

January 2, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

The "News" of October 3, '05, told of the preparations for my "trip of a lifetime" in our 1912 Stanley Model 87 in 1972. It will take an estimated 3 stories to tell of the whole trip, so roughly 1/3 of it is recalled here.

Jules Reiver, Weldin Stumpf and I left here in the rain in early afternoon of June 13 for our 500-mile trip to Montreal to begin the second-ever "Transcontinental Reliability Tour" run by Millard Newman for the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. To be eligible, all cars had to be made prior to 1915. Stopping at Stroudsburg, PA, Latham, NY, and Plattsburgh, NY, we arrived in the French-speaking city on the St. Lawrence at noon on the 16th. 32 cars were signed up to participate, but only 20 showed up (the 21st joined us in Ottawa, missing only one day). We headed west out of Montreal on a bright and sunny Sunday morning (June 18), staying in Canada for the first 5 days of the tour, with overnight stops at Ottawa, Callander, Sudbury, and Sault Ste. Marie, all in Ontario. Our first "free" day was on the Canadian side of the Soo Locks. All kinds of weather prevailed during this initial stretch. It became very hot and humid on the second day, followed on the third by a violent thunderstorm, and cold, damp weather for several days thereafter. At home during this time, Hurricane Agnes was taking its severe toll.

Crossing Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the rain, it finally cleared the next day as we passed through northern Wisconsin and stopped at Rhinelander overnight. Beautiful weather followed us into Minneapolis, and by this time we had already experienced water stops at a hospital, a commercial steam laundry, and a State-run fish hatchery. We had also visited with several postmasters and taken on water from farmers who had collected rain water in advance. The free day in Minneapolis was a beautiful one climaxed by an evening tour through several of the city parks with their many lakes and an ice cream social at Minnehaha Falls. I changed passengers here, with Jules Reiver flying home and Jim Johnson from the Chicago area joining (Weldin Stumpf had come home from Montreal on June 16, his 50th birthday, and his first time in an airplane).

Every car that had started in Montreal was still with us, but there had been two or three driver changes. We were getting to know everyone very well, and even though we had the only steamer, there was great comradery among our small group, each pulling for everyone else to complete the trip to Tijuana and San Diego. As we "raced" west, we stopped overnight at Milbank, SD, Baker and Miles City, MT, and were enroute from the latter point to Billings when a rear-wheel bearing went out- Friday afternoon of the long July 4th weekend. Limping into Billings at 20 m.p.h., we found a machinist who opened his shop and

worked most of the night helping us make the repair. Getting to bed at 4:30 A.M., we were on our way the next morning at 9:30, enroute to Livingston and Yellowstone National Park, where we enjoyed Old Faithful Inn on July 4, and I changed passengers again. The Stumpfs, Weldin, Dorothy and their 13-year-old daughter Joan, joined at Yellowstone and Jim Johnson moved over to ride with Millard Newman in the latter's 1911 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost. 22 days of the total 58 were successfully behind us.

With the coming of 2006, work projects are again beginning to jell. With the help of Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard and Bill Rule, the many adjustments required in the rear of the Model 71 are nearing the end, and the car is again ready for testing on a warm day. We had a set-back on the Model K's burner, as we discovered the new vaporizer leaking, and it is back with Herb Kephart for him to make us a new one.

The stainless tubing used before was questionable, and I had broken the weld at one of the nozzles. These are the two cars being prepared for the trip to Florida beginning January 22. The Hopkins boys dropped the burner on the 725 yesterday, and while it doesn't look that bad, the pilot slots, and some of the drilled holes in the grate will need to be cleaned. More importantly, the boiler is "weak", and while it is not leaking very much under hydrostatic test, it's life is limited. In a week or so, I hope to get this car to the upper garage to see how the boiler can be tightened up and thoroughly cleaned. We can apply band aids, but the old-timers would say "it's time for a new or a re-tubed boiler". We'll make a decision within a couple of weeks on which way to go.

The 735 is almost ready to be moved to the upper garage as well. Here the final touches can be applied to the paint job, the boiler can be lifted out, tested, and recovered with Fiber-Frax, and everything under the hood and under the car cleaned up. Locomotive 402 can have the piping hooked up near the right cylinder, and this can be hydrostatically tested for leaks. I should have some news on the safety valves very soon. I would like to get our power hack saw hooked up in the basement of the shop. The completed hydraulic brake "kits" for the Models EX and 735 will be coming in the weeks ahead, but the EX has been delayed because we are having new axle gears fitted to the rear axle at the differential. This axle is now at the Rempco shop in Cadillac, MI, and will be returned to Bob Barrett for finishing the brakes before it comes back to us.

Rob Robison is coming down to the wire on our first real News Letter, to be called the AUBURN HEIGHTS HERALD, which he hopes to be off the press by mid-January. We know this will be a great job, and a giant step forward for F.A.H.P. Many thanks, Rob, for your expertise and all your hard work. Our Annual Appeal stands at \$46,000, with \$4,000 to go. I am optimistic that we will go "over the top" in a few days. Bob Reilly and his wife Barb are enroute from New England to their home in Colorado for Bob's last time at home before he comes on

board here as Executive Director about February 8-10. On a sad note, Cathy Schwoebel's father, Howard Millard, died in Danville, PA, Sunday evening. Our condolences go to Bill, Cathy, and their family, as well as to Lynn Millard (Cathy's brother), one of our Advisors. Tom