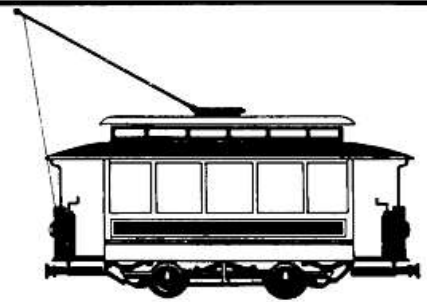


T·H·E LIVEWIRE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AMERICA'S
FIRST DOWNTOWN STREETCAR MUSEUM



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NEW JERSEY TRANSIT #26 FINDS A NEW HOME

Who would have ever thought back on August 24, 2001, the day NJT retired its Presidents Conference Committee (P.C.C.) cars, that one of them, NJT #26, would eventually find a new home at the Baltimore Streetcar Museum? It *did* happen. Twelve years, six months and twenty days later, the streetcar safely arrived at the Museum on January 15, 2014.

But first, some history about the car is in order. Let's go back to the mid-1940s and into the early 1950s to Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minnesota, a/k/a the Twin Cities.

The Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company (TCRT) never operated a steel streetcar until 1945. In fact, TCRT showed little interest in P.C.C.s until that time. A Saint Louis Car Company-built air-electric (with air brakes) demonstrator (#299) was diverted from the plant and was tested in the Twin Cities in February 1945. Pleased with the results, TCRT ordered 40 all-electric (all electric brakes), extra-wide P.C.C cars (#300-339) from Saint Louis Car Company a month later. Additional orders



A CAPITOL PICTURE: TCRT's P.C.C. #415 passes the Minnesota state capitol building located on Wabasha Street in the early 1950's. Abandonment of the line was not too far off. *Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.*

were placed with the same company, 50 cars (#340-389) in August 1945 and 50 more in October 1947 (#390-439). Interestingly enough, the initial order was built for two-man operation, but was eventually converted for a single operator.


D.J. Sprouse, president of TCRT since 1936, ordered these P.C.C.s in an effort to provide the best possible service to the system, particularly on high-capacity routes. All seemed well until an outsider, Charles Green, a Wall Street stock speculator, pursued the first of two proxy battles in 1949 which ousted Sprouse. Green believed that TCRT could provide adequate public transportation (eventually with buses) *and* at the same time, pay dividends to stock holders (including himself). The dividends were something that had not been paid in years, as the company reinvested in its capital assets.



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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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the air car. 'Twin Cities' streetcar system would never run again ... until light rail came to Minneapolis in 2004.

As the saying, "what goes around, comes around," goes, there is a postscript to the "modernization" of TCRT. Mr. Ossanna was convicted in federal court in 1960 on thirteen counts that included conspiracy, mail fraud and interstate transportation of property taken by fraud. Several others were also convicted of participating in a scheme to defraud in the disposition of TCRT properties between 1950 and 1954. They included Benson Larrick of TCRT, Harry and Fred Isaacs of a local scrap dealer and Earl Jeffords. To add salt to their collective wounds, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the convictions in 1962 and the United State Supreme Court refused to review the case.

The Public Service Coordinated Transport of New Jersey proposed a modernization effort in 1947 to pave over the Newark City Subway and use all-service vehicles (a hybrid diesel bus/trackless trolley). Although a demonstrator arrived in 1950, the city refused to pave over the subway. When Public Service eliminated the remaining streetcar feeder lines to the subway, it found out that riders *preferred* to transfer *from* the replacement busses *to* the subway. Public Service gave in and began

And so, Green was determined to convert the Twin Cities into an all-bus operation by 1958. However, the end arrived four years earlier.

In another proxy battle, Green, when it was discovered that he had connections with organized crime, lost control of TCRT to a local attorney, Fred Ossanna. Ossanna accelerated the shutdown of TCRT's streetcar system and most of its fixed assets in 1954. This left a fleet of 141 (140 all-electrics and one air-electric) nearly-new P.C.C. cars looking for a new owner. The cars were sold to three operators in 1953. Twenty cars went to Shaker Heights Rapid Transit; thirty went to the Public Service Coordinated Transport for its Newark City Subway and the rest went to Mexico City, including





to search for some modern replacement cars for the subway. Atlantic City's Brilliners (J.G. Brill's own answer to the P.C.C. car) were considered, but there was a better solution ... nearly-new all-electric P.C.C. cars for sale at bargain prices in Minneapolis. Thirty former TCRT cars, ordered in 1947 and delivered in 1948, all arrived in Newark by late 1953. They were numbered 1-30 and car #21 was the first in revenue service on January 20, 1954. By the end of the next month, all of remaining old cars were gone and the P.C.C.s would soldier on for almost 47½ years.

Public Service and its successor, New Jersey Transit, were well-known for the meticulous care that was given to the cars. Perhaps one of the most important factor in the cars' excellent performance records was the fact that the cars were stored, when not in use, in the subway's underground shop, adjacent to Newark's Pennsylvania Station terminus of the subway. A January 2000 visit to the shop confirmed this. It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet the staff at the shop who were very proud of their fleet and had a sense of the cars' history.

As they say, all good things must come to an end, as evidenced by New Jersey Transit's decision to expand the subway and upgrade to "light rail" standards. And so, on August 24, 2001, Newark City Subway's P.C.C.



LAST DAY: NJT #26 at Orange Street in Newark, New Jersey on August 24, 2001.

Photo by Harry Donahue.

cars passed into history. This did not mean the cars would face same the fate as many streetcars ... the scrapyard. A number of them went to San Francisco for its historic Market Street Railway. Several went to museums, such as the Rockhill, Shoreline and Connecticut Trolley Museums. There would be one special one, #26, which would eventually find a home in Baltimore.

Twin Cities Rapid Transit #415 was one of the 30 P.C.C. cars purchased by New Jersey Coordinated Transport and numbered #26. After the car's retirement in 2001, it was carefully shrink-wrapped (just as pleasure boats are) for preservation and stored until its delivery to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum in January 2014. And the rest is history.

Wednesday, January 15, 2014 began as a cloudy, but not-too-cold day. In fact, temperatures had moderated from the previous week's cold snap and thankfully, there was no snow. The car was to be delivered by late morning and anticipation to its arrival was akin to waiting for Santa Claus to arrive on Christmas.

A lot of preparation had to be made for the car's delivery.





A set of Baltimore gauge P.C.C. trucks had to be readied to be swapped with the trucks that were delivered with the car. Temporary track, a/k/a “snap track,” had to be put into place to expedite swapping the trucks. Several of the Museum’s streetcars needed to be moved around, particularly the snowsweeper, so that the “new” trucks could be put into place. In addition, two fork lifts were readied to assist with the trucks’ moving. With everything in place, the only thing that remained was the waiting.

The waiting paid off and car #26 arrived safe and sound from being on the road. Silk Road Transport’s truck arrived without incident with its prized treasure. The task then began of unloading the car onto “snap track,” moving the trucks from under the car and then swapping them with the “Baltimore” trucks. The task was greatly facilitated with the Museum’s electric car lifts. Once the trucks were swapped, #26 could easily be towed around the Museum’s tracks. Nightfall was setting in but the main task was completed.

Once this was accomplished, the snowsweeper towed #26 out the Museum’s car line to check clearances, due to the car’s wide 9’ width. Although the lights could not be turned on inside the car, several volunteers, who were on hand that day, rode out the line on the car in darkness. Who cared? There were absolutely no problems with clearances. Once this was done, the car was towed back and placed in the Museum’s yard. The “as delivered”



trucks were moved to track #4’s storage area. It was the end of a very busy and long day.

Work is already underway to restore the car. The first thing done was to put a trolley pole back on the car (with a wheel, of course). An estimate has been obtained for the car’s body repair and painting. Already a donor has come forth with 50 percent of the cost. Underneath #26, the car’s electrical system is being thoroughly inspected and will be repaired as necessary in order for the car to operate safely. Even the cleaning of the interior is underway. Because the car was properly shrink-wrapped, it is in amazingly good condition.

Why did B.S.M. obtain #26? There are lots of reasons, namely, a good deal, saving a historical artifact and the car’s condition. More importantly, the Museum plans to purchase a portable wheelchair lift to assist those who need it to board #26 and the other Museum’s cars. Car #26 will be even more accessible because of its wide aisles.

There is one person to whom the Museum is indebted. Many thanks go to Bill Wall of the Shoreline Trolley Museum. Without his support and assistance, #26 would not have a home at B.S.M.

[This article and the random pictures without captions are by your editor.]



REMEMBERING GEORGE VOITH, B.S.M. #157

By James Genthner

Members of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum and the Baltimore Chapter N.R.H.S. were saddened to learn of the death of local rail fan and noted rail photographer George Voith. The Northwood resident, who was 87, died at his home on February 10, 2014. He had been in declining health recently after suffering from a fall about two months previously, while in his yard.

George Joseph Voith was born in Baltimore on September 17, 1926 and grew up in Waverly which was served by the #8 and #17 car lines. He attended Saint Bernard's school and graduated from Baltimore's Polytechnic Institute. He had a law degree. During World War II, he served in the United States Navy. Upon returning to civilian life he went to work for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which, at that time, was a major employer in the Baltimore area. It was while working at the railroad he met his future wife, Charlotte. They married in 1953 and had been married for 59 years when she died in July 2012. George and Charlotte had two children: Jan and Randy.

Charlotte retired from the freight claims section of the railroad in 1983 and George retired from an executive position two years later. Both enjoyed long and active retirements. Around 1978, the Voiths purchased a home in Rock Hall on the Eastern Shore and divided their time between Baltimore and Rock Hall. Most of their weekends were spent at their shore home. George was fond of seafood, particularly steamed crabs.

Starting around 1946 George, with his keen photographer's eye, was able to capture the final years of Baltimore streetcar operations in numerous black and white prints and Kodachrome™ slides. He was generous in allowing the use of these photographs. The pictures have been included in books about Baltimore's streetcar history by authors Mike Farrell and Herb Harwood and have been reproduced in the Baltimore Chapter N.R.H.S. newsletter. Several of his slides have been put on post cards and sold by B.S.M.

Bob Janssen, in his enjoyable book *Travellin'*, recalls that George was one of the fans on the last trips of the car lines that were discontinued in June 1947. This marked the beginning of the National City Lines' bus blitz in Baltimore.

My favorite of George's photographs is one which he took on a snowy day in winter 1948, showing a tired and weary looking red semi-convertible on the sidewalk track

leading to the Belvedere car house. The car is working the #33 West Arlington line, which was scheduled to be converted to buses soon afterward. The cars were the life blood of the city at that time and they had to get through in all kinds of weather.

He imparted his love of streetcars and trains to his son, Randy, as well as his love of sports. A true Baltimorean, he loved the local teams and he turned down an offer of a promotion which would have required him to move out of state. The Voiths lived within walking distance of the old Memorial Stadium.

He could, when he put his mind to it, charm the acorns off of an oak tree. In his eulogy for his father, Randy recalled how George found an ingenious way to get them into Colt games for free. Since the Colts left Baltimore 30 years ago, Memorial Stadium has been torn down and since the statute of limitations has long ago expired, I'll retell this story here.

Back in the sixties, Colt games sold out every Sunday. George and Randy would walk to the stadium after half time, select an entrance and walk up to the guard. George would point to Randy and tell the guard that "This is my son. He's never seen a Colt game before. Could you please let us in so he can watch the game from the aisle?" It worked every time, but they had to make sure that they found another guard each time they used this method.

George joined the Baltimore Chapter N.R.H.S. in 1944 and at the time of his death, was one of its two most senior members. He was scheduled to receive a 70 year membership certificate at the chapter's February meeting. He had, at one time, also been a member of the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers.

George was a long-time member of B.S.M. and had served as a dispatcher in the early years of our operations. He also laid the platform blocks that are in front of the car house.

B.S.M. member and Baltimore N.R.H.S. chapter president Ken Van Horn remembers working on the track gang with George back in the early days of the museum. Ken writes that that "on one Saturday, we laid down track the full length of the freight shed. George was with the track crew and brought several six-packs of beer for the gang on that sultry, typical Baltimore summer day. He expressed his track philosophy: 'Drive a spike, have a beer.'"

Services were held on February 15, 2014 and burial was at the Dulany Valley Memorial Gardens. His

immediate survivors include his son, G. Randall Voith, his daughter, Janice Wilson, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by his family and his many friends at B.S.M. and N.R.H.S.



TWO BELLS

By Jerry Kelly

I know that I had promised a full report on transfers, I.D. checks, transfers, etc., but as I started putting the information together, it just grew and grew and grew. I was reporting on both route #8 as well as route #9-14. It's like it would never end. So for now, that is going to be reworked and I hope to have ready for next *Two Bells*.

But for now, here is something from the wish list. Can anyone lend or supply any photos of the #5 line, north of Pikesville? How about a picture when the route #8 tracks connected with route #9-14 at Catonsville Junction? I would also like to see photos of either route #12 or #17 at the stub end at Westport. The same goes for route #13 on Milton Avenue at either terminal which was cross-over or a stub end. While there are thousands of photos available, it seems like sometimes, we are missing more than we have.

The Baltimore Transit Company (B.T.C.) issued a Bulletin to the route #17 rail line as well as two bus routes on May 19, 1938. Here it is.

"Complaints have been made to the effect that railroad stations are not being properly announced, resulting in an inconvenience to patrons of Company and to the railroads. You are, therefore, instructed to announce the following railroad stations at the nearest point to your line and to announce in the following manner:

<u>STATION</u>	<u>RAILROAD SERVED</u>
Arlington Station	Western Maryland R.R.
Biddle Street Station	Pennsylvania R.R.
Camden Station	B&O R.R.
Edmondson Ave Station	Pennsylvania R.R.
Gay Street Station	B&O R.R.
Hillen Station	Western Maryland R.R.
Maryland and Pennsylvania Station	MA&PA R.R.
Mt. Royal Station	B&O R.R.
Pennsylvania Station	Pennsylvania R.R.
Walbrook Station	Western Maryland R.R.

This is extremely important and failure to comply with same will be cause for suspension."

This was signed by the B.T.C.'s General Manager and Superintendent of Transportation. It sounds like they meant business.

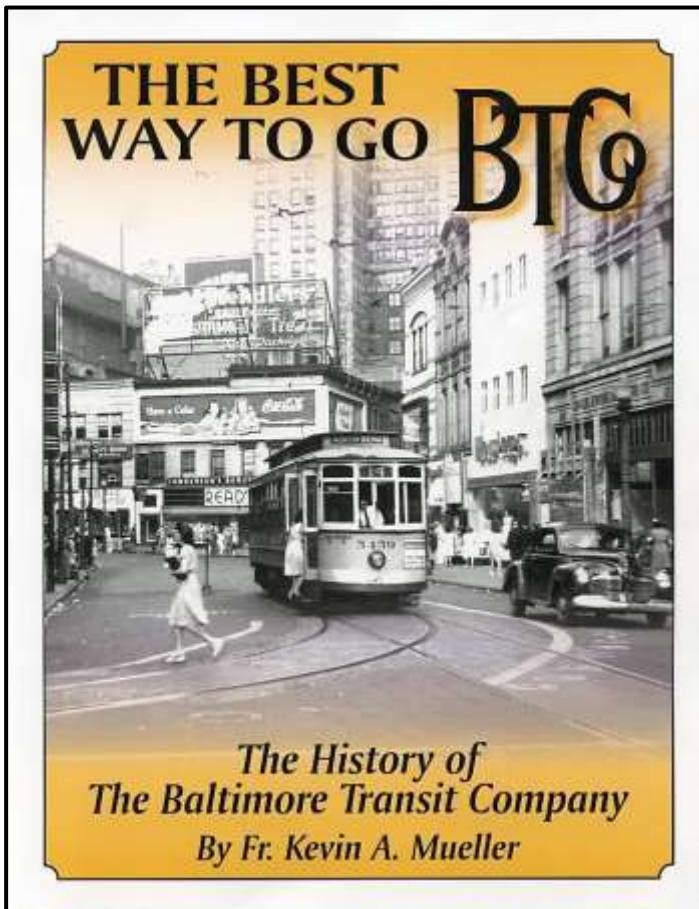
Here are some points to ponder. In the 1940's, it was clear you would board a P.C.C. car, a Peter Witt car and a yellow semi-convertible at the front. And we all knew you would board a red car at the rear. When could you board a red car at the front door?

I want to thank Bernard Sachs, B.S.M. #298, for his outstanding article about his living in Ellicott City and his streetcar riding. What an insight he has given us of how it once was! Remember this is your museum and please follow in Bernie's steps and share you memories with us. Remember it is fun to see your name in print ... and also your photos.



Looking Ahead at Your Museum

- ☞ JUNE 7, 2014: Museum is open on Saturdays through the end of October.
- ☞ JULY 26, 2014: Mark your calendar for the Annual B.S.M. Crab feast. Please see the enclosed flyer for information and the reservation form.
- ☞ SEPTEMBER 20, 2014: It's time for the Baltimore Streetcar Museum Members' Day and the Annual Meeting. This is a great time to come to *your* Museum and meet old friends, make new ones and even get a chance to operate a streetcar. At the Annual Meeting, you will be brought up to date on the Museum's activities for the past fiscal year. Your lunch will be on us! More information will be mailed to you in the Summer.
- ☞ OCTOBER 19, 2014: The Chesapeake Region of the Antique Automobile Club of American will make its Fall visit. Keep your fingers crossed for good weather. Their March 30th visit was rained out.
- ☞ MOST SATURDAYS: Come on down and volunteer to help with lots of work that needs to be done around the Museum. Wear your old work clothes. Lunch is usually at SubwaySM in Hampden, Hon.



On Sale Now at the B.S.M. Gift Shop

NOW PLAYING

The next time you visit the Museum, first stop by the Visitors Center and see what's playing. Really? A new flat screen monitor has been mounted on the wall next to the display kiosk in the Visitors Center Lobby. A digital presentation, *Bits 'n Pieces*, is currently playing that features pictures of the Museum's volunteers at work as well as pictures of the last years of Baltimore's streetcar operations. It was originally planned to be shown at last year's Members Day, but a few technical difficulties delayed its showing. As they say, "better late than never." The presentations will be changed from time to time. Lord knows, there are always plenty of pictures of the Museum, streetcars, etc., to show.

Also, an operating train and streetcar display is nearing completion in the Gift Shop. Visitors, young and old, will be able to operate the display by pressing buttons.

These two projects are the start of the Museum's effort to refurbish and enhance its displays. More projects are planned for the future.



The President's Message

By John J. O'Neill, Jr.

This issue, we have good news and bad news. I'll report the good news first. We got an e-mail from Mr. Jeffrey Buchheit, Executive Director of the Baltimore National Heritage Area that we were recommended for approval for our small cap grant to restore car #554. Final action will be taken before you read this, so I think we are good to receive the \$14,470.00, that represents one-half of the cost of restoring the car with the other half being cash match provided by the Museum. I have to give special thanks to all of those who helped me put the grant together including Ed Amrhein who provided the work plan and the estimated costs for the project, Charlie Plantholt who took pictures of the car to show the restoration work that was needed for submission as part of the grant, our pro bono lobbyist in Annapolis Bruce Bereano who obtained letters of support from three political leaders, Senator McFadden, Delegate Washington and Councilman Cole, which were a part of the required grant submission. Logan Tracy gets recognition for his fundraising activities for #554 as well. Also a tip of the hat goes to Mark Hurley who helped me assemble some of the loose ends for the Maryland Historical Trust Capital Grant, which we completed at the same time for the remainder of the money needed for the project. Yes, that's right; it is possible that we could receive the entire amount for the project! We recently received the approval to submit that grant after it was reviewed. So stay tuned.

So much for the good news ... now for the bad news. Ms. Lorraine Parks of the Secretary of State's Office sent us a letter stating that, because of the large percentage of our costs that are categorized as administrative (54%) on our I.R.S. Form 990, as completed by our auditor, we are ineligible to be included in the Maryland Charity Campaign. I spoke with her by telephone and she is very understanding of our situation, but the figures on the 990 (our form of income tax report, even though we don't pay tax) are sinking us. I have appealed the decision, but I plan to discuss this for next year before the form is completed since a lot of costs for the Museum such as insurance, electricity and visitor center expenses are actually part of our visitor service and not overhead expenses as they appear to be.

There is much else of interest happening at the Museum right now, as detailed elsewhere in this issue. I would like to sincerely thank all of those who have contributed to the President's Appeal this year and ask those who haven't please, consider doing so. We also received word that another member, Victor K. Weisberger, has remembered the Museum in his will and, we are grateful for that. More details will be provided in a later issue. See you at the Museum!



They tied the knot! Our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes go to B.S.M. members Mary (daughter of Mary Ann and Ed Amrhein) and Justin Thillman (son of Sandy and Charlie Thillman), who were married on February 7, 2014 at Saint Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church in Govans (that's Govanstown on the former #8 streetcar line). Three other B.S.M. members participated in the wedding. Mary's sister, Stephanie Amrhein, was the Matron of Honor. Father Kevin



Mueller officiated at the ceremony. Mark Hurley provided the music on Saint Mary's grand organ. Ed is the Museum's Administrative Vice-President. Justin, a B.S.M. trustee, is well-known for his expertise in holiday decorations. **** Speaking of decorations, the Museum has finally been "defrocked." The big Christmas tree and decorations in the auditorium came down in late February and the train garden was taken apart in March. The decorations had remained in place by request of several groups that hosted events at the Museum, including Mary and Justin's rehearsal dinner. **** Sixty five years ago, the Baltimore Transit Company replaced the streetcars on the # 25 Falls Road line with buses on the portion of the line from Mount Washington to downtown. The change occurred on April 24, 1949. On that same day way out west in San Diego, the transit company there shut down their streetcar system. No one could have imagined that a San Diego P.C.C. car would end up at a trolley museum in Baltimore to be restored as an example of the same type of car that ran on the # 25. **** Another streetcar? By the time you read this, another Peter Witt car will have been seen at the Museum. Where are we going to put it? Actually this Witt is only a model. Bachmann Trains has released a G gauge model of car #6119. I have seen it and it looks almost like the real car. Bachmann has previously produced this model in several other scales. **** Five cars in our collection have significant anniversaries this year. Cars #2324 and #4533 are 110 years old. Car #6119 was removed from transit service 60 years ago (1954) and placed in the historic collection. Seventy years ago, car #7407 was delivered to Baltimore in late 1944 and entered service in December. And, our newly acquired Newark P.C.C. car # 26 was built in 1949 making it 65 years old. I'm beginning to feel old ... car #26 is younger than I am! **** Gotta run. The editor is threatening to transfer me to the #3 bus!

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