

Midwest Bus Museum

501c3 Not For Profit Corporation

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April 2023 Newsletter



President's Message

It has been my great honor and privilege to be president of MBM from its founding and watching the growth that we have experienced over the last three years since being incorporated in 2020. The board has grown from its original four founding members to a full board of seven members. Our membership has also increased and continues to approximately double each year. Our collection has also increased introducing more varieties of bus chassis and bus body builders. I want to take the opportunity to thank all of our members and directors for your support, without you MBM would not be what it is today. - Tom Schwartz

2022 Year in Review

2022 was successful year for MBM, several historic bus rescues were accomplished as well as acquisitions of support equipment.

100th Anniversary of Check Motors

MBM Wisconsin was host to the 100th Anniversary of Checker Motors event which took place during Memorial Day Weekend 2022.

Meet Our Board of Directors

Our board of directors are made up of transportation enthusiasts with various backgrounds all with the common goal of preserving transportation history.

Looking Ahead in 2023

We have several initiatives and events planned for 2023 to continue our mission of preserving bus transportation history.

Renew Your Membership Today!

Thank you for your supporting the Midwest Bus Museum. Your membership and donation contributions are vital to our continued operation to preserve, restore, and promote transportation history for future generations. Please log on to midwestbusmuseum.org to renew your membership.

Stay Updated on Facebook!

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2022 Year In Review

2022 was a great year for MBM with several great events for our members and transportation enthusiast community to enjoy. 2022 kicked off with a special tribute to the 100th Anniversary of Checker Motors event followed by parade opportunities, ATHS Day, and our annual museum open house. Thanks to all who made it out to an MBM event last year!



100th Anniversary of Checker Motors Event

The first MBM event of 2022 was the 100th Anniversary of Checker Motors event held in Bangor, WI at MBM Wisconsin. The event was a success with several vintage Checkers on display. It was a great display of the various uses that Checkers played in fleet service as well as for consumers. There were several Checker cabs from different eras in attendance, as well as a Checker used in police service, and an Aerobus. Several other public safety and fleet vehicles were also on display for visitors to enjoy.



Meet our Board of Directors

Tom Schwartz

President

Tom has loved buses from his earliest memories of riding the school bus in elementary school and would keep track of the school bus fleet and the various makes and models used by the school district and was always excited by the look of faded yellow paint when the bus was



approaching the bus stop. From the early days onward Tom has been a bus enthusiast, visiting the Illinois Railway Museum and enjoying the special treat when the buses were in operation. Tom began collecting buses in 2017 and partnered with Emerson Zentz to start the Midwest Bus Museum in January of 2020.

Emerson Zentz

Vice President

As a 20+ year railroad veteran, Emerson has been fascinated by and involved with transportation and vehicles of all shapes and sizes since an early age. Owning over 100 vehicles so far, he has developed a deep mechanical and spec knowledge of a vast array of classic cars, buses, and commercial vehicles. Classic buses, though, were always especially intriguing.



One of the first large vehicles Emerson rode in as a kid was a mid-'80s Chevrolet Thomas school bus. He was enthralled with the way the driver handled the bus – the shifting through each gear, the loud clunking, the backfires that made his friends jump, the coughs and hiccups of the motor. When he was older, summer camp transportation was a GM fishbowl transit. Again, he was fascinated by how old it looked, the goofy front window, and the way the back seat rumbled from the roar of the diesel engine. He would save his allowance money for model cars and buses. With

Emerson Zentz

Vice President (Cont'd)

his first job, he bought books and old bus sales brochures where he began to learn all the available options and specifications. Driving age finally came, and secretly he bid on and won his 2nd vehicle through eBay – a '68 Chevy c50 with a 292 straight 6, 4-speed with a 2-speed rear end. He taught himself how to drive it, take care of it, and work on it, and he and his friends had so much fun with it! One bus grew to a handful of buses, and he got to know good friends in bus hobby – Stan Holter of The Bus Boys and Ross Gabrick. It was these relationships that fueled Emerson's passion to collect, restore, and preserve classic and historical buses. That handful of buses since then turned into 50+ buses, and the rest is history with much more history to still be written.

Rachel Zentz

Secretary

A born and bred classic car enthusiast, Rachel was first introduced to the bus world in high school when she began dating her now husband. As seniors, they went on their 4th date in Emerson's 1968 Chevrolet C50 school bus. It wasn't until later in the relationship Rachel began to truly understand and appreciate this unique mission and perspective, and her passion



began to build. The more she learned about what makes each bus unique, the more interesting it became to her. Funny how that works!

Rachel's favorite part of being on this Board? Being part of the MBM team going on rescue trips in an attempt to get the buses back to our museum grounds. There are 2 words that come to mind seeing this group of people work together to get the engine going, tires unstuck, leaky air bag systems to work, finicky clutches and manual steering ... and THEN seeing that 60 year old bus slowly driving or being trailered 500 miles back to the MBM ... pride and awe.

Heather Schwartz

Treasurer

Heather was introduced to the love for buses when she went on her first date with her soon to be husband, Tom in April of 2018. On their first date, Tom couldn't help but express his passion for transportation history, especially as it relates to buses. Heather has since been on countless bus rescues, attended bus enthusiasts events, helps maintain the bus fleet, and has also grown an affinity for the buses of yesterday.



DJ Wedding

Logistics Director

DJ has had a passion for school buses since he was a kid and told himself, someday, he'd own a bus to some degree. In March of 2018, He bought his first bus at auction. It needed a lot of work, but didn't care and bought it anyways. Fast forward to the current, and after a dozen or so buses, he currently owns 4. DJ has a 1990 Bluebird on a Chevy C60 chassis, powered



by a 8.2 Detroit. DJ also has a 2000 Amtran Genesis (the odd hybrid year where it could be classified as 3 models), backed by a DT466E. Also in the fleet is a 2005 Bluebird Vision, and a 2007 Thomas HDX, both buses backed with CAT C7s.

DJ is proud to be the Logistics Director for the Midwest Bus Museum, based in Illinois, where he does a little of everything. We currently have 60 or so buses and around a dozen support vehicles.

Earl Ford

Fleet Director

Earl got interested in trucks and equipment, as many young boys do, as a kid. Getting a couple ride alongs with a friend's dad who had his own semi, really inked that in him. His dad grew up in Cicero, and had some stories to tell of riding the CTA, including the transit busses. Since busses are essentially truck chassis, and my first job out of high-school was at a trucking and excavation company working as a grease monkey in the shop and yard, busses naturally fit into my main area of interest. Earl also helped create the Kettle Moraine Chapter of the American Truck Historical Society back in 2018, and he is currently the president of the Chapter.



Jeff Waxman

Historian

Jeff has been in the public transportation industry for 39 years.

He got into buses and trains when he was a young child. His family grew up in Glenview, Illinois on the Wilmette Border. His family would either drive to the CTA Linden L station in Wilmette (Now the Purple Line) or Dempster Street Skokie Swift Station (Now the Yellow Line) and take the train to Howard Street and transfer to the Howard Englewood/Jackson Park Train (Now the Red Line – Howard/Dan Ryan), and go downtown. His grandmother who lived in Chicago didn't drive, and would take the CTA buses all over the place.

When Jeff turned 12, in 1976 he started taking the public bus to Junior High School instead of the school bus. The Village of Wilmette operated a system called Wilmette Wilbus.



Jeff Waxman

Historian (Continued)

They operated 1959 30 foot old look GMC's purchased used from Lexington, and 1976 30 Foot Flexibles purchased new. He got to know the drivers, and started hanging out on the bus after school for several hours. They would let him count people, punch transfer, and fill out the trip sheets. Eventually Jeff got to into the yard, fueled buses, and swept them out. They also would let Jeff drive the buses around the yard and also got to know the Manager because he would also drive on Occasion.

Jeff also became friends with the people that started up Wilmette Wilbus. These people also started up Highland Park Transit who he works for during the summer as a Ravinia Driver, and the Northbrook Commuter Bus System.

Wilmette Wilbus operated from 1974 until 1995, and is now Pace Northshore Division. The Northbrook Commuter System eventually became part of Nortran (North Suburban Mass Transit District). The two routes that were operated in Northbrook no longer exist.

Jeff started his real transit career as an intern for the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and held internships with the Urban Mass Transit Administration which is now the Federal Transit Administration, and the Chicago Transit Authority. He also worked his way through college as a fixed route and paratransit bus operator. After graduating from college, Jeff worked 11 years for Pace Suburban Bus Service starting out as a dispatcher working his way up to Safety and Training Manager before rejoining IDOT in 2000 as a project Manager. Jeff's responsibilities include assisting the Section 5311 Rural Transit Grantees in complying with the FMCSA's and FTA's Drug and Alcohol testing implementation program

along with the other program requirements. Jeff also works in the Section 5310, State of Illinois Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program (CVP). Jeff also has conducted drug and alcohol trainings at the American Bus Association, Buscon, CCTA, Midwest Bus, and Motor Coach Association, National RTAP, and Southwest Transit Association Conferences. In addition, Jeff also participated in a panel discussion on state oversight at the FTA's Drug and Alcohol Conference in 2019.

Jeff Waxman

Continued

Jeff graduated in 1988 from Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration. He is also certified in Bus Accident Investigation from the National Transit Institute (NTI), and also completed the Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) qualification training class in October of 2011.

In addition to all of this, Jeff still works as a part time fixed route and paratransit bus operator. In 2013 he received his two million mile safe driving award.

Jeff also owns two vintage transit buses. One of the buses is a 35 Foot 1976 GMC New Look Model # T6H4523A transit bus that Jeff drove in the 80's as a college student at Northern Illinois University. This bus was formerly owned by Huskie Bus Line in Dekalb, Illinois. Jeff uses this bus for parades, vintage transportation shows, and special events. The other bus is a 30 foot 1977 Flxible New Look Model # 35096 formerly owned by the Bi State Development Agency (Metro) in St. Louis, Missouri. His hope is to have this bus in fully operable condition this year.



2023 Spring Events

ATHS Day - Saturday May 20th
MBM Richmond, Illinois 10AM-4PM

Memorial Day Parade - Monday May 29th
Johnsburg, Illinois 9AM