

January 24, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

Last week I started by saying the temperature was 17 degrees. It's still the same with a little weather in between. But so far as I know, we're all doing well.

I'm not sure how many of you will want to come Tuesday night, but we are plowed out and there is easily parking for 8 or 10 cars. Our 3 "Florida boys" plan to load and leave Wednesday morning for Ormond Beach. Jim Personti has just rebuilt the safety valve on the little CX, and the car should be better than it's ever been during my ownership (I bought it in 1975). They are taking a brand new flyer written by Bob Reilly and printed by Butch to help promote the Friends of Auburn Heights while they are at the "races". It is of a more general nature than the "Volunteer Opportunities" flyer produced over a month ago. Both are very nice, in my opinion. The new one tells who we are, what we have, and what we do, but it's not geared toward volunteers. Thank you, Bob and Butch.

Since our Annual Meeting is under 10 days away, I'd like to share some of what I know about it. As mentioned several times, it will be on Feb. 3 in the Museum at 7:30. There will be at least 3 main things on the agenda. First, Bill Schwoebel and I will try to explain the function of the new Board of Directors with its committees, and of the Management Group with its committees. We will share a new Organizational Chart, which some of you have seen already. Bill will also announce the names of Operating Committee chairpeople and members who have already volunteered to help in their respective areas. We encourage many more of you to sign up in your area of interest. The active volunteers will undoubtedly serve in more than one place. Second, Chaz Salkin, Director of the Division of Parks and Recreation for the State of Delaware, will speak to us on the typical role of a FRIENDS group working in a State Park, and how we may differ from being "typical". He will expand on areas of cooperation between ourselves and the Division of Parks. And third, we will have our election. Eleven candidates will be nominated for election to the Board. 3 will be for one year, 4 will be for two years, and 4 will be for three years, the length of candidates' terms to be determined by lottery prior to the meeting. The eleven are: Tom Cannard, Emil Christofano, John McNamara, Greg Landrey, Dan Muir, Mike Jones, Mike May, Bob Reilly, "Rob" Robison, Stanley Wilcox, and Cam Yorkston. A short biography on each will be provided to you at the start of the meeting, to give you an idea of the strengths each will bring to our new Board.

Immediately following the close of the Annual Meeting, the

new Board will convene to elect its officers. We have 4 candidates in mind who have consented to fill the positions of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, and in addition the new Board will need to make at least two appointments, that of Membership Chairman and of Marketing Director. Again, we have people in mind who will do a fine job in these categories. The secretary and the treasurer do not have to be Board members.

Admittedly, our work projects have taken a back seat this month. However, we are sure when the new Management Group with its committees kicks in, there will be much better organization of these and more projects as well. Stay tuned. We need you!

In addition to the 6 Sundays we plan to open the facilities in 2005, we have "chartered" the Wilmington Friends School group in late April, and the Wilmington Rotary Club in late June, the exact dates not yet finalized. Of course we want to do the Down Syndrome Association in September as we have in the past, and we have an opportunity to pick up several more charters of our facilities. We are considering one or two week days in May when Pre-Schoolers can come and ride the train.

We've been asked, too, to take our cars twice in May to help with special events. On Saturday, May 7, the Division of Parks has requested a few of our cars in Dover to help celebrate Old Dover Days, in which they are heavily involved this year. On Saturday, May 14, we've been asked to go with cars to Greenbank Station to participate in a joint promotional day between the Wilmington & Western R.R., the Greenbank Mill, and the Friends of Brandywine Springs. In helping others, we can certainly get some good promotion for ourselves by participating.

Nothing is definite yet, but John Hopkins is leaning toward postponing his Chestertown Tour this year in favor of the Eastern Steam Car Tour at Lakeville, CT, as the latter is now scheduled for the same week he had in mind, July 18-23. The Hopkins families would like to go to Lakeville, and several of us have said we don't want to do both. If you want to urge John to change his mind, don't hesitate to do so.

Best wishes to all, and to all a good night. Tom