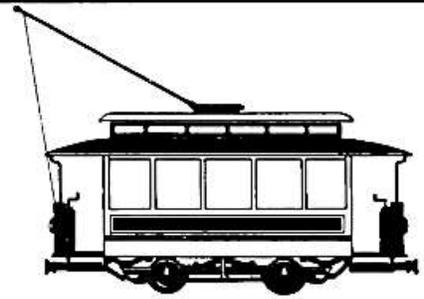


T·H·E LIVEWIRE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AMERICA'S
FIRST DOWNTOWN STREETCAR MUSEUM



Volume 44, Number 2

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REMEMBERING PAUL RITTERHOFF

Article and Pictures by Andrew Blumberg

Paul Ritterhoff, one of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum's most senior members, passed away on Tuesday, December 2, 2014, of kidney failure at Stella Maris Hospice, at the age of 91.

A member of the museum since 1982, Paul was a qualified motorman, conductor, and operator, whose expert machinist and metal working skills were put to good use time and again on a variety of projects.

Born in Baltimore and raised on Denison Street in Baltimore City's Ashburton neighborhood, Paul was a 1940 graduate of Polytechnic Institute, and earned a bachelor's degree in engineering in 1944 from the Johns Hopkins University. He served stateside with the Army's Counterintelligence Corps during World War II.

After the death of his father in 1952, Paul and his brother, Charles Ritterhoff, took over as co-owners of E. Ritterhoff and Sons, a retail hardware and plumbing supply store at Baltimore Street and Central Avenue that had been established by their grandfather Ernest Ritterhoff in 1873. After serving multiple generations of Baltimoreans, the store closed in 2000 after 127 years of being in business.

Paul's interest in streetcars and steam engines started in childhood, according to his son, Paul M. Ritterhoff. "As a kid, he wanted to be a streetcar motorman, and when he was 16, in 1939, took an excursion to Alaska looking for and riding steam engines and trains," his son said. "He was pretty ecumenical when it came to steam locomotives. He liked them all."

When Paul joined the museum and took its training course to learn how to operate the cars, he realized his



HONORING PAUL: John O'Neill presents Paul with the Governor's Proclamation for his dedication to the museum.

lifelong dream of becoming a motorman. That, however, was only part of his museum involvement, for Paul also brought considerable skills in pattern-making and sheet metal-working to streetcar restoration projects.

"Paul was a really talented metal worker and machinist. He could make anything," said B.S.M. President John O'Neill.

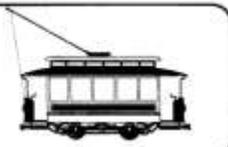
Added Ed Amrhein, B.S.M's Superintendent of Transportation, "Paul was a great listener. We'd be discussing some need the shop had to replace a part to keep a car running or help in restoration. Without

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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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anyone asking him, Paul would soon return with a brand-new, fabricated part to solve the problem. This happened time and again. He never wanted any fanfare or credit for his help.”

In particular, Paul was instrumental in the early restoration efforts of PCC car # 7303 that had operated in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California, before ending up as a real estate office in New Mexico. In 2002, BSM purchased the car, due to its close approximation to the first order of PCCs that ran in Baltimore starting in 1936—an example missing from



FRIENDLY SUGGESTIONS: Harriet Ritterhoff gives a few helpful “hints” to Paul before they take a ride on car #7303.

the museum’s collection. Paul’s talents then came into play.

“He made all of what we call aluminum ice tray lighting fixtures. It was a painstakingly difficult job, and when they’re installed, they will be a fitting tribute to Paul,” said John. “He was a true craftsman, and he could do many other things like making castings, which is a lost art.”

“He had taken courses in pattern-making at Poly and often referred to his notebooks as he worked on projects,” his son remembered.

Paul’s love of streetcars also extended into modeling. He constructed a streetcar layout in his Northwood residence, and as his son recalled, “even made and soldered the overhead catenary.”

In 2011, museum members honored Paul’s years of volunteering with a luncheon. It was at that event where his generosity once again was in evidence. “Paul gave all attendees a gift — a small notebook, circa 1920s, produced by his grandfather, promoting his hardware store at 1159 East Baltimore Street,” recalled this writer. “On the inside front and inside back covers were printed schedules of Baltimore streetcar lines. It was a generous and thoughtful gesture, and was very characteristic of Paul.”

A collector of standard-gauge Lionel trains and railroad books, Paul was a Mason and a member of the Kedron and Corinthian Lodges.

A memorial service was held Saturday, December 6, at Divinity Lutheran Church, Towson. In addition to his son, Paul is survived by his wife of 63 years, the former Harriet Pollard; another son, Thomas Ritterhoff; two daughters, Claire Ritterhoff and Gretchen LeKites; and six grandchildren.



ON ANOTHER CAR: After riding on car #7303, Paul takes car #2168 on a trip out the museum’s carline with family and friends.



TWO BELLS

By Jerry Kelly

Here is a look back into B.T.C.'s Routes #9 and #14.

This is the story of how and when PCCs were assigned to Route #14. When this all started back in 1938. I was not aware of the background, the whys and the wherefores that took place from 1938 to June 1941 to resolve. In 1938, a local citizen wrote to the president of the Baltimore Transit Company (B.T.C.), Bancroft Hill, asking if any of the ordered PCCs were going to be used on the #9-14 line. In December 1938, the B.T.C. wrote back that some of the cars on order would be used on 9-14 line. After this, there were many letters from the City of Baltimore, B.T.C., local citizens and also several groups were formed to be made a part of the new car plans and what would be routing changes.

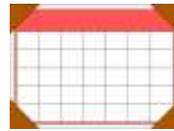
It all came down to how far west of North Bend Road the new cars would operate. The B.T.C. wanted to run the PCCs from downtown to North Bend, where a loop would be built. That would be the west end of route #14. Route #9 would operate from North Bend to Ellicott City using two-man semi-convertible cars. This caused a rash of letters to the B.T.C., the City of Baltimore and the Public Service Commission. Most were about anyone who lived past westbound North Bend would now have a two-seat ride each way to work, shopping, etc. This plan just did not sit well with anyone but the B.T.C. While the B.T.C. would build the loop at North Bend Road, that was all they were planning to build. They had a switch back at Catonsville Junction and a stub end in Ellicott City. As this battle waged on, the idea of a "Y" at Ellicott City was brought into play, but the B.T.C. stated the street, Main Street a/k/a U.S. Route 144 would be problematical. The traffic on Main Street would not allow autos to pass a car waiting to back into the "Y." For this reason the, "Y" would be a traffic hazard.

I should point out that at this time, the B.T.C. operated route #9-14 cars westbound from Charles and Lexington Streets to North Bend Road, Rolling Road and Ellicott City. All cars were one or two man double-ended cars. This meant that all westbound cars did not need a loop. B.T.C. would build a loop at North Bend Road. B.T.C. provided traffic and passenger counts, showing a drop of over 50% of ridership between Ellicott City and downtown. Also, many residents along the line wanted the new PCC cars, but since most riders lived between North Bend Road and downtown, this did not sit well with residents of the area west of North Bend Road into Ellicott City. Further, they just did not like a two seat ride to reach downtown.

Older B.S.M. members may remember the name Louis "Lou" F. Meyer. He was very active in seeing that westbound service on routes #9 and #14 did not end at Road. He was an attorney with a local law firm and also was chairman of a group leading the fight to stop rail service past North Bend Road from becoming, in his words, "jerkwater" service.

This battle went on and on. It did come to an end on June 20, 1941 when the Public Service Commission handed down what would take place. A loop would be built at North Bend Road *and* Rolling Road. The new PCC cars would operate from downtown to both loops. Two man cars would still service route #9 under this order of service. (1) On Sundays, cars would operate from Ellicott City to Catonsville Junction. (2) On weekdays, cars would operate through service from Ellicott City to downtown until 9:00 A.M. and in the evening, from 3.30 PM to 6.30 PM. (3) On Saturdays, there would be through service until 9 A.M. and from Noon until 3:00 P.M. Please note that the A.M. times were just as it was in the Public Service Commission's order.

As we know the PCCs did come to route #14 and did run very well, ending in September 1954. The #9 hung on until summer 1955. We are very lucky that the letters, orders, drawings, etc., from this tug of war have survived so we can review and build on our history of transit in Baltimore. As always, if you can add to this, take issue with this, or have found errors please let us know. Remember this is your museum so if you have information, articles, photos, etc., you would like to share your information, please do.



Looking Ahead at Your Museum

- ☞ MARCH 29, 2015: The Chesapeake Chapter of the Antique Automobile Club of America makes its first 2015 visit to the Museum. If you've never experienced seeing this great display of cars, you are really missing something! Cars arrive around Noon and leave by 4:00 P.M. Bring your camera.
- ☞ MAY 10 & JUNE 21, 2015: B.S.M. celebrates Mother's and Father's Days. Bring your Mom or Dad down to the Museum and they ride for ½ admission.
- ☞ JUNE 6, 2015: It's summer at the Museum again. The Museum opens on Saturdays in addition to being open on Sundays.
- ☞ JULY 25, 2015: Join us for the Annual B.S.M. Crab Feast. A reservation form will be in the next *Live Wire*.
- ☞ SEPTEMBER 19, 2015: Join us for the Annual B.S.M. Members Day. More details will be mailed to you later in the summer.
- ☞ OCTOBER 18, 2015: Antique cars return for their Fall display at the Museum:
- ☞ OCTOBER 24, 2015: B.S.M. celebrates Halloween with its Streetcar Pumpkin Patch.
- ☞ OCTOBER 31, 2015: The last Saturday of the year the Museum is open. Museum is always open on Sundays.
- ☞ 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).

THANK YOU, DONORS

The Museum sincerely wishes to thank the following donors for their recent generous contributions. While we have tried to make this list as accurate as possible, we apologize profusely if anyone has been omitted. Please let us know if we did.

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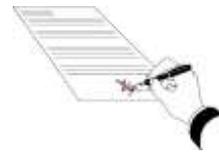
STREETCAR PUMPKIN PATCH

By Ray Cannon

The Baltimore Streetcar Museum joined the list of trolley museums with its first Halloween pumpkin patch type of event on October 25, 2014. Children picked out a small pumpkin which they then decorated with stickers. Yes—the kids got to keep the pumpkins. Sharon Citro organized the event, Margaret Hurley obtained the pumpkins from an Amish farm, Justin and Mary Thillman, Mary Ann Amrhein, Thom La Costa and Cheri and Logan Tracey did the set-up. Ed Amrhein and John O'Neill tended the patch during operations at the 28th Street Loop on car #264 that was to be parked in front of the sweeper. Freddie and Susan Yelton provide goodie treats to the kids. Thanks to all who attended.



A BEAUTIFUL FALL DAY: Car #264 is posed with the snowsweeper and the Pumpkin Patch (on the far left).



The President's Message

By John J. O'Neill, Jr.

I hope that everyone had a happy holiday season with family and friends. The Museum certainly was a centerpiece of cheer and fun. Our two weekends of Santa's Streetcar were a lot of fun for those of us who volunteered and/or brought family to the festivities. Our happiness was tinged with sadness due to the passing of long time member and supporter Paul Ritterhoff, just before the holidays. As you read in the article in this issue (and in *The Baltimore Sun*) he was quite a guy and we will miss him very much.

The wonderful decorations and train displays accomplished by Justin Thillman and his helpers really made the Museum a showpiece. Over the holidays, the Museum became the proud owner of a new cash register which will allow us to keep better records of who our visitors are. This data is required by the funding organizations and now we will have it, thanks to John LaCosta. We are also the proud owners of two new state-of-the-art credit card machines that are required by the newer credit cards with chips in them. We also are in full compliance with the new credit card regulations, effective January 1, 2015. I obtained the machines at no charge—a definite plus.

The pace of restoration and repair activity hasn't slowed much. The restoration of car #554 that I told you about earlier is just about complete with wiring, painting and replacement of the car on its truck all that is left. If you haven't had a chance to see it, stop into the barn and take a look. We are grateful to the Baltimore City Heritage Area for their financial support that allowed us to use outside help to accelerate the project. We are planning another grant application to tackle the more extensive and more complicated restoration of car #3828 as our next major project. Of course, we can't forget the finishing touches on car #417 and initial repairs on car #1050 that are also getting the restoration crew's attention in the barn.

There are many other activities underway such as tie replacement in the track, maintenance of the existing operating rolling stock and all of the other things that require our hard working volunteers' attention. I would encourage everyone to get involved and make a visit ... soon!

John

A PATCHWORK OF PICTURES

Here are some pictures, by your editor, of the 2014 Santa's Streetcar event and car #554's restoration work. More pictures will be on the Museum's website in the near future. (It takes time to pick the best ones.)



READY TO VISIT MR. CLAUS: Car #2168 is ready to ride out to the 28th Street Loop for the children to visit Jolly Old Saint Nicholas.



READY FOR THE LAST TRIP: Car #2168, dazzling at dusk, is ready to make its final trip of the day to the North Pole.



TALKING IT OVER: Dave Wilson (l) and Abe Zumwalt (c) discuss car #554's progress with Master Carpenter Keith Bray (r).



CRIBBED UP: Keith Bray removed the floor and its side framing from under car #554 and moved it forward so that new frames can be installed, resulting in a perfectly level floor. Note the intricate temporary support and cribbing. You can see the floor in the picture on the bottom left. Keith pretty much tackled most of the heavy work himself! His restoration work is well sought after by many trolley museums. B.S.M. was fortunate to obtain his services. Some small details need to be done that includes new wiring and a thorough repainting ... when better weather returns.



FROM LEFT SIDE TO RIGHT SIDE: This view shows Keith Bray's intricate support system was built to hold up the car's sides and roof.



FROM BACK TO FRONT: This view shows Keith's support system over the car's single truck, which remained in place during work.



Out with the old year and in with the new. What will happen at B.S.M. during 2015? We shall see. I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. **** Where did that holiday season go? Seems like we just had Thanksgiving ... and boom ... it is the New Year. The Christmas season just didn't seem to be as festive this time around. Santa made his usual visit to B.S.M. Children received a small a train related activity booklet as a gift, in addition to the obligatory candy cane. **** B.S.M. also participated in the Annual Toys for Tots Appeal. Organized by Sharon Citro, a

collection box was nearly filled to capacity during Santa's Streetcar, with new toys for needy children. This effort will be repeated again this year during the weeks around Santa's Streetcar. **** Split personality department: open car #554 fit this description for a month during late October and early November. The floor of the car was removed leaving the seats and roof suspended (actually jacked up) in the air with the truck sitting disconnected underneath. With the floor removed, master carpenter Keith Bray worked during the week to make new main floor beams and install them. The floor has now been placed back under the seats and the droopy ends are gone. Car #554 now has a nice straight floor. Justin Thillman is working on a new wiring harness to replace the old ragtag mess that had been installed by the old UR&E Company back in the 1920's. The goal is to at least get the car running sometime this spring. Work on the car was partially paid for with matching grant money. The floor by itself took on a totally different perspective without the seats above the floor—it looked so large. I was surprised at just how big car #554 really is. **** Operator training class starts on March 7th. If interested contact Mark Hurley as soon as possible to sign up or to obtain information. (You may use the "contact us" form on the Museum's website to reach him.) This class does require a commitment of eleven Saturday mornings, from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. **** Last run: this is getting to be a regular (and unwanted) part of this column. We say farewell to several longtime members who passed away in recent months: Richard "Rick" Obbink (#214), Paul Ritterhoff (#934) and Ronald Deiter (#855). Rick was involved with track construction, overhead lines and shop work for many years. Paul was one of our operators and also created several patterns for much needed streetcar parts. He also made an entire set of ice cube tray lighting fixtures for car #7303. Ron was the author of a book about the Washington, D.C., metro system. Also passing was Charles Hurley—father of Mark H. Our condolences to the families of these departed friends.

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