

TRANSFER

VOL. 19 - NO. 1 SHELburnE FALLS Trolley Museum Newsletter SPRING 2010

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SHELburnE FALLS & COLRAIN STREET RAILWAY

SPRING HAPPENINGS AT YOUR MUSEUM

The museum was pretty quiet throughout the winter. Once the early spring came, activity picked up noticeably. I won't try to include all the names, many folks pitched in, but we can always use more volunteers, skilled and unskilled.

Many of the projects are only noticed by the most observant, but are still important. One of the office windows was broken last winter, so we took out the sashes, replaced the broken pane and re-puttied and painted the sashes. On the to-do list is to do same for the other office window and replace the rotted window sills. Many of our projects are contingent on other projects, in this case first we need to build shelves and re-organize the office to allow access to that window.

The driveway and parking area suffered from the winter's plowing and has been re-graded, creating several loads of gravel for use in filling in low spots in other parts of the yard.

We've started clearing the locust grove near the freight house for use as a picnic area. This involved picking up trash and cutting brush, yanking out stumps with the boom truck and preliminary grading. Donations of new or used but serviceable picnic tables would be appreciated by our visitors.

New paint has appeared in several locations, notably the front entrance, two doors on No. 10, and some touch up around the Ticket Office.

Brush has been cut all along the slope above Depot Street, improving the view to and from the trolley at Salmon Falls. Buckland has repaved Depot Street, making our entrance much more appealing.

Every spring, and several times during the season, No. 10 gets a top-to-bottom inspection and servicing. In its first career, as a busy rural trolley from 1896 to 1927, No. 10 probably got inspected and serviced every 1000 miles or more. Now we do it about every 200 miles, but we have a much older car now, and no substitute if a problem gets out-of-hand. In the spring the process includes blowing warm air into the motors for days to dry out the windings. This is done while periodically testing the insulation with a 'megger'. Although the initial readings seemed OK, as the drying proceeded the values dropped well into the danger (to the motors, not passengers) zone, but then as they dried out the readings rose back well into the acceptable zone. While this was happening, the motor commutators and brushes were inspected. All the journals (friction bearings, steel axles on oiled brass surfaces) were checked and had their oil topped off. Bolts were checked and tightened, the brake mechanism was lubed and inspected for loose or worn parts and adjusted. The doors were checked for proper operation, and two were removed for painting

and adjustment. The controllers, which regulate the flow of current to the motors, were cleaned, lubed and inspected. The roof equipment (pole, wheel, stand), which requires climbing onto the roof to inspect, was also found to be ready for the season. Except for some wear and tear on floors, and the inevitable weathering of the exterior (the south side was repainted last spring), No. 10 is holding up very well and ready to begin her eleventh season since restoration.

One of the spare motors that went to A.C. Electric in Bangor Maine is completely overhauled. We have asked Amherst Railway Society for a grant to help with the \$4000 cost of the second motor, at which point we'll bring them both back and put them into No 10 in place of the present motors. A Motor Fund has been setup to accept donations cover the remainder of the cost.

We have nearly completed sorting through our pile of junk and used ties. Some ties are suitable for lining driveways, manure piles, fence posts, etc. and are for sale for \$5 or \$10 each (call or email Sam for details). Many more are of no use and have been piled adjacent to the Pam Am Southern tracks in anticipation of them being hauled off when they clean up the rest of their ties.

We replaced and adjusted the Switch 1 switchstand so that it can be properly locked and easily used on those occasions when we move cars around the yard.

The stairs to the freight house are being replaced with code-compliant stairs.

Professional survey services were donated to mark some important corners of our property and control points for siting the car barn and loop track were set.

Planning for the new car barn continues. Austin Design of Colrain will be donating some services to get us to the bidding and permitting stage. Donations for the Car barn Fund are always appreciated.

Mowing, with its attendant upkeep of machines, has started, and the gardens are starting to shape up. Everything should be ready for Opening Day. Come see us!

Except as noted, and some obligatory Community Service work, the work at the museum is performed by volunteers, let us know if you'd like to help.

Sam

BEHIND THE SCENES

Most of our visitors, and most of our members, only interact with the operating crew. They get a ticket from Dave or Betsy, an overview of the displays and a pump car ride from Polly, and a trolley car ride from the crew that day.

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DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS - 2010

Officers:

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

Directors:

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

dbartlet@crocker.com

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 97 current active memberships.

WELCOME MORE NEW MEMBERS

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

Dan Cornish - Torrington CT
Francis Talarczyk - North Branford CT
Ernie Darrow - Taunton MA

THE CARBARN FUND

At last report there was over **\$11,200** in the fund. It is hoped that in the coming year plans can be completed and estimates can be obtained. Grants are being pursued at this time. Donations are very much welcomed.

SIGNING UP FOR eTRANSFER

As a convenience to our members, and as an attempt to control costs, **TRANSFER** is 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
- 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.

Please note - if you are an eTFR subscriber, and subsequently **change** your email address, please be sure that you let us know.

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!

DON'T MISS TROLLEYFEST!

SEE YOU THERE!!!

GREENFIELD TROLLEYS

Trolley fever became epidemic by the early 1890's. Prior to this time, the byproducts of all powered transportation, public or private, littered the streets in a most disgusting manner. (The main exception was the steam railroads, whose byproduct merely littered the air.) Street railways had been in existence since 1832, but motive power was supplied by the horse. Speed was somewhat faster than a walk, but not a whole lot more.

It was time for improvement. The electric streetcar (nicknamed "trolley" car) provided the answer. Speed, comfort, an end to noxious deposits, and in time – even heat in winter. All in one package. It was no wonder that in no time, every city and every village wanted trolley service.

The Greenfield area grabbed the wave in 1895, with the opening on June 22 of the Greenfield & Turners Falls Street Railway. If we consider the hub of the system to be in Court Square in Greenfield, we find a single-track line running north on Federal Street to Silver Street, then west on Silver Street as far as the intersection with Chapman Street, where the line dead-ends.

A second route runs west from Court Square on Main Street, but only as far as Conway Street, at which point the line runs north on Conway Street to its intersection with Silver Street near Nash's Pond, where it also dead-ends. Note that while both lines mentioned so far meet or run on Silver Street, there is a gap between them. The curious would wonder why no connection was made along Silver Street.

Running south from Court Square, down Bank Row to Deerfield Street is the Turners Falls line. A brick carbarn was built on Deerfield Street, and survives to this day as the GMTA bus garage. Sacrilege!!

Past the carbarn, the line turns east on Montague City Road to Avenue A in Turners Falls. There was a substantial bridge built across the Connecticut River for the trolley line - not substantial enough, it seems, to have withstood the 1936 flood. This was not the end of the world for the operation, however, because the line had already been abandoned two years earlier.

From Turners Falls, one of several villages in the Town of Montague, the line ran south to Lake Pleasant, where it split, with a branch to Millers Falls and another to Montague City.

Greenfield's system did not emerge in a vacuum. Nor did it intend to stay that way. Along the Connecticut River Valley, streetcar companies were formed right and left. Five years after G&TF was formed, a new company, the Greenfield & Deerfield came along, which three years later had morphed into the Greenfield Deerfield & Northampton.

In the Northampton area by this time, lines were sprouting in every direction. The Northampton & Amherst was one. The economics of the times were dictating mergers and acquisitions

(sounds familiar). Somehow the N&A must have been the fat cat – when on April 1, 1905, it absorbed the G&TF and the the GD&N, and a month later rebranded the now-47 mile rail system as the Connecticut Valley Street Railway, one big happy family.

It should be noted at this point that there were already lines operating south of Northampton, to basically anywhere you might want to go. If the trolley didn't go there, you probably would want to either.

About the time we get all this merging straight in our minds, then, you guessed it, there was more! The CVSR was taken over by the Massachusetts Northern Railways, which was itself an aggregation of smaller line covering the land from Fitchburg to Orange, and had in its master plan a proposed connection from Orange to Greenfield. (See map on Page 5). While that part never happened, we could still imagine what it would be like to travel eastward from Greenfield, by electric power, all the way to Boston and beyond. Likely you could get there quicker on the Boston & Maine steam cars if you didn't mind the odd cinder in your eyes. But it might cost you more to do that. Oh, by the way, to further confuse students of electric traction, in 1913 the MN renamed itself: Massachusetts Consolidated Railways.

Well, as the saying goes, nothing is forever. The trolley era peaked around the time of World War One. Why? You guessed it: Ford.

The MCR started to become unglued as the trolley business in the less-populated area began to fade. This traction mini-empire started selling itself off. Bits and pieces of its routes were abandoned. The Connecticut Valley Street Railway portion couldn't make it on its own, and sank into receivership in 1921.

Heroic efforts at profitability were ineffective. The courts directed the receiver to suspend service on all routes by March 31, 1924. On that date all service ended between North Hatfield and Greenfield. The former Northampton & Amherst was sold to the Northampton Street Railway.

There was consternation in the Greenfield area, but a white knight was on the way in the form of the Massachusetts legislature, which, foreseeing the massive crumbling of the streetcar systems across the state, had authorized in 1920 something called the Transportation Area Act. This act allowed municipalities to purchase the assets of the failed private transit companies, and to operate them. After several leading citizens of Greenfield and Turners Falls had failed to raise enough private capital to purchase the line, the Act became the last hope for survival. Thus the Greenfield & Montague Transportation Area came into being.

The two towns voted overwhelmingly in favor of the two towns paying the receiver the sum of \$62,000 for 8.7 remaining miles of track and bridges, plus the carbarn and the rolling stock. (It should be noted that the lines beyond Turners Falls had been abandoned by the receiver in 1923). That was the good news; the bad - the Electric Railway Journal reported that what the towns got for their

(Cont'd on Page 4)

(TROLLEYS – Cont'd from Page 3)

money was close to junk status. Maintenance had been deferred for years, resulting in broken rails, rotten ties, failed drainages – you name it. A real fixer-upper!

Over the next two years a massive rehabilitation took place. From the roadbed up to the overhead system, much needed replacement was done.

The big bridge needed redecking and painting. The carbarn needed a new roof. Some rolling stock wanted mending. All it takes is money, and that's what it got - \$30,000 in 1925-era cash.

For a while, everything went along swimmingly. Four shiny new cars were built to augment and then essentially replace the 1911-built fleet which the GMTA got for its money. But then the next shoe dropped.

What the coming of the automobile and the bus had begun in strangling streetcars country-wide, the Great Depression finished off. Streetcar systems in more-rural areas everywhere started dropping like flies. In 1934, GMTA's final trolley car run brought the electric traction era in town to an end. That was later than many lines. The Conway Electric Street Railway and the Shelburne Falls & Colrain line were already just fading memories. Up and down the valley the bus was king.

Even in Springfield, the last trolley line would fold in 1940. In eastern and central Massachusetts, a vast web of streetcar lines was gone by Pearl Harbor Day. The Worcester Consolidated Street Railway had been reduced to just lines essentially within the city, and was in fact on the verge of converting to buses when the war broke out. The result here was that the trolleys soldiered on through the war, but at the end of December in 1945, the entire remaining system shut down overnight, leaving the Boston metro area as the only place in the state where one could still ride a streetcar instead of a bouncy, smelly bus. Progress? You decide.

(BEHIND THE SCENES – Cont'd from Page 1)

But if you've ever been involved in an operation like Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, you know there are a lot of folks working behind the scenes to make this all happen. Here are some of them and what they do, in no particular order, and no doubt incompletely. Please remember that in spite of the huge amount of time involved, these are all volunteer positions.

Dave Bartlett is known to most visitors as the man behind the ticket counter. And I hope you recognize that nearly all of the work that goes into putting this Transfer together is his as well. Behind the scenes he also manages our membership database, collecting dues (are you up to date?) and sending out membership cards. As Clerk, he takes minutes at the Board of Directors (BOD) meetings, and he provides his engineering background to projects around the yard. He also manages our charter scheduling.

Betsy Wholey Osell (great-granddaughter of Frank Johnson, savior of No. 10) helps out at the ticket counter when her schedule allows. Her much less public, but vital role, is Treasurer. Betsy makes sure we only spend what we have, that our bills are paid on time and our accounts are up-to-date. This year she tackled filing our taxes, a huge job the first time around, with revised forms to boot. She helps Dave with stocking the TrolleyStop, and manages all the special orders for historical reprints.

Besides being “Pump Car Polly” and a qualified conductor, **Polly Bartlett** is in charge of Education and Interpretation. She works to make our displays as informative and logical as possible. She also encourages and arranges school groups to come for field trips for science and history. Polly is the one who lines up the volunteers to make the meals happen for Trolleyfest and Members' Day.

John Pelletier is our restoration manager. His primary project is the caboose, Central Vermont 4015. You can see for yourself next season how much work he has put into it. Well, you probably can't, unless you've worked on such a project. All the scraping, repairing, replacing and planning is pretty much hidden once the paint goes on. John has put together a safety program and will gladly train any one who wants to help out with restoration. John will lend his handy-man skills to other projects, especially those that crop up during a busy operating day.

Dave Goff is our Public Relations manager. He writes our releases and gets them distributed far and wide, so that folks keep coming from all parts of the world. He arranges to have our posters and rack cards designed and printed at discount prices and this year started a Google Adwords campaign. He also is ready and willing when it is time to do trackwork, and with his trackmobile is always eager to do any switching or caboose rides needed.

Alden Dreyer is well-known to those who have signed up for trolley car crew. His job as Crew Dispatcher is to harangue folks via email (mostly) to get them to sign up for operation shifts (called 'tricks' in railroad parlance). Our crew is a willing group, but mostly like to wait until Friday before committing to a trick, causing Alden to lose sleep near the end of the week.

Bill Kaiser is known to most as a trolley car operator. But he also makes it up for trackwork sessions, and recently fixed two of our delicate mechanical artifacts. Our Fare Register (the round numbered counter in No. 10) now operates, having been a static object of curiosity for years. And the Western Union Self-Winding Naval Observatory clock that said 8:00 all year is running again thanks to Bill. See <http://www.abbeyclock.com/western.html> for more information on these famous clocks.

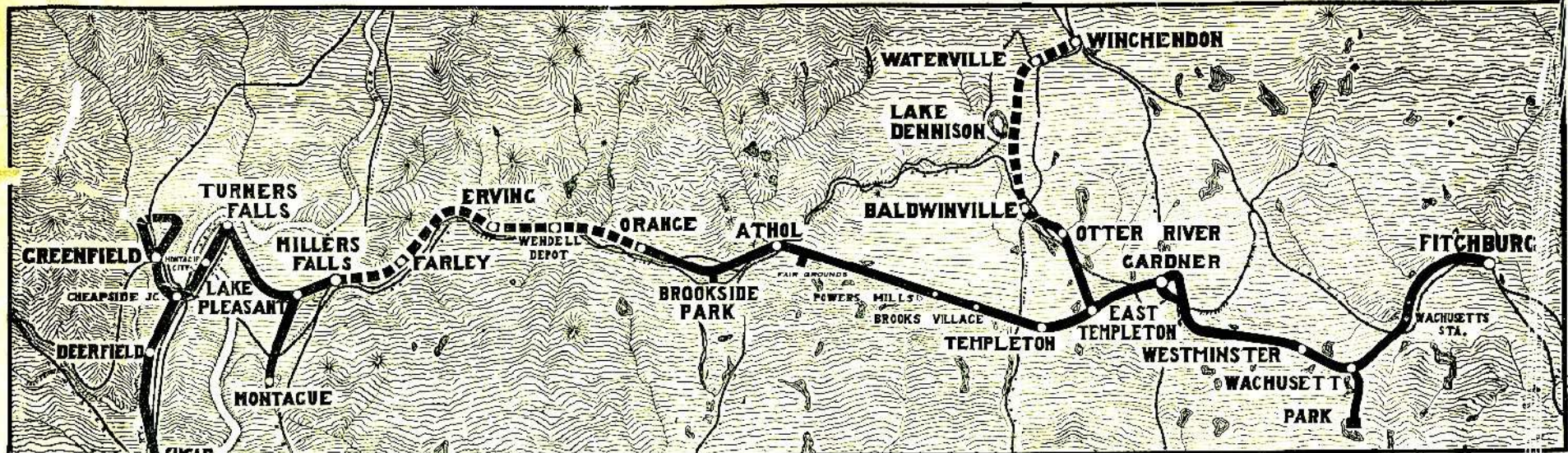
John Greene often shares his wisdom from decades as a B&M trackman. He tells us what needs to be done, how to do it, and how to do it safely. He also does or oversees the mowing.

Dave Dye (BOD Chair) can be counted on to help with repairs and up-keep and improvements to our buildings. Among other things, Dave built and installed the porch railing, a feature our insurance agent requested. Dave trailered our two spare traction motors to A.C. Electric in Bangor ME for overhaul and covered up an exposed end of F&L No. 60.

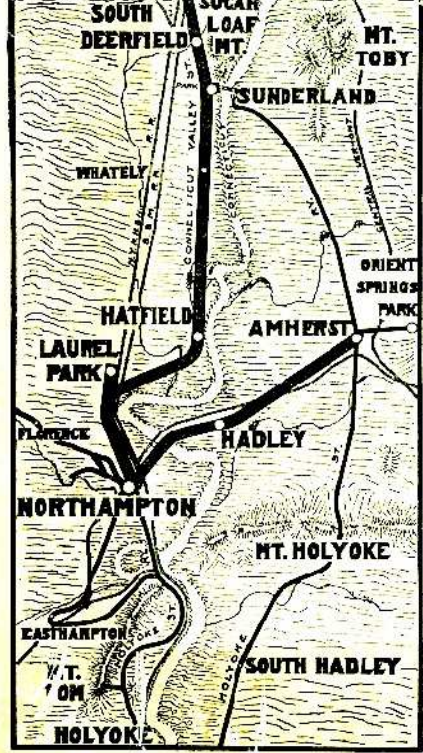
Sam Bartlett (President and General Manager) writes grants, tries to keep the website up-to-date, works with the tenants, arranges work parties, does trackwork and yard cleanup and building repairs, handles emails and calls, keeps No. 10 and the pump car running, fixes trucks and mowers and writes occasionally for the Transfer.

When you are contemplating how large a financial contribution you are going to make to SFTM this year, think about the value of the work these volunteers donate each year.

Sam Bartlett



ROUTE OF THE
NORTHERN
MASSACHUSETTS
RAILWAYS



TRANSFER

2010 OPERATING SCHEDULE

**BEGINNING ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND,
OPERATING EVERY SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND
HOLIDAY, THROUGH THE END OF OCTOBER.
HOURS OF SERVICE - 11 AM TIL 5 PM.**

**ADDITIONAL SUMMER SERVICE:
JULY AND AUGUST -
MONDAYS - 1 PM TIL 5 PM.**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Please check the date on your mailing label below.
If the date is **12/31/2010**, then you are good to go
with SFTM through 2010.

If your date is **12/31/2009**, it is time to renew.

SFTM heavily depends on its memberships for its
continuing success. Everything you give goes into
the care and feeding of Trolley No. 10 and the land
and buildings it operates on. The entire staff at
SFTM is one of volunteers only, so nothing you
give goes home with any of them.

Renew today. Help keep the lights on and No. 10
rolling down the line!!.

TROLLEYFEST 2010

SATURDAY JUNE 26

ELEGANT CATERED MEAL AT NOON

10TH MASS. CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTORS

PUMPCAR AND CABOOSE RIDES

MORE

**Meal reservations requested. Advance
payment not required.
Please email dbartlet@crocker.com or
call 413-625-6628 by June 23)**

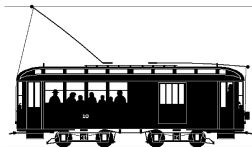
**Check in at sftm.org for updates and
more info about the day.**

Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum

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413/625-9443 www.sftm.org/



*Check the date on the upper right of your mailing label.
Is your membership about to expire?*
