



# TRANSFER



Vol. 18 No. 2 **SHELBURNE FALLS TROLLEY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER** SUMMER 2009

**DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SHELBURNE FALLS & COLRAIN STREET RAILWAY**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum is an educational institution. This gives us our non-profit status. We could just rent an empty classroom somewhere and have lectures on local trolley history. If we did that every weekend, how many visitors do you think we'd get each year? How many volunteers would help with that sort of an operation? How many members would we get and retain?

Instead we have preserved and restored No 10 and are nearly finished restoring caboose CV 4015. We use these 'artifacts', as well as our preserved freight yard, pumpcar, displays and Visitors Center to make an interactive, moving, hands-on (especially on the pump car, in both senses of the term) experience. We aren't 'sugar-coating' the educational aspect, but I know most of our visitors, especially kids, are learning far more than they realize during their visit.

Here are two notes from visiting families that demonstrate this:

*•I took my granddaughters, age 5 and 7, to the Trolley Museum today. They had a blast. So did my poochie and I. We did it all - rode the trolley, climbed all over and inspected the caboose being restored, pumped the hand car, and the girls had a good ole time running the trains (or moving the Brio ones) as I looked at photos. Plus we all enjoyed the historical descriptions and anecdotes. Lilly, the almost-8-year-old, confessed to me as we were riding on the trolley and she'd just pulled the bell cord that she hadn't really wanted to come to the Trolley Museum. "I thought we'd just climb up some stairs and look and look at things and then climb some more stairs and look and look at more things - like we did at MOMA when Daddy took us to New York. I like this a lot more than MOMA." So much for art.*

*•Just wanted to let you know what a wonderful time my children and I had on Monday, Aug. 10, during our first-time visit to your museum. First off, we were so warmly greeted by Polly Bartlett. What a way to make your visitors feel welcome! From there, we had so many options - the caboose, the handcar, the trolley car, the museum, or children's play area. In time, we saw all of the attractions, and only wished we had more time in the end (and we spent three hours as it was!). We would've loved to have ridden the trolley car again, which was also a wonderful experience thanks to the helpfulness of crewmembers Shirley and Stan. The bottom line is, visiting SFTM was one of the best ways we could've spent our afternoon! The equipment is all beautifully and lovingly restored, and the museum is thoughtfully put together with great detail. And, with three young kids with me, I appreciated the operating model railroad layouts and the wooden train playset, and coloring and*

*reading areas. Your people and your activities all made us feel very welcome! We look forward to visiting again!*

As our crew knows, many folks feel this way about their SFTM visit; experts compliment our restoration and interpretation, non-experts learn how to tell a trolley from a dressed-up bus, and everyone learns about the impact of the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway on the valley's residents one hundred years ago.

The folks quoted above probably met four of our volunteers on their visits, but the adults, at least, realized that there were hundreds of people responsible for making their short visit possible. Our members and grantors make this endeavor financially possible, our volunteers do all the work to make it happen. We hope you'll continue (or increase!) your support for this worthy operation.

*Sam*

## NICKEL DAY

Concurrent with Members' Day on September 26, SFTM is also offering Nickel Day to the general public. As a nod to the beginning of the SF&C St. Ry. in the fall of 1896, one-way fares will be five cents, paid in cash to the conductor on the car. Also planned are nickel ice cream cones and drinks. Members will still ride free, of course.

## eTRANSFER

For a decade SFTM, unlike many similar organizations, has not raised its membership level dues, and it is not our intent to do so at this time. However in view of TRANSFER's greatly increased printing and postage costs since the dues schedule was set, SFTM retains an ever-diminishing net donation especially at the lowest membership levels.

To help SFTM hold the line is where eTRANSFER kicks in. By signing up to receive your TRANSFER on-line (see Page 2 for easy how-to-do-it), SFTM receives the full value of your donation. Furthermore, our gnomes, who have to hand-assemble each of around 150 print copies along with everything else they already do for SFTM, will be eternally grateful to you for taking the plunge on eTRANSFER!

About 20% percent of the membership is already signed up, which has been a help in cost control. And wait – there's more! You can get your copy in color!! Check out the instructions on Page 2, and email up today. The gnomes will bless you!

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS - 2009

### **Officers:**

President - Robert (Sam) Bartlett  
Vice President - David Dye  
Clerk - David Bartlett  
Treasurer - Betsy Wholey Osell  
Chair of Board - David Dye  
Assistant Treasurer - Shirley Pelletier

### **Directors:**

Harvey Allen  
Gerald Besser  
Alden Dreyer  
David Goff  
John Pelletier  
Shirley Pelletier  
James Wholey

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TRANSFER is a publication of the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum Inc., produced for the enlightenment and entertainment of our members and special friends. Spring, Summer, and Fall issues are planned for each year. Comments, contributions, and letters to the editor are welcomed.

David C. Bartlett - Editor

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## **GUEST BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS**

**Individual** and **Junior** levels (IN) (\$15) and (JR) (\$10) - card is valid only for named member. No additional guests.

**Family** (FA) level (\$25) is as follows: your card covers rides for up to two adults and all related children under age 18. There are no additional guest privileges for the Family membership.

Beginning at the **Friend** (FR) level, additional guests may accompany you whenever you ride the trolley:

**Friend** (\$35) - 2 guests, plus Family privileges.

**Contributing** (CO) (\$60) - 4 guests, plus Family.

**Patron** (PA,BP,SP,GP,LM,HL) (\$100 and higher) - no set limit to number of guests you may bring when you come to SFTM.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

As of this writing, SFTM has 138 current active memberships.

## **WELCOME MORE NEW MEMBERS**

These folks have joined SFTM since the last TRANSFER was sent out:

John Anderson – Lake Pleasant MA  
Brian Donelson - Rowe MA  
Harold Bradeen – Vernon VT  
William Weidner – Dublin NH  
Sally Boutte – Leeds MA  
Sarah Neelon – Shelburne Falls MA  
Lesley LaBarge – Hatfield MA  
Tom Rooney Family – Amherst MA  
David Cohn – Haydenville MA  
Barry Smith – Arlington VA  
Peter Miller – Greenfield MA  
Beckett Herbert – San Jose CA  
John MacIntosh – Leicester MA

## **THE CARBARN FUND**

SFTM has received from the Amherst Railway Society a \$1,500 grant toward final design drawings and site preparation – a real boost for the cause. At last report there was over \$6,700 in the fund.

## **SIGNING UP FOR eTRANSFER**

As a convenience to our members, and as an attempt to control costs, TRANSFER will be made available on line as a pdf file. This will give you the option of filing your copies of TRANSFER on your computer, in case you want to refer back to them at some later time.

If you wish to receive your future TRANSFERS by email, here's how to do it:

- Send an email to: [dbartlet@crocker.com](mailto:dbartlet@crocker.com)
- In the Subject line, please enter **eTFR**.
- In the body of your message, please enter **your name** - that's all.

That's all there is to it. Your address will be entered on a mailing list, and the future issues will come to you by internet instead of by snail mail.

## **VOLUNTEERING - HOW TO DO IT**

Simply contact the Museum (see Contact US on this page). Indicate what your interests are - operating, painting, building stuff, selling, or what. We will get back to you and get you plugged in. We need you!

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## SFTM DOES RECYCLING

Many of our readers have joined us in recent years, so as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of our trolley's coming to life a second time, we thought that some SFTM history might be appropriate.

Plagiarism seems common these days, but is disdained by your editor. However he feels strongly that it is quite OK to steal from one's own work. Herein, therefore, an account of the run-up to the second life of SF&C car No. 10. as plagiarized from TRANSFER Vol. 8 No. 2, dated 11/22/1999:

### The Age of Miracles is Not Yet Dead - Countdown to T-Day

The events of the last week leading up to the October 9 Trolleyfest are worthy of recording. While Trolleyfest was going to be held in any event to celebrate the restoration of trolley car No. 10, shop forces led by Sam Bartlett labored feverishly against great odds to make the car fully operational by then. Herewith a brief account:

October 3, 1999 (**T minus 6**): Board of Directors advised on status of number 10. Overhead trolley system (1200 feet) all up. Substation in and working. Restoration work on car well-advanced. Controllers installed. But—no brake actuating system, no resistors. Half the rails not bonded. Car wiring cables cut to length but not connected. Bruce Thain due to come in two days with brake rigging, resistors, and other parts. Car operation by T-day (October 9) considered 50% possible.

**T-5:** The "trunk" cable that had been temporarily installed is removed, tagged, pulled into a piece of fire hose (with lots of soap for slipperiness) and rehung under car. One brake staff is installed and connections for the motors and resistors are installed. Same odds.

**T-4:** Bruce Thain delayed a day. Tensions rise. Odds tank. Miscellaneous work goes on anyway.

**T-3:** Bruce arrives. So does Fred Perry, driving from St. Louis. Bruce and Fred, both trolley experts, had done a lot of previous work on the car, and were key advisors on technical aspects of the project. Both start work at once. Brake levers installed, still not connected to brake wheels. Resistor grids installed, motor leads and second controller connected. Odds up.

**T-2:** Resistors, brake components, and wiring flying together. Controllers, resistors, and motors wired together. Odds soar when a temporary lead from the trolley pole to the controls is tied in. As twilight approaches, Bruce and Fred pronounce the car ready for a test.

With reduced voltage from the transformer to the rectifier, and with Fred at the controls, the assembled workers watch anxiously. Fred moves the controller - nothing happens. He advances it more, and in a shower of sparks from the trolley wheel the car moves under power for the first time since 1927. Rust burns off the rails as the wheels roll along. One wag comments that welding glasses would be in order for those watching the car arcing along the

track. After rolling to a stop, Fred drags the temporary connection through the car to the other controller to see if the first notch works on that end. Same problem, fewer sparks. The car reverses and moves back toward the barn—downhill. With the brake system not yet finished. But Fred skillfully stops the car with a touch of reverse.

A second short run is called for, and the first passenger since 1927 (this writer) hops on with Fred, and we go about 400 feet before returning to the barn. Odds boom. Then the decision to increase the line voltage to about 300 Vdc is made. Sam makes the change on the transformer. It is nearly dusk as the car steps briskly out of the barn. At the end of the tangent Fred stops the car. As he runs back toward the barn, he opens the controller all the way, to "full parallel." Instead of accelerating, the car coasts to a stop. All the lights inside and outside the Museum and carbarn go out, and the security alarm goes berserk. The car is moved back into the barn, as it has been all summer, by pickup truck and trailer hitch. After a call to the power company, the crew calls quits to a long day. Odds sink.

**T-1:** The brakes get set up. Painting and woodworking by Mike Cole and Joe Pagano continue unabated, as it has all week. At noon the power company shows up in three trucks, with new heavier line wire to the building, and a 50 kVa transformer for the pole. Over the lunch hour they get us wired again, and are quickly gone. Saved!

During the day a local welder has welded rails and joints together as a quick and dirty fix to the bonding problem.

By late afternoon it is decided to run the car for the first time to the end of the line. Arcing furiously between wheels and rails, the car notches up cleanly and heads for the Salmon Falls "station." Fingers crossed—it negotiates a turnout and gets over a section of badly out-of-cross-level track. What's more, the trolley wheel nicely tracks the wire around the reverse curves. On the return trip the car doesn't want to switch into parallel mode but does make it back to the barn. The brakes need work. After a bit of tinkering, a second round-trip to Salmon Falls and back is made with no fatal problems. The crew, while ahead, quits for the day. A cleaning crew comes in to sweep shine the inside of the car. Odds approach 100%. Only Murphy's Law can stop SF&C No. 10 now!

**T-Day. October 9:** At first light people are crawling over and under the car, cleaning, adjusting, and generally tinkering. Car lighting, a gong on one end, and a second brake staff, are all in place. Only minutes before the parade arrives, the blue flag comes off. And after the ceremonies outlined elsewhere in this edition, the pole is raised to the wire by Sam Bartlett, and the car shortly does indeed start off, perfectly, with its first load of the day!

October 9, 1999, then, goes down in history as the day car No. 10 of the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway is reborn. It also marks the day Murphy took a holiday in Shelburne Falls.

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## A SPECIAL THANKS

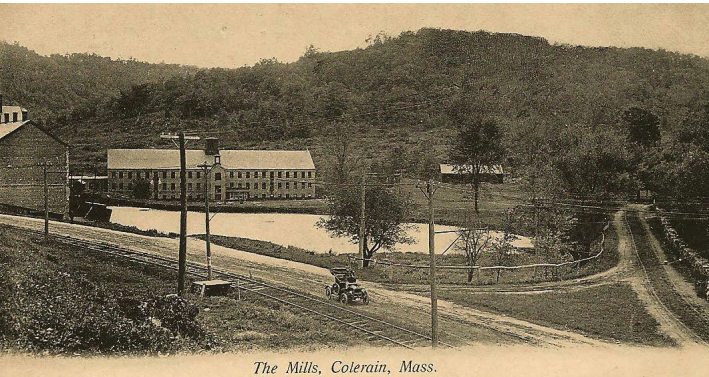
Two individuals, on their own, organized fund-raisers for SFTM. Thanks go to Mrs. George (Xian) Dole for donating proceeds from her food booth at Riverfest, and to Gary Young for rallying the railfan club Worcester Foreign Power Team to pass a large hat among its members at a gathering it held in mid-August at SFTM.



## MORE GLIMPSES OF SF&C'S PAST

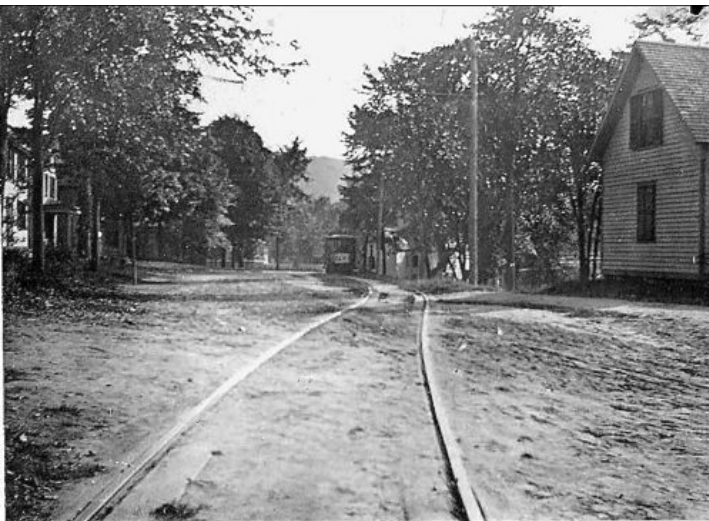


No. 10 Rattling along the main street in Colrain.



*The Mills, Colerain, Mass.*

No trolleys here at Willis Place, but note the loading platform next to the track. Milk, maybe?



Main Street in Griswoldville. The track just wanders from one side of the road to the other. No crossing protection in those days.

Photos courtesy of Colrain Historical Society

## TRACK FACTS

Visitors to SFTM sometimes ask if there are ever any trains on that other set of tracks on the west side of our yard. Some days it seems even to the staff that there aren't, but on other days trains make themselves quite obvious. While they don't run by the clock, three trains in each direction are carded to pass in roughly every 24 hours. For good measure, several 100+ car coal trains go by every week, and a unit train of lime slurry shows up on occasion, as does a local freight.

The railroad was built as the Troy & Greenfield Railroad, coming into the village in 1867. It was taken over by the Fitchburg Railroad in 1887, which was acquired by the Boston & Maine in 1900. It was always a very busy line, with frequent freight and passenger trains for many years, but autos killed off the passenger trains over 50 years ago.

In 1983 the line, along with several other railroads, was acquired by Guilford Rail System. Some years later the owners decided to rename their holdings as Pan Am Railways, which it remained until this spring, when the owners and the Norfolk Southern Railroad created a new jointly-owned company, named Pan Am Southern, to operate 400 miles of Pan Am's major routes.

It can be said that, going into this new arrangement, the property is in less than pristine condition. Trains often pass SFTM at 10 mph on account of deteriorated track and signals, and many of the locomotives have just about run out their useful miles.

The exciting part of all this is that Norfolk Southern, one of the country's Big Four, is investing in the order of \$80 million dollars in bringing Pan Am Southern to good repair.

Already this summer new ballast has been spread throughout PAS territory, new rail has been installed in some places with more to follow shortly, and a major tie-renewal project is in full swing. The tie job is expected to reach Shelburne Falls before summer is past. Signal modernization is on the docket as well. When all is said and done there will be a modern railroad in town, as there once was way back in the last century, and the trains will no longer crawl by SFTM. This of course will mean that it will be more important for all to stay well clear of the tracks at all times.

Passenger traffic is expected to resume at about the time that SFTM's trolley service across the Bridge of Flowers to Colrain does. But don't hold your breath - on either account!



**SFTM'S ANSWER TO THE OPEN CAR.....**

The pumpcar is mobbed on a summer's day.



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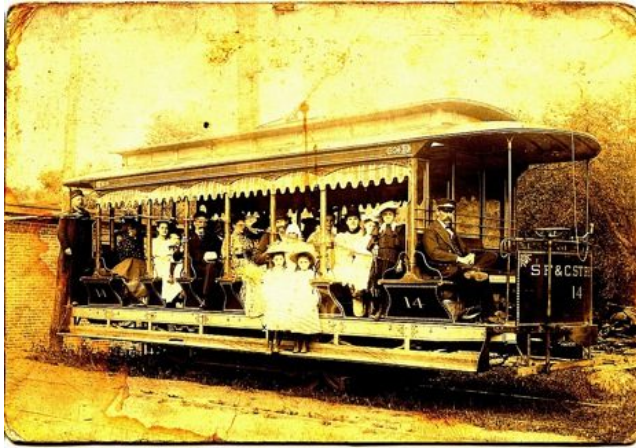
## THE SF&C STREET RAILWAY EQUIPMENT ROSTER - WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

The SF&C's records of equipment are sketchy at best. The people with the answers are long gone. Most of what we have is from the NRHS Transportation Bulletin No. 75, first published in 1968. Herein we consider that rolling stock which was motorized.

The first car bought by SF&C was No. 10, a double truck combination car built new by Wason Mfg. in Springfield MA in 1896. She needs no introduction.

That same year SF&C bought several used cars from Boston streetcar companies. No. 11 was a closed 4-wheel ex-horse car which had been motorized. No. 13 was an open-bench non-motorized ex-horse car.

Three more cars show up on the roster, but without date, former owner, or builder. No. 14 was a 4-wheel open car (see photo), No. 15 was a double-truck (8-wheel) open car, and No. 16 was, like No. 14, an open car.



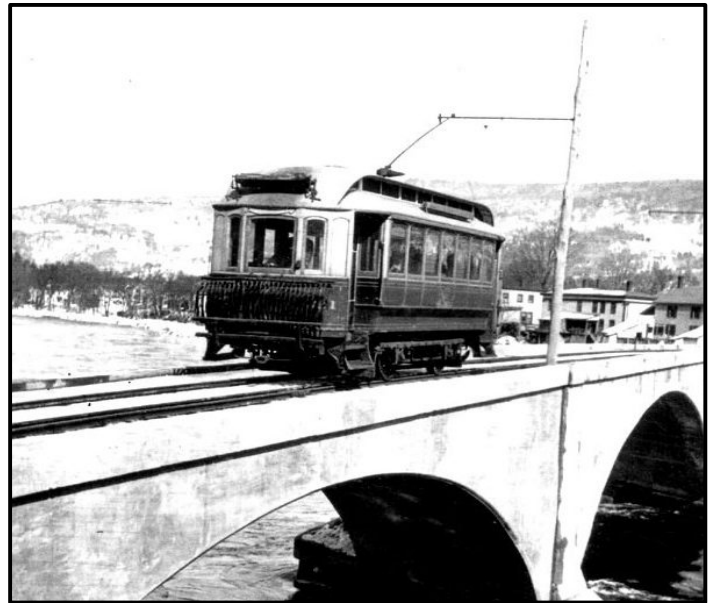
Photographs exist of all three of these cars operating on SF&C, but there are questions as to whether they were all on the property at the same time. And although it wasn't a passenger car, we mustn't forget No. 24, a 4-wheel snowplow, which appears with no pedigree whatsoever.

The next car to appear was 4-wheeler No. 21, purchased in 1907 from the Farmington Street Railway in CT, and built in 1894 by Jackson & Sharp. The following year saw the opening of the concrete bridge across the river, which brought an immediate demand for a much heavier car which could pull full-size railroad cars from the railyard to the mills on the North River. Wason Mfg. received an order for a new combination car, No. 25, to do the serious lugging for SF&C.

The last car to join the fleet came in 1925, not long before the line folded. It is believed to be a 25-foot Laconia-built (1907) closed car from the Portsmouth Dover & York St. Ry. Since passenger business at that time was rapidly going down the drain, this suggests that one or more of the other cars had already given up the ghost.

So we do know how many motorized passenger cars the line owned in total - seven. And we do know what became of No. 10. We don't know for sure how many were up and running at any given time, nor if any were retired early.

Maybe someday we'll find out.



Ex- Farmington St. Ry. No. 21 struts her stuff on the bridge.

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## MISCELLANEOUS SFTM NEWS

### The Rental Business:

All SFTM's available rental space is now occupied. While a few tenants need occasional prodding, the rental money coming in is essentially covering the monthly \$1000 mortgage payments toward SFTM's owning the property for real in June 2018. Members can count on a gala event to be held at that time!

### Passenger Traffic:

In spite of the recession, a shortened season, and an increase in ticket prices, ridership and income from same is coming in at record levels. It would seem that gas prices have caused all of eastern and central Massachusetts to discover the western part of their own state, in lieu of trips to the north country.

### The Carbarn:

The carbarn is SFTM's priority capital project. With a grant from the Amherst Railway Society and ongoing donations from members, the carbarn fund is now over \$6,700. The next move, when time permits, is to have full plans drawn up and costs estimated. Grant-writing has begun, and one application has been sent out.

### The Caboose:

With a great deal of attention to detail, the inside of the caboose is nearly finished. Roof flashing is being renewed, and the ends of the car have just been painted. The caboose is very popular with SFTM visitors - the cupola is a great place from which to watch rail activity. Special thanks to John Pelletier for his countless hours of work on the car.

### Fitchburg & Leominster Car No. 60:

Not forgotten, but somewhat on hold while the owner works out his schedule for removing the building around the car, and while SFTM ponders the logistics and cost of acquisition.

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## SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRESS

Our volunteer track crew made good use of the delayed opening date, removing, replacing, tamping and spiking in 29 'new' ties in the main track. Then the resulting mess had to be graded out. At this point you can hardly tell that close to one hundred hours were put into this project, but the track is much more reliable now. Fortunately the spring weather was favorable, but one day we arrived to find a pond where our tie project was supposed to be!

A clear dry week in May allowed a few volunteers to repaint the south side of No 10. It had suffered some from ten (!) years of sitting in the sun between runs. It now glistens like it did ten, and 113, years ago.

The same dry week allowed for the Visitors Center porch to be painted. This, along with the addition of railings on the porch, improves our visitors' first impression.

The loading platform has been rebuilt and repainted (well, it needs some touch-up, any volunteers?) as well. Our operator training session in May was well attended, and several new operators have joined our ranks.

The historical photographs in the Visitors Center, showing Shelburne Falls and Colrain in the trolley days, have been remounted and rearranged to allow a more geographical 'tour'. Their captions are being updated as well.

Two timbers have been cleaned up and placed near the pump car to make a 'waiting area' for all the people to sit in comfort while waiting their turn on this popular attraction.

# MEMBERS' DAY

## SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

**ANOTHER FINE MEAL AT NOON**

**REDUCED PRICE FOR ANYONE  
COVERED BY A CURRENT  
MEMBERSHIP**

**PLEASE RESERVE BY SEPTEMBER 22  
EMAIL: [MEMBERSHIP@SFTM.ORG](mailto:MEMBERSHIP@SFTM.ORG)  
PHONE : 413-625-9443**

Of course, there are all the 'usual' activities; operating No 10; training, scheduling and qualifying crewmembers; mowing and picking up the yard; greeting visitors; writing press releases, articles and checks; selling tickets and t-shirts; inspecting and repairing equipment.

If you can help with any of these projects, please be sure to email me at [sam@sftm.org](mailto:sam@sftm.org), or call 413-624-0192. We are also always looking for more trolley car crewmembers, anyone 16 years or older is welcome. If you haven't joined our crew and would like to help out by operating our trolley for the public, contact me, please.

*Sam*

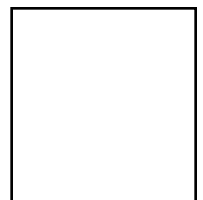
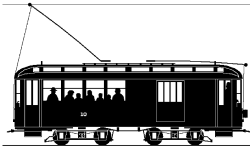
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