

One of the scary illustrations that appeared in Oliver Wendall Holmes' 1891 poem "The Broomstick Train," a wonderful Halloween-y explanation of how trolleys work.

## Broomstick Trains Start Annual Banquet

The OERHS annual banquet held on April 29 was a nicely organized event; being both informative and entertaining. Those in attendance enjoyed themselves. Dinner began on a humorous note as President Walt Mason read from Oliver Wendall Holmes' poem "The Broomstick Train, or the Return of the Witches." Holmes long poem

was about New England's witches returning from Hell to their old stomping grounds. The punch line of the tale is that, after wreaking havoc upon the locals, they are set to pulling the new electric trolleys, which had been introduced to Boston in 1887. Here is an excerpt:

Often you've looked at a rushing train,  
But just what moved it is not so plain,  
It couldn't be those wires above,  
For they could neither push nor shove;  
Where was the motor that made it go  
You couldn't guess *but now you know.*

During the brief business meeting that followed, Treasurer George Wilcox reported that dues were coming in nicely. Paid members in attendance received a pleasant surprise when he distributed 1977 membership cards designed to look like 19th century railway passes.

The annual election of OERHS officers and trustees was then held. The results, in true "railroading" style (all serving officers being re-elected), were:

- Walt Mason, President
- Tom Johnson, Vice-President
- George Wilcox, Treasurer
- Dick Thompson, Corresponding Secretary and Editor
- Roy Bonn, Recording Secretary (replacing outgoing George Hickock).

Two trustee positions were up for renewal. Roy Bonn was re-elected, and Dick Thompson was elected for the position now vacated by Rich Hoffman. These trustees will serve five-year terms, while all other officers serve for one year.

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Twenty members and guests were present. But we missed George Hickock (who reportedly has not been seen since his recent marriage) and new VP Tom Johnson. Even so, there were plenty of new faces in the audience to compensate. One of these was Bill Hayes who, claiming to be so impressed by the new membership cards that he had to have one, joined on the spot. We welcome Bill, whose vast knowledge of local transit history is sure to prove an asset to the Society.

After the business portion of the meeting we were treated to two delightful 16mm films circa 1937-41 presented by guest speaker Rudy Zvarich. The first of these silent films was black and white, and the second color. They were the result of experimental traffic control studies undertaken by the City of Portland to test the need for stop lights. Various intersections around town were shown and, among the delightful classic automobiles, were streetcars! We saw Birneys, 400 to 600 class PAYEs, modern streamlined Broadways, and trolley coaches. Livery ranged from classic maroon and yellow, to apple green and cream, light grey, green and ivory, and Portland Traction red and cream. Thanks are due Rudy for an entertaining end to a fine evening. 🚃



*Council Crest and Westover line trolleys are wearing two different color schemes as they pass on SW Morrison at 19<sup>th</sup> in this clip from the 1941 traffic study film.*

subsequent Sundays; May 15 and 22nd. The May 22nd session will be followed by a Society meeting, the first at the Park this season. The training sessions will begin at 2 o' clock, but on the 22nd interested members may gather for a picnic beforehand. The picnic will begin at 1, and the meeting will be held at 3, immediately after the training.

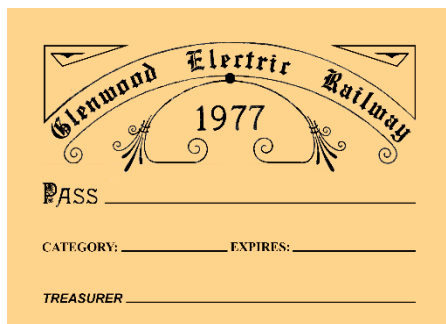
The training sessions, which are designed to acquaint new members with car operation and refresh the skills of previous volunteers, will be conducted by Paul Class. Subjects to be covered will include the trolley pole, controller, brakes, speed over each part of the line, general traction principles, and safety. Texts taken from compendiums of the 1906-12 period have been printed for reference during these classes, which will be held on the Broadway car. If you want to operate cars at the park this year it is suggested that you attend one of these sessions.

After the May 22nd meeting members will be invited to inspect

rolling stock being readied for the Park opening on Memorial Day weekend (May 28th). It should be a fun afternoon, so do not hesitate to bring along wives and friends. 🚃

## Museum Pioneer Passes Away

We have been sent a clipping from the Perris, California *Progress* newspaper reporting the recent death of H. Lincoln Harrison. All of us associated with a railway museum owe a debt of gratitude to this pioneer who had the original trolley museum idea back in 1939. His efforts resulted in the formation of the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine, which is now the oldest such endeavor in the country and the first of many. 🚃



## Training Sessions Scheduled

Two streetcar operation training sessions will be held at the trolley park in Glenwood on



*Grand Forks Street Railway Birney No. 123 is ensconced in the basement of the Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant in St. Louis, Missouri.*

## Trolleys in Restaurants

Paul Class is back in Portugal on another trolley-hunting assignment, but he and Sonja were in the Portland area long enough to give a report on recent Gales Creek Enterprises projects at last month's annual banquet.

To begin with, they installed a North Dakota Birney car in the basement of a St. Louis, Missouri building. The vintage streetcar would be part of a new Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant. Unfortunately, the building was unheated, and the Midwest was suffering an unusually cold winter. So, before work could begin, the Classes had to erect a plastic "igloo" around the trolley. Even then, each piece of wood had to be heated before it could be worked on or it would stick to the skin!

The Old Spaghetti Factory attraction is No. 123, which was one of six Birneys built for the Grand Forks Street Railway in 1921. The car was part of an effort to modernize a street railway system that opened in 1904 after several false starts. The economies

these Birneys brought to Grand Forks may have slowed the demise of rail transit there, but the 8.5 mile system was converted to bus operation in 1934.

Next, the Class family traveled to Atlanta, Georgia (undoubtedly a relief for their two kids, who were a minority in the tough urban school they had to attend while in St. Louis) where they installed another Birney in the fourth-floor restaurant of the new OMNI International Hotel. In order to get the streetcar up to the fourth floor it was necessary to cut it into 37 pieces small enough to fit into a freight elevator and then reassemble it. Paul made no mention of the car's origin.

One result of the long venture back east was that Gales Creek Enterprises opened a sales office in St. Louis. It will be run by David A. Young, although Paul will continue to handle restorations from his Glenwood location. We wish the Classes lots of luck in their expanding operations. 🚃



*The Birney seen here was similar to the one now installed in a St. Louis restaurant, but it was part of the Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway, which operated 80 miles south of Grand Forks.*