

## *Green Mountain Heaven in 2007 – AACA Founders Tour*

By Al Lawson

Mildred and I left Maryland on Friday morning June 1<sup>st</sup> heading for an overnight stay in Bennington, VT. The first day of the 2007 Founders Tour was scheduled with a pre-tour opening event on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at *Hemmings Motor News* Museum.

Saturday morning at Hemmings we saw some rare cars, most of which have been restored. We then toured to the Georgian Revival mansion and gardens at Hildene, the former home of Robert Todd Lincoln, in Manchester. After Hildene, Mildred and I made an unscheduled stop at the Magic Hat Brewery to taste several of their beers. They produce a beet beer that was different, but good. From there we drove to Burlington, the hub-city for the tour, and the ice cream social Saturday evening.

Sunday's tour route was divided into odd and even numbered cars. We had an odd number (63), so we started the tour with a stop at the Shelburne Museum, a collection of folk art and Americana, including the Ticonderoga steamship, in 39 buildings scattered across 45 acres. From there we went to the Vermont Teddy Bear factory in Shelburne. The opening banquet that evening was aboard the Spirit of Ethan Allen III cruise ship. They had shuttle buses transport us to and from the banquet.

On Monday, the first stop was the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. Then we toured over to Crown Point, NY, crossing the bridge at Chimney Point. Crown Point was a key fortress a

century before the American Revolution, and played an important role in the struggle between France and England for North America.

The next stop, one of the best on the tour, was the Morgan Horse Farm at the University of Vermont. It's a working farm that breeds, trains, and sells Morgans, America's first horse breed.

On Tuesday, we drove to Barre, VT, parked in Barre's Civic Center, and then boarded buses for the day's tour. Barre is the granite center of the world and recognized internationally for its high-quality stone manufacturing and artistry. Our first stop was Rock of Ages Visitor Center, manufacturing plant and the world's largest granite quarry. The quarry is over 600 feet deep. Workers are lowered into it by crane and taken out for lunch and at quitting time. Next, we stopped at the Hope Cemetery, which has the finest granite monuments. And then, we were taken for a traditional stonecutter's lunch of baked chicken and Mostaccioli pasta, salad, rolls and dessert. After lunch, we were shuttled to Montpelier, Vermont's capital, for a group photo on the State House steps.

Wednesday's tour began with a trip through the Vermont countryside with a coffee break at the home of Bill and Jan Sande to see their car collection, a 1/8-scale 1500-ft. railroad, and a GM locomotive on-site. Our next stop was the Von Trapp Family Lodge resort. Lunch was at the golf and country club where we had our car picture taken with Camel's Hump Mountain in the back-

ground. We also received the tour plaque. Then we went to the Cold Hollow Cider Mill for samples. There were several other tour stops that you could make but we skipped them to make sure we had time to stop at Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory for a tour of the plant and an ice cream sample. A must-see here was the "Graveyard of Discontinued Flavors". There was a tombstone for each flavor with its name, life span, and a humorous epitaph.

Thursday morning we toured through six covered bridges, the oldest built in 1820 and the newest built in 1865. The afternoon was free to relax and get ready for the banquet.

Chesapeake Region members attending this 19<sup>th</sup> Founders Tour were: **Lou & Mary Jane Fritz** in their 1957 Porsche, which has been on all 19 Founders tours. There has been only one other car on all 19 Founders Tours, a 1957 Chevrolet owned by **Cliff & Martha Phipps** from Spirit Lake, IA. **Al & Mildred Lawson** were in a 1963 T-Bird; former CR member and past CR president **Howard Scotland** and **Judy Scotland** were in a 1963 Corvaire; and **Bob & Jean Wilhelm**, with **Franklin Gage**, were in a 1966 Chevrolet.

This Founders Tour was hosted by the Green Mountain Region, AACA, assisted by Vermont Automobile Enthusiasts, Inc. The Region was chartered in 2003 and most of the members have never been on an AACA tour. We had a very relaxing and enjoyable tour.



*At the banquet from the left; Jean & Bob Wilhelm, Franklin Gage, Al & Mildred Lawson, and Lou & Mary Jane Fritz*