

May 2, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

The Mountain Wagon and the March of Dimes (Chapter One): I saw in the paper where thousands walked yesterday to benefit the March of Dimes. In the years immediately before the discovery of the Salk vaccine, I belonged to the Wilmington JayCees. One of their many projects was the "Mile of Dimes" (to benefit the March of Dimes) on Market Street between 4th and 6th, where long tapes were strung along the sidewalks parallel to the curbs on both sides of the street. Two teams of JayCee members hawked the project to passers by, and placed dimes on the tapes, the east and west sides of the street competing against each other to see which tape could collect the most dimes. I would take my dad's Mountain Wagon to the site, and give rides around the block to anyone who donated (and who wanted a ride). There was no Market Street Mall in those days, and traffic was heavy, but somehow a young operator didn't mind, and made out fine every time. I did this for at least 3 consecutive years, usually in February as the March of Dimes annual drive started on F.D.R.'s birthday, January 30. (to be continued next week)

Everyone who worked on Sunday to welcome the Wilmington Friends School group did a fine job and is to be congratulated. I counted 24 volunteers, and everything came off like clockwork. Being heavy on small children the Auburn Valley rides and the electric trains were the favorite attractions, but the Mountain Wagon and the Rauch & Lang electric were also filled on almost every trip. Thanks to Steve Jensen and his railroad committee (Bill Schwoebel, Anne Cleary, Jim Personti, Steven Jensen, and the McNamaras, John and Luke, for a fine day with no derailments, to Jerry Lucas, Bill Rule and Rob Robison for the auto rides (Rob ran the electric car all afternoon after a brief training session from Jerry Novak in the morning), to the food and gift shop trio (the two Hoffmeisters and Chevonne Robison), to John and Robert Hopkins for the electric train operation, to Alan Berry and Willard Robinson in the Museum (and to Alan for the Steam DVD), and to Richard Bernard, John McNamara, and the Maute boys in the parking lot and road crossing, ALL OF WHOM made the day possible. And a special thanks to those who helped get ready and to Richard Bernard for chairing and managing the event so well. We understand the group wants to come back, probably on April 30, 2006.

There is more good news! Emil got home from the hospital yesterday, but not before he stopped here for a few minutes just before we opened for our afternoon event. He walked in and stood in the Museum for a few minutes on his own steam, and looked remarkably well. He had his clothes on, even though he told the hospital staff he could come home in his gown. We are delighted you are home, Emil. Don't overdo it too soon.

Our new car, the 1902 (or is it 1901?) Mobile steamer arrived last Tuesday, and our numbers were somewhat swelled Tuesday night by attendance of the curious. We would like to be able to raise an additional \$5,000 in contributions to cover the purchase price, so if any of you would like to participate, please let me or our treasurer, Joe Mosteller, know. Please don't feel you are obligated to chip in, but if you care to, any amount will be welcome. I am reminded of the fund-raiser who asked his prospect: "Could you give \$100,000 (or whatever it was) to our campaign?" The reply: "I could, but I won't". A few of our members cleaned up the Mobile Tuesday night and made it more presentable already. As you know, it is not my car, it is owned by the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve!

Last Thursday, the emphasis of our work session was getting the Museum, the Mountain Wagon, and the A.V.R.R. ready for May 1, but in addition the Model 76 was cleaned up and moved back to the Museum, and the inside of the water tank on the Mocol CX was re-coated to seal the leak, and it, too, is back in the Museum. This Tuesday and Thursday evenings, we may begin replacing some more track sections near the tunnel, and getting cars ready for our next two weekends when we hope to participate in 3 events. I'd like to lift the top off the Mountain Wagon Tuesday night, so it can be loaded in Rob Robison's trailer Thursday night or Friday for its trip to Dover on May 7. We are also planning to take one other steamer in my trailer, probably the 607 or the 76. In addition to Bill Rule, Butch Cannard and Anthony Zych have expressed an interest in going to Dover. I HOPE MORE OF YOU CAN GO- LET ME KNOW IF YOU CAN. It will be a long day, but should be enjoyable, and an excellent chance to promote our F.A.H.P.

Bill Schwoebel advises me that he'd like another railroad session here on Sunday, May 8, at 11 A.M., to test out Locomotive 401 and its consist of cars and the inside (clockwise) track, so far untested this year. It's a good time for more training for would-be engineers and conductors. If we have "students" wanting Stanley driving lessons, we can fit them in Sunday afternoon, also May 8, about 1:00 to 1:30 P.M., with Bill or me as instructors. Let us know if you are interested. Please remember Wednesday, May 11, when we'll run one Auburn Valley train and the electric trains for 2, 3 or 4 pre-schools in the area, by reservation only. Presently, we have about 90 children and 40 adults to supervise them. Chris Sanger is going to help me with the train, Rose Ann plans to run the electric trains, and we need about 3 more retired volunteers.

Finally, Anne Cleary, events chairperson, is concerned that so few members have signed up for the May events off premises. On Saturday, May 14, the Wilmington & Western R.R. is having a special day and cooperating with the Greenbank Mill and the Friends of Brandywine Springs with all sorts of important events. We have been

invited to participate with as many cars as we care to take. It is an easy run, will probably take less than 5 hours of your time, and be good training for drivers who need more experience (all of us). On Sunday, the 15th, the Annual Spring Meet of the Historical Car Club of Penna. is held at Linvilla Orchards, about 18 miles from Yorklyn. In the past we've averaged 5 or 6 cars at Linvilla, and it's a fine meet at a very nice place, so please sign up, whether as passenger, student driver, or operator. Tom