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This continues the Peter Pan story from the earlier Part 1 and includes events and activities through to 2023.

The Peter Pan Fleet

Peter Pan Bus Lines has operated a wide range of equipment over its 90-year history. The original fleet of 1933 consisted of two 1930 Buicks, one 1929 Packard and one 1929 Pierce Arrow, all seven-passenger limousines. Chevrolets that were stretched by Fitzjohn to seat 11 passengers were soon added to expand the fleet. They operated more economically than the original fleet. As the number of passengers increased, the company switched to buying smaller Beck buses until about 1940.

While the War years brought an increasing number of passengers, the number of new buses available was reduced because of War limitations. As a result, Peter Pan Bus Lines expanded their fleet wherever they could find buses. Buses added to the fleet at this time included three gas-powered Yellow Coaches, a pair of Fitzjohns, three Becks, two Aeroaches and a ubiquitous Ford Transit that presumably only saw local service.

The company's first diesel-powered bus was a GM PDA3702 acquired in 1944. Records indicated that the company had grown to operate approximately 13 vehicles at this time.

This resulted in a rather diverse fleet in the mid-1940s and earned Peter Pan Bus Lines the sobriquet "Pots and Pans" from detractors, particularly Trailways and Greyhound drivers. When normalcy returned in the post-war years and buses became available again, Peter Pan began moving to a more standardized fleet. With very few exceptions, the company purchased GM coaches almost exclusively for the next 25 years. In common with most major bus operators, the Peter Pan fleet included the PD4103, PD4104 and PD4106 models.

At about the mid-century mark in 1950, Peter Pan Bus Lines began outfitting its buses with whitewall tires, a rather unusual procedure for bus operators. As a result, Peter Pan became known as the company "with the whitewall tire fleet." In 1958, the company celebrated its 25th anniversary. Two Flxible Starliners were purchased in 1958 and became the only Flxibles purchased new by the company. By that time the fleet had grown to 27 coaches.

Peter Pan continued to rely on GM coaches for several more years. Typically, the company placed orders once each year for at least three to five coaches. The first of the PD4107 coaches arrived in 1966. Peter Pan moved up to 40-foot coaches when the PD4903 became available in 1968. From there, the company embraced the PD4905 and P8M4905A models until 1973.



In looking for an introductory photo for today's Peter Pan Bus Lines, we felt that this MCI J450 in front of Springfield's Union Station was appropriate. Although the company has expanded and diversified in many areas, it is still best known as a scheduled route operator. It also remains a family enterprise with a fourth generation now moving into management.

Peter Pan Bus Lines Celebrates 90 Years – Part II

by Larry Plachno

Photos from Peter Pan or National Bus Trader unless otherwise noted

MCI coaches began showing up in the United States in serious numbers in the mid-1960s. They first appeared in Greyhound's fleet but soon were seen in the fleets of other operators. MCI introduced their MC-7 model in 1968 and numerous operators purchased the MC-7 to move up to the 40-foot length. Watching these developments, Peter Pan made a similar decision as many other bus operators and began to look at switching from GM to MCI coaches.

In 1974, Peter Pan purchased its first MCI coaches, a pair of the new MC-8 model coaches. The staff at Peter Pan was pleased with them and additional MCIs were soon added to the fleet. Today Peter Pan continues to be an MCI customer and they dominate the Peter Pan fleet. Peter Pan has also been the first customer for new MCI models on occasion.

In 1977, Peter Pan introduced its first billboard bus, which had some of its exterior covered with special lettering and graphics. This first billboard bus was a 1975 MC-8 that advertised Canadian tourism destinations. Subsequent billboard buses took advantage of improved graphics and promoted various areas, celebrated a company anniversary or highlighted the Peter Pan storybook characters. Many were both colorful and eye-catching.

In 1978, Peter Pan put the first wheelchair-assisted coach in service. This was a 1975 MC-8 that was equipped with a wheelchair lift by the Peter Pan staff. The company celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1983. By that time the fleet had grown to 65 coaches.

In recent years, Peter Pan has continued to buy regular orders of MCI coaches. In



In 1974, Peter Pan Bus Lines switched to MCI coaches. Their first purchased was a pair of MCI MC-8 coaches. The company has remained a loyal MCI customer ever since.

some cases, Peter Pan was the first company to order a new model. After the MC-8 model, Peter Pan purchased the MC-9, 96A3, 102A3 and 102B3 models. In 1993, Peter Pan became one of the first operators to purchase the new 45-foot 102DL3 model. Purchases of the 102DL3 model continued for the next eight years when it made up the majority of the Peter Pan fleet.

The Peter Pan fleet sometimes included more than buses. A 49-seat sightseeing riverboat appropriately named *Tinker Belle* was launched in 1997. It offered cruises on the Connecticut River from Springfield's Riverfront Park. What may have been the most unusual vehicles in the fleet came in 1998

when Peter Pan introduced its Pirate Ship land and water tours. Passengers rode in British Stalwart amphibious vehicles.

Looking for a combination of MCI reliability and modern design, Peter Pan was very interested in the new J4500 model. In 2001, Peter Pan Bus Lines took delivery of the first new MCI J4500 models off the assembly line and then continued to purchase more of this same model on a regular basis. When MCI introduced the newly improved J4500 for 2013, Peter Pan Bus Lines again was the first company in line to take delivery of these coaches. 2013 marked a new milestone for Peter Pan with the purchase of 42 new buses in one year. The company continued to favor the MCI J4500 model that represents the bulk of its fleet. The company purchased 25 new buses last year.

Recent Developments

Recent years have seen Peter Pan expanding service on Cape Cod and the South Shore area west of Cape Cod in response to a need for service in the area and reduced operations by other carriers. In 2015, Peter Pan expanded its presence on Cape Cod by instituting service between Boston, Logan Airport and Hyannis, Massachusetts. In 2019, Peter Pan further expanded its Cape Cod service to include Provincetown, at the tip of Cape Cod, and now serves all major towns on Cape Cod.

In September of 2017 Peter Pan announced that it was ending its partnership with Greyhound. "What people want in a bus company is really very simple," suggested Peter Picknelly, chairman of Peter Pan Bus Lines and third generation leader of the company. "They want a clean bus, a professional driver and on-time

Peter Pan Bus Lines remained a loyal customer of General Motors buses for decades until 1973. The "deck" or "Buffalo" model was the last of the GM coaches to enter the Peter Pan fleet. Here, in a posed publicity photo, the late Peter L. Picknelly gets a new GM coach from Santa Claus.



friendly service. Seems easy but it's really difficult to execute all the time. I happen to think that Peter Pan executes it better than most."

According to Picknelly, one of the reasons that Peter Pan Bus Lines wanted to separate from Greyhound was that it was getting harder to execute on those consumer needs. "Greyhound is a big, foreign-owned company with a very large service footprint," explained Picknelly. "We are committed to the Northeast corridor – those are the routes and customers we know well. It got to a point where our values and business approach no longer matched."

Other improvements at this same time included an investment of \$13 million in new buses and a move to paperless tickets. "We're going to have paperless tickets on all of our routes," explains Picknelly. "Buy your ticket on your mobile device a couple minutes before-hand, go right up to the bus, show the driver and you're on your way. People want value for their money."

In 2017, Peter Pan began a move from the former Springfield Bus Terminal at 1776 Main Street, which opened in April of 1969, to the nearby recently renovated historic Springfield Union Station. The station had been unused for many years since Amtrak had moved to a nearby smaller station. In addition to Peter Pan and Greyhound buses, Union Station serves the local PVRTA transit buses, the Loop Downtown bus, Amtrak and the CT Rail Hartford line.

Peter Pan's offices followed the buses and took one floor at Union Station. Included are executive offices, marketing, legal, training, payroll and the information center. There are 70 Peter Pan employees at the new headquarters, but total Peter Pan staff at all locations amounts to about 1,000. To celebrate this move as well as Peter Pan's 85th anniversary, the City of Springfield has named the entrance to Union Station Peter Pan Way. The company was operating more than 1,000 daily departures to more than 100 destinations in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

The last scheduled buses left the old terminal in September of 2017. In December, Peter Pan sold the old terminal to Way Finders, a local housing agency, which had recently sold their office building down the street. Way Finders planned to construct a new building on the site for its new offices.

Peter Pan expanded their presence in New York City in 2018 by opening its first ticket counter at the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Included in the expansion was office space and additional bus gates. The Port Authority Bus Terminal on an average week-day serves more than 8,000 buses and 225,000 people and about 65 million people annually.



In 2017, Peter Pan Bus Lines began a move to a different bus terminal in Springfield. Since April of 1969 the company had operated from its own terminal at 1776 Main Street that also included offices and maintenance facilities. Now, the company would join a multi-modal facility at the Springfield Union Station that was shared with trains and other buses.

Five new J4500 MCI coaches were delivered to Peter Pan during the 2018 Thanksgiving Holiday. Over the years, Peter Pan has depended on MCI and the J4500 model for much of its fleet needs. When the J4500 was first introduced in 2001, Peter Pan was the initial buyer and placed an order for the first 12 coaches off the assembly line. Additional orders for the J4500 have followed annually except during the pandemic. At this time Peter Pan had 250 MCI coaches in its fleet with 78 being the J4500 model.

Special features on these new coaches include wheelchair lifts, Peter Pan seating by Kiel with made-to-order fabric by Lantel. Each of the 56 seats has 110-volt outlets. Peter Pan added MCI's optional Bendix Fusion, the next generation Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) featuring a collision mitigation camera radar system with stationary vehicle braking, lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition. In addition, Peter Pan opted to install a six-camera security system on these coaches.

Peter Pan Bus Lines was MCI's first customer for its new J4500 in 2001. In following years, Peter Pan was first in line placing an order when the J4500 was updated and improved. Today, the MCI J4500 model represents a major part of the Peter Pan fleet.



In 2019, Peter Pan celebrated an 80-year partnership with the Firestone Tire Company. It was in 1939 that Peter Pan Bus Lines reached an agreement with the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company to try using their tires for one year. That began an 80-year partnership with Firestone and its parent company, Bridgestone America's, Inc.

"When my grandfather Peter C. Picknelly sealed this important partnership with Harvey Firestone in 1939, they could only imagine how many miles these two companies would travel together," said Peter A. Picknelly, chairman and CEO of Peter Pan. "We were the first bus company in the United States to enter into a lease agreement with Firestone and we're the longest bus company partnership Firestone has ever had. Now 80 years later, we are still proud to share the road with a longtime leader in the tire industry. Together over the 80 years, Peter Pan and Firestone have carried passengers over 600 million miles on Firestone tires. That's 2,514 trips to the Moon and 24,094 times around the Earth. Safety is Peter Pan's number one priority and Firestone Tires have delivered that promise with precision and consistency."

Surviving the Pandemic

Like other transportation companies, Peter Pan was faced with the COVID pandemic. Unlike some other companies, Peter Pan received praise from several sources for keeping routes going and safe. In addition to investing extra effort and expense to keep buses clean for passengers and drivers, Peter Pan also established new procedures to improve the welfare of those on board. Service resumed on June 5, 2020. The company implemented contact-free boarding by being



This photo shows the transition in Peter Pan vehicles over the years. Included is the Buick sedan, the GM PD2903, a PD4103 and two newer MCI coaches. Downtown Springfield is in the background.

able to check boarding passes from a passenger providing their name. Peter Pan buses have fresh air continually circulating. Bus cleaning and disinfecting was updated to use CDC/EPA-approved chemicals. In addition, Peter Pan buses were sealed with a state-of-the-art product that kills all germs, bacteria and viruses on contact.

A special program at Peter Pan during the pandemic was Stuff the Bus to "Feed the Fight." Peter Pan Bus Lines partnered with the Bean Restaurant Group to show support for Springfield area responders and front line health care heroes. Each day, the company delivered lunch in western Massachusetts for first responders and front line workers while supporting the local western Massachusetts restaurants.

June 25, 2020 saw Peter Pan once again expanding service into areas that were underserved. This time new stops were added at the Plymouth, Massachusetts;

Rockland, Massachusetts as well as 13 new towns in Cape Cod. Passengers were able to connect to any Peter Pan destination including Boston; South Station; Logan Airport; Cape Cod; Hartford, Connecticut; New York City; Baltimore, Maryland; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; Washington, D.C. as well as 100 communities throughout the Northeast.

Mid-July found Peter Pan expanding Cape Cod service for the summer season. While other bus companies stopped all Cape Cod service for more than a year during the pandemic, Peter Pan was the only bus company that kept on rolling. Peter Pan offered safe, sanitized transportation within CDC guidelines when other buses just stopped. Peter Pan has added 21 more schedules to service the entire Cape Cod region. Connections can be made in Hyannis, Provincetown, Woods Hole and Bourne. Travelers can connect in Hyannis to go to Boston's South Station and Logan Airport.



This 2017 map shows Peter Pan routes as of that date. Starting with the Springfield-Boston route, Peter Pan subsequently added more routes through purchase and expansion. More routes were added during the pandemic era.

The company pointed out many features riding Peter Pan buses. Peter Pan provided express service for less throughout the Northeast. Contact-free boarding was offered with online and mobile APP ticket purchases. Buses offered convenient free Wi-Fi, charging stations onboard as well as guaranteed seating. The Peter Pan bus fleet has GPS systems and is equipped with advanced engines and are the most fuel-efficient large vehicles on the road. Peter Pan was the first bus company to install safety belts and introduce a fire suppression system in its fleet. All Peter Pan buses feature a state-of-the-art onboard multi-camera security system and a unique Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) that features a collision mitigation camera radar system with stationary vehicle braking, lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition and more.

One of the more notable changes in recent years has been the introduction of the fourth generation of the Picknelly family at Peter Pan. Peter A. and Melissa Picknelly's children joined the company in 2020. Lauryn Picknelly-DuBois became the controller while Peter B. Picknelly IV served as the director of safety and security. More members of the fourth generation would join the company in the following years.

Safety Awards

Driver safety has become a major achievement at Peter Pan. Many Peter Pan drivers have achieved one-, two-, three- and four-million miles without an accident. The company is very proud to have



A Peter Pan coach poses at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. Over the years, Peter Pan has supported its hometown in many ways beyond bus operations. These have included the Monarch Place building, restaurants and several other enterprises.

the only drivers in the United States to have achieved 48 years/four million miles of accident-free driving. In round numbers, one million miles equals at least 12 years of accident free driving. Much of this was obvious at Peter Pan's Super Team Achievement & Recognition (STAR) Awards and Safety banquet held on February 28, 2023 in Worcester, Massachusetts. It marked the 90th anniversary of Peter Pan Bus Lines and honored company staff who have gone the extra miles.

Everette Anderson, who had driven for Peter Pan Bus Lines for 53 years since May of 1970, was the second motorcoach operator inducted into the National Safety Hall of Fame for driving four million miles without any accidents. The first inductee was Peter Pan motorcoach operator Ed Hope who reached four million accident-free miles in 2017. "It's an amazing accomplishment, and I cannot say enough about the dedication and professionalism that Everette Anderson has had behind the wheel," said Picknelly. "There have only been two drivers in history to achieve four million miles without an accident and both have worked for Peter Pan. This really demonstrates our commitment to safety, and we are very pleased to honor these distinguished drivers."

Motorcoach operators honored at the S.T.A.R. awards on February 28, 2023 in Worcester, Massachusetts included Thomas Reckner for three million miles; Phillandor Knight, Dave Kollisch, Wayne Soloman and Anthony Wilson for two million miles; plus Paul Boie, Syed Bukhari, Edward Caouette, Frederick Perry and Horace Wright for one million miles.

Early 2023 saw Peter Pan again expanding service into areas that needed transportation. Beginning April 18, 2023 Peter Pan Bus Lines rolled into Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton, bringing commuters to Boston South Station and Logan Airport.

This new service gave travelers a sigh of relief because these routes were no longer operated by Anetile Connie. Peter Pan Bus Lines further expanded service to passengers and commuters by offering Logan Airport as a new destination. This new service

Peter Pan has won several safety awards over the years. In this 2018 photo, Driver Ricky Johnson poses after having reached a million accident-free miles. More recently, other Peter Pan drivers have received awards for as many as four million accident-free miles.



will require a Peter Pan Bus Lines ticket, which can be purchased at www.peterpan-bus.com, on the Peter Pan Bus mobile app or at the Peter Pan ticket counter at South Station in Boston.

"Thank you to Peter Pan Bus Lines for stepping up to provide bus service to Boston for the residents of New Bedford and the entire South Coast. From the moment we heard about the possibility of the end of service, the community mobilized, and we in the South Coast legislative delegation started a series of conversations on the local and state-level with MassDOT about a viable path forward. With the addition of an airport shuttle, Peter Pan is bringing added value to this new service," said State Representative Tony Cabral, D-New Bedford.

"Thank you to Peter Pan Bus Lines for stepping in and helping our community. We appreciate the expansion of service to the Greater Fall River area. This will be very helpful to the commuters who had to drive to a surrounding town for their transportation needs. It will also be a significant benefit to now have service to Logan Airport," said State Representative Patricia A. Haddad, D-5th Bristol.

Peter Pan purchased an additional 25 MCI J4500 coaches in 2023. The first 10 were delivered in January and prompted an order for 15 more. This year is significant for both companies since both date their history back to 1933 and have supported each other for a half a century. "We are true-blue MCI," said Peter A. Picknelly, CEO and third-generation owner of Peter Pan, one of the industry's most prominent family-owned motorcoach companies. "We started with the MC-8 in 1974, and since the 1980s, our fleet has been exclusively MCI." Peter Pan was among the first operators to buy the popular DL model (MCI D4505) when it was introduced in 1993. When MCI launched the all-new J4500 in 2001, Peter Pan was the first operator to place a 12-coach order. Peter Pan has counted on MCI's reliability since placing an annual order for new vehicles, with the exception of the COVID-19 pandemic period in 2020 and 2021.

Peter Pan's exquisitely decaled J4500 coaches help Peter Pan marketing efforts by serving as billboards rolling along the most non-stop express daily trips in the Northeast serving Boston, Cape Cod, Hartford, New York City, Washington, D.C., Hartford, Philadelphia, Providence and other locations.

Peter Pan Bus Lines was proud to win an award from the Better Business Bureau of Central New England. According to the Better Business Bureau, the awards celebrate businesses in western Massachusetts that embody corporate responsibility and always what is right for their customers. This June 21 event in Worcester was the first in-person



April of 2023 saw the fourth generation at Peter Pan Bus Lines make arrangements to acquire more clean diesel MCI J4500 coaches. From left: Allen Keith, Brent Maitland and Patricia Ziska from MCI join Peter A. Picknelly, Peter B. Picknelly IV and Melissa Picknelly of Peter Pan Bus Lines as they sign an order for more MCI coaches.

western Massachusetts awards presentation since 2019. Peter Pan Bus Lines was the winner of the 2023 Western Massachusetts Award for Marketplace Excellence.

The Fourth Generation

One of the more interesting developments at Peter Pan has been bringing in the fourth generation of the family. Peter A. Picknelly and his wife Melissa have three of their four children – the fourth genera-

tion – actively involved in operations. With Lauryn Picknelly Dubois as controller, son Peter B. Picknelly IV in safety and security, and Alyssa Picknelly in customer and employee relations have elected to join the company after working for the firm as young adults during the summer and while on college breaks. Joe Picknelly, a cousin and son of Tom Picknelly, who served as vice president of maintenance for decades until his passing in 2021, is senior director of maintenance. "We ele-

Over the years, Peter Pan Bus Lines has received numerous awards from local civic organizations. Here, Emily Potter (center) from Peter Pan Bus Lines accepts an award from the Better Business Bureau of Central New England. The awards celebrate businesses in western Massachusetts that embody corporate responsibility and always do what is right for their customers.



vated a talented group and now have the next generation in place steering the ship and ready to take on more responsibility with more tenure," Picknelly said.

Each generation has brought their own special talents to Peter Pan. Peter A. and his wife, Melissa, who served as executive director of Peter Pan Tours, were guided by the

late Peter L. Picknelly. They ushered in greater expansion. Embracing an era of digital technology, they have grown ridership by offering a high frequency of service and economical pricing policy, and using social media and a new app to attract a wider and younger audience. Nearly 85 percent of all ticketing and charters sales are now transacted online.

Like most bus companies, Peter Pan has been looking for good bus drivers. Peter Pan drivers have several benefits and incentives. This includes a guarantee of a 40-hour work week, paid training, paid time off and paid holidays, a uniform allowance, health and dental insurance, a 401K plan and life insurance. New applicants that already have a CDL license and passenger endorsement are offered a sign on bonus of as much as \$5,000. Applicants without a CDL can receive training at some of the Peter Pan terminal locations.

When asked about the future of Peter Pan Bus Lines, Peter A. Picknelly, the chairman and CEO of the company, had this to say, "We are very optimistic about our company's future . . . in order to be successful in this business you need to have passion – Melissa and I are thrilled our kids have the same passion for Peter Pan as we do and as my father and grandfather obviously had. With the next generation of leadership already in place, Peter Pan's future has never been more bright." □

One of the more noteworthy developments as Peter Pan Bus Lines celebrates 90 years is the introduction of the fourth family generation into the business. From left: Peter B. Picknelly, Peter's son and Peter Pan Bus Lines director of safety; Melissa Picknelly, Peter's wife and vice president; Peter A. Picknelly, chairman and CEO and Lauryn Picknelly Dubois, Peter's daughter and Peter Pan Bus Lines controller.



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