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## VOL. 20 - NO. 1 SHELBURNE FALLS TROLLEY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

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

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### TWENTY YEARS AND COUNTING

This summer marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum Inc. as a functioning incorporated non-profit organization. The unexpurgated story of events leading up to the founding of SFTM, written by the Founder himself, can be found on Page 3 of this edition. It has been a challenge, albeit an exciting and rewarding one, to nurture SFTM through two decades. Enthusiastic support from our members and volunteers has played a key role in SFTM's being still very much alive today.

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### TROLLEYFEST – TWO SPECIAL EVENTS

Come and see:

Brian Donelson will be at SFTM to sign autographed copies of his newest book about the favorite shortline railroad of many rail enthusiasts, the legendary Hoosac Tunnel & Wilmington Railroad.

Just out is his “The Coming of the Train” - Volume 2. This book is a comprehensive history of the beginning of hydroelectric power on the Deerfield River, and the railroad that made this major construction project possible to do.

Brian's Volume 1 is completely sold out (as of this writing, SFTM still has one for sale - your last chance), and Volume 2 will undoubtedly be on many wish lists. Get your copy, signed by Brian, at SFTM. He is most generously donating part of the proceeds to SFTM.

Come this year for some of our special events which will include a musical performance on the Trolley and an interactive theatrical program on the caboose that is a Civil War tale, based on real events in Western Mass., that take place on a train! A costumed living history educator from the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association of Deerfield will be the presenter of this fun and educational program. We will also have special creative activities for children and live music throughout the day. Don't miss this once in a double-decade day!

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As noted elsewhere in the *Transfer*, this is our twentieth year as a museum. This is only our twelfth full season as an *operating*

museum, because we needed those early years to get No. 10 restored and ready to happily haul passengers. Here is what we have been doing to get ready for another safe, exciting and educational season.

Some work and planning has progressed on the House Track, its easternmost 200 feet were torn up last fall and we expect to have it graded to the new grade and to have ties and rail back in place for opening day. Eventually we will need to put turnouts in here, but for now we will put down the switch ties (so we don't have to tear everything up again) and rails to the slightly relocated pump car 'shanty'.

The board decided that changing out the motors on No. 10 could wait until next season because completing the House Track work and being operational for the Art Walk was going to put quite a crunch on our time. No. 10 and the pump car have been given their periodic inspections and maintenance, thanks to Bill Kaiser for help on that task. No problems were found, No. 10's extensive restoration is holding up well. Track Inspector (and returning Director) Tony Jewell has inspected the Main Track and found it ready for another season. Nancy Parland is getting the gardens in shape, if the Bridge of Flowers can put flowers on a trolley bridge, we can put flowers in a freight yard!

The Car barn Fund now stands at over \$15,500, thanks especially to an anonymous \$1000 gift and an anonymous \$2000 gift from folks who obviously feel this project is worthy of significant support. Your donations, large and small, will help to propel this effort along. We have a few minor permitting issues to work out, and then we'll be able to start serious grant applications for the building itself.

Help needed: See <http://www.sftm.org/projects.pdf> for a list of 2011 projects that we could use help with. Or consider that we could use help with repairs on our boom truck, carpentry on the Freight House, painting in many places indoors and out, and track work. Let me know how you'd like to help us, [sam@sftm.org](mailto:sam@sftm.org) or 413-624-0192.

Wish List: We're still looking for one or more picnic tables, used in good condition or new. Also a baby changing table, fold out type, would be nice for one of the restrooms.

Sam

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## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS - 2011

### Officers:

President - Robert (Sam) Bartlett  
Vice President - David Dye  
Clerk - David Bartlett  
Treasurer - Betsy Wholey Osell  
Chair of Board - David Dye  
Vice Chair – Alden Dreyer  
Assistant Clerk – Reba-Jean Shaw-Pichette  
Assistant Treasurer - Shirley Pelletier

### Directors:

David Goff  
Anthony Jewell  
William Kaiser  
James Wholey

## CONTACT US

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**TRANSFER** is a publication of the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum Inc., produced for the enlightenment and entertainment of our members and special friends. Spring, Summer, and Fall issues are planned for each year. Comments, contributions, and letters to the editor are welcomed.

David C. Bartlett - Editor

[dbartlet@crocker.com](mailto:dbartlet@crocker.com)

## GUEST BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

**Individual and Junior** levels (IN) (\$15) and (JR) (\$10) - card is valid only for named member. No additional guests.

**Family (FA)** level (\$25) is as follows: your card covers rides for up to two adults and all related children under age 18. There are no additional guest privileges for the Family membership.

Beginning at the **Friend (FR)** level, additional guests may accompany you whenever you ride the trolley:

**Friend** (\$35) - 2 guests, plus Family privileges.

**Contributing (CO)** (\$60) - 4 guests, plus Family privileges..

**Patron (PA,BP,SP,GP,LM,HL)** (\$100 and higher)  
No set limit to number of guests you may bring when you visit SFTM.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of this writing, SFTM has 96 current active memberships.

## WELCOME MORE NEW MEMBERS

These folks have joined SFTM since the last TRANSFER was sent out:

Paul Lewis – Higganum CT  
Duane Barnes – Chicago IL  
Etienne Debaudringhein – Shelburne Falls MA

## THE CARBARN FUND

The following members have donated to the Car barn Fund in 2011:

Lee Webster, Don Campbell, Lad Nagurney,  
Robert Lawrence, William and Grace Wood,  
Ruthann Eastman, Russell French, David Ashenden,  
Richard Finck, Margaret Howland, Jack Yerkes,  
Walter's Propane, Gerhard Postpischil, Jay Stryker,  
Paul Cook, Anonymous (2), Bill Brigham,  
Jonathan Meeks, Bill Kaiser, Walt Stapleton,  
Cathy Buntin, Diantha Wholey, David Dye,  
Raymond Olander, Kinsley Goodrich,  
Bill Townsend.

## SIGNING UP FOR eTRANSFER

As a convenience to our members, and as an attempt to control costs, **TRANSFER** is available on line as a pdf file. This will give you the option of filing your copies of **TRANSFER** on your computer, in case you want to refer back to them at some later time. What's more, **eTRANSFER** comes out in **full color!**

If you wish to receive your future **TRANSFERS** by email, here's how to do it:

- Send an email to: [dbartlet@crocker.com](mailto:dbartlet@crocker.com)
- In the Subject line, please enter **eTFR**.
- In the body of your message, please enter **your name** - that's all.

That's all there is to it. Your address will be entered on a mailing list, and the future issues will come to you by internet instead of by snail mail, thereby saving printing and mailing costs.

Please note – if you are an eTFR subscriber, and subsequently **change** your email address, please be sure that you let us know.

## VOLUNTEERING - HOW TO DO IT

Simply contact the Museum (see **Contact US** on this page). Indicate what your interests are - operating, painting, building stuff, selling, or what. We will get back to you and get you plugged in. We need you!

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## In the Beginning -The Three Big Bangs

by A. Jewell

I was recently told that if I could write a reasonably credible piece concerning the origins of the SFTM, I could have my picture printed in color in the Transfer. Since this offer had the implied adoption of wide format for the Transfer, I readily accepted.

It's safe to say that the creation of the SFTM Inc. was more on the order of discovering a slow processed cheese that was arrived at by locating a misplaced bottle of milk.

To start off, I am not a great trolley fan. I do like trolleys, of course, but if I am a fan I am really a transit fan or a rail fan, but not really a trolley fan per se. When I first moved to Shelburne Falls in 1982 I was aware of the old trolley line because it was in the front part of a NRHS publication that had something I was really interested in; the story about the Green Mountain Railway.

If you live in Shelburne Falls long enough you eventually adopt the gospel that once upon a time the Bridge of Flowers was a trolley bridge for a trolley line that was quirky and easily forgotten. Take away the trolley er flower bridge there was very little in Shelburne Falls to remind you of any existence of any trolleys in 1982.

Accordingly, my first foray into the historic preservation field had nothing to do with trolleys, it was in fact railroad related. For those of you who remember, in the mid 1980s when the Steamtown foundation was moving its circus from Bellows Falls through Shelburne Falls to Scranton PA for its new home, a delightful mishap happened in the Buckland railroad yard. One of Steamtown's steam engines, a high wheeled ex CP with tender had been set off in the Buckland yard due to a broken axle. Thinking how great an attraction this handsome but slightly stripped unit would be in the sterile yard environment at that time, I pursued purchasing it from Steamtown. I had thought that I could get it for a scrap price for under \$15,000. Despite pleading, cajoling, and threats, Steamtown declared that it was worth six times that amount and so my initial historical transportation exposition plans went up in smoke.

Chastened but still eager for things historic, another happening fell on my plate in the form of the Iron Bridge in Shelburne Falls. For those of you who don't know, the Iron Bridge was part of the original 1895 proposed right of way for the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway. In 1987 or so, it had been decided how wonderful it would be if only the old Iron bridge could be done away with in favor of a lovely cement bridge mirroring the equally lovely flower bridge. One of the big selling points for the cement configuration was the fact that a new bridge would allow tractor trailers to waltz better and quicker around downtown Shelburne Falls. Realizing that lead in the water had obviously blinded the local selectmen from their God-given task for historic preservation in Shelburne Falls, I decided to take on saving the Iron Bridge. Through a campaign-highlighted by chicanery, mass mailings, and historic domino terrorism, I succeeded in helping to save the Iron Bridge. True I didn't have any friends left when it was all over, but I took consolation in the fact that JB Hunt and company would have to romp in other places.

Another event that loomed large in my life a few years before SFTM was my getting acquainted with one D. C. Bartlett, PE. For those of you who don't know the man, well, do buy a ticket chez SFTM toute suite. My original deal with Pump Car Polly was that in exchange for keeping Dave off the streets and feeding

him daily at the Student Prince he would, for another small charge, tell me numerous stories and perform engineering feats as might be required for various rail projects that I had in the Springfield area. Indeed this maestro of computer, algorithms, central angles, and Pullman adventures became a fixture in my rail thinking and talking points. Between Shelburne Falls and Springfield over the next ten years we would solve most of the problems of the railroad world and elsewhere.

All of which leads me to the First SFTM big bang. The primordial floods of historic preservation and trains and tension and dissension and Wienerschnitzel with Dave in the presence of a cataclysmic catalyst would have a profound effect not to mention affect on my life for the next ten years. What was that cataclysmic catalytic event? It is in fact so shocking that I am only telling you this secret of the creation of the SFTM now in strictest secrecy. Are you ready? Ok. The change from curb side pick up of trash in the town of Shelburne to a tagged bag drop off system in Charlemont was the First SFTM big bang. Now it can be told: Trash leads to preservation!

To put this all together, you would either need to be a resident of Shelburne or possibly a passenger on one of the old Trolleysaurus Treks. In order to get to the new Charlemont trash transfer station, which site interestingly enough was owned by Marshall Johnson, you occasionally would have to drive by the Johnson farm on North River Road. So what? Well what if I told you that away in a manger with no track for a bed lay the Number 10 trolley at said Johnson farm. At first I didn't know what it was. But I started noticing it. Wondering about it. Definitely thinking about it. And I am sure at some point on the way to Springfield after one of these new to me trash runs, I said to Mr. Bartlett "Have you ever seen that thing that looks like a passenger car with tires piled on it in Charlemont?"

And I'm reasonably sure he said something like, "You mean the crushed remains of the old trolley car at Johnson farm? Yeah I guess so." And that was that. I still didn't really know much about it at all. It had been written about in the NRHS book I had, but, up to this point, I never really had read that meandering SF&C story very thoroughly.

In the near spring of 1991, March 19 to be exact, as I was driving by the Johnson farm, I took a long hard look at that lonesome delapidated trolley shell and decided I'm going to see Mr. Johnson and see what I can see. With not a lot of introductions, I succeeded in getting Marshall to give me a tour.

So here is this peeling red and grey old thing in the middle of a farm yard on a cloudy day. It looks tender. The roof is collapsing under piles of old tires. There are no wheels. The wood is rotting. The north end is completely falling apart. Oh, and then sports fans, the fun begins.

Marshall slides the west freight door open. It rolls so easily. Hard to believe it works at all. We step inside. Oh, the car is filled with more farm crap than you can shake a stick at but, yes but, with the light pouring through those century old windows on the old wood work and brass handles and benches, oh yeah you knew that you had just entered a cathedral. Or at least Tony Jewell believed that he was in a cathedral. I took it all in and immediately became consumed with committing to try to save this thing. No matter what.

(Cont'd on Page 4)

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### (BANG – Continued from Page 3)

But just one question Marshall, “Would you like to see the car restored and preserved?” Marshall, who leaned heavily towards excessive largess in his orations, gave me a “Yupp.”

Using time proven pressure tactics I got to get an inkling of what Marshall might want to see in terms of saving Number 10:

1) He wanted to see the car displayed in Shelburne Falls.  
2) He wanted no local town moneys to be used for the restoration

3) He wanted full agreement on the project from the towns of Buckland Shelburne selectmen, the Shelburne Historical Society, and the Shelburne Falls Business Association.

So little for so much!!! I skipped out of Johnsonville with a mission. Immediately I sought out my spiritual adviser, DCB., to inform him about my new glorious project. DC. didn't take two nano seconds to declare, “You're nuts. That car is hopeless. Where the hell will you get the money?”

After promising Dave that I would be more responsible in my personal finances and he could have two beers that very day at the Student Prince, wouldn't he pretty please humor me with his presence in my thinking on the matter. Obviously if you can't get a railfan on board with you on a project like this who can you get? I might note here that after that little bit of evangelistic arm twisting on route 91, twenty years later DCB. is still with the project along with the rest and I do mean **all** of his family.

Initially I thought that the Shelburne Historical Society was the logical site and sponsor for the car. Seeing as Number 10 was the original Shelburne Falls school bus for the academy it was a natural. The fact that it was a well known fact that the Historical Society had wherewithal was not lost on me either. With surgical precision, however, they crafted letters back to me that let me know that while they were spiritually in bed with me on the restoration they were way too involved with the cleaning of their cellar to actually become involved with No. 10 themselves.

This was in fact the Second Big Bang. If the local historical society wouldn't house and nurture the restoration, then a non-profit organization that would do it needed to be formed.

As word of the “crazy” project spread in local papers several new adherents emerged to become part of a group I now called Trolley Square Associates. The first out of the blocks was Al Barten, an architect with serious railroad trolley fever. It should be noted that it was Al who proposed an associate of his, Kinsley Goodrich, noted trolley expert, who could assess the doability or non doability of the project. It was in fact the evil Kinsley that said, “It can be done.” The Third and final Big Bang as it were.

Getting back to Al, Al was a major source of inspiration - artistic and professional - that took our slightly seedy project into the rarified realm of respectability. Besides DCB and Al two other folks figured prominently in the birth of the SFTM. The next victim was Brian Carr. A medically retired ex B&M car knocker, Brian gave his all to make it happen. In the initial stages, Brian was very much my right hand guy for anything and everything. Last but not least, Mike Fontanella rounded out our little band. Mike was another railroad medical retiree, having barely survived a severe hy-rail grade crossing accident. Mike did many many things among which he helped to gather up reams of resources of historic information about the car and the SF&C at the GCC library.

Armed with a “doable” mission, a promise for a rotting shell, a mixed bag of emotions, and a ton of optimistic idealism, we gathered up Attorney Bishop to proceed with “Operation SFTM, INC”. And so, boys and girls, after due process on August 12, 1991 the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum Inc. was born. And they lived happily ever after.

Tony

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### WHAT CAME NEXT?

Much more than anyone at the time envisioned. Tony had rented a building at 12 Water Street in Shelburne Falls. Whether by chance or by design, this building was the original office of the SF&C St. Ry. On July 17, 1991, he rounded up in said building C. H. Alfred Barten, David C. Bartlett, Richard K. Lane, and James T. Richardson with the purpose of holding the formal organizational meeting which brought forth the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum Inc. Those present anointed themselves Directors in the about-to-be legal corporation, and appointed in absentia several others who had expressed an interest. Officers were then elected. Tony Jewell as President, Marvin Shippee (not present at the time) as Vice President, Al Barten as Clerk, and David Bartlett as Treasurer.

Thorough as always, Tony had drafted by-laws, and had filed an application for incorporation as a nonprofit educational institution. The official incorporation date of SFTM was August 12, 1991, The IRS granted the non-profit status subsequently.

Slowly but surely, Tony ground ahead, arranging a formal deal with the Johnson family for SFTM to acquire and preserve the trolley, collecting volunteers with a wide range of skills, and gathering community support. Eventually a trickle of volunteers began the chore of mending the car body where it sat. It soon became apparent that this was not to be a trivial task. But over a span of several years, some progress was made. At one point the carbody was moved to a site in Shelburne and protected from the weather by an open shed.

Then came a breakthrough. A private party was about to purchase the Boston & Maine freight yard in Buckland, and was willing to allow SFTM to move to the site and to use the tracks in turn for a modest annual payment. By the beginning of 1995, the deal was done. SFTM moved out of 12 Water Street, and into 14 Depot Street. While it was touch and go at one point (fodder for a long subsequent story), SFTM has been there ever since.

Tony wasted no time when this happened. He waved his magic wand over the State Executive Office of Transportation and came away with \$200,000 in seed money toward restoration of Car No. 10. He'd solicited bids for restoration from various firms, but it was agreed that it would be best to keep the car in the yard and get local people to do the work. (The idea of all-volunteer restoration had slammed into the wall of reality quite some time earlier).

A trio of skilled local builders estimated the job could be done for \$104,000, with \$14,000 more to tack a new wooden carbarn onto the side of the former Agway structure. (Lesson learned – always at the very least double any estimate anyone anywhere ever makes for you).

Early in 1997, the carbody, which had been transported back from Shelburne, was unloaded inside the uncomplete carbarn.

(Cont'd on Page 5)

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## AN ELEGANT OFFER

John Levine, President of the Pioneer Valley Railroad, has most generously offered to operate a private train as a fundraiser for the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum on Saturday September 24, 2011.

The train will originate in Westfield MA, running to Holyoke and return. A very special repast of catered hors d'ouvres and champagne is included in the package.

Seating is limited to 50 passengers. Seats are \$50.00 each, and some have been purchased already.

The Pioneer Valley Railroad operates on the last remaining Massachusetts portion of the one-time New Haven & Northampton's Canal Line. An interesting tie-in with SFTM is that from 1881 to 1921 the Canal line's most northwesterly branch line led to Shelburne Falls. The PVRR today has about 17 miles of line, terminating in the Holyoke area.

A very special bonus has been included by PVRR for this excursion: one lucky person will be allowed a cab ride on the outbound trip, and another lucky person on the return trip. How does one get to be lucky here? Simple. Be the highest bidder! Minimum bids for the cab rides are \$100.00 for each of the two sides of the trip. Note that bidders must already have bought seats at \$50. Details of the bidding process will be forthcoming in the Summer issue of TRANSFER.

Don't wait until Summer to buy your seats, however, if you want to ride the train and to boost SFTM. To secure seats, please send a check for the number of seats you want, to SFTM, PO Box 272, Shelburne Falls MA 01370. Upon receipt of payment, tickets will be mailed to you. Any checks sent after the train is sold out will be returned to sender. In the event that the trip is cancelled, refunds will be made. Otherwise, tickets are non-refundable. This trip will soon be widely advertised, so don't wait too long.

For further information at this time, email [membership@sftm.org](mailto:membership@sftm.org)

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### NEXT – Cont'd from Page 4.

The builders had at the car with gusto. Tony kept waving that wand as costs mounted. Money kept appearing. Not bad for SFTM, which had at that time only \$3800 in its treasury. Yes, there were bank loans taken out to pay for the work. Only after such was done could SFTM apply for reimbursement from the State. And guess what? The State checks took their very sweet time in finding their way to SFTM!

Later that year the owner of the yard announced that the yard was for sale to the first person with \$500,000. A very sharp stick in SFTM's eye. So while work progressed on No. 10, a group was organized to seek other sites for the Museum. In every case investigated it would be necessary to build a railroad from scratch, so that even if a prime site were to be located at a reasonable price, SFTM would still need to come up with buckets of gold to put in track and structures.

Another hurdle facing SFTM at this same time was getting

suitable trucks and electrical components for the car. None of this was easy, but Tony eventually found a pair of trucks, which, with a lot of work, would do the job.

By early 1998 the carbody resoration was well along. But funds ran out due to cost overruns, so work stopped for a bit. But Tony knew how to activate the public money spigot yet again. Work resumed. By May the contractors had completed their work, leaving SFTM volunteers to do lots of painting and varnishing.

In October 1998 the overhauled trucks were on the property. On November 13 the car was lowered onto its new trucks, and by using member John Greene's pickup as the "shop switcher", No. 10 rolled out the barn door, on rails, for the first time in seven decades. There was still much to be done, and the yard issue was far from resolved. Even Tony couldn't raise enough to meet the owner's asking price.

Work went on anyway. In the spring of 1999, line poles and 1200 feet of overhead wire were put up. Electrical hardware had been located and was being installed. Early October was set as the goal for full operation. By mid-September SFTM was still waiting for an outside consultant to provide critical components (like brakes) for the car.

But with an SFTM team working like beavers for weeks, on the evening of October 8, No. 10 came to life – sparks flying from the rusty rails as it made its maiden trip! And by the morning of October 9, after speeches by participants and visiting dignitaries, it was ready for its "official" inaugural run. SFTM was truly in business, hauling real passengers for the first time since October 1927! Tony had indeed worked his miracle!!



**SFTM Founder Anthony H. Jewell and No. 10**

DCB Photo

**Renewal Time?**

SFTM memberships (with the exception of Life Memberships) expire at the end of each calendar year.

If you find a renewal form enclosed, then your membership has expired.

Your support is critical to keeping No. 10 running. SFTM can't pull this off without your continuing help.

Remember, SFTM is a 501c3 non-profit organization, which means that your donations to SFTM may be tax-deductible.

**A FAN TRIP NOT TO BE MISSED!!**

**SATURDAY SEPT. 24, 2011**

**The Pioneer Valley Railroad is hosting a Very Special Excursion for SFTM.**

**Departing from Westfield MA at 1:00 pm.  
Returning at 4:00 pm.**

**Seating is limited to 50 riders.**

Details on Page 5

**TROLLEYFEST 2011  
SATURDAY JUNE 25**

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS  
OF THE  
SHELBURNE FALLS TROLLEY  
MUSEUM**

**There will be a meal at noon. New caterer.  
Reservations requested by June 20. Send to [membership@sftm.org](mailto:membership@sftm.org) or mail to SFTM.  
Pay upon arrival.**

**Check in at [sftm.org](http://sftm.org) for updates and more info about the day.**

**\*Two new special events – see Page 1**

**2011 OPERATING SCHEDULE**

**BEGINNING ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND,  
OPERATING EVERY SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND  
HOLIDAY, THROUGH THE END OF OCTOBER.  
HOURS OF SERVICE - 11 AM TIL 5 PM.**

**ADDITIONAL SUMMER SERVICE:  
JULY AND AUGUST -  
MONDAYS - 1 PM TIL 5 PM.**

**Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum  
PO Box 272  
Shelburne Falls MA 01370-0272**

413/625-9443 [www.sftm.org/](http://www.sftm.org/)



*Check the date on the upper right of your mailing label.  
Has your membership expired?*