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August Model Traction Displays!

On August 6th, the Southern California Traction Club had the opportunity to run their models on the tracks and under the wires of the San Diego Railway Museum in Balboa Park in San Diego. They had been invited by the club to share one of their Friday operational days at the club. The SCTC has over 200 certified cars which they use during their many Southern California appearances each year. At the May 1, 2004 Swap Meet, the invitation was extended and some SCTC cars, including the San Diego trolley models shown below were tested with good results. The invitation was accepted and scheduled for August 6th.



Three club members participated in this initial run, Fred Gurzeler, George Huckaby and George Jones. About a dozen cars ran on the layout and another dozen were on display on the layout in various locations. The very large HO trolley layout of the San Diego Model Railroad Club consists of a long single track line with a loop at each end and five passing sidings between the loops. It takes 8 1/2 minutes for a car to make the entire circuit. The layout is powered by four Innovator throttles, as are the modules of the SCTC, although only one was used on this day. San Diego trolleys were featured today with four Class 5 cars and one PCC on display or in operation. A three car train of Class 5 cars, signed for route 16, La Jolla, were run during the day. Included in the train was Mission Yellow Car 447, just completed the previous evening. The train is shown on the east end of the layout while Port of Los Angeles Pacific Electric 1058, Sacramento Northern 1004 and Philadelphia PCC 2100 await their turns on the line.

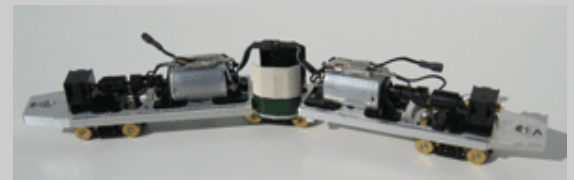


The trolley guru for the SDMRM is none other than Parker Williams. He has erected all the overhead over this 7 scale mile line. He has fashioned all the overhead frogs used as the wire is been made compatible for pantographs, including the 'rocking' Faivley types used on modern electric locomotives. On top of this, the entire trolley layout can be run two-rail. The two hidden loops at the ends of the line have 12" and 15" radius curves, respectively and there is a subway that goes under the main railroad tracks with a 7% grade at each end. Overhead wire in the subway and in both loops consists of code 70 rail with the head removed and turned upside down. There is a definite 'sing' of the trolley shoes as they traverse these areas.

The first SCTC car to make a complete trip over the line was SEPTA 9038, a model of the latest car in the U.S. to be built for operation under trolley poles. This car is still equipped with the very first Bowser 1999 drive issued to Custom Traxx for initial testing back in the summer of 1999.

New Traction Items!

By now, most HO scale traction modelers are aware of the HO scale 1999 Bowser traction drive that has been on the market now for five years and is gaining increasing use both in the United States and in other countries, particularly Australia, where traction modeling is experiencing tremendous growth. Recently, Bowser has been collaborating with Custom Traxx to produce metal floors for HO scale plastic and resin double truck streetcars. The first of the planned floors is being developed for the AHM/IHC Boeing Light Rail Vehicle as used in Boston and San Francisco in the late 1970s through 1990s. The HO scale models were available from AHM starting in 1978 and are still being sold today by Mehano. Serious traction modelers attempting to operate these cars under live wires found serious problems due to the oversize flanges, inability to negotiate sharp radius curves and the light weight of the unit. The model has three trucks, all with 26" wheels, of which only one is powered. The new floor will allow both end trucks to be powered as is the case on the prototype. The second floor is intended for the Ken Kidder double truck Birney cars imported some time ago and can be still found at swap meets and on ebaY. The first Birney floor was received by Custom Traxx for evaluation on August 24th and evaluated. The results will be reported in the October Times. A third floor for a resin shell is also being studied. More about this one later. The first test Boeing LRV chassis with dual power was delivered to Custom Traxx for testing on the rails of the Southern California Traction Club. This prototype articulated floor allowed one Bowser drive in each half of the unit. One Bowser 125100 mechanism (26 inch wheels) was installed in each half of the unit and tested. The unit needed more weight added to improve traction and track worthiness. Then two A-line 20040 Bowser Trolley Flywheel kits were installed. One ounce was added to each half of the unit, using stick on weights placed under the floor. An LRV model obtained in Marrero, Louisiana at a Woolco Store in 1980 had been stripped and painted almost 25 years ago but never run due to the large european flanges used on AHM models of that era. The nominal weight of the entire LRV with plastic shell approached 10 ounces when testing was completed on the test track of the Southern California Traction Club on Wednesday, August 18th. The unit ran flawlessly for over four hours and negotiated curves with radiuses as low as 9 inches. Extended testing began on the modules of the Southern California Traction Club. at the Ventura Great American Train Show on Saturday, August 21st. and he results were excellent. These floors will be offered as kits with assembly and wiring to be customer accomplished. Initial testing was done with only Bowser components. A glimpse of the test chassis is shown below after being wired by Custom Traxx.



The two articulated sections were joined electrically by a Miniaturics three pin micro-mini plug. The two Miniaturics two-pin micro-mini plugs were connected to the trolley poles and the trolley pole hooks. When two A-line 20040 Bowser Flywheel kits were installed, the units looked as seen below just before the shells of MBTA 3402 were installed.



As was the case in both Boston and San Francisco, early testing of these cars was done with trolley poles.



In another scene at the center of the line, PERY 832 passes several San Francisco F line PCC cars. PERY was painted and lettered by David Cowperthwaite of the East Penn Traction Club before being acquired by Fred Gurzeler, last spring. the 832 is also equipped with t 1999 Bowser drive.



Over the weekend of August 21-22, some of the many vacationers beating the heat in the Ventura, CA area got to see the traction models and modules of the Southern California Traction Club at Seaside Park from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM each day. Saturday operations began with the testing of Boston LRV 3402, equipped with the prototype Bowser LRV chassis and two Bowser drives. In fact, it became the star performer for the entire weekend.



The 3402 ran all day Saturday without any problems. Current ground is by all four wheels of the power trucks only. The center truck contributes neither power or electrical grounding. The final floor will have provisions for couplers and headlight/taillights. Below is the 3402 negotiating an Hartel 9" radius curve.

Please remember that this is a first cut at the chassis and there might be changes. Stay tuned to the Times for more news as it develops.

Trolleyville Changes!

In the next few months, readers will notice several changes in the Trolleyville Times and other sections of the Trolleyville web site. Custom Traxx owner George Huckaby has decided to take a more active role in the actual maintenance of the web site, now that he has finally retired from his aerospace career. sharp eyed readers will already notice one of the changes that already taken place starting with this issue of the Times.

Trolleyville was created by Darin Volpe of GLA Computer Services in 1997. The purpose of the web site was to give traction modelers a single source of modeling information, products and prototype information. So the Schoolhouse, Library and Times were created. Darin's signature still adorns the home page. He maintained the entire site including the Custom Traxx web page until Custom Traxx began to slowly assume more of the maintenance functions of both the Custom Traxx and Trolleyville sites. So Custom Traxx decided to acquire some formal training in the operation and maintenance of a web site. but they needed to complete this during the summer of 2004. After checking more than one source of knowledge in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, they found Oxford Institute of Technology in Woodland Hills, CA. This school, owned by Naved and Irfan Nizami, had the perfect instruction methodology and schedule.

So the formal training began in June and ended in August, fitted around model train shows and club work sessions. The feature of Oxford is that they make every attempt to fit the training to the student, especially those of us who are avid MacIntosh users. The first assignment involved the complete rebuilding and upgrading of the Custom Traxx web site using Dreamweaver MX and including photos of either the prototype or a model painted with the appropriate decal set. Custom Traxx is offering a free decal set to anyone who provides a picture of a model lettered with a Custom Traxx decal set that is used in the catalog.

Custom Traxx has been producing the Trolleyville Times since the first edition in 1998 and has maintained the monthly edition since that time. Trolleyville has continuously asked for inputs from other traction modelers for not only the Trolleyville Times but also the Schoolhouse. There have not been many responses but both items continue to be updated.

Want to learn more about computers?

In our dealings with many streetcar and interurban modelers, we still encounter some who wish they knew more about computers so they could take advantage of the internet and catalog their hobby inventory. They sincerely want to know more about computers but do not wish to be made to feel stupid in doing this. They realize that a whole generation has come and been immersed in the computer world and know computing like the back of their hands. Custom Traxx had some of the same concerns when they wished to know more about the web.

Enter Oxford Institute in Woodland Hills, CA. This school was founded in 1997 by Naved and Irfan Nizami, two brothers who came to the U.S. from Pakistan in 1980. Both with advanced degrees and their father, who is Vice-Chancellor of Sir Syed University, in Karachi, they started a Computerland store in 1985 and were among the first to market the then new Macintosh computers.

When Custom Traxx selected Oxford for training, they did so because the school has the philosophy that *...You will know what you need before you leave..* They have a "laid back" style that encourages learning in a pace made for you and designed to let you learn and enjoy it. They will do everything in their power to accommodate your schedule and your academic needs. They thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and the instruction at Oxford. In the next photo is Custom Traxx owner George Huckaby (center) holding his Web Master/ Web Design Completion Certificate along with his instructor Naveed Bhola (left) and one of Oxford's owners Naved Nizami (right).



Elsewhere on the modules (above photo) were PTC2100, SDery 408, 447 and 503. On display in a case were some of the many cars owned by Custom Traxx.



For those of you who missed these appearances, the club will be appearing at the Orange Empire Railway Museum, in their Town Hall on September 18th; the HobbyVisions Hobby Trade Show at the Sands Expo Convention Center in Las Vegas on October 7-10th; Pomona Fairplex Great American Train Show (GATS) November 6-7th; Del Mar Fairgrounds GATS December 4-5 and the Anaheim Convention Center GATS



So if you live in Southern California, especially in the San Fernando Valley and wish to increase your computer knowledge, call Naved at 818-598-8007.

December 11-12. During most of these appearances, club members are available to answer questions on traction modeling and conduct workshops on selected traction topics.

The club is always interested in new members. We have a meeting place in Baldwin Hills, CA and we meet on Tuesday afternoons and Sunday mornings. Call the club at 323-931-1994 or 310-990-5422 if you would like more information about the club. You can also email the club at setractionclub@earthlink.net

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