

November 20, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

With Thanksgiving almost upon us, I would like to tell a Thanksgiving story, but alas, I don't have anything profound to say. Although we usually met with my father's family on Thanksgiving, for some reason these occasions did not make a lasting impression as did Christmas when we gathered with my mother's family at one of three locations. Perhaps it was because I saw my paternal cousins weekly if not more often.

In 1942 at the beginning of World War II, my last Thanksgiving as a civilian was spent in Boston where I was living at 329 Commonwealth Avenue with my roommate, Dick Mullikin. During that fall we usually had "dinner" at a Greek cafeteria called the Esplanade on Massachusetts Avenue about 2 blocks from our residence. Almost every night we ordered the fried scallop platter for 40 cents (the Greek almost threw it at us), but with a beverage and dessert it wound up to be about 65 cents. I also remember a Chinese laundry nearby where the proprietor apologized for taking more than 24 hours to get our laundry back.

The government was trying to change the date of Thanksgiving from the traditional last Thursday in November to the next-to-last, but most people resisted. So, on the traditional Thanksgiving Day, Mullikin and I decided to splurge, and have a real dinner with all the trimmings. We went to the restaurant in the Hotel Bradford on Tremont Street where a full course dinner was offered for \$1.75 plus the 5% Mass. old age tax (charged on all meals \$1 and over). The following Saturday, November 28, 1942, Holy Cross beat Boston College 55-12, a real upset, in their annual football game, and in the evening hours many were celebrating in the Cocoanut Grove Night Club. Dick Mullikin and I went to see "Mrs. Miniver" at a movie house on Huntington Avenue.

When we came out, sirens were blasting and fire engines and ambulances were speeding eastward. The night club had caught fire. Before it was over 491 patrons had lost their lives including four brothers from Wilmington, MA, all in the Navy. It seemed to us that the ambulances ran on Commonwealth Avenue all that night until dawn. I apologize for such a morbid story.

Last week a lot got done on mechanical things and in preparation for our public days November 24-25. Since I was tied up in meetings both Tuesday and Thursday nights, I'm not sure just who did what, but the locomotives got thoroughly cleaned and checked out for their upcoming 2-day runs, some temporary patchwork was done on the wooden passenger cars, brake work was done on the Stanley Model 740, and the hood was removed from this car so Walter Higgins can paint it. Gift shop inventory was checked out by Rose Ann, and she, Jerry Novak,

Art Sybell, and Emil set up our Christmas tree in the museum, and arranged a number of other appropriate decorations. Jerry Lucas prepared the Mountain Wagon for use taking visitors around the grounds.

Ted Simpkins repaired a leak in the compressed air piping in the garage, and Jim Personti brought his friend "Bill the welder" from Rising Sun, MD, who repaired the leak in the bottom of the Model 76's boiler. A few more things were done to the 735 and it was moved to the museum until after our public days at the end of this week. The floor has been scrubbed down in the garage in preparation for its use for popcorn, hot chocolate, gift shop, and possible entertainment.

On Tuesday night Emil, Bob Reilly and I met with Bill Enslen of near Hockessin, who was recommended by Mary Hopkins as a possible FAHP treasurer. We were favorably impressed but we have not offered him the job as yet. On Wednesday, a joint Development-Finance Committee was held (on rather short notice), and on Thursday night our quarterly Board of Directors meeting took place in the Museum. Our Collections Policy was formally adopted, the most important item of which was the decision to accession the core group of antique cars donated to us (my collection), but not to capitalize this collection nor have it show on our Balance Sheet as an asset except as a footnote. This is in keeping with the practice used by most prominent museums in the country. Greg Landrey and Mike May are to be thanked for all the time and research that went into this recommendation to our Board. I advised the Board that I would probably be donating about 4 cars to FAHP in 2006, 7 or 8 cars in 2007, and those remaining in 2008, with the possibility of holding one back as "my car".

Tomorrow night, November 21, will be our last chance to get things ready for our public event. The condition of the Museum will have to be finalized, and the cars roped off. The tiller-steered Model CX, the Mountain Wagon, and the popcorn machine will be in the upper garage until after November 25 (the "Wagon" will be in service when we are open). There will be no work session on Thanksgiving, 11/23, but next week we will be back to normal with Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Rob Robison advises that our volunteer list looks good for Friday and Saturday (stronger for Saturday), and we should be well-covered. Many thanks to all who have volunteered. Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Tom