



TRANSFER

VOL. 18 - NO. 3 SHELburne FALLS TROLLEY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER FALL 2009

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A Tale of Two Motors, and Other Projects.

When No. 10 was donated by the Johnsons to SFTM, it was just a wooden body. The most obvious of the missing parts were the two trucks (the frames that hold two axles, with their wheels, motors and brake gear). No. 10 was a two-truck car until it became a farm outbuilding. Many, but not all, two truck cars had four motors, one attached to each axle. No. 10 had trap doors to access all four axles, and could have had four motors, but records seem to indicate that it only had two, at least at times. Since changing out an electric motor is relatively simple, it was common for street railway companies to move motors around, perhaps 'sharing' motors between a snow sweeper and an open car, changing motors with the seasons.

To make No. 10 operational, she needed trucks. Founder and restoration project manager Tony Jewell looked far and wide to find replacement trucks for No. 10's reincarnation. After some moldy and high-priced dead ends, he found a functional and reasonably-priced pair of trucks with four motors at the Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern Railroad in Pennsylvania. These trucks were overhauled by Bruce Thain in Connecticut. Bruce determined that one of the motors was not in very good shape, a measurement with a megohmmeter showed weak insulation. It was decided to just install two motors, and keep the other two for spares. No. 10 has run now for ten years on those first two motors, with (dare I say it?) nary a whimper.

But when a 40 hp electric motor fails, it usually goes with a bang, not a whimper. Or maybe a lot of sparks and grinding noises. Followed by smoke and an inability to move the car. Instead of just sitting and waiting for that inevitable day, the board has decided to overhaul the two spares. Once they are ready, we will install them in No. 10, greatly reducing the likelihood of fireworks from under the floor.

To that end, Dave Dye and Sam Bartlett loaded up (yes, the boom truck still works!) the two spares and trailered them to A.C. Electric in Bangor Maine. There they will be taken apart, the commutator will be smoothed out, the armature will be vacuum pressure impregnated, the field coils will be reinsulated, the bearings will be turned and trued, in short they will be ready for long busy life.

This will cost \$4000 per motor, which is a lot of money for small museum, but it is a lot cheaper than having to replace or rebuild a blown motor. Please consider an additional donation when you renew your membership this year.

Speaking of donations, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has generously donated \$3,000 to our car barn fund. We are still seeking donations for the car barn from members as well. We will proceed this winter with design work for the car barn, and will start work on construction as finances allow.

In other news, projects this fall included slate roof repairs on the freight house, repairs to the boom truck, cleanup of the old coal building foundation that sits on the property line near Elm St, covering F&L No 60 in Ashburnham, caboose scraping and painting, creamery platform cleanup, tie reorganization, fare counter rebuild, Western Union Self-Winding clock repair, winterization, grant applications and working (successfully for the moment) to keep all the rental space occupied.

SFTM's volunteer crew works hard to keep the museum operational and improving in appearance and reliability. While we are not in danger of going bankrupt, and actually have had a good year fiscally, we hope you will be generous with your memberships and donations. We couldn't, and wouldn't, do this without your support.

Sam



The two traction motors, chained down on a heavy-duty trailer and on their way to Maine for complete overhaul - a round-trip that kept Dave Dye and Sam on the road for 17 hours.

Photo - Sam Bartlett