



Bus Musings

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The Newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation

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President's Message...

By Tom Collins

Here we are at the halfway point of the year 2008 and we're happy to report that attendance at the Museum is ahead of last year, despite the sharp increase in fuel prices. The Museum marketing segment has focused advertising on the local market with ads appearing mostly in central Pennsylvania newspapers and magazines. Trade publications, in the antique car category, always have an ad or an article about the Museum and, almost without exception, mention or show our buses. Frequently appearing is our "Forest Gump" bus which is the former Lakeland TDM 4515. The 1912 Martz White is in most of the Museum handouts even though it will not actually be with us over the Summer of 2008. Martz has it back in Wilkes-Barre where it has undergone complete restoration; we are looking forward to having it in early 2009.

Speaking of the Museum, the full time executive director for the past five years, Pat Foltz, has resigned his position to explore other interests. The Museum Board is currently interviewing candidates for this position. Since the Bus Museum is a tenant we will hold a position on the interview panel and assist in the selection of a candidate.

Other Auto Museum news of interest is that the Antique Motorcycle Club of America is now a tenant in the Museum building and has an agreement with the Museum Board in a manner similar to ours. Having them here with some 40 interesting old motorcycles (like Indians) assists in sharing the costs of operation of the Museum and should save some monies over a period of time.

Our Spring Fling was an overwhelming success with nearly 400 attendees this year. While most of our Board members had some hand in the function, the credit for "getting the word out" goes solely to Bob Beard. Early on, Bob put out first class news releases to all of the major industry publications and wrote personal letters to many suppliers. For the first time, this netted us a set of specific sponsors, each of whom donated \$200 to the event. Bob has done a nice job of writing a recap of this annual event in this issue of the newsletter.

Looking around the Fling, we could not help but notice that our hobby is "graying" and that there are very few (almost none) young people in this hobby of ours. Most of us who are involved developed our in-

terest back in early days of transit (perhaps even in the trolley era) when the inter-city bus was the "king" of travel between cities. There does not seem to be that interest among the younger set these days – perhaps because the youth looks upon buses as simply an outgrowth of the yellow school bus that they had to ride in their last few years of school. A bus may have appeared as transportation to a sporting event or a class trip but it had no special interest other than the function it was providing.

The Museum of Bus Transportation, as most of you know, is a Region (chapter) of the Antique Automobile Club of America. The AACA, as it is known, has 60,000 members nationwide but, it too, is suffering from a lack of young members. Antique car events and shows are usually attended by older people. They are taking a stand to attract more students and we should do the same. If you know of a young person who has a fascination for buses – the

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☰ Along the Line...

Financials. We've completed our financials for the first half of 2008. General income (dues, special events, and contributions) was \$44,420.90. Expenses (including "prepaid" rent to the Museum of \$43,176) were \$85,653.94. Net loss, for the period, was \$36,306.15 but less that the corresponding period in 2007. Contributions were less than 2007, generally figured to correspond to the economy and not unlike other similar organizations.

Spring Fling Receipts. The successful Spring Fling brought us total receipts of \$2,224 and expenses were only \$672.48 so our net profit was \$1,551.52. Thanks to our 5 corporate sponsors, Michaud Bus Sales, Lancer Insurance, United Motorcoach Association, Prevost Car, and MCI for their support – it was through their financial assistance that this event was so successful.

Membership Cards. If for some reason you have lost, misplaced, or even never received a membership card for the Museum of Bus Transportation PLEASE let us know – by mail or by phone at 717-566-7100 X 119. We will issue you a new one. Membership cards are especially important if you want to gain free entry to the Museum – they must be shown to the agent on duty and presented at the gift shop for the discount. Speaking of the gift shop members must pay the Pennsylvania sales tax; members are NOT exempt Pennsylvania sales tax. Our organization is exempt from paying taxes when WE purchase items such as supplies, printing, etc. but individual members are not.

Paving Project. As mentioned briefly in the President's article on the front page, we have paved a portion of the grass lot at the George M. Sage Annex. Mark's Paving Service did this for us at the special price of \$4,000. This segment has been a large improvement at the Annex and we hope to expand this to other areas of the lot in the future. The \$4,000 has been included in the \$85,653.94 set of expenses.

New Members. We welcome the following new members; Roger Handren (life member), Roger Loucks, Pennsylvania Bus Association

MCI Park Bench. MCI has been in the bus industry for 75 years and to include the Museum of Bus Transportation in its celebration they have designed and had constructed a special metal bench. Featuring their famous MCI logo, it also honors us with the inscription "For Service to the Industry".

Patricia Ziska, Executive Vice President of Sales for Motor Coach Industries, Inc. had this bench delivered to us just in time for the "Spring Fling". This handsome item is now on display in a "bus stop setting" near our oldest display buses, generally the ones which garner the immediate attention of the many visitors to the Museum. We have extended our thanks to MCI, in the form of a letter, but want to again acknowledge receipt of this on these pages. See page 3 for photos.

Gift Shop Update. Sharon and Oliver Odgen continue to professionally manage the Gift Shop and monitor sales. Special T-shirts featuring buses in our own fleet have been the big sellers. Books by Ken Springith have also sold quite well. We recently re-established ourselves with Corgi and will be expanding this line. Total gross sales for the first six months of 2008 were \$2,614.45. Check out the offerings on our website.

Update - Harold H. Geissenheimer Collection. Member Dave Biles advises that the collection has now been removed from Harold's apartment and storage location which included 238 boxes of rail and bus artifacts. U.S transit operations represented in the collection were those from Pittsburgh, Chicago, San Francisco, and various New Jersey operations. Dave advises that it will take several months to sort out the material for the Museum. In our last issue we incorrectly reported that Mr. Geissenheimer had passed away. He is, at this time, very ill and will most likely require constant care in a facility.

Fleet Report. Our dedicated fleet manager, Rev. Dan Lehman, continues his series of work sessions at the George M. Sage Complex. For the months of July, August, and into September the days of the week will vary from the general "every other Friday". If you care to assist with cleaning, polishing, touch up, and minor mechanical work please call the Museum at 717-566-7100 X 119 and we will get back to you on the specific dates when someone will be at the Complex.

Several interesting vehicles have been offered to us and are on the way including two ex-Atlantic City jitneys, a 1951 International Metro, and a 1960 Chevrolet Step-Van. Thomas Tallentire, Cincinnati, OH, wrote to offer us a 1937 Yellow Coach model 733 which, at one time, operated in Lancaster OH. These little transit buses, only 83" wide, were produced from 1936-1939. It would be great to acquire one and we've asked Thomas to provide us with some more data and photos. Always paramount with receiving more vehicles is possible restoration, upkeep, and storage.

A considerable amount of work has been performed on the EX-Altoona (AMTRAN) #153 by a team headed up by volunteer, and devoted member, Bob Devine. Assisting him were Ken McNellis and Jeff Holland.

Thanks to members Cal Little and Dino Mandros, our '46 Ford Transit (model 69-B) at least looks good on the outside. Painted last year, Cal Little located the proper turn signals and reflectors and installed them in time for the "Fling". Dino paid to have the bus professionally lettered and numbered as Lebanon Coach Company #106. It looks the part, although it is a one door and all of Lebanon's Fords were two door. The Ford needs a myriad of inside work and doesn't run but as a static display is looks pretty good.

The Fleet committee is preparing to change the indoor display, in the Museum in early October. There will be some transit representation in the Fall changeover.

SPRING FLING DRAWS 400 *by Bob Beard*

The Bus Museum's Spring Fling entertained 400 guests. This beat last year's 350 attendance which, in itself, was triple the number of people in 2006 (before the Memorial Annex and Grounds were acquired). This year's Bus Memorabilia Flea Market produced 10 more vendor tables. Over 20 vintage and unusual buses were on display outside the annex building and 2 additional buses from the New Jersey Transit Historical Collection, both in the old Public Service livery. This crowd gathered early and the two shuttle buses which were to start at 8:30 AM began their runs from the main Museum to the George Sage Complex an hour earlier. Thanks to **Rohrer Bus Service** and **Wolf Bus Lines** for the drivers and coaches.

"Dan's Diner" began operation before 8 AM with breakfast items and by 10:30 had switched to a menu of hot dogs with sauerkraut, cheeseburgers, meatball subs, and chili con carne along with coffee, cold sodas and bottled water. Brother Dan Lehman and his partner, Howard Nice, stayed busy all day. Just after noon, museum president Tom Collins joined vice president Dan Lehman in a public mortgage burning celebration, officially granting your Museum of Bus Transportation full ownership of this complex.

Of course, the big draw of every Spring Fling is North America's largest bus collectibles flea market which this year expanded to 27 tables. Even more, we found we had room for as many as 20 additional tables and some guests for the day expressed the desire to have their own tables in 2009. Although abnormally warm outside, the annex stayed comfortable inside. Vendors were happy with the sales they made and the buyers found the prices fair. And, just like last year, folks drove and flew in from Canada as well as the mid west and west coast.

The well publicized Author's Table was a most popular new addition to the Spring Fling and brought in 6 writers of transportation books and stories, 5 of whom stayed all day to meet and greet their readers and auto-



graph their books.

As the free Fling began to wind down around 2 PM, most of the guests took advantage of the greatly reduced admission fee to the Antique Auto and Bus Museum where they parked to visit that facility before leaving for home or the rest of their Hershey weekend. Each of these visitors also received a discount in the Museum's large gift shop.

We offer special thanks to the sponsors of the 2008 Spring Fling including **ABC Companies, Lancer Insurance, Michaud Bus Sales, Motor Coach Industries, and Prevost Car, Inc.** Their early contributions very much eased the expenses of such an affair. In addition, Motor Coach Industries and Lancer Insurance both visited

bearing gifts.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The annual Spring Fling is about you as well as the Museum. It's your day with us. How can we make it better? Some suggestions were made and we're open to others, including criticism. Statements included:

If the Museum always needs money, why can't we charge a guest for the day instead of allowing the parking, shuttle, and fling itself to be free? Would that deter you from attending? Suppose you were bringing your family? And, I'd be more willing to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Spring Fling *continued from page 3*

travel from a great distance if it was more than a one day affair. Would you like to see in a 2-day event? 2 days of the flea market, the main Museum and lunch as we have now? A Friday and Saturday?

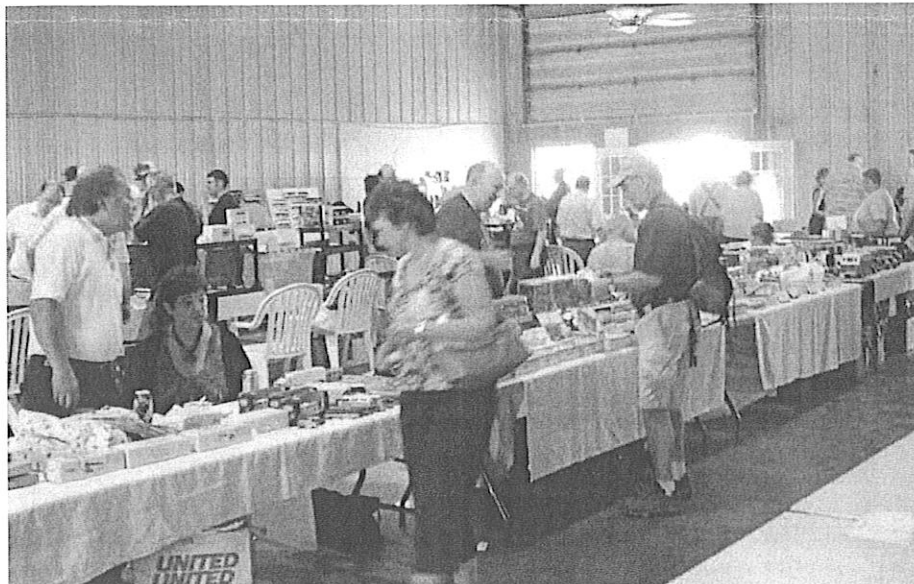
Bear in mind that there would be a much higher cost to you to cover buses for upwards of 400 people to tour or to and from a dinner as well as the meal itself. The Museum officers and directors hope to keep this a free event and expect the Flea Market to grow even bigger each year. Please write Tom Collins, President, Museum of Bus transportation. 161 Museum

Drive, Hershey PA 17033. Or, e-mail the busmuseum@yahoo.com. Talk to us!

VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED

Your Museum is still in critical need of volunteers, both workers and docents to man the display floor. We are always looking for friends who live within driving distance and who have a background and/or knowledge of the bus industry and who can devote time to meet and greet museum visitors. Also, especially during the summertime, we need a good bit of help on weekend at the George Sage Com-

plex. There are buses to be cleaned, touch-up to be done, some mechanical work, and the acres of grounds need cutting and trimming regularly. Don't let the words "work party" turn you off. These days can be fun and rewarding and usually Vice President Lehman opens Dan's Diner for his helpers. Contact the Museum via e-mail at: thebusmuseum@yahoo.com or call and leave a message at: (717) 566-7100 ext 119.



Spring Fling *2008*

LEFT. Guests of Spring Fling enjoying browsing the many items available for sale.

RIGHT. MCI donated the park bench with an inscription and their famous logo appearing on a plaque attached to the bench..

2008 MOBT Events

Board Meetings

September 2
October 7
November 4
December 2

NOTE: no August board meeting

Other Events

October 25, 2008

Annual Meeting, Business Session, Bus Display, Motorcoach Tour, and Evening Dinner. Howard H. Roberts, President, New York City Transit is our honored speaker. All events will be held at the Bus Museum in Hershey.

President's Message continued from front page

person, perhaps, who spends a lot of time riding local and intercity buses and speaking to the drivers and support personnel about buses - PLEASE let them know about us and give them an application to join.

We've added a fair amount of new members this year but, on the other hand, have lost some members who have passed away, moved, and, in a few cases have not renewed. We'll need to add to our base membership over the next few years just to keep up with attrition.

Mr. Ralph Fetrow, a recent addition to our Board, has continued to work with our investments and this should bode well for us over the next few years. We continue to control expenses. We have retired the mortgage for the storage facility and are pleased to announce that the monthly cost of the maintenance at this facility is very

low - confined to insurance, electric service, and some minor maintenance.

Buses continue to be offered to us. However, we turn down more than we accept due to required maintenance and the lack of additional storage space. We are pleased to advise you that we did pave over some of the grass area at the rear of the Annex in order to provide a safe and protected parking and staging area. This project was completed just in time for the Spring Fling.

We encourage you to support the ABC Companies as often as you can - they have done so VERY much for us. Their body shops are among the finest and you'll always get friendly service (if this sounds like a commercial in a way it is!) but they have been so very good to us we need to tell the "bus world about them"

Remember our Annual Meeting on October 25, 2008. Please start planning to attend and, while you are at it, have a good Summer!



Model Bus Musings *By Doug Campbell*



A wonderfully detailed and realistic HO scale (1/86 scale) replica of a 1960 French motor coach is being reviewed in this issue of Bus Musings. This motorcoach was used at Orly Airport near Paris – the Autocar Saviem SC, by Norev Toys of France, with the model made in China, and a re-issue of a late 1960's Norev model which was also made in plas-

tic, but back then made at their French manufacturing plant. This new version is in a bright blue & white with Air France graphics. I remember riding in from Orly Airport into the Air France bus terminal in central Paris during my first visit to France in the mid-1960's, on a coach just like this toy model, and must call this a most realistic replica! The model is all plastic, and full of tiny details, which Norev models are known for.

This Old Bus: 711 Capital Area Transit *By Bob Devine*

Harrisburg Railways operated its last streetcar in 1939. Although the system was operated entirely by buses since then, the name Harrisburg Railways remained. In August 1972, Hurricane Agnes devastated the area and seriously impacted the local economy. Feeling its effects and with decreased patronage forced Harrisburg Railways to file with the Public Utilities Commission to abandon most of its routes. The few profitable ones would be retained. The smaller Valley Transit Company had abandoned all of its routes on the west shore of the Susquehanna River in 1970. With a need for public transportation in the area, the City of Harrisburg along with Cumberland and Dauphin Counties, acquired the assets of Harrisburg Railways. The Cumberland-Dauphin-Harrisburg Transit Authority was established in 1973.

One of the first objectives of Capital Area Transit, as it is known today as was to replace an aging bus fleet. The newest buses in the fleet at that time were built in 1961. An order was placed with the General Motors Truck and Coach Division for 55 new

air conditioned T6H-4523A model buses. They were built under Sales Order YC-204822-76 and carried serial numbers 1261-1315. Specifications included Midland outward folding four leaf rear exit doors and Allison VS2-6 automatic transmissions. They were built in February and March 1975. Bus 711 was shipped on March 3.

The 700s were very reliable and the backbone of the fleet for several years. Capital Area Transit has a reputation for high maintenance standards. In May 1993 retirements began with the purchase of 15 by Altoona Metro Transit. Retirements continued through 2000 and all were retired with the arrival of 21 new El Dorados.

Bus 711 was one of the last in service. The Museum of Bus Transportation sponsored a fan trip in 2001 using bus 711. The trip was part of the museum's annual meeting held that year at CAT headquarters. At the end of the trip, Capital Area Transit General Manager Jim Hoffer announced 711 would be donated to the museum.

Bus 711 is an example of the final generation of New Look buses built by General Motors. Improvements included an environmental improvement package (a catalytic muffler and vertically mounted air intakes to reduce air emissions), roof top emergency escape hatch and reinforced rear engine bulkheads. When production ended in November 1976, a total of 2,214 model T6H-4523As were built. It was the best selling model in GM's "45" series New Look line.



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