

October 3, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

This is the week for "semi-technical stuff" regarding steam cars, so here it is: In the spring of 1972, after deciding to try to fulfill a lifetime dream of driving a Stanley to the West Coast and back, we (Weldin Stumpf and I) had only two months to prepare the car, our 1912 Model 87, and to decide what supplies, tools, and extra parts we needed to assemble and take along. This was to be a trip of over 8,000 miles (it turned out to be 8,328), and was to be made without an accompanying vehicle of any kind. At that time the car was cosmetically much as it had been when my father bought it in 1950, and it had been used a lot during the ensuing 20 plus years, but we knew it was the right car, and the only one, suitable for such a long trip. We reviewed what we needed to do to the car, and then what parts we should take along that we hoped would never be used.

The boiler was fairly new, and we were satisfied it could make the trip. The burner was rebuilt, as we found the old grate cracked. The balls in the engine cross-heads were replaced with slides and new wrist pins were installed. New sealed rear wheel bearings were substituted for the originals. A large cubical water tank holding about 55 gallons was hung under the car as a supplement, for the purpose of increasing the range on water from 40 to 85 miles. A tall, thin tonneau tank was located just behind the front seat, which held an additional 22 gallons of kerosene. We hung a spare superheater and a spare vaporizer under the car, tying it to something underneath. On the running boards, we had alligator racks, behind which was some luggage but mostly cans of pilot fuel (in those days, Atlantic Solvent 36 was the best pilot fuel), and steam cylinder oil. The "jump" seats were removed and the back of the car was full of luggage, cleaning supplies, and sometimes people. We knew our route and schedule in advance. The 4,100-mile tour we were joining started in Montreal and ended at San Diego, after a brief visit to Tijuana, Mexico. We were joined by 20 other cars, all 1914 and older, for the second-ever "Transcontinental Reliability Tour", run by Millard Newman and sponsored by the Veteran Car Club of America. We were the only steamer, and the first to make such a trip. Our schedule while not with the tour was also planned in advance (Yorklyn to Montreal and San Diego to Yorklyn). The car left Yorklyn in the rain on June 13 and returned on August 9.

In advance, we shipped pilot fuel in 5-gallon cans to 8 points along our route, and cylinder oil to 3 or 4 of these points. We were never disappointed; when we arrived, the needed supplies were there. We gave away some good empty cans, as we had no room to carry them. In the 8,328 miles, we had only two major mechanical problems. Westbound near Aberdeen, SD, a very light "click" near the right rear wheel was audible, and this gradually worsened until it was decided something had

to be done 500 miles farther along west of Miles City, MT. I pulled the wheel and found the wheel bearing "shot". Limping into Billings at 20 m.p.h., we found a machinist who opened his shop and worked all night over the July 4th weekend, so we could be back in business the next morning. He built up the axle shaft and turned and fitted a new bearing to it, and the next afternoon we made our check point at Livingston, MT, on time. The second problem we corrected at Disneyland, CA, just after the end of the tour at San Diego. The burner had started to backfire occasionally before the official tour had ended, but we knew we could make it through and we completed the 4,100 miles with a perfect score. Before starting east, however, we dropped the burner, found the inside pan rusted through (even though it was new 2 months before), fabricated a new one, installed the burner in the car, and no more trouble of any consequence occurred on our homeward trip. (More on this "trip of a lifetime" in a later edition).

Bill Schwoebel conducted a constructive meeting of the Management Group last Tuesday, and it was decided we should go all out to promote our two remaining public events for this year. With this in mind, John McNamara has written a news release for the October event on 10/30, featuring Halloween and the semi-annual house tour, and updated our WebSite to include our special themes.. Butch has redesigned and printed new flyers and posters advertising our October and November events. Ruth and I expect to saturate public places in the Kennett Square area tomorrow and Friday, with an appointment with the editor of the Kennett Paper on Friday. In addition to flyers and posters, we hope to make personal contacts in many of the places we visit (we have about 30 locations in mind). We will give out Complimentary Tickets where we think it will do some good. In lieu of an advertising budget, this is how we'll try to get the word out. If some of you can do the same in other areas, IT SHOULD HELP A LOT.

Our work projects are moving along. Dale Simpkins is persistently working on the 735 Stanley's wheels, preparing them for the paint shop. Rob Robison has taken some small parts to have them replated. Ted Simpkins has straightened and cleaned the running board moldings. Chuck Erikson is back on the job sorting things in the shop, Brent McDougall cleaned up the locomotives after their runs on 9/25, and Steve, Bill S., Butch and Anne are continuing their track replacement work. Willard Robinson removed the stuck carpet from a portion of the Mountain Wagon floor, and cleaned up the floor. A small piece of red carpet that will fit this area is needed. Wire-laying and manufacture of insulated splice bars is progressing well, preliminary to hooking up our R.R. signal system. Even though many in our group will be in Hershey this week, these projects will continue on Tuesday and Thursday nights. We have decided to install hydraulic brakes on the Model EX and the 735, and Bob Barrett is supposed to be here Friday to take some rear-axle parts from the EX that he will need to design its brakes. Jerry Lucas plans to disassemble this axle before Friday.

We are glad to report that Jim Personti is feeling better and has a good tentative health report (he was here Thursday), and Steve Jensen seems to be over his bout with "the bug". We understand Herman Feissner, while not back to normal, was able to get away for a few days, so hopefully he will be back with us before long.

Bill Schwoebel asked me to remind everyone qualified to drive one of our cars that October 10 is the deadline for entering cars at the HCCP Fall Meet on October 16 at Delaware County Community College near Media. It is a very nice meet and a good 50-mile round-trip run. Jerry Lucas plans to take the 1908 Model H-5, and Bill Schwoebel the 1905 Model CX, two of our outstanding early cars. To keep up with them, I might drive the '08 Model K, but I've not found time to check it out since the new vaporizer was installed. We need a couple of larger cars to go, so please come forth if you have an interest. There will be members wanting to go who will need seats to ride along. Let me know by the end of this week, so we can get the entries in. In addition to this day, we have volunteered to take one or more cars to Newtown Square on Saturday, 10/15, for the dedication of the old Freight Station, now a museum featuring things from the age of steam. This Saturday, October 8, I have been asked to have our '37 Packard at Winterthur for their special "Day on an early American Estate circa 1940", and I plan to go, unless someone else would like to do it. It is a long day, as they'd like the car there by 9:30 and keep it until the event closes at 4:00. It will be parked near the front door of the Museum.

The theme for our November 19 evening event is "Auburn Heights by Lantern Light", and we'll develop new activities along these lines. Please keep this date, along with October 30, in mind, as we'll need volunteers for both events. Finally, our friend Bill Rule is supposed to be operated on at 9:00 tomorrow morning to repair his hip badly mutilated in his motorcycle accident on Sept. 23. He is in Temple University Hospital, 3401 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140, and his phone number is (215) 707-6198. It has been a tough 10 days on his back, but he is told therapy will begin Wednesday to get his system back to normal and teach him to walk again. Other than tomorrow, he will probably appreciate phone calls. Tom