



# THE SWITCH IRON

July 2014

Volume Seven

Issue Number One

Editor: Alex Regiec



## The Association is on the road to community events & displays

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association (MTHA) is non-profit **museum** and registered **charitable** organization whose volunteers collect and preserve historic public transit memorabilia and classic vehicles.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF THE SWITCH IRON:

#### NEWS THAT TRAVELS

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association is on the road again this summer and is busy attending various community events, car show displays and parades. See where we've been and where we're going with the classic buses.

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#### TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

"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."

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#### MTHA TO CELEBRATE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association, Inc. was established on July 21, 1989 by a group of dedicated Winnipeg Transit employees and retirees. We are celebrating our 25th year in 2014.

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*Woodhaven Neighbourhood Reunion residents enjoy a ride on the 1956 Scenic Cruiser*



*RCAF Marathon Run & Family Day*



*Transcona Hi Neighbour Parade*

2014 is another busy year with the MTHA attending displays, community festivals, car shows and more!





The 1956 Scenic Cruiser parked in a sea of bikers at the annual Ride For Dad



President Brunsel takes the wheel

**RIDE FOR DAD**

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association joined over 1,500 motorcycle riders by taking part in the Ride for Dad on Saturday, May 24, 2014. This annual event is held to raise monies for the battle against prostate cancer. The MTHA's 1956 Western Flyer "Scenic Cruiser" joined the rally at Polo Park Shopping Center and followed the procession westward toward Assiniboine Downs. The motorcyclists then continued their tour northbound to Gimli before returning to Winnipeg.

**WOODHAVEN NEIGHBOURHOOD REUNION**

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association was pleased to be invited to the Woodhaven Community Reunion on Saturday, May 24th, 2014. Two classic buses were part of the community festivities. The community of Woodhaven is located in St. James-Assiniboia and is considered to be a hidden gem for local residents. The neighbourhood is a cottage-like setting in the middle of city with open green spaces, undulating hills and an active community.

A special thank you to the following MTHA volunteers: John Kapusta, Alan Brunsel, David A. Wyatt, Logan Poole and Ian Moore.

**RCAF MARATHON RUN & FAMILY DAY**

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association joined the Royal Canadian Air Force at 17 Wing base on the morning of Sunday, May 25th, 2014 for the annual RCAF Run. The 1958 Western Flyer Coach model T40-58, and former RCAF #119A35-1815 transport bus was on display at the family day area on Wihuri Road at CFB Winnipeg 17 Wing. Many families and their children, together with forces personnel, hopped on board for a look at this classic bus.

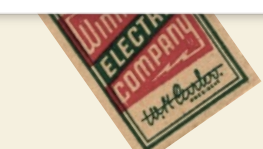
**TRANSCONA HI NEIGHBOUR FESTIVAL PARADE**

The Transcona Hi Neighbour Festival has been bringing the community together for 50 years. MTHA volunteers participated in the 2014 Parade on Saturday, June 7 featuring the 1956 Western Flyer "Scenic Cruiser", the 1958 Western Flyer Coach and the 1971 GM "Fishbowl" buses.

**SKINNER'S 85TH ANNIVERSARY**

On Sunday, June 22, 2014 the 1956 Western Flyer "Scenic Cruiser" drove up to Lockport, Manitoba to Skinner's Drive-In 85th Anniversary Celebration and classic car show. ■

Check our website for future events at: [www.mtha.ca](http://www.mtha.ca)



**Assiniboine Park Free Shuttle:**  
Watch for the MTHA's bus 62 operating on the park shuttle with the Domo Double Decker bus this summer.



1994 RTS coach in the Park.





# Regular meeting of the MTHA Board of Directors

HELD ON MAY 29, 2014 AT BRANDON GARAGE IN WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

## RECORDED BY:

David Wyatt, MTHA Historian

## PRESENT:

Alex Regiec, Logan Poole, Tom Dudych, John Kapusta, Bev Haystead-Ginter, David Wyatt, Dennis Cavanagh, Linley James, Al Brunsel, Angus McIntyre (TRAMS).

## CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 19:26.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUEST:

Angus McIntyre of the Transit Museum Society (TRAMS) in Vancouver. Angus discussed the operations of TRAMS and its relationship with TransLink in Vancouver.

## PRESIDENTS REPORT:

We have signed up a few new members. Members contribute about \$6,000/year. RCAF Run and Family Days (25 May 2014) was attended using bus #75. Ride for Dad (24 May 2014) was attended using bus #20. Woodhaven Neighbourhood Reunion (24 May 2014) was attended using buses #20 and #751. Bus #111 was unable to attend. Ian Moore will rejoin the MTHA. We also received a thank-you email from the reunion organizers. Bus #62 Assiniboine Park Project. Proposal was received from Assiniboine Park Conservancy. Alex outlined the features of the proposal. The Transport Board says no additional insurance nor PSV plate required. Discussion about a

clause to have a donation farebox on board #62 with a revenue split between APC and MTHA.

MOTION: Al Brunsel moved to accept the proposal and Alex Regiec seconded.

Discussion. CARRIED.

Regina Bus. Contact has been made with Regina and working out the details is in progress.

Northern Bus Lines possible donation. Reg Hiebert of Northern Bus Lines has two heritage highway coaches. He has sold his transit operation and garage to the municipality, and is looking for a preservation future for the vintage coaches. One coach is #111, a 1962 (or 1964) Western Flyer P41 Canuck (diesel 6V51 engine, AC). The second coach is a 1983 MCI MC9 (has 5-speed standard). Reg proposes that some time a delegation from the MTHA come to Flin Flon for a weekend of fishing and discussion about the buses. Timeline for such a donation would be sometime in the next two years. We would need help from someone like New Flyer who could store all our highway coaches on an ongoing basis, since they are a potential political problem on transit property. MOTION: Tom Dudych moved to explore acquisition of the two NBL buses and Dennis Cavanagh seconded. CARRIED.

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

Alex Regiec reported that we are doing well financially. We have about \$10,000 in our savings account, and \$1,500 in the

fundraising account. The 50/50 account holds about \$4,000.

Book of Provincial Grants. Bev Haystead-Ginter volunteered to assist Alex with reviewing which grant funding we should apply for.

## MUSEUM BUS PROJECT:

Discussion of vanity cabinets. Alex volunteers to do graphics. Floor work needs Ross or Jim. Lighting - do we have a volunteer? It was suggested we have a sandwich board to set up on the sidewalk to tell people to come inside.

MOTION: Al Brunsel moved to delegate himself, Alex, David and Bev to pursue buying cabinets with a maximum budget of \$1000 and John Kapusta seconded. CARRIED.

## PRIDE PARADE:

June 1, 2014

Logan is organizing. There will be a \$99 float fee for a parade vehicle. Need to arrive at the Legislature by 11:00AM.

## HI NEIGHBOUR PARADE:

June 7, 2014

Bev is organizing. Using buses #20, #107, and #75.

## APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD:

MOTION: Al Brunsel moved to appoint Logan Poole to the MTHA Board of Directors and Alex Regiec seconded. CARRIED.

## ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Al Brunsel moved to Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 20:59. ■



# MTHA founding member Ross Smith reflects on work life and his passion for classic buses

## MTHA FOUNDING MEMBER AND SECRETARY

On January 20, 1969 I landed a mechanics job at Winnipeg Transit located between Garry and Fort Streets on Assiniboine Avenue. Starting wage was \$2.15 per hour . This new career would last 32 years rewarding me with a unique experience in auto mechanics as well as a lot of diesel experience.

New apprentices would always make mistakes. I was no exception as this would happen during my first night of overtime. After repairing a fluid leak, a test drive was required. Hanging a left out of the garage I headed west down Assiniboine to go under the Midtown Bridge. Apparently buses don't fit under this bridge, but somehow mine did? I was the talk of the garage the next day.

My dream to rebuild engines stemmed back to high school auto shops. In my last eighteen years at Transit I had

enough seniority to sign up for work in the dynamometer area. Our department was fortunate to have this capability and experience in this area was a huge opportunity in the mechanical field.

Winnipeg Transit was also a centre for social activities. Fellow employees met after-hours for bar and pizza nights, and families went out on ski trips, bowling nights and even roller skating adventures! There was always a wedding social or special banquets for Christmas or retirements. Our quarterly newsletter, Transit Matters, encouraged me to write articles about the yesteryears of public transit.

On July 21, 1989 the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association was formed. Many old buses were located throughout Manitoba. To restore any bus is a huge task but nevertheless we

bought our first 1941 Twin Coach for one dollar in Grand Marais, Manitoba. The bus was used by Harry's Hideout & Dance Hall to transport people from 1958 until 1978. We bought the bus in an attempt to restore it and bring attention to our newly founded club. I have been the recording secretary of the club since its inception in 1989.

A couple more classic transit buses have been added to our collection recently. Fortunately Winnipeg Transit has supported our activities 100% in trying to preserve its history; where better is there a place to restore classic or vintage transit buses than in a bus maintenance facility?

My enjoyment working on these old classic buses still is strong especially with the new younger remembers like Jim Dudych, Rick Larocque and Wayne Smith. ■



Ross Smith behind the wheel of his favourite bus.



Ross and the "younger" mechanics



## 1937 Twin Coach bus #111: A Short History by the late John Baker

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. Its initial assignments 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 travelled 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. The route's high speed requirements made the Twins unacceptable and they were re-assigned 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. ■

*Article reprinted. Originally published in 1991.*



1937 Twin Coach model 23R

“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.”

~ John Baker (late)  
Founding MTHA member





Over 62 members from around the world attended the Bus History Association Convention in Minneapolis.



Metro Transit Green Line Opening

**ON THE ROAD TO THE MINNE-APPLE ...**

Early on Monday, June 9th, 2014 Manitoba Transit Heritage Association Treasurer Alex Regiec and Historian David A. Wyatt left Winnipeg by car to begin a 7-day journey to attend the annual convention of the Bus History Association in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The duo's 8-hour journey on the Interstate Highway System included calls at Grand Forks and Fargo to observe local transit operations and brief stops at Pembina (MCI plant) and Crookston (New Flyer factory).

**RECORD ATTENDANCE**

The Minneapolis BHA convention set a record with approximately 62 people in attendance on any particular day. Tuesday's pre-convention day saw the group travelling to Hibbing to see the fine displays of the Greyhound Museum. After the museum, the group travelled to visit with the Duluth Transit Authority. The Wednesday pre-convention day was spent in Minneapolis riding Metro Transit and the University of Minnesota's 3.1 mile inter-campus transitway.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES & A MILESTONE EVENT**

The main events on Thursday included visiting the New Flyer plant in St. Cloud,

St. Cloud MetroBus, Voigt's Bus Service, and Metro Transit's John T. Heyward garage. Friday saw a visit to Southwest Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, the Richfield Bus Company and Rochester City Lines. On Saturday the group visited with Jefferson Lines, the Minnesota Streetcar Museum, the Minnesota Transportation Museum and rode on opening day on the new Green Line light rail train from Union Depot in St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis.

**A TRULY MEMORABLE CONVENTION**

This was truly a special opportunity to visit and photograph such a diverse collection of transit, commuter, coach and rail operations in one locale. A big thank you to Kevin Nicol, convention organizer and his assistants Doug Shields and Bernie Drouillard. A very special word of thanks goes out to Stan Holter of the Richfield Bus Company whose support and dedication made this an unforgettable event, including hosting a welcoming barbecue on Wednesday night at his bus garage in Bloomington. ■

**Minneapolis-St. Paul milestone:** "It's the end of one era - 61 years of Route 16 interurban bus service and the beginning of a new one - the start of the new Green Line light rail service in the same interurban corridor on June 14, 2014."

~Doug Shields  
BHA Convention Organizer



Members were busy taking pictures in Rochester, MN.



**MTHA TO CELEBRATE 25TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Manitoba Transit Heritage Association, Inc. was established on July 21,

1989 by a group of dedicated Winnipeg Transit employees and retirees. We are celebrating our 25th year in 2014.

Please see information poster below for details ...



**Members are invited to attend the ...**

# **Twenty-fifth Anniversary**

**of the Manitoba Transit Heritage Association**

**on Monday, July 21, 2014 in Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**In celebration of our 25th year, we will be travelling in the 1956 Scenic Cruiser coach via old River Road to Lockport, Manitoba for supper at the Half Moon Drive-In.**

**Tickets are \$30 and include transportation and a footlong hot dog, fries & drink.**



**The coach will depart from Winnipeg Transit's Fort Rouge Garage 421 Osborne Street at 5:30 P.M. sharp.**

**Parking is available on the adjacent residential streets.**

**Space is limited! Only 35 seats are available on the Scenic Cruiser, so reserve your spot early!**

MANITOBA  
TRANSIT  
HERITAGE  
ASSOCIATION

**Please R.S.V.P.**

**via e-mail to: [brunsel@mymts.net](mailto:brunsel@mymts.net)**



# From the Photo Archive



A special thank you to Mr. Bob Hussey of Boston, Massachusetts who provided us with this wonderful picture he took of Winnipeg Transit # 751 in service on the Route 29 SHERBROOK - LOGAN.

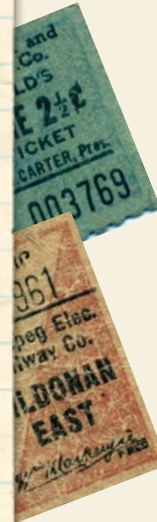
## IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Your MTHA membership fees are due for 2014.

Please remit \$25.00 with the application form below.

If you have already sent in your dues, then please fill out the form below to help us update our mailing list.

Thank You!



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



MAIL TO:  
MANITOBA TRANSIT HERITAGE  
ASSOCIATION, INC.  
Attention: Alan Brunsel-President  
P.O. Box 2388 Station Main  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R3C 3A6

Please fill in your particulars below and remit this form with cheque, money order or cash payment in the appropriate amount in Canadian or US funds.

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE/STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

I consent to receive electronic communications (e-mails) from the MTHA about its activities, programs and events.)

MEMBERSHIP TYPE/AMOUNT ENCLOSED:  \$25 REGULAR  \$5 JUNIOR (INDICATE DOB): \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK IF WILL MAKE A CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE MTHA THROUGH THE CITY OF WINNIPEG'S EMPLOYEE RETIREES CHARITABLE FUND (ERCF) OF \$25 OR MORE DURING 2014. IF CHECKED, THEN YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR THE YEAR 2014 IS WAIVED. (SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION WITH THE ERCF.)

DO YOU WORK IN THE BUS INDUSTRY?  YES  NO IF YES, COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU RETIRED FROM WORKING IN THE BUS INDUSTRY?  YES  NO

