

September 3, 2007

Hello, Steam Team:

Labor Day has never been my favorite holiday. For one thing, it signifies the end of summer and I never liked cold weather. I subscribe to the lyric: "Summertime and the livin' is easy". Although summer officially ends about Sept. 21, Flora Stanley, in her diary, said August 31, 1899, was the last day of summer. Many of you will know that was the date she and her husband, F. O. Stanley, climbed Mount Washington in a tiny Locomobile steamer, the first successful ascent of the mountain in an automobile.

It was early September in 1938 when Orson Welles shocked the nation with his radio broadcast telling of the landing on earth of the Martians. And despite what he had told Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain of Great Britain, Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, signaling the beginning of World War II. Not only did a 15-year-old have to face going back to school following a fun-filled summer, the news of the day was not good.

On a happy note, however, the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve enjoyed a very successful day on Sunday, Sept. 2, when 501 paying visitors enjoyed what we offer here on our public days. Thanks go to Steve and Ann Bryce, chairs of the day, Rose Ann Hoover for her excellent organization of the gift shop, Bob Reilly for his hard work in getting our name before the public, and for ALL the 42 volunteers who made this day outstanding in all ways. Advance publicity, careful planning, and excellent weather combined to assure us that there is no problem in scheduling an event in the middle of a holiday weekend. All mechanical things worked well, and although the lines were long at times, there were no complaints. We noticed especially the large number of young families, many here for their first visit. Special things offered for the first time were Ed Lee of Chesapeake City riding his high-wheeled bicycle around the grounds, Peter Parlett presenting two educational programs (a history of the Stanleys, and how a steam engine works), and Lou Mandich's 1918 Buick displayed to contrast with our steam cars and our electric car of the same period. Bob Reilly performed the "Firing Up" demonstration with our 1913 Stanley Model 78.

After my favorite carpenter, Virgil Engel, cut out plywood to conform to the rounded sides of the railroad tunnel, Steve Bryce and I fastened in these pieces to make riding through the confined spaces a safer experience. Within a week or so, these will be coated with a urethane foam product so that brushing against the sides when riding on the trains will not injure arms and legs that may come in contact (we have never had a problem, but we don't want one).

Another railroad improvement will begin this week when about 180 feet of track will be removed, section by section, to make way for the excavation of the top of the bank between the turntable and the corner of the Museum. Our volunteers will remove the track (and eventually replace it), and the rest will be done by outside contract. About 4 feet of stone and dirt will be excavated immediately behind the wall separating this area from our on-site parking lot. Then footers and reinforced concrete will be poured with a low wall being turned up on the “overhang”. Drains will be installed in this area to take care of the parking lot and the turntable pit. Finally, the area will be back-filled with many tons of porous material to provide the weight to stabilize the cantilevered overhang. Our ballast stone will provide the surface material, about 6” deep, on which our track will be re-installed, leveled and ballasted. Finally while we are on the subject of the Auburn Valley Railroad, our new “Diesel” passenger locomotive, ordered last spring, may be ready for delivery in about a month. Some design work will be in order to provide for a third track in our “engine house” (basement of the shop).

On Thursday, Sept. 6, three Stanleys and possibly the Rauch & Lang electric are expected to go to the North Creek Nursery where Anne Cleary works in nearby Pennsylvania and be there from 10:00 to 2:00 for a special event. If any of you are interested, please let Anne or Bill Schwoebel know. On Sunday, Sept. 9, our picnic for volunteers and their families will be held at Auburn Heights between 1:00 and 4:00. If you would like to come but have not signed up, I think the committee can “squeeze you in”. Just get in touch with the FAHP office, 239-2385.

On Saturday, Sept. 15, Greg Landrey has requested the Mountain Wagon to be at Winterthur from 10:00 to 4:00, and we are glad to oblige. The next day, Sunday, Sept. 16, is the annual Hagley Museum’s Car Show, always a highlight for old car enthusiasts. We have about 6 of our cars registered and in addition Bill Schwoebel is taking his ’07 Autocar (its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!) and Emil Christofano is taking his ’57 Chevy on its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. On Wednesday, Sept. 19, a small group of women plan to visit Auburn Heights and we would like to run the electric car and possibly one steamer for them. More on this later. Happy September. Tom