

August 21, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

In 1941, my father visited Martin S. Lewis in Wilmington, California, on our 12,000-mile trip in the '37 Packard Twelve. Mr. Lewis, an accomplished draftsman and machinist, had established a small business called "Little Engines" to sell castings and drawings to amateur hobbyists who wanted to build their own scale-model steam locomotives, now referred to as "live steamers". Shortly thereafter my father bought the package to build a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-scale 4-8-4, on which he worked during World War II, completing it in 1945 before I returned to civilian life. He named this little beauty for me and took it to several hobby shows in the late 1940's, operating it in place with steam from a Stanley car outside the building housing the show. It is now on display in our Museum.

The desire for a larger locomotive to run on a railroad that could carry passengers remained strong, however, and in the mid-1950's Martin Lewis offered castings and drawings for an engine twice as large, his 1-1/2"-scale 4-8-4 or "Northern type" locomotive. Lewis himself began building the first of these locomotives and his fellow Californian, Seymour Johnson, ordered and completed one of the first of these larger engines for his "Canoga Valley Line". My father was also among the first customers and began work on his 4-8-4 in the late 1950's. As completion neared after 7,500 hours of work by my father, he and I began to discuss how and where we could build a railroad on which to operate this new beauty. In March, 1960, he engaged Everett Hollingsworth of Fairville and his partner to lay out and grade for the original loop around the grounds of Auburn Heights. With the major grading completed, they nailed together and installed the 10-foot-long track sections using 2 x 2 redwood ties, built the turntable and its pit, constructed a trestle over the bank behind the museum, and installed removable grates across the driveway near the front gate with the track depressed in a trough below. Several tiny passenger cars were hurriedly built with the help of Paul Wollaston, a local carpenter, and friends were invited to ride for the first time on my father's 75th birthday, August 5, 1960. The Auburn Valley Railroad was born.

With minor modifications, one of which eliminated the awkward removable grates in the driveway in favor of a wooden grade crossing, the public was invited to come and ride on several Sundays during the fall of 1960, and the little railroad ride was very popular. Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc. had been formed about a year earlier, its main objective being to establish a steam passenger service on the Landenberg Branch of the B & O R.R., which soon became known by the line's original name, the Wilmington & Western. Plans were made to

operate the Auburn Valley for the benefit on HRCV and to place two trains in service for the 1961 season. HRCV's volunteer members would make this operation possible.

Martin Lewis died about 1959 and my father eventually convinced Mrs. Lewis that she should sell him her husband's partially-completed prototype. My father's original Auburn Valley locomotive had been numbered 401, and the hastily-completed "Lewis" engine became the 402. Both have served the Auburn Valley well since 1961, with some sort of service being provided in about half of the 45 years between then and now. HRCV volunteers operated the Auburn Valley for 5 seasons (1961-'65) and 33,000 passengers were carried raising \$15,000 for Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc. (The continuing story of the "Auburn Valley" will be covered next week).

Our just-completed "Ice Cream Social" weekend was a fine success and a lot of fun for our nearly-600 visitors who were here Friday and Saturday evenings. Our very special cadre of volunteers are to be thanked and congratulated on a job very well done. The participation of the 36 volunteers on Friday and 38 on Saturday was supplemented by a lot of hard work and preparation that went into the event. This was evidenced by no mechanical or operational failures. Since all pulled together in a fine team effort, I will not mention names with the fear of omitting some of the most important contributors. It's important to mention the advance publicity we received and the efforts of our promotion team, especially in distributing flyers and posters. Our executive director arranged for public TV announcements on WHYY Channel 12, the cost of same subsidized by 4 of our members. We also had a free listing in the Philadelphia Inquirer and the News Journal. Jerry Novak conducted a survey of those visiting both evenings which showed 10 families or groups came as a result of our sign out front, 8 from our AAA magazine article last May, 6 from Channel 12, 6 from our exposure at Woodside Farm Ice Cream Parlor (Bob Reilly was there 4 days of the last 5 before our weekend with a Stanley car), 4 from the News Journal listing, and 3 or less from several other sources. Rose Ann provided the following accounting: Friday, 166 adults, 52 children, 20 complimentaries for a total of 238; Gross from ticket sales \$2,024, Gift Shop \$186.50, miscellaneous \$20, TOTAL \$2,230.50. Saturday, 230 adults, 81 children, 39 complimentaries for a total of 350; Gross from ticket sales \$2,867, Gift Shop \$328, TOTAL \$3,195. THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL!

Anne Cleary is chairing an Events Committee meeting tomorrow night, 8/22, at 7:30 in the reception room of the museum, at which time evaluations of past events, plans for our upcoming fall weekends, and our 2007 schedule are heading the agenda. A small group consisting of John and Mark Hopkins, Anne Cleary and Bill Schwoebel met with Bob Reilly on Saturday to initiate plans for the 2007 Steam Car Tour to be hosted by us in June next year.

Mechanical ongoing projects are the completion of "Little Toot" headed by Ron Turochy, Art Sybell, Dale Simpkins and Willard Robinson, the finalizing of the hydraulic brake jobs on both the Model EX and the 735 headed by Jerry Lucas, Jim Personti, Ted Simpkins and Rob Robison, the partial rebuilding of the burner from the Model 76, the possible switching of batteries on the Rauch & Lang by Emil Christofano and Walter Higgins, the cleaning of the "down pipe" on the 740 by Walter Higgins, the rebuilding of injector valves on the locomotives by Jim Personti and Steve Jensen, the "lapping in" of the throttles on the Mountain Wagon and possibly the Model 78, and the progression of the railroad signal project by Bob Wilhelm, Ed Hoffmeister, and Bob Reilly.

Bill Schwoebel is asking all interested prospective engineers for the Auburn Valley to attend a training and experience session on Sunday, September 10, if it is convenient. One of the locomotives will be fired up and chances to practice without the general public on hand will be possible. Bill also wants to follow up on Bob Wilhelm's Stanley operating course (Stanley 101) with more driving opportunities for those interested in the next few weeks. He and I expect to take two Stanleys to "A Day on the Farm" at Worcester, PA, this coming Sunday, 8/27, which is nearly 100 miles round-trip. If any would like to go for "experience on the road", this will be the longest daily run for the remainder of this year, and seats are available. There is a charge of \$25 per person as a donation to a local hospital, and a gourmet lunch is provided. In September, we have committed two cars to Longwood Gardens for six weekend days, and the annual Hagley Museum car show is on Sunday, the 17th, for which we have registered several cars. Best wishes to everyone. Tom