



Trolley conductor Scott Maits waves for people to join him on the trolley. The driver is Bill Monahan, a leading member of the Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys Group. The trolley is a rebuilt 1947 PCT trolley.

Next stop ... the past

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CORRESPONDENT

DARBY — The borough celebrated its history last weekend at the third annual

“We’re using history to try and bring hope and renewal.”

*Scott Maits
Trolley tour guide*

OcTrolleyFest.

Events all over the town were connected by a restored 1947 PCC trolley running a loop by the historic sites. Visitors could ride for free on the trolley, enjoying a guided tour by Scott Maits, local historian and caretaker at the Blue Bell Inn, built in 1766.

The first trolley stop was by the Old Swedes Mill, which is going to get a Pennsylvania historic marker within the next year.

Pritz’s Mill, built in 1646, is now only a pile of rocks in Cobbs Creek, but the historic area marks the first water powered mill in Pennsylvania and the crossing of the Minquas

Indian Trail.

The mill was the “first industrial site in Pennsylvania,” notes Maits.

Events were also taking place at the Darby Free Library; the oldest continually operated public library in the country (since 1743).

Marshall Becker gave a talk on the Lenni Lenape, and Ken Springirth was signing books, including his newest: “Suburban Philadelphia Trolleys.”

Vans took visitors from the library to a tour of historic Eden Cemetery in Collingdale.

The trolley rolled past Yeadon Plaza, a modern shopping cen-

This Darby Borough trolley makes stops in the past

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ter that marks the site of an old baseball field. The Negro League Hilldale team played there, and were world champions in 1925.

The "Darby Village Green," normally a vacant lot at 8th and Main, featured live music (Matt Roth, Joe Becton, and Ged

Roman), balloon artistry by Steve Wolbach, tables for local interests, a display of photographs from the collection of David King, a rain barrel raffle, and much more. Rides were also available on a miniature train set up in a parking lot.

Emily Linn of the Clean Air Council had a table on the green. She was passing out information about SEPTA's

hybrid busses and the Cobbs Creek Connector Trail.

The Clean Air Council has worked with the Darby Creek Valley Association on both issues.

Along the wall of a building bordering a green were photos from Darby — 1959 to present.

King took most of the photos himself, but he's also a photo collector.

"I'm building a collection on

Darby Township," he said.

King lived in Darby for 22 years, and now lives in Yeadon, where he's been for 26 years.

He remembers what downtown Darby was like many years ago.

"This place was mobbed," he said, pointing across the street to two empty storefronts. "It almost brings tears to your eyes when you come through here at night and it's so desolate."

Scott Maits, trolley conductor for the day, hopes that the history of Eastern Delaware County can draw renewed interest to the area and spur revitalization.

"We're using history to try to bring hope and renewal," Maits said.

Next year marks the 150th anniversary of the oldest continually operating trolley line, today SEPTA's route 11.

OcTrolleyFest hopes for even bigger commemorative event next fall.

A table on the green had a sign up for people interested in Darby Volunteer Projects, including Creek Clean-up, Town Watch, and next year's OcTrolleyFest.

To volunteer for next year's events, contact festival organizer Jan Haigis by email at JanHaigis@yahoo.com.





ANNE NEBORAK/Staff Photographer



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Ed Kane, a re-enactor (above left) plays the part of a colonial recruiting officer. Kane is part of the Old Mifflin Historical Society and is from Hatfield, N.J. Emily Linn (left) and Mr. Pumpkin, Joel Spivak, talk while waiting for people to get their picture taken at Village Green in Darby. The Blue Bell Tavern sign (above) hangs from inside the Blue Bell Tavern.