

Trolley Lines

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A group consisting of Bill Keigher, Frank Miklos, Jim Tomczyk, Hank Kaminski, Bob Hooper, Bill Wall and Tim (the truck driver) observes the trucks for Car 2651 after they were unloaded. The car awaits the day when it will rest on these trucks and return to active service transporting dozens of eager riders. Photo by Tony Hall

Car 2651 Restoration

At long last, after years of effort we now have trucks for 2651. This happened just a short while after we suffered the disappointment of losing out on the trucks from the Cornwall Street Railway car that was scrapped at Tipton, Pennsylvania. For some time we knew that the Branford Electric Railway Association had at least two pairs of trucks

on its property in Connecticut that were not being used. One of the pairs was of the Standard C-50-P type which was used by 2600-series cars like ours. However, the Branford trucks came from a Pittsburgh car and would require re-gauging. Members of the North Jersey ERHS had inspected them a few years ago. The other pair came from a Boston car and were therefore standard gauge. They were a C-90 type which are similar in appearance to the C-50-P's.

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Monthly meetings of the North Jersey ERHS are held at the First Presbyterian Church, 1731 Church Street in Rahway on the Third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM. During periods of bad weather consult the website to see if the meeting is still scheduled.

2651 (Continued)

Following the collapse of plans to acquire the Cornwall trucks, Bob Hooper contacted Bill Wall of Branford to negotiate an agreement for the acquisition of a pair of trucks from them.

Since our funds were limited, we originally approached Branford about leasing one of those pairs of trucks for a nominal fee. However, this was not as desirable as having actual ownership of them. A couple of years ago when we were preparing a grant application for money to restore 2651, we sought out several sources of trucks to determine how much a set complete with wheels and motors would cost. While there were variations in price, a pair in good condition could be obtained for between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

We reported the potential acquisition of trucks at our December meeting, but noted that these would have to be leased because we did not have enough money in the treasury to purchase them. After the business portion of the meeting was concluded, one of our members, Father Patrick Wilhelm spoke with Bob Hooper and pledged \$25,000 to finance the purchase of the trucks from Branford. In

January, Bob Hooper, Tony Hall, Jim Tomczyk, Bill Keigher, and Frank Miklos traveled to Connecticut to inspect the trucks in question. While the C-50-P trucks were more appropriate for the 2651, we decided for the Boston trucks because they were in better condition and would not have to be re-gauged.

Initially, Branford was reluctant to consider anything other than a lease agreement for the trucks, but after receiving our offer of \$25,000 they decided to sell them to us. The deal was beneficial to both organizations. We finally received the trucks that we needed, and Branford could use the money to help in the purchase of some property adjacent to its museum. They had been seeking pledges for the acquisition of this real estate which is across the street from their Sprague Visitors Center. The current residents were always tolerant of the museum's activities, but there is no guarantee that new owners would be so willing to accept the idea of trolleys and people congregating in front of their home. By purchasing the property the museum was protecting itself from potential problems. The \$25,000 that they received for the trucks was a major step in their goal of acquiring the property.

The trucks were delivered to Phillipsburg on the morning of February 25. They had been loaded onto a flatbed trailer with a tilt deck the previous evening under the guidance of Bill Wall who accompanied the driver on the journey from Connecticut. On hand to assist with the unloading of the trucks were Tony Hall, Bob Hooper, Hank Kaminski, Bill Keigher, Frank Miklos and Jim Tomczyk. However, most of the work was done by Bill Wall and the driver of the tractor-trailer. The trailer was lined up with the track in front of 2651 and the deck was tilted to allow the first truck to roll slowly onto the rails. A winch and chain prevented it from running away, but that was hardly the problem. Both trucks came from a car that had been used as a snow plow and the plow blades were still attached. The angle of the tilt deck on the flatbed caused the blade on the first truck to hang up on the rail head, so the tilt deck was lowered slightly to provide a more gradual slope. This did the trick and the truck settled into place on the track. The next step was to roll that truck several feet to provide room for the second truck. The second truck had the plow blade on the back end so that it rolled off of the tilt deck and seated itself on the track much easier.

After the trucks were positioned next to each other and everything appeared to be in order, Bill Wall and the driver of the flatbed truck headed back to Connecticut. Bob Hooper left shortly afterwards. He was not feeling well that day, but that did not stop him from being on hand for this significant event. Jim Tomczyk, Tony Hall, Bill Keigher and Frank Miklos remained behind. Jim removed the brasses from the journal boxes to protect them from theft. Tony and Frank went to the local Home Depot to purchase a tarpaulin to cover the trucks and protect them from the weather. After the tarp was in place and everything was secure everyone headed for home after having experienced one of the most rewarding days since 2651 was acquired for restoration and preservation.

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2651 (Continued)

be modified before they can be installed under 2651. Most of this will involve removing the plows which are bolted to the truck frames and replacing a bent section of a frame. These are not major projects and should be completed quickly. We look forward to the day when Car 2651 finally rests on a pair of genuine streetcar trucks.

Thanks are in order to Bill Wall for his help in arranging for the purchase of the trucks and for handling the delivery of them to Phillipsburg. Thanks also, to the members of the North Jersey ERHS who were on hand for the unloading of the trucks. Finally, special thanks to Father Patrick Wilhelm for his generous contribution, without which none of this would have been possible.

Publications News

As of the end of February, nearly half of the loans for the printing of "TROLLEY TREASURES - TRACKS OF TRIUMPH" have been repaid. Revenue from the sale of the book is being used to repay the loans. For those who are interested in obtaining a copy of the book it may be purchased by placing an order through our regular mailing address at Box 1770, Rahway, NJ 07065. The retail price of the book is \$45, but North Jersey ERHS members can purchase copies at a discounted price of \$30 plus an additional \$5 for postage and handling.

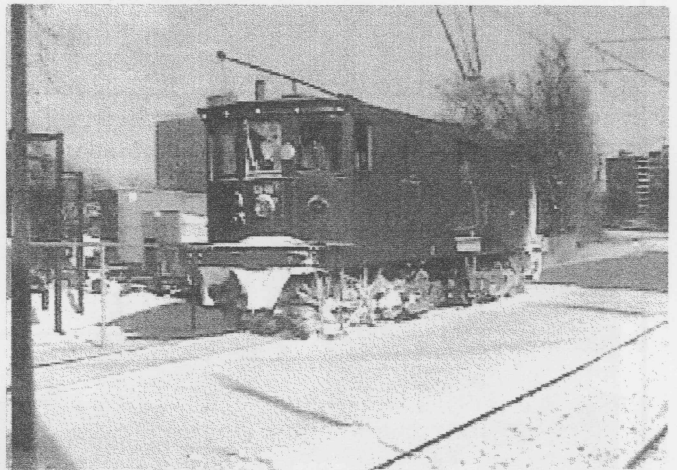
Membership Notes

To date we have received payment for 2005 dues from over 125 of our members. Another 39 members still have not paid. To determine the status of your dues, please check the upper right hand corner of the address label on the front of the envelope. If it reads "05" or higher you are up to date. If the number is lower it indicates the last year for which your dues are paid. Dues remain at only \$15 a year. Those who are not up to date will be considered inactive and will be dropped from our membership rolls.

Dues renewals for 2006 will be mailed with the Spring 2006 issue of TROLLEY LINES.

In Memoriam

We were sorry to learn of the deaths of two of our members. G. Lester Whitfield joined our organization shortly after it was formed and regularly attended our meetings until about two years ago when his health began to decline. He was a career railroader who spent most of his years with the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey. After he retired, he was active with the CNJ Veterans Association. He was



Snow sweepers were once a common sight on American trolley systems. Bill Keigher captured this view of NJ Transit sweeper 5246 following a snowstorm early in 2005. It is at Silver Lake on the City Subway extension in Belleville.

also an officer with the North Jersey Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and a member of the Electric Railroaders' Association.

Richard Evans joined the North Jersey ERHS in 2001. In addition to membership in our organization, he was on the board of the Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center. He also belonged to the Electric Railroaders' Association where he served as treasurer and librarian.

Our sincere sympathy is offered to their families.

New Jersey Transportation News

The extension of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail line to Tonelle Avenue in North Bergen was opened on February 25. The new segment includes operation through the old railroad tunnel between North Bergen and Weehawken that was once used by New York Central's West Shore commuter trains. Two new stations have been added including one inside the tunnel at Bergenline Avenue in Union City. High speed elevators connect the station platform 160 feet underground with the street. The entrance to the station is at 49th Street and Bergenline Avenue. The facility includes an off-street platform for buses adjacent to the station entrance.

The terminal at Tonelle Avenue has a two track pocket stub in the center of a large loop track. Pull-off lanes next to station entrances are provided on both sides of Tonelle Avenue for connecting bus services. A large park/ride lot is also located here.

A new service pattern was introduced on the Hudson Bergen Light Rail system in conjunction with the opening of the Tonelle

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Hank Kaminski stands in the foreground watching the delicate maneuver of unloading one of the trucks from tilt bed trailer ramp and the track in front of the building housing the 2651. Bill Wall stands next to the trailer ready to coax the truck along.

Tony Hall photo

News (Continued)

Avenue extension. There are now three different services namely, Tonnelle Avenue to Hoboken, Tonnelle Avenue to West Side Avenue in Jersey City, and Hoboken to 22nd Street in Bayonne.

Also for the first time since the Hudson Bergen Light Rail service started there are now transfers between the light rail system and local buses. Many bus routes in the area have been restructured to provide connections with the light rail service. For example, the 181 Route which used to operate between Hoboken and the George Washington Bridge Bus Station in New York now terminates at the Bergenline Avenue light rail station. Passengers to and from Hoboken must now take light rail trains to connect with the 181 buses.

The original plans for the Hudson Bergen Light Rail system called for the line to terminate at the Vince Lombardi

Park/Ride in Ridgefield, but early on it was recognized that most of the potential riders would come from communities in Bergen County north of that location. Plans were revised to extend the light rail line over the former Erie Northern Branch to Tenafly. Recently NJ Transit announced that such an extension would be too costly and instead they have proposed the operation of shuttle service between North Bergen and Tenafly. The change has generated strong opposition from supporters of light rail who have vowed to fight for the direct line to Tenafly.

Work has also advanced on the construction of the Newark City subway branch to the former Lackawanna Station at Broad Street. Mulberry Street which was closed for cut and cover subway construction is now reopened to traffic. The ramp from the subway at Center Street is completed along with all of the trackage on the surface. Most of the trolley wire is in place and the finishing touches are being applied to the stations. The new extension is expected to open in the summer.