

Green Pennant Special

RUN #39

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC. OCTOBER 1985



###NOVEMBER MEETING###

Join us on the first Friday of November at the Bismarck Hotel (Randolph at Wells, Chicago) in Parlor E on the 3rd floor at 7:30pm when our featured guest will be Louis F. Gerard who will share some slides of his travels around the country. There should be plenty of good bus, traction and railroad action, so don't miss it.

###ON OUR COVER###

In this issue we talk a little about one Colorado city that has restored a Birney streetcar to operation. So what could be more appropriate for the cover of GPS than a picture of what might be called the bus equivalent, the Ford Transit. Ford 2393 is shown here in the garage of Danville City Lines in 1954 and appears to be in almost mint condition. Very few Fords have been preserved. (B. Moffat collection)

COLORADO RAMBLES

During August, OSA member Bruce Moffat took a nine day trip to Colorado, where he visited nearly every transit property and tourist railway in operation. His report follows.

Upon arrival at Stapleton Airport on a Saturday, I rented a car and headed directly to Fort Collins, which is located about 60 miles north of the mile high city. Fort Collins is the home of the Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society, which along with the help of the Fort Collins Junior Women's Club has restored one of Fort Collins original Birney streetcars to operating condition. Car 21 was built in 1919 by American Car and remained in Fort Collins service until 1951 when the municipal street railway system was replaced by a privately owned bus operation.

Following eight years of work, the car was placed in operation at the beginning of this year and operates over a restored stretch of trackage in the median of Mountain Avenue. Although only a few blocks in length, the line when completed, will extend over one mile between City Park and the edge of downtown. The line is also notable in that it also includes a one block segment of mixed traffic operation on Roosevelt Ave. to reach the park. This is similar to the operation of the South Shore Line on 10th and 11th Streets in Michigan City.

Local Transit in Fort Collins is provided now by the city under the name of Transfort which operates a fleet of Blue Bird's and two GM bowls. See last issue for a complete roster of this property. Near Fort Collins is the city of Greeley, which relies on a fleet of Carpenter's for its transit needs. Because it was late in the day, it was not possible to obtain a roster of their equipment.

Following a brief stop in Denver to photograph the operation of their transit mall and bus action in general it was on to Colorado Springs. Referred to as Springs Transit, this municipal operation is managed by National City Management, which is a descendant of National City Lines. Although never a City Lines property, they do have several 3501's which apparently came from another NCL property judging by the presence of the NCL "fruit salad" scheme which was visible where the present two-tone green paint job had flecked off. In addition to the old looks, this property operates a number of Flxible and GM "New Looks", GM RTSSs, and Gillig's (see roster last issue).

(Colorado continued)

Nearby Pueblo operates a fleet composed mainly of GM RTS-02's and TMC's. This property although fairly clean, did not seem to be as well maintained as others visited.

Tuesday found me riding the incline to the top of Pikes Peak and riding behind steam on the 2 foot gauge Cripple Creek & Victor. Both rides are highly recommended although Cripple Creek is somewhat remote and is served by only one paved highway. The Steam Passenger Service Directory is a valuable reference tool when visiting these properties.

All day Wednesday was spent enroute to Durango, home of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge RR. Formerly operated by the Rio Grande, it is now privately owned but is as good as ever. The steam roster now consists of nine locomotives, about six of which are generally available for service on the three daily round trips between the two towns. This railroad requires two days to properly cover, one day to ride (the round trip takes about nine hours including a two hour stopover in Silverton) and one day to photograph in and around Silverton and Durango. Due to the terrain it is not possible to "chase" the train in the normal sense of the term. Likewise, the yard is generally off-limits and is protected by locked gates when no trains are scheduled to arrive or depart. This apparently is for safety reasons.

For those of you not impressed by the sight of a K-28 thundering out of Durango in the early morning sun, the city of Durango operates about a dozen Orions in local and ski service.

On Friday I stopped in Avon, Colorado which is served by two transit systems. One is a small system operated by the city and the other by Beaver Creek which is a combination resort and permanent home site development located not far from Vail. Both operations rely primarily on TMC and Orions, and are maintained by Beaver Creek. Although the city operation apparently has about a half dozen buses, the Beaver Creek operation has at least 40. Although I made several attempts, I was unable to find any schedules or route maps for this operation.

I rounded out the week with visits to the Georgetown Loop steam line, whose western terminus is next to the Interstate (talk about convenience) and the Colorado Railroad Museum near Golden. The Georgetown operation is immaculate and features several rugged grades and one very high steel span bridge on its route. The Colorado RR Museum on the other hand, seems to suffer from some of the problems commonly associated with the National Museum of Transport in St. Louis. This is probably due, at least in small part, to funding supplied to the Georgetown operation and not to the other.

In the nine days I was away, I put only 1,500 miles on the rental car without ever leaving the state.

*** ELECTION NOTICE ***

The terms of two OSA Directors are up in 1986, they being Bruce Moffat and Jim Penning. The Nominating Committee has submitted the names of three members, Andris Kristopans, Zenon Hansen and Melvin Bernero, to run for election to fill the two available positions.

Election ballots are enclosed in this issue of Green Pennant and must be received by the Judge of Elections no later than the start of the December meeting.

Only paid up members can vote and there will be no cumulative voting, a maximum of two names per ballot will be permitted. If you vote for three people your ballot will not be counted.

*** EL PASO STREETCARS SOLD ***

According to WESTERN TRANSIT, the monthly publication of The Western Transit Society, the nine former El Paso City Lines PCC streetcars were sold during August.

Eight of the cars went to El Paso Iron and Metal which might be resold, or cut up for scrap, and one went to Friends of the San Diego Trolley, a rail enthusiasts' club in San Diego.

NEWS NOTES

CTA is testing another Flexible Metro demonstrator on route #22 Clark...Monday, October 21st, saw the first part of CTA's paratransit service being taken over by a consortium of four private contractors. The 20 Carpenter's have been leased to the new operation while the Superior's will be sidelined...Muncie, Indiana is selling a number of TDH-3714's and 3302A's (rare!) our GPS staff has been sent to investigate...On October 21st, the CTA held public hearings on a proposed new transfer system that would utilize tear-off style transfers with coupons that would allow a maximum of two uses. Also the old transfer rules will be more or less reinstated, namely the transfer will not be honored for an additional ride on the route of issuance, also there will be a flat 2 hour time limit (no zones)...It is OSA election time and your chance to heard, so take the time to vote (no cumulative voting, sorry)... Continental Air Transport will be assigning 2 of their baby bowls to the Naperville contract which they run for PACE, replacing CBS...CTA is considering painting the bus fleet in silver and gray with red/white/ble stripes similar to the rehabed 5-50 series cars, as part of a newly announced campaign to spruce-up the agency's somewhat tarnished public image. The campaign will include new blue driver uniforms and comment cards for passengers to fill out concerning employee performance.

###OCTOBER MEETING###

Our October meeting was held on the second Friday instead of on the first Friday as is normal. We were scheduled to have Bob Halperin as our guest. Unfortunately Bob had become very ill and asked that his trolleybus program be rescheduled to a later date. In Bob's place was shown an assortment of slides and movies supplied by a number of our members including Mel Bernero, Bruce Moffat and John LeBeau.