

Bus Musings

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The Newsletter of the Museum of Bus Transportation

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From the Board Room.....

We're changing this title to focus, not on the President, but, rather the functions of the Board and major projects since the last issue of the Newsletter.

We've had a fairly busy quarter. Board members have attended and participated in the recent Pennsylvania Bus Association's Marketplace at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex/ Harrisburg. We also had several members in attendance at the Pennsylvania Public Transit Association's annual meeting in Hershey, PA. At both of the above functions we were able to meet "face to face" with private and public bus personnel. We handed out copies of the excellent material prepared by Bob Beard and set to print by the marketing staff at ABC. This packet really tells our story.

By the way, we recently adopted the term MBT rather than using MOBT; it seems catchier; after all, what is an MOBT?!

We've arranged for an appearance at the busy Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. Most likely we will setup a booth in one of the aisles to attract the many bus operators and management personnel who pass through the building each day. We may be contacting some of you to assist us in this venture, most likely in July.

As of this writing we have not picked up the bus material from the Harold Geissenheimer collection. Arrangements have been made with board member Dino Mandros to pickup the 12 boxes of bus related data.

Discussed at a recent Board meeting was the possibility of co-hosting a "Bus Bash" in 2010. After discussion it was decided and voted to continue with our "Spring Fling" rather than link up with a proposed "Bus Fling".

Our big news is, perhaps, the fact that after many years we now have a combination business and strategic plan. Board member Ralph Fetrow and his colleague Jill Young made an excellent audio presentation at a special Board meeting to outline the program. We've reached a consensus on the draft plan and have assigned Board members and other members to various aspects of the plan.

One of the first items was to obtain a list of former MBT members who for some reason have not renewed membership. Direct mailing material is being prepared to send to these individuals.

One of the items proposed was an increase in dues from the current \$30 to a new rate of \$35 which was ultimately ruled out. Keeping dues at the lower rate seemed fair. Current members receive a quarterly newsletter and free admission to the Museum – a portion of dues is retained to assist us in our various projects – most of the members we polled seemed to think the current dues are fair.

We are going to sell off several pieces of equipment in our fleet and be VERY careful in selecting additional units at this time (see separate fleet news for an update on this).

Most likely, by the time you receive this, we will have completed the Spring Fling. Hopefully, we can report that it was a success (will be hard to match 2008's but we are going to try).

The Board continues to function well as a team often going into lengthy discussions on various topics before we take them to a vote. We'll continue to keep you posted and thanks so much for your continued interest and support.

Submitted by Tom Collins/President

Along the Line...

Gift Shop Update

Oliver and Sharon Odgen

Mr. Odgen reported that gift shop sales for March 2009 were higher than the corresponding month in 2008.

The "Spring Fling" featured 2009 T-shirt will be the Wolf Bus Lines, Inc, 195I Fitzjohn Cityliner. This unit, thanks to the Wolf organization, is currently on the Museum floor and is very popular with our visitors. We often allow visitors to actually board this vehicle if a docent is on the floor.

There are many interesting books and models available at the gift shop and the Odgens continue to keep the display looking fresh.

Timeline Update

Bob Smith

We have moved past the 1980's and are now into the 1990's. Timeline panels are being developed for Trailways, Coach USA, and Greyhound among others. Cost of these panels is around \$500 – several are less, depending on their size.

One of the 1980 panels depicting the development and evolution of the RTS was dedicated to the late Ken Snyder. Ken, as reported earlier, passed away several months ago. He had a great love for the RTS bus.

If you want to sponsor a timeline please contact us at the Museum office. We sell these, basically, for cost.

Volunteers / Docents

Oliver Odgen

The AACA Museum hosted all of its volunteers including bus personnel in mid-April. Nearly 100 volunteers were honored at a dinner replete with a guest speaker.

Sharon Odgen received a lifetime AACA membership for her 1,000 hours of volunteer service, Dan Lehman was

honored for his 2,000 hours of service, and Olicer Odgen for his 3,000 hours of service.

Nearly 96,000 total hours of volunteer service has been expended at the Museum since it opened in June of 2003.

The cadre of actual "bus volunteers" is rather small and we'd surely like to recruit some additional help. If you'd like to volunteer, we'll work entirely around your availability! Contact Oliver Odgen at his email address: seojogden2@aol.com.

FINANCES

White Envelope Activity

Ed Wolf and Ralph Fetrow

We enclosed a set of generic white envelopes with the past issue of the Bus Musings. To date, we have had an excellent response from the membership for general donations. Below, in no particular order, are those who donated recently.

Nearly \$3,000 was received and applied, in most cases, to the General Fund. In two cases, funds received were to be applied for a specific purpose.

We plan to continue with the white envelopes in the hopes of building up our General Fund. Thanks to all of you!

- Harvey Eckert
- Fullington Trailways
- Dave Phillips
- Allen Snyder
- Ed Gladysz
- Clark Pyewell
- Fred Champion
- George Lindsey
- Joseph Cyr
- Gary Pard
- Bill Christenson
- John Burkert
- Dallas Krapf
- Dave Gregg
- F. Hafer

Income

Income for the period January-April 2009 was \$27,063.56.

Other Donations

Scott Sprengel, Suburban Transit Corporation donated a beautiful portrait of one of their MCI in the traditional orange and white livery pictured in Lower Manhattan with the World Trade Center Towers in the background. It hangs proudly on the back wall of the bus display to be viewed by our many visitors. This was personally delivered by Steve Majofsky, one of our members and supporters.

J. Morgan, Citizens Auto Stage Company, donated several interesting artifacts including belt buckles. Items of this type enhance our displays. All donations are acknowledged by individual letters.

New Members

Easton Coach Company
William Jones
Valley GMC
Matt Michner

New Blog

Check out our new BLOG;
<http://thebusmuseum.blogspot.com/>

Office Hours

We are often asked when one of us is actually on the Museum property or physically in the office at the Museum.

We have Board members or member volunteers in the Museum most Wednesdays, Thursday, Friday (generally administrative office day), Saturday, and Sunday. While most of the "Museum time" is on the display floor, mail and phone messages are handled throughout the week. Phone

Continued on Page 3

calls to our 717-566-7100 X 119 are monitored on a daily basis. Important calls are returned as soon as possible by a staff member.

The full-time paid AACAM staff answers the general Museum phone weekdays from 8:30am until closing at 5:00pm. On weekends part-time managers respond to phone messages at the ticket counter. Bus related phone calls average about ten per week.

- Enhance Marketing / Communications, and Education
- Increase Membership

Each of the above facets has a committee of Board members and MBT general members.

We are moving ahead to fashion a better and stronger MBT.

Artifacts

O. Odgen and R. Devine

We've gathered quite a collection of transfers and schedules over the past few years. Sorting and cataloging them would seem like a daunting task!

Bob and Oliver have begun the process and are filing them in, of all things, sandwich bags.

In this age of pre-paid fares, monthly passes, and other fare instruments many transit systems are eliminating transfers. As such, our collection will only grow in value.

Oliver has setup an "office" in our mobile unit next to the George M. Sage Annex for this purpose.

Business and Strategic Plan

We have broken down our objectives as follows;

- Design a business Plan
- Develop a firm Fund Raising Program
- Maintain a first class display of historic buses

In Memory

We are saddened to note the passing of a former board member – Harold Jenkins. Harold, at the time he served on the board, was the general manager of the Cambria County Transit Authority (Johnstown, PA) and often traveled to and from our old Lemoyne office with, then, fellow board member the late Dick Fullington.

Fleet Report by Dan Lehman and Tom Mozer

Our co-fleet managers continue to work hard keeping the fleet looking good and in running order. We are now on a summer schedule which means that we have work sessions at the Annex. You'll need to check with us to ascertain just when these are scheduled and we suggest that you call the MBT office at 717-566-7100 X 119 for that information.

As reported previously, we often receive offers of buses but, to date, we have not had a firm policy in place to accept units. Recently we voted to put a bus acquisition policy in place. Designed by member Bob Devine with the assistance of Dan Lehman and Tom Mozer, this form is similar to vehicle appraisal forms used by major used coach dealers. Manufacturer data, exterior, interior, and mechanical information is listed on the form. In addition, we will use the in-

dustrial standard 1 to 10 grading system.

Photos must be attached to the initial form prior to the Board taking a vote on the vehicle.

The Board did vote on acquiring two interesting vehicles from Peninsula Transit which include a 1924 Fageol and a 1944 Ford Transit. Delivery of these should be by the time of our annual Fall meeting.

We have also been offered a Flxible 2-level Vista-Liner by Marvin Carter, of Oklahoma. This former Trailways coach is perhaps on of the last "seated" Vista-Liners still in captivity. This coach runs and appears much intact – delivery is being ar-

ranged as you read this.

Our unique Volvo B-10M has been returned from the paint shop where it received a completely new outside coat of paint. This paint job was donated to us.

The White 782 is still at Bergen Auto Upholstery where it is receiving an entirely new interior; it should be back in mid-Summer.

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One of the 20 historic buses preserved by the New York City Transit Authority is bus 236 a 1980 Grumman Flixible 870. It interesting that the NYCTA would preserve a bus that it considered so problem plagued and in service less than four years.

The first of 850 Grumman Flixible model 870 buses began arriving in June 1980. It was one of the largest orders ever placed by the NYCTA. Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority received 310. The buses were numbered PA1-PA175; 201-452; 453-552; 553-565; 601-810 and 811-910. MaBSTOA was assigned 601-910. All were painted in the white and black standard 870 scheme with a dark blue stripe around the belt line. The skirts and wheels were also painted dark blue, with a large MTA logo on the front panel and rear engine door. A smaller MTA logo was located just after the front wheels on both sides. PA1-PA175 were owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and leased to the NYCTA. Numbers 453-552 and 810-910 were equipped with wheelchair lifts. PA1-PA175, 601-810 and 201-452 were not equipped with lifts. Seating arrangement was 1X2 hard seats while ones assigned to express service featured standard 2x2 padded seats. The interiors were two tone blue with the standard 870-color

scheme. Several were even fitted with exterior illuminated ad panels. Numbers 553-565 were built to Avenue B and East Broadway specifications a private Manhattan operator. However, Avenue B went under just prior to delivery and the 13 were assigned to the TA. These were 96" wide, V-8 engines and 2X2 seating with earth toned interior. Almost every depot was assigned Grummans except possibly Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue Depot.


In December 1980, cracks occurred in the A-frame undercarriage. New York was not the only city to experience this problem as other cities reported it also. All 650 Grumman buses delivered by that time were sidelined for repairs. The TA pulled recently retired GM and Flixible buses back into service. They also leased about 100 or more buses from Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. WMATA sent mostly 5303s, 5304s, 6800 series Flixibles and even a 4517.

By July 1981, the first retrofitted 870s returned to service. Grumman had set up a repair facility at the Grumman Aircraft facility on Long Island to handle the work. As the 870s were returning the TA was now taking delivery of 837 new RTS-04s. By January 1982, the fleet now had 1,687 new Advance Design buses. An addi-

tional 650 RTS 04s arrived by February 1984. Trouble with the 870s began to surface again as 50 were sidelined for steering problems. Newly appointed NYCTA president David Gunn made the decision to remove all Grumman buses from service. All fare boxes and radios were to be removed and sent to await their fate at the Brooklyn Army Terminal storage facility. Once again the TA had to bring retired buses back to service. It also leased 149 MC8s and 1 MC9 from Greyhound.

There was legal action between the TA and Grumman. The TA did not scrap the buses. Even though the story of the TA's Grumman buses was not a happy one, the story does have a happy ending. TA sold the buses back to Grumman for \$6,000 each. Grumman rehabilitated them and they began a second life with NJ Transit (620), Cleveland RTD (127) and others

The TA preserved an 870 as they were the first Advanced Design Buses to enter service. These advancements included wheelchair lifts and digital destination signs. The 870s were the last buses delivered by Flixible. It is ironic that a bus that had so many problems and in service a short time would find a place in New York bus history.

2009 Bus Museum Events	
<i>Board Meetings</i>	<i>Annual Meeting</i>
July 7	October 31
August 4	
September 1	
October 6	
November 3	
December 1	

Model Bus Musings *By Doug Campbell*

Summer has returned, and on the highways the **Greyhound** fleet is changing into a truly handsome new royal blue, silver, and white paint scheme, and how exciting it was for me recently to see my first one parked in our local Baltimore Grey-



hound terminal...it really is a truly BEAUTIFUL paint & graphics design! And as the real new Greyhound buses are starting to be seen on the highway, from Royal Coach comes the first TOY version of the new Prevost X-3-45 coach in plastic with attached side mirrors, this model is colored via special vinyl trim that really looks painted onto the model! Fenders, wheel wells, bumpers, and side windshield posts are painted black, and the new Greyhound graphics really will brighten up your toy shelf on this new Prevost toy model coach! (www.royalcoachbuses.com)

Like the Prevost below, the next toy replica is also about 10 inches long, and represents the still current Greyhound "shadow" style

logo on their MCI DL-3 coaches, and this one is too a plastic bank model, and all graphics-front, sides, rear, and roof are all directly painted onto the plastic...no labels or decals! This nice model is still for sale at your local Greyhound terminal's gift counter or

ticket counter (along with the smaller die-cast Road Champs version!), and is an official Greyhound merchandise item,

as is the neat little "beanie" Greyhound dog shown alongside the model bus in my photo, which too is sold only at Greyhound terminals, and sports the logo, & dog logo on sides, and a Greyhound blue printed collar! The toy bus comes in a printed box, and has all correct graphic details, including official MCI logos on front & rear!

The final photo shows one of my larger toy model buses. a huge 24 inch long solid wooden model of our MOBT V-President/Fleet Manager/Chaplain- Dan Lehman's real MCI coach...painted for his "NORTH POLE LINES" collection fleet. This large truly excellent wooden model bus was made back in June of 2006 in a very limited production by New York Folk Artist/master craftsman Harold Sauter. A small wooden cross is mounted on the model bus's front, as on Dan's real coach, and side lower silver paneling, and full graphic details are all painted on, to make this a truly authentic model of the REAL BUS! Happy Collecting !



Fleet Report *continued from Page 3*

We surely need to acknowledge the fine "restoration" project on the ex-Altoona 4523A #153; work was done by Bob Devine, Jeff Holland, and Ken

McNellis. This bus needed a lot of cosmetics and this crew really outdid themselves (see photo). Our next projects are the ex-Williamsburg 3301 and the ex-Harran Fixible Visi-coach.



Finally, Michaud Bus Sales has offered to appraise our fleet of buses. We submitted a fleet list to them - photos or rating data will be submitted as required.

If you want to adopt a bus please contact us.

Museum Highlights

The AACA Museum, which the Bus Museum has been a part of since it opened, will be six years old on June 23, 2009.

Automobile exhibits continue to change every three months and, recently, the museum added antique motorcycles.

Attendance at AACA for 2009 through end of April was 11,048. While this represented 1,282 less visitors than the corresponding period in 2008

revenues were up.

We want to remind our MBT members that access to the Museum is FREE – its a part of your membership dues. Only twelve MBT members, other than our regular volunteers, have actually taken advantage of this so far this year.

By the time you read this it is most likely that the Museum's name will have changed to Auto Museum at Hershey. It will, of course, still be part

of the Antique Automobile Club of America.

By the way, the Auto Museum at Hershey was recently named one of the ten best auto museums in the Country! We're proud to be a part of it.

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