

April 11, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

I'm sure my lack of mechanical talent disappointed my father, and my ability to operate a Stanley, in 1946 at least, left much to be desired. Hyde Ballard and Dick French completed the first "early" restoration of our Model 71 about the time I returned home from the service in August of that year, and about a month later my dad entrusted me to drive this beauty to the AACA Fall Meet at Devon, 30 miles from Yorklyn. I was alone in the car, but my dad was ahead in his 1912 Model 63 (now owned by Bob Parke), and Roy Bengel was behind in our Model 76. We made it O.K. for the first half mile, and then Roy's pilot went out. I knew he had stopped to light it, but thought I would go back to assist. I had heard my father say Stanleys would run as fast backward as forward, so I decided to save some time. When I was about half-way back to where Roy was stopped, I completely lost control, and the 71 veered sharply right and then left in rapid order. The car shot back and off the road toward the creek in a wooded area. I was helpless until the car and I finally came to a stop. I had narrowly missed several trees, and there was not a scratch on the new paint. In looking the car over, however, Roy noticed the tie rod on the steering had a 30-degree bend (it's supposed to be straight), causing the front wheels to be towed out about 3" or more. I remember he sat on the ground, pushed on the bent rod with his foot, and brought it back nearly straight, good enough for us to proceed. My father wondered where we were and turned around and came back. He wisely decided he should ride with me to Devon and back, saying that he couldn't keep the pilot going on the Model 63, but the real reason was obvious. We had a fine day from then on, but traveled only in a forward direction.

We had a good Firing-Up evening last Tuesday, and the Model 607 did just what it's supposed to. For those who witnessed this for the first time, I suppose it's best when no problems jump out and bite the operator, but as unknown things will happen in the near future it's also good experience to see how we deal with minor surprises. This coming Saturday, April 16, we have two driving lessons scheduled, and room for a couple more "students" if any of you want to participate. Also that day, the railroad crew wants to fire up one of the locomotives to test out the work done on it, and the quality of track work performed the past two weekends. This will give us two weeks to make adjustments before our first event on the property, the Friends School Alumni group on May 1. Contact Bill Schwoebel for details on the driving lessons and Anne Cleary for the same on the R.R. trials.

Last Thursday a good work session resulted in getting one step closer to "buttoning up" the Model CX, and the rear axle was put together on the Model 76, the rebuilt differential having come back

to us with beautiful new gears. As of now, the rear has been adjusted, the yellow paint touched up, and the car is setting on all 4 wheels. I finished up the Model K, and it is in the Museum awaiting its first road test. Jerry Novak and Anne Cleary have touched up the paint on the locomotives. On Saturday, 4/9, 9 volunteers worked on Auburn Valley track, and in addition to leveling and spreading more stone, they replaced 3 lengths of old track going into the tunnel from the upper side. We are delighted that new family members Chevonne Robison and Cameron McDougall joined in this effort. Steve Jensen has offered us a special discount on lumber to cut more ties, and we hope to have this on hand later this week.

Tomorrow night, April 12, Bill Schwoebel has called a meeting of all his committee chairpeople at 7:30 in the reception room of the museum. On Wednesday, Joe Mosteller is having a meeting of the Finance Committee at Painter's Cross Roads (Routes 1 and 202). We have some new insurance quotes which this committee will consider and make recommendations. Thursday evening is a regular work session at the usual time. The Model 735 goes to the paint shop next Monday, April 18. We are a busy group! Sometimes it makes an 81-year-old head swim.

Through the generosity of our Board member Rob Robison, we have the means to trailer the Mountain Wagon to Dover for Old Dover Days on May 7. We still need an operator for the "Wagon" as the Division of Parks would like us to give rides while there. I can do it if all else fails. On Wednesday, May 11, we have at least 4 Pre-Schools lined up to visit the Auburn Valley in the morning between 9:30 and 11:30. We'll be asking for a few volunteers as the time draws closer. I've asked Chris Sanger if he can run the engine; if he cannot, I can do it. The rain date is Thursday, May 12.

We are sorry to report that Walt Hopkins, father of Mark and John, has had another set-back, and one day after arriving home, ended up in the Hershey Medical Center again. He developed a blood clot and breathing complications. Spring is here, Walt- you must get better! Our best wishes to Herman Feissner also. I don't have an update, but we hope he is doing much better. Tom