

# NORTH TEXAS HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION

Summer, 2006

[www.NorthTexasTransport.org](http://www.NorthTexasTransport.org)

## 2006 ARM Annual Conference

Mark your calendars. The annual Association of Railway Museums (ARM) annual meeting is scheduled for November 8 - 12, 2006 in Sacramento, California. A registration form is included in this newsletter. All NTHT members are encouraged to attend but are responsible for their registration fees, transportation and accommodations.

## Thieves Destroy NTHT Property

FORT WORTH – NTHT is sad to report the theft and vandalism of irreplaceable property at the E. El Paso Street lot. Our biggest loss was the destruction of the rectifier that once powered the M & O subway system. Several Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) buses in an adjacent lot were also damaged.

Record high copper prices and the unfortunate location adjacent to both a scrap metal dealer and a homeless encampment of reported heroin addicts have made security at the site an ongoing challenge.

Fencing has been cut and repaired several times. One individual was spotted attempting to break in while the other end of the fence was being repaired. The T has requested additional police patrols in the area through the time sharing (TSO) program. NTHT volunteers and employees of The T spent over 2 days cutting down trees and other brush in a 30 square yard area to increase visibility. Where possible, items containing copper, brass, or aluminum have been welded shut or relocated to more secure site.

NTHT estimates damage to the rectifier and cars #10, #5, and #7 at over \$50,000. NTHT retrieved a small amount to the stolen parts following a police investigation as well as identifying stolen parts at the scrap dealer. Perhaps most heartbreaking is that the culprits are believed to have cashed in on less than \$125.

**EDITORS NOTE:** *The individual in the story below is suspected of stealing NTHT property in addition to the death of another suspected parts thief. At least one NTHT member has seen this person in the area. NTHT members are warned not to engage these criminals.*

*To report an incident of theft, vandalism, or trespassing involving the El Paso Street lot, contact the following:*

**Fort Worth Police**  
911

**Union Pacific Railroad Police**  
817-878-4508  
817-667-4049 (cell)

**Fort Worth Transportation Authority**  
817-215-8600

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## History of Cars 25 and 411

*By Lee Lavell*

In the previous newsletter we covered the early history of the interurban line and the original configuration of cars 25 and 411. Substantial changes to these cars occurred beginning in 1924. These changes ushered in the era of the Crimson Limited.

### Second Configuration



Rear compartment of car 411 showing newly installed wicker chairs, gloss white ceiling, and frosted globe style light bulbs.

The NTTC's days were numbered when Henry Ford introduced the Model T.

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## Suspect Arrested

(from Fort Worth Star-Telegram article)



FORT WORTH --A 49-year-old transient who police allege bullied and committed crimes against the home-less was arrested Monday night, accused of fatally stabbing a man. Dennis E. Kelly is accused of stabbing Larry Bramlett, 48, once in the chest then fleeing. Bramlett was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 5:25 p.m. Monday. Dennis E. Kelly, known as "KC" because he was born in Kansas City, was arrested on a murder warrant later Monday after transients from the East Lancaster Avenue area helped lead police to him. He is also being investigated as a suspect in two other crimes against the homeless this month, the June 2 assault of a woman and the June 12 robbery of a man and woman. "There was a lot of people that were really eager to help the police in this from around the night shelter area because apparently the suspect had a history of bullying and committing offenses against other homeless people," homicide Detective Curt Brannan said. "So when patrol officers were searching for him in the area, they commented on how quickly people were pointing at his direction." The stabbing occurred about 4 p.m. in the 1100 block of East Vickery Boulevard after witnesses saw two men walk out of some bushes on the north side of the street. "There was some type of verbal confrontation," Brannan said, and witnesses told investigators that they saw the suspect stab Bramlett in the upper left chest. Brannan said Bramlett staggered toward a nearby business and collapsed on the street. "The witnesses saw the suspect walk over to him as he was kneeling down on his hands and knees, push him down onto his back, pick something up and then calmly walk away from the scene," Brannan said. Brannan said he has not identified what the suspect took from the scene.

## Leonard's M&O Car Update

Work on the first truck for Leonard M & O subway car No. 1 has been completed. The truck was degreased, de-rusted, primed, and painted black. The degreasing process is underway for the second truck. Anyone interested in working on M&O Car #1 should contact [Gabby@NorthTexasTransport.org](mailto:Gabby@NorthTexasTransport.org).

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Electric Railway Foundation

A challenge grant of \$5,000.00 was recently approved by the 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation. It is now up to NTHT to provide \$5,000.00 to match this grant. The funds must come from outside our membership. If successful, the resultant \$10,000.00 will be used for reproduction of Birney car journal boxes for the car 560 project. Car 560 is one of two official NTHT directed donation projects. If you choose you may specify that your tax deductible donations go directly to car 560 efforts. Donations may be sent by PayPal through this web page or mailed to our post office box.

## Fort Worth Trolley Study Uploaded to NTHT Online Library

FORT WORTH - The final version of the 1998 Fort Worth Trolley Feasibility Study has been uploaded to the NTHT online library. NTHT members will find this study of interest from both a historical and contemporary perspective due to the proposed Trinity Uptown project north of downtown Fort Worth. Planning for a "transit circulator" has resurfaced in The T's strategic plan for the next 4 - 10 years. It has the potential to gain additional traction as the Trinity Uptown project proceeds forward. Reading through the document, you can see that NTHT has met several targeted goals such as acquiring historic vehicles, track, etc. as opportunities have arisen and by making public awareness presentations to local schools and neighborhood associations. One peculiar item in study is the assumption that the public does not consider PCC cars historic. As NTHT has experienced through our efforts with the Leonards Museum, the enthusiasm many Fort Worth residents have expressed towards the proposed

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## History of Cars 25 and 411

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As time passed, more and more people turned to the private automobile for transportation. In 1924 the NTTTC made significant changes to the interurban fleet. These changes were designed to give the cars a more luxurious appearance. The exteriors of the cars were painted red with white around the windows. Clear light bulbs in the interior were replaced by frosted globes and the ceilings painted gloss white. One end of the trailer cars was modified to convert the back half into an observation room, dubbed a "salounge". This was achieved by removing the doors, bulkhead, and steps on one end of the car. Additional stained glass, a canopy and a drumhead were added to the rear to enhance the effect. The bench seats in the rear compartment were removed and replaced with wicker chairs. The cars with these modifications came to be known as the Crimson Limited.

## Third Configuration



Interior of motorcar showing painted mahogany, blue and white linoleum, and newly installed side wall sconces. Original bench seats replaced by double bucket style seat.

In 1927 additional changes were introduced to further the previous enhancements as well as give the cars a more modern appearance. The natural mahogany interiors were painted and the brass fixtures were nickel plated (some fixtures had been plated prior to 1927). The luggage racks were removed. The double row, bare bulb ceiling lights gave way to a single row of enclosed lights. Wall lights were added where the luggage racks had been located. The bench seats of the motorcars were replaced with a more modern double bucket style. The green cork linoleum flooring was replaced with blue and white blocked linoleum. The trailer cars saw replacement of the bench seats in the front half with revolving parlor chairs (One car had the new seats in 1926). The green cork linoleum was replaced in the front half with brussels carpet and with blue and white blocked linoleum in the rear half, or salounge. The salounge retained the previously appointed wicker chairs. The exteriors of these cars saw little if any change.

## Final Railway Configuration

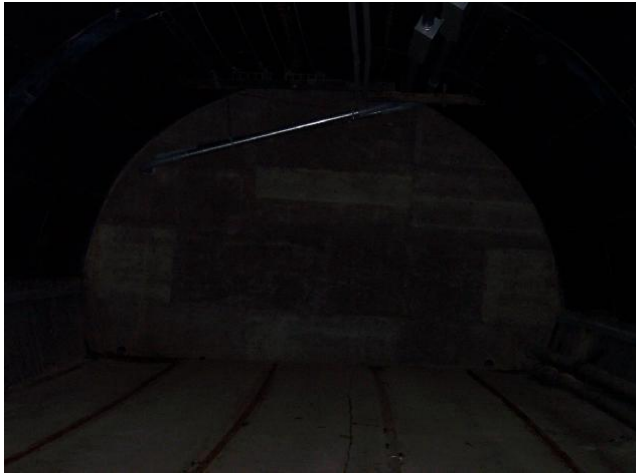
The internal combustion engine was taking its' toll across the country. The ever popular automobile and motorization of electric rail transit systems finally brought an end to the once proud interurban line. The NTTTC went into receivership in 1932. Story has it that the usage of trailer cars was discontinued at that time. Some motorcars (maybe all) were converted to one man operation. This called for the introduction of air operated doors on the cars. Some motorcars utilized the wicker chairs from the trailer cars. For reasons unknown,

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restoration of Leonards M&O Subway Car #1 strongly contradicts this assumption. To read the full report see:  
<http://www.northtexastransport.org/NHTLibrary/FWTFInal.html>

On another historical note, the proposal to extend the Leonard's Subway to the T&P station back in 1974 is also available at:  
<http://www.northtexastransport.org/NHTLibrary/CBDSubway/CBDS.html>

## Dead End



Following closure of the Tandy Subway in 2002, a two-foot thick concrete seal was applied on the north end of the tunnel that once led into the vast parking lot. Shown above is a rare view from inside the tunnel in 2005.

car 25 never received many of the modifications introduced in 1927 or beyond. The interurban line ceased operations in December 1934.



Last run of the Crimson Limited on December 31, 1934. This picture shows Fort Worth to Dallas service being handed over to Texas Motors Coaches.



## Man known for hard work, charm, persistence

By Gordon Dickson (*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*)

In many families, there's that one person who's really good at talking a hotel clerk into a better room rate, or a store manager into a discount. Silvino "Bino" Suarez was that kind of guy. "Sports Illustrated was having a promotion only for new subscribers," sister-in-law Pam Riley said. "He told them he had been a loyal subscriber for 21 years and he deserved a football, too. Sure enough, they sent him one. "Mr. Suarez, a seemingly healthy 61-year-old who golfed several times a week, died suddenly Sunday after a stroke in Houston. He had served on the Tarrant County Work Force Commission since his 2002 retirement from Lockheed Martin, where he had worked 32 years. He also had served on the Fort Worth Literacy Council, Adult Education Advisory Panel and United Way Crisis Council. Born in a village near Guadalajara, Mexico, he immigrated to Fort Worth with his family when he was 6. The parents and eventually eight children lived in a boxcar near the Stockyards for several years. He couldn't read, write or speak English when he enrolled in school. "He told me about his first report card. He got Fs in everything but math, which he understood because it was numbers," his wife, Sharon Suarez, said. "But he worked hard, and he was successful. That's why, as an adult, he was so passionate about literacy programs. "He graduated from Diamond Hill Jarvis High School, served in the Air Force and attended the University of Texas at Arlington before landing a job with General Dynamics, which later became Lockheed Martin. Known as "Big Guy," by many relatives, the 6-foot, 4-inch man happily retold stories of his hardscrabble youth on the north side -- and he may have embellished a few tales. He was known as "Uncle Bubba" by 9-year-old niece Alex. "She would say, "Uncle Bubba, tell me a story about when you were ba-a-a-d," Riley said. "She liked stories about how he got in trouble when he was a kid, and he never let the truth stand in the way of a good story. "His parents, Federico and Socorro Suarez, and other relatives still live in Fort Worth. In 1999, the family was profiled in a Star-Telegram article when six relatives graduated from high school or college in the same year. During a party attended by more than 150 people, Mr. Suarez spoke about the importance of education, quoting his father's creed: "I want people to associate positive attributes to our name. If they ever hear the name Suarez, I want people to think of integrity, hard work, character and honesty."

### Next Quarterly Meeting Saturday, August 5

The next quarterly meeting of North Texas Historic Transportation, Inc. is scheduled for 1:00 PM Saturday, August 5, 2006 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Knights of Pythias Building at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main in downtown Fort Worth. For information and directions, contact Willie Kirby at 817-478-0773 or via e-mail at:

[WKirby@NorthTexasTransport.org](mailto:WKirby@NorthTexasTransport.org)

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