

# Bus Musings

Volume 10 Number 2 • Mid-Spring 2008

The Newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation

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**Ralph J. Fetrow**  
Members 1st Credit Union



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## President's Message...

By Tom Collins

For sometime now, even prior to the bequeath of \$500,000 from the George M. Sage estate, we've needed some professional financial assistance and guidance on our Board. We are pleased to announce the addition of Ralph J. Fetrow to our Board. Mr. Fetrow is a Certified Financial Planner employed by Members 1st Federal Credit Union. He also serves on the administrative executive Board for the AACA Museum as treasurer. He has approved our budget for 2008 (our first official guideline in controlling expenses and investments) and he is going to administrate our investments and endowment. At a later date, we will be seeking three new endowment trustees to assist in that process. Our last two Board meetings have centered mainly on financial matters with the goal of providing financial stability to the Museum into the future.

Speaking of finances we have paid off the mortgage for the Memorial Annex and, concurrently, we will have a "mortgage burning" as part of our Spring Fling on June 7, 2008. The Board also voted to name the property and building *The George M. Sage Complex*. Were it not for George we would not have the building at all and

now it is fully paid for. We are real estate tax-exempt so the monthly upkeep on the building is very low.

We are pleased to announce to all of our Museum of Bus Transportation members that upon presentation of your membership card you will receive free admission to the Museum itself. This was part of a recent agreement with the AACA Museum administrative Board – this also will apply to AACA members. The normal \$9.00 fee will only apply to non-members or your guests.

We were included in a recent Fox News presentation on the growth in intercity bus ridership. Todd Connor, Fox correspondent, visited the Museum and selected our 1947 Flixible (Capitol Bus Company livery) as the backdrop of the interview. The focus of the article was short haul intercity services which also included the recent influx of "Chinese operators" and the new Greyhound/Peter Pan "Bolt" service.

Mr. Connor was interested in reflecting on some past highlights. In the interview with him we discussed military transport during World War II, the introduction of the famous 4104 (and the Scenicruiser), charter and

tour business during the World's Fair (1964-1965), and intercity bus services over the interstate highway system before AMTRAK and the introduction of low cost airlines. Our Golden Eagle was also used in the nearly 4 minute TV presentation. It is amazing how much they can squeeze into 4 minutes but it was well done and reflected well for the industry. We received several calls regarding this – two of them from industry leaders who thought the timing was perfect.

We are supplying some artifacts for the forthcoming movie production based on Jim Lehrer's book called "Kick the Can." Among the items will be some old Russells Guides and timetables. The movie is being filmed in California and, although requested, we could not supply them with any of our actual buses.

Our 4106, already famous for its forthcoming appearance in the movie "The Lovely Bones", was on display at the recent Pennsylvania Bus Association "Marketplace". This is an event open to the major bus operators in the Keystone State who transport their

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## ☰ Along the Line....

**Collections.** Member Dave Biles has contacted us regarding the bus photos and other bus related data in the vast collection of the late **Harold Geissenehimer**, a well known transit professional who passed away recently. Dave Biles, a member of *Railways to Yesterday*, is part of a group charged with the handling and placement of the Geissenheimer collection. The Museum will be receiving some of the bus data for our files and the AACA Library.

With sadness, we note the passing of the late **John F. Tucker III**

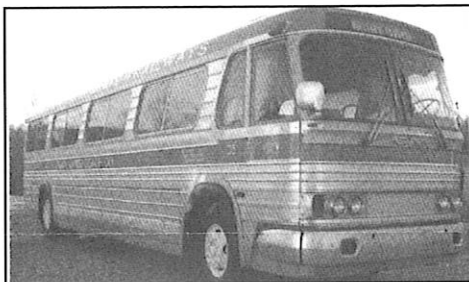
who was a veteran of over 40 years in public transit, holding senior management positions with SEPTA, Dayton RTA, New York City Transit, and AMTRAK. John's love was Philadelphia and its transit, and his collection includes archives from that general area. Member Michael Burshtin was appointed by John's family to assist in disposing of this collection and he has suggested that the bus material be donated to us. Three fare boxes have already been turned over to us and we thank member Gary Blair for transporting them to the George M. Sage Complex where they are now stored.

**First Quarter Financials.** Income for the first quarter in 2008 was \$18,279.06 and expenses \$35,244.93. After other income (investments, dividend income, and interest) are factored in, our net loss is \$14,837.76 compared to \$19,268.91 in 2007. We still had several mortgage payments in early 2008 and we now have a new financial plan thanks to the addition of our new financial advisor, Ralph Fetrow. Generally, things also look much better in the remaining three quarters. We still need, and very much appreciate, donations from the membership.

**Newsletter Sponsorships.** There are two more 2008 newsletters due out this and if you care to sponsor one (with or without an ad) an issue is only \$500. Please contact us if interested.

**Frank Martz Coach Company.** Our fleet manager's "personal" 4106 (ex-Bollman charter) is now on the Martz property and is appearing in parades and static displays as the "Martz bus of the 60's."

Frank Martz Coach Co. is 100 years old this year and displays of their



equipment include the 4106 and their 1912 White (which was in our Museum) and a new D 4505 coach.

ABC's

Northern Division, Camden, N.J. again performed a yeoman's job in painting the 4106 to authentic Martz colors and lettering. ABC painted our 1952 4103, the 1945 Aerocoach, and the 1947 3703. Visitors to the Museum remark about the quality of the paint and body work on these vehicles and we are proud to tell them where it was done. Several of them operate buses or have converted buses to motor homes. History was indeed rolled back seeing the 4106 in Martz livery.....and imagining it pulling into the Wilkes-Barre, or Stoudsburg terminals enroute to New York City.....Martz purchased 4106's every year they were built (1961-1965).

**Fling's Author's Table Attracts 6 Writers.** The decision to add something new to the Spring Fling, an Author's Table where writers could sell and autograph their books and meet their readers, is a surprise hit even to the Museum staff. Starting with one writer in mind, historian Ken Springirth, and expecting board members John Dockendorf and Bob Beard to make themselves available, Kurt Resch also agreed to join the group. Then two new writers with books either just now being released or published by mid May introduced themselves to us: Margean Gladysz (*A Spy On The Bus - the memoirs of a company rat*) and John Edward Alexander (*9Half Way Home From Kinderlou*) will make the fifth and sixth at the table and, who

knows, with still some time to spare, we might find others.

The Spring Fling will continue to grow with new ideas and programs just to get you back every year. It's not just the biggest bus memorabilia flea market in North America anymore.

**Do You Do Windows?** There is always a need for volunteers to serve in your Bus Museum year round but, as mid spring and summer approaches, the need for workers at the Museum, Memorial Annex and Grounds becomes acute. Grass needs to be mowed, buses need washing, windows need cleaning, and archives material needs to be cataloged. As we near the June 7<sup>th</sup> Spring Fling, days become hectic for the few regulars as buses inside the annex building have to be moved outside and prepared for showing. (Liability insurance prohibits anyone from operating vintage buses except qualified museum staff.) The inside of the annex has to be cleaned for the large flea market, and cooking and eating area. Mechanical work needs to be performed by knowledgeable mechanics, tables and chairs need to be set up, and the area policed. Limited parking areas need to be designated, and we need docents on the Museum Showroom floor. Please consider volunteering, especially Fridays in May and on June 5 and 6. Contact the Museum at (717) 566-7100, ext 119, or on line at [thebusmuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:thebusmuseum@yahoo.com). Live close by? We can use you all year round!

**Brag About Your Museum Invite a Friend to Join.** Organizations always want and need new members and the Museum of Bus Transportation is no different. As members, could actually double Museum membership in no time at all if you put your mind to it. Please make the Museum a topic of conversation on your internet forums and in everyday conversations with other bus friends and nuts. Membership is not a moneymaker for a museum just as subscriptions do not make money for a magazine. But word of mouth is, and the more members we

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## President's Message Continued from Front Page

clients to the Marketplace where they meet with sales associates from destinations from across the country. The 4106 received a lot of attention – especially from the “old-timers” who drove or rode in them. We received some membership requests and fielded other questions relative to the Museum.

The Board is busy preparing for the Spring Fling (see separate folder) and is pleased to announce as of this writing that we have now “sold” 22 tables from vendors for this event. All types of bus artifacts will be available on that day. Wolf's Bus Lines, Inc, will provide, as they did in 2007, a shuttle bus which will operate all day from the Museum to the George M. Sage Complex. Please remember that all cars should be parked at the Museum property itself.

Attendance at the Museum seems to be holding up rather well even through the slow months. Fortunately, the weather has held up well (almost no snow or ice here in Pennsylvania this year) and that has

helped us to maintain a good flow of visitors, especially on weekends. We always make a pitch for additional volunteers to work the floor. A small cadre of us continue to do this but often we can not man our displays properly. If you are interested in assisting we can schedule around your hours and available time. Give us a call.

Lancer Insurance has done a fine job in producing a painting of our Golden Eagle with a background depicting its original operating territory in Texas. It came to us from Continental Panhandle Lines which the late Dick Maguire was still president of the Museum and has become a fixture on the floor in the display area.

In closing we note that our flow of contributions has slowed. This is, perhaps, in line with the general state of the economy and stock market. The AACA Museum has also noted this. We invite you to contribute to the general fund, when and as you can. Although the Sage monies will provide us some degree of stability we still need consistent membership support.

Hope to see as many of you as possible at our Spring Fling.

## Annual Meeting

Saturday October 25, 2008

In addition to the Spring Fling our other “big bus event” is something which is really not that far down the pike. To get you started in thinking about the October 25th Annual Meeting, it will include our annual business meeting, ample time to browse the Museum, and a visit to our very well equipped gift shop. Lunch will be available in the Museum, and then after that we will be taking our annual bus trip. This year we'll be heading for the Hazleton area which was once the home of five private transit providers, and although changed in scope, it is still interesting. The charter coach this year will be provided by **Executive Coach, Inc.** of Lancaster, PA so we'll have first class service!

We are VERY proud to have Mr. Howard H. Roberts, President of New York City Transit, as the guest speaker at the annual meeting.

This year's annual dinner is in a nearby restaurant known as 'Crossroads'.

Best of all we've reduced the all day price to \$55.00 of which a portion to be retained as a donation to the Museum of Bus Transpiration).

An exciting day for all!

## ☰ Along the Line continued from Page 2

have, the more sponsors hear about us and pay attention to us. If each member could bring just one friend into the fold . . . . . Find the membership form in this issue of the Musings. Fill it out with your friend's name and other information then hand it to them and ask that they follow through and become one of our new members. You do that for them and they'll know you really want them included.

## 2008 MOBT Events

**June 7, 2008**  
Spring Fling (see attached flyer)

**June 28, 2008**  
Museum 5th Anniversary, Special Events (cars, trucks, buses)

**October 25, 2008**  
Annual Meeting, Business Meeting, Bus Tour, and Evening Dinner

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## Model Bus Musings By Doug Campbell

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Big news in the model bus hobby comes from Classic Metal Works/Mini Metals models in 1:87 scale! In this tiny "HO" scale, and sold currently nation-wide at hobby shops who are dealers of Walthers Hobby Products, is the new metal/plastic GMC PD 4103, available in Greyhound Lines colors with destination signs of



New York, Chicago, Los Angeles or plain, and also in the colorful graphics of Union Pacific (yellow/gray/red graphics in Los Angeles destination). The models are about 5 inches long, with rubber tires, and side mirrors that you attach. The graphics are completely authentic, and the real PD-4103 was built 1951-52, and was part

of a General Motors bus series known as "Silversides." The look of these coaches was based on mid-1930's aircraft-monocoque design using riveted unit construction, and no main frame. Greyhound purchased about half of all of the PD 4103 coaches that were made, and many of the PD-4103's re-

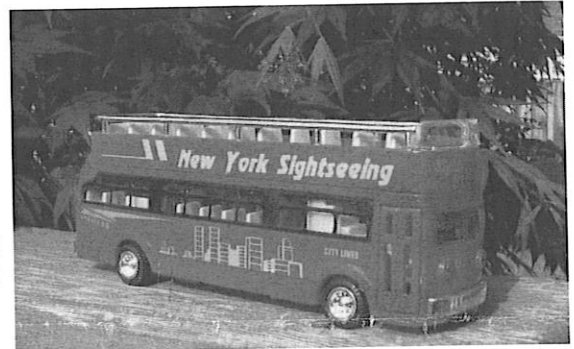
mained in highway service well into the 1970's! This new Classic Metal Works model of the PD-4103 is a great value

for its small price, and even has complete interior details too!

Sales of these new models have been excellent, and I'm told that we might expect more model buses from this manufacturer soon! Model is made in China.

Next to review this month is a model sold in many gift shops in New York City, and represents a somewhat

generic model in about 1/43 scale of a red open-top double-decker New York Sightseeing bus (I see many of these open-top buses used for sightseeing this summer too in Washington, DC!). The model is die-cast with "pull-back"



motor on its miniature rear wheels, and the model is just over 6 inches long with chrome plated deck rails & bumpers. The "City Lines" logo on the left side looks a little like a "Gray Line" emblem, and the right front lower-deck door opens too! On the rear is a logo of the Statue of Liberty, and it sells in many gift shops for a very inexpensive price! Model is made in China.

Happy Collecting!

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## This Old Bus By Bob Devine Johnstown Traction 402

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Bus 402 represents one of the most interesting transit properties of its time. Johnstown Traction Company was a street railway system operating in Johnstown, PA. Although a street railway, the company saw the advantages of buses, and purchased both gasoline and diesel powered buses from Yellow Coach.

Bus purchases continued in the 1940s. The company turned profitable in these years. It decided that streetcar operations would continue and did not convert to bus operations like other transit properties. Surprisingly in March 1945 it placed an order for 17 new streetcars known as PCCs.

In 1948, it placed an order with General Motors for ten model TDH 3207 diesel transit buses. They carried same numbers as the 400 series

PCC streetcars. Trolley coach operations began on November 21, 1951 with six 48-seat St. Louis Car Company trolley coaches. Johnstown witnessed an industrial slowdown during the mid 1950s and operating changes were necessary. Trolley coach service expanded in 1958 with the acquisition of 21 used trolley coaches.

Between 1951 and 1960, streetcars, trolley coaches and buses could be found on Johnstown's streets. Johnstown Traction was one of the last systems in the United States to abandon trolley operations. On June 11, 1960 streetcar operations came to an end. Trolley coach service continued until on November 11, 1967.

In July 1976, the Cambria County Transit Authority was formed and Johnstown Traction Company

ceased operations. 402 was already 28 years old at this time. Most transit properties retire buses after 15-20 years in service but 402 operated into the decade of the 1980s. When it was retired it had been driven one million miles.

402 was preserved and restored by the Cambria County Transit Authority. In July 2004 it was donated to the Museum of Bus Transportation. In 2006, it was repainted in A. B. & W. colors and numbered 881 for the movie *The Good Shepherd* starring Angelina Jolie and Robert DeNiro.

Several Johnstown streetcars were preserved along with trolley coach 713. Bus 402 is the only Johnstown bus to be preserved.