



MOTOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM NEWS

Volume XI No. 2 31949 Highway 94, Campo, CA, 91906 - Ph. (619) 478-2492 Summer 2009

Web Site: www.motortransportmuseum.org - E-mail: motortransport@att.net

The Motor Transport Museum held its annual open house on Saturday April 25th. Pictures are included later in this newsletter.

The annual election of the president and directors of the MTM was completed by mail-in ballot on April 25th. The results of the election are reported later in this newsletter. Our feature article this quarter is an account of the rise and demise of the Coleman four-wheel drive truck company. This article is reprinted from the January 2009 issue of *Off Road Adventures* magazine. We would like to thank the publishers of the magazine for their permission to reprint the article.

Coleman: The Mile-Hi Four-By *by Jim Allen*

In the early part of the twentieth century, Harleigh Holmes knew what sort of truck was needed in the sparsely settled, largely roadless Colorado high country. Four-wheel drive trucks existed but were not common. Many of those early 4-bys were ill equipped for the grades and the altitude. Holmes got a new idea for front axle and applied for the patent in 1919. By the time the patent was granted in 1921, Holmes had a working prototype that had acquired quite a stalwart reputation around his home in Littleton, Colorado. Harleigh was encouraged enough by its performance to form the Holmes Motor Company.

Short of cash for growth and development, Holmes went into business with the Plains Iron Works in Denver and built his trucks there for a time. Part of his work included the development of a four-wheel drive conversion kit for Ford trucks and resulted in a 500-unit order from a Canadian distributor.

In 1922, brothers Alfred and George Coleman bought 51 percent of Plains, moved truck production back to Littleton and renamed the company Coleman Motors.

Things really began to roll regionally when it became apparent that Coleman made excellent snowplow trucks. Holmes had discovered the best form of advertising was to have the trucks constantly performing feats of daring-do. The Coleman's continued this practice but added national advertising and a larger sales department. The feats included rescuing stranded miners in blizzards, towing stuck trucks, winning a public tug-o-war with a Caterpillar tractor and a never-collected \$5000 reward for any truck, four or two-wheel drive, that could exceed a Coleman's off-road performance.



A particular 1924 feat attracted the attention of the Artillery Branch of the Army. A mining company had heavy equipment that was needed at a remote mine. A 22-horse team had tried and failed to deliver it. Four-bys of other makes had trouble on the route with ordinary loads and clearly weren't up to the task.

A Coleman truck was pressed into service, carrying 5.5 tons on its back and towing a further 8.5 tons on a sled built from logs. It hauled the 14 tons from 7,450 feet near Idaho Springs, to the mine at 10,840 feet. There were sections of the road that no motor vehicle had been able to drive under any circumstance and the Coleman did it with a 14-ton load.



A 1929 Coleman Model DD-40 2 1/2 ton 4 x 4 named "Charlie." Ken Kafka of Pierce Colorado restored it. Charlie is powered by a 400ci Buda BUS engine that puts out 104 hp.

By 1925, the Army Field Artillery was testing a 5-ton Coleman against their standard 4x4 truck, the Militor M1918 TTL. The Militor was designed as a standardized military 3-ton 4x4. It came on just as WWI ended and production was stopped in 1919 after only about 150 were built. They were constructed of standardized components but used lower gearing than the available commercial 4x4 trucks. What put the Coleman ahead was its two-speed transfer case, a fairly new feature for the day, which gave it a 140:1 crawl ratio, versus 74:1 for the Militor, 35:1 for the still common FWD Model B military and 40:1 for the few military Nash Quads still in service. The Artillery Branch was particularly interested in the Coleman as a medium prime mover to replace the abysmally slow tracked units. The Coleman combined pulling power with a top speed of 22 mph, fast for a heavy truck of that era.

Coleman competed against the better-known FWD brand, and others, for contracts in the '20s and '30s and even against the Army's own short-lived truck factory at Camp Holabird. Small numbers were purchased by all branches of government in that time period but despite its performance, Coleman was never able to make sales headway against the bigger companies, up to and especially after WWII.

Still, Coleman had a long history of building big four-wheel drive trucks for military and commercial agencies, even offering 4x4 conversion kits for light duty trucks in the '40s and '50s. They finally ceased operations in 1986, having been located on South Nevada Street all that time. Harleigh Holmes, always a major shareholder in the company, stayed on for all his working life in a senior position, finally passing on in 1963 at age 84. His many inventions live on in many forms.



New Members

Arv Larson of San Diego has enrolled as a new life member of the Museum since publication of the spring newsletter. **Alan Brill** of San Diego, **Robert Mathews** of San Bernardino, CA **Mike Georgelis** of Poway, CA and **Mark Scudder** of El Cajon, CA have enrolled as new general members of the museum. We welcome these new members to our museum.

Attention All Members

You can donate money towards MTM's cause without spending a dime by simply receiving these quarterly issues of the Motor Transport Museum News by e-mail. This way MTM can save mailing costs and use the savings towards operating expenses. Not only will you get instantaneous delivery of your copy, you will get the photographs in glorious living color, a feat that we have not yet accomplished with the printed copy. Please Email us at motortransport@att.net and subscribe.

Also – MTM needs people like you to greet and educate our visitors. Being a docent is fun and rewarding. Anyone interested in helping on any of the Saturdays during 2009 please call John Thomas at (619) 479-4318 or MTM at (619) 478-2492 to volunteer.

Weekend Work Party

MTM would like to thank all those who attended our “*Weekend Work Party*” at the beginning of June. Thanks to Don Driggs, Glen Collins, Jim Jenson, Ed Dilginis, Bryan Butler and Carl Calvert. With everyone's help, we were able to make a dent in the much-needed maintenance of the grounds. We created three more parking spaces, removed some weeds and removed unwanted tires and trash. Carl Calvert put together a tasty barbeque for all those who attended.

MTM plans to have a “*Weekend Work Party*” once every month as there are many projects still needed to be accomplished. Join us if you are physically able, for an enjoyable and rewarding day of work and play. For more information, contact us at (619) 478-2492 or inquire by email.

Newsletter Articles

Each quarter our newsletter features interesting articles themed mainly about the motor and transport industries unique historical past and about many of the artifacts we have on show here at the museum.

Perhaps some of you have a story to tell! If you would like to share your informative historical story in our newsletter, please submit it in care of **John Thomas** by mail or email.

For Sale

The MTM has numerous items for sale at its main facility at the Mill in Campo, CA. Visit our web site at <http://www.motortransportmuseum.org> to view many of the items that MTM is currently selling.

The MTM Web Site

We now have movies to watch on the web site as well as an updated calendar of events. If you have photos of the museum you would like to share on our site, please submit them to motortransport@att.net. We'll post them accredited to your name!

Election of Officers & Directors

Election Results`

The MTM conducted its annual election of officers' and directors this spring by mail-in ballot. Ballots were sent to all qualified members either by mail or in their copy of the spring newsletter. **Greg Long** was re-elected president of the MTM and **Carl Calvert** and **John Thomas** were each elected to serve a three-year term as director. **Bill Jellyman** and **Don Driggs** were elected to two year terms as director and **Jim Jensen** and **Jim Hamilton** were elected to one-year terms. We would like to thank the MTM members for participating in the election and wish the president and directors the best of luck in guiding the MTM during the next year.

Upcoming Events

The **Antique Gas Engine and Tractor Museum** of Vista, CA will be hosting its spring show on the weekends of June 21-22 and June 27-28. Visit www.agsem.com for further details.

The city of National City Chamber of Commerce will hold its Automobile **Heritage Day** on August 2 in National City, CA. The Classic Car Parade on the Mile of Cars will start at 8:45 am and the Classic Car Show will be held at Kimball Park from 10am to 4pm. For further information and driving instructions visit their web site at www.nationalcitychamber.org

The **MTM Board of Directors'** meetings for the summer quarter of 2008 will be held at the Horseless Carriage Foundation library at 8186 Center St. La Mesa, CA at 6:30 PM on the following Thursdays: **July 16th**, **Aug 20th**, and **Sept 17th** All members are invited to attend

MTM Officers and Directors

The officers and directors of the Motor Transport Museum are as follows:

Officers: Greg Long, President

John W. Thomas, Secretary

Carl E. Calvert, Chief Financial Officer

Directors: Ed Dilginis Jim Jensen Bill Jellyman, Carl Calvert, Don Driggs, Jim Hamilton and John Thomas

Recent Donations

During the last three months **Jeff Schenemann** of Lemon Grove, CA donated three tow trucks to the Museum. They are: a 1959 Dodge, a 1960 Kenworth and a 1960 White. We would like to thank Jeff for making these donations

Other donations during the months were: a 1963 Chevy Truck by Dave Stall, a 1971 MG by Oren Jewett, 1970 Ford Truck Parts by Alan Gobal, A Sheet Metal Sheer, Brake, and Roll by Joe Trily, and six old books by Dave Lewis.

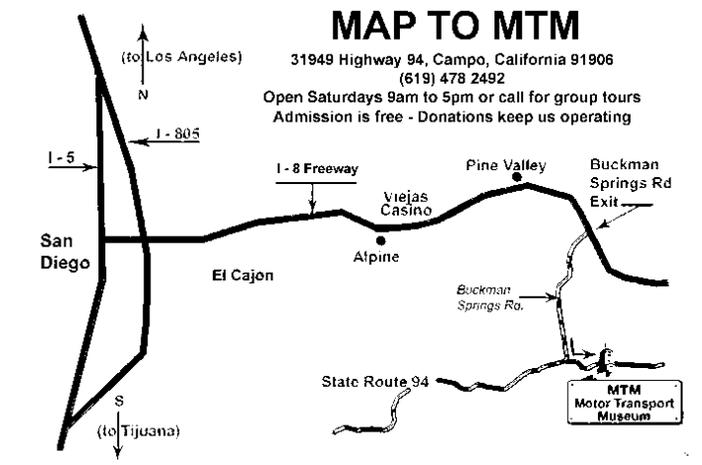


1960 Kenworth tow truck donated by Jeff Schenemann of Lemon Grove

Hours of Operation

The Museum facility at 31949 Highway 94 in Campo, CA is open to the public every Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM. Admission is free, donations are accepted.

Location





Motor Transport Museum

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Renewal

Name _____ Spouse _____
Street Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ E-Mail _____

| | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| General Membership | 1Yr \$20 _____ | 2Yr \$40 _____ | 3Yr \$60 _____ |
| General - International Membership (Non USA Mailing Address) | | | 1Yr \$25 _____ |
| Corporate Membership | | | 1Yr \$75 _____ |
| Life Membership | | | \$250 _____ |
| Endowing Life Membership | | | \$1000 _____ |
| Associate Membership - Non Profit organization | | | 1Yr \$35 _____ |
| Jounior Membership - Children under 18 (non-voting) | | | 1Yr \$1 _____ |
| Student Membership - Full time students, 18 - 25 | | | 1Yr \$6 _____ |

I agree to comply strictly with the By Laws of the Motor Transport Museum; to conduct myself at all times in a manner which will support and promote the best interest of the Motor Transport Museum

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

MOTOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM
31949 HIGHWAY 94
CAMPO, CA 91906