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Mother, son killed in crash with deer

By Antonio M. Prado
Staff Reporter

A woman and her son were killed and the woman's husband was injured when a deer caused

Volunteers to help preserve part of Marshall estate

By Andrea Miller
Staff Reporter

A group of 35 volunteers has been formed to help the state preserve a piece of Yorklyn history.

The Friends of Auburn Heights was formed when Tom Marshall decided last Spring to donate his 3.8-acre, \$3 million 1897 Victorian estate at Route 82 and Bengé Road to the Delaware Department of Parks and Recreation, as part of the newly forming Auburn Heights Preserve. The preserve will eventually include both Marshall's land and 200 adjacent acres along the Red Clay Creek purchased from NVF by the state.

The state will own and maintain the property and buildings. The group will own and maintain Marshall's steam automobile collection and early 20th century furniture from the home, incorporating

See Auburn Heights, Page 10

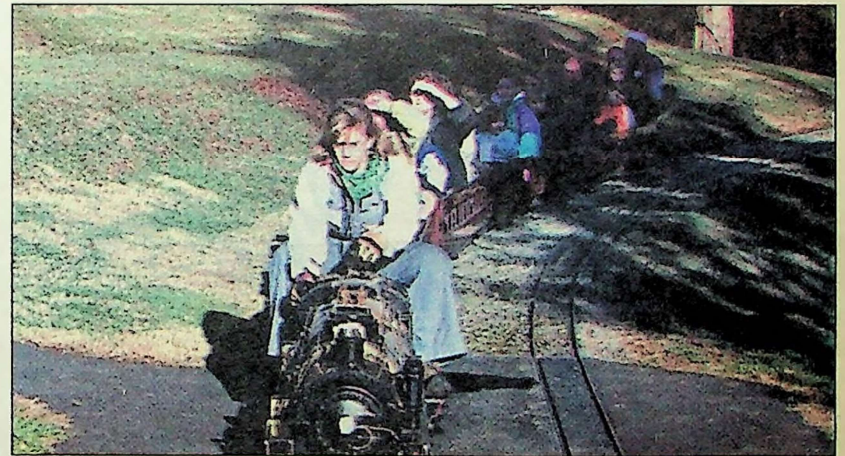


Photo by Ruxana Bhatti

Emma Cleary, engineer and chairwoman of the Marshall Steam Team, brings a holiday train into West Yorklyn Station during the first fundraiser for the Auburn Heights estate.



Photo by Ruxana Bhatti

Marie Graham (center) is shown pictures by Ruth Marshall (left) and Tom Marshall, who donated their estate to the state for a park.

Auburn Heights from Page 1

them into interpretive museum exhibits and events for the public that depict life in 1910, the Marshall family history, and the significance of the steam engine.

The automotive collection has the largest known collection of steam automobiles in the world, and includes 17 automobiles dating from 1902, including a 1915 mountain wagon, 14 Stanley steam cars, two Packards, and an electric car. It also includes a 1/8th-scale steam train and a vintage steam-operated popcorn popper.

What is unique about Marshall's collection, is that although he shows the cars on tour, they are

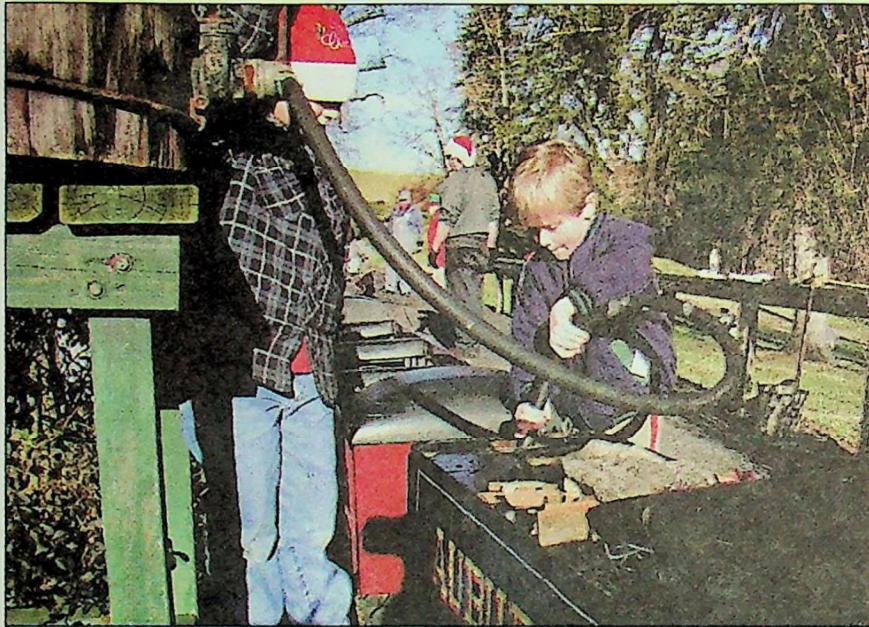
more working automobiles than show cars, maintained through regular use, rather than being refurbished vehicles. The Stanley brothers hand crafted steam powered automobiles from 1900 to 1928. Because they were never mass-produced, they are very rare.

The estate has been host to numerous charitable and non-profit fund raisers, but has rarely been available for public view. The Marshall's opened their home and grounds to the public four years ago during five fund raisers to help rebuild the Wilmington and Western Railroad after Hurricane Floyd.

As part of the transition from home to museum and park, the Friends of Auburn Heights, the Marshall Steam Team plan to hold about six public events each year, through 2008, when the Marshall's will turn over the estate to the state.

So far, there have been two such fund raisers: in October and December, which included rides on the train, tours of the Stanley Steam automobiles museum, and popcorn from the steam-powered popcorn machine. About 500 visitors came to the Christmas

**See Auburn Heights,
next page**



Photos by Ruxana Bhatti

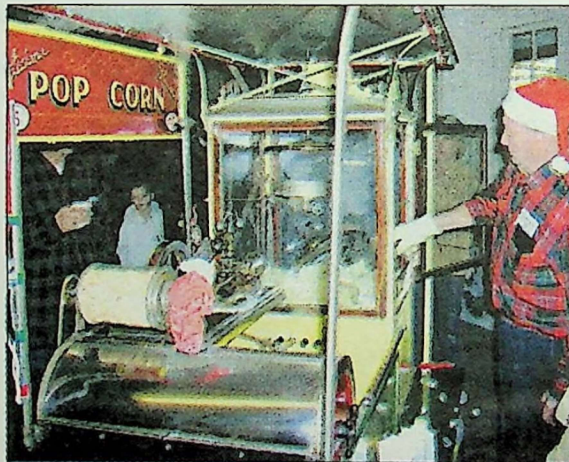
Sammy Minker (right) and Steven Jensen water one of the steam engines that run around the estate.

Auburn Heights from previous page

weekend fund-raiser, double the number of visitors who came for the first one in the October.

"One of our long term goals is to expand the exhibits and provide more opportunities to interpret the home and way of life to the public," said Richard Bernard, a member of the volunteer group. The other main goal, to maintain and run the automotive collection both on and off the property, has been informally in operation for several years.

About five years ago,



Volunteer Ed Hoffmeister makes popcorn in the 1920 steam popcorn machine. The machine is part of the collection of steam cars that the volunteer Marshall Steam Team will maintain.

the "Marshall Steam Team," an informal group engine enthusiasts began to form. Marshall taught them how to operate and maintain the collection, before there were any plans to donate the property to the state. The Steam Team is now part of the larger group, Friends of Auburn Heights.

Part of Marshall's willingness to leave the property to Delaware, was prompted by the state's purchase of the surrounding NVF property for a nature preserve.

Tom Marshall's family moved to Yorklyn to build their paper mill business (what is now NVF) along the Red Clay Creek.

The Victorian mansion, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was built by Marshall's grandparents, Israel and Elizabeth Marshall, in 1897 for \$11,500. Their donation

includes the house, land, steam collection and many historic furnishings.

A volunteer network, who have been educated by the Marshall's about the history of the property in recent years, will likely continue to staff the steam engine museum and house tours once the state assumes responsibility for the estate.

The stories passed down by the Marshall's, both orally and in written form, give color to all of the things they are leaving the state and Friends, said Bernard

For example, one of the automobiles in the collection, a 1937 four-door limousine, was bought new by Marshall's father. That automobile, he recalled, was used to tow the many steam cars home when they were purchased.

The railroad was bought and assembled by Marshall's father from a

hobbyist kit company in California in the 1960s.

Bernard said he hopes that the stories, already incorporated into the tours, will be given a more formal museum structure with help from state consultants after the transition.