

November 27, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

In the Weekly News of October 23, 2006, I mentioned that 1941 and 1972 were two of the most enjoyable years of my life, and I told of our trip in 1941 that made one of them memorable. I have already written a lot about the 8,300-mile trip in the '12 Stanley in 1972, how we prepared for the trip (10/3/05), and three installments of the trip itself (1/2/06, 3/20/06, and 5/8/06). So here is another and perhaps the final reason why 1972 was so special.

Modest inflation with increasing incomes since World War II had resulted in a steady rise in the standard of living during the 25 years prior to 1972. Gasoline averaged 35 cents per gallon and was usually less in the Delaware Valley because of the numerous refineries. Lodging rates in good hotels and modern motels averaged about \$16.00 double per night. Kerosene to fuel the steamers was about 25 cents per gallon in this area (one station north of Harrisburg sold it for 14 cents), but it was slightly higher in Canada and in the West. A good meal at a family restaurant was around \$3.00. It was a good time to make a long trip. 1973 brought the first gasoline lines, our president became a national disgrace (Nixon resigned in '74), and integrity was fast becoming an unknown attribute, or so it seemed to this ancient writer who was about 50 years old at the time.

Back to 1972, Millard Newman, who ran the Trans-Continental Reliability Tours for cars 1914 and older, liked to stay at the finest hotels. In Montreal we stayed at the new Chateau Champlain and paid \$36 per night, the highest of anywhere on the tour which included the Sheraton Ritz in Minneapolis, the Sun Valley Lodge in Idaho, and the Century Plaza in Los Angeles. To ship 40 gallons of Arco Solvent 36 for the steamer's pilot fuel, I bought new 5-gallon metal cans for \$2.50 each and shipped them via Yellow Freight to 8 places along the route, going and returning. I also sent 15 or 20 gallons of cylinder oil the same way. Never were we disappointed- the supplies were always waiting for us to be retrieved. I did have to buy kerosene from a hardware store in Montreal in gallon cans and paid \$1.10 per Imperial gallon, but in Ottawa the next day I bought "stove oil" for 31 cents per Imperial gallon that worked just as well.

Credit cards had not yet come into common use, and many places would not accept them. I didn't have a credit card until much later. I bought a lot of Travelers' Checks, but I ran out in Idaho, and my cash was getting low. Dick Worrall, president of the National Bank & Trust Company of Kennett Square, had given me a letter of credit to use in case I needed cash. At Sun Valley, they told me I would have to find a regular bank, so the next morning I went into a bank at

Shoshone, Idaho, but the manager was not impressed with my credit letter. I suggested he call Mr. Worrall, but he said that would not mean anything to him. I came out empty and we headed into Nevada. When we finally reached Reno, I was almost penniless, as I had tried a couple more banks with the same negative result. There was a casino just off the lobby of the hotel where we were staying, so I made a stab at it. The cashier said "How much do you need?" and when I said I'd like to get a check cashed for \$300, I think he was surprised it was for such a modest amount, and no more questions were asked. I was back in business, but I know the casino expected more benefit from the transaction. Later that night, I gambled \$1 at Harold's Club and lost it all, but it was still a very good year.

October 24 and 25 were two very good days at Auburn Heights. Perfect weather with temperature near 60 degrees both days and good advance publicity resulted in 1,058 tickets sold and with gift shop income of over \$900, we grossed over \$10,000. The work of our volunteers was exemplary, and Rob and Chevonne Robison, who chaired the event, are to be congratulated. On Friday we had a few less volunteers than desirable (27), but everyone worked very hard and our visitors were delighted. On Saturday there were 35 volunteers, and everything worked out well. Some long lines resulted, especially waiting for the car rides (and occasionally for the trains) but no one seemed to mind as the weather was so pleasant. In addition to our FAHP volunteers, the services of a Park Ranger from White Clay Creek State Park both days were much appreciated.

Although I don't usually do this for fear of missing someone, I want all members to know those who worked this past weekend. Nor do I want to miss some of our regulars who could not help on these two days but who helped us get ready and are in our group of stalwarts usually on hand: Richard Bernard, Dale Simpkins, Teddy Simpkins, Bill Rule, Herman Feissner, Dan Nichols, Joe Mosteller, Rose Ann Hoover, Andy Zych, Cathy Schwoebel, Chuck Carisch, Gisela Vazquez, Elise Simpkins, and Ellen Hopkins. Those listed below with (2) after their names were here both days.

Friday and Saturday, October 24 and 25: Anne Cleary (2), Bill Schwoebel (2), Art Sybell (2), Gerhard Maute (2), Walter Higgins (2), Mark Hopkins (2), Rob Robison (2), Steve Jensen, Steven Jensen, Bob Reilly (2), Barb Reilly (2), Jean Reilly (2), Kathy Beck (2), Jerry Lucas, Jim Sank (2), Bob Wilhelm (2), John McNamara (2), Luke McNamara

(2), Art Wallace (2), Gene Maute (2), Jerry Novak (2), Jim Personti, Will Hopkins, Emil Christofano (2), Tom Marshall (2), Ruth Marshall (2), Chris Sanger (2), Chevonne Robison, Bob McGovern, John Hopkins, Robert Hopkins, Dan Muir, Holly Novak, Chuck Erikson, Bob Krewatch, Earl Robinson, Butch Cannard, Brent McDougall, Joyce Sybell, Alan Berry, and Ron Turochy. What a crew!

Rob Robison, Bill Schwoebel and I have been working on a program of small working groups to undertake mechanical projects, which we hope to be able to present by next week. We hope to involve all regular volunteers at our work sessions, and complete a number of projects, large and small, during the winter months. Anne Cleary is holding an Events Committee meeting on Thursday, December 7, at 7:30 P.M. here at Auburn Heights. The fall edition of the Auburn Heights Herald has been mailed to all members, thanks to Rob Robison and Bob Reilly. The Motorola Model T5620 black "walkie-talkie" belonging to Emil Christofano still has not been turned in. Please make sure you don't have it by mistake. This disappeared after our October 21-22 event. Please let Rob and Chevonne Robison know if you can attend their holiday party on Saturday, December 9 from 5:00 P.M. on . . . at their beautiful home on Yorklyn Road. All FAHP members are invited. If you can come, please call on or before Sunday, December 3. The Robisons' phone is (302) 239-4096 and E-mail: [robscads@comcast.net](mailto:robscads@comcast.net).

Finally, thanks are due Bob Reilly, our Executive Director, for all his hard work that went into planning and promoting our November event just concluded. I think we can safely say that we are beginning to be recognized, mainly because of excellent publicity and the great job all of you do to entertain our visitors. Bob tells me we now have 135 families as members with the possibility of several more from the applications that were picked up this past weekend. Again, many thanks.

Tom