

August 28, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

Very shortly after my father died in October, 1969, I determined that I should open his Museum and the grounds of Auburn Heights on a more regular basis, and Weldin Stumpf became my partner in this endeavor in February, 1970. It was decided to call the facility the "Magic Age of Steam" and the Auburn Valley Railroad was perhaps the most important part of our anticipated operation.

Although the museum building was greatly improved with many new operating exhibits, the railroad and the grounds received the most extensive changes. An artificial pond was built on the sloping north lawn, which required a major embankment, extensive earth moving, and an off-site water supply. A new driveway was built around the south and east sides of the big house so that Mountain Wagon rides could be provided without reversing the vehicle. The pond and this driveway wiped out much of the original Auburn Valley rail line. The original line, coming behind the Museum close to where it is today, turned almost to the angle of the loading dock and then climbed toward the rose arbor passing West Yorklyn station on the upper side of the building. It continued to climb on a 3% grade, passing below the sun dial and soon occupying the route of the present east driveway, passing the old flag pole (written about in the 7/24/06 "News") at a place we called "Summit", as this was the highest point on the railroad. Dropping sharply across the front lawn toward the main driveway, it crossed about 20 feet above the present crossing near the gate posts, and continued toward the middle of the present pond. From there, it followed around the hill to the turntable, still in its original location. From the turntable to the starting point (mentioned above), the location was almost the same as at present. There were passing tracks at West Yorklyn, Summit, and near Table Junction behind the garage.

Marvin Klair, Bob Reilly, Jake Lafferty, Bob McGovern, Jr., Ray Smith and Jim Wilson helped Weldin Stumpf and me prepare the grounds and build the new railroad. Stumpf built the double-tracked trestle across the old vegetable garden, cut and welded the full-sized railroad tank car bodies to form the tunnel, and formed the approaches for the pouring of the tunnel's wing walls. Marvin Klair, with his 1945 gasoline tractor, did all the earth moving and grading for the pond, tunnel, new railroad bed, and new driveway. Starting at the same point mentioned in Paragraph 2 above, the line with its two tracks crossed the trestle, passed West Yorklyn station on the lower side, and then ran almost level to the east approach to the tunnel where the upgrade became about 2%. Passing through the tunnel on this grade and crossing the driveway at the lowest point possible it then followed on the top of the new pond embankment, crossed the pond's spillway, and returned to the turntable area which we still called "Table Junction". With

this new construction, much less grade was required and nearly half the railroad was double-tracked. In September, 1971, the Magic Age of Steam was ready to open!

Last Tuesday, 8/22, the Events Committee discussed the weekend event just completed, planned for October 21-22, and expressed concern for enough volunteers to work our after-Thanksgiving days. Next year's schedule of public days at Auburn Heights was nearly decided with a few details to be worked out. The Committee recommends the last Sunday of each month starting in either June or July and continuing at least through October. A possible schedule conflict with the Eastern Steam Car Tour to be hosted by F.A.H.P. makes the June Sunday questionable. The "Little Toot" working group headed by Ron Turochy and Art Sybell moved along toward completion of this project, Jerry Lucas finished the brake installation on the Model EX Stanley, and Jim, Dale, Teddy and Rob are nearly ready to roll the 735 out the door. Brent, the two Simpkins', and the two Jensens cleaned up the locomotives from the 8/18-19 runs, and Chuck Erikson continued his faithful organizing of the shop. Emil Christofano and Walter Higgins worked on the clock and speedometer on the Rauch & Lang, and Teddy and his friend from Kennett introduced to us by Art Sybell (I'll soon get his name straight) removed the old burner liner and cleaned up the burner from the Model 76. Bob Wilhelm showed up twice on Thursday in his beautiful Model 735, and left well after dark with his 12-volt headlights. Last Thursday night, there were 26 volunteers in attendance, a record for work sessions.

Through the urging of Bill Schwoebel, 5 of us went to Ross Myers' "A Day on the Farm" at Worcester, PA, on Sunday, 8/27. We took two Stanleys on the 86-mile round trip run, and a wonderful day it was.

Rob Robison, Walter Higgins and Art Sybell joined Bill in the 87 and me in the 607, and all but Art got a chance at the wheel. The fund-raising event is not over-rated, and despite the threatening rain, about 700 people supported the show at \$25 each. It's a beautiful place with excellent food. Ross Myers gave us special recognition for making the trip in the Stanleys, displayed them in the most prominent place on the grounds, and gave F.A.H.P. a nice plug. Our cars had no trouble except the exhaust hose on the 87 developed a hole on the way up, and Bill lay on his back to replace it with a spare he had along. The Model 78 was supposed to go, not the 607, but a continuing oil pump problem caused the substitution.

Work projects immediately ahead include insulation of R.R. track sections, replacement or repair of locomotive injector valves, cleaning the "down-pipe" on the Model 740, bleeding the new brake lines on the 735, installing a new burner liner in the Model 76's burner, rebuilding of the oil pump on the 78, packing the engine glands and the fuel pump on the 607, removing and lapping in of the throttle on the Mountain Wagon, and completion and painting of "Little Toot". Bill Rule has given us a permanent bell for this wooden locomotive. Thanks

to one and all.

Tom