

The big Trapshooting week at Yorklyn: Traditionally, the first week in August was the time of the annual trapshooting tournament, operated by my father from 1921 through 1950, at the Yorklyn Gun Club. Although the program varied some from year to year, the week usually began with a preliminary day on Tuesday, the “Marshall Marathon” 500-target championship on Wednesday, the “Brandywine” (usually a 200-target event) on Thursday, the “Auburn Special” (at either 150 or 200 targets) on Friday, and the T. C. Marshall Handicap (at either 100 or 150 targets) on Saturday. Night shoots with 50 targets per shooter were held on Wednesday and Friday evenings starting at dark, and the Yorklyn Doubles Championship was usually on Thursday after the “Brandywine.” A special event called the “Red Clay” took place Friday afternoon. Although it would have been the largest day, there was never shooting on Sunday.

The week before, my mother would supervise a thorough cleaning of the clubhouse building, and arrange for the meals that would be served during the tournament. A box car load of clay targets would be hauled up the hill from a siding next to the Yorklyn station, all ten trap houses would be filled, and the additional supply stored in a building behind the clubhouse. Originally, these came in wooden barrels, 570 to the barrel, with stacks of targets wrapped in newspaper and sawdust to prevent breakage. On the barrels were labels: “Fragile as Eggs.” After 1937, however, cardboard cartons holding 135 targets and weighing 35 lbs. were much easier to handle and store. Before the shooting week began, these had to be opened, and the stacks of targets unwrapped so the trap loaders could grab them quickly and place them on the arm of the trap that threw them 50 yards over the brow of the hill. The grass would be neatly cut and trimmed, and supplies of ammunition, squad sheets, cashier sheets, and bulletin sheets would be on hand. Very seldom did we know how many shooters were coming, as no advance reservations were made. During the shoot, my father made frequent trips to the bank, as all transactions were in cash.

No later than Monday, about 20 directional sign boards would be nailed to trees and electric poles pointing to the “Yorklyn Gun Club.” By Monday afternoon, a few shooters from a distance would begin to arrive to “check things out.” Sometimes my dad would know them; sometimes he would not. Many were repeaters who came to Yorklyn each year. On Tuesday, there was ample time for practice, along with a preliminary event, usually attended by about 40 shooters. And then the “big shoot” got under way with the “Marathon” on Wednesday.

It took about 40 people to run the trapshooting program, and another 12 or 15 to handle the store and serve the meals in the dining room. The trap pullers and loaders were mostly local teen-age boys, glad for four or five days’ work. The referees might be local trapshooters, school teachers on summer vacation, or experienced scorers from other gun clubs. The cashiering and bulletin board work was done gratis by representatives from the ammunition and powder companies (called “professionals”). Ammunition was sold by the supplier. For many years, the women of the Kennett New Century Club served the meals and ran the store, helping to pay off the mortgage on their club house building. My mother seemed to “run the show.”

By late Saturday, about 500 shooters had taken part. We were tired- it had been a busy week!

Death notices: **F. Garrett Shanklin**, age 80, of Groton, MA, passed away on July 27. Until recently he was an avid member of the eastern Steam Car community, attending most of the annual tours, including the Auburn Heights tour in 2007. He was even better known in the theatre organ world, as he

built his own Music Hall to accommodate a large theatre organ from one of the Boston theatres. A very successful small business man and manufacturer, he will be missed by all who knew him. We send sincere condolences to his wife Sarah, his son Norman, and his three daughters and their families.

Linda A. Crump, age 65, of Newark, DE, the wife of one of our early FAHP volunteers, Thomas N. Crump. Tom came to our work sessions for some time, and made several things for us in his machine shop at home, including the fabrication of several brass whistles suitable for use on Stanley cars. We send Tom and their family our sincere sympathy.

With Steamin' Sunday fast approaching, much of the activity last week surrounded preparation; several volunteers polished brass and cleaned cars, Dan Nichols helped Chuck Erikson put up ropes and prepare the Museum, Richard Bernard and Bob McGovern lined the parking lot, Susan continued to add signage to the museum and grounds, including seven "Burma Shave" signs. Jay Williams has donated an oil pump to complete the pump box on our "hands-on" display, and a group effort returned the sand-blasted 10-horsepower boiler to the display. Bill Schwoebel helped Butch Cannard and Dan Citron clean a blockage from the burner forks on the Model 735. A loose exhaust connection and blown-out exhaust hose are believed to have been the substantial steam leak that was evident, and both were repaired by Tom on Friday. Emil Christofano, with help from Lou Mandich, installed an external throttle control on one of the scale model trains in the collection. On Saturday, Art Wallace and Tom took the Model 71 to Wild Birds Unlimited in Hockessin and Woodside Farm Creamery to promote Steamin' Sunday.

Last Wednesday, Bill Schwoebel treated the mechanical staff from Hagley to a firing up demonstration of Locomotive #402 and gave train rides to 17 of them. Tom then demonstrated the Model 71, after which they toured the museum, shop, and engine house (below the shop). Jonathan Rickerman and Mike Leister helped with the railroad activity. On Thursday, Tom and Ted Kamen disconnected fuel lines between the gas pump next to the museum and an underground fuel tank; the tank is scheduled for removal this week.

Dan Citron is again offering (exclusively to FAHP members) tours of the old Marshall Brothers Paper Mill, now owned by State Parks! The next tour is scheduled for Tuesday, August 17, and will begin at the paper mill at 6:30, returning to the carriage house around 7:15. Those who are comfortable walking down the hill can meet Dan at the back gate of Auburn Heights (by the back building) between 6:15 and 6:20. There are limited parking spots along Benge Rd for those who would prefer not to climb up and down the hill. Please e-mail Dan (Daniel.Citron@state.de.us) if you are interested in attending.

Within hours of closing the gates on another successful Steamin' Day (despite a worrisome initial forecast), we received a heartfelt thank-you note via the web. The note says it all -- and is testament to the spirit of our organization:

"We have not visited Auburn Heights before today and found out about it through the Mom's "Things to Do" Magazine... When I read about the train workings and museum, I was elated ... you see, my 7-year-old son is severely Autistic, nonverbal and LOVES trains. The volunteers treated Devin with respect, love and were so accommodating! I cannot begin to tell you what that meant to our family. We do not go places together as a family that much because (1) it is hard with Devin as he runs and (2) our 6-year-old daughter is typical and has started to develop different interests. This was fun, a learning experience and meant the world to us all!"

More than statistics and numbers, THAT is what sets FAHP apart! Kudos to one and all!