

February 13, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

Leather Belts, Brake Lining, and Castor Oil: For those who don't know it, castor oil was a nasty product applied to youngsters of my generation who needed a strong cathartic. It was the texture of olive oil and was sold in tiny bottles of about 2 ounces for 15 cents. The normal dose was one teaspoon or more which was often camouflaged with orange juice. The trouble was, it didn't mix, and the orange juice was always on top. The victim would be happily drinking the juice, when he (or she) would suddenly hit the castor oil. The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children no longer allows this practice.

Although less known for these uses, castor oil was also a good dressing for leather belts (it kept them soft and non-slip), and for old brake linings that had become glazed. Learning this from my father, I still keep it in the shop and use it in these ways. On a steam car tour in Vermont in 1976 with our Model 71, I had bested another Stanley in an informal race up a long hill, and had heated up the brake linings on the way down. The brakes seemed noisy and unreliable. I asked Jerry Brady, my passenger on that trip, to go into a small drug store in the next town and buy a bottle of castor oil. As he started for the store, I called to him: "get two bottles, so I'll have a spare to take home". Jerry asked the clerk for castor oil, the good man obliged by finding a bottle in the back of the store, and then Jerry said he wanted two bottles. The clerk was taken aback, and exclaimed: "Oh, no, ONE will do the job!".

Productive work sessions last Tuesday and Thursday continued some of the fine work Jerry Lucas had overseen while a few of us were in Florida. The steam automatic on the Model 740 is being rebuilt, and the asbestos under the hood of the Model 607 was replaced with Fiberfrax. Emil rebuilt the toolbox for the Model 735, and Jimmy spot-welded the bottom ring on the same car's boiler and brazed the pin-hole in the steam pipe from the Model 71. Rob, Dale, Ted, Anne, Bill Schwoebel and helpers continued work on the 735, and the front wheels, now striped by Jim Sank, are back on the car. Tomorrow night, we hope to continue these projects plus starting to rewind the wire on the repaired 735 boiler. Butch printed a lot more brochures for distribution in Philadelphia, and Bill S. and Anne hung several of our tour banners from the ceiling in the Museum.

A number of our members attended the AACA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia Friday and Saturday past, and Rose Ann did a lot of P.R. work for F.A.H.P. while manning her Grand National booth at the trade show. Our own Mike Jones, general chairman of the meeting, introduced our new Exec. Director, Bob Reilly, to many prominent AACA people when he and I attended on Friday. Especially, we talked to the AACA Museum principals, and made tentative arrangements to lend them a Stanley car

for a period of one or two years, with proper recognition, of course. Rob Robison, Emil, and Jerry Novak took tender loving care of our '32 Packard on display at the Phila. Auto Show, and handed out a LOT of information about FAHP to interested passers by, as did Alan Berry. The three, accompanied by Bob Reilly, successfully brought the Packard home today in Rob's trailer, for which we thank all of them.

Bob Reilly has been at his new job with us for five days now, and they have been busy ones. He and I have covered many items, several in preparation for our Annual members' meeting this Thursday, February 16, at 7:30 in the Museum. Nominating Committee chairman Jerry Novak will be accepting members' ballots at the start of the meeting for those who have not previously sent them. We hope the business meeting will conclude by 8:45, to be followed by light refreshments and a talk and slide show on the Ormond Beach activities and our participation in them. While we are dug out and there is limited parking on the grounds, some may need to park across the road. We look forward to seeing you!

Finally, Rob Robison would like to hear from you if you can go to Baltimore with us on Saturday, April 1, to visit the B & O Railroad Museum. There was a flyer included in the Auburn Heights Herald. Space is still available, so talk it up to your friends and make your reservations with Rob as soon as possible. There is no easier way than a bus from Yorklyn; \$22.50 for members and \$32.50 for non-members, including bus fare and museum admission. Children \$4 less in both categories. Tom