The MTHA gratefully acknowledges the generous support of

# THE SWITCH IRON

Official record of the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association.



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Special edition ★ ★



# Vintage Transit In Motion

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association's newest addition to its vintage fleet is about to take motion as it is being prepared for a summer of displays, city tours and charters.

# Reprinted from 1991

# The story of the 1937 Twin Coach

#### By JOHN BAKER (Late) MTHA Founder

Bus # 111 was released from the Twin Coach Company plant at Kent, Ohio on February 15, 1937. The bus carries serial number 95582 and was part of a five-bus order from the Winnipeg Electric Company, the transit operator in Winnipeg at that time. The other buses in the order were similar to 111 in that they were model 23R, but because they had no exit doors, they had capacity of 25 passengers. The other units were 113, 115, 117 and 119.

## Arrival And Route Assignment

Bus # 111 arrived in Winnipeg during the third week of February, having been driven up from Ohio into Canada over the somewhat precarious roads of the late 1930's. initial assignments Its were not well recorded, but photographic evidence shows the bus in the company of a similar unit at Selkirk, Manitoba. Its assignment on the Selkirk route was the result of the Winnipeg, Selkirk & Lake Winnipeg Railway's discontinuance of electric car operation in August, 1937. Research has indicated that the Twins ravelled in pairs on the route due to their small capacity and so that one unit would not be stranded in case of trouble in the winter.

# See TWIN, Page 3

# Preserving Transit History

# MTHA celebrates thirty years

### By ALEX REGIEC Switch Iron Editor

When it comes to Winnipeg's public transit history, few know the industry's past better than Manitoba the Transit Heritage Association (MTHA). Walking by the MTHA's museum collection on display each summer, including many models in the fleet formerly part of Winnipeg Transit, is like time travelling into the past. Row after row of vintage antique buses are lined up in chronological order at various local show & shine car shows or community festivals.

At each bus, small groups of the general public eagerly explore the gleaming steel giants of public Winnipeg's history. transportation asking MTHA volunteers questions and snapping pictures. Doors open to the vintage buses and as the public climbs onboard MTHA volunteers talk about the wood heating the stoves streetcars, the eight-anda-third cent cost for a bus ticket, or the electric trolley bus poles that kept falling off the overhead wires, stalling the vehicle mid-route, sending everyone into laughter. It becomes obvious to see what makes preserving public transport's history so important.

# The Beginning

The idea for the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association began when retired Transit employees Ron Alexander (late) and Kapusta John were travelling rural Manitoba in the summer of 1987 scouting for old Studebaker automobiles. Instead the pair stumbled across an old electric streetcar that had been long forgotten in a wooded area of a farm field.

See CELEBRATING, Page 4

# INSIDE YOUR Switch Iron

Nostalgia Cruiser It began with a lunch hour meeting over corned beef on rye and coffee at Nathan Detroit's Sandwich Pad in the Richardson Concourse and resulted in the "Joys of Summer Cruiser". Page 7.

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Minutes of meeting from December 3, 2018

# Regular meeting of the MTHA Board of Directors

#### Recorded By DAVID WYATT Historian

Manitoba Transit Heritage Association Meeting of December 3, 2018

Location: New Flyer Industries 711 Kernaghan Avenue.

Attendance: Alan Brunsel, Alex Regiec, Linley James, David Wyatt, John Kapusta, Jim Legg, Roger Hamelin, Pat Rogoski, Elizabeth Peters, Logan Poole, John Panting, Kevin Oliver.

Regrets: Dennis Cavanagh.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm. Alan Brunsel chair.

The minutes of the meeting of 29 October 2018 were reviewed. Motion to approve by Alex, seconded by Roger. Carried.

### **President's Report**

Alan Brunsel reporting.

The President requests that when email is sent to members that they please reply.

Santa Claus Parade. 17 November 2018. This event proceeded successfully, without any hitches. Special thanks to Logan, Al, and Alex. Photos were taken by Robert E. Wilson. John Panting drove the MC-9. Winnipeg Goldeyes contributed a string of lights. \$200 was spent on decorations at the dollar store. Bus 751 (1971 GM "new look") decorated will be on display at Fort Rouge Garage through the holiday season.

We have a Red Diamond engine at Schuck Bus Service in Moorehead, Minnesota. We need to ask Stan Holter to write a bill-of-sale for one antique bus motor to get it across the border. Once here we can store it at North Garage by bus 565. To swap this engine into 20 (1956 WFC T36-2L) we need to book a month of space somewhere.

Three windshields store at Greyhound on Sutherland Avenue. Two were broken when a forklift was backed into them. Survivor is stored in Museum Bus. There are glass chips to fill in on our MC-9. We still need to collect Greyhound display and Intercity history board at Greyhound Terminal at airport. Plan is to transfer them to North Garage in Al's truck before Christmas.

The MTHA needs a Secretary. Someone to arrange meetings, take minutes, send notices, prepare agendas. David is willing to help with minutes.

Wedding of two Transit operators 09 February at St. James and Marlborough Hotel. Noon to 3:30pm. They would like the MC-9. Bride is an MTHA member via CWCF (formerly ERCF). Roger confirms he can do it. John Panting can teach Linley to drive the MC-9.

Email from Bill Morrisey. Wonderful Winnipeg City Tours. Would like to use vintage coaches. Forty-person per tour. This would be the MTHA adopting a more operating-oriented role. Revenue split with company partner. MC-9 is safetied and would have to be kept safetied. It could be leased to someone like Beaver Bus Lines, however BBL is uncomfortable with liability exposure. Activity must comply with City of Winnipeg For Hire bylaw. Vehicles The Minnesota Transportation Museum does similar working through a private bus company partner. The Winnipeg Foundation likes self-sustaining, revenue activities. Idea: Transit History Tours of Winnipeg? Prairie Dog Central is also charter-able. Bus 20 T36-2L) (1956 WFC needs а compression test. Bus 111 (1937 Twin 23R) will not pass safety. Decision to reply positively to Morrisey bus Caution that we may not be able to deliver.

## Treasurer's Report

Alex Regiec reporting. A summary of our financial position was presented. Opening balance last month was \$1182.59. End of month balance was \$2118.22 Main sources of revenue were CWCF (formerly ERCF) donations and a refund from Greyhound.

The Tennant Insurance policy requested by the City of Winnipeg is in place. It covers our activities in Fort

Rouge Garage and North Garage. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report by Alex, seconded by Logan. Carried.

### Fundraising

1. Discussions have taken place with Lussier at the Winnipeg Rick Foundation. We can make an online grant application for \$30,000. Perhaps \$10,000 capital to finish the Museum Bus and \$15,000 to mount (Tours, programming wedding charters). Museum bus will have a schwag sales counter as a revenue component. The remaining \$5,000 would be for administrative services (books, agendas, book meetings). Grant deadline is January 30, 2019. If successful, disbursement of funds would be early May 2019.

Superbowl Lotto. Connie Tellaire.

Planning Committee. We participated in around 21 or 22 events in 2018. That seemed to be too many. This year may include Tours, and Weddings.

## **Maintenance Report**

Jim Legg reporting.

Bus #188 (1954 GM "old look"). Decals have been applied. Bad fuel drained. Regina farebox removed. Turn signals fixed.

Bus #565 (1946 Ford). Needs carburettor kit. Needs shock links. #111[N] (1966 WFC P-41 Canuck). Bumper and panels have been straightened. Can we re-adonize ground panel?

Horns on #75 (1958 WFC) and #20 (1956 WFC) being repaired. Some buses have dead batteries, which we should be able to exchange with Transit.

#111 (1937 Twin) and #214 (1941 Twin) need door bearings made. Between the two the seat cushions need to be organized and exchanged, and the damaged upholstery recovered.

#### See BOARD, Page 3

# Board meeting

# From Page Two

Bus #751 was a little cool inside during the Santa Claus Parade. Perhaps the booster pump needs attention.

## **New Business**

20 December 2018. Winnipeg Harvest/CJNU event. John Panting and Roger Hamelin will volunteer. Early call

at 6am, and the day before for radio station equipment to be set up. An itinerary is needed.

A meeting with Greg Ewankiw is still pending.

A meeting with Janice Harper at New Flyer Group is needed to discuss storage space and designation of a NFG delegate.

Director Bev Haystead has been unable to attend MTHA Board meetings recently. Perhaps recruit a replacement director? John Panting?

Special Thanks to New Flyer Group for hosting the meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Jim Legg. The meeting adjourned at 20:35.

# **Upcoming Meetings (Revised)**

- Monday, February 25, 2019
- Monday, March 25, 2019
- Monday, April 29, 2019
- May 27, 2019 AGM
- Monday, September 30, 2019
- Monday, October 28, 2019
- Monday, November 25, 2019

# Twin Coach Bus #111 Short History

# From Page One

The route's high speed requirements made the Twins unacceptable and they were reassigned to city routes such as Coniston, Aulneau, Aberdeen, Silver, and rush hour trippers to the stockyards and packing plants, and wartime industries.

Bus # 111 have yeoman service throughout the wartime years and in 1946 was given its first general overhaul. At this time its paint scheme was modified from the aluminum roof, cream down to green strip below the windows and orange lower body to cream roof and the rest the same. The bus was turned over to the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission in 1953 when public ownership took over from the private company. On October 14, 1955 # 111 was sold to Sutherland Cartage on Work Order X286 and its fate remained a mystery for the next 35 years.

## **Restoration and Preservation**

In 1989, the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association was formed by transit employees and other interested people to preserve historical transit vehicles and artifacts. In October 1990, # 111 was discovered in the yard of King's Welding at Ladywood, Manitoba. The Association purchased the bus for \$750 and brought it back to Winnipeg for a total restoration.

Members of the Association have spent over 3000 man-hours dismantling the bus, refurbishing and rebuilding parts as required. Outside suppliers have volunteered their services and products such as tires, wheel bearings, rear axle gears, engine parts, etc. The Association has purchased glass, paint, chrome plating, rubber gaskets and other things necessary to bring # 111 back to its original appearance. Members have dismantled the running gear and body; sanded the body down to bare metal; cut, painted, and fitted new interior panels; reworked the interior lights; rebuilt and refurbished the seats; and finally replaced all the glass and painted the body in its original colours and patterns.

The efforts of all these people have resulted in the restoration of this bus, a unit that is hopefully the first of a collection of vintage transit equipment that will celebrate Winnipeg's unique transit history.



The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association on display at the Fabulous Fifties Ford Club's Flashback Weekend at Garden City Shopping Center in 2018.

# WINNIPEG'S TRANSIT MUSEUM

# Celebrating thirty years of transit

# From Page One

This chance find led the men to discuss creating a bus, trolley and streetcar preservation group, and together with other Winnipeg Transit staff and retirees they formally established it on July 21, 1989.

Other founding and original members in the MTHA who shared John and Ron's vision and passion included local historian John Baker (late), Ken Graham (late) a streetcar operator and Credit Union former President, Bill Belcher, George Watson, Ross Smith, James Hunter, Steve Dankewich. Geordie Despins, Rick Gill, Ron Parker, Ken Taylor, Chris Orr, Dennis Cavanagh, David Hrehoruk, Bill Campbell, Jim Brydges, Brian Schuff and Ray West.



The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association's founders, John Kapusta and Ron Alexander.

The MTHA was formally registered as non-profit museum and charitable organization under the Act Corporations of Manitoba on December 21, 1990, became a registered charity under the Income Tax Act (Canada) on April - 3. 2008, and obtained it's Safety Fitness Certificate under the Motor Vehicle Transport Act (Canada), the Highway Traffic Act (Manitoba) and National Safety Code in April 2016.

## The Mission

John and Ron's vision manifested itself in the mission of "restoring old transit vehicles for historical purposes; to create a transit museum for the display of vintage transit vehicles: to provide restored vehicles to transport senior citizens, disabled persons, school children and other such groups for tours and outings; and to provide restored transit vehicles for public parades and displays".

Their vision is fulfilled annually as more than eighty dedicated MTHA members continue to support and volunteer restoration with and preservation work. community outreach and education programming, participation and at special event displays.

#### **Restoration** and **Preservation**

With careful research work and specialist restoration skills, our transform volunteers rusting wrecks into gleaming and functional artifacts. museum Thousands of man-hours have been invested to insure that the MTHAs antique vehicles are safe and fully operational for public enjoyment. Members have been meeting on a regular basis since the Association's inception in 1989, pooling their considerable mechanical knowledge to rebuild buses, often fabricating missing or worn out parts from scratch.

The first project had the volunteers rescue a 1941 Twin Coach model 30GS from a farm yard in Grand Marais, Manitoba. After finishing it's service in 1957 as a transit bus for the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission, the vehicle was used to shuttle patrons 1/4 mile at Harry's Hideout Theatre and Dance Hall between 1958 and 1978. The abandoned bus was purchased for one dollar.

The second project began in October 1990 when volunteers discovered a 1937 Twin Coach model 23R in the yard of King's Welding at Ladywood, Manitoba. The restored vintage vehicle was unveiled on November 2, 1991 at the International Inn (now Victoria Inn) near the Airport during annual Driver of The Year Banquet. The vehicle had been hidden behind a

curtain wall during much of the evening, creating much suspense. Finally after dinner and the award ceremony, the curtain was lifted revealing the shinny restored vintage vehicle to very surprised and а excited crowd that included the excutives of the Amalgamted Transit Union Local 1505 and Transit Winnipeg management.

The third project that had early MTHA the volunteers busy was the recovery of a 1946 Ford Transit Bus model 69B in 1990. Substantial restoration work had been completed by 1992. however on-going work on other projects delayed its final restoration to operational status until 2018.

Other projects over the last 30 years that have added to the fine collection of antique vintage vehicles include:

- 1954 GM operational model TDH-4801 "old look";
- 1971 GM operational model T6H-4421A "fishbowl"; and
- 1979 OBI Orion 01.503 to be completed as a mobile transit musuem.

Winnipeg's last electric trolley coach, a 1950 Canadian Car Foundary-Brill model T48 electric trolley, is awaiting restoration mainly in body work.

# vehicle restoration and preservation

A complete list of the vintage vehicle fleet can be found on the MTHA's website at www.mtha.ca.

### **Special Event Displays**

Throughout the year, volunteers MTHA proudly display its wonderful historic vehicle collection at community festivals, parades and car shows providing people of all ages an opportunity learn about and to celebrate the public transit industry.

Whether it was winning the "Best Antique Vehicle in Show" at Steinbach's Pioneer Days Parade, or simply cruising to Lockport with the fine folks of the Fabulous Fifties Ford Club during their "Flashback Weekend Rally", the MTHA is active in the Winnipeg community.

Volunteers regularly show up on most summer Sundays with antique buses for display at the Pony Corral restaurant's "Sunday Night Cruise", Winnipeg's largest vintage vehicle show and shine display held on the parking lot of the Grant Park Shoping Center.

#### **Community Outreach & Education Programming** The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association explores the past, present and future of public transportation service in the City of Winnipeg and other Manitoba communities b y researching, acquiring and preserving historic objects for use in its public Community displays.

education outreach presentations share the stories of the people and the public transportation infrastructure they built that continues to operate and serve today.

Every summer, MTHA volunteers proudly drive to schools and senior centers to display the unique collection of authentic heritage buses and artifacts, and make presentations because of John and Ron's original committed to public education about transit's rich and colorful past.

## Film & Television Production

MTHA vehicles have been used bv the Manitoba Film Industry in may movie and television productions over the last 30 years. For example in MTHA period 2009, transit buses were featured in the HBO cable television show "Less Than Kind", and the MTHA's 1956 Western Scenic Cruiser Flyer played a starring role in movie "The Don Cherry Story".

#### **Coporate Sponsorship**

addition to the In dedicated group of 80 plus individuals who are members, the Manitoba Heritage Transit Association is very fortunate and grateful for major the support provided by local Winnipeg corporations and institutions.

Winnipeg based NFI Group is a premier corporate member of the MTHA, offering strong support and volunteers through its New Flyer Industries and Motor Coach Industries facilities. Other corporate members include Beaver Bus Lines of Winnipeg, the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1505, Northern Bus Lines of Flin Flon and until recently, Greyhound Canada.

### Partnership With Canadian Heritage Foundation

On March 18, 2017 the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Transit Heritage Foundation, a federally incorporated non-profit association whose mission is to be the voice and resource for Canada's transit heritage. The intent is to complement the activities of both organizations and develop opportunities to work together to enhance the quality and value of member services, and to build strength in preserving transit heritage

across Canada for future generations to enjoy.

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### **Moving Forward** With Vision

As the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association enters it's 30th year and its calendar filled with projects. restoration bookings for educational presentations, or display in parades or car shows, mission of the the organization remains committed to the original vision of John Kapusta and Ron Alexander to create a Transit Museum for Winnipeg.

As Ross Smith, MTHA Secretary from day one recently stated, "Our Association welcomes new members, be they mechanically-inclined, able and licensed to drive the buses, generous sponsors. corporate of collectors Transit memorabillia, or simply just folks interested in documenting history. All they need to bring to our their group is commitment and enthusiasm!"



MTHA volunteers displaying the 1937 Twin Coach at the Sunday Night Cruise at the Pony Coral in Grant Park Shopping Center.

# THE SWITCH IRON

Published by the **Manitoba Transit Heritage Association** (MTHA), a non-profit <u>museum</u> and registered <u>charitable</u> organization whose volunteers collect and preserve historic public transit memorabilia and classic vehicles.

ALAN BRUNSEL President ALEX REGIEC



The MTHA is a proud affiliate member of the Canadian Transit Heritage Foundation.

# Running on empty

Between the 1920s and 1990s, the Province of Manitoba had many bus companies that provided schedule intercity service to rural and northern communities. The following is a list of a few of the past operators:

- Greyhound Lines of Canada
- Grey Goose Bus Lines
- Manitoba Motor Transit
- Red River Motor Coach Lines
- Eagle Bus Lines
- Webb Bus Lines
- Moore's Trans-Canada Bus Line
- Southern Bus Lines
- Trans-Continental Coach Lines
- Thiessen Bus Lines
- Sonnichen Bus Lines
- Interlake Bus Lines
- Northern Bus Lines

Prior to the late 1980s, one could find daily bus service on most Manitoba Highways, operating from all of the major cities. Most of the companies above have ceased operations in the province or are defunct and out of business.

On July 9, 2018, Greyhound Canada announced that after many years of declining ridership and mounting financial losses, the company would have to cease operating its routes in Western Canada (west of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario) as of October 31, 2018. Sadly, after 96 years of serving Western Canada and 78 years in Manitoba the availability of dependable Greyhound bus service came to an end.

Since the pull out of Greyhound, a few small private local bus companies have entered the marketplace to offer scheduled service. Primarily serving the north, these companies now connect Winnipeg with Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, Flin Flon and Thompson. Maple Bus Lines, Kelsey Bus Lines, Thompson Bus and Highway 6 Express are attempting to fill the large service gap left by Greyhound's exit. Air Shuttle continues to provide a frequent level of small van service linking Dauphin and Brandon to the Winnipeg Airport, and Kasper Transportation vans continue to link Selkirk with Winnipeg. However, Brandon Bus Lines recently offered regular scheduled bus service to Winnipeg and quickly abandoned its endeavour. Other cities such as Steinbach, Morden and Winkler are without any bus service.

No one has replaced the once robust and proud national bus lines operated by Greyhound on the Trans-Canada highway, leaving many Western Canadians literally at the side of the road. The lack of a national ground transportation policy is both puzzling and embarrasing in a developed western nation like Canada. Finger pointing between federal and provincial governments is not helpful, nor is it going to get the needed bus services restarted. If there had been any genuine concern, a deal would have happened before the shutdown of STC or pull-out by Greyhound. Unfortunately politicians are many days late and many dollars short.

#### THOSE WERE THE DAYS:

A look back at a Greyhound advertisment from November 29, 1969.



# Nostalgia Cruiser on the road across our city

It began with a lunch hour meeting over corned beef on rye and coffee at Nathan Detroit's Sandwich Pad in the Richardson Concourse and resulted in the "Joys of Summer Cruiser".

Tom Dercola, President, and Adam Glynn, Manager, of CJNU Broadcasting Cooperative met with Alan Brunsel, President, and Alex Regiec, Treasurer, of the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association (MTHA) in May to explore promotional opportunities between the two non-profit and volunteer driven organizations.

Key in the discussion was the concept of using one of the MTHA's classic buses as part of the partnership.

Dan Chase, Director of Sales & Marketing, of the Goldeyes Baseball Club was welcomed into the discussion and brought in the talented folks of John Henry Creations to craft an exterior design for the bus.

Together in partnership, CJNU 93.7 FM, the Goldeyes, and the MTHA have transformed a vintage motor coach into the "Joys of

Summer Cruiser" decaling it with an attractive "Memories Are Made This" livery. Today Of this cosmopolitan cruiser simply cannot be missed as it hits the road with CJNU personalities making stops at community events, baseball games, car shows and street festivals across the city.

"Where other radio stations have mini vans ... mine has a BUS!" An exuberant Tom Dercola, President of CJNU 93.7 FM, declared.

Winnipeg's Motor Coach Industries built this iconic silversided diesel highway bus in 1983. This MC-9 model, also known as the Crusader II, was one of the company's most popular units, with over 6,400 buses produced between 1978 and 1990. Started in 1932 as Fort Garry Motor Body & Paint Works, MCI was recently purchased by New Flyer Industries making Winnipeg a leader in bus engineering and manufacturing.

This immaculately maintained motor coach was previously owned and operated by Northern Bus Lines of Flin Flon, Manitoba, and was recently donated to the MTHA for long-term preservation and display.

CJNU is a community radio station Nostalgia operated by Broadcasting Cooperative which is owned by its members, and local supports non-profit organizations by broadcasting live on location. The MTHA is a nonprofit registered charitable organization whose members volunteer in the restoration, preservation and display of Manitoba's largest collection of antique transit vehicles.

In Partneship with the Goldeyes and CJNU 93.7 FM Nostalgia Radio, antique transit buses on display at the ballpark.

Together with CJNU 93.7 FM, the 'Nostalgia Express' also gathers food donations at Christmas for Winnipeg Harvest.

"It's fun to watch people's heads turn or cameras snapping as I drive the bus around the city," beamed Alan Brunsel, President of the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association. "This bus is definitely an eye-catcher!"

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association's Nostalgia Cruiser and communitybased CJNU 93.7 FM Nostalgia Radio attending many Winnipeg Goldeyes games during the spring and summer season at Shaw Park.





# Photo memory from the Archive

This wonderful photograph comes to the MTHA courtesy of the Peter A. Cox collection.

The late Peter A. Cox of Edmonton, Alberta was a friend and supporter of the MTHA and we are grateful that he shared many wonderful pictures from his collection with us.

In remembrance of Peter, we share his picture of Manitoba Motor Transit Limited #100 taken in Winnipeg on October 10, 1967.

This coach was a 1965 Motor Coach Industries model MC-5A seen on Fort Street next to Greyhound's garage.

# Manitoba Motor Transit Limited

Felix Sigmund Geiler immigrated to Canada in 1919 from Germany and settled in Dauphin, Manitoba where he met his wife Ann (Fendick). F.S. Geiler (also known as "Phil") established the **Northern Manitoba Motor Bus Company** in 1929 operating a scheduled service between Dauphin and Brandon.

Phil Geiler relocated his company headquarters to Brandon, where on May 18, 1933 his company became the first to transport passengers interprovincially into Manitoba from Fleming, Saskatchewan. He operated the new WinnipegPortage La Prairie-Brandon-Virden-Fleming route until he sold it to Barney Olsen's Trans-Continental Coach Lines in 1935. This route would later become part of Western Canadian Greyhound Lines growing network in 1940.

Phil Geiler died in 1961, but his family continued to expand the company and by 1966 operated buses from Minot, North Dakota all the way up to Flin Flon and Thompson via Brandon. The company was sold in 1969 to Grey Goose Bus Lines.

