



Vol. 18 No. 2 **SHELBURNE FALLS TROLLEY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER** SUMMER 2009

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum is an educational institution. This gives us our non-profit status. We could just rent an empty classroom somewhere and have lectures on local trolley history. If we did that every weekend, how many visitors do you think we'd get each year? How many volunteers would help with that sort of an operation? How many members would we get and retain?

Instead we have preserved and restored No 10 and are nearly finished restoring caboose CV 4015. We use these 'artifacts', as well as our preserved freight yard, pumpcar, displays and Visitors Center to make an interactive, moving, hands-on (especially on the pump car, in both senses of the term) experience. We aren't 'sugar-coating' the educational aspect, but I know most of our visitors, especially kids, are learning far more than they realize during their visit.

Here are two notes from visiting families that demonstrate this:

•I took my granddaughters, age 5 and 7, to the Trolley Museum today. They had a blast. So did my poochie and I. We did it all - rode the trolley, climbed all over and inspected the caboose being restored, pumped the hand car, and the girls had a good ole time running the trains (or moving the Brio ones) as I looked at photos. Plus we all enjoyed the historical descriptions and anecdotes. Lilly, the almost-8-year-old, confessed to me as we were riding on the trolley and she'd just pulled the bell cord that she hadn't really wanted to come to the Trolley Museum. "I thought we'd just climb up some stairs and look and look at things and then climb some more stairs and look and look at more things - like we did at MOMA when Daddy took us to New York. I like this a lot more than MOMA." So much for art.

•Just wanted to let you know what a wonderful time my children and I had on Monday, Aug. 10, during our first-time visit to your museum. First off, we were so warmly greeted by Polly Bartlett. What a way to make your visitors feel welcome! From there, we had so many options - the caboose, the handcar, the trolley car, the museum, or children's play area. In time, we saw all of the attractions, and only wished we had more time in the end (and we spent three hours as it was!). We would've loved to have ridden the trolley car again, which was also a wonderful experience thanks to the helpfulness of crewmembers Shirley and Stan. The bottom line is, visiting SFTM was one of the best ways we could've spent our afternoon! The equipment is all beautifully and lovingly restored, and the museum is thoughtfully put together with great detail. And, with three young kids with me, I appreciated the operating model railroad layouts and the wooden train playset, and coloring and

reading areas. Your people and your activities all made us feel very welcome! We look forward to visiting again!

As our crew knows, many folks feel this way about their SFTM visit; experts compliment our restoration and interpretation, non-experts learn how to tell a trolley from a dressed-up bus, and everyone learns about the impact of the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway on the valley's residents one hundred years ago.

The folks quoted above probably met four of our volunteers on their visits, but the adults, at least, realized that there were hundreds of people responsible for making their short visit possible. Our members and grantors make this endeavor financially possible, our volunteers do all the work to make it happen. We hope you'll continue (or increase!) your support for this worthy operation.

Sam

NICKEL DAY

Concurrent with Members' Day on September 26, SFTM is also offering Nickel Day to the general public. As a nod to the beginning of the SF&C St. Ry. in the fall of 1896, one-way fares will be five cents, paid in cash to the conductor on the car. Also planned are nickel ice cream cones and drinks. Members will still ride free, of course.

eTRANSFER

For a decade SFTM, unlike many similar organizations, has not raised its membership level dues, and it is not our intent to do so at this time. However in view of TRANSFER's greatly increased printing and postage costs since the dues schedule was set, SFTM retains an ever-diminishing net donation especially at the lowest membership levels.

To help SFTM hold the line is where eTRANSFER kicks in. By signing up to receive your TRANSFER on-line (see Page 2 for easy how-to-do-it), SFTM receives the full value of your donation. Furthermore, our gnomes, who have to hand-assemble each of around 150 print copies along with everything else they already do for SFTM, will be eternally grateful to you for taking the plunge on eTRANSFER!

About 20% percent of the membership is already signed up, which has been a help in cost control. And wait – there's more! You can get your copy in color!! Check out the instructions on Page 2, and email up today. The gnomes will bless you!