

# Student Experience Program

The following is excerpted from the Air Cooled News article that explains the Scholarship program and associated club efforts in greater detail:

In 2010 the Club began offering scholarships to students enrolled in automobile restoration to the Club's annual Trek in Cazenovia, New York. There was a secondary goal to this outreach, that of helping lower the average age of the Club's members by encouraging younger automobilists to explore the Franklin car.

## Key Factor:

Our membership, while not as old as the cars themselves, likely average out as septuagenarians. We realized that as a Club we cannot continue to be vibrant and perky without the energy of youth. Further, we have had the good fortune over the past



Photo: Jeryl Schriever

50 to 60 years to retain many of our members. The value of a 50 year member to our Club cannot be understated. We are a small group of 700. It is not easy to replace the loss of knowledge of someone who has been around these cars for 50+ years. Further, recruiting new members, who are 50 or 60 years old means we will only have the benefit of their engagement for 20 to 30 years, half of what we used to enjoy.

## Programs:

The notion of the Trek experience program was born and has grown to further encourage engagement. To date we have had over 35 students take part in our Treks. At the 2022 Trek, five new students attended the Trek, while six former students returned. In fact thanks to our engaged multi-generational Franklin families and the scholarship programs, almost 20% of the participants at the Trek were under the age of 25. Do you know another car club that can say that?

To encourage students to return, the Club's members also funded The Sinclair Powell Scholarships, where Trek experience students who return to two or more Club events, are eligible to apply for up to \$2,000 in tuition funding. Also, in memory of Arnie Christiansen, who welcomed us to the Trek for over four decades, the Arnie Fund was born to help supplant the cost to students returning to future Treks while they are still in school, or are under 25 and getting on their feet financially.

In 2019 the Board approved a plan where the Club will donate \$7,500 to McPherson College's restoration program for each ten students sent from the College who attend the Trek. Further, we have offered to have faculty come visit the Trek and are pursuing students receiving academic credit for their participation.

Lastly, the Club has worked to help students interested in acquiring a Franklin car find a way to own one. This varies from students receiving a basket case and making a car from it, like Alex Ramsier's "Kalvin Koolidge" Franklin racer which rose from the bits of a rotted junked Franklin, to Chuck Johnson's gift of an unfinished Series 15 to Matt Goist and Sandy Bennett helping Cameron Rogers get behind the wheel of a Series 11. At last count, more than six students who went through the Trek Student Experience have Franklin cars, most are running and driving, and several



can be seen on the road at the Trek. Former students Wally Behrens has a Series 9, Matt Joseph is racking up the miles on his ubiquitous Series 10, and Cameron in his Series 11. This investment in our future is an expensive undertaking for a Club with only \$40 dollars in annual dues. The Club's goal is to increase student participation to between 10 and 20 students per year. The cost of this effort will grow to between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per year.