

**BLACKBOARDS, CHALK, AND ERASERS:** During my time in school (1930-1947), blackboards were an essential part of every classroom. They were used quite successfully by most teachers and with less success and some frivolity by their many pupils. Please note that I said “pupils,” and not “students.” Early on, one of my teachers told me she had many pupils but very few students.

Some of my blackboard reflections are described herewith. In the second grade as the Christmas season approached, Miss Metten, my teacher, had red and green chalk, with which she drew all sorts of holiday scenes on the blackboard in her classroom. I had never seen anything but white chalk before, and I was quite impressed with the colorful images of decorated trees, Santa Claus, and all that goes with that time of year.

One of my classmates from Grade 3 through 12 was Bill Bergman. Bill was not normal in many ways, and his physical coordination was very poor. He held a pencil like a chisel, so his skills in handwriting and arithmetic were very poor. In the fourth and fifth grades, he was dropped off for school before most of his classmates, and he would go immediately to the blackboard on one side of the large classroom. “Way out on “cloud nine,” he would envision prehistoric creatures and start to draw. All sorts of weird battles would take place, being narrated as they were drawn. Bill was completely oblivious to anyone or anything else in the room; he was enraptured in his gruesome tales. With an eraser in one hand and chalk in the other, he would half-erase as fast as he would draw, explaining to himself what awful battle was progressing (others in the room were used to it and paid no attention). This daily activity usually lasted about ½ hour, after which the teacher, Miss Passmore (4<sup>th</sup> grade) or Miss Wright (5<sup>th</sup> grade), would tell him it was time for school to start and attempt to erase the mess on the blackboard. Bill Bergman’s recreation for the day may have been over.

In high school, Mr. Detwiler was my math teacher. He was good at what he did and could illustrate geometry very accurately on the blackboard. He would take a large compass with chalk on one end and draw a perfect circle. His pupils tried but couldn’t do as well. One of the jobs of the janitorial staff was to thoroughly clean all blackboards after each school day.

When I was a senior, anything in school was preferable to studying. I would play ping pong with friends when possible, but nearly as popular was throwing blackboard erasers at waste baskets, and keeping score. Walt Lumley (FAHP member Dave’s father) and I were especially competitive. This would take place in the senior class homeroom until Mrs. Black would come in and break it up.

Finally, in an old building on the quadrangle at Brown University, I. J. Kapstein, head of the English Department, tried to teach us public speaking as part of our Air Force Pre-Meteorology course. He would give us a scientific topic to explain verbally before the class in about 5 minutes and encouraged us to use the blackboard behind to illustrate our remarks. This was difficult at the time but turned out to be excellent experience.

Do blackboards survive in schools today? Perhaps they do, as white chalk is still available (we use it in the shop). If there are blackboards and chalk, there must be erasers.

**Work Report:** Missed update from last week: On Tuesday, September 10, 19 volunteers, plus two more who attended the Events Committee meeting, were on hand, as follows: Steve Bryce (in charge), Dave Leon, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, John Roberts, Dan Citron, Jerry Novak, Robert Hopkins, Mark Hopkins, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jerry Lucas, Bill Schwoebel, Brent McDougall, Gary Green,

Jay Williams, Mac Taylor, Tim Nolan, Tom Marshall, Rose Ann Hoover (Events), and Art Sybell (Events).

On the new "Diesel" locomotive, the oil was changed, and new oil and air filters were installed. The pilot vaporizer and nozzle was worked over again on the Model EX, and this time we believe it is fixed to last a while (a new vaporizer will be in order this winter). The Models K, 76, and 725 were prepped for the trip to Hagley on Sunday 9/15. On the Model 607, the top brackets were properly adjusted, new straps were dyed and attached to the rear of the top, the wood strips on top of the doors were completely installed, and small fuel leaks were repaired. Work continued on improving the electric train layout. The Model 750 was vacuumed as a start to the clean-up process on this very original car. Locomotive #401 was serviced after its runs on September 1.

On Tuesday, September 17, 14 volunteers were on hand, viz: Dave Leon (in charge), Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, Jerry Lucas, Brent McDougall, Ted Kamen, Dennis Dragon, Tim Ward, Ken Ricketts, Jay Williams, Emil Christofano, Bill Schwoebel, Mark Russell, and Tom Marshall.

On the Model 607, fresh from its initial trip to Hagley, the gauge glass for the 3-tube indicator was replaced with a red-line gauge (much easier to see), the rear view mirror was attached and the spare tire bracket tightened, a water filter was found for installation in the water line from the tank, and the front water pump, that had failed on the return trip from Hagley, was cleaned out, and the outlet ball was replaced. The Model 87 was prepped for its use on Sept. 21 to fulfill the prize for the winners of the lottery drawing, a trip for four from Auburn Heights to Longwood Gardens and return (including a gourmet lunch and a trip to a nearby winery).

Gasoline was drained from the Model K, following its successful round-trip to Hagley. On the Model 71, promised in connection with a member's wedding reception at Auburn Heights on September 21, a leak in the oil line at the steam pipe was repaired, packings were tightened, and a short extension of the throttle stem was fabricated and installed. Work continued on the Lionel electric train layout, the horn switch was repaired on the Model 735, and a small steam leak in a thread near the water level automatic on the Model 725 was fixed.

On Thursday, September 19, 13 volunteers attended, as follows: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Steve Bryce, Dave Leon, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Jerry Koss, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Bob Stransky, Paul Kratunis, Gerhard Maute, Eugene Maute, and Tom Marshall.

On the Model 607, the speedometer cable and housing were removed for repair. The links were thoroughly cleaned and the housing soaked to soften old grease and dirt. The cable ends were removed and cleaned up for re-soldering once everything is back together. Diplag was added to the bonnet behind the flap. The water filter was installed under the front floor board in the line from the tank. The 3-tube gauge glass was filled.

A new stem was made for the main fire valve on the Model 87, and the car was checked out and cleaned up for its use on Sept. 21. The Model K was cleaned further after its trip to the Hagley Show. Both the Models 87 and 71 performed well on Saturday, 9/21, and did their jobs as intended. The sessions during the coming week will be devoted to arranging and cleaning everything for our annual Invitational Car Show on Saturday, Sept. 28.