

F.A.H.P. News, January 20, 2014

S. A. S. and Solveig: In the travel world of the mid-twentieth century, S.A.S. meant only one thing, Scandinavian Airlines System. Traveling on S.A.S. was a wonderful way to cross the Atlantic, with superb food, beverages, and service, second to none. Most stewardesses were young and attractive on all airlines, but the Scandinavians were outstanding. Unfortunately, as transatlantic routes were doled out following World War II, there was much lower demand for travel to Scandinavia than to London, Paris, and Rome, so travel agents such as Marshall & Burton (later Marshall & Greenplate) in Wilmington had fewer opportunities to put clients on S.A.S. than on British Airways, Air France, Pan American, and TWA. The European destinations in Scandinavia were only Copenhagen, Oslo, and Stockholm, but in the days before the transatlantic jets (about 1960), most eastbound Scandinavian flights stopped at Prestwick, Scotland, for refueling. Once I flew on S.A.S. to Prestwick on a Douglas DC-7 and took a steam train from Glasgow to London.

Like all airlines promoting transatlantic travel, in which effort they made great strides over steamships during the 1950s, S.A.S. did all sorts of interesting things for travel agents, hoping for increased business in return. W. Murray Metten, travel editor for the *News Journal* papers, would put on a travel forum in Wilmington annually, featuring an interesting and enjoyable program open to the public. Usually one of the airlines, tour companies, or tourist organizations promoting places like the West Indies or Hawaii would be a certain year's attraction. And that's where Solveig enters the story.

I don't remember Solveig's last name, but she worked out of the New York office, promoting S.A.S. among the travel community. A very attractive Swedish girl in her mid-20s, she had been a top stewardess for the airline before her promotion. She spoke perfect English (or American English) and apparently loved living in New York. S.A.S. was invited to sponsor the Travel Forum in Wilmington (about 1951), and Solveig was sent to spend two or three days making arrangements, overseeing the program, and visiting Wilmington travel agents. I don't know how it happened, as I was afraid of girls, but I ended up entertaining Solveig one evening.

My car at that time was a used 1940 Packard One-Sixty 8-passenger sedan with 148" wheelbase, and in that I drove her around the area. One of my secret places in those days was the old Hagley Powder Yard, where the gate off Barley Mill Road was always open; nothing was happening in the area that is now the Hagley Museum. We drove along the Brandywine and exited up Blacksmith Hill to the area of Christ Church, then out via Buck Road. We also went to Longwood Gardens, where the grounds were open until dark with free admission. We ended the evening at the Greenhill Dairy at Lancaster Avenue and Greenhill Avenue, where we enjoyed milkshakes. It was a very quiet evening for a sophisticated New York girl, but she said she enjoyed it thoroughly. I think Solveig enjoyed everything.

Some 10 years went by, and I got a phone call from Solveig. She had married a New York socialite, and she wanted to bring him to see me and our attractions and especially expressed an interest in Longwood. She said her twin sister wanted to come with them, which sounded interesting. It was arranged on a Sunday in the summer, and they arrived in her husband's fancy convertible. We enjoyed Longwood together, visited my father's cars, and had dinner, possibly at the Hotel DuPont. Solveig's twin sister, however, was her opposite, very plain looking and shy; she hardly said

anything during their visit. Solveig's husband was pleasant enough, but his wife carried the day. That Sunday visit was more than 50 years ago. I never heard from that quarter again.

Work Report: On Tuesday, January 14, 12 volunteers took part, as follows: Steve Bryce (in charge), Bill Schwoebel, Dennis Dragon, Dave Leon, Ted Kamen, Mark Russell, Mac Taylor, Tim Ward, Greg Landrey, Jerry Lucas, Emil Christofano, and Jerry Novak. Work continued on the Lionel electric trains and their locomotives, which have "shown their age" in recent years.

The running gear and the draft gear on Locomotive 402 was pressure-washed in preparation for dismantling and major mechanical work. The water tank was removed from our Model 740 for the insertion of an "absorbent sock" and a thorough cleaning. The cleaning of the right front fender on our Model 750 was completed, and soon the right fenders and splash apron on this side will be ready for wax. All gasoline was drained from the Model EX and is stored in cans under the shed near the kerosene pump. Machine work was done on new "Blazick" nozzles for our Model K.

The Events and Scheduling Committee also met on January 14, with the following present: Rose Ann Hoover, Susan Randolph, Dan Citron, Steve Bryce, Jerry Novak, Richard Bernard, Art Sybell, and Brent McDougall. It was decided to have more limited participation in the July 4 parade at Hockessin. We hope to send two cars to Dover in early May for "Old Dover Days." Ticket prices for public events at Auburn Heights will be raised by \$1.00 in 2014, the first increase in many years.

On Thursday, January 16, 14 volunteers were on hand, viz: Tim Ward (in charge), Steve Bryce, Bill Schwoebel, Bill Rule, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Linda Herman, Paul Kratunis, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Lou Mandich, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, and Tom Marshall.

Locomotive 402 was thoroughly inspected, and excessive wear was evident in many places. Not only were the springs, hangers, and equalizers in bad shape, but the tread on the driving wheels is badly "dished," and there is flange wear, plus excessive lateral motion in the main journal boxes. It is quite apparent why this locomotive continued to derail when in service. The rods were removed and one set of drivers has been removed from the frame. Jim Personti, with help from Bill Schwoebel, Geoff Fallows and Linda Herman, worked diligently on this project. Steve Bryce successfully cut a hole in the top of the 740's water tank and the new cover was put in place. Lou Mandich took the tank to his place to thoroughly clean it, as it had a heavy oil deposit in the bottom.

Work continued on cleaning the right side of our Model 750, and, on the Model 607, the new acetylene line to the headlights was formed. Bob Jordan and Ted Kamen continued on this project. Paul Kratunis did some needed housecleaning and especially cleaned the work benches in the shop. Work continued on the two vaporizers for the new Model K burner, and they are nearly ready to go to Walter Higgins for brazing together. The Maute brothers continued their important work in the library.