Hello Again, Philadelphia!

In a refreshing departure from the usual, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) recently observed the fortieth anniversary of PCC operation in Philadelphia by unveiling car No. 2054 repainted in the 1938 Philadelphia Rapid Transit (PRT) livery of aluminum and blue, and sporting PRT decals. The car is not equipped with a farebox and is used primarily as an instruction car. Several private excursions have been operated on weekends with No. 2054 thus far.

PRT PCC's No. 2001-2020 were delivered in July, 1938 and were scrapped in 1960. Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC) succeeded PRT as operator of the property on January 1, 1940 and took delivery of PCC's No. 2031-2080 and 2501-2580 in 1940-41. SEPTA became operator of the city system on September 30, 1968.
In commemoration of the September 1, 1928 opening of Philadelphia's Broad Street Subway, SEPTA shopped for and restored 630 cars No. 75 and 150 to their original condition. This included the installation of cane seats, ceiling fans and a white interior. The cars' exteriors were repainted in the original green body with gold lettering, cream window area and maroon roof.

On November 4th, the cars were sent to Fern Rock terminal for public inspection. After appropriate speeches, a “mummers” string band played “Golden Slippers” and the ribbon across the doors of one of the cars was cut. The entire group present then boarded the train for the express run from Fern Rock to the Vine Street Station. At that point, the group detrained to view the display SEPTA had set up featuring photos of the line during and after its construction. Afterwards, the group reboarded the train for an express run to Fern Rock terminal. The cars are reported to be in operating service in the Ridge Avenue subway, a branch of the Broad Street line. So far, no graffiti has appeared on the cars. —George W. Gula, PRPA Trolley Fare

Saturday, October 28, 1978 was to have marked the resumption of trolley service on the upper portion of SEPTA Route 23 on Germantown Avenue between Mermaid loop and Bethlehem Pike. The occasion was noteworthy in its own right because of the special attention given to the combination streetcar/track renewal/street repaving project. There had been pressure from Chestnut Hill businessmen to “restore” the Belgian block paving along Germantown Avenue thereby preserving the Colonial charm of the neighborhood. Also included in the project was the reversal of the loop at Bethlehem Pike in an effort to ease the flow of trolleys entering and leaving the street traffic.

Recently restored PCC No. 2054 was to have starred alone rededication ceremonies. However, on Wednesday, October 25th, the SEPTA board made the sudden and surprising decision to borrow a car from the Buckingham Valley Trolley (PHILADELPHIA continued on page 4)

KAWASAKI LETS THE GOOD TIMES ROLL...

On December 21, 1978, SEPTA officials opened bids for 141 trolley cars, the first step in a $128 million renovation program under which half of the city's trolleys and the entire Broad Street subway fleet will be replaced by the early 1980's.

The apparent low bidder, at $57.7 million, was the Insho-Iwai Corp. of Philadelphia. Prime subcontractor for Insho-Iwai is Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd. of Japan, makers of the Kawasaki motorcycle. A SEPTA spokesman indicated that if the Japanese-American firm gets the contract, some parts of the cars, including the bodies, would be manufactured in Japan, while heavy components, such as propulsion equipment, would be produced in the United States. The trolleys would probably be assembled in the U.S.

Also bidding were an Italian firm, two Canadian companies, a Belgian firm and an American firm (the Budd Company of Philadelphia). Budd was the apparent high bidder at $84 million.

The SEPTA board will take up to 60 days to evaluate the bids before announcing an award. The federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration, which will put up 80 percent of the cost of the trolleys, must also approve the successful bidder.

Delivery of the new cars is to begin in 1981, coinciding with the construction of a new trolley barn in southwest Philadelphia and a heavy maintenance shop at Woodland Depot.

The new cars will displace 40-year-old cars now in use on west Philadelphia lines and on the Media and Sharon Hill lines of the Red Arrow Division. —The Bulletin, The Inquirer
Mexico Round Up

by John H. Eagle

MEXICO CITY

The Servicio de Transportes Electricos del Distrito Federal (STF) on October 1, 1978 inaugurated a system of priority trolley coach routes. This is the first time that mass transit has priority over the automobile in Mexico City and involves reverse transit lanes on otherwise one-way streets. These trolley coach routes have a reverse paint scheme of the former one, that is they are all white with orange logo and trim. The other trolley coaches and streetcars operated by the system retain the basic orange scheme with white logo and trim.

The STF is looking for 500 used trolley coaches from which to obtain components to build 500 new look trolley coaches to be constructed in their own shops as well as the Casa Body Works. The coaches will have roller controls and the electrical and mechanical technology will be Japanese. The program is expected to be accomplished by 1980 when all present second-hand coaches will be retired. The 500 coaches are needed to provide the margins necessary for rebuilding while maintaining service with the present coaches.

The STF is planning to abandon all streetcar lines except Tlalpan and Xochimilco which are basically private right-of-way routes which feed the Metro. The others would be replaced by trolley coaches by 1980. The reason given is the inability to maintain a suitable service and schedules due to Mexico City’s narrow streets and traffic congestion. Abandonment will take place sooner, if possible. This will reduce the city’s streetcar routes from eleven to two.

The used Marmon-Herrington and St. Louis Car Company trolley coaches purchased second-hand from the San Francisco Municipal Railway are being refurbished at the Ascapotzalco depot while others still reside in the yard in San Francisco Arroyo. Ex-Chicago Transit Authority Marmon-Herringtons have been refurbished to the Tetepilo depot, some in the new white with orange logo and trim.

When the streetcar lines are phased out, 1902-vintage Brill No. 0, presently in operation as the tourist tram will go into storage at Tetepilo depot with the ex-Brill T-405 trolley coach. They will be held for future display.

The Servicio de Transportes Electricos del Distrito Federal operates a network of thirty-three trolley coaches on eleven streetcar routes with 550 trolley buses and 176 streetcars. 350,000 passengers are transported daily. The fare on all services is 60 centavos whereas the tourist tram charges a fare of one peso.

Sistema de Transportes Colectivos del Distrito Federal, operator of the Metro, is currently extending Line 3 northward from the Manuel Gonzales terminal. Metro Line 3 is the Potrero route.

GUADALAJARA

The Transportes Collectivo de Guadalajara currently operates a fleet of 126 Ex-Chicago Transit Authority Marmon-Herrington trolley coaches which have been refurbished with modernistic fiberglass front ends and bumpers. The color scheme is white with orange trim. Body damage is in evidence with some holes punched through the fiberglass on some coaches.

The fare is two pesos and the two routes operate are ZAPOTAN-TLAQUEPAQUE and PANTEON NUEVO-PLAZA DEL SOL which together form the letter "H." Once the common (central) portion of the "H" the routes operate through a 3.25 mile subway with seven stations in the underground portion. All trolley coach service is operated out of the Abundancia depot.

VERACRUZ

The Cooperativa de Transportes Urbanos Y Sub Urbanos de Veracruz is down to three routes operated with ten cars. The routes operating outward from the Central Square are REFORMA ZARAGOSA, VILLA BRAVO, and VILLA DEL MAR.

Two single-truck open cars, ex-Connecticut Company double-truck Birneys, ex-Pacific Electric 100’s, and ex-Mexico City Peter Witts comprise the Veracruz fleet. A fare of 30 centavos is charged on the regular cars while a fare of two pesos is charged on the newly built open car No. 001. The open cars operate primarily on the VILLA DEL MAR route which operates along the Gulf of Mexico.

The streetcars and trackways are decrepit but somehow the system plods along seemingly unaware of modern times.

TAMPOCO

Operations of the Sociedad Cooperativa de Transportes Electricos de Tampico ceased with an employee's strike some three and one-half years ago. The car barn has been torn down and the cars have been scrapped. Only one of the 1923 Brill cars remains at the former car barn, and this is only a body resting on blocks without trucks. The route formerly operated from downtown Tampico via private right-of-way to Madero on the Gulf of Mexico. In addition to conventional cars built for Tampico, there were secondhand PCC’s from Kansas City, St. Louis and Toronto. Some of the Toronto cars originally operated in Cincinnati.

(PHILADELPHIA continued from Page 2)

Association (a Philadelphia group) for the festivities in Chestnut Hill. Peter Witt Car No. 8534, a 1926 Brill product built for PRT, was trucked to Luzerne depot the following day. On Friday, October 27th, No. 8534 was removed from a new set of doors, as well as a completely revarnished interior. The car was also checked out by shop crews while being readied for service.

On Saturday, October 28th, FCC No. 2094 and Peter Witt No. 8534 were cleaned and polished prior to proceeding to Chestnut Hill for the parade and ceremonies. It had been planned to operate the two cars from Mermaid loop to Chestnut Hill loop once in the parade before returning to Luzerne depot. However, the public and railroad response was so great that it was decided to operate the cars in a free shuttle service between the two loops before returning to Luzerne at dusk.

On November 25th, a lease agreement between SEPTA and the Buckingham group was signed, thus making the car available for charter service.

Car No. 8534 again found its way to Chestnut Hill on December 2nd for the annual Christmas parade, and brought in the New Year in style in a special New Year's Eve charter.