

*The Newsletter of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society*

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Photos of Car 2651, owned by member Tony Hall, are scarce. This view, provided by member Arthur Ward, shows the car at the Greenville depot in Jersey City. When this picture was taken, Car 2651 was assigned to service on the lines to the Federal Shipyards in South Kearny. Flanking Car 2651 is Car 2762 whose front dash must have been painted by a shopman recuperating from a night on the town. Car 2762 was built for service on the wide-gauge routes operated by Public Service out of Camden. When the Southern Division trolley routes were abandoned in the late 1930's, Car 2762 was one of nearly 100 cars of the 3200-series which were sent to North Jersey and given a set of standard-gauge trucks for continued service. It was renumbered from 3238 at that time.

# INTRODUCTION

by Frank Miklos

The North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society is pleased to introduce its publication DESTINATIONS. This initial issue will provide a background to our organization and outline our goals. Future issues will update our progress in meeting these objectives.

We also hope to include news about transit developments both here and overseas in the publication, and to spotlight other organizations involved in preserving and restoring historic transit vehicles.

## BACKGROUND

The development of the State of New Jersey has been closely tied to accessible transportation. Its miles of harbors and navigable rivers were linked by a network of canals. After the railroads rendered the canals obsolete, an intense competitive struggle for the passenger and freight traffic developed between the various rail carriers. The advent of the street railways and various commuter rail branches helped to spread the state's development beyond the older waterfront cities.

By 1920, New Jersey boasted over 2,500 electric trolleys serving urban areas like Newark, Jersey City Paterson and Camden, along with smaller cities like Bridgeton and Phillipsburg. The arrival of the automobile, along with electrification and other improvements to the commuter railroads led to a steady decline in the use of trolleys for public transport. In 1986, the once vast network of trolleys in New Jersey is reduced to single line in Newark with a fleet of 24 cars. Recent proposals have surfaced for new trolley lines with modern cars to serve the Hudson County waterfront, so there may be a revival of that form of transit in New Jersey.

Unfortunately, over the years, little effort was made to recognize the historical role that mass transit contributed to the state's development. Most of New Jersey's retired transit vehicles were uncerimoniously scrapped. The largest operator of trolleys was Public Service Coordinated Transport which at one time operated over 2,000 cars. Only one car (No. 2431) at the Branford Electric Railway Association's trolley museum in Connecticut survived intact. An Atlantic City car is owned by the Trolley Museum of New York. Two Wildwood cars survive, one at Branford and one at Warehouse Point in Connecticut. However, the Branford car has been restored as a Lynchburg, Virginia car, where it originally operated.

The bodies of three other New Jersey trolleys have been rescued and the necessary parts are being acquired to make them operational again. One of these is a Wildwood open-bench car which is being restored by the Buckingham Valley Trolley Association for possible operation on that group's line along Delaware Avenue in Philadelphia. A Coast Cities Railways car survived for many years as a cottage near Point Pleasant, New Jersey. Its owners donated that car to the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine where it will be restored into the livery of its original New England owners--the Bay State Electric Railway Company. The third car is Public Service No. 2651 which survived for more than twenty years as a storage shed in the yard of a private home in Long Valley, New Jersey.

It was Car 2651 that ultimately led to the formation of the N.J.E.R.H.S. That car was a sister to ones which ran in the Newark City Subway until 1954. Because this class of cars survived so long, it is the type most closely identified with later generations of Public Service trolley riders, but no examples of this class were preserved.

When it was learned that the body of 2651 still existed, a group of members of the North Jersey Chapter-N.R.H.S. discussed the possibility of acquiring it for restoration to operating condition. The proposal was brought before the membership of that organization, but they felt that their treasury could not support such a project. As a result, the preservation effort remained in the hands of individual Chapter members under the direction of Tony Hall. Several members of the Chapter donated their personal funds to the preservation effort and the Chapter itself agreed to loan funds to pay part of the costs of moving the car to the Black River and Western Railroad in Ringoes, New Jersey.

The B.R. & W. has played host to Car 2651 for over ten years and during that time the management of that railroad has been most cooperative. Our small group of volunteers have spent many weekends stripping paint, replacing rotted wood and rusted metal, sealing leaks, and repainting and varnishing the car. By 1982 the restoration of the car body itself was essentially completed.

Now the time had come to assemble the hardware required to make the car operational again. The necessary electrical gear and air brake equipment were obtained from scrapped work trolleys that once served Philadelphia and Toronto. However, both of those systems utilized non-standard track gauges. Before Car 2651 could operate, it would be necessary to completely rebuild the ex-Toronto trucks to standard gauge or acquire a pair of standard-gauge trucks, in either case a very costly undertaking. Since this was well beyond the financial means of the volunteers, the group decided to organize a non-profit historical corporation to solicit an expanded membership participation and contributions from non-members. The original name selected for the organization was the "New Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society" but this had to be changed when we were informed that we could not use the name "New Jersey" unless we were in fact a state agency. Therefore the name was changed to the "North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society". Although our application for tax-exempt status is still pending with the I.R.S. in Washington, our corporate charter was approved by the State of New Jersey in 1985.

Shortly after this the N.J.E.R.H.S. set out in earnest to acquire parts for 2651. Seating was a major need. The car had longitudinal seating throughout on both sides of the aisle and a search for that type of seating led to the recently retired ex-Lackawanna MU cars which had such seats near the end doors. The question remained about how to acquire some of these seats. While on a walking tour of the Newark City Subway, Tony spoke with N J Transit's Bob Sherwood who was also involved in car preservation work. Since Bob worked in the Rail Equipment Department, he was able to arrange for Tony Hall to contact the scrap dealer who was cutting up some of the old MU cars. The scrap dealer agreed to sell seats to our organization.

Shortly afterward Tony met with Bob to see an ex-Lackawanna MU car (#3541) that Bob had purchased for preservation, in conjunction with Jack Keeler. The car was in the Mahwah yard of N J Transit. Also at that location

was a combine trailer car (No. 3406) which was in derelict condition from being out of service for many years. Both Tony Hall and Bob Sherwood recognized the uniqueness of this unit. Only ten were built and most of them were scrapped years ago. An inspection of this car revealed that it was structurally sound and could be made presentable with very little effort. A decision was made to rescue this car under the sponsorship of the N.J.E.R.H.S. and shortly thereafter Bob Sherwood and Jack Keeler decided to join forces with our newly-formed organization by leasing Car 3541 to it.

At our first organizational meeting, a Board of Directors was appointed, consisting of Tony Hall--President; Bob Sherwood--Vice President; Jack Keeler--Secretary and Frank Miklos--Treasurer. The Board also voted to establish two classes of dues namely, \$10 a year for regular members and a \$25 a month Executive Membership fee. The four Board members were designated as Executive Members.

As soon as the decision was made to acquire Car 3406, work got underway. The first step involved the removal of trash that had piled up on the floor of the car to a depth of over a foot. In its final years out of service at Hoboken, it appeared the car was used as a makeshift dumpster. Our crew literally shoveled the accumulated newspapers, beverage cans, and other miscellaneous items into giant garbage bags for disposition.

The Summer of 1985 was mostly devoted to sealing and repainting the roof. From the outset, it was obvious that the trucks were totally unsatisfactory for the car. They were stripped of most of their components and one of the frames was cracked. While they could be restored, the amount of work required to get them back into shape would require a major effort. The alternative would be to exchange the trucks under Car 3406 with a pair in good condition that was under a car set to be scrapped. Again we were able to secure the cooperation of the scrap dealer and arrange for such a swap which took place on June 14, 1986. Without a doubt this was the biggest undertaking for our organization and a detailed report on this project will appear elsewhere in this publication.

That about summarizes the background to our organization and our accomplishments to date. While we do hope to publish DESTINATIONS on a regular basis, it should be recognized that we are not primarily in the publishing business. Our principal goal is to preserve and restore historical transportation vehicles and we feel that we have an obligation to our members to see that this is done. To accomplish this, we are always in need of volunteers who are willing to get involved in the many tasks required. If you are interested in contributing to this effort, please call Tony Hall at (201) 388-0369 on evenings between 8 and 10 P.M.

Our MU cars are being stored at Whippany, New Jersey, thanks to the cooperation of Ben Friedland, the President of the Morristown and Erie Railroad. Work on restoring the cars is underway at that location. The Public Service trolley remains at Ringoes, where further restoration work will take place.

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YES! I want to join the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society!

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

Phone.....Occupation.....

N.J.E.R.H.S.  
P.O. Box 1770  
Rahway, N.J. 07065

Enclosed is my check/money order for \$10 payable to:



A crane hoists Car 3406 into the air to make way for a new pair of trucks in the photo at the left. The replacement truck is lined up with the car prior to being placed under it. The original truck sits next to the new truck on the adjacent track.

The right photo shows Jack Keeler, Lou Wasserman and Bob Sherwood using their muscle to guide the new truck under the car.

### *Your Dues and Doers at Work* *by Tony Hall*

The huge 40-ton capacity crane waddled across the former site of the Mahwah Ford plant like some great yellow dinosaur reincarnated for service in our Lackawanna restoration project.

Weeks of negotiations with the Sharp Electronics Company conducted by Jack Keeler resulted in their generous permission not only to cross their property, but to cut a hole in their newly-installed fence to admit our heavy equipment. This was necessary since the construction of their new plant on the Ford site had rendered the rail yard inaccessible to highway vehicles.

And our Car 3406 was, after all, still stored there at the former Ford railyard at Mahwah. We had purchased it from the Abato Trucking Company of Jersey City in January of 1985 when it was one of hundreds of survivors of the old D.L.&W. electric fleet. It is one of the very few

low-profile trailer combines left and we selected it as an ideal mate for motor car 3541 purchased earlier. The wedding would be at Morristown with a Honeymoon in Hoboken to follow.

Her beautiful body was well preserved, but her trucks were cracked and had missing parts, including coil springs. One had new wheel sets, the others were worn out. Alternative trucks were located under another car which was slated for scrapping and their purchase arranged. These had good frames, coil springs and two sets of new wheels. The job at hand was to be two-fold; first the removal of the original trucks from Car 3406 with their leaf springs and two new wheel sets, and the installation of these parts into the replacement trucks which lacked them; and finally, the installation of the rebuilt trucks themselves under Car 3406. The result was to be a car equipped with a complete set of trucks with eight new wheels.

The first replacement truck was placed on the track a few yards ahead of the spot where the crane would have the best access to the car. An oversize tow truck was engaged to move Car 3406 to that spot which was perhaps a hundred yards north of where the car was then located. The young teamsters finally accomplished this move amid the snapping of chains and the explosion of tires which straddled the rail and came to grief when rail joints with their protruding bolts were encountered. Their success nearly turned to disaster as Car 3406 gathered speed. Naturally there were NO brakes on board so a hasty meeting was called to discuss possible ways of stopping the car. Bob Sherwood picked up a two by four, artfully lodged it between a rolling wheel and the passing rail head beneath, and effectively slowed and stopped the car precisely where we had intended.

The stout cables of the crane were attached to a coupler and the car was lifted clear of the cab-end truck. The old truck was shoved out from under and cribbing was arranged in its place. The car was set down on the wood, and the cable detached and attached to the old truck, which was removed from the track. The leaf springs were removed from the old truck, placed into the new one and the crane was reattached once again to the same coupler. The car was re-lifted, the cribbing removed and the new truck, now equipped with leaf springs salvaged from the old one, was pushed by four tiring railfans under the car and the car laboriously centered over the truck and eased down onto its new wheels. The job was half done; the easy half, that is!

The next step was to move the car once again so that the blind end would be adjacent to the crane. Bob's Chevy pickup provided the pull part of that move and four hearty backs did the pushing. Once again the crane cables were attached to a coupler, this time the blind-end knuckle, and the second end was lifted free of that truck. Heave to, me hearties, was the order of the day as yet another worn-out truck was man-handled out from under its burden and yet another wooden crib constructed in its place, all this while half of a forty-ton car waved in the breeze a few feet overhead. One weak cable and there would have been four red blotches where the railfans had been. The crib in place, the car was once again lowered onto its temporary wooden foundation and the trusted cables released. The major challenge of the day was to be faced next.

The new truck was placed along side the old. The old truck frame was lifted from the new wheel sets with which it had been equipped. Next, the replacement truck frame was lefted clear of the worn out wheel sets with which it had been equipped. Now the trick was to drop the new truck frame

onto the new wheel sets which were still on the track. This was accomplished with great pushing, shoving, grunting, yelling and hoping. But it WAS accomplished. The coup de grace was the mounting of the leaf springs from the old truck into the new one in which they were lacking. A few crushed fingers later this, too, was history. The triumphal moment had arrived. The second reassembled truck was now ready for replacement.

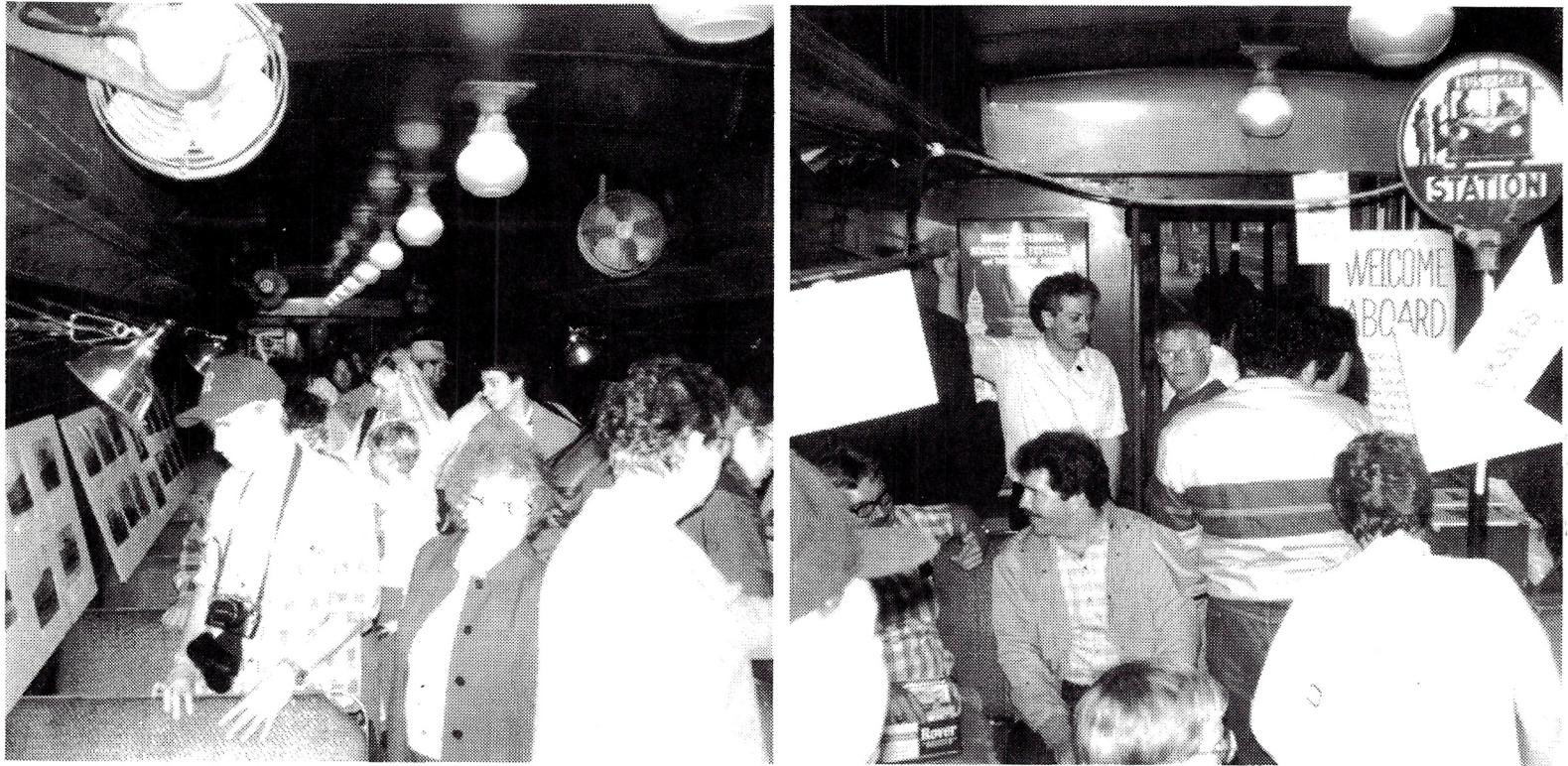
Once again the faithful crane cables were released from the replacement truck frame and reattached to the coupler. With a tug and a heave and a creak and a squeak, the 3406 once again moved skyward. Gingerly we removed the cribbing, and now, savoring the moment of truth, shoved the truck, now even heavier with its leaf springs and new wheels in place, in under the car. Voila! Almost. Unfortunately the car and/or the crane had shifted and the truck would not line up. Pushing a forty-ton car, which is suspended from a dangling cable, "slightly to the left, no, slightly to the right, now down, no, now up..." etc., was just one of the little aggravations of the day. Ultimately, proper positioning was achieved and Car 3406 was settled down onto the second of its "new" trucks. Victory was at hand. The sun was setting and we had finished just in time since there were of course neither lights nor electricity out there. The crane crew was paid and they trundled off into the sunset, through the hole in Sharp's new fence and across the ruins of the Ford plant toward Route 17 and freedom in the form of pavement for its foot-sore Firestones. Elation followed exhaustion for the job was done! THEY said it couldn't be done, but THEY were wrong as they always are. Broken and exhausted we picked up our few paltry tools and prepared to beat a hasty and well deserved retreat.

But Nooooo...! Out of the gathering gloom gleamed a pair of headlights from beyond the breached cyclone of the Sharp Company and the realization that we had yet ANOTHER task before us became apparent. Dazed, exhausted and hurting, we dragged the loose ends of the fence together under the gaze of the only light now available, these headlights, which turned out to be mounted on the pickup truck of the Sharp security patrol. In helping us they also made sure we fulfilled our bargain with them by repairing their stubborn fence.

After returning borrowed tools to the Morristown and Erie Railroad shop in Morristown we stopped for a post-midnight dinner at an all night diner on Route 10. Bob Sherwood, Lou Wasserman, Jack Keeler and I indulged in a little bit of well-earned mutual admiration over a little hot food. It was nearly daylight by the time we got to our various homes. We had put in a twenty-two hour day, more than we thought we would have to, MUCH more than we thought ourselves capable of. But the knowledge that we now would have a roadworthy car, one of the last low-profile D.L.&W. trailer combines in existence, truly made it all worthwhile. A few afternoons of tinkering with the brake linkages and we would be ready to roll.

Those who missed out on this day have missed, in addition to a possible hernia, one of the greatest satisfactions I could imagine in my life as a railfan. Of course the project is on-going and we welcome all who would help in the future in whatever capacity they may wish to serve in. Most of the remaining work is a bit lighter than changing wheels and trucks and we will need help in everything from welding to window cleaning. So come on out. Join up. Help out. What greater thrill can there be for the heart of a rail fan than the joy of participating in the salvation and restoration of the very trains we love?

## Hoboken Festival



Two views of the crowds visiting our exhibits in Car 3541.

The North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society participated in this year's Hoboken Festival which took place on September 27. Originally held to commemorate the completion of the Hoboken Terminal rehabilitation project in 1981, the celebration proved so popular that it has become an annual event attracting as many as 50,000 persons. The attendance at this year's festival was held down by gray skies and intermittent showers, but nearly 30,000 people showed up despite the inclement weather.

The Morristown and Erie management cooperated by moving our MU motor car (No. 3541) from its siding in Whippany to the Hoboken Terminal.

Our participation in the festival actually involved several months of advance planning. We originally hoped to have both the motor car and the combine trailer (No. 3406) coupled together as a train, and we worked throughout the summer to prepare the combine for the move to Whippany from Mahwah. On at least three or four occasions we were given a definite date for the move and each time, the car remained at Mahwah. When it finally became obvious that the car would not arrive in time for the festival, we decided to make do with the motor car.

At the outset of planning for the Hoboken Festival, we intended to use the baggage section of the combine for historical exhibits and displays.



We also wanted to set up a sales table and a farebox for contributions inside this area. Without the combine we had no choice but to try to accommodate these things inside the motor car.

Tony Hall had arranged to borrow a small glass display case from the Black River and Western Railroad. He also purchased two 4 feet by 8 feet Homeosote wall panels and cut them lengthwise to provide a backdrop for picture displays. Frank Miklos set up the pictures for the four panels, each of which had a different theme. Panel One depicted views of Hudson County trolleys. Panel Two saluted the Newark City Subway--New Jersey's last remaining trolley line. Panel Three showed commuter rail operations including several views of the old Lackawanna MU cars. The fourth panel was a historical review of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society and depicted much of our restoration work. Frank spent the entire Sunday prior to the festival typing up the captions that were used under each panel.

On that same Sunday, Tony Hall and Bob Sherwood were at Whippany painting part of the motor car's roof and tending to last-minute preparations for the move to Hoboken. The pantographs had been chained down the previous week to prevent accidental contact with the Morristown line's 25,000-volt AC catenary. Bob attached a lead to the car's lighting circuits to permit a connection to house current.

Car 3541 was moved to Hoboken by the Morristown and Erie Railroad on the evening before the Festival. When Tony Hall arrived at Hoboken during the wee small hours of the next morning he found the car near the end of a platform looking somewhat forlorn in the pre-dawn mist. Workmen were arriving to assist in setting up the tables and displays for the festival. Our heavy-duty extension cord was plugged into an outlet over the platform next to our car. Within minutes, this was connected to the leads that Bob Sherwood had installed and the lights in the car glowed for the first time since it left Hoboken for the final time in August of 1984.

The picture display boards were set on top of the seat backs resting against the windows. Photography lamps were clamped to the overhead baggage racks to provide extra illumination for the displays. Several pieces of trolley hardware were put on the shelves inside the illuminated glass display case which was set directly in front of the longitudinal seat at the end of the car. An old "Bus or Car Stop" sign was installed on the top of a metal stanchion onto which the farebox was also attached. Since we did not have a table, we removed the back from one of the walkover seats and used the cushion as a makeshift counter for the sale of pictures and postcards.

Once the festival got underway there was a heavy parade of passengers through the car that continued without interruption until late in the afternoon.

In the course of the day the N.J.E.R.H.S. sold nearly \$150 worth of pictures and took in over \$270 in contributions through the farebox, making our debut at the Hoboken Festival a very successful one indeed.

Frank Miklos,

Editor.

## Photo Collection Acquired

Last Spring, Frank Miklos received a flyer in the mail announcing an auction of the remaining unsold negatives from the collection of the late Steve Maguire. The proceeds from the sale were earmarked for the Railways to Yesterday operation at East Broad Top.

Mr. Maguire was a famous photographer and writer from New Jersey who had a monthly column about transit in *Railroad Magazine* for more than three decades.

The negatives were offered in lots of between 75 and 100 each. Unfortunately, all of the New Jersey trolley negatives were sold off long ago. However, there were several lots of trolley views from other areas of the country. There was also a considerable number of mainline railroad lots from around the country including several lots from New Jersey.

Frank talked to other Board members about the possibility of bidding on some of these lots to build up a photo collection for the N.J.E.R.H.S. Since our funds were committed to other projects, Frank submitted his own bids on several lots with the understanding that the Association will eventually reimburse him when the funds are available. Because of financial constraints the bids amounted to just over 50 cents a negative. Since similar negatives can command as much as several dollars on the railfan market, the bids were submitted with the thought that there was virtually no chance of coming out on top.

However, a few weeks after the closing date for bids Frank was informed that he was the successful bidder on all but one of the lots involved. The bill amounted to \$500 and resulted in the acquisition of nearly 1,000 negatives including more than 300 views of New Jersey railroad scenes, and traction views from various parts of the United States.

The acquisition of these negatives gives the N.J.E.R.H.S. a potential steady source of revenue. George Kallimanis, a longtime railfan, offered the N.J.E.R.H.S. his basement darkroom facilities to make prints from these negatives. He has already made a number of 8" X 10" prints for us at a price equal to his costs. We have already realized several hundred dollars worth of sales for these prints.

We are planning to publish a list of these 8" X 10" pictures which are being sold for \$1.75 each or three for \$5 plus \$1 for postage and handling.

## Parting Comments

We hope you enjoyed this premier issue of *DESTINATIONS*. Although this one was entirely devoted to reporting on our activities, future issues will include other topics as well. As you can see, we have accomplished a lot in a short period of time. We appreciate the confidence you have shown by joining our organization. During the next year we plan to hold membership meetings and other activities. We will keep you informed of these in upcoming issues. Thanks again for your support.