

# East Penn Traction Club

February 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 February 5, 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 and be followed by a presentation by Mike Szilagyi on his *Bucks County Trolleys* book recently released through Arcadia Publishing.

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

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91346637733?pwd=VzlCaCtSZEVlOXVqSXB MK1NSYmx CUT09>

Meeting ID: 913 4663 7733

Passcode: 267445

One tap mobile

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[+13017158592](tel:+13017158592), [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799), [+16699009128](tel:+16699009128), [+12532158782](tel:+12532158782), [+13462487799](tel:+13462487799) US (Washington D.C)

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Meeting ID: 913 4663 7733

Passcode: 267445

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/91346637733?pwd=VzlCaCtSZEVlOXVqSXB MK1NSYmx CUT09>

## The 2021 EPTC Trolley Calendar is Now Available!

The calendar features a full color cover photo and 13 high quality B&W photos of nearby trolley lines including LVT in the Lehigh Valley; Capital Transit Company in Washington DC; Philadelphia and Easton; Trenton NJ; Brooklyn NY; Hershey PA; PTC & SEPTA in Philadelphia PA; and Philadelphia Suburban/Red Arrow.

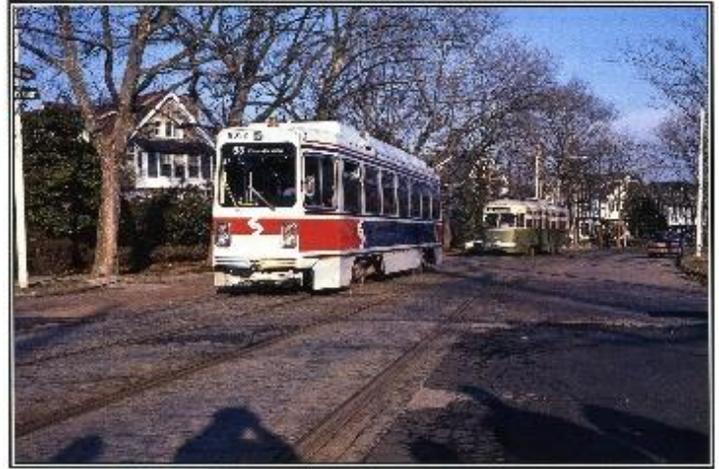
Price is \$10.00 each for non-members. Postage and handling for one calendar is \$2.00, \$3.00 for two calendars. Postage and handling for three to five calendars is \$7.75 for priority mail shipping (US only). Pennsylvania residents please add 6% sales tax.

Visit the East Penn Traction Club web site on the Internet at [www.eastpenn.org](http://www.eastpenn.org) or East Penn Traction Club on Facebook.

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Edited by George LaRue

## 2021 CALENDAR EAST PENN TRACTION CLUB



Quantity pricing for non-members is six for \$48.00 plus \$7.75 for priority mail shipping (US only). Pennsylvania residents please add 6% sales tax.

For East Penn members: \$9.00 for one, \$8.00 each for up to five, \$6.00 each for six or more. Postage and handling for one calendar is \$2.00, \$3.00 for two calendars. Postage and handling for three to six calendars is \$7.75 for priority mail shipping (US only). Pennsylvania residents please add 6% sales tax

Calendars can be purchased on the [www.eastpenn.org](http://www.eastpenn.org) website via Paypal or to order the calendar by mail, please send a check or money order (payable to: East Penn Traction Club) to:  
East Penn Traction Club  
c/o Charles Long  
[227 Locust Road](http://227 Locust Road)  
[Fort Washington, PA 19034](http://Fort Washington, PA 19034)

This year we reduced the number of calendars printed based on declining sales over the past few years. We have recovered our costs and are on the way to increased profitability, but there is a significant possibility that we will be sold out as the year ends. Get your orders in! Contact Charles Long 215 CH7-1951 – [treasurer@eastpenn.org](mailto:treasurer@eastpenn.org) to arrange pick-up.



## In Memorium Donald B. Grant Sr.

Donald B. Grant Sr. a long-time member of EPTC and a skilled O-scale and 1/2"-scale traction modeler, died Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup>. Donald proudly served in the US Air Force in Vietnam and then worked over 30 years as a machinist for Amtrak before retiring. We

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extend our deepest sympathies to Don's family, including brothers Charles Grant Sr. and William Grant Jr., children Christina, Donald Jr. and Brian, his nine grandchildren and his lifelong friend Jack Spedden, a fellow Delawarean, HO modeler and former EPTC President. Donations may be sent in Donald's memory to Wounded Warriors, PO Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

## Biography of Frank Steen



My name is Frank Steen. I grew up in central Los Angeles and regularly rode the Vermont streetcar line that stopped in front of my Junior High School. That was my first traction inspiration. I graduated in 1963, the year the line was shut down. In 1973, moved to Hamburg, Germany and lived close to the streetcar line #3, which I rode regularly. These were the V3 cars, red and cream with poles, very unusual for Germany in the 1970s. Hamburg ended their wonderful streetcars in 1978. This is my favorite traction line! While we were in Europe, I dragged my new wife along to ride trolleys in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Budapest, Bucharest, Vienna, St. Polten (the last of the really old timers in regular service), Helsinki, Hannover, Bremen, Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Basel, Zurich, Amsterdam, Den Haag and probably a few more cities I left out. She became a "sort-of" trolley fan.

In 1974, I purchased a set of Lilliput post-war Viennese trolleys in HO (the kind you see running backwards in the movie, "The Third Man") and started to build a portable trolley layout in our tiny apartment. Eventually, I built into a two-meter cabinet with a trolley layout as a fold out. I added a number of trolleys over time, including a number of brass German models from Bert Sass (Fairfield).

While my kids were growing up and I was developing my career, I left the hobby. I returned when I was living in Boston in 1999 and

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found Ken's trains, a specialty N-gauge shop nearby. I purchased a number of Japanese trolley models and built an N-gauge modular live-overhead trolley layout. Of course, in Boston, I rode the trolley lines as well as the interurbans.

The big change came when we finally moved into a house of our own outside of New York City in 2009. Built in 1870, the house has a small barn. My wife says she bought the house and I bought the barn. I moved and expanded my modular layout into the hay loft in the barn. At the same time, I built an elaborate regular N-gauge model railroad around the trolley layout.

I have two N-scale trolley lines on the layout. One runs with much in-street trackage, live overhead and pantographs. N-scale in-street trackage has a major problem of keeping the track clean. I finally solved the problem last year when I purchased an Arnold four-wheel track cleaner, my rail grinder. It has spinning abrasive disks and nice weight to keep it on the track. The weight and quality Arnold pantograph keep it running on all problem tracks. It really makes a difference in keeping the trolleys running.



I have about 30 N-scale Japanese and German trolleys and freight motors on the live overhead, all running with the smallest DCC decoders I can find, usually TCS Z1. One of the problems with N-scale trolleys is their lack of power. Negotiating sharp turns and encountering the friction of the overhead against the pantograph is a challenge. I keep the overhead "greased" with track cleaner.



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Between my rail grinder and the greased overhead, the trolleys can run OK.



One of the defining moments of my model railroading life was having my layout be on the tour for the 2018 NER meet. Unfortunately, I did not have the rail grinder and I did not have time before hand to properly clean the track. I had to make that part of my layout as view only. Today they will run.

Because of the difficulty in running N-scale live overhead, I also recently added a cheating, two-rail trolley line. My son-in-law and my grandsons are extremely disappointed, but the separate set of non-overhead trolleys do run well. I bought a second rail grinder for this and use the beautiful new Tomix N-scale in-street trackage.



I still have the HO scale portable layout I built in Germany and I am building a small O-scale trolley layout as well. Just for fun, I also have two Peter Witt G-Scale trolleys for my garden layout. They are beautiful models. For comparison purposes, I have Peter Witt cars in four scales: N-Bachmann, HO-Backmann, O-Williams (modified for two rail and overhead) and G-Aristo. It is fun to show the comparisons.

In conclusion, I still get a thrill in watching my trolleys run—in all scales. It is the most pleasurable part of my model railroading hobby!

## Biography of Larry Bosler



Around 1943-44, at age 3, I developed my strange interest in trolleys, transfers, tokens and the PTC. I started collecting transfers and accumulated an extensive collection for the years around 1943-46. It is a close-to-complete collection of one transfer from every route in the city, in all directions affected. These transfers were first collected by browsing around major transit depots such as Broad/Olney and Frankford/Bridge, and along many trolley, bus and subway routes, looking for discarded ones.

Then, since PTC fares were only a nickel and you could transfer from one line to another freely with only a paper ticket (hence the



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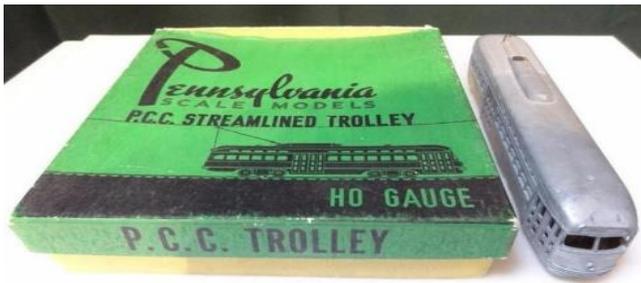
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term 'transfer'), my parents and sister would ride many of the routes from which I needed a transfer, often getting on at one stop and off at the next. I used to ride my tricycle around the house giving out and collecting transfers from family members and visitors, pretending that I was a bus or trolley driver. My Grandpop gave me one of his empty wooden cigar boxes to store my transfers in just like the real drivers did, and then Mom and Dad helped me put my transfers in a three-ring binder, sorted by route number and direction. I still have it.

In the 40s my favorite place to eat out was William's Restaurant, located at 5221 Frankford Ave. between Bridge and Pratt Streets, across from the Frankford trolley car barn where I could watch all of the trolley activity while eating.

Sometime in the late 40s my dad took me on a long hike along the disbanded Fairmount Park trolley line, looking for old transfers, of course.

In the early 1950s I expanded my trolley interests into traction modeling with my dad's help. It all started with Dad taking me to a model railroad show at the Baltimore & Ohio train Railroad in downtown Philadelphia. It was the 1951 Philadelphia Model Railroad Club's Annual Show and there were several trolley layouts there. I spent all of my time watching the small trolleys running around with their sparking wires and quick movements with great fascination. I was hooked.



My first models were two HO gauge Pennsylvania Scale Model PCC trolleys that we purchased on October 8, 1951 that my dad carefully painted in my favorite green, cream and silver PTC colors. With my dad, we built a 3' by 4' platform and almost every item on it was either designed, hand-made or hand painted by him. While being only 3' by 4', it contained about 15' of HO track.

One particular challenge he had to deal with was when we had to string the overhead wire. He couldn't get the trolley poles to follow the correct wire at track switches, so one day he actually stood in the middle of the street at Park and Olney Avenues looking up at the switch on the overhead wire trying to figure it out. He did it though. I sometimes wonder what people were thinking about him, seeing him do this. The technique for stringing overhead wire is an art that is well documented today (see EPTC Standards), and the overhead



wire switches are standard off-the-shelf purchases for today's traction modelers, but Dad was in the forefront of this technology at the time. I still have the layout and I am currently reconditioning it for my grandsons.



In High School getting to ride the route 3 or route 5 trolleys to Mastbaum Vocational H.S. twice a day wasn't too bad. However, these routes were soon converted to buses (ugh!), so my euphoria was short-lived.

One summer day in the early 60s I ventured out on my first long drive, a ten-hour round trip to East Haven, Connecticut to visit the Branford Trolley Museum. Seeing that it was nothing more than a trolley junkyard, I



I disappointedly turned around and drove home. My next visit to this museum would be in 1989, and what a difference a few years makes. It was great.

That same year I visited another trolley museum in Tansboro, New Jersey called Trolley Valhalla. This turned out to be another junkyard but the group there has since joined forces with some other trolley fans in

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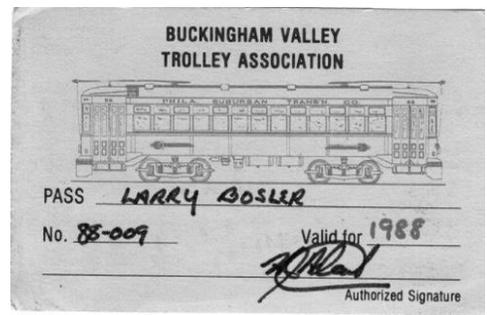
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the Philadelphia area to form the Buckingham Valley Trolley Association.

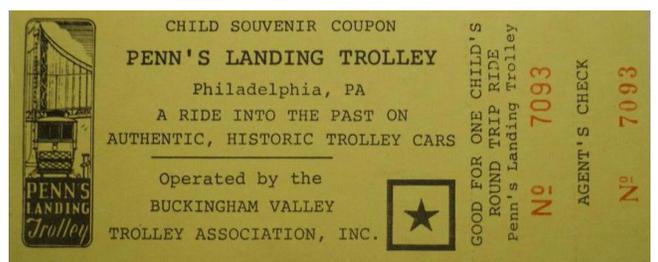
They had several old trolleys and operated a tourist trolley line on Delaware Avenue at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia.

This operation was eventually disbanded, and its cars were sent to a couple of locations, the Electric City Railway Museum in Scranton being one of them.

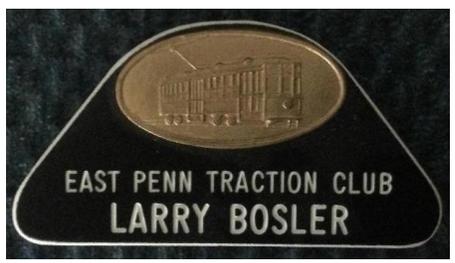
In the 70s and 80s I became a member of the



Metropolitan Philadelphia Railway Association (around the time of the acquisition of the renamed Liberty Liners) and began my association with the EPTC, attending many of their 'Trolley Meets' over the years.



Moving ahead a few decades (after marriage and raising a family), I gave my trolley modeling interests a new birth by purchasing, assembling, painting and powering four O gauge Philadelphia models (a Nearside, an eighty-hundred and two Hogs Island cars, three greens and an orange) and accumulating other various models. My grandsons are happily extremely interested in watching my operational O Gauge models on their test track and powered overhead wire, and hopefully in later years they will have acquired the same interests as me in trolley prototypes and models.



Since moving to Arizona in 1976 I have maintained my Philadelphia Trolley interests and have expanded them to becoming a member of the Phoenix Trolley Museum. Other associations I have, other than the East Penn Traction Club, are with the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, the Baltimore Trolley Museum, Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys and am a life member of The American Vecturist Association, an association of transportation token collectors.

As for favorite routes, there are many, but the local lines, 26 and 47, drew the most interest, and in case it isn't obvious, my favorite transit company is the Philadelphia Transportation Company.

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## Membership Update

Please note the following membership changes:

### New Member

Charles G. (Chuck) Lombardi - Catasauqua PA

## Calendar of Events

### EPTC Monthly Meeting

**Pending course of Covid-19 Pandemic.**

March 5<sup>th</sup> – Virtual via Zoom

### Other Events

The East Penn participation ”\*”.

**\*25<sup>th</sup> Trolley Meet** in Allentown, PA

While originally planned for May, 2021, the alternate dates of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 have been reserved and should be more realistic for having the 25<sup>th</sup> Trolley Meet in 2021.

## East Penn Classifieds

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

**For Sale:** I have available a 13 page list of Out of Print RR & Trolley Books in Excel. Covers all publishers including, C.E.R.A., Interurban Press, B.S.R.A., E.R.H.S., Transportation Bulletins, Colorado Annuals and much more. Also a one page list in MS Word of new books in stock. Send E mail address to: [farrells4@comcast.net](mailto:farrells4@comcast.net) to receive both the Out of Print list and New Book list via E mail or Self addressed stamped envelope to receive a paper copy: Kevin T. Farrell, P.O. Box 282, North Billerica, MA 01862. We take checks and credit cards. Additional lists of Timetables: RR, Transit and Bus, Dining Car Menus & RR Promotional Paper items and O Scale Trolley and RR parts.

**Wanted:** North Shore HO Catenary by MTS, Erie-Lackawanna MU cars by Overland in HO, Reading MU cars by Custom Brass or assembled kits by IHP in HO, CTA 6000 flat door el cars in HO RTR. Also, CA&E steel cars Pullman and/or Cincinnati Car Co. in O RTR including track and power pack. HO GHB Milwaukee Electric models in any of the three versions: articulated, diner with picture windows or regular coach. Contact - David Liebe Hart, [3918 Beverly Blvd., Apt. 407, Los Angeles CA, \(323\) 504-2532](mailto:3918BeverlyBlvd@comcast.net).

East Penn Traction Club, Inc.

### 2019 - 2021 Officers

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