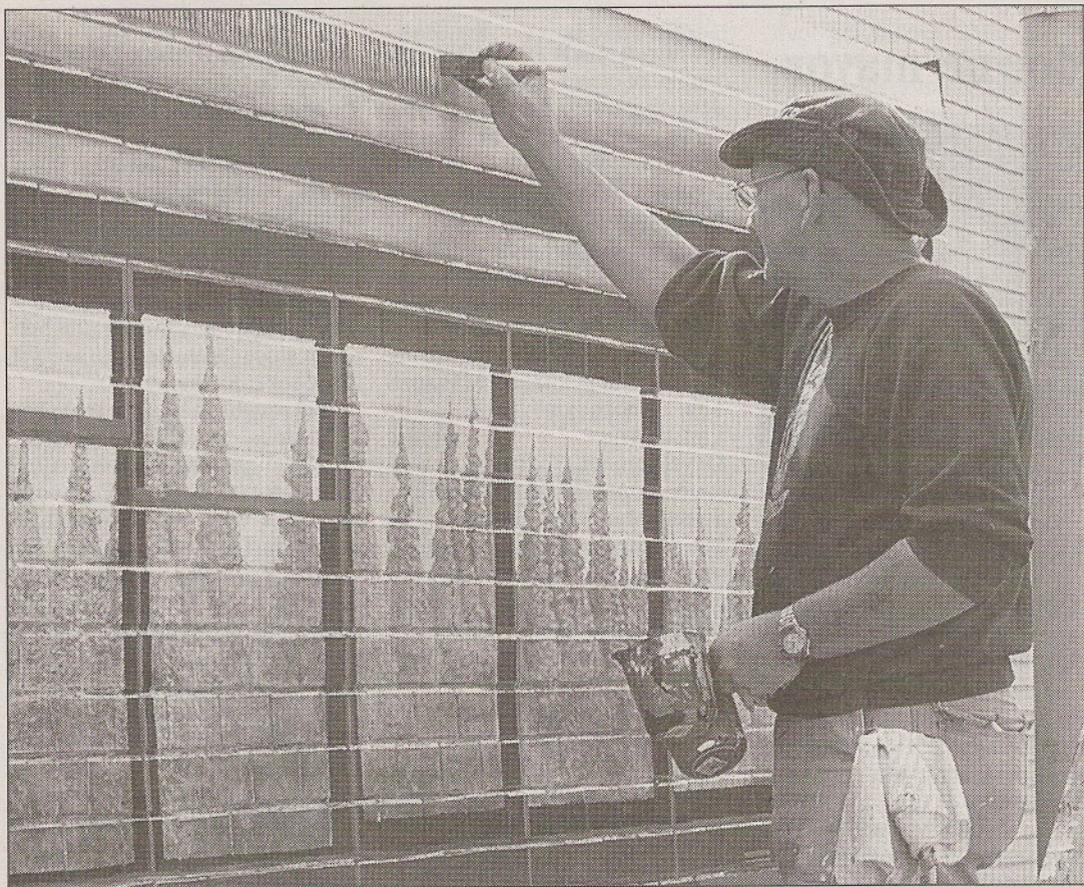


A trolley ride to the past



ANNE NEBORAK/Staff Photographer

Ted Manczur of Colwyn paints a trolley mural at the trolley station in Darby during Saturday's trolley festival.

By Jan Haigis
CORRESPONDENT

After a week and a half of rain and gloom, Saturday, Oct. 15, dawned sunny and bright, a good omen for the first ever OcTrolleyFest.

A 1947 vintage PCC trolley arrived to carry folks on the loop through Yeadon, Colwyn, Darby and Elmwood. Part of the route followed the current Route 11 Subway Surface trolley. The route is the oldest route continuously operating in Philadelphia along the same line. It began as a horse-drawn trolley into Darby in 1858.

The festival began at the Darby Library, where people picked up tickets and waited for their free ride, entertained by the OcTrolleyFest Committee, Sue Eshbach and her library staff, and a host of characters, including W.C. Fields, the Conductor, the Ghost of the First Librarian, the Ghost of the Children's Librarian looking for Bartleby, the Pumpkin Man, and the RSVP Clowns. A trolley song sing-a-long was also in the offering.

Many who rode the trolley also visited the library to meet Bill "Ready" Cash, who played with the Hildale Giants and the Philadelphia Stars of the Negro Baseball League in the 1940's and 50's. Cash shared stories of his experiences and signed autographs for those who attended. At "Midnight Minus Twelve", people gathered to hear Charles J. Adams III tell local scary stories from his new book "Ghost Stories of Delaware County," which includes tales of the ghosts of the Blue Bell and of Boone's Tunnel in Darby.

Trolley displays and videos were also on view at Darby's Resource Center on 9th Street, hosted by Bernice Dickerson of the Darby CDC. A collection of 1922 Darby streetscapes and trolley photos lent by Darby resident Tony Spano and aerial shots of Darby in 1929, 1939 and 1951 were highlighted, along with vintage trolley videos shown by Bill Neal of Yeadon.

Along the Loop, people left the PCC car to take photos or to visit a fire safety display by Darby Fire Company No. 1,

have a sandwich at the Darby VFW Post No. 598, or take part in a tour and reception at Mount Zion AME Church on Center Street, which is celebrating 130 years of service.

In the afternoon, guests visited some famous and lesser known Darby sites, including a mural of Darby in the 1950's at the Marvil Funeral Home.

At opening ceremonies, John Haigis of the OcTrolleyFest Committee of the Darby Borough Historical Commission, which planned the event, talked about the trolley as a community asset often taken for granted. Also on hand to speak were Darby Mayor Paula Brown, and Yeadon Mayor Jacqueline Bogle Mosley, who was born in Darby.

Visitors came from Lansdowne, Sharon Hill, Folcroft, Wallingford, Glen Mills, Upper Darby, Springfield, Havertown and Philadelphia, as well as from New Jersey, Delaware and Alabama.