

# East Penn Traction Club

April 2021

## Next Meeting:

**Our tradition of meeting in member homes is not appropriate with the current Covid-19 Pandemic. The Board of Directors has decided for the foreseeable future to hold virtual meetings using Zoom.**

We are scheduling a Zoom meeting for our usual First Friday of the month on April 2, 2021. We will start at 7:30 PM Eastern Time for general discussion and introductions. The normal business meeting will start at 8:00 PM. This will be followed with a presentation by Adam Eyring on the Illinois Terminal System – past, present and modeling.

Information to join the Zoom meeting from either a computer, tablet, smart phone or voice dial-up is below. Contact Charles Long with questions.

Topic: April 2021 East Penn Traction Club Meeting  
Time: [Apr 2, 2021 07:30 PM Eastern Time](#) (US and Canada)

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99023058479?pwd=c0MvVnNubFp2ajUrMXUrRHrVaVIvUT09>

Meeting ID: 990 2305 8479

Passcode: 517446

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 990 2305 8479

Passcode: 517446

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abAIbF7dC>

## The 2021 EPTC Trolley Calendar is Almost Sold Out!

Please see previous issues of the Newsletter or the [www.eastpenn.org](http://www.eastpenn.org) web site for ordering information.

## EAST PENN TRACTION CLUB

### MAY 2021 PHOTO CONTEST PROCEDURES

# Newsletter

Edited by George LaRue

- The 2021 East Penn Traction Club Photo Contest will be held during the May 2021 Zoom General Meeting on Friday May 7<sup>th</sup>.

- **CATEGORIES**

The categories for the contest will be as follows:

- A: SEPTA
- B: Pre-SEPTA
- C: Other US/Canada Contemporary
- D: Other US/Canada Pre-1976
- E: Foreign
- F: Snow
- G: Night
- H: Heavy Rapid Transit
- I: Mainline Electric
- J: Museum Heritage
- K: Model

- **ENTRY SUBMISSION**

- Entries for the contest must be emailed to Michael Junod ([trolleyman@verizon.net](mailto:trolleyman@verizon.net)) no later than **11:00PM Monday 3 May 2021**.
- There is a maximum of 6 entries per category per member.
- Photos should have been taken by the submitter. Not photos downloaded from the web, inherited or bought at a show.
- Entries must be in a commonly used photo interchange format such as .jpg, .gif, .bmp.
- File size is not restricted. However, photos will be inserted into a PowerPoint presentation for use in the photo contest. So excess resolution may be compromised.
- Files can be submitted in .zip format or through multiple emails.
- Photos should be sent in as high a resolution as their email will support even if that means sending multiple emails with one or two photos each.
- File name must contain the category letter, submitter's name, and number (if multiple entries in a category) (i.e. my second entry in Pre-SEPTA would be "B\_Michael\_Junod\_2"). Please use underscores instead of spaces in file names.

- **CONTEST PROCESS**

- As in past years, we will go through the photos for each category and then vote on that category.
- Photos will be presented twice.
- The first time through the photos, each photo will be displayed for 10 seconds.
- The second time through the photos, each photo will be displayed for 5 seconds.
- The display time will be set in PowerPoint.
- After the second time through the photos you will vote for the best photo in that category.
- The photographer's name will be withheld until winners are announced.

- **Voting**

- Voting will be done through Zoom Polling.

Edited by George LaRue

- Following the second time through the slides, a slide saying “Time to Vote” will appear. A poll will pop up on your screen. Simply click on the number of the slide you thought was the best in that category.
- Photos should be judged on technical merit and not the popularity of the subject.
- **Winners**
  - After all the categories are displayed and voted upon, there will be a short break while I assemble the winning photos into a presentation.
  - The winners in each category will be announced and asked to briefly talk about their winning photo.
  - Winners and their photos will also appear in the June newsletter.

### NORTH OF THE BORDER By David Andrew



I am David Andrew, one of the “new guys on the block” at EPTC living in Canada in the town of Port Hope. Port Hope is about 35 miles east of Toronto right on Lake Ontario and almost opposite Rochester, New York. I am an O gauge trolley modeler with power from the overhead. My layout is based loosely on the N.S. & T., (Niagara, St. Catharines, & Toronto), and, given my proximity and working life in Toronto, the TTC.

The N.S. & T rails never got to Toronto, but their steam cruise ships did. The N.S. & T. had 3 divisions with lines to Pt. Dalhousie, Welland, Niagara Falls, and a large freight service. At one time N.S. & T operated local service in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls (Ont.). They also operated a service to Niagara Falls NY where it connected with the International Railway Co. which operated interurbans to Buffalo.

I was raised in a small suburb of the old City of Toronto in the town of Leaside during the latter part of World War 2. My parents did not have a car, so public transit was the only way of traveling. Leaside is adjacent to Toronto; TTC bus routes (Toronto Transportation Commission the moniker back then) in Leaside met the then extensive streetcar network. Since we lived a few miles from the nearest car line, we had to take a bus to the nearest line. Back then, the TTC had some 900 streetcars (Witts and PCC’s), approx. 90 Witt trailers, approx. 20 old wooden ones (TRs), and about 250 small buses like Macks, Twins, Fords, Brills, and a few GM (I know, horrors, a tram enthusiast who has a secondary interest in buses! The communities surrounding Toronto had their own bus operators who had an even wider variety of buses like Fitzjohns, Reo, Flxible, Aerocoach, but I digress).

My interest in railways was partly kindled by my father; he worked half days on Saturdays and often took me with him. We took the bus (usually a Mack or Twin) to Yonge St. The Yonge line was all large Witts pulling trailers. South on Yonge with a transfer to St. Clair Ave. where we boarded a St. Clair car (now 512) which was an air electric to Avenue Rd. Transfer again to a Bay car which was usually a large or small Witt to his office.

My grandfather on my mother’s side assisted in my ‘addiction’ to railways, and streetcars in particular. He was born in England near the border with Wales. First job was a trainee fireman on the Great Western Railway (GWR). He emigrated to Canada in the 1900’s and worked for the CPR in northern Manitoba as a track person. Moving ahead to the 1920’s, he worked as a motorman on the Toronto and York Rlwy. which was an electric line running from North Toronto to Sutton and Jacksons Pt. on Lake Simcoe, a distance of approx. 50 miles. Later the TTC took it over; he moved to Toronto and was a motorman on the Yonge line working out of Eglinton car-house. He was laid off during the 1930’s Depression. He enlightened me about the various Witts, the trailers, the PCC’s etc. and his days operating. Annually, he took me on a short train trip: travelled to Hamilton once, saw the green HSR cars, went to St. Catharines and saw the N.S.&T., and to Oshawa where CN had an electric freight operation.

My grandmother on my father’s side lived in an apartment over a store on Danforth Ave. close to the Danforth car barn. I spent many an hour sitting watching the streetcars, and standing out near the barn, watching the cars pour in from the AM rush and, watch the Bloor MU cars uncouple in a loop. After uncoupling, the front car would then head east on Danforth, and the second head around down the ladder track to the yard as well as the cars from the other 7 routes completing rush hour duty. Post the opening of the Yonge subway, the Bloor-Danforth car line was the busiest route in the city with some 70 MU PCC trains on the entire line and another 15 MU PCC trains (Danforth route) serving the east end from Bedford loop. Danforth was one of the 2 largest car houses with a capacity of 220 plus cars. In rush hours, the entire yard was empty, you might see 1 or 2 cars in the entire place.

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# Newsletter

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Fast forward, my parents moved a few times as my Dad was a banker. The moves to new communities afforded different railway locations and older small buses and bus companies. Moving on to high school and later university, other than 1 HO engine and a few switches and cars, time and money scarcity minimized my rail-fanning and hobbies. In Toronto, a large rail-fan group, the Upper Canada Railway Society (UCRS), operated a number of steam excursions post the end of mainline steam in Canada in the 1960's. On a weekend (usually Sundays) when there was a steam trip to somewhere in Ontario, there was a streetcar charter with small Witts (large ones were gone \*) on the day before. I could not afford the steam trip but did scrape up enough \$ for the tram trip. (\* the large Witts were surplus post purchase of used PCC's from the US, Cleveland, Louisville, Birmingham, Kansas City, Cincinnati).

About 1965 and still in university, I read a piece about a group in Toronto concerned about the fate of a large Witt streetcar. Years before (middle 1950's), the TTC rebuilt large Witt 2424 with the view of rebuilding a number of them as a pilot project. It was done, but along came the availability of used PCCs from the US, project halted, 2424 sat for a while, then sold to a scrap dealer for \$500.00. The scrap guy wanted \$1,000.00 from the group; that amount was prohibitive for them. As luck turned out, the car was still on the TTC property and the TTC allowed the car to be chartered on a night trip around the system. Two newspaper reporters were invited along, and the tale told to them. Story was published the next day along with the scrap dealer's name. The group got the car for \$500.00. That group was the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Assoc. (OERHA).

Post university in my working life and marriage, I worked for a pharmaceutical company, taught chemistry and mathematics at a community college, and joined the Toronto Police Dept. in 1973. Post 5 years in uniform, most of my time was spent in the investigative branch including holdup squad, auto theft and fraud. Acquisition of a house with a basement gave me an opportunity to start model railroading.

About 1970, I drove up to the aforementioned OERHA west of Toronto and later joined the group. There was 1 barn with 2 tracks, no ends on the barn, and a main line of about 300 yards off the barn switch. The above noted 2424 was there! The group were placing holes in the ground for the overhead poles. I joined, and this was the beginning of making many great friends. The museum grew with eventual electrification, track laying to a length of 1 1/4 miles, now 4 barns, and about 40 cars (now including a number of CLRVs & 1 ALRV).

My wife and I went to Rochester NY for a weekend, and I ended up at a hobby shop. For no particular reason, I settled on a Southern Pacific switcher. I puttered away at a layout, it was tough while raising a family, working, and helping at the museum. A larger house was purchased, and a room set aside in the lower level for model trains. A few years later, we went on a trip to California and just happened to



end up at a hobby store on Ocean Blvd. In a cabinet were 2 brass Pacific Electric models, one in the old paint scheme and the other in the new one. Being a traction fan, I had to buy one, but I couldn't decide which one. My wife made up my mind, buy both!

I retired from the Police Dept. on a Friday, and went back to work the following Monday for the governing body of real estate brokers and salespersons in Ontario. I worked out of the house, but had to travel around the province to investigate and attend court. I built a new, but unfinished HO layout, mostly SP and Cotton Belt. I had collected many more Suydam brass trolleys and they stayed in boxes. Retired a second time 7 years later, and we moved to our present home in Port Hope with a walkout basement. Between us and Lake Ontario are 4 fairways of a golf course, and the main lines of CN and CP from Toronto to Montreal (putting in time with Covid lockdown last year was easy!). Finished the basement and I made an area approx. 13 x 40 feet for a layout. I expanded the SP and even started the trolley section.

Five years ago, I reconnected with Glenn Whitehouse who is also a member of the OERHA and invited to see his layout. It is an operating O gauge trolley layout with about 30 plus cars and a 4 or 5 track car barn. Glenn is a Master Modeler and made his cars; his layout and cars are works of art, something for another article! He has won many awards for his models. I asked him if he ever considered downsizing, please let me know. About a month later he called and invited me to see some cars he had in his basement. I went, and there were about 10 N.S.&T. passenger cars and 2 freight motors along with a number of freight cars, all O gauge. Glenn had made the cars and motors years ago for the late Dr. Bill Salton who lived in St. Catharines. His widow wanted to move and needed to dispose of her husband's layout and cars; Glenn was assisting her. A couple of cars were spoken for, I immediately committed to purchase the remainder of the cars and 2 freight motors and some freight cars. Days later, Glenn and I visited Mrs. Salton; the layout had been taken down, poles removed, and the overhead cut down. Mrs. Salton offered me the layout, and I accepted. Mrs. Salton told me about her husband; he was a medical Doctor in St. Catharines. When Bill was 13, he worked on the Dalhousie, an N.S. &

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T. lake steamer. That initiated his interest in boats, canals and trolleys. He had an extensive picture collection of ships, canals, and the N.S. & T. With Glenn's assistance, he eventually had a collection of 30+ N.S. & T. cars and a layout. Bill and Glenn and their wives travelled to many trolley museums in the U.S. on vacation.

In short order, my HO layout at home was torn down, lumber hauled up and out to a dumpster, the cars, locos boxed, switches & some track removed and prepared for sale at an upcoming train show. A week later, I drove to St. Catharines with my son, met Glenn, and loaded up the truck and trailer. Dr. Salton's train room was more or less square, and mine rectangular. Fortunately, the sections were taken down in a modular fashion, assembly made easier, but I had to modify the tables, build new ones, discard 2 of his, and then add a long connecting one. On his layout, he had a 4 track terminal adjacent to a bus terminal and there was access at either end in a loop fashion in addition to a long line and 2 reversing loops. Being a 'partial' bus person, I bought an MTH bus terminal and I placed a few of my Corgi buses on it. The proceeds from Dr. Salton included several bundles of new overhead wire, plenty of poles both single and double. Over the next 4 months, I began setting the poles in the original holes in the units I used and started stringing and soldering the overhead. At the same time, Glenn installed Q Car. Co. trucks and poles and modified the 5 St. Petersburg Toronto PCC's I acquired years ago that gathered dust on a shelf. I started operation with a long around the table line in a L shape with 1 reversing loop. It took about a year to build a long connecting track from the original long loop to the bus terminal and a 3 track car-house, and string the overhead. Glenn later made another NS & T car for me. At a train show a year ago, I acquired a Glenn Whitehouse built TTC large Witt with trailer, and Brill Witt.



# Newsletter

Edited by George LaRue

I have been very fortunate in both the real trolleys and now the model hobbies. With friends from the OERHA, we annually went to the trolley museum conventions and made side trips to the US cities that had trolleys. We rode the Red Arrow, the air electrics in the Philly tunnels, the 3 car PCC trains in Boston and Shaker Hts., old CSS&SB cars and watched a Little Joe freight. I was never much interested in single truck cars until 4 of us went to Lisbon, Portugal in 1989. Watching and riding single truckers on narrow streets with hills steeper than Pittsburgh changed my outlook! Lisbon is narrow gauge, had trolley poles then, about 27 tram routes, and over half the cars were Brill. The seat frames had JG Brill, Philadelphia etched on them. It was a time warp.

My modelling skills are fair at best; I am grateful knowing Glenn and having his guidance. I am indebted to Joan Salton in keeping Dr. Bill's layout alive. I created a housing subdivision and roads. At the 2019 EPTC meet, I acquired more 1:50 scale autos and trolley overhead parts. I have scenery on 60% of the layout (helped by many structures from Joan), yet to hang wire in freight yard and 3 track car-house. I find it tricky attempting to have all cars navigate all the overhead frogs, a work in progress. The PE collection you ask; they sit on tracks on a glass shelf, at least they are out of the boxes.

## Part 1 SEPTA's "Norristown 6000's" [and the "Dark Days" of the (former) P & W, 1986-1994]

By George Chiasson, Jr.

Immediately following a catastrophic crash at 69th Street Terminal on August 23, 1986, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (i.e., SEPTA) set about the task of locating and procuring second-hand, replacement rolling stock for short-term use on its Norristown High-Speed Line (i.e., NHSL), "Route 100." Historically this was known as the "Philadelphia & Western," (i.e., P&W) a dedicated, third rail-powered, semi-rapid transit, semi-interurban route which at that time featured two elderly, incompatible types of multiple-unit equipment: Seven (7) of eleven surviving "Strafford" cars, dating from 1924-1929 and eight (8) of ten surviving "Bullet" cars, delivered in 1931 and 1933. Both categories were fabricated by former car builder J.G. Brill at their plant in West Philadelphia. The Straffords had been heavily upgraded by the P & W in the 1930's to bring them into a state of conformance with the more-technologically-advanced Bullets as they were being delivered, but then both groups were essentially unchanged from that time forward, but for light cosmetic modifications, well into the 1980's.

Stewardship of both the Philadelphia & Western and Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (i.e., PSTC), collectively known as "The Red Arrow Lines," was assumed by SEPTA in January 1970, including the unique rolling stock of both operations. For various

reasons SEPTA did not pursue the acquisition of replacement equipment for more than a decade, including an ongoing assessment of the entire Red Arrow system's modal future. After new Light Rail Vehicles (i.e., LRV's) had been procured for the former PSTC (i.e., "Media and Sharon Hill") lines, a preliminary design for new NHSL rolling stock was finally drafted in 1985. By that time use of the existing equipment was seen as an interim measure, though its longevity was contentious, and a rehabilitation effort initiated three years previous on all surviving vehicles. This work was still in progress when a failure in the main braking circuit of "Strafford" car 167 contributed to its collision with the bumping block at 69th Street Terminal as described above. Given the age and questionability of the equipment at that time, operation of the Norristown Line was suspended immediately for an undetermined interval. A thorough investigation was then conducted by SEPTA in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission (PUC), who revoked the annual inspection certificates of the line's entire fleet as a result of the August 23 collision.

There had been a prior history of second-hand equipment transfer in 1963 between the P & W and the Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee, a recently-discontinued, privately-owned interurban line which connected those two major metropolitan areas. At that time the latter company's only two "Electroliners," were sold to the P & W, heavily modified under the new moniker "Libertyliner" and placed in rush hour service, supporting express operations between Upper Darby and Norristown. The two distinctive cars had been produced as specialized, articulated vehicles by the St. Louis Car Co. in 1941 and were by design required to be operationally compatible with the "L" lines of the Chicago Rapid Transit Co. (as later assumed by the Chicago Transit Authority [i.e., CTA] in 1947). Their physical specifications then proved to be transferrable to the P & W with only slight alteration and both units were operated for most of the next 15 years, despite some otherwise persistent mechanical issues, until the middle of 1978.

As such, given the minimal quantities of time and budget available to SEPTA with which to administratively respond to the NHSL's emerging equipment crisis, focus was concentrated in short order on determining the availability and associated cost of acquiring a group of surplus "L" cars from the CTA. At that time the Chicago area transit agency was late in the process of receiving 600 new 2600-series cars from Transit America (formerly the Budd Company), which made scores of its newly-retired, 1950's-vintage 6000-series cars available for possible resale at below-salvage prices. Given direction upon inquiry, SEPTA inspectors visited the CTA's Kimball facility during September to peruse a small group of recently-retired 6000's which were pending disposition. Consensus was soon reached on the acquisition of twelve (12) such cars, as well as a preliminary inventory of necessary modifications to match them with present-day NHSL operations. Also required was the arrangement of logistics to ship the cars to Philadelphia, the allocation of floor space at SEPTA's

Woodland Shops to implement these changes and a means of instructing SEPTA personnel as to their operation and maintenance, in addition to sustaining an adequate spare parts stock to support several additional years of continued operation.

By default, all twelve cars that SEPTA was destined to purchase were from the two oldest groups of 6000's originally built by the St. Louis Car Company (numbered 6001-6130 and 6131-6200), as these were the types then most recently put in line for immediate disposal. Vehicles 6079, 6080, 6089, 6090, 6109 and 6110 had been delivered in 1950, while 6139, 6140, 6151, 6152, 6161 and 6162 had arrived on CTA property in 1951. At this stage it should be noted that these two series in particular had been built as completely new cars at the start of CTA's first "L" equipment replacement program. 570 newer rapid transit cars which were subsequently delivered from the same source between 1954 and 1960 (numbered 1-50 and 6201-6720) re-utilized certain components that were salvaged from retired "Green Hornet" PCC streetcars, as installed in newly-fabricated bodies that represented slightly modified versions of the first 200. A fortuitous result of this circumstance was SEPTA's ability to capture a wide range of surplus components that were specifically and exclusively used on those initial 200 cars. This compared favorably to the later PCC "L" car models, which utilized two different types of trucks, three variations of propulsion groups and two distinct models of traction motors (the latter from two suppliers), in addition to an assortment of other variable components that had been salvaged from CTA's mixed fleet of Pullman Standard- and St. Louis-built streetcars.

Per an approval by SEPTA's Board of Directors on October 7, 1986 the acquisition of the twelve retired PCC rapid transit cars was finalized at a cost of \$250 each, in "as is" condition (this but for their inconsequential ATC cab signal paraphernalia, retro-fitted snow guards and "gravity" type third rail shoe assemblies). Car 6151 and 6152 were the first to be shipped east via flatbed trailer exactly two weeks later, followed by an additional pair about every two weeks with all 12 on hand by December 11. Of note is that the final four pairs (6139/6140, 6079/6080, 6089/6090 and 6109/6110 in that order) were readied for shipment to SEPTA within days of their withdrawal from CTA service on the Ravenswood Branch. 6151/6152 was the first pair of "CTA's" to be operated under power on the NHSL by making a "clearance" run to Norristown and back on October 30, while the second pair (6161/6162) was retained at Woodland Shops as a prototype for operational modifications. Most noticeably, these consisted of a mid-train fare collection station (i.e., PMS) in place of one double seat, the addition of two double seats where the CTA's Conductors' positions had been, the addition of 8-inch extension plates at the door thresholds to adjust for the P & W's platform loading gauge and the installation of "flapper," or New York-type shoe assemblies to be adaptable with the NHSL's over-running (covered) third rail.

NHSL operator instruction on the former CTA cars was initiated on November 21 using already- modified 6139/6140 and three weeks

later, on December 13, 1986 pairs 6079/6080, 6139/6140 and 6161/6162 carried their first “revenue” passengers on the NHSL, though the service was actually provided as part of a special (free) weekend “Shakedown” schedule. Rush hour Route 100 service had initially been restored on a limited basis using three re-certified Straffords and five Bullets on Monday, October 6 (with no stops between 69th Street and Rosemont). Full timetables were at last returned, for the first time since the August 23 mishap, on December 22, 1986 with eight of the ten modified CTA cars used to and from Norristown in rush hours, generally in place of those runs which had previously employed 2-car trains of Strafford or Bullet equipment. Otherwise, the eight surviving Brill-built cars were used to provide off-peak service and as rush hour locals to Bryn Mawr. The fifth and final pair of ex-CTA cars to be modified for the NHSL (6089/6090) was activated on December 30, after which the bodies of the now-stripped, sixth set (6109/6110) remained at Woodland Shops until they were trucked to Delaware Car Company in Wilmington two months later and scrapped. Over the weekend of July 25-26, 1987, some of the ex-CTA “6000’s” were re-numbered in the SEPTA “480” series, in deference to the anticipated scheme of the line’s new “N-5” multiple-unit cars, 26 of which were finally ordered from ASEA-Brown Boveri (i.e., “ABB”), a Swiss-based conglomerate, the following year. By fall, revised car numbers (as applied “somewhere outside” on all ten of the former 6000’s by that time) were as follows: 6079/6080 to 480/481; 6089/6090 to 482/483; 6139/6140 to 484/485; 6151/6152 to 486/487; and 6161/6162 to 488/489.

Despite their age (then 36-37 years) and relative slowness in contrast to the operationally robust Strafford and Bullet cars, SEPTA resumed its pursuit of additional 6000’s from CTA in the spring of 1987. In part this was a response to growing age concerns (and unreliability) surrounding the three surviving Strafford cars, and in part was deemed necessary following the loss of two more Bullets (202 and 207) due to a collision at Ardmore that January 27. Meanwhile, since the end of 1986 CTA’s planning staff had been able to officially “hold” all of the recently-retired 6000’s not sold to SEPTA as the authority foresaw a possible equipment shortage due to rising ridership at the time. As a result, even as the last of the PCC “L” cars delivered in 1950-51 were withdrawn from passenger service and replaced by the 2600-series on July 3, 1987, the easy acquisition of additional units by SEPTA remained out of reach. Finally, a cooperative agreement was hashed out between the two agencies in September which enabled the sale, on similar terms to those of the 1986 deal, of six cars (three pairs) to SEPTA that were garnered from a list of those already released for disposition (“AFR’d” in CTA parlance). These represented the least desirable of those 6000’s remaining on CTA property—those which were least likely to be needed at a future date.

In the end, the six cars selected by CTA mechanical forces on behalf of SEPTA were 6069, 6070, 6115, and 6116 (delivered 1950), along with 6175 and 6176 (delivered 1951). Given the incomplete operational states of all six vehicles, only 6069, 6070, 6175 and 6176

were to be made whole and restored to operation, while 6115 and 6116 provided the necessary componentry. All arrived at Woodland Shops by the end of October 1987, where they were concurrently restored and modified in a manner identical to the earlier ten cars. Pair 6175/6176, renumbered as 478/479, were placed in revenue service on December 23, followed by 476/477 (originally CTA 6069/6070) on January 24, 1988.

In the meantime, more stringent PUC inspections revealed that the Bullet and “Chicago” cars had incompatibilities in their anti-climber elevations, which had the potential to result in the cars’ “telescoping” should there be a collision. As a result, the former were restricted to one-man night and Sunday operation (when the “CTA’s” were idle) until a rectification measure could be implemented. This proved easier on paper than in reality, however, and in May the Bullets were further removed from nighttime operation per order of the federal Department of Transportation. The two-man CTA cars were then substituted during these times to circumvent visibility issues. Finally beginning in August, a steel “layer” was appended to the lower edge of the former 6000’s existing anti-climbers. The Bullets were then restored to full-time operation upon the completion of all fourteen such cars on November 7, and one-man nighttime crewing was returned. At that same time, plate steel “caps” were appended above the swinging “B-end” doors of the ex-CTA cars to protect against slippery footing on their thresholds. By early 1990, it had been discovered that neither these nor the original chain barriers strung between the ex-CTA pairs were sufficient for the assurance of safe, protected passage between cars while in motion. In response, all 14 of the former 6000’s were retrofitted with black rubber diaphragms, akin to those in use on railroad coaches, which completely surrounded the B-end train door frames and their previously- extended anti-climbers.

The 484/485 pair (ex-6139/6140) was laid up for a couple of months in mid-1989 due to undercar fire damage, but the overall group continued to provide yeoman service across the next several years, especially considering their nature carrying a good part of the Norristown Line’s operational load as a “retirement job.” Meanwhile, the line’s surviving P & W veterans began to fare poorly, and with the recent arrival of the “new” (used) cars from the CTA, were then generally deemed uneconomical to repair as failures occurred. Two of the three Strafford cars (161 and 163) were thus pulled out of service during 1988, which left only 162 to occasionally ply on by itself outside of rush hours, albeit with recently-discovered (non-critical) deficiencies in its structural framing. This revered, 63-year-old “P & W” (brown)-painted veteran finally made an “orchestrated” farewell appearance on March 24, 1990—a damp, raw Saturday in the Norristown area, then died for good when one of its traction motors failed while shuttling rush hour passengers between 69th Street and Bryn Mawr on the following Friday, March 30.

Likewise, the Bullet fleet began to exhibit unexpected and undesirable signs of aging by the end of 1989, with cars 203 and 208 soon removed

from service for a bolster beam and kingpin replacement they were never to receive. By the time, all work on those two cars was abandoned in March, even more issues had been discovered which brought greater scrutiny to the three survivors. A third Bullet (205) was found to have bodily deterioration extreme enough to force its withdrawal in April of 1990, leaving only two of the “legacy” vehicles (206 and 209) in service to assist the fourteen hardy, second-hand Chicago “L” cars in filling all Route 100 schedules. This was certainly an unwanted economic circumstance considering the “CTA’s” unconventional two-man operating nature, and all the more accentuated their relative slowness against the pair of older cars with which they shared the rails. At this point, the ongoing NHSL equipment crisis forced SEPTA to implement an innovative solution by adapting a group of five (5) wide-gauge, single-unit rapid transit cars from its adjacent Market-Frankford Line (i.e., Blue Line or MFSE) for reassignment to the standard-gauge Norristown Line. This was done by procuring five sets of General Steel #70 trucks salvaged from retired “K” cars that had operated on the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (i.e., PATH) system between New York and New Jersey between 1958 and 1988. Built by St. Louis Car Co., the “K” cars, (alternatively known as MP-51’s by their original purchasing partner, the Pennsylvania Railroad) were similar in scale and nature to the CTA’s 6000’s. Nevertheless they were of no technological relation and after being retired from PATH, their bodies were disposed of by “reefing” beneath the Atlantic Ocean off the New Jersey coast.

By contrast, the stainless steel Market-Frankford cars, which had been built in Philadelphia by the Budd Company and delivered in 1960 and ’61, possessed many unique design traits. The fleet was divided into 46 single units and 224 cars arranged as permanent “married pairs.” Their bodies, however, while of a similar loading gauge (i.e., width), were seven feet longer and significantly heavier than either the carbon steel K-cars or the aluminum CTA 6000’s. Whereas the “K” cars had conventional kingpins beneath which secured the trucks to their bodies, the Budds’ irregular, wide-gauge trucks from Adirondack Castings had kingpins built into their framing which were inserted to forged receptacles at the center of the bolster cross-beam. To create a compromise mounting for the salvaged PATH trucks on the Budd cars’ bolsters, heavy steel pylons were fabricated which would fit at either end into the cars’ bolster beam receptacles and the kingpin mounts on the GSI trucks.

601 became the first single-unit MFSE car to be moved a very short distance by truck to the Norristown Line’s 72nd Street facility on May 3, 1990, whereupon another series of modifications were performed in addition to the truck change indicated above. Some were similar to those applied to the CTA cars-most notably they received a Conductors’ PMS fare collection area which then required the deployment of two crew members, even when operated as single units. Having been originally designed to a higher performance parameter than were the CTA 6000’s, the MFSE 601 notably exhibited speeds approaching 70 mph during its initial clearance run and shakedown on

June 30, a characteristic which further highlighted the relative sluggishness of the ex-Chicago cars in comparison. The 601 was joined at 72nd Street by MFSE 602 at the end of May, then by 605, 609 and 619 by late August. In addition, MFSE single-unit car 631 was set aside at SEPTA’s 69th Street MFSE facility next door, specifically to be used as a spare parts source for the five NHSL cars.

Meanwhile, use of the two remaining Bullets fell off significantly over the summer of 1990 as the effects of wholesale mileage accumulation set in. An overall shortage of equipment then forced all service to be localized on a 12-minute headway, using the 6000’s and two Bullets (if available), with the September 10 schedule change. Those last two P & W natives managed to dawdle through another month of occasional use, making their final revenue trips and as a result closing the book with regard to the Philadelphia & Western’s own rolling stock on Columbus Day (Monday, October 8), 1990. They then remained on a “stand-by” footing of sorts, until the 209 suffered a door circuit failure during an Overnight Special on October 29 and both cars were placed in permanent storage. The first four of the Bullets’ de facto replacement vehicles, coined “Budds” by NHSL personnel, were ready for use, following employee training and familiarization, on Monday, October 15. Whereas it had already been discovered that their faster speeds and a lack of track brakes (such as those on the CTA cars) made the MFSE singles vulnerable to dew-induced overruns before 8:00 am, they were kept aside until that time and the rest of the service turned over to the fourteen 6000’s. This remained the case from the time the fifth Budd (619) was finally activated in late November 1990 until the last quarter of 1993, with normal, mixed local and express operations at last being restored during the rush hours on January 14, 1991. So it was that the ex-CTA cars truly enjoyed their second career of seven-plus years, serving Norristown Line riders just as faithfully as they had the “L” patrons around Chicagoland in times past. As an incredible point of perspective, three of the Norristown 6000 pairs (6069/6070, 6079/6080 and 6089/6090) had actually been assigned to CTA’s long-forgotten Garfield Park Branch early in their careers, a line which hadn’t even existed since June 1958!

The “pilot” N-5 car, numbered 451, was delivered to the “P & W Shop” (i.e., 72nd Street) on May 22, 1991. This unit proved to be lengthy in testing and pre-acceptance, not starting preliminary revenue service until August 17, 1992 when it was run to Bryn Mawr on the rush hour local for further evaluation. It was limited to this role (when available) well into December 1992, was withdrawn for further modification and testing, then returned to revenue service on a regular basis in April 1993. By this time the overall N-5 contract was three years late in generating additional deliveries, and it was clear that many rounds of post-production modifications had been necessary to bring the new cars up to SEPTA’s desired state of operational reliability and advancement. It wasn’t until June that the balance of the 26 new cars, as ordered, began to arrive on the NHSL. Deliveries then continued more or less unabated for the following 15 months until the latter part of 1994, bearing new car numbers 131-155. The first “production” N-

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5 to enter full revenue service was recorded as 142 on July 15, 1993, being followed by 143 on August 3, which enabled them to be used as a 2-car train on rush hour express service to and from Norristown. Ultimately, pilot car 451 was returned to ABB's plant in Elmira Heights, New York in January 1994 to receive its own application of post-production modifications. It was eventually returned to Philadelphia late in the delivery process, carrying new number 130. As for ABB, they were brought to task by SEPTA for their long-running delivery delays, and as a result provided the agency's Regional Rail Division with a "free" ALP- 44 electric locomotive (#2308) as compensation.

The first five of the N-5's were operating in revenue service by the end of October 1993, with all five of the ex-MFSE "Budds" being rapidly withdrawn during the following month. All were physically transferred the short distance back to the MFSE's 69th Street facility during the first two months of 1994 (if nothing else to create track space for the quickly-materializing N-5's). Once there they remained on their specially-mounted, standard-gauge, ex-PATH GSI trucks and sat atop wooden timbers, never to be used again except as sources of spare parts. Coming to fruition by that time was another new equipment order with ADTranz, ABB's corporate successor, for 220 "M4" cars for the Market-Frankford Line, which made any life extension of the returning Budd cars untenable. The 12th N-5 car (138) was delivered on March 16, and for the next three weeks afterward the ex-CTA 6000's appeared in service with decreasing frequency, either Local or Express. During the first week of April, the former 6000's were obviously being parked, seemingly pair by pair, in sidings and yard tracks around the 72nd Street facility until the last revenue run was made by 482/483 (the ex-CTA 6089/6090) on the afternoon of Friday, April 8, 1994.

The following winter, that same pair was re-worked as a de-icing train at 72nd Street but proved to be rarely, certainly infrequently, deployed to assist the speedy N-5's. The other dozen of the ex-CTA 6000's were offered as surplus immediately upon their withdrawal, being scooped up by two clients. Cars 476 and 477 were taken away to the Middletown & Hummelstown Railway, which had a small, non-descript trolley museum near Amtrak's ex-PRR Main Line in the former community, not far from Harrisburg. The rest (478, 479, 480, 481, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488 and 489) were taken by Ed Metka's Vintage Electric Streetcar Company (i.e., VESCo), located in Windber, Pennsylvania near Johnstown. The last of these to be observed on their way out of the Delaware Valley were, in fact, the 488 and 489 (ex-CTA 6161 and 6162) which spent the Columbus Day Weekend of 1994 sitting in the commuter parking lot at the King Manor (now DeKalb Street) NHSL station before entering the Pennsylvania Turnpike westbound. So, finally, was ended the second (retirement) career of fourteen otherwise lucky CTA 6000-series "L" cars. As for the pair of De-icing "CTA's" (482/483), they lingered outside of 72nd Street Shops for years, and as of June 2018 were finally destined to be preserved at a railway museum in North Carolina.

# Newsletter

Edited by George LaRue

## Calendar of Events

### EPTC Monthly Meeting

April 2nd Zoom meeting. Please see page 1.

May 7th Zoom meeting. Annual Photo Contest

### Other Events

The East Penn participation ""\*".

\*24<sup>th</sup> Trolley Meet in Allentown, PA. October 7th, 8th & 9th, 2021.

## East Penn Classifieds

Send your listings by email to [newsletter@eastpenn.org](mailto:newsletter@eastpenn.org) (Listings will be published for 3 months unless notified otherwise.)

**Wanted:** PTC "Off Peak" magazines from the 1940's, and "PTC News" newsletter from the 1950's, *original* 8x10 company photos from PRT & PTC that have the date and photo number at the bottom. Please describe. Joe Boscia, [724-774-0198](tel:724-774-0198), [josephfboscia@hotmail.com](mailto:josephfboscia@hotmail.com)

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