

Who desires a streetcar named Peter Witt?

By ROSS BOBAK

The Toronto Transit Commission approved an expenditure of \$33,000 Tuesday for restoration and operation of at least two vintage Peter Witt streetcars. From the 20's till the very early 60's these square windowed vehicles with riveted steel bodies and wooden interiors served as the workhorses of the TTC fleets.

Metro council member Art Eggleton, a member of Heritage Toronto, spoke in favour of such a tourist oriented operation saying "it would be very popular with the people of Toronto."

Mike Filey, author of several books on early Toronto and also Heritage Toronto member, produced several photos and posters of Peter Wits in operation. He pointed out that North America's first successful streetcar operation

using an overhead trolley occurred in Toronto in 1884.

Members of the Ontario Electric Railroad Historical Association argued that their rural streetcar museum should be allowed to operate all vintage streetcars but only obtained one of the four vintage cars available.

The Peter Witt streetcars would operate June 1 to September 1 on the downtown King, Spadina, Queen, and Church trackage and regular fares and transfer privileges would apply.

TTC commissioner Paul Godfrey made the motion of approval saying it "would bring a bit of San Francisco spirit to Toronto and create interest among Torontonians."

Toronto artist Charles Pachter whose show at the Isaacs gallery last April associated him with the

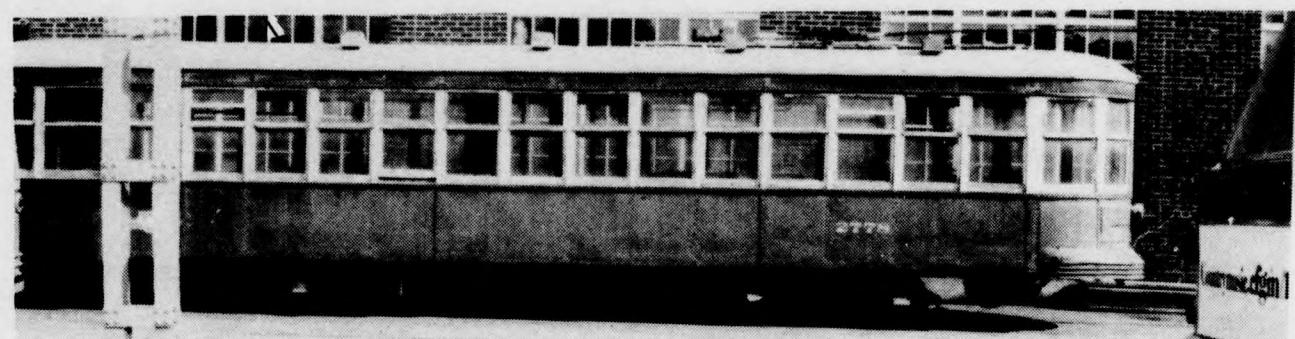
streetcar image, approved of the event.

"I think it's fine but we must be aware of the danger of kinky nostalgia. It's a danger only looking at the past. They should also have a new gorgeous streetcar too, serving

new routes and new suburbs".

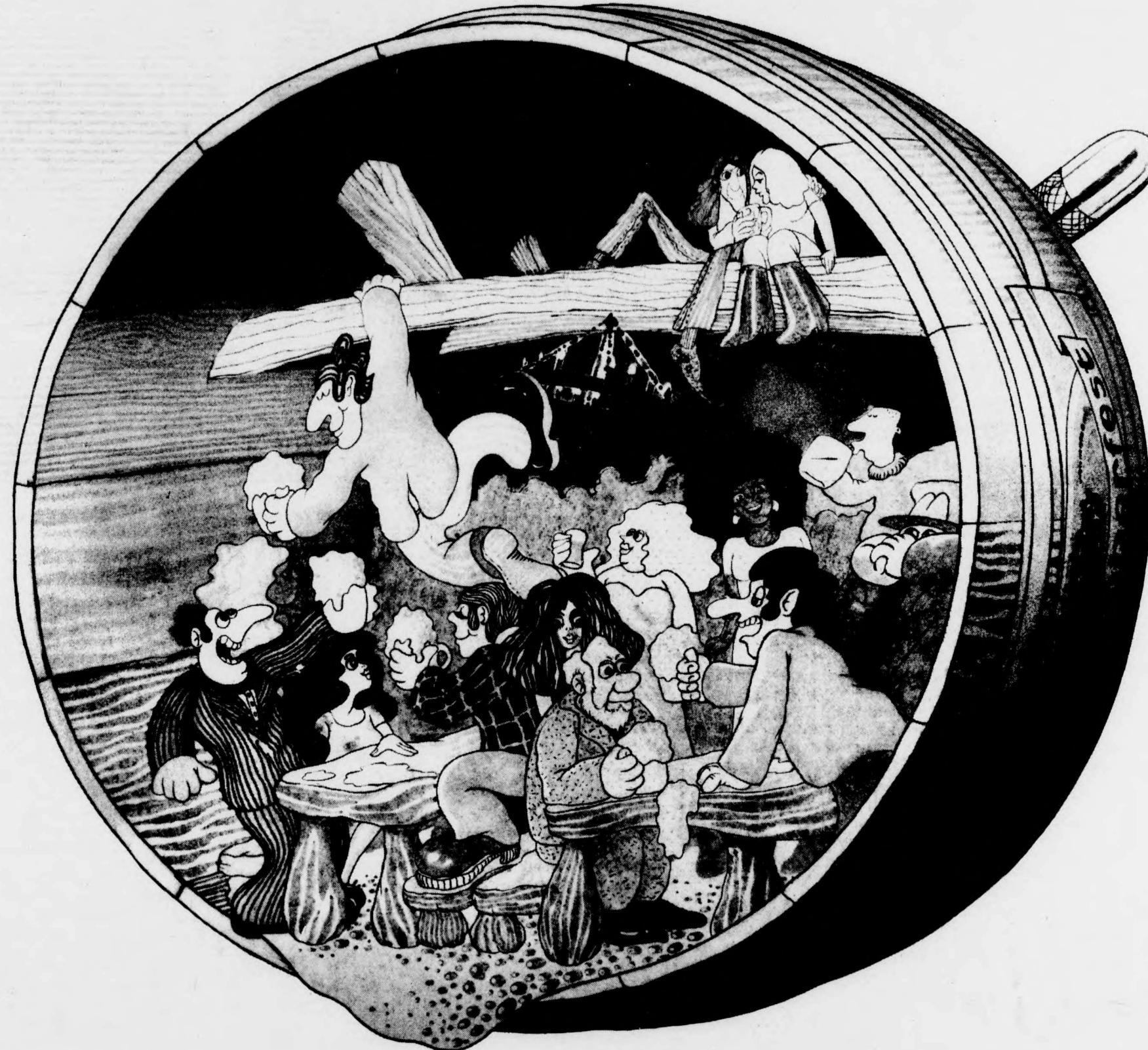
John Punter of York's social science department recently conducted two packed and successful Saturday streetcar tours. "I'm keen to see them kept. Its important to preserve elements of the past, nice

to know where you've been especially since you don't know where you're going. Streetcars make the historic experience authentic. We should preserve whole environments rather than isolated buildings.



The TTC has approved \$33,000 to place two vintage streetcars into summer service.

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