

June 2003

EAST PENN MEET BOWSER VISIT

EAST PENN MEET MAY 2-3, 2003

The East Penn Traction Club hosts a grand Trolley Meet every other year in May and this was no exception. The big news this year was that it was held in the National Guard Armory instead of the South Jersey Expo where it had been for many years. This was a nicer, cleaner, well-maintained facility that also gave us a chance to see the professionalism of some of our reserve forces. The show was well attended. Custom Traxx reported a large volume of decal sales.

The meet begins with the modules setting up on mid-day Friday and ends about 5:30 PM Saturday. The meet has contests for traction models in all scales and there is usually a theme for the show. This year it was Birney Cars. Below are some of the Birney cars entered into the model contest.



All of the traction 'mafia' usually comes to this show. We came across G. Norman Hauser (commercial model painter), Paul Mayer (Shoreline Models) and George Barsky (GHB Imports) discussing a potential project during the show:

CUSTOM TRAXX VISITS BOWSER

In conjunction with the East Penn Meet, Custom Traxx usually pays a visit to Bowser Manufacturing in Montoursville, PA. Montoursville is a slice-of-Americana town just a few miles east of Williamsport, PA (known mainly for the Little League World Series). The visit this year was no exception except that Custom Traxx and Bowser began collaborating on some proposed HO scale traction projects. With no agreement as to the date of completion, Bowser and Custom Traxx are evaluating the development and production of one and possibly two new streetcars. Both of these cars would be injection molded in plastic with window inserts. Bowser has gained much experience in injection molding over the past years with highly successful items in HO, N and Z scales and feels that time is right for injection molded trolley models. Both of the trolleys would be Ready-To-Run and over 25 paint schemes are under evaluation. A second project is the production of a Grand Union track layout in HO scale. A Grand Union is an in the street 90 degree double track crossing at which all possible turns can be made. The Grand Union is being designed using Computer Aided Design (CAD)



and would match track spacing and curve radii currently produced by Richard Orr of

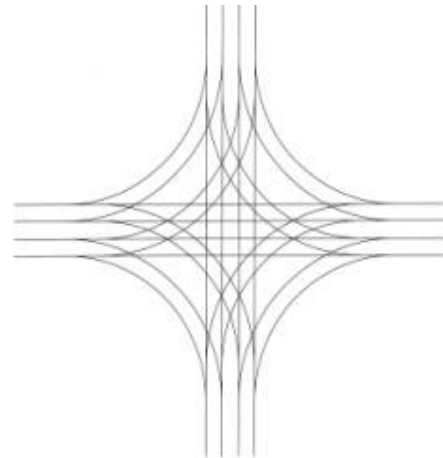


As usual, Jimmy Sparkman is on hand with his really large scale elevated structure and cars. Some of his equipment is shown below:



There were model trolleys in many scales from the super large models of Jimmy Sparkman to some N-scale models running under a live trolley wire. Some of the HO scale modules are shown below:

Omaha, Nebraska. The Grand Union would be available in four pieces. A sketch of the proposed grand union is shown below:



Not only is this a challenging track plan but the overhead wiring is a project in itself. More on these projects will be reported in later issues as events occur. Later during the same visit, the feasibility of producing injection molded trolley shells in current plastics was examined and several possibilities were discussed. By the end of the visit, possibilities were down to two cars and twenty-five roadnames. If you have input or comments about these projects, please Email Custom Traxx at decals@customtraxx.com

Meanwhile, while the industry keeps moving more production to China, Bowser continues to maintain capability in Montoursville. Within the past year, they have acquired a five-axis pad printing machine that allows them to place five different colors and types of data on one item. This machine was demonstrated to us during our visit.



The usual highlight is the Friday morning visit to Boyer Machine in



No traction meet could be complete without a display of the fine imported models of MTS Imports, Inc. Joel Lovitch of MTS is shown discussing the merits of his models with a customer.



On a personal note, Custom Traxx owner George Huckaby finally met Dr Harold Cox about 42 years later than expected. George has been collecting and using Dr Cox's many traction historical books and pamphlets for almost 30 years. George joined the old Metropolitan Philadelphia Railway Association back in 1962. At that time, Dr Cox was producing the club newsletter and the club was involved in supporting a museum effort at Tansboro, NJ, participating in the Reading Iron Horse Rambles and having fan trips on what was the Philadelphia Transportation Company and the Philadelphia Suburban Transit Company. Without ever meeting each other, Doctor Cox moved to Virginia and continued writing books. George joined the U. S. Air Force and eventually settled in Southern California, On Friday evening, May 2nd, these two individuals finally got to talk to each other and to discover the the reasons why it took 42 years to meet each other.

Northampton where injection molding is done. Brian Boyer is shown below explaining critical lengths of certain parts to be made:



Bowser has recently embraced the Ready-To-Run concept in its line of steam locomotives with some hand assembled and finished PRR steam engines and continues to improve their steam engine models with super detailing kits. The PRR R-T-R II Decapod, just released is sold out and the R-T-R T-1 stock was down to two as we arrived. The next locomotive will be the PRR B-6 -0-6-0, As of late May, the B-6 was almost ready for production and it will be a fine loco. The prototype is seen below:



Because it is so good looking, we have already reserved one!

THE END OF AN ERA?

On Saturday, May 17th, the Sahuaro Central Railroad Heritage Preservation Society held what is to be the last indoor Swap Meet at the Family Life Center of the North Phoenix Baptist Church. The next Sahuaro Central Swap Meet will be held on October 18, 2003 at the Adobe Mountain Desert Railroad Park, 22822 N. 43rd Avenue, south of Pinnacle Peak Road, West of Interstate 17.

Sahuaro Central has been holding a premier model railroad swap meet since the 1980s at many locations in the Phoenix area including the BCI Bingo Hall, the Postal Union Hall and the North Phoenix Baptist Church. Custom Traxx displayed cars featuring its new decal sets for Third Avenue Railway System and Brooklyn Double End Peter Witt cars shown below:



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