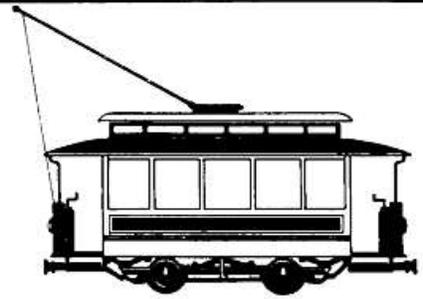


T·H·E LIVEWIRE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AMERICA'S
FIRST DOWNTOWN STREETCAR MUSEUM



Volume 44, Number 3

January-February-March

REMEMBERING THE JOLLY TOWN TROLLEYS

In the Roaring Twenties, the United Railways and Electric Company found itself with surplus and unusable streetcars on its hands. While most cars were either scrapped, sold or put to other uses, several were saved for children to enjoy. These cars were placed at the United's parks and several neighborhood playgrounds.

The pictures of the car shown on the bottom of this page appear in Michael Farrell's *Who Made Our Streetcars Go* and Gary Helton's *Baltimore's Streetcars and Buses*. This car, an 1898 Brownell, car #134, was placed at the well-remembered Gwynn Oak Park. Images of animals and nursery rhymes replaced the advertisements inside the car.

The Gwynn Oak Jolly Town car, as pictured below remained in place for many years until the ravages of time and vandalism took their toll. As far as it is known, all of the cars were scrapped but the remains of the Gwynn Oak car still exist.

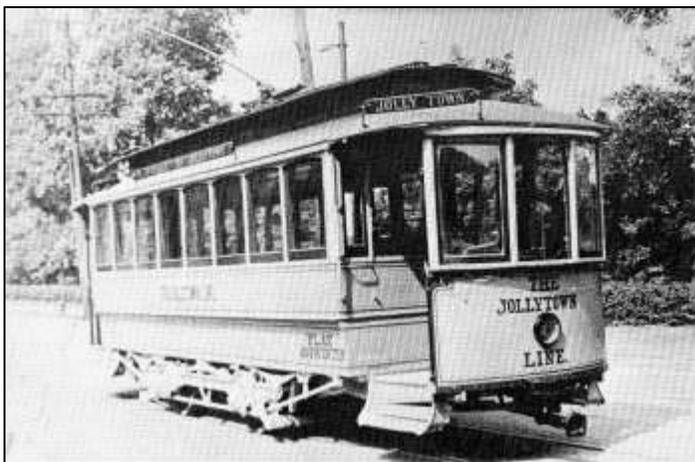
The car's single truck found its way to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum's collection, over which a wooden overhead line tower car was built. Although the line car



was recently dismantled, the truck is in safe storage. It will be used for a new line car that is planned to be built.

A real discovery is the picture above. Frank Lidinsky, a long-time friend of the Museum, sent this picture of the car that was placed in Baltimore's Bocek Park, still located at East Madison Street and Edison Highway. Frank received the picture from childhood friend, Rick Costello. It was taken in the late 1950s, showing Rick's grandfather, Frank Costello, with another one of his grandchildren. It is the only known picture of this car.

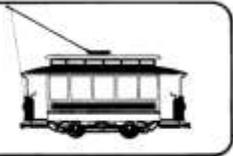
The Bocek Park Jolly Town car is a six-window Brill that pre-dates its Gwynn Oak Park counterpart. At first glance, it is difficult to determine the number that is on the car's dasher in the picture; the fence post next to the headlight makes identification more difficult. However our Curator, Mark Dawson advises the car's number is 3612. Let us know otherwise!



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is published by the Museum for the enjoyment of its members and friends.

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YOUR COMMENTS AND IDEAS ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATED!

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The Museum's Board of Trustees meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month, except August, at the Museum's Visitor's Center auditorium. All members in good standing are invited and encouraged to attend Board Meetings which begin at 7:30 P.M. Correspondence and submissions for *The Live Wire* may be addressed to the Museum's post office listed above.

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adjacent carhous trackage. As usual, there was a healthy selection of automobiles, spanning the 1930s up to the 1980s—yes, even relics from the late years of the 20th century are now officially qualified to be classified as “antique.” Classic sedans and re-tooled hot rods shared the stage with muscle cars and cream puffs that looked as pristine as the day they rolled off the assembly line.

Among the crowd favorites that made an appearance: an immaculate 1947 Cadillac, jet-black 1949 Dodge, split-window 1963 Corvette, classic 1967 Buick Skylark, and the meet’s winner as picked by museum member Logan Tracey—a light green (as in mint) 1954 Hudson Hornet, pictured below on the left.

In addition to the beautiful selection of vintage vehicles, the barbershop quartet “Surprise!” from Gaithersburg, Maryland performed on the streetcars and amongst the antique autos for much of the afternoon. Another treat was local organist and B.S.M. member, Jim Curd, who played a medley of popular tunes (which included taking requests) inside the visitors’ center on his portable organ. Various visitors tried to stump Jim with various 1950s and 60s television theme songs and Top 40 hits, but he proved up to the task with each and every one.

If you missed this appearance of the CRAACA, no need to worry—the group is scheduled to exhibit at the museum again this fall, on October 18, 2015. Check the museum’s website and future issues of *The Live Wire* for more details as the date draws closer. There are more of my pictures on page seven and a sampling of pictures from the CRAACA (with their kind permission) on page four and five in this issue.

THE CRAACA VISITS B.S.M.

Article and Photos by Andrew Blumberg

A stubborn winter finally gave way to a harbinger of spring when the Chesapeake Region, Antique Automobile Club of America (CRAACA), made the first of two visits scheduled for 2015 to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum, on March 29, 2015.

Despite windy and cool conditions, approximately 40 vehicles graced the museum’s North Avenue Loop and



B.S.M. ON TRACK TO A BRIGHTER FINANCIAL FUTURE

By Christopher McNally, B.S.M. Executive Vice-President

For anyone who tracks B.S.M.'s finances, you know that the annual museum operating budget for many years was roughly \$60,000.00 to \$80,000.00 and our investment portfolio (a "rainy day" fund that provided dividend income when the economy was good and for emergencies) hovered around \$150,000.00. It is truly amazing that the museum has been able to operate on such a "shoestring" budget, which is a testament to the volunteers who have for years done virtually everything to keep the museum running ... activities, that at many other museums, would require highly paid professionals. We on the Board have long hoped for more choices and financial security, however, and had eyed our investment portfolio warily for many years, especially during the 2008 Recession, when our total portfolio lost roughly one-third of its value at its lowest point—thankfully since rebounded.

B.S.M.'s financial well-being has always been a function of several constants at the museum: (1) fiscal responsibility above all else (B.S.M. has never carried any debt and always lived within its means); (2) sweat labor to offset costs (everything from building track to plumbing/electrical upgrades, phone system maintenance, security maintenance have been borne by the volunteers; in fact, the only major capital improvements made at the museum in the past 10 years have been city-financed replacement of the visitor's center HVAC system, a new roof on the Visitor's Center, and repairs to sprinkler system); (3) a "pass the hat" commitment from its core volunteers—examples include the purchase of "Big Jim" the backhoe by our departed Jim Robertson, the purchase of insulated shipping containers by Ed Amrhein, the seeding of an endowment fund by John LaCosta and the financing of the purchase and move of car #7303 by the late Carvey Davis – to name literally a few examples among probably hundreds since the museum's founding. This is an organization that has literally survived and thrived based on the labor and funds of a very dedicated core of volunteers—a truly one of a kind organization. The lack of overhead from not having major capital expenses or paid staff has also given B.S.M. a flexibility to weather hard times well. Our overall financial picture, however, had also been a hindrance toward making the museum more professional, presentable and "cutting edge," and

has also hindered our ability to attract major donors, fundraise, or hire any paid professional staff). For those concerned with the long-term future of B.S.M., these concerns were alarming.

The past two years have seen a radical shift in the museum's fortunes (and the choices that are now before us as an organization). As a consequence of four major bequests from several recently deceased B.S.M. members, B.S.M.'s liquid net worth has increased fivefold in the past two years. The generosity of these individuals knew no bounds (several of whom literally bequeathed their entire Estates to B.S.M.). While the loss of these individuals is saddening (with each passing more of the collective memory and legacy of streetcars and the early founding of B.S.M. passes with them), their legacy to B.S.M. will live on for generations. We wish to acknowledge these individuals as follows:

ESTATE OF PAUL WIRTZ—\$538,823.00

Paul Wirtz, who was the long-time comptroller of B.S.M. and who passed with no close relatives and a lifelong love of B.S.M., as well as a very healthy investment portfolio, bequeathed over half a million dollars—\$538,823.00—the entire residue of his Estate after taxes and expenses. This is without a doubt the largest single bequest by any individual B.S.M. member and literally tripled B.S.M.'s total liquid net worth. Paul was a kind, gentle, intelligent wonderful financial steward of B.S.M. during his life—after his death his stewardship was truly revealed.

ESTATE OF LEE ROGERS—\$113,891.00

Lee Rogers, a long-time resident of Prince George's County and very active in dozens of transit and DC history organizations, left the entire bulk of his estate to B.S.M. (including his childhood home which housed literally thousands of books, artifacts, documents, transit-related materials, photographs, slides—even a 1969 Volkswagen Bus). Back in 2012, B.S.M.'s volunteers spent the better part of three months every weekend cleaning out his home and transporting the valuable materials to a secure storage container at B.S.M. The proceeds from the sale of his home and other investments, after expenses, netted \$83,137.00. In addition, Mr. Rogers left many truly amazing non-transit related historical items, books and materials that B.S.M. has been liquidating (after careful analysis by the Maryland Rail Heritage Library Staff—any transit related items of interest are being retained or donated to

appropriate historical organizations)—the sale of these materials has netted an additional \$31,000.00 (and at least another \$10,000.00 is expected).

ESTATES OF ROBERT RILEY AND VICTOR WEISBERGER—(\$71,078.00)

B.S.M. also received unexpected and extremely generous bequests from the Estate of Robert Riley (\$30,404.00) and Victor Weisberger (\$40,674.00), two long-time and very generous donors/benefactors whose remembrance of the museum netted substantial proceeds from these Estates.

The net total of these bequests totals a remarkable \$723,792.00, which when added to our existing portfolio has totaled roughly \$873,000.00—an almost 600% increase in B.S.M.’s liquid financial worth in just two years.

The immediate net effect of these funds is that they should result in interest and dividend annual income well in excess of \$20,000.00, even with a very conservative investment strategy (which will bring our annual operating budget in excess of \$100,000.00 for the first time ever). This has also given us financial choices that we never previously had. We emphasize that our first order of priority is to ensure that the corpus of these funds are maintained and invested properly—this Board is committed to not going on a “spending spree” with this money (quite the opposite). We have long-term plans to utilize the income from these investments to begin the process of significant overhauls at the museum including the following:

1. substantial upgrades to the displays in the visitor’s center;
2. improvement of lighting, signage, parking facilities, handicap access;
3. continued investment in major renovations to the rolling stock (as evidenced most recently by the money invested in car #554);
4. increase our advertising footprint across the Baltimore Region (this has started in slow increments including B.S.M.’s first-ever major radio advertising campaign, which is set to air later this year on Baltimore’s Country Radio station and was an effort spearheaded by B.S.M. Board member Justin Thillman with assistance from the Museum’s Director of Public Affairs, Andrew Blumberg);



5. The hopeful eventual hiring of a professional development/fundraiser and/or executive director.

It is an exciting time for B.S.M. and the future continues to look shining bright! This is good news for our volunteers, the collection and future generations of B.S.M. visitors and transit enthusiasts. B.S.M. wishes to thank and acknowledge the individuals above for their amazing generosity, but also any and all donors big or small who remember B.S.M. in their annual giving, the President’s Appeal or any other special donation which is greatly appreciated! B.S.M. also wishes to remind everyone to remember B.S.M. in your estate planning – you too could leave an enduring legacy for future generations to come to know, love and appreciate streetcars as much as we do and continue to protect and preserve our priceless collection of artifacts.





Selected interesting articles from the past.
by Dave Wilson

The Leonhardt Wagon Manufacturing Company was on a roll 120 years ago. This edition of *The Street Railway Journal* (March 1895) contained this announcement for a new Tower Wagon, as well as the patent notice for a new streetcar fender designed by J. H. Leonhardt. The tower wagon must have met with some success. I have found photographs of its display at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904.



FIG. 1.—TOWER WAGON, CLOSED.



FIG. 2.—TOWER WAGON, RAISED.

New Tower Wagon.

One of the most necessary adjuncts to the successful operation of an electric railway system is a good tower wagon. One of the latest inventions in this line is the Leonhardt revolving tower wagon, upon which the inventor John H. Leonhardt, of the Leonhardt Wagon Manufacturing Company, Baltimore, has received letters patent dated February 19, 1895.

With this tower the lineman is enabled to make any repairs to the trolley—no matter at how difficult a point—without blocking the cars for even a minute.

The special points of merit claimed are: Handiness, quickness of operation, neatness of design, simplicity and lightness, without sacrificing strength or durability. Good time can also be made with this wagon, in responding to calls, as no part of the tower—when lowered—projects as high as the driver's head. The danger of upsetting is also thus eliminated, especially when turning corners.

Fig. 1 shows the tower lowered, Fig. 2 elevated and extending backward, and Fig. 3 elevated and turned over the car, while the wagon stands outside of the tracks. The ladder is hinged by heavy forged irons to a turntable mounted on the sides of the wagon body, and is thus readily and quickly swung in any direction, to the right or left, forward or backward. It is raised and lowered by one man, with a simple gearing pulling on the two chains. It is, however, not dependent on the chains, for when raised two wooden uprights carry the entire strain and form rigid supports. To the upper end of this ladder is hinged a folding platform which, when the ladder is raised, extends over the edge of the wagon sufficiently to allow the cars to pass unobstructed, while the men are working on the trolley.

The City & Suburban Railway Company, of Baltimore, has one of these wagons in daily use and speaks of it in excellent terms.



FIG. 3.—TOWER WAGON IN USE WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH CARS.



THANK YOU, DONORS

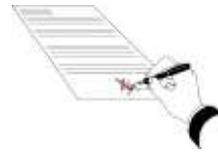
The Baltimore Streetcar Museum would like to acknowledge the following individuals who have made donations during the past several months. These include the annual President's Appeal, memorial donations for deceased members, contributions for car restoration and general donations. We greatly appreciate their generosity and apologize to anyone we missed.

Leonard Adler	Albert Johnson
George Alderson	Helen Kohl-Mohr
Russ Baer, Jr.	Richard Lanham, Sr.
Shirley Ball	Gretchen Lekites
Mel Boteler	Scott Margolin
Glen Bottoms	Raymond Martin
Samuel and Doris Bowen	Jay P. McMahon
Emily and George Brown	Matthew Mummert
Michael Brownell	Matt Nawn
Andrew Burger, Jr.	Claire Ritterhoff
Daniel Dekowski	Harriet Ritterhoff
Harry Donahue	Paul Ritterhoff, Jr.
Marianne Freedman	Thomas and Katherine Ritterhoff
Charles and Regina Graham	Rev Kenneth Schnepf
William Gough	William Semenuk
Lillie Hentz	Rena and Jack Shenk
William Hoover, Jr.	Kenneth Spencer
J. Shelly Hopkins	Carl Thistel
Kathryn Hutson	Randall Voith
Robert Janssen	



*Looking
Ahead at
Your Museum*

- ☞ MAY 10 & JUNE 21, 2015: B.S.M. celebrates Mother's and Father's Day. Mom or Dad ride for ½ admission.
- ☞ JUNE 6, 2015: The Museum opens on Saturdays during the summer.
- ☞ JULY 25, 2015: Join us for the Annual B.S.M. Crab Feast. See the enclosed flyer for details and a reservation form.
- ☞ SEPTEMBER 19, 2015: It's time for the B.S.M. Annual Members Day. More details will be mailed later this summer.
- ☞ OCTOBER 18, 2015: Antique cars return to the Museum for their Fall display.
- ☞ OCTOBER 24, 2015: B.S.M. celebrates Halloween with its Streetcar Pumpkin Patch. More details will follow later.
- ☞ OCTOBER 31, 2015: The last Saturday of the year the Museum is open. Museum remains open on Sundays.
- ☞ DECEMBER 12, 13, 19 & 20, 2015: It's time for Santa's Streetcar. There will be a flyer in the next *Live Wire*.
- ☞ MOST SATURDAYS: Come on down and volunteer to help with lots of work to do. Wear your work clothes. Lunch is usually at Subway™ in Hampden, Hon (Dutch treat).



*The
President's
Message*

By John J. O'Neill, Jr.

There is a lot of exciting news for this report. First, the Board of Trustees reviewed the curator's comments upon the display report that was funded by the Baltimore City Heritage Area and directed him to obtain prices for the items that it thought viable. Included are such things as revamping the auditorium displays, a new outside marking on the exterior of the Visitor's Center indicating the name of the organization, lowering the admissions window for handicapped access, revamping the parking lot and the fence along Falls Road and a number of other items. It is my intention to apply for further grant funding like we received for car #554 for this work. Speaking of car #554, it is currently scheduled to be rolled out in July of this year with a celebration of its return to service with its new frame and wiring. Car #3828 will also be receiving attention once we have our skilled carpenter who worked on car #554, return and give us a detailed estimate for another grant. The Baltimore City Historical Alliance will also be hosting one of their grant seminars for Baltimore Historic Sites at the Museum in late spring.

The Board also has addressed the terrible winter we had with ice and snow as well as numerous illnesses among the operating staff. We weren't open for operations for weeks on end. As a result, the Museum is now going to be closed during the months of January and February. Museum internal activities such as repairs/maintenance, planning, library, NRHS and other nonoperational activities will continue but there will be no public operations or rentals. This is a change to a long-standing tradition, but the active members are ageing and can no longer be counted upon to dig the Museum out by hand and break up ice in the flange ways like we did in the past. With "Big Jim," our front end loader, being kaput, it is just impossible to keep things going for the few visitors that we have during those months. While we do plan to replace the loader, the work under winter conditions is too difficult—even for the snow sweeper, which couldn't navigate the ice either this year.

Needless to say, we are looking forward to the summer activities to brush away the memories of this winter. See you at the Museum!

John



TWO BELLS

By
Jerry Kelly

HOW I MISS THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS OF THE B.T.C.

For all of us who were around in 1947, we remember “M Day.” This was when B.T.C. started the flow of riders on the system from rail to bus. I am sure we remember that weekend in June 1947 when the #1 line was reduced to a Park Terminal to City Hall route. The # 17 and #29 rail routes were no more. The #24 line was reduced to just a shadow of what it was. Over the next few years more and more of rail lines were reduced to a short trip or were no longer with us. After June 1947, we went on to lose by December 31, 1949, the following rail lines all or most of the route. Routes #1, #2, #5, #6, #16, #20 and #46 were no longer with us. In this same period, we lost a good part of #15 and a large part of route #25. Route #33 was no more by its number but the rail from Gwynn Oak Junction to Belvedere Loop as part of route #32 was still in use.

But what else did we lose in the above two and a half years? We, as rail fans, lost the beauty and sight of many transit properties. A few did remain but they were not the same, no longer being part of the rail system in Baltimore. Following is what we lost. How many do you remember?

2/2/1947	The loop to the west side of the Edmondson car house.
3/27/1947	The Roland Park car house property.
5/29/1947	The loop at Monument and Kresson Streets.
9/12/1947	The Oak Street car house (Howard and 25th Streets).
10/15/1947	The car house, bus garage and trackless trolley base at Preston and Potomac Streets.
10/20/1947	The Madison Ave car house.
10/22/1947	The car house at North Avenue and Gay Street.
10/30/1947	The car house at Baltimore and Smallwood Streets and a great car yard and loop.
5/19/1948	Part of the car yard at Eastern Avenue and Ponca Street.
7/20/1948	The Light Street Car house. (It is not known if the car yard was part of this sale.)
2/18/1949	The property that was the Westport loop.
11/30/1949	The Cumberland Street car house.
12/27/1949	The car yard located at Irvington Loop.

Not only did we lose our street cars but we also lost the buildings, car yards, loops, etc. These were in many ways just as important at times as the cars and routes. Often today, I look at one city’s light rail, then another and it is hard to tell them apart. That was not true back in the good old days. I am happy that I can remember this and at the same time sad, as we have lost this physical part of our hobby.





Spring is here but the Baltimore area did not escape some very nasty weather. Oh, nothing like the never ending snow that inundated the New England area, but enough to cause some of the usual winter problems that seem to drive people crazy. The last half of February and the beginning of March brought very cold temperatures and wind chills in the single digits along with snow, sleet and freezing rain. These elements forced the museum to close for four consecutive weekends. Then, a power failure at the substation forced a fifth lost weekend. Better weather is here and the museum is back to normal (whatever that may be). ☼☼☼☼ Restoration work has resumed on car #1050 and Justin Thillman has made a new wiring harness for car #554, with the intent of getting the

car at least operational by summer. ☼☼☼☼ P.C.C. car #2168 recognized: the Association of Tourist Train and Railroad Museums noted this car as a “significant achievement” in the electric car category when handing out awards last autumn during their annual banquet. It was one of three cars so honored. A thank you goes to Harry Donahue for the providing the information. ☼☼☼☼ Last call: we offer condolences to long time B.S.M. member J. Shelley Hopkins on the loss of his wife, Debbie, who passed away in late March after a prolonged illness. ☼☼☼☼ 125 years ago (1890): the North Avenue Railway Company began operation of Baltimore’s first electric trolley cars using an overhead wire. This was in the Walbrook area and quickly proved that electric cars were the wave of the future and the age of the horse drawn streetcar would soon be over. ☼☼☼☼ 115 years ago (1900): the new United Railways and Electric Company (UR&E) acquired 105 convertible streetcars. 55 cars were from the J.G. Brill Company of Philadelphia and another 50 were from the Brownell Car Company of Saint Louis. Our car# 264 (a Brownell product) is the only car left from this group. ☼☼☼☼ 110 years ago (1905): the UR&E began operating a fleet of semi-convertible streetcars built by the J.G. Brill Company of Philadelphia. By 1920, the fleet numbered 885 such cars. ☼☼☼☼ 85 years ago: (1930), the UR&E acquired 150 Peter Witt-type streetcars, 100 from Brill and 50 nearly identical cars from the Cincinnati Car Company. These were the only Cincinnati built cars to ever run in Baltimore. Car #6119 (from Brill) is 85 years old. ☼☼☼☼ 80 years ago (1935): the UR&E emerged from bankruptcy and took on a new name: The Baltimore Transit Company, which lasted until the Maryland Transit Administration took over transit service in the early 1970’s. ☼☼☼☼ It seems hard to believe that it was 45 years ago when car #3550 (now # 4533) made the first run at B.S.M.. In July 1970, the museum officially started public operation with cars #1164 and #264. Gee ... I wonder how many miles we have put on these cars since then. It took a lot of hard work by many volunteers to get the first cars running. It still takes a lot of work to keep our fleet going. Thanks to everyone who has—and continues—to support the Museum physically and financially. ☼☼☼☼ This is your museum, so why not take a day and visit? Come on down, say hello and check out what’s happening.

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