

F.A.H.P. News, July 2, 2012

June 30, A Day of Importance: With summer young but in full swing and the glorious Fourth just around the corner, for the most part I have been impressed with what has happened on June 30, which this year was the Saturday just past. Our Mountain Wagon enjoyed the day as I drove it around Hockessin, Lantana Square, and Woodside Farm, home of scrumptious ice cream.

In 1863, with several divisions of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in south central Pennsylvania with a strategy of swinging eastward and cutting off Washington, D.C., from the rest of the Union, it became evident that a major showdown was fast approaching between the Confederates and the Union's Army of the Potomac, racing to place itself between Lee's advance and the capital. On June 30, both sides were closing in on the small community of Gettysburg, and Major General John Reynolds of the Union Army became the first general to be killed in that major battle, when he lost his life northwest of town. The main battle took place on July 1, 2, and 3, with Pickett's fatal charge on the final day.

In 1876, my mother's oldest sibling, Mary Shallcross (later Ferguson), was born on June 30, and three months later was carried on a pillow by her parents to Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition, America's first World's Fair. That was a unique happening with many of the wonders of the Industrial Revolution on display for the first time. George M. Corliss of Providence ran most of the machinery with belts and pulleys powered by his mammoth Corliss steam engine, the forerunner of thousands of famous Corliss engines in manufacturing plants for the next half century. The year 1876 was the first time American antiques were shown and appreciated, as Chippendale- and Hepplewhite-style furniture from the 18th century was on display, and reproductions were sold. Although the little girl three months old didn't remember her experience, she was interviewed about it in 1976 as she celebrated her 100th birthday (she died in October that year). I remember celebrating Aunt Mary Ferguson's 80th birthday at her home in Ridley Park on a warm evening in 1956.

On June 30, 1933, my father staged a one-day trapshoot at the Yorklyn Gun Club that he billed as the "Old Timers' Shoot." It was quite successful, as an effort had been made to have famous shooters in attendance who had started shooting at the turn of the 20th century. Some were still able to shoot, and some were not, but all had a good time, and many photos and home movies captured the enjoyment of the occasion.

On June 30, 1942, I had to register for the World War II draft on the second floor of the Odd Fellows Hall at Centerville. Brooks Jones, a schoolteacher from Glens Falls, New York, accompanied me, as he had arrived the evening before in what became our long-lasting 1922 Stanley Model 740. My father had bought this car from Robert B. Chase of Earlville, New York, and since Brooks had time off during summer vacation and owned a 740 roadster himself, he was engaged to drive it the 300 miles to its new home. It was the second Stanley to join what became our collection, and my father used it on a regular basis during World War II to avoid gasoline rationing. Like most Stanleys, it burned kerosene, which was more readily available and cost between 15 and 25 cents per gallon.

Work Report: In addition to serious adjustments and repairs to Locomotive 402, lining the parking lot, improving the hydraulic brakes on the Stanley Model 76, doing needed maintenance work on the A.V.R.R. track, improvements to our Lionel layout, and the ongoing reconstruction of our Model 607, the numerous members of our four “clean-up and organization” teams dug in on Tuesday and Thursday nights. A total of 25 volunteers answered the call on Tuesday (with no meetings!) and 15 on Thursday.

The four areas tackled were the snack bar/grease rack room, our side of the rear storage building, the main section of the shop, and the garage where most of our automotive work is done. Tools, paint cans, and supplies of all kinds were initially sorted and some designated for disposition (trash, metal scrap, or items for sale). There is a long way to go, but the work has started and will continue through the summer. All mechanical volunteers seem to realize the importance of better order in our working and storage areas. In addition to the above, the necessary things were prepped for our July 1 “Steamin’ Sunday,” and several improvements have been made in the museum, including an enhanced education area for young people and the moving of the 1902 Stick-Seat Runabout into the reception room. Kelly Williams also conducted a driving lesson, describing thoroughly the Model 725 on Wednesday night.

Those on hand Tuesday were Steve Bryce (in charge), Bob Stransky, Mark Russell, Mark Hopkins, Robert Hopkins, Mac Taylor, Jay Williams, Tim Ward, Tim Nolan, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Art Wallace, Richard Bernard, Dennis Dragon, Brent McDougall, Jonathan Rickerman, Anne Cleary, Susan Randolph, Paul Kratunis, Dave Leon, Emil Christofano, Butch Cannard, Bob McGovern, Art Sybell, and Tom Marshall. On Thursday, the following were present: Steve Bryce, Ted Kamen, Dave Leon, Butch Cannard, Jim Personti, Robert Hopkins, Paul Kratunis, Art Wallace, Richard Bernard, Chuck Erikson, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Tim Nolan, Rose Ann Hoover, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

A Steamy Steamin’ Day: Despite the Excessive Heat Warning and scary temps (with a high of 97) on Sunday, we welcomed 209 visitors to the July 1 Steamin’ Day. We thank our fantastic volunteers for braving the heat and keeping their cool so our visitors could enjoy a fun day. We’ve introduced some new signage with the What’s Under the Hood exhibit and completely overhauled and improved the newly dubbed “Kid Zone,” where children can color, learn, interact, and discover the wonders of the Marshall Collections. Hat’s off to Jesse Gagnon, our new Education Coordinator, for her quick makeover of the space. She has a lot more planned, so stop by and check it out this season!

Auburn Heights Invitational Historic Auto Display, Sept. 29, 12:30 to 4:30: Mark your calendar for the Auburn Heights Invitational and the chance to see this extraordinary automobile. We will have some magnificent historic vehicles, an exceptional setting, festive food and entertainment, and must-see programs. Plus the opening of the Smithsonian exhibition *The Way We Worked*, which will debut in Delaware at the Marshall Steam Museum (made possible by the Smithsonian's Museums on Main Street program and thanks to Delaware Humanities Forum).