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President's Message...

By Tom Collins

We are entering 2009 and our 11th year of publishing this quarterly newsletter. We will continue with the same format without change at least through the balance of this calendar year.

Your Board has been busy so far this year.

The big Winter project was our appearance at the United Motorcoach Association EXPO in Orlando, Florida. Thanks to sponsors ABC, Trailways Transportation Systems, and the United Motorcoach Association, Ed Wolf, Bob Beard, and I were able to attend the event. ABC prepared a very professional package detailing the Museum of Bus Transportation's functions, fleet, forthcoming Spring Fling, and other documents.

The Board is pursuing the possible sale of several of our buses which either need extensive work (far beyond restoration). Even with the new Annex storage, it is a vexing problem. All of the vehicles with the exception of one have been stored, wrapped with a tarp, or are off the property for cosmetic work. Our ex-Johnstown TDH 3207 is stored at Wolf's Bus Lines which takes it out of the harsh Pennsylvania Winter elements.

We ordered special

docent shirts for those Board members and others who work the floor at the Museum. Our official "uniform" when on duty will be the new bus operator type blue shirts adorned with our logo. This will replace the blue vests we have been using since the Museum opened in 2003. Those tended to brand us as "Wal-Mart" greeters!

We have not as yet installed signage over the entrance to the George M. Sage Annex but that will take place, hopefully, prior to the Spring Fling. Concerning the Annex, we are also considering doing some work on the front garage doors to allow us additional access to the property and provide a more even flow of air through the garage.

We are also looking into building a "stable type" of covered storage area to keep some of the vehicles covered. Once we select the type of structure we will then have to approach the township where the garage is housed to seek permission to erect it.

Funds for the above are a concern in these trying times and we do not want to touch our investments or CDs for this purpose. Special fund raising may be necessary to effect this.

By the time you receive this we will have met to finalize a strategic plan for 2009. Included in this will be contacting some of our former members who did not renew, more direct mailings, and phone contacts with major bus operators to enlist their support. This will not be the easiest task, however, given the state of the economy.

The Pennsylvania Bus Association, and its Executive Director, Elaine Farrell, have been most helpful to us – they edit and produce this newsletter and have invited us to attend their annual Marketplace in Harrisburg and annual meeting in the Pocono Mountains.

There are twelve cartons of motor bus material available to us at The Electric Trolley Museum Association in Scranton, PA. These items are from the Harold H. Geissenheimer Collection and we are making plans with the curator and Museum of Bus Transportation member David Biles to pickup the material in early Spring.

A curb scene Diorama is planned for the street side of the Museum along Pennsylvania Highway Route 39. This will

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BUS MUSEUM DISPLAYS AT UMA EXPO



Museum President Tom Collins stands in front of the Bus Museum exhibit on the floor of the UMA Exposition in Orlando, Fla.

Thanks to the invitation of and the sponsorship by the United Motorcoach Association, the ABC Companies, and the Trailways Transportation System, the Museum of Bus Transportation participated in the annual United Motorcoach Association (UMA) EXPO this year at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Although there were over 180 different exhibitors on the EXPO floor, our Museum exhibit drew as many visitors as any. Most of the over 1800 registered guests as well as the other exciter visited with us. The 2-pocket folder of pictures and information we handed out contained items of interest to buyer, seller, manufacturer, or bus company owner.

The highlight of every UMA EXPO is the Vision Awards Banquet attended by upwards of 2,000 people. Victor Parra, President and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association, asked Tom Collins and Bob Beard to stand and be recognized and praised the efforts of all our volunteers to preserve and present the wonderfully rich history of our bus industry.

GETTING READY FOR SPRING FLING

The Museum of Bus Transportation's annual Spring Fling Bus Show

and Flea Market will be held on the first Friday and Saturday of June at the Museum's George Sage Complex, Hershey, Pa. In 2009, it will be held on June 5th and June 6th.

EASY PARKING. All guest parking must be at the main Auto & Bus Museum at 161 Museum Drive, off Route 39. A \$2 admission fee per person over age 12 will cover parking, shuttle to and from the Fling, and entrance to the bus show and flea market on both days.

VENDOR DISPLAYS. Guests will find badges, books, photos, bus toys, bus models, fare boxes, destination signs, magazines, books, punches, caps, pictures, photographs, almost anything you might wish to collect. Table and space is available on a first paid first reserved basis until we reach our 50 table maximum. All tables will be under cover inside the Memorial Annex. Cost for space with a table is \$25 for one day and \$40 for two days. Lunch will be available in the Memorial Annex Building at an additional cost.

WHERE TO STAY. Two nearby host Inns will offer a reduced rate for our guests registering before May 1st: The Scottish Inn at 888-901-8383, and Country Hearth Inn at 888-545-6944. Both are new, next door to each other, 4 miles from the Museum, less than 1/4 mile from I-81, Exit 77, and offer free continental breakfasts. Their rate for Museum guests is \$81.10, 10% under their AARP and AAA rates. You must mention the Bus Museum to receive this special rate.

HOURS. Spring Fling hours are 9 am to 3 pm each day and special times and vendor parking are established for set-up and take down. Free admission for vendors, limit two per table. Additional information as well as vendor rules and space request form is now



Museum Board Member Sharon Ogden (standing) greets guests to the 2008 Flea Market from behind the Museum's table near the entrance to North America's Largest Bus Memorabilia Flea Market.

available on the News & Notes page of www.buseum.org or email us at thebusmuseum@yahoo.com.

All guests will have time to visit the main Bus and Auto Museum which closes at 5 pm. Of course, no admission fee for card holding Museum members. All three floors of auto, bus, motorcycle, and model train displays and exhibits, and the large gift shop will be open to guests at the regular entrance fees.

GIFT SHOP

Some of the best selling items featured in our gift shop are a line of books by Arcadia Publishing Company. Although we are a "bus group" trolley related books such as "Greater Erie Trolleys" and "Johnstown Trolleys and Incline" sell fast. We find that smaller bus models also move well as they are affordable when families visit the Museum and Gift Shop.

The Odgens continue to manage the shop which includes ordering, stocking, and keeping the displays neat and orderly. They reported total Gift shop sales in 2008 of \$14,729.

Continued Page 5

COMING EVENTS

The Bus Museum plans to participate in the Pennsylvania Public Transit conference in early Spring, and the Pennsylvania Bus Association annual meeting in June. We have also made inquiries to allow us to setup a desk in the vast Port Authority Bus Terminal for a day or two which will provide the Bus Museum exposure to the hundreds of drivers who pass through this facility each week-day – many who may not know we even exist.

FLEET NEWS

Several of our members have asked for an up to date list of the buses that we own, or have on long-term loan. Thanks to ABC Companies, we have a professional looking list of the 30 buses that we own. There are also three top-notch buses currently on long term loan and this list reflects them also. This list is attached.

Perhaps once a month we receive offers of additional buses. Recent vehicles offered were an MCI MC-7 and an early Prevost – we have not heard back on either of these at the time this newsletter went to press. We have become increasingly more selective about what and how many buses we add due to the lack of currently available storage and incurring additional costs in transporting and maintaining them.

Several offers of “new look” GMs and RTS vehicles have been turned down since we already have buses of this type in the fleet.

As mentioned earlier, we are considering downsizing and concentrating on quality rather than quantity. As a result, we recently sold our 1960 Chevrolet Step-Van (ex-Atlantic City Jitney) and, with this issue, have placed our 1951 International Metro up for sale (see separate column).

We have been looking into a deal which might involve our 1951 Marmon-Herrington (ex – Inter-County Lines).

A vehicle not on the bus roster but owned by the Bus Museum is a rare Tri-Van three wheel truck, one of only 112 produced. This was owned by the late Dick Maguire and was used by his Capitol Trailways as a shop truck in and around the Harrisburg garage. Similar trucks were used by Safeway Trailways in their Washington, D.C. maintenance shop along Brentwood Road. This truck is being advertised in several publications.

Currently, a feature of our floor display is the very rare 1951 Fitzjohn Cityliner, owned from new by Wolf Bus Lines, Inc. Fitzjohn buses were very popular in Western Pennsylvania in the 1940's and 1950's, and it is unusual to find one today in this condition. Recently, we purchased a brand new mannequin and dressed him in an old Wolf Bus Lines uniform. In tribute to the late Paul Wolf, founder of Wolf's Bus Lines, we named the mannequin Paul – he stands proudly alongside the Fitzjohn.

The Wolf organization owned three Fitzjohn buses in the 1950's....two Roadrunners and the Cityliner.

PROFIT & LOSS/2008

Our total income for 2008, as yet unaudited, was \$99,771.12 and expenses were \$149,205.37. The net loss, from operations, was \$49,434.25.

Part of our “operating expenses” was the line item of prepaid rent of \$24,999.96 that presents expensing out the rental over a 20 year period.

Factoring this out of the loss, which is the most fair assessment of our financials shows a loss of \$24,434.29 for 2008.

Over the years we have had several donors who committed to significant yearly donations but these have all expired and we are now ready to embark on a new fund raising program.

Our new business plan and strategic plan will assist us in this venture.

TIMELINE

Bob Smith has completed the timelines for the 1980's so the walls behind our display areas now show the complete development of the motorbus from the 1900's through the 1980's. Included in this are intercity, sightseeing, transit, and school buses.

Taking the concept of the timeline a step further will be a new Iconografix book, due out in late 2009, featuring our timeline. Virtually, every make of motorbus built in the United States over eight decades will appear in this booklet including Corbett, Dittmar, Spartan, Beaver, and many more – watch for it.

..... *Along the Line continued from page 5*

THIS BUS IS LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME....

When was the last time you saw one of these International Metros? This one, a model LM-150, was built in 1951 and served as an Atlantic City Jitney for years. Jitney operators tell us these "little buses" were the very best vehicles for their purpose. One former operator described the Metro akin to what Checker was to the cab business. The Bus Museum acquired this one last year but we really don't have either the storage or funds to keep and restore it.

Prior to the Bus Museum accepting this model, someone attempted to convert it into a mini-motor home. It could be returned to "bus status" by someone with the resources

and material. We will accept the highest reasonable bid for it.

You might recall that it was given to the Bus Museum free, so any bid will be a net to the Bus Museum (the bidder will have to arrange for its removal, as well). Bids should be submitted to our Hershey office.

REQUESTS FOR PARADE, DISPLAY, AND MOVIE BUSES

We do not actively solicit requests to use our buses in parades or movies but when they come in the Board discusses all aspects including the pros and cons of showcasing the bus in the venue requested.

The Bus Museum likes the exposure but this must be balanced

against any expense, liability, and damage to the unit. However, movie production and the use of buses in certain parades produces some revenue.

The Bus Museum is not currently permitted to transport passengers under the terms of our insurance policy. Recently, our insurance rates came down thanks to the efforts of Fleet Manager and Vice President Dan Lehman. He was able to get certain vehicles re-classified and re-valued under the new policy.

THE WHITE ENVELOPE

We have taken the liberty with this mailing to include a small white envelope already addressed to the Bus Museum. The purpose of this can be considered a "soft" form of fund raising.



We are hoping that you might consider writing a donation check to the Bus Museum and you may designate its use for any purpose such as for general funds or for a specific bus since we have several that need cosmetics and two (the TDH 3207 and the TGH 3301) which need full paint jobs.

All donations will be acknowledged – we are a 501-C-3 organization!

Please give it some thought – Thanks!!

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