

Tractorcade to Washington, DC Diary

January 18 – February 8, 1979

by Beverly Snyder

January 18, 1979 Lewis to Topeka

Rise and shine at 5 a.m. Headed for Lewis via Jack's (*Wolfe*) to load tractors on truck. Headed out about seven. Lester (*Derley*) in service truck, Jack and Dosca (*Wolfe*) in their pick-up and new camper, Marge and Ed (*Scheufler*) in their pickup and camper, and Dub and Clara (*Stapleton*) with their 5th wheel trailer. It ended up we took a little different route to Topeka – but all drove thru cold rain. The first day of this adventure was not without incident. It was discouraging to learn that Jack and Dosca rolled their rig near Newton, but all are thankful there were no injuries. We hope they can figure out a way to re-join us later. Marge and Ed had mechanical difficulties too, but arrived safely.

As we arrived at Ben Marble's farm it was apparent we were approaching a situation close to mass confusion. After a day of rain the "parking lot" was 100% mud. Campers simply took over the paved road and presto—instant trailer park. I easily found a place to park the tractor. Eventually us Lewis people found each other and Lester taxied us to a chow-down and meeting a few miles down the road. Chow was good – lots of people, mostly wet and in good spirits. At the meeting there was much concern over our route thru Missouri. Decided we should solve that problem when we got there. Passed a resolution that tractor drivers would make policy on the trip. I told Lester and Ed I would always consult them before casting a vote. I sure want to make sure I don't get on the wrong side of the man in charge of fuel and my bed at night. We also decided we would have a little party on the tractor tomorrow which should qualify us all as tractor drivers.

January 19, 1979 Topeka to Lee's Summit

Alarm set for 5 a.m. Dumb me wakes up at 4 – wide awake, ready to go – convinced it must be 5 – woke up Marge – she says "It's only 4:15, go back to sleep" – so I did. Up at 5 – jump into clothes. Lester and I hike the quarter mile to the tractors and bring back the 4020 and Titus' 4630.

Sky was clear and no more rain - much to our delight. Plan was to pull out by 7, and somehow get service trucks together with the tractors. By 8 – after 3 hours of "getting ready" we began pulling out. By 9:30 we were beginning to pull out on highway 75. It didn't take long to realize that our "parade" was going to be quite an attraction. As we approached the turnpike – there were tractors in every direction – up on bridge, under bridges, on approach ramps and as far forward and back as you can see. A sight to remember. A lot of spectators – many our own AAM supporters who drove ahead, then stopped to see the others go by. Tractors of every size, color and shape. Only thing in common – a great amount of determination to reach Washington, D.C. and tell our story. Stopped for about an hour along road for lunch break. Some breakdowns on tractors – oil leaks, flat tires.

Reached Kansas City in time for rush hour traffic. Highway Patrol everywhere. They had entrance ramps to 70 blocked for other traffic so we had much of I-10 to ourselves. What a sight – lights flashing everywhere. And what a feeling to see people standing on overpasses waving at every tractor. Maybe we all aren't crazy after all. The highway patrol effectively directed us off I-70 to 50. We finally were told via CB we would spend the night at Tacoma Park. Finally – at 8 p.m. we stopped in right lane of highway 50. Presto – instant trailer park! So here we are – the camper parked on top of an overpass.... Jim and Jean Titus found us

somehow. Ed drove Jim's tractor today until Jim could join us. Our leaders are negotiating to return to I-70. Called Rocky – everything seems to be going fine – even without me! Alarm set for 4:30 a.m. Bet I don't wake up early.

January 20, 1979 Lee's Summit to Sedalia, MO

Up at 4:30 and I was right – didn't even hear the alarm this morning. After a good hot breakfast compliments of Marge, we fueled up our tractors and got ready for the other 17 tractors in our region which Lester is hauling fuel for. Tractors rolled at 8:30 a.m. Short day – only 65 miles – parked at the state fair grounds. Our region's tractors still not together which makes it hard for getting fueled up. Had a big meeting at 2 p.m. in sale ring. Many decisions to make to better organize ourselves. Opinion polls and ideas were accepted by applause. Lots of applause = that's the way we'll do it. Great meals and hospitality from the local folks. Highway patrol good guys. Gave them some buttons. Snow everywhere. windy and chilly. Decided not to travel on Sunday so it was late to bed and late to rise.

January 21, 2012 Sedalia, MO

Felt good to sleep past 4:30 a.m. Attended a church service given by Father Andy (Gottschalk).

Drivers met at noon and determined how to group tractors together, then lined-up for departure at 6 a.m. next day. Our region, for the first time, is now lined up together. Hope we can stay that way. Tomorrow we will be on 2-lane roads to Union, MO. I'm afraid many local folks will have bad feelings about our jamming their roads tomorrow. We would have much preferred to travel on I-70 so traffic could easily pass. The Governor (*Joseph Teasdale*) did not see it our way.

Did the laundry this afternoon and brought back a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken for supper. Ed and Marge went with Father Andy to a local AAM meeting. Karen and Darrel (*Miller*) joined us today. They will be stopping in several cities along the way to help gain support at meetings scheduled in advance.

After supper had another short meeting. Everyone in real good spirits – ready for a long day tomorrow. Breakfast will be served from 3:30 – 5:00 a.m.!

Met up with Harlan and Donita Schaffert from Otis, Colo. – old friends who formerly lived at Willcox, Az. Didn't visit too much but hope to have more time later.

After meeting Lester, Karen and I called home from the truck. I've sold about 300 buttons so hope Judy can figure out a way to get more buttons to me

Reports are coming in on the progress of the other tractorcades – j350 units in Louisiana, 450 units in Arkansas, 300 here, 100 plus to the north. We hope to double our number as we pass through Illinois. Everyone is anxious to hear how many units will leave Georgia tomorrow. Those Georgians have been talking big numbers, so let's see how they do.

January 22, 1979 Sedalia to Washington, MO

Didn't need the alarm this morning. the highway patrol drove around with his siren on at 3:35 a.m. I got up and started up the 4020. Chilly this morning but 4020 started with a little staring fluid. Have a couple small oil leaks but haven't had to add yet. Back to the kitchen for a hot breakfast and now waiting for the wagons to roll, about 3 p.m.

We are having a short break now. It's been a good day. Civilian traffic from the rear must be stopped by the Smokies. I'm enjoying travel on Missouri's up and down and around roads. Well-wishers wave along the way. Some farmers look like they wish they were with us –

a lot of “thumbs up” signs as though they are telling us to “Give’em hell” for them too – others look rather skeptical. I guess at one time or another everyone on the tractorecade has wondered if they were a bit crazy for driving a tractor to D.C. for what at times seems like an impossible task. I think all those doubts are gone now. We know what we are doing has to be done. We hope to generate more support as we travel east. We will not quit. When we tire, others will carry on and take our place until we join again. Everyone here has one purpose in mind. It goes beyond dollars in their pockets – it’s a way of life and a nation we are proud of that we are attempting to save.

Finally circled up for the night at the fairgrounds near Union at 7 p.m. Thirteen hours and 150 miles. Thirteen hours and 150 miles. Lester and Ed are fueling tractors, Marge is fixing a meal fit for kings, Titus is heading for town to fuel up his pickup, and I’m sitting here. I did manage to grease and check out the tractor. Everything seems OK>

Tuesday, January 23, 1979 Washington, MO to Greenville, IL

Up at 5 a.m. and rolling by 7. The first few miles were over up and down Missouri hills but soon got on I70. It was raining when we left – which turned into sleet – which turned into snow. I mean a lot of snow. About that time the windshield wiper quit. The hot air from the heater prevented ice from building up so I was able to see good enough.

Driving through St. Louis was an experience to say the least. The highway patrol had been superb on the trip. But through St. Louis, they were scarce. Changing lanes was a challenge. Unfortunately we did have an accident and lost a tractor. The accident was caused by the combination of two factors – 1. tailgating, and 2. a Smokey stopping us on an overpass. The Smokey had stopped our group for some reason and as a tractor came over the overpass, it could not stop in time. He clipped a semi-truck which was alongside. This threw his front wheel into the back of the motor home. The motor home hit the tractor in front of him, and that tractor hit Dub Stapleton’s trailer – only bending the bumper. The Stafford County tractor received the most damage – broke a front spindle, blew a rear tire, and bent the hitch on the 5th wheel trailer he was pulling. Actually, someone must be watching over us because no one was hurt and we are thankful. The accident was only about 4 vehicles behind, but we all waited until the tractor and motor home were towed to the side so our group could proceed as a unit.

The rest of the day was uneventful except for some difficulty seeing where we were going. Occasionally a tractor had to stop to clean the snow off the windshield. Most tractors are traveling with their camper or support vehicles nearby so when a tractor stops for repairs, help is always there. The Colorado tractors, about 30 strong, all travel together, followed by their support vehicles. As for me, I’m more than happy to have Scheuflers’ trailer nearby when we take a break. On a normal day – which I don’t think we have had yet – we stop in the morning at 10 for one 15 minute break, then noon for 30 minutes, and 3 pm for another short break.

We are parked at Greenville, Mo. for the night, at a race track. Got all the tractors fueled up. Parking is confusing still – need someone who knows the plan – as it is we park where ever we want. Ended up having to pull the pickups with trailers through the snow. Had a brief drivers’ meeting in the grandstands. Everyone eager to get to Columbus where they are having a big farm show. They have a good place to park and they plan on feeding us. Marge says hooray! Columbus is three days by tractor.

I began looking around for Harlan and Donita so we could visit. Discovered they were parked only 30 feet from us. So after supper we had a good visit and caught up on the news.

Jim Titus is having quite a time with his first time trailer experience. We had a good laughing time at Jim's stories and complaints, but we all know Titus wouldn't miss this for a million bucks – well maybe five thousand bucks.

Hit the sack about 11 p.m., alarm set for 5:15 a.m.

Wednesday, January 24, 1979 Greenville, ILL Snowbound

Stuck my head out to see a bunch of snow on the ground and more still falling. Temperature about 7°, but -39° with wind chill factor. I tried to get in the pickup to listen to CB to see if we would travel today - soon learned highways were covered with ice, so we will be staying here today. Got back in trailer – no one up yet, but awake. We all managed to get back to sleep till 7. Pickup doors frozen shut so got in Titus' tractor to listen to C.B. No travel today. I made a super goof – left the key on – discovered it a couple hours later. Now Jim has another story to tell.

Went to town to do some laundry, buy groceries, and kill some time. Townspeople very friendly. Of course everyone on the tractorcade easily recognized by buttons and emblems. ... Lester and Ed helped me work on windshield wiper – got it put back together, but there is no way to put a clip on the end to keep it together without taking top of cab off. Decided not to since I will probably make out O.K. if it would come off again. Then they were running out of things to do so they moved my C.B. up to ear level so I can hear them better when they yell at me. Titus had to buy a mike for his C.B. in the pickup. Communication is probably our biggest problem on this trip but getting a message from the front of our line back 15 miles to the end is improving each day. Channel 14 is reserved for communication from the leaders in front. Our region uses Channel 10 – other regions use other channels. By the time we reach D.C. we will have everything down perfect, I hope. Some turn to Channel 19 and listen to the truckers. Some wish us luck and others tell us to go to hell. A.A.M.ers are quick to pick up the mike and offer thanks to our fiends. Some frustrated farmers have some choice words for the not so friendly truckers. Not sure this helps our cause much, but I know many have been so patient and forgiving for so many years they are about to go broke and are tired of being nice.

The local people fed us a ham and bean dinner – except they ran out of food. Sold a few more buttons – 350 total now. Had a meeting afterwards. It is evident we are becoming larger in number. Must have been around 500 at the dinner and many did not attend because of ice and snow. 100 units are waiting in Vandalia, 16 miles east. Even with the ice on the highways, many drove over there last night to see what was going on. They just couldn't wait to see what was her.

The motor home which was involved in the accident was repaired and arrived last night. It took them 4 ½ hours to drive the 45 miles from St. Louis because of road conditions. Reports of many vehicles in the ditch.

We learned we would not travel tomorrow. Hopefully we will be able to leave by Friday. Worked out a few more details on organization and the Illinois leader spoke to us. There is talk of having all support vehicles follow the tractors to eliminate some of the whiplash effect. The lack of line, even the middle, experiences a lot of slowing down and speeding up. Merging traffic going in and out doesn't help us to keep a steady pace. To bed at 11 p.m. – no alarm set.

Thursday, January 25, 1979 Greenville, ILL (Snowbound)

Up at 8 a.m. Lester and Ed out helping Titus with some mechanical difficulties with his trailer. Our shower drain is frozen so they have a heater out there trying to thaw it out. We are not parked by a faucet so Lester hauled water for the trailer in a 6 gallon container. Lester said

that was enough for his shower but I needed to haul my water. But I see now Lester is hauling more water. These guys find something to do all the time. These guys find something to do all the time. Painted some more signs on the canvas on the tractor – **“Beware – Mad Farmer’s Wife”**. Cleaned windows on the tractor. Started it up a couple times, but will probably have to plug in the engine heater in the morning.

Friday, January 26, 1979 Greenville, ILL to Terra Haute, Ind.

Rise and shine at 4:30 to crank up 4020. Tractors rolled at 6:30 and it took us only 35 minutes to clear the parking lot – we’re getting better. Many of the campers went ahead or stayed behind today and it did seem like the tractors were able to keep a more steady pace. Traffic started backing up, but in a couple minutes they took off. We saw about 20 trucks and cars in the ditch along the road. One truck laying on its side with the cab sticking up in the air. Got to Terra Haute about 6:30....As soon as the tractors are parked, Lester begins fueling up. Ed usually helps. I wash windows on the 4020 and Jim;s tractor and the truck. tonight I washed windows on Chenoweth’s tractors since I used the bathroom in their R.V. during a break today. Scheufler’s had several things to take care of today so did not travel with the tractors.

Drivers weren’t too happy with the highway patrol. We were detoured several miles out of the way on snow packed and icy roads for no apparent reason. As we passed thru Vandalia we saw a wonderful sight – 122 tractors and trailers lined up and ready to join our convoy. What a feeling too – hard to put in words.

Had a brief evening meeting. Departure at 7 a.m. tomorrow. Lots of new faces – Illinois people. after spending 2 days in Greenville, most faces were becoming familiar, but hopefully we will see more new faces every night. News was on at 11 p.m. so after watching the tractors on T.V. we called it a day.

Saturday, January 27, 1979 Terra Haute, Ind. to Indianapolis

Up at 5 and rolling by 7. Traveling through Terra Haute angered those driving who weren’t quite mad by the previous detour, and made those already mad, madder. It took about 30 minutes for each tractor to clear the city. In that time I saw only one Smoky directing traffic. In all other towns thus far all intersections have been controlled and we did not stop at red lights or stop signs since Smokies had them blocked off. But this morning we were on our own. I really did not realize what the situation was until I nearly ran over a car at an intersection. We still didn’t stop for red lights, but were more cautious. The way we zoomed thru red lights and stop signs – it was a wonder someone wasn’t killed. One tractor did squish the back end of a pickup – no injuries. We were glad to be out of that town. As we traveled thru surrounding smaller towns, intersections were controlled, thank goodness.

We hadn’t much got started until it started snowing heavily. Highway 40 was snow packed and a little slippery for campers and R.V.s. The windshield wipers worked for a little while, then I had fun looking for the road. Finally reached the Indianapolis Raceway Park and parked tractors. Scheuflers had arrived earlier and found an R.V. park nearby so water and electricity would be available. That was a smart move as it was still snowing and we will be here tomorrow too.

Scheuflers had their furnace worked on yesterday and it ran perfectly last night, but it looks like the blower motor is out. Titus loaned us an electric heater. Miller’s trailer has a plumbing leak underneath and Titus has a broken pipe inside. So between all of us we have heat, water and a functional bathroom – just have to be in the right trailer!

Last night Millers had a “trailer warming”. Stapletons (*Dub and Clara*) are here also – their trailer is O.K. It’s really nice to be among such a great bunch of people with everyone helping each other. Dub has a guy from Paxico driving his tractor. Larry (*Seele*) is a diesel mechanic and keeps busy helping others keep equipment going. He seems to enjoy figuring out what’s wrong.

Sunday, January 28, 1979 Indianapolis, IND 650 units – 1,500 people

Woke up late. I did the laundry while Lester fueled up tractors. Marge cleaned house and Ed took his furnace apart.

After a fried chicken and mashed potatoes with gravy dinner, we headed to Brownsburg, 5 miles, for a church service by Father Andy and a meeting afterwards. Wyoming, Nebraska, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, and Iowa are now joined with Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois. We have about 650 units with 1500 people. Some from the northern routes are in favor of traveling the interstate even when highway patrol directs us elsewhere. I talked to a Wyoming lady this morning in the laundromat. She said at one point they were directed off the interstate so about ½ mile down the road they stopped – had a short meeting – turned around and went back to the interstate. Nothing happened. There is still a question about how we will get on the other side of Indianapolis, interstate or thru downtown. The majority still feel we should travel on whatever roads we are directed because our business is in D.C. not on an interstate or where ever.

This afternoon I started up the 4020 so it wouldn’t forget how to run. As soon as I turned the key on, the cab filled with smoke. I turned the key off and jumped out. After the smoke cleared, I found a wire which went to the C.B. was charred. Darrel Miller was unanimously elected as the best electrical fixer so he wired around the short and got everything running without too much difficulty. Only problem, it was -3° with the wind chill factor.

Got back to the trailer. Ed was trying to dump the pot but it was frozen. After using Jim’s heater and a few choice words –got things thawed out....

Monday, January 29, 1979 Indianapolis to Richmond, IND

Up at 6 – helped get trailers ready to go – then Jim and I rode with Lester over to the tractors to get them started up. Not too cold – about 18°, but snow on everything. Departure was delayed as we waited for the highway patrol to get in gear. It seems one of their electric arrow signs broke so had to send for another one.

At this moment we are stopped on 74 Highway as we wait for the back to catch up. We had more delays when a train stopped part of the tractors. Police want us together as we enter 465 to circle Indianapolis. Here we go.

We are stopped for lunch break now. It was very slow moving around Indianapolis. The police stopped us a couple times to close up gaps. They just don’t realize how long it takes for us to get started again. It might have been better to have the lead tractors just slow down rather than stopping completely. Tractors rolling.

Today was interesting. We had a couple incidents. It seems the police in Greenville decided to stop our tractors periodically to allow cross traffic to pass. The tractorcade policy is to allow only emergency vehicles to break up our convoy. As soon as police stopped the tractors at an intersection, others began blocking off side streets and all east and west bound traffic. In about 15 minutes, after explaining to the police that we were a bona fide, 100% genuine parade and didn’t appreciate delays, - we began rolling without further delays. The

same thing happened in the next town, but we educated the police as quickly as possible and proceeded on our way.

Our parking situation is not the best tonight. We are divided among 2 shopping center parking lots and a side street. Some groups are divided so it should be interesting when we pull out in the morning. After some searching and hiking we did find our trailer. Millers have gone on to Columbus to arrange our stay there.

Tuesday, January 30, 1979 Richmond, IND to Columbus, Ohio

We were ready to roll by 6 a.m. As most of us anticipated leaving in any order was about impossible. I think a couple other Kansas regions are ahead of us that were usually behind – that doesn't matter much, but some like to be as far up as they can get. We have tried to arrange it so those who have come the farthest are in the front.

Most of the day was uneventful – as we were on interstate 70 until we arrived at Columbus during the after work lunch hour. The police divided the “cade” into 4 groups and took each group to the Ohio State Fair ground by a different route. Lucky me – my group went right through downtown Columbus. I needed an automatic transmission with all those stops and starts. It was interesting to note that very few people in the downtown area stopped to watch us pass – too involved in the rat race, I guess. As we passed through a poorer section of town it made me treasure our open spaces and breathing space at home. I feel sorry for the kids who grow up on concrete. I think Amy would go berserk growing up here. I would too.

Good place to park – plenty of room. Fueled up, greased 4020 and washed windows on 4 tractors. Traffic was slow in the trailer so took a shower.

We are growing. We picked up about 100 more units from Ohio and Minnesota.

The Ohio people had a good meal for us – music – then meeting. I sold buttons – have sold over 5000 now. The meeting consisted of introductions and some mighty inspiring speeches. As we draw nearer to D.C. the mood gets more serious. There is much talk about what will happen. Many willing to go to jail and I won't be surprised if that happens. Also comments leaving some farm equipment in D.C. We can make D.C. in 3 days from here. Darrel Miller was master of ceremonies for the meeting. To my surprise he introduced two women drivers - one from Colorado and one from western Kansas, plus myself. Must have been 2,000 present at the meeting. Tried to call Rocky but no luck. To bed by 11 p.m. Alarm set for 5.

Wednesday, January 31, 1979 Columbus, Ohio to St. Clairsville, Ohio

Up at 5 and on our way 6 a.m. Lester had to get some fuel for his truck so he will catch up later.

It was a pretty sight this morning when we left at dark. West bound traffic was heavy and blinking lights as far as you could see to the front and rear. Heard on the C.B. a car ran into the back of a tractor – no injuries. It seems like we have at least one wreck in each large city. Now we are stopped on the interstate – some problem about not being allowed to park for the night where we had made arrangements.

Finally got parked in a huge shopping mall parking lot. The coal miners union had made arrangements for us to park on some private property. But, it seems the county health department found out about this about 3:30 and said it was illegal because of sanitation regulations. There was suppose to be 1 port-a-john for every 50 people. It was later explained that they figured on collecting \$2 a trailer if we parked at their fairgrounds. Some campers had already parked so they began leaving. After some consultation, we ended up here, no fee. The coal miners were very ticked off by the actions of the county commissioners.

It has been snowing most of the day, but no visibility problems. Had a meeting at 8:00. Some good words from the local coal miners union leaders. He said he wasn't too good a speaker, but as he looked at the crowd he said we looked like a bunch of angry coal miners so he felt at home. He was well versed in the farmers' problems as they are so similar to their own.

Thursday, February 1, 1979 St. Clairsville, Ohio to Frostburg, Md

Stopped for lunch break now. I usually have my lunch gone by now, so at least I have time to write. Fun, fun this morning. Big mix up going through Wheeler. Traffic was heavy and merging. Traffic split us up and someone made a wrong exit which routed us through downtown, Wheeler. We were suppose to stay on I-70. You know, if the lead tractor went over a cliff, the rest of us would probably follow. Hope Jimmy (*Carter*) doesn't think of that. Anyway, we ran through all the red lights of Wheeler, without even a smash-up, got turned around and back up on I-70. We are all together again now. There is much talk on the C.B. about not being allowed into Washington, D.C. By this time, no one even considers turning back. Wherever we are allowed to go – it will be a big traffic mess.

Most of the afternoon was uneventful until we thought we were ready to stop. We were supposed to stop near Morgantown, but our fearless leaders decided it was inadequate – roads too steep and icy. Let me explain here that a lot of these hi-plains farmers were beginning to wish they were back on the plains. The mountains were one thing – and as we continued on down the road, the snow became worse. Roads were snow-packed and icy. Vehicles pulling trailers were slipping and sliding, and it began getting dark. No one knew where we were going to stop. The C.B. started to sizzle. As we started down one steep grade, those pulling trailers began pulling off to shoulders. Some tractors stopped too. Some went on – tractors were all over. Where are those leaders? In the hotel? The little town of Friendly was at the bottom of the hill. So after about an hour or so, everyone finally eased their way down the mountain and began pulling into Friendly. I was separated from Titus and Larry (*Seele*), but we regrouped soon. We had no idea where the support vehicles were – couldn't raise them on the C.B. Tractors and support vehicles were scattered throughout the town. With all the confusion on the hill, many groups were separated. After a few minutes, the local police came around and was encouraging us to go on to Cumberland, 30 miles away before we were snowed in. Many decided to stay. Larry, Titus and I plus an RV and tractor from Pratt headed out – a mini convoy. We were hoping our nice warm trailers were ahead, and we were right. Ed is usually real good about making contact with us as soon as we pull in a parking area – so since we didn't see him – we figured they were ahead. As we headed on, visibility was bad. The wind was blowing snow from the back in gusts which engulfed the tractors. The roads were icy in spots. At one point Titus left the interstate on an exit without realizing it, so we hollered on the C.B. and he got turned around. Larry was in the lead doing a good job. After a few miles we heard a familiar voice on the C.B. Cornhusker (*Lester Derley*) and Father Time (*Ed Scheufler*) were looking for us. They had gone ahead to Frostburg – unhooked the trailer and were heading back west searching for us lost sheep. They got turned around and joined our little convoy. Lester offered to relieve me on the tractor, but it was only a few more miles and I figured I could make it, but I was getting rather tired from looking for the road. At least it was dark and I couldn't see over the edge. Needless to say, it felt very good to get off the tractor after 14 hours, and we were happy to be reunited. We didn't know where Stapletons (*W.A. "Dub" and Clara*) were so Larry will sleep in Titus' trailer. After everyone told their version of the day's episode, we went to bed.

Friday, February 2, 1979 Frostburg, Md to Frederick, Md

The mood before we went to bed last night was that it would take all day to get everyone regrouped and ready to go. A lot of the tractorcade was shut down 30 miles back in Friendly, so – we didn't bother to set the alarm. Dream on.

At 5 a.m. someone banged on the trailer and announced tractors were to roll at 6. Many groans, then up to quickly, eat and fuel tractors. About 6:30 we pulled out and headed toward Frederick.

At the moment I am parked on the upgrade of a hill. A Smoky has us stopped to regroup and some are taking advantage of the time to fuel up. No communication in the back so some tractors kept on going around. I think they stopped up ahead. Need more than 1 Smoky. They just don't realize what is coming and what it takes to direct us. We have a lot of independent thinkers around here who want to get to D.C. and wait on no one. One morning we were suppose to roll at 7, but Illinois left at 6:30 ahead of Colorado. Guess maybe they're just over anxious.

1 p.m. Here we are stopped again. This time for lunch break. Most of the small groups have now joined into 2 or 3 large groups. Still don't know where those are that stayed in Friendly last night. We are behind a slow tractor who didn't know where we were going – so we took a little detour thru Heacock. The police got us back on the right track with little problems. The town was so small it didn't even have a red light to run – but we did go thru a stop sign. According to the rumored plan we will stay in Frederick, Md. tonight. From there we wait until we plan to enter D.C. More talk today that tractors will be impounded and drivers arrested who trespass the capitol grounds – yet we go on.

Saturday, February 3, 1979 Frederick, Md

Up by 5:30 and out the door so campers could leave early to find a trailer park. We fueled tractors then went to a nearby truck stop to eat breakfast. No one seemed to know what the plan was. Did learn the second group was all down the mountain, but spent the night somewhere else. They hoped to join up today. Rumors were spreading that most likely no tractors would move today so we got in fuel truck and went to D.C. to find the trailers and did so with no trouble. Did some laundry and grocery shopping then left for a rally in Warrenton. Took the bucket of buttons and sold 477. A lot of people – all tense and anxious, many looking tired. Good talks to inspire everyone and home by 2 a.m. after getting lost only 56 times (Not really).

Sunday, February 4, 1979 Frederick, Md to Cherry Hill Camp City

Up at 8. Marge, Ed and Jean went to D.C. bus to sightsee and practice navigating via bus. Lester and Jim (*Titus*) went to Frederick to fuel other tractors and see what was going on. I did a little housework to stay in practice and clipped newspaper articles.

About noon, some others returned from Frederick and said South Central was getting ready to move the tractors here to Cherry Hill. So Dub (*Stapleton*) took Larry and I to Frederick. Millers rode up with friends to bring *Titus'* pickup back. I grabbed a sandwich and fruit and ate on the run.

At Frederick, the ground had started to thaw and things were muddy. Nevertheless, it didn't stop the sightseers from wandering among the tractors reading signs and taking pictures.

Headed for D.C. There was C.B. talk about taking all the lanes, but everyone decided to save their energy until tomorrow. Many cars on the beltway slowed down to check us out, causing traffic to back up anyway.

Monday February 5, 1979 - Cherry Hill Camp City to Capitol Hill D-DAY

Up at 4:30 for the big day. About the only thing we know for sure is that we're leaving at 6 p.m. At this moment I'm sitting on the tractor somewhere near Capitol Hill. After leaving Cherry Hill our convoy got on 495 W and then turned on 185 to head south. That is when the fun started. We moved at a snail's pace blocking all lanes – at times one of the on-coming lanes. If the back part got delayed we in the front stopped to wait – preferably in an intersection. Some cars at times would get hemmed in – some would jump curbs to get out – others patiently followed us – some turned around if they could.

At one point about 6 police insisted we not block the intersection. Some tractors moved ahead of the intersection. A police stepped in front of my tractor so I stopped. He continued to stand there – inches from my front sign, so I got out and took his picture. He wouldn't smile. Meanwhile, other police directed the cross traffic. After about 10 minutes a policeman directed the one in front of my tractor to motion other cars on. He took about 2 steps away, then must have thought I would move because he turned around with a pleading look and motioned me to stay put. I did. In a few minutes we got going.

Stopped again. it seems Daryl Chenoweth (*Haviland, KS*) bumped a motorcycle cop who drive out right in front of him, then slammed on the brakes. After about 15 minutes drivers became impatient. We walked back to see what was going on. Daryl was in the police car along with an officer. Marg tried to take a picture of the officer, but he held his helmet up in front of his face and shook his head "No". Another officer, a lady, was doing the writing – said it would only be 10 more minutes. Still not ready so we began to block all three lanes. I nudged ole 4020 out – cars were bumper to bumper in left lane so I just went slow at an angle until a car stopped. Others did same. Officer came and told me "You have come to be noticed, please don't block traffic." As I backed up someone else would drive into the lane. So cop would go talk to him. After 2 or 3 minutes of see-saw, Daryl radioed he was free to go so we tracted on at a slow pace, trying to keep tractors as close together as possible.

Stopped again. A tractor sprung a leak on a hydraulic hose so everyone is stopped while he wraps some tape around it.

8 p.m.

From the time I wrote the above to now I have been busy. By the time we reached Louisiana Avenue and D Street, about 2 blocks from the Capitol Building, we began to see tractors everywhere. We had also heard reports of violence and tear gas which turned out to be true. We heard reports that cranes were moving tractors – which were false. We made a parking lot out of Louisiana Ave. and since it was 11 a.m. most ate the lunches they had packed. Many then began walking around to observe the situation. The first thing that struck me was the clogged streets and lots of tractors everywhere. Second, was that for every tractor there was 2 policemen, wearing riot gear, complete with clubs and gas masks. They were everywhere and more were being bused in every moment. In fact it was announced on the television that all police in the city were called to work.

Some streets were barricaded and this is where many of the problems started. The Missouri leader lowered his blade and didn't stop until he had 3 police cars and some cycles piled up. By then the cops had broken his tractor window and dragged him out. Another driver had a mace can in his cab after he bumped some cycles. He is in the hospital in critical condition. Others were clubbed after harassing cops.

At 2 o'clock we had a rally on the steps of the Capitol. Farmers everywhere. Had some good songs to fit the occasion then some brief pep talk by the leaders. Some congressmen also

spoke and as they were speaking, farmers seemed to begin drifting away. Many were here last year and are tired of talking and listening. They prefer to show their feelings more overtly. We were encouraged to keep the tractors rolling.

After the rally Larry, Titus and I decided to do a little sightseeing via tractor – only got lost 26 times. When we returned our group had left, so we decided to head for Cherry Hill. Before we left we talked to 2 young men from Chile who were studying agriculture. If we talked slow they could understand. They said they have much the same problems in Chile. After getting to the trailer, with only getting lost 23 times – we watched ourselves on T.V. News coverage is great. Two different reporters were asked if they noticed any hostility from the local folks. Both said NO and said they thought we farmers had much support from the city people. This was very evident to us drivers also – the only people who showed hostility were police and I'm not saying they weren't justified in every case.

10:30 P.M.

Ed, Marge and Lester just returned in the truck. It seems about the time we 3 on tractors began leaving, the police began herding all the tractors into the mall area. The mall was then blockaded with 174 city vehicles set bumper to bumper. The vehicles consisted of police cars, paddy wagons, city buses, dump trucks and garbage trucks. There was no exit for the imprisoned tractors. They then allowed vehicles other than tractors to leave, so Lester, Marge and Ed left. No one knew where our tractors were – of course we were in the trailers, snug as a bug in a rug. The mood of everyone was at an all time low. Everyone admitted that the police had outflanked the tractor drivers. So it was to bed for a restless night.

Tuesday, February 6, 1979 Capitol Hill

Our 3 tractors look mighty lonely lined up where yesterday morning there were 20. Up at 7, although I have been awake since 5. The 4 of us jumped into the pickup and headed for town, along with food to last us the day. We first went to the national AAM office to learn what was being planned. Learned the tractors had no intentions of moving. Negotiations were in process with police and AAM leaders. I guess it took police several hours to figure out who the AAM leaders actually were. We then went to the Skyline Inn office which is AAM headquarters. Many farmers are staying at the Skyline too – so strike caps everywhere – some covering the eyes of farmers sound asleep in chairs in the lobby. Saw Mildred (*VanNahmen*) and Peggy (*Arensman*) manning telephones – many farmers telling others of incidents they had witnessed the day before – much head shaking and gestures of exasperation. Mildred made an appointment for me with an FHA man to discuss our loan denials.

From the Skyline office we went to the Dirksen Building where our newly elected senator, Nancy Kassebaum, agreed to meet with farmers. The room, 1202 was filled to standing room only. Kassebaum began by explaining she would not co-sponsor legislation to increase the loan rate to 90% of parity. Her reason was that this legislation would never pass, so it would be dishonest to co-sponsor it, but she would vote for it if it came up for a vote. Farmers were pretty vocal during the meeting. I think Nancy has already learned how to speak like a politician. She indicated that we elected her to do a job, now we should allow her to do what she thinks is best.

After meeting, went to a rally on the Capitol steps. More pep talks. Walked around the Mall some, then headed for the Skyline Inn where the pickup was parked – then headed home.

Wednesday, February 7, 1979 Capitol Hill

Lester and I headed for D.C. in the truck to see if any tractors in our region, which are ironically imprisoned on Independence Avenue, needed fuel. I had an appointment with a man in the U.S.D.A. in the FHA division. He gave me a copy of the procedures to follow when appealing a loan rejection. He also suggested our banker and perhaps an aide of a congressional contact, Mr. Gertz. He said if there is a "reasonable chance of success" for an applicant, it should be approved.

After the meeting I returned to the tractors. Lester was still fueling tractors, so I helped by driving the truck. The drivers were all in good spirits. One was standing at the intersection scraping ice off car windshields as they stopped. I must mention, it snowed about 4 inches and was still coming down. He said they had also passed a lot of American Ag Newspapers out to those passing by. As we were there, the police allowed about 100 tractors to go on an escorted parade around the U.S.D.A. building. As the tractors arrived in front of the U.S.D.A., the drivers shut down and went inside to eat lunch at the cafeteria. The police had no choice but to wait until they returned.

After fueling the tractors we headed for Cherry Hill. It was about 1:30 so got Ed and Marge and found a restaurant. Roads were getting bad so decided not to return to D.C. today. Instead managed to take my first nap since this adventure began.

Thursday, February 8, 1979

Still snow and ice so we decided to take the metro to Capitol. It took 1 ½ hours to reach our destination. Riding the Metro seemed complicated but I guess it is routine for many.

First we visited Keith Sebelius' office and talked to his aide. Called the office at the Skyline – not a whole lot going on today. Talked with others on the Mall. The police and farmers are getting along well. Everyone in good spirits. Cops complaining about the government getting too much of their overtime check. One said if farmers stay long enough, perhaps he would have enough overtime pay to buy a farm. The Mall does show evidence of some damage. Trees and parking meters run over. Guess there are some rotten apples in every crowd. Sometimes I think I should take the 4020 down and "break in". But that would mean I would have to stay there also and with our trailer set up here, it just didn't seem like the pluses would equal the minuses, especially since I am flying home tomorrow. Police are allowing tractors to leave the compound.