

August 15, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

This week, the "schedule" calls for "semi-technical information, mostly pertaining to Stanley cars". Here's a shot at introducing the subject: During the past 60 years, whenever we've been somewhere with the Stanleys, interest by the general public has far outweighed the marque's numerical strength. Until a generation ago, nearly everyone had heard of a Stanley steamer, although few had actually seen one. About 1946, the BULB HORN, publication of the Veteran Motor Car Club of America, ran a poll of its members asking what antique car was the most popular. The results were not even close; Stanleys outpaced all other makes by a large margin (if my memory serves me correctly, 99 respondents said "Stanley", something like 20 plus said "Packard", and on down the line). Why, then, have Stanleys been a very small minority of collectible American cars? Recently we can say the scarcity and the price tag are the reasons, but this was not the case 50 years ago. It had to be "technology" or the lack of it. Many early gas car owners yearned to own and operate a Stanley (or a White), but for many reasons, very few did. When these good people, and many were close friends of my father and me, delved into it they usually discovered a steam car was so different from what they understood and had mastered, that they feared they could never get onto it, and they'd better not try (or possibly, better not make a fool of themselves). A steam car and an internal combustion car were certainly dissimilar and possibly not compatible. The winner was highly technical; the loser was a great power whose time had passed.

This week we are preparing for Governor Ruth Ann Minner's visit on Wednesday evening. She and her party of between 6 and 10 will be arriving about 6:30, and we'll expose them to 3 rides and the museum as the first things they do. One train, the Mountain Wagon, and the Rauch & Lang will give her a good cross-section of what our activities are about. Then we will retire to the front porch for supper. While it will require only about 6 of us to take care of the activities, all active volunteers are invited be here if you would like to meet the Governor and show her what a great group we are. If you can stay for supper, please let me know by tomorrow night (Tuesday). If you speak with the Governor, it is certainly appropriate to answer any questions, and tell her about our mission and vision for Auburn Heights and its collections, but inappropriate to ask her for specific things. This should be done through Chazz Salikin and the Division of Parks and Recreation. Chazz's boss, John Hughes, who heads the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), is expected to be here also.

Our participation with cars in off-site events was minimal this past week, but one car load of us went to the BRAACA picnic at Hagley on Saturday where Rose Ann, Jerry Novak and Dan Muir officiated. Dan

was our official host; Rose Ann was in charge of the food as only she can do it, and Jerry cooked the delicious 'burgers and hot dogs. Ruth and I went in the Model 87 with Dan Nichols and Willard and Eleanor Robinson as our passengers. Additional FAHP members who were there: Chuck Carisch, Emil and Doris Christofano, Joe and Louise Mosteller, and Alan and Terri Berry. I'm not aware that any of us attended the Daimler-Chrysler event at Newark the same day, but we understand it, too, was a nice affair. We had hoped to have a contingent going to Kinzers this Thursday to attend the annual Threshermen's Reunion, but right now there appear to be drivers and passengers for just two of our cars: Jerry Novak in one of the Packards and Butch Cannard, probably in the 78 or the 607. Dan Nichols and possibly Andy Zych have expressed interest in going along. We'll try to finalize arrangements Tuesday night. Unfortunately, the "Day on the Farm" at Worcester, PA, is the same Sunday as our "Back to School" event at Auburn Heights, August 28. In September, the big event for us will be the Hagley Show on the 18th, but there will be other things coming along, too. Stay tuned.

On Sunday, Steve, Bill Schwoebel, and Anne installed more track sections between the turntable and the pond and several volunteers worked in this area last Thursday as well. Jim Personti is working on Jim Sank's little 4-4-0 in the shop- watch him proceed to get this locomotive running, if you have an interest. Today, I brought the 735 back from the paint shop, and it is now in the museum ready to be set on blocks so the wheels can be removed, cleaned, sanded, and prepared for new paint. A good project for a team of two or three volunteers is to take on the final restoration of this car including, in addition to the wheels, polishing and replacing gauges on the dash, cleaning up under the hood, rebuilding running boards, and sanding and refinishing rims. There is a little work on the rear axle to be done. Byrd's Body Shop still has the hood, and he will take the wheels back for painting when we have them ready.

Two nice colored pictures about Auburn Heights appeared in the Hockessin Community News of just over a week ago. Many thanks to Community Publications for your help! And thanks to Jean Toman and the promotional work she is doing for us and for our "Steamin' Sundays".

Keep the hot and humid weather at bay!            Tom