

February 20, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

NIGHT SHOOTING AT YORKLYN: For at least 50 years, trapshooters loved to shoot "under the lights". This was possible by having high-powered flood or spot lights shining toward the flight of the clay targets, which had a white or yellow band painted on their top sides. The target then looked like an electric light bulb flying through the normal trajectory to be fired upon. When the target was hit and broken, small fragments of light would fly in all directions, and if the target was "smoked" (that is, hit with the full charge of shot), a cloud of smoke would momentarily appear before drifting away. Millions of bugs, prevalent in the summer time in this area, would also be lit up from the lights, and looked like tiny white specks all over the place.

The first night shoot at Yorklyn was staged by my father and W. W. Bissett, manager of the Snuff Mill, in a meadow on snuff mill property on July 4, 1916. This was possibly the first night shoot ever, but I can't prove that. In 1921, when my father started his annual tournaments on Poplar Hill, southeast of the fibre mills, night shooting was a part of the program, along with the "registered" events during the day. The night shoots were usually 50-target events, as opposed to the longer 150 or more targets shot during the day program. The shorter 50-target "races" often attracted a larger number of shooters, as they were more affordable. The entry fee was about \$3.00 including ammunition. By the early 1940's, over 200 shooters were taking part in Yorklyn's night shoots, with six traps (now called "fields") lighted. At many clubs equipped for night shooting, the high-powered search lights were mounted on high poles about 30 yards behind each traphouse to be lighted. At Yorklyn, however, an earlier lighting method was employed, using two 1000 candlepower bulbs with reflectors behind on each side of the traphouse, with a standard 40-watt bulb with a "pool table" reflector above, directly over each shooter about 10 feet off the ground. These were needed so the shooter could see to sight his gun.

Direct current was generated by a 1917 Second Series Packard Twin Six motor attached to a large dynamo, and wired from there to the places requiring illumination. This was replaced by A.C. in the mid-1930's, however, when poles up the hill brought commercial power to the gun club grounds. It was not unusual to blow fuses with the heavy demand for power, and my father would always have an electrician friend on hand to deal with emergencies. Prizes were awarded on the "Lewis Class" system, which meant that except for the top score, others were awarded on sort of a lottery basis. They usually consisted of small utility items, always costing less than \$10 each. 7 weeks from now, there may be another trapshooting story, and although this has limited interest, it was very much a part of Yorklyn's history.

Our Annual Meeting is behind us, and last Thursday evening 44 members were in attendance. Five Board members whose terms expired were re-elected: Joe Mosteller, Anne Cleary, Rob Robison, Mike May, and Emil Christofano. New Board members elected were Bill Schwoebel, Richmond Williams, Thom Harvey, and Joe VanSciver. Reports were given, and our secretary, Anne Cleary, has sent copies of the minutes to all members with E-mail. Rose Ann reported that we had 81 members last year, and we have 66 so far for 2006, including 4 new members. Cam Yorkston said the Annual Appeal of year-end 2005 now stands at \$48,420, with 55 contributors. Bill Schwoebel reported that there were 5,166 volunteer hours (from the sign-in sheets) during 2005. We thank all of you for your membership support, and many for contributing to our Annual Fund as well. Bob Reilly gave his first report as Executive Director. He outlined an ambitious agenda which he hopes to tackle immediately. Presently his office is under the kitchen at Auburn Heights, but within a month, we expect it to be in the apartment over the garage, which will also be the Reillys' home when they are in Delaware. Following the business meeting, an illustrated report on the Land Speed Record Centennial at Ormond Beach, FL, January 24-28, was given by Butch Cannard and yours truly, and Ruth Marshall served refreshments. Thank you, all 44 of you, for coming.

Ongoing work projects include re-winding the boiler from the Model 735 (Jim Personti tack-welded the bottom boiler ring in place with the loan of Emil's welding outfit), fitting the windshield on this car (Rob Robison), fastening the tool box to the running board, and possibly completing the beauty treatment under the hood begun by Richard Bernard and the Simpkins', Dale and Ted. The driver's door on the '37 Packard needs a latch repair and Jim has looked at this. The small Civil War locomotive owned by Jim Sank has a stuck piston which should not be hard to free up. Finishing the steam automatic for the 740 may be delayed because our new spare diaphragms are in the trailers now in Florida (until mid-March). I have promised the Maute boys some pictures and literature for filing in our library, and will try to oblige by Thursday night.

Our annual Board Meeting, at which time we will elect our officers for 2006 and approve a final budget for the year, will be held in the front hall at Auburn Heights this Thursday evening, so that will take some members away from the work session that night. Best wishes to all of you, and thanks for the prospect of another very good year for F.A.H.P.

Tom