

F.A.H.P. News, February 20, 2012

The Cold February of 1934: (Part of this story was told in the Weekly News of February 5, 2007). The coldest day of the 20th century in Yorklyn was February 9, 1934, when the big thermometer on the front porch at Auburn Heights registered 18 degrees below zero. In fact, it was one of the coldest winters in memory. That was the winter one of my maternal cousins, Mary Comly Shallcross, then a student at Beacom College at 10th and Jefferson Streets in Wilmington, lived with us, going home to her family's farm near Odessa only on weekends. "Comie," as she liked to be called, celebrated her 19th birthday with us on February 4. It was also the winter that the back of Auburn Heights was torn up in the building of our new kitchen and a recreation room below. The stone wall had been cut away to make the opening where the pantry gives way to the present kitchen, and in the evening we could walk carefully through this opening to inspect construction progress. Since the old kitchen door had been closed off, we had to use the "side door" to enter and exit the old kitchen, still in use.

Unlike early Christmases, I remember very few of my birthdays. I was told by my mother that my father had taken her in a snow storm (obviously in one of his Packards) to Mrs. Turk's Hospital on West 18th Street near Monroe in Wilmington where I was born on February 20, 1924. The only logical conclusion to this short paragraph is "Who Cares?" or "So What?"

Back to 1934, Comie and I, along with my paternal cousin Eleanor Marshall, were taken to school in Wilmington as usual on February 20. About 10 A.M., it started to snow steadily, and in early afternoon, Clifford Murray ("Cliffey") had put on "the chains" and was dispatched to gather us up and bring us home. Today, it's hard to realize how big storms or blizzards could cripple transportation for several days. For one thing, we had no idea these storms were coming. For another, there was no equipment on hand to clear the roads. Cliffey made it to the old Friends School at 4th and West Streets and then picked up Comie at 10th and Jefferson, and we headed out Kennett Pike. Moving along slowly but steadily, there was no way he could turn onto the present Route 82 or onto Old Kennett Road, so he continued on to "the head of the Pike" at Hamorton and on into Kennett Square. Carefully, he made it down Creek Road to Clifton Mill and on to the gateposts at Auburn Heights. Comie and I ran up the lane to the front porch in snow up to our knees. Somehow, Cliffey must have gotten Eleanor home or at least to the foot of "Gun Club Hill" at the railroad. He then began the long task of digging out our driveway by hand, but he was used to that.

The one birthday present I remember was a spring-loaded pistol set that shot harmless darts. Instead of sharp points on the darts, there were rubber vacuum cups, so the operator could shoot at a wall or a target and simply pull the dart away without harm to anything. My greatest enjoyment with this set was shooting at ping pong balls on the floor of a room with sparse furniture, somehow trying to beat an opponent who was doing the same thing. The little pistols were surprisingly accurate.

Work Report: Two meetings took place on Tuesday night, which swelled the attendance for the evening. Anne Cleary's Events and Scheduling Committee met at 7:00, followed by Bill

Schwoebel's A.V.R.R. Committee at 8:00. Both were productive. The bonnet was fitted to the top of the new boiler on the Model 725, and new patches were made to fill in some of the openings. It was determined that everything will fit well, despite the 16"-high boiler, 2" higher than the old one. All the tire pressures were checked on the cars in the museum, and the new insurance cards placed in these cars. Additional small parts were assembled, cleaned and painted for the Model 607. We said good-bye to Art Wallace, who will be visiting his son in New Zealand for the next three months.

On Thursday night, a new cleat, which has been missing, was made and soldered to the flap on the hood of the Model 607, prior to priming and painting. All patches for the 725's bonnet were finished and fastened in place. The 607 body was lifted off the frame, stored again on trestles, and the chassis was moved back to the garage. The boiler was lifted out, and the tubes were swaged in the top head. This job was finished by Tim Nolan on Friday, and the bottom will be done next week. A new layer of Diplag was applied to the circumference of the boiler on the Model 87, greatly improving the appearance. The gauge glass on the popcorn machine was successfully installed and inspected for leaks with 50 p.s.i. hydrostatic pressure.

Volunteers in attendance on Tuesday were Jerry Lucas (in charge), Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard, Anne Cleary, Rose Ann Hoover, Jonathan Rickerman, Robert Hopkins, Brent McDougall, Kelly Williams, Mac Taylor, Tim Ward, Tim Nolan, Ted Kamen, Art Wallace, Steve Bryce, Jerry Novak, Emil Christofano, Richard Bernard, and Tom Marshall. Those in attendance on Thursday were Richard Bernard, Jerry Novak, Steve Bryce, Chuck Erikson, Butch Cannard, Ted Kamen, Dave Leon, Tim Nolan, Gene Maute, Gerhard Maute, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

Rose Ann Hoover has donated a new 4-ton Craftsman floor jack to F.A.H.P. for our use in the garage and museum. This is a great gift, in addition to all the food she donates to several of our functions each year.

Help Wanted

With the Easter Bunny's visit fast approaching, we need your help to "paper the town" with rack cards and posters announcing the annual Auburn Heights Easter Egg Hunt. We are targeting shops and locations from Bear, Newark and Wilmington to Hockessin, Kennett Square, Avondale and Unionville. If you can help, please stop by the FAHP office and pick up a few stacks to share! With your help, we can ensure that the more than 1,500 Easter eggs that will be adorning the mansion lawn will find good homes!

Recycle!

You can still recycle those used ink/toner cartridges to benefit FAHP. Drop off any you may wish to contribute at the FAHP office or turn them in to your local Staples and give them the FAHP phone number to credit them toward our Rewards Account: 302-239-2385!