

Bus Musings

Volume 11 Number 4 • Fall 2009

The Newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation

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From the Board Room.....

It's hard to believe that this newsletter is our final one for the calendar year 2009.

2009 has been an interesting if not financially rewarding year for your organization. We had our plus and minus items and, not unlike many other organizations, no significant large contributions.

On the plus side, we had:

- a VERY successful two-day "Spring Fling",
- the finalization of a set of by-laws,
- the addition of several new pieces of rolling stock,
- enhanced gift shop stock and sales,
- less state-related paperwork,
- completion of the timeline through the 1990's,
- addition of Dave Millhouser as an advisor to the Board.

Of significant importance were the completion of a business and strategic plan as well as a fleet appraisal (courtesy of Michaud Bus Sales).

On the minus side was:

- the resignation of long-time board member Bob Beard,
- the inability to obtain any grants,
- increased transportation costs for vehicles, and
- slow growth in membership and volunteers.

Few general donations were received in 2009 but we did receive several significant ones designated for specific projects.

Shifting the subject matter, we changed the format of the Annual Meeting (see special column and photos) and were

pleased with the response. It was also financially rewarding to the MBT,

An item which came up in the general discussion period of the Annual Meeting was the request for distribution of a membership list. We reviewed several organizations and have noted that most of them do allow that. We have enclosed a membership list with this mailing for your reference.

Board incumbents John Dockendorf, Bob Smith, and Howard Nice were re-elected to the Board for another three year term. We received nearly 160 ballots which was an excellent response from the general membership.

Plans for 2010 include:

- some fundraising,
- continuation of a two-day Fling,
- pursuing additional storage space,
- enlisting the new strategic plan, and
- repeating the very successful "2009" Annual Meeting format.

We could always use more volunteers, new members, and unsolicited contributions to the general fund. The Museum of Bus Transportation is an IRS 501-C-3 organization so this helps all contributors at tax time!

Enjoy your holidays and have a Happy and Successful New Year!

Along the Line...

Annual Meeting

Tom Collins

Our 2009 Annual Meeting, also known as Bus Day at the Museum, was held on Saturday October 31, 2009.

We are pleased to report that our revised format was very well received; we had 56 registrants for the day which was about on par with recent years with the old format. We have to note, however, that our best attendance was in 2003 when we had 109 registrants when Jim Lehrer was our guest speaker.

Early registrants were treated to coffee and Danish, with a Halloween flair, in the Rotunda area of the Museum which was a new item this year. This "coffee and chat" period also provided us a chance to setup a table for some odds and ends that we wanted to sell off, handled by member and Board advisor Terry Costentino. Oliver Odgen had a table to sign his new book "Fifth Avenue Coach Company".

The business portion of the meeting was held in the Regions and Chapters Room with attendees receiving a packet of material on The MBT's operation during 2009. Included were the minutes from the 2008 Annual Meeting, a draft of the fleet appraisal being done by Michaud Bus Sales, our new strategic plan, a current budget, and an overview of 2009. This packet enabled us to complete the business portion of the day in a 90 minute window.

Our guest speaker this year was James JeBran, Vice President of Trans-Bridge Lines, Inc. in Bethlehem, PA. Jim and his family which includes a well known bus name from the past, "A. J." Ferraro, founded Trans-Bridge in 1941. The current Trans-Bridge includes companies which were purchased over the years. MBT members were, in some cases, surprised to learn how many former operations are now part of Trans-Bridge including Lehigh Valley Transit (portion), Delaware River Coach Lines, West Hunterdon

Transit, Lehigh Valley Motorcoach (formerly Jim Thorpe Transportation), and Tri-City Coach Lines. Jim's very interesting presentation focused on the equipment operated over the years which delighted the attendees.

After his talk he was presented with a hand painted Corgi 4515 in Trans-Bridge colors - professionally done by Bob Garrett.

A first class buffet luncheon was served in the Rotunda area preceding a motorcoach trip in a Trans-Bridge Lines MCI to Lancaster County. The bus operator was a 26 year veteran, and former Pennsylvania Bus Association operator of the year.

After all expenses were paid your organization netted a profit of \$3,780.36 which goes to the general fund. That figure exceeded the net for both 2007 and 2008.

General Museum Items

Ralph Fetrow

Attendance to date for 2009 is 39,588 slightly less than the same period in 2008.

Of note is automobile "Meet Week", the first full week in October, saw fairly good weather in the Hershey area. Crowds stayed on the Flea and car display areas rather than visiting the Museum. During periods of foul weather car week crowds tend to migrate to the Museum. Friday, October 9, however, the Museum set a one day record of 1109 guests.

"Meet Week" is the time of the year when we change our display. Our "Night at the Museum" involves removing every bus from the display and then moving them back in the early hours the following day. Our crew this year included Sharon and Oliver Odgen, Dan Lehman, Don Barlup, Tom Mozer, Bob Smith, Ed Wolf, and Tom Collins.

Also related to Museum items is the fact that the name has not to date been changed. It is still the AACA

Museum (dba The Auto Museum at Hershey). The AACAM Board will take further action on this at their Fall Board meeting.

By mid-November 109 MBT members (does not include the Annual Meeting) had presented their membership cards for free admission to the Museum.

TimeLine

Bob Smith

TimeLine coordinator Bob Smith reports that he has completed and sold most of the panels for the 1990's.

Following this timeline, a set of panels depicting the history and development of the entire bus industry including intercity, transit, and school through the decades (1900's to 1990's) serves to educate the general public on the role of the motorbus in the United States and Canada.

We are taking the necessary steps to possibly incorporate this set of archives into a book. If you would like to purchase a timeline panel, new or one which was previously installed without a sponsor, please contact us .

Gift Shop

Oliver Ogden

Sales, especially of books, has allowed us to surpass ALL of 2008 in total sales in just ten months. Sales to date have produced \$16,451.45 in revenue versus \$14,372.03 for ALL of 2008 and we still have two months to go!

Books, Clothing, and Bus models are the three leading sales items.

Gift shop director Oliver Odgen is always on the lookout for new bus related items and is careful in his wholesale purchases to control our stock and costs.

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☰ Along the Line... continued

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The Museum has named the Gift Shop which includes the combined shop/cars and buses, the "Three Dog Garage".

Additional Coach Storage

Bob Devine and Ken McNelis

In late 2008, the Board discussed the possibility of erecting additional bus storage facilities to accommodate the growing historic fleet. After some research was done several alternatives evolved. Enlarging the current George M. Sage Annex in the hamlet of Union Deposit or building a new separate steel or wooden pole barn or "stable" were included in the 24 page document which was reviewed by the Board at the November meeting. Union Deposit is in South Hanover Township and officials were contacted and helpful to the design team.

Costs to erect a structure could range from a low of about \$45,000 for a "stable" type of facility which would provide cover for buses on three sides, to a full fledge steel garage similar to our current one which could escalate costs to \$80,000. We will include this in our new fund raising effort.

This project would offer a major contributor "naming rights" and it was suggested that perhaps there was an individual member or company which may well be interested in doing that.

As always, we invite your inquiries.

Fleet News

Dan Lehman and Tom Mozer

We've had several interesting fleet related items surface over the last few months.

Of significance is the "adoption" of our somewhat recently acquired 1929 Pierce Arrow bus by Rohrer Bus Sales located in Duncan-

non, PA. The Rohrer organization is one of the largest operators of school buses in Pennsylvania and is also the regional sales outlet for Thomas buses.

When H.E. Rohrer started in the school bus business it was with a Pierce Arrow school bus – tracing the routes of our Pierce Arrow we learned that it started "life" as a school bus. Rohrer is returning it to school bus livery in their extensive body shop. We are indebted to them for this offer and are looking forward to seeing the bus in our display area in 2010.

Our rare 1951 Transit, aka Transit, was also "adopted" by an anonymous source. It is currently at the Supreme Corporation located in Jonestown, PA where it is being returned to its original Detroit Department of Street Railways livery – that well known cream and red. It needed some glass panels, a new bumper, some marker lights, etc.; all of that is being done in their shop. This bus is expected to be returned to us in early 2010.

We received the 1940 White 786-1 back from Bergen Auto and Hudson Body Company. It has received a new full set of seat covers and backs and Hudson painted and re-lettered the roof. The upholstery and labor for it was donated by Nancy Citti, president of Bergen Auto Upholstery.

The long awaited Flxible-Twin model FL-33, a low production Fageoliner, was delivered to us in early September. We were pleased with the general appearance of the bus which, unfortunately, was subject to outside storage for the past two years. A complete new paint job is a must; anyone out there want to "adopt" the Flx-Twin?

The fleet manger donated five buses to us in late Fall including a Flxible Metro, an ex-Red Rose Transit, an AM General which was an ex-Greater Richmond Transit, a 40' Orion transit, an ex-Rabbit Transit, a '54 Chevrolet/Wayne school bus, and a GM 4905 which was owned from new by a church in Philadelphia.

We have an offer of a rare MCI MC-5C. This unit is on the West Coast and we are trying to arrange transportation of it to us. One of our retired members offered to fly out to get the vehicle so we are working on those details.

The accompanying photos will show the Flxible Two-level coach which we received in mid-Summer. As pictured, it is still in Wilkes-Barre, PA awaiting mechanical work. We plan to have this returned to Trailways livery.

The George M. Sage Annex



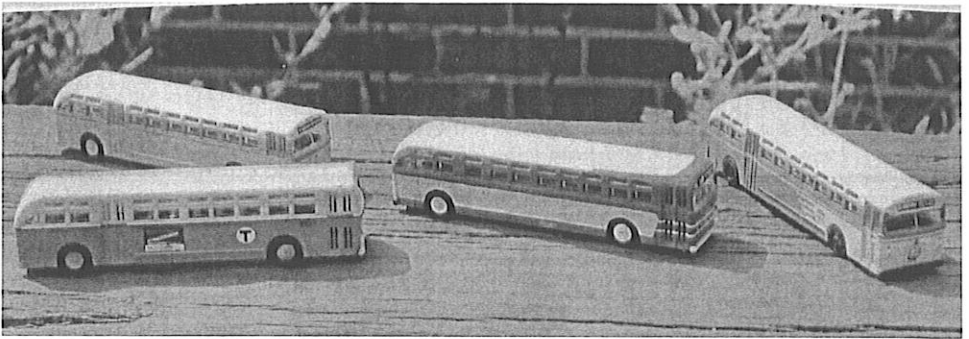
has been winterized and we are now looking ahead to having more volunteers in the Spring to come on out and assist with maintaining or growing fleet.

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Model Bus Musings by Doug Campbell

Two model manufacturers have introduced new lines of model buses into the American hobby market this Fall. First is Athearn (www.athearn.com) with their classic HO and N scale 1950's Flxible Visi-coach models, in 4 handsome paint schemes: Badger, Consolidated, Fred Harvey, and Utah Parks. These models are so small yet loaded with details such as air horns, grab iron bar at rear, added sign on the Fred Harvey issue, and even the tiny Flxible builders logo plate on the front!

Visicoaches were popular tour buses of the 1950's era with about 925 totally produced between 1950 and 1958. They were powered by Buick "straight-eight" engines & GM engines were offered most of the production run. Gasoline engines were also supplied to Flxible by Fageol and White. These tiny models have full interior details too. They are available at MBOT's gift shop or at any local hobby shop. Tiny windshield wipers and side rear-view mirrors are attached also,



and the body shape and overall streamlining of the real bus is so per-

fectly captured in this small HO and N scales by Athearn Models!



In N scale, Wheels of Time Models have released an excellent White C49 coach in various bus graphics and variations such as Avenue B & East Broadway (New York City), Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco, and Western Greyhound, among others. Their website is (note spelling!) www.wheelsotime.com. Details on these very small coaches are just amazing; you can even change the destination sign (it reverses) with the little tool enclosed with each model, and many of the variations include advertisement panels too! There are full interior details, and flawless pain applications on these wonderful classic old 1950's coaches! Happy Collecting!

This Old Bus: New York City Transit Authority 8466 By Bob Devine

The largest buyer of General Motor's TDH-5303 model was the City of New York. Between 1963 and 1967, the city acquired 2,112 units. This accounted for approximately 29% of the total production of 6,205 buses. 552 buses were assigned to the New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA) and 1,560 were assigned to its subsidiary the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (MaBSTOA). The final and largest order placed was for 682 buses in 1966. The NYCTA received 202 to replace the remaining TDH-5101s built in 1948-49. MaBSTOA retired all former Fifth Avenue Coach TDH-4509s, TDH-5104s and Surface Transit Macks.

Built under Contract MB-17OA the first units began arriving in December 1966 and continued into March 1967. These were the first new air-conditioned buses in the fleet. The city did inherit 11 air conditioned buses from Fifth Avenue Coach when it acquired that property in 1962. All came equipped with illuminated roof mounted advertising card frames and power driven side destination signs. On MaBSTOA buses, the side destination signs carried the route number and name; while the TAs had the route number and destination. Standee windows and the familiar GM logo and vent trim was omitted. Seats were American Seating style 6432 arranged along the sides with only the rear bench seat facing forward. MaBSTOA buses had green seats while the TA ones had dark gray. Seating capacity was 43. The interior was painted light turquoise and the dash board was black. The exterior and skirts were painted dark metallic green. There serial numbers were 5303-5091 to 5303-5772 and were numbered in the 8000 series. Depots receiving them were:

MaBSTOA: 8301 - 8325 Coliseum; 8326 - 8350 West Farms; 8351 - 8375 Kingsbridge; 8376 - 8470 Amsterdam; 8471 - 8545 100th Street; 8546 - 8620 54th Street; 8621 - 8685 132nd Street and 8696 - 8780 146st Street
NYCTA: 8001 - 8040 Flushing; 8041 - 8080 Jamaica; 8081 - 8122 Flatbush and 8123 - 8202 Manhattan Depot

In 1972, they began to be repainted in to the two-tone blue color scheme of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Also around this time the side destination signs were removed and replaced by an advertising panel. In 1978 repaints began emerg-



Bus 8466 is on display at the 2022 NYCTA Bus Fest in Brooklyn, NY

ing with white replacing the light blue. They continued in service in service until 1983. When problems developed in 1984 with the Grumman Flexible model 870 buses, the TA retired the entire fleet. To fill in this gap retired 5303s were pulled from storage. The TDH-5303s were reliable and 23 were selected to be rebuilt by Blitz. These continued in service into the 1990s **and were numbered 5000 to 5022. Those rebuilt were: 8585, 8304, 8323, 8426, 8143, 8526, 8545, 8430, 8542, 8610, 8438, 8050, 8591, 8619, 8367, 8568, 8192, 8624, 8109, 8131, 8546, 8613 and 8757. As part of the rebuild, they received 2X2 seating and all billboards advertising panels were removed. All were assigned to**

100th Street Depot.

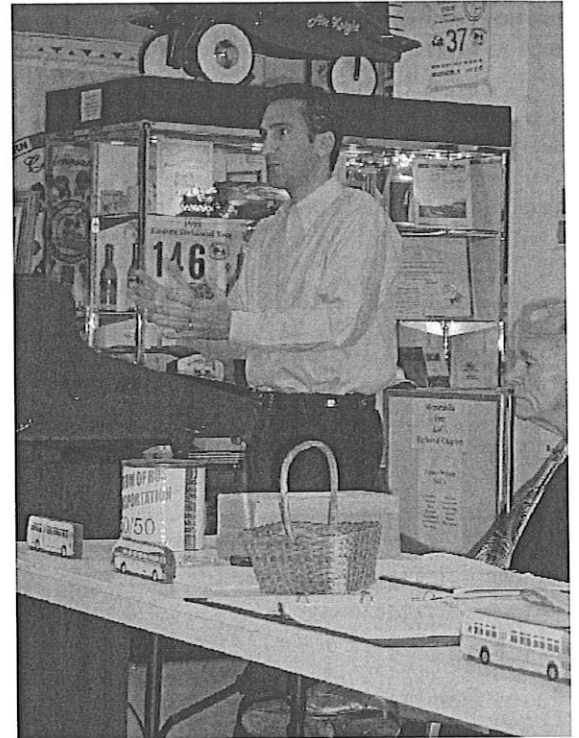
Bus number 8466 was set aside for the museum fleet. Assigned builder's number 5303-5256, was delivered on December 27, 1966. It could often be found on the M104 Broadway route. A new express bus service was established from the Yorkville section of Manhattan to Wall Street in 1971. New T6H-5305As were used but as the service expanded numbers 8460 to 8474 were converted to express service. The seating format was changed from the hard plastic "bowling aisle" arrangement of 43 to 47delux seats in the familiar 2X2 transit arrangement

using American Seating style 6592. They were also assigned to the M41-Culture Loop 1 route which operated only on weekends and holidays. Upon retirement, 8466 was selected for the historic fleet. It has been returned to its as delivered appearance although the express bus seats remain. It is operational and is a regular at Bus Rodeos and the annual Bus Fest. It is one of seven GM "new look" buses in the Transit Authority's

historic fleet. It is stored at Flatbush Depot in Brooklyn.



2009 Annual Meeting



More Annual Meeting photos
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Membership Upgrade

John Dockendorf

If you are a member who renews annually you may want to consider "upgrading" to a life membership. Upgrading from the standard \$30 per year or corporate membership of \$100 is \$500. The upgrade will be applied to the general fund and allow your organization to enhance the fleet and archives. Members who do this will receive one of our Capitol Bus Company Corgi Flxible models as an added bonus. We hope you will consider this.

Strategic / Business Plan

Ralph Fetrow

The following items are some of the objectives in the recently completed plan:

- Develop a fund raising plan
- Enhance the fleet of buses
- Increase membership
- Balance budget
- Conduct 50/50 at all meetings and functions
- Sell off some of the fleet and equipment (as deemed excess)
- Obtain grants
- Obtain additional storage space
- Establish a "premier member"

category

- Enhance marketing

2010 MBT Events

Board meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm unless there is a conflict with a Holiday.

Spring Fling is scheduled for Friday, June 4, 2010 and Saturday, June 5, 2010

Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 30, 2010 with both the meeting and luncheon at the Museum.

Mark Your Calendars!

MBT Contributors

The following MBT members have contributed monies or, in kind donations in recent months:

Bob Garrett
Hugh Mose
Walter Earl
Tom Mozer
Charles Wotring
Dan Lehman
Tom Collins
Virginia Reynolds

Mike Lennon
Howard Wales
Ed Erickson
Robert Jones
Don Coffin
Al Mandel
Howard Nice
Bernard Podlucky
Don Barlup
Clark Pyewell
Bill Gregory
Ralph Fetrow
Ken McNelis

Bob DeVine
Bob Sauer
Charles Webb
George Smerk
Ed Maloy
Terry Cosentino
Dino Mandros
Mike Glikin

Most of the above monetary contributions were for the general fund but others were "project specific

such as the recently acquired Flxible Twin bus).

All of the above are deeply appreciated and individual acknowledgements have been sent or are being prepared. Support received helps us to sustain the organization and enhance our vehicles and other archives.

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Annual Meeting Photos continued from page 6

North America's Largest Bus Memorabilia Flea Market!

**Join us the first Friday and Saturday of every June
at the Museum of Bus Transportation's
George Sage Complex, Hershey, PA**

- > badges > books > photos
- > bus toys > bus models > fare boxes
- > magazines > destination signs
- > punches > caps > pictures
- > almost anything you might wish to collect!

Table and space is available, first paid – first reserved, until we reach our 50 table maximum. Flea Market is under cover inside the Memorial Annex!

- > Auto parking at the Museum.
- > Shuttle from the Museum to and from the Complex.
- > Entrance to the antique bus display and flea market.
- > Parking available at the Museum for buses during the day. (There is a charge for overnight parking of buses, motorhomes, conversions. No hook ups.)
- > Food is available.
- > A small admission fee covers 2 days!

Flea market hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day, giving you time to visit the main Bus Museum (no fee for card holding members). All three floors of auto, bus and



motorcycle displays and exhibits will be open to our guests. Museum closes at 5 p.m.



Watch our web site at www.busmuseum.org
or contact thebusmuseum@yahoo.com