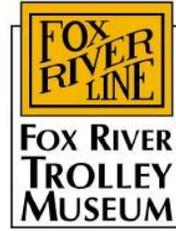


# FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e



Issue 05-4, Winter 2005

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## Rip Van Crissey Wakes Up - Five Years Later - 2011



**316 just west of Glen Oak station August 16, 1945. Note the arch windows. 316 is currently undergoing restoration by the Car Department. Hopefully, when Rip wakes up in 2011, it will be restored.**

As I pull into the museum off of IL 31 I am amazed at all of the progress there has been in the last five years. The grounds now are landscaped with appropriate native plants. In fact the area between the substation and IL 31 is now planted with native wild flowers with a little path wandering through the area. While I am talking about this sector of the grounds, the sub-station's rotary converter has been rebuilt and works. It is part of the tour of museum as it shows early 20th century technology and has quite a history of it's own. Look! There's a docent taking a small group on a tour of the facility

The mammoth and ancient oak trees still dominate the area between the old main line and it's loading area down to the stub tracks. I note that the old R&I cement whistle post still stands. We rescued it in about 1960 one evening (when else) on a trip to Rockford and beyond with Ed Allen and Wendell in Wendell's old Chrysler. The picnic tables are still there although they have been rebuilt or replaced and have a new coat of paint. That's one of the tasks done by the retired persons pool during the week. They also run charter trains, give tours, sell items in the gift shop, and do light other jobs The pool has at least a dozen people in it. Some of them also help out on the weekends and for special events.

Just to the east of stub tracks is the Visitors Center. It's a brick structure with large windows. The building has a main floor as well as basement and a second floor. It's based on the CA&E depot/substations that were at key locations along the railroad. Besides housing the ticket office, gift shop and toilets, the main building has an exhibits area with artifacts, photographs, and art. The museum sponsors an annual trolley art contest for the school kids in the area with prizes awarded by age group. There are some offices for the museum director, a meeting room with multi-media capabilities, a library, and a kitchenette. The meeting room is popular with some of the groups in the area who use it both on a regular and an occasional basis. The docent pool works out of this building giving tours of the facilities. Some of the senior folks do this but there are younger people from the area that like to do the tours as well, both during the week and on the week end. Of course they are all members of the museum.

The Visitor Center has a large canopy over the platform which extends out to the track. It helps protect our visitors from the sun, rain and snow most of the day. The balance of day the oak trees shadow the sun in this area. The platform itself is paved with bricks. Naturally every area at the museum is ADA compliant as possible.

South and a little east of Visitors Center is an expanded car barn. Most of the rolling exhibits can now be stored inside due to the expansion and a rationalization of some of the items the museum had acquired over the years. The only new car is a Fox River car which the museum got in a trade. A paved walkway runs to the barn for the use of the museum members but our

visitor tours with a docent as well. There is appropriate signage through out the grounds explaining various points of interest. The barn has a ventilation system that reduces damage to the exhibits. These items are now maintained and rehabilitated with a planned program.

Just south of the barn is the repair barn. It is heated, well lite, has a track pit, a store area, and a large shop room where we can do some of our own fabrication such as milling car siding. While some of the members still like to get dirty, the museum can now hire an outside professional to come in and lead restoration projects. Having such a facility as this makes such a goal possible. There is a toilet and running water here as well.

The parking area to the east of Visitors Center has been arranged to handle buses as well as automobiles. The charter business at the museum has grown greatly. With the Visitors Center open this business has doubled each year for four years. FRTM now handles not only senior citizens and school children charters but tours from groups having conventions and meetings in the area. This new business has also help some of the commercial establishments in South Elgin.

All of this is due to a "sea change" in the museum's organization with the Board of Directors expanded to include additional members from the community and county.

These new people have helped the Capital Funds Committee to obtain grants from governmental units, private foundations and individuals.

There has not been many changes in the route of the demonstration ride. With the extension finally completed into Blackhawk Park in 2001, the museum's ride is one of the most original and scenic interurban railroads in the country

**Fred Crissey**



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## **Mission**

To preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890s and peaked before 1950. The electric transport era is significant because electric railways, including interurban, rapid transit, and streetcars, helped the Chicago region grow to be one of North America's great metropolitan areas. The Museum strives to show that electric railways were more than

convenient, they were and are a way of life for generations of people from all walks of life.

The Museum fulfills this mission by preserving, interpreting, and operating historic railway vehicles on its demonstration electric railway, over the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric route at South Elgin, Illinois. Furthermore, the museum preserves, displays and interprets smaller artifacts, photos, oral histories, and documents which help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.



## **Thinking about the Future - Succession Planning**

(Continued from previous issue 2005-3)

Idon't want anyone to think that I want the dedicated volunteers of the Fox

River Trolley Museum to stop work on CA&E car 20 or any other car in our collection of historic trolleys. However, at some point, we must face the dilemma of the replacement paradox. Will we continue replacing pieces and parts on our trolleys until the original artifact does not exist? Or, will we maintain the true historic fabric of our collection of antique trolleys and leave the artifacts as is, and then replace the older cars with newer artifacts and reproduction trolleys? In some respect, we have, by default, made this decision. We have acquired newer antique trolleys and substituted them for the older trolleys. Twenty years ago, the Museum did not own or operate PCC type rapid transit L cars. Today, antique PCC type rapid transit L cars form the backbone of our historicoperation.

With this in mind, what I believe is that the Museum must begin its Trolley Succession Planning now. I don't expect it to happen over night or in the next few years. But, if we continue to repair, replace and change our existing antique trolleys, they will no longer be the historical artifacts that we have saved, cherished, and used to demonstrate the excitement of the electric trolley era. Instead of using up and consuming our antique equipment, we need to plan to move our antiques to future retirement while simultaneously acquiring both newer artifacts and reproductions of our existing antique trolleys. The newer artifacts and reproductions would allow our Museum to continue to provide the incredible enchanting experience or our demonstration trolley ride for our future visitors and families. While, the preservation of our existing artifacts in as close to their original condition a possible will provide the exhibits needed to preserve the fabric of the past for future historians.

I am interested in your views on Trolley Succession Planning and setting the future course of the Museum. Please feel free to write me at anytime.

**edwardkonecki@aol.com**

**Edward Konecki**

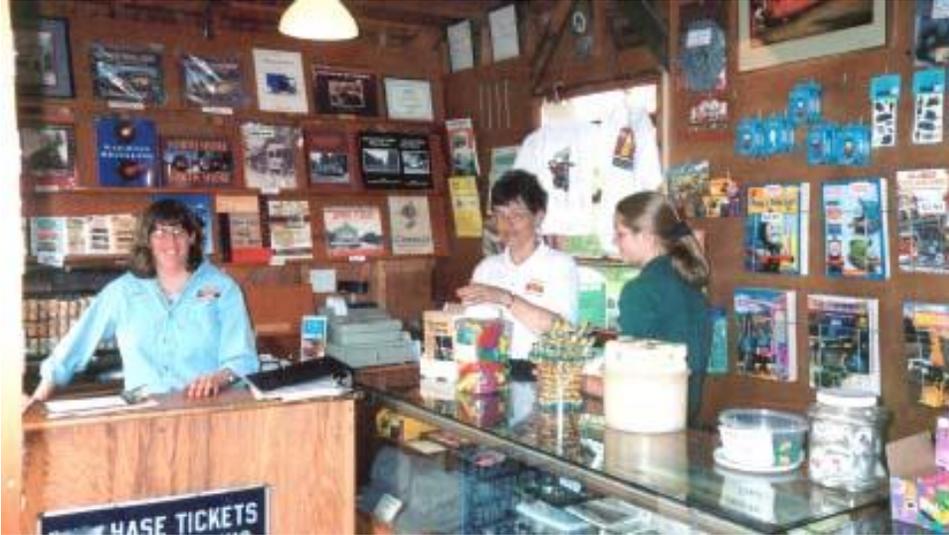
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## **Cash Income and Expenses 2004 vs. 2005**

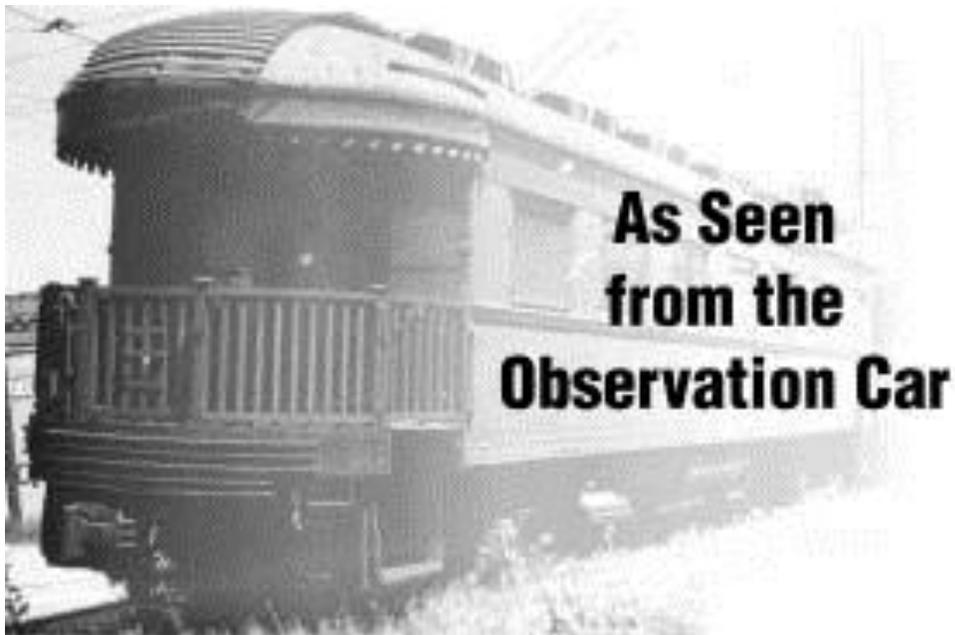
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>DUES</b>	<b>\$9,782</b>	<b>\$5,543</b>
<b>DONATIONS</b>	<b>\$29,604</b>	<b>\$24,039</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS INCOME</b>	<b>\$43,198</b>	<b>\$8,607</b>
<b>STORE SALES</b>	<b>\$10,064</b>	<b>\$10,255</b>
<b>TICKET SALES</b>	<b>\$23,466</b>	<b>\$27,731</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$116,114</b>	<b>\$76,175</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>\$37,931</b>	<b>\$29,399</b>
<b>CAR MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$3,225</b>	<b>\$2,421</b>
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>	<b>\$2,220</b>	<b>\$2,653</b>
<b>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$2,328</b>	<b>\$1,844</b>
<b>MEMBER &amp; MUSEUM SVCS</b>	<b>\$24,002</b>	<b>\$17,230</b>
<b>STORE STOCK</b>	<b>\$8,468</b>	<b>\$6,245</b>
<b>TRACK MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$6,748</b>	<b>\$9,948</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$84,922</b>	<b>\$69,740</b>
<b>INCOME LESS EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$31,192</b>	<b>\$6,435</b>

**Chuck Galitz**

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**Jane Kubicki, Laura Taylor and Alecia Kubicki work the museum's Gift Shop at Castlemuir.**



*The following is a condensation of an article that appeared in the October-December 2005 issue of the News Bulletin of the Electric City Trolley Museum Association. - Ed.*

## **An Essay about Trolley Museums**

My first introduction to the 'trolley museum movement' happened to be a photo article about the Seashore Trolley Museum which appeared an early 1950's issue of 'MECHANICS ILLUSTRATED' magazine. When I first found out there were such things as 'trolley museums', I thought it would be great to be a member of such an organization.

Later, as a member of the Metropolitan Philadelphia Railway Association, my wish became a reality when five members of the MRPA pooled their money and purchased PTC double end car #5327. That was after the conversion to bus operations of Rt. 46, the last double end trolley route in Philadelphia. *(The group grew and added a number of cars indigenous to the area to its collection. - Ed.)*

My first visit to an operating museum was in 1960. That was the Perris Trolley Museum in California. 1961, I was at the Arden Trolley Museum near Washington, PA. The following year I travelled to three New England area trolley museums, Branford, Warehouse Point and the Seashore Trolley Museum.

At all of the trolley museums I visited, I had an opportunity to operate various trolley cars. Needless to say, operating real trolley cars was and is a real thrill. Since those early years of my 'trolley interest', I became involved in other museum operations.

Looking back to the late 1950's and 1960's, all of the trolley museums had many things in common. In every museum there are a few members who wanted to save everything related to the trolley era. Museums were trying to move complete cars, car bodies, car bodies that had been converted to sheds and cottages, track switches and rail, ties and other related trolley 'hardware'. The end result at most museums, they began to look like railway junk yards! Everything that was moved to the museum could not be placed undercover or out of public view.

How many cars have been acquired from transit companies in good running condition only to sit outside at a museum and just sit and rot. How many cars have been covered over with tarps and suffer the same end result? How many cars have started to be restored by 'interested' members only to reach a state of "lack of interest" and sit for years in pieces? How much has been spent moving cars from one location to another then to

another? How many historic cars have been acquired by museums and end up going for scrap?

Every museum has its ups and downs. Some museums never recover from certain events be it man made or by Nature. (The Magee Museum, Bloomsburg, PA comes to mind).

I have noticed in recent years, more of a cooperation between various museums. Museums are taking a serious look at items in their collection and realizing not everything can be preserved in a `like new' condition. Some `car swaps' have been completed between museums.

Another factor that enters the `trolley preservation' efforts is us `old timers', and I include myself, I won't be around forever. Where are the younger trolley enthusiasts going to come from? Will they have the same interest in preservation? Will they have the skills to do the restoration work?

The early years of trolley preservation was done by a few fellows who spent their own money acquiring cars and restoration expenses. Since the 1970's , funding for restoration projects have been available from private and government grants or matching funds programs. Will these funding programs continue in years to come?

**David Biles**

*When speaking with Dave to secure permission to reprint this article he brought me up-to-date about what is happening at their Scranton, PA location. Lackawanna County purchased the old Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley (Laurel Line) interurban which the county operates for freight service and upon which Electric City Museum runs its Cars. The County is extending the line one-half mile to a AAA baseball park. The park will be served by the Museum's cars. The county is building (near the ball park) a 65 foot by 177 foot car barn and maintenance facility with three tracks that will hold nine cars with adequate room for working on the cars. This barn will cost \$1.9 million.*

*Your comments are invited -Ed.*

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