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## VOL. 21 - NO. 1 SHELBURNE FALLS TROLLEY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2012

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

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The big projects for this past winter and spring were to keep pushing ahead on the carbarn and to figure out a way to allow wheelchair access to the trolley.

For the carbarn, we have found a supplier of pre-engineered buildings who is reasonably priced and easy to work with. We have the funds to purchase the building, but the building code requires a concrete floor before we can use the building, so we are still in money-raising mode. We also continue to acquire switch and track materials for the carbarn track. Many of you have sent in carbarn contributions with your membership renewals, thanks for your support.

We spent a bit of time during the winter trying to figure out a way for people in wheelchairs (and people with bad joints and others who can't negotiate stairs) to get into trolley No 10. We have decided to rebuild the porch to provide access that way. As of this writing, we have plans, a permit and have removed the old porch, which had several problems anyway and needed work. The new porch will allow everyone to board the trolley directly via a ramp from the porch, and will be safer and larger. The VC is already 'barrier-free', and since No 10 is a combine, we do not need to make any changes to the car to allow wheelchairs. This important project will probably still be in process when you read this, we could use your donations of time, materials and money. By making it easy and safe for mobility-impaired people (wheelchair users, and also people recovering from falls or hip or knee surgery, etc.) to use the car, we gain them as visitors, and also their family and friends, who might have all skipped the museum otherwise. You can see some porch project pictures at our Facebook page.

This summer we will be debuting a new TV ad for the museum, targeting kids and their families. It will air on local Comcast channels. You can see this ad at <http://www.sftm.org/multimedia.shtml>. Thanks to Goff Media and associates for their pro-bono work on this ad.

By the time you read this I hope we will have replaced Pole 6 (broken off in an accident this winter) and added the two remaining poles needed to string a wire along the House Track toward the new carbarn.

Joe and Tony worked on Switch 1 this spring, installing a rebuilt switchstand.

Dave D hauled off another load of scrap metal, helping to clean up the yard and improving our coffers.

Dave D repainted all the lower windows on No 10, as they had been losing paint after 13 years of operation. Dick, Jordan and Bill assisted with removal and re-installation.



Dave Goff prepares for porch demolition  
(See Page 5 for what happened next)

Photo: Marie Bartlett

Thanks to Rowan, Jordan, Dick, Tony, Dave G, Marie, Shirley, Alden, John, Bill and Nancy for their help getting the museum ready for spring this year.

A lot has happened but it isn't too late to get involved. We always want more operating crew, and we have plenty of projects to work on. Contact me at [sam@sftm.org](mailto:sam@sftm.org) or 413-624-0192 if you can help!

*Sam*

### LAWRENCE WERNER

Larry Werner, longtime member, director, and motorman at SFTM, passed away in March 2012.

He will be sorely missed.

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS - 2012

### 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 – Reba-Jean Shaw-Pichette

### Directors:

Gerald Besser  
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,GPLM,HL)** (\$100 and higher)  
No set limit to number of guests you may bring when you visit SFTM.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At this writing, SFTM has 87 current active memberships.

## THE CARBARN FUND

Donors since the previous report:

Lee Webster - Amherst MA  
Dan Howard - Catskill NY  
Joe Kelly - Florence MA  
Lad Nagurney - Amherst MA  
Jack Yerkes - Newington CT  
David Ashenden - Harrington ME  
Walter's Propane - Sunderland MA  
Richard Finck - Florence MA  
Jack Trowill - Dalton MA  
Don Campbell - Dalton MA  
Anonymous  
Paul Cook - Huntington VT  
Walter Giger - Wethersfield CT  
Muriel Peterson - Rensselaer NY  
Louis Musante - Conway MA  
Jane Trombi - Turners Falls MA  
Steve Howland & Nancy Parland - Shelburne Falls MA  
Bill Kaiser - Florence MA  
David Goff - Deerfield MA  
Robert Dewey - Melbourne FL  
Harvey Allen - Amherst MA  
Jonathan Meeks - Wardsboro VT  
Jim & Diantha Wholey - Shelburne MA  
David Sayre - Leesburg FL  
Bill Townsend - Florence MA  
Bill St. George - Holliston MA

## 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 just **your name** - that's all.

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 need you!!!

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## THE LAST DAYS

Recent finds in newspaper archives in Deerfield have brought out details of the sad final days of the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway.

### ***The Greenfield Recorder***

Wednesday October 26, 1927 Page 8:

#### Shelburne Falls **Trolley Car in Mourning**

*"The big car," which has been run by the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway for a number of years and of which Conrad Sauter is motorman, was draped in mourning on Tuesday morning after it became more fully known that the trolley road was to cease operations on Saturday night of this week. The car attracted much attention in the dressed up condition. Mr. Sauter has been a faithful employee on the road for 35 years and ran the first car over the company's lines. Practically all the road's employees have been with the company for a long period of years and it is hoped that they will find positions equally as good as they now have.*

*It is understood that several parties are to put in bids for the carrying of mails between Colrain and Shelburne Falls. The trolley lines have carried all mail between these two towns for the past thirty-five years. There are three post offices along the electric lines, Shattuckville, Griswoldville and Colrain.*

<>

References in other places to "the big car" seem to suggest that No. 10 was the car wearing the moniker. It was "the big car" from Day 1 until 1909, when No. 25 (which was bigger) came to town. At least one source refers to "the big yellow car".

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### ***Greenfield Recorder***

October 28, 1927 Page 3:

#### Shelburne Falls **Railway Closes October 29**

*Henry W. Ware, president of the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway, announced this morning that the operations of the electric road would cease on Saturday night, October 29. This announcement had been expected by the people living in Shelburne Falls and Colrain and this vicinity and thus is no surprise. Business men who use the trolley tracks in the local freight yard were informed of the change on Monday. Forty or over students and workers use the electric road each day and some way will have to be provided at once for their accommodation. Selectmen of Colrain, Shelburne and Buckland were called into consultation recently over the future arrangements. The Griswoldville Manufacturing company announced several weeks ago that after November 1 and sooner, if agreeable to the electric road, their freight would be conveyed by trucks and it was known at that time that the Shelburne Falls and Colrain street railway would cease to be, within a short time.*

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The other paper in town has this to say:

### ***Gazette Courier***

Friday October 28, 1927 Page 8:

#### Shelburne Falls **Trolley Finis**

*Trolley cars operated between Shelburne Falls and Colrain will make their last trip on Saturday night of this week. Decision to discontinue the operation of cars and abandon the line has been reached by the directors of the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway company, according to announcement made Tuesday by an official of the company. No arrangements have been made for a substitution of automobile bus service as was recently suggested for the transportation of school children and adults between the two towns. This announcement had been expected by the people living in Shelburne Falls and Colrain and this vicinity and is no surprise. Selectmen of Colrain, Buckland and Shelburne were called into consultation recently over the future arrangements. The Griswoldville Manufacturing company announced several weeks ago that after November 1, and sooner if agreeable to the electric road, their freight would be conveyed by truck and it was known at that time that the Shelburne Falls and Colrain street railway would cease to be within a short time.*

*When the road was built about 35 years ago, it formed an important link between Shelburne Falls as a railroad center and Colrain as well as many of the outlying districts. The handling of freight was fully as important as passenger traffic, though many people depended upon it as a means of travel. A large number of pupils from Colrain have been transported to Arms academy daily during the school session, about 40 coming down daily at the present time. Probably a substitution for the electric cars will be procured for this conveyance.*

*Conrad Sauter of Franklin street, who ran the first car over the road will probably run the last one as he still continues as the trusty and faithful motorman on what is known as the "big car." E. S. Hunter, who has been manager of the road for several years, has served the company in various capacities for about eighteen years and has labored under many trying circumstances to render good service to the public. (Mentioned later on and not highlighted but sounded interesting since it was related)*

*It was reported on the street late Wednesday afternoon that J.M. Blassberg had applied for a permit to conduct an auto bus line for passenger between Shelburne Falls and Colrain. If negotiations are completed the line will start on Monday morning. This arrangement will solve the problem of the students and workmen and it is believed will meet with general satisfaction.*

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### ***Greenfield Recorder***

Saturday October 29, 1927 Page 6:

#### Shelburne Falls

*This is the last day for the operation of the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street railway and as the last few hours of their running draw near, it is not without some regret that such a move was made necessary.*

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## DO YOU KNOW THE TIME

*by William Kaiser*

In our modern times, with hectic schedules, knowing the exact time is important for many. We presume that in the days when SF&C was operating people were a bit more relaxed about knowing the exact time. Clocks and watches were well developed, and people could know the time. But how would they know what the correct time was so they could set their watches and clocks? One way was to go to the Western Union office and look at their Naval Observatory Time clock, which was updated daily and synchronized across the USA. At the SFTM Visitors Center, behind the ticket counter, is a Western Union clock.

From the 1880s into the 1960s Western Union kept their clocks synchronized to the time of the Naval Observatory. Each day, shortly before noon, Western Union stopped telegraph traffic on their wires. At noon they sent a signal that set and synchronized all their clocks to noon.

These clocks were self winding, made by the Self Winding Clock Company of New York City. Inside the clock, on the back end of the minute hand shaft, were cams, pins, and knock-off piece. As the minute hand rotated, once an hour all these pieces did their respective actions and closed a switch. The switch closure activated the winding motor and wound the mainspring. As the mainspring gear, which was on the minute hand shaft, turned, the bits rotated with it, and at the proper point they opened the switch and the winding stopped.

These self winding clocks were pendulum clocks. The mainspring was fairly light. When it was fully wound it would only power the clock for about three hours, then the clock would stop. Since the clock would wind itself once an hour, the spring was kept wound, and the clock continued to run.

Inside the clock case were two 1.5 volt dry cells (updated to two D cells in a battery clip in our clock) to power the winding motor. The motor was actually a vibrator and worked on the same principle as a door bell. When the two electromagnet coils of the motor were energized they pulled an armature up, the armature broke a switch contact, the armature dropped, and closed the switch, and it moved up again, up and down. Each time the armature moved, a pawl picked up a tooth on a fine ratchet wheel. The ratchet turned, was geared to the main spring wheel, and wound the spring. If you wait around the Visitor Center near the clock for an hour or less, you will hear the clock wind. It sounds a little like a small air compressor, and winding continues for about half a minute. The exact time the winding takes place is not coordinated with the minute hand.

There is another pair of coils inside the clock case for the synchronization. When energized they pushed a roller onto a heart shaped cam on the minute hand shaft. That action pushes the minute hand up to the 12 position. Some clocks also had a second hand synchronized the same way. (The SFTM clock does not have a second hand.) The Western Union time signal

activated these synchronizing coils. When the signal stopped the clock was set, and would begin to run at the correct time. Between the hands and the 6 is a red light. That came on when the synchronizing signal was active. This mechanism will set the clock at any hour. I presume that it was up to the telegraph operator to wait for the noon pause in telegraph traffic to switch the clock to the lines, and wait for the red light to come on and off, then disconnect it.

The next time you're at the Visitors' Center take a look at the clock. Western Union stopped their clock service around 1970, so our clock is not updated daily and may not be quite accurate. The clock does represent another bit of history of the time of the SF&C. Ride the trolley and check the time. If you're late, don't worry. No one else will.



Shirley Pelletier, a member since the earliest days of SFTM, and a motorman and a director in more recent times, has retired from the Board of Directors, to which she contributed a great deal. Thanks to Shirley for making last year's PVRR fan trip happen, among other things. She promises to continue as an operator on No. 10 whenever she can.

## THE RAILROADING HISTORY OF SHELBURNE, MASS.

If you want to know a lot about the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway, your source is Transportation Bulletin No.75 as published by the Connecticut Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society in 1968. If you seek knowledge of the SFTM and how No.10 has been saved twice, you visit the museum and read *The Transfer*. But did you ever ponder why the museum is located where it is? That dates back to 1854 and the numerous, well-financed, and energetic anti-Tunnel politicians on Beacon Hill in Boston. They placed a poison pill in the legislation authorizing a \$2M loan to the impoverished Troy & Greenfield RR. That pill directed that before the first and subsequent \$100,000 of state script could be issued, 1,000 feet of Tunnel and 7 miles of railroad had to be constructed. Come 1860, and a desperate chief engineer, trying to avoid default and foreclosure, moved the projected railway from Shelburne into Conway. Instead of the Shelburne depot being located off Maple Street near the Arms Academy, it was sited across the river. Charlemont, like Shelburne, was treated the same, much to the probable great dismay of residents who had subscribed to T&G stock. Both towns were then obliged to built expensive bridges across the Deerfield River. Regardless, the T&G went bankrupt and that chief engineer went on to become a famous U.S. Civil War General.

Want to know more? You will find a 16 page article in **RAILROAD HISTORY No.206, Spring-Summer 2012**. This is the esteemed journal of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, the original railway historical society, as published at least twice a year since 1921. Alden Dreyer is the author and serves on the board of directors of both the SFTM and the R&LHS. As at the trolley museum, Alden has numerous duties with the R&LHS as the VP - Administration. One of those is as clerk of the corporation, and since the R&LHS is a Massachusetts 501(c)(3) non-profit like the SFTM, World Headquarters is at Alden's home in Shelburne. Hence the long article on railroading in this small hilltown from 1848 up until the latest news in March 2012.

Alden has donated copies of No.206 to the SFTM to be sold in the Visitor's Center at the normal non-member rate of \$15.00, tax free as a periodical. Alden also serves on the R&LHS Membership Committee and the hope is that you'll be so impressed with the 128 page journal that you'll join the Society. See <<http://www.rlhs.org>>[www.rlhs.org](http://www.rlhs.org)

So please help the SFTM, and yourself, while supplies last. SFTM will ship copies to any US address for \$15.00 plus \$4.00 S&H. Make check payable to SFTM.

**Alden H. Dreyer**



There Goes the Porch!  
John Greene and Sam playing with big toys.



Any Survivors Under There?

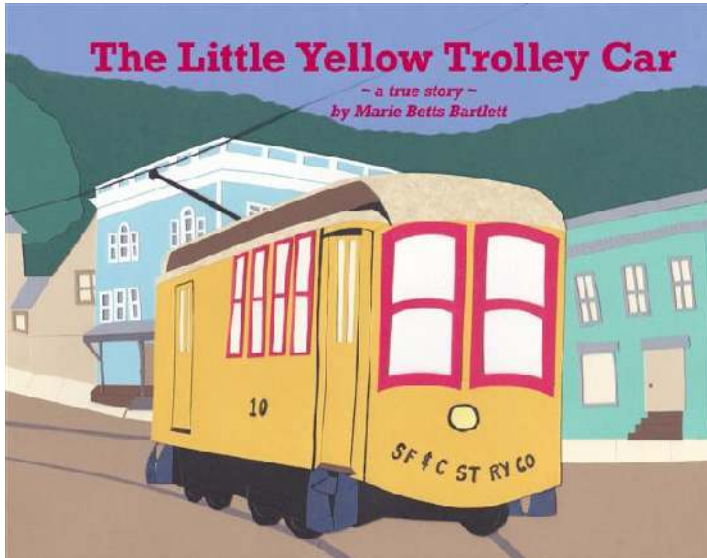
Photo: Marie Bartlett

An autopsy showed that the old porch had serious decay. Its replacement will be built with more durable materials, and will have an extension which will allow access for passengers, even if seriously physically impaired, to the trolley. With less than two weeks to opening day, access to the Museum may be by a hole in the roof for a while. Wish us luck!

## 2012 OPERATING SCHEDULE

OPERATING EVERY SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND HOLIDAY, FROM MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND 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.



Still looking for gifts for railfans young and old? Check out the new book about No. 10, *The Little Yellow Trolley Car*, a true story of the SF&C by trolley operator Marie Betts Bartlett. See sample pages and order online at [www.thelittleyellowtrolley.com](http://www.thelittleyellowtrolley.com).

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

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



**RENEWAL TIME AGAIN.  
CHECK THE DATE ON YOUR  
ADDRESS LABEL. IF IT IS  
12/31/2011, YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
HAS EXPIRED. PLEASE RENEW!**

## Trolleyfest 2012

### Saturday June 23, 2012

#### Stories and Songs of Trolleys & Trains!

Lunch at Noon

Kids' Activities and Music Galore  
And this One-Time Special Event:

"Taken by Trolley", an interactive trolley ride with costumed living-history presenters from the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association's Deerfield Teacher Center. At 1pm, 2pm and 3pm, ride the trolley while "Taken by Trolley" is presented, created from the diary of a real girl in Massachusetts, circa 1910. The audience will become Time Travelers as we ride the trolley with her and see and hear of her experiences then.

For More Details, of which there are too many to fit in here, see [www.sftm.org](http://www.sftm.org)

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