

# Bus Musings

Late Fall 2006

Vol. 7, No. 4



**The Newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation**

**161 Museum Drive Hershey, PA 17033**

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## From the Dispatch Desk:

We have purposely delayed the production of this fall newsletter because we had a lot on our plate.

As many of you know, your Board has spent the last several months in the pursuit of a larger and, hopefully, closer storage facility to replace the one we have had for over four years in Myerstown, PA.

Although serving us well, Myerstown was nearly 30 miles from Hershey and afforded us only 5,600 sq. ft. of storage for our vehicles. We needed more space and wanted to be closer to Hershey.

We looked into real estate in Lebanon, Mt. Joy, Harrisburg, and also another property in Myerstown prior to settling on the *purchase* (no more leasing) of a property in the small hamlet of Union Deposit, PA, less than 1 1/5 miles from the Museum. Reverend Dan Lehman, our fleet manager and vice president, shopped around and was able to obtain some innovative financing which results in an excellent monthly

### **Richard J. Fullington, Sr.**

*Dick died at 87 and until 2005 regularly attended all of our Board Meetings, usually driving down from his office and then turning about and driving back after the meeting (nearly six hours round-trip!).*

*He was an early Board Member and supporter of the Museum of Bus Transportation. As such, his family requested that in lieu of flowers that donations be made to the Museum of Bus Transportation. To date, we have received nearly \$3,000 in donations.*

*We are grateful to the Fullington family for thinking of us, but we will miss Dick's company and guidance. He has done so much for us.*

## Model Bus Musings:

To start off my fall review, here's a brand new casting by Corgi, modeled off of the real bus which is on exhibit in our own MOBT. This Flexible Clipper will appear in Corgi's line in November in the exact brown/tan colors of the Capitol Bus Co. of Harrisburg, PA, as on our real version, but the first release of the new casting has been issued in a 5440 limited edition in the blue/silver/white colors of PA Greyhound Lines, with the neat PA Railroad logo on the rear of the coach and featuring a Cleveland destination sign. This version is already available in the MOBT Gift Shop in Hershey, and really is a most exact and attractive replica!

The next model featured this issue is one of my favorites, and you can see John Dockendorf's model in his display in the MOBT. My model still has its original box, and I can only call this huge plastic 1950's 17 1/2 inch long GM Scenicruiser battery-operated model as being just a whistle away. Yes, when the patter is installed, a blow of the plastic whistle enclosed with the model operates it in motion around the table or floor—a most unique feature on this replica made back in the late 1950's by Bell Products of Missouri. My model

payment less than what we were paying in rent.

Dan, along with Board Members Tom Moser and Oliver Ogden, was able to move all of our vehicles that were not currently on the Museum floor, under their own power, to the new location.

The facility (pictured on the cover) offers us about 7,100 sq. ft. plus some office space and an acre of land.

The other neat thing that happened to us, as a direct result of Bob Beard's August article in *Bus Ride* was the offer of the first production model RTS II (S/N TH8-201006), courtesy of Jim Ditch, V.P. Maintenance of the Long Beach Public Transportation Authority. We sent a truck out to California to pick it up, funded by Dino Mandros. It is now on the Museum floor and it looks like it just rolled out of the Pontiac, MI assembly plant.

Not all of our news is good, as we lost three respected supporters: Richard J. Fullington, Sr., James JeBran and George M. Sage, all well known in bus industry circles. We will miss them all.

### **James J. JeBran**

*Jim was the Chairman of the Board of Trans-Bridge Lines, Inc., in Bethlehem, PA.*

*Jim and his family were always interested in the development of the Museum and, over the years, have given in the form of cash and a vehicle.*

*Trans-Bridge Lines and its predecessors have had a rich and interesting history of their own.*

*Jim will be sorely missed in the industry.*

still actually operates, and this was a most exact model GM PD 4501 Scenicruiser, and was probably only sold at Greyhound Terminal gift shops, although maybe some were released to American toy shops. This is a rare model to find in good condition today, and even comes with more destination signs that you could place in the front holder. This huge plastic model, I feel, captured the look and style of the GM PD 4501 Scenicruiser!

Finally, we'll visit Paris, France back in the 1950's. Toys/France made a 14 1/2 inch long Gare-Marie wind-up trolley bus, complete with a neat tin driver inside and spring-suspended trolley poles. This model ran by battery and really is just one of the most charming model buses that was ever made in my opinion; it captures the look and excitement of Paris during the 1950's when such a real trolley bus was a common sight on Parisian streets, and the toy trolley bus is colored in the exact green and cream colors of the era. I found this one many years ago at a Hershey AACA Auto Meet, in the vast flea market, and it is in near mint condition, and even features center opening door and plastic clear windows and operating front lights.

Happy Collecting!

Doug Campbell



**On the Cover:** Pictured prior to acquisition is our new annex. This is located a short distance from the museum, in the hamlet of Union Deposit, Pa.

# Along the Line:

## Museum Gift Shop

The Gift Shop has been stocked with an influx of Corgi models, courtesy of Corgi and Don Coffin. Less expensive smaller items have been donated by Royal Coach.

We have filed financial papers to purchase Corgi items on a wholesale basis.

A line of postcards depicting actual buses owned by MOBT is now available, as well as bus t-shirts. You may purchase items through paypal (see our website).

## MOBT Correspondence/Publicity

By now, hopefully, you have all seen the August issue of Bus Ride written by Bob Beard. They did a fine job of presenting the Museum to the industry. We are very pleased with the feedback, and have acquired several new members and lots of inquiries.

A similar article, albeit smaller in content, will appear in the Pennsylvania Bus Association Bus Digest.

In early 2007, we plan to get some recognition in some school bus related publications. This is an area we have not yet approached.

## Website Notes

Sharon Ogden, our webmaster, has received several interesting responses to the question What sparked your interest in buses?

Following are two of them, with more to follow.

## From Harvey Eckart, Berwick, PA

In my case, as a young boy, I was fascinated by all types of vehicles: cars, trucks, fire trucks, buses, police cars, tractors, and locomotives. The common thread was they are all instruments of transportation, in one form or another.

Over the years, the following buses provided a special interest to me:

1 1930 s era early B Model Macks — The North Branch Bus Co. of Bloomsburg, PA operated a fleet of Mack transit buses past the front door of my house. I rode these frequently and remember them as rough and tough units.

2 After WWII the North Branch Bus Co. operated Ford transits, which I was not fond of. They were literally a big box with a puny V-8 engine and rudimentary instruments and controls, about as basic as you can get.

3 Greyhound Yellow Coach 3701 Silversides — As a serviceman in the 50 s I rode these frequently between Berwick, PA and Baltimore, MD. This was, and is, my favorite bus of all time. The styling was sleek and the column mounted gearshift was unique, just like in the 39 Plymouth our family owned.

4 Aerocoach Model P-33 — While in the service I rode one of these from Ft. Meade, MD to Camp Pickett, VA as part of a convoy of several buses which ran down Route 1, and as I recall, at about 70 mph and 10 feet apart. I am sure the floorboards in front of me had to be repaired, as I was doing a lot more braking than the driver was.

5 Flexible Clipper — I have always admired this model for its distinctive styling and purr of the straight eight Buick engine.

6 Greyhound Scenicruiser — Talk about mixed emotions! This bus probably did more to attract customers than any other and was highly appealing to the general public. On the other hand, it's hard to figure how GM could make such a massive screw-up in the original drive train of two four-cylinder engines and a trouble prone transmission that required a complete upgrade to correct. It's too bad none were preserved with the original set up, but I guess this just reinforces how bad it really was.

7 The Mack MV6200 experimental Greyhound bus of 1957 —

As a Mack enthusiast, I am elated Mack built this attractive highway cruiser, and disappointed it did not find a market and become a one of a kind unit. The good news is it was restored by member Charles Wotring and will, hopefully, always be a part of the bus industry historical collection.

A final observation is that buses, like most modern vehicles of all kinds, are vastly more efficient, but lack the character, distinctiveness, and personality of older models. Thankfully, we have the Museum of Bus Transportation to keep the past alive.

## David Housh, Glendora, CA

In my case, it started when I was an elementary school student in the 1940 s. To get to school you walked! Then, lo and behold, my school district bought a new Superior rear-engined transit style school bus — its first ever. Mr. Joseph B. Gallagher was hired to drive it. He was a grandfatherly sort who was respected by all or else! In 1949, he was given a brand new Gillig (also the rear-engined transit style) — the district's second school bus and the first bus I was privileged to ride. Something clicked in my feeble mind then, and I've been hooked on buses ever since.

My first exposure to an intercity coach came in the early 1950 s. My dad and I took a trip with Greyhound on what I suspect was a PD-4103 since it was not air-ride. We spent the trip bouncing on top of the rear axle! Bus it didn't dim my bus fever.

My high school district featured an all Crown fleet. The Crown Supercoach has to be considered the ultimate school bus. It was built like a tank (intercity style integrated construction) and had great power — Hall-Scott engines just like IC-41 s. These coaches were built to last at least 20 years, and many are still running here in California, even though the last one left the factory in 1991.

During my Army years I rode GM PGA-3301 s, Fageol Convertibles, and a Southern (model unknown). Then buses seemed to be gone from my life.

Now we fast-forward to 1969. I was a young school teacher in need of a summer job. As luck would have it, the local Gray Line franchise sent a circular to my school soliciting teachers to be seasonal tour bus drivers. They trained me, and a bus nut became a bus driver! I went on to spend 35 summers driving and touring passengers around the western United States for Gray Line Los Angeles, California Parlor Car Tours, California Charter, and Coach USA. Early buses I drove included Fitzjohn Roadrunners, Flexible VL 100 s, and Flexible Hi-levels. My favorite bus to drive was the MC-7. The H3-45, E4500, and T2100 had come along before I retired, but they didn't require much real old-fashioned driving and were a bit dull. I had some great experiences during my driving career.

I am now retired from both teaching and driving, but I have never lost my interest in buses. I cannot think of two careers that I would have found more enjoyable.

## Board Meetings:

We remind all of our members that the Board Meetings are, generally, held the second Tuesday of each month, and are open to anyone. Meetings are held at the Museum and start at 6:30 PM.

## Innovative Ways to Donate (first in a series):

### Insurance

Perhaps you don't need all of the insurance you have. This may serve as a contribution to us by simply making the Museum of Bus Transportation the owner of the policy. The benefits to you and the Museum are shown below.

### MOBT as Owner

- ¥ Receive a charitable deduction when you name us as beneficiary and ownership.
- ¥ Reduce your estate taxes because proceeds are removed from your estate.

### MOBT as Beneficiary

- ¥ Obtain flexibility by naming us as beneficiary but keeping ownership
- ¥ Name us as contingent beneficiary and secure your family's needs first.

## 2006-2007 MOBT EVENTS

### Friday, June 1, 2007

Clean-Up Work Day  
Storage Annex

### Saturday, June 2, 2007

Spring Bus Fling  
Storage Annex  
8:30 AM — 3:30 PM  
Flea Market, Bus Display, Food Available  
Registration Fee: \$10 (donation to MOBT/Vendors Only)

### Saturday, June 23, 2007

11th Annual Museum Expo  
AACA & MOBT Museum  
9:00 AM — 5:00 PM  
Museum Open — Normal Fees Apply)  
Cars, Trucks and Buses on Display. Food Available.

### Saturday, October 27, 2007

Annual Meeting  
Museum in Hershey

**JOIN US, IF YOU CAN, AT ANY OR ALL EVENTS!**

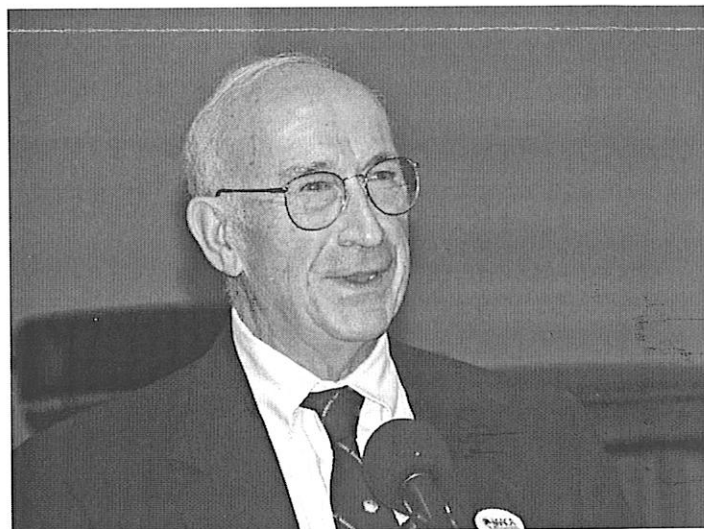
## George M. Sage

As we were about to go to press we learned sadly, that one of the most respected gentlemen in the industry passed away suddenly.

George, 75 was known for his early purchase of the Short Line of R. I. through various additions grew this to the Bonanza Bus Lines, Inc. operation.

George loved the industry and prided on riding from point to point or to industry functions by regularly scheduled bus!

He supported the industry and the Museum of Bus Transportation (personally responsible for our 2006 Match program). His loss will be felt forever.



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*Bus Musings*, the quarterly newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation, is published for you in the interest of providing a thumbnail sketch of what your organization is doing to preserve bus history. We continue to invite your comments.