

The Trolleyville Times

December 2004



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Testing Completed - Bowser HO scale SLRV and LRT floors are now available!

After what seemed like an eternity, the first of the new SLRV floors, Bowser part number #125147, are now available, exclusively from Custom Traxx. The times learned that Custom Traxx received the first batch on November 30. Testing off the Bowser HO scale Boeing SLRV floors and Kawasaki LRT floors were completed by Custom Traxx at the Great American Train Show in Pomona, CA over the weekend of November 6-7. Testing of the Boeing units could not be completed until a two-car train of the Boeing LRVs had been trained and run through 9-inch radius curves without incident. This test was considered essential to ensure that these floors could be used by modelers running under overhead wires and over typical tight curves used by the prototype in both San Francisco and Boston. Because the overhead wires of the Custom Traxx and the Southern California Traction Club are not configured for pantograph operation. Models of Boston cars 3400 and 3402 were used. These units had been equipped with trolley poles during the initial testing of the cars over the Boston system in 1975. The two units ran flawlessly for the entire show and again the following weekend at the Northern California Model Railroad Show on November 13-14.



Because the units are equipped with power trucks on each end similar to the prototype, the units run similar to the prototype. Two motors also contribute to a much smoother operation as the motors are wired in parallel. Below are the two units negotiating a nine-inch radius curve.



As is the case on all Custom Traxx Bowser powered units, both the A and B sections of each test LRV were equipped with the A-line 20040 flywheels. Because we operate from overhead wire, we also added one ounce of weight under the floor between the truck in each A and B unit. While we recommend the A-line flywheels for all HO scale Bowser trolley mechanisms, adding the weight may not be necessary when running the SLRVs in the two-rail mode, but it certainly can't hurt. These floors only will be available initially from Custom Traxx and the first lot is already partially sold out. The Boeing SLRV floor is available assembled, ready for two-rail operation, with two Bowser traction 125100 mechanisms for only **\$80.00**. The Kawasaki Single End (SE) Light Rail Transit (LRT) vehicle floor, part number 125148, will retail for **\$62.00**. It will contain one Bowser 125100 mechanism and is available assembled, ready for two-rail operation. Neither contain flywheels, but the A-line 20040 Flywheel kit can be used on this mechanisms and is available separately. Both of these floors snap in to their respective shells.

Check Section VI of the Custom Traxx catalog at www.customtraxx.com for specific ordering information.

Beginning in 2005, Custom Traxx will become a distributor for Bowser products, including Stewart, Cal-Scale and other lines under Bowser ownership! More about this in the next Trolleyville Times.

The Trolleyville Mission

When Trolleyville was created in 1997, the purpose was twofold. The first goal was to try and gather all the model traction suppliers under one electronic roof and make them accessible on-line to a new generation of light-rail and heritage trolley modelers. After all, since 1975, new light rail vehicles had appeared on existing systems in Boston, San Francisco and Philadelphia (shown below):



New systems had opened in San Diego, Edmonton, Calgary and Baltimore. Even car-loving California had new lines in San Jose, Sacramento and, by 1990, even Los Angeles. Shown below are the Dallas, Denver, Portland, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles vehicles. The emergence of these vehicles had been the most significant growth in railroading in the past twenty years.



Another Fine Northern California Model Railroad Show!

[How to Run a Good Model Train Show!]

November 13-14, 2004 was another beautiful fall weekend for the Northern California Model Train Show (NCMTS), formerly known as International Railfair. The show is sponsored by (1) The Sierra Division, Pacific Coast Region (PCR) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA); (2) the Sacramento Modular Railroaders, (3) the Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club, and the European Train Enthusiasts (ETE). all four organizations support the show financially and share the benefits or losses.

As has been the case for many years, the show was held at the Placer County Fairgrounds in Roseville, CA in three different halls, Johnson, Jones & Lauppe. There were at least two large layouts in each building and there were at least one Lionel, one American Flyer and one Large Scale layout somewhere at the show. There were two ETE layouts in Lauppe Hall, Both contained lots of catenary and the scenery had a distinct European appearance.

After a string of model train shows over the summer with lackluster attendance and less than brisk vendor sales, this show was excellent in all categories. During the show, we sat down with several attendees and found seven rules that successful model train show promoters should follow:

1. **KNOW YOUR VENUE.** Local clubs that conduct train shows have a great advantage over non-local companies. They advertise by word-of-mouth and by the local train lovers grapevine. The clubs know the best bang for the buck in local advertising. The clubs know the peculiarities of the show locations, the hall employees that they are doing business with and how to "work the local system". They have local "pull" with local authorities and do not hesitate to employ it. If you are an out-of-town company, acquire and maintain working relationships with the local model railroad clubs and get them to participate, even if financial incentives are involved. Try and get influential local club members to do some advance work for you. Do not allow a situation to occur where the show in "boycotted" by local clubs.

2. **GET COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.** First of all, try and get more than one organization or club to support the show. In the case of the Northern California Model Railroad Show, there are three clubs, the local chapter of the NMRA, the Garden Railway Association and the Rainbow Girls all backing the show and getting some financial benefit from it.

3. **MINIMIZE EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER TURNOVER.** We have been familiar with this show since 1992 and most of the same people are still involved with the show so the wheel does not have to be invented each time a show is conducted. (i.e. One couple visits from their home in Idaho to ensure that the NCMRS runs as it should). Make sure that all information about the show, including vendor preferences and requests are stored in central files where everyone concerned can get access. Never allow just one person to have all the show information.

4. **MANAGE COSTS TO BOTH VENDORS AND THE PUBLIC.** At this show, parking was not \$10.00, not \$8.00 and not \$6.00, but \$1.00 and was adjacent to the show buildings. No long walks here. The show costs \$6.00 for adults, kids under 12 free and there is a Sunday Family Special for \$10.00. There are snacks available along with hotdogs for \$2.00 and nachos. Breakfast (eggs, sausage and pancakes with coffee and orange juice) is served each morning to vendors by a local group of girls for \$3.75. They are all pleasant, well groomed and professional young women and girls, supervised by adult men and women, all of whom seemed to love to be there serving breakfast beginning as early as 7:00 A.M. each day. We reported on the Rainbow Girls in the December 2000 issue of the Trolleyville Times. Shown below is just a portion of the Rainbow Girls Organization that supported the show.



The major model railroad manufacturers have almost totally ignored these events. They are making Union Pacific Challengers and Veranda turbines, all of which have not seen active service in fifty years. Meanwhile, the next generation was largely on-line and that was the ideal place to reach them. Unfortunately, except for a marginally operational model of the Boeing Standard Light Rail Vehicle (SLRV), originally marketed by AHM in the late 1970s and later by IHC and Mehano, no other relatively affordable ready-to-run models of any of modern United States light rail vehicles have been available. In fact, the SLRV models are currently NOT available as we go to press. Models of German and Japanese Light Rail Vehicles abound in both Germany and Japan. Even though a great deal of the current U. S. vehicles have origins in Germany, Japan and Italy, still no models after almost twenty years of continuous growth in the numbers of lines and vehicles.

Custom Traxx, one of the Trolleyville vendors, has been working with Bowser to produce floors for current model electric transit vehicles. Just prior to the end of November 2004, milled aluminum floors equipped with the excellent Bowser 1999 drives are now available for HO scale modes of the Boeing Standard Light Rail Vehicle (Boston & San Francisco) and the Kawasaki Single End Light Rail Transit Vehicle (Philadelphia).

Trolleyville's second purpose was to let modelers know of the vendors that could supply them with the necessary items for their traction layouts and which one's were responsive to their traction needs. Many of the model trolley pioneers did not embrace the internet and left the business for one reason or another prior to going on-line. Although Richard Orr's street railway track is now on the internet, many other traction products did not go there. Modelers must rely on phone and letter contact with some of these vendors for service. Trolleyville wanted to let modelers know which of these vendors were reliable and which were not and that is where some of the problem lies. Many of these vendors, who will not be named here, tend to take a less than businesslike approach to the hobby. Early in November 2004, a modeler from Virginia called us to complain about the level of service he was getting from not one, not two but three different small model traction manufacturers. In one case, he had even used their shopping cart and the vendor had been paid but he could not get anyone to confirm shipping of the items. Here was a customer just trying to buy a product from a vendor who spends good money advertising in model railroad magazines and maintains an internet web site and then for some reason feels that it is not important to respond to customers in a rapid manner. Trolleyville attempted to contact one of these vendors and got the same run around. We understand that some of these vendors are one-man operations, and that the owners have full-time employment in other areas. But, no one put a gun to their head and told them to advertise a service to modelers. **They talk the talk...so they should walk the walk!**

We at Trolleyville are asked on many occasions to recommend a source of one traction product or another and we gladly so so until we get complaints about the lack of responsiveness of certain vendors. Starting in January 2005, as a service to trolley modelers, Trolleyville will be letting modelers know of these vendors. So vendors beware. When we hear about you being non-responsive or extremely tardy in responding to customers, we will let our readers know!

World's Greatest Hobby On Tour Announces Shows!

The World's Greatest Hobby on Tour (WGHoT) announced their new approach

There is an ATM positioned in the middle of the five buildings where the train show is being located. Vendors are not charged for electrical power, after all this is an electric train show. Bring your extension cord, plug it in and tape it down and you are in business. Tables are available at \$45.00 each, not \$50.00 or \$60.00. To ensure that tables are available to the most vendors, there is a small surcharge for more than three tables per vendor. Restrooms are located in each hall and are clean, well lighted and well maintained. They all were upgraded since the 2003 show.

5. MAKE THE SHOW DIVERSE BUT ALL INCLUSIVE. Since the show is hosted by three model railroad clubs and the local chapter of the NMRA, the Northern California Model Railroad Show encourages and accepts anything that has anything to do with trains and model trains. Toy, tinplate and scale items are available. The European Train Enthusiasts are present along with N scale, HO, O and large scale layouts. There are three separate buildings full of trains. Outside, there is a live steam model train and a larger live steam engine pulling cars that people can ride and a hand car for visitors to ride on.

6. HAVE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE STAFF. At the Northern California Model Railroad show are wearing green vests with International Rail Fair logos on them. Dick Witzens of the Sierra Division models one of the vests,



If there is a problem, you know who to go to immediately. Each hall has assigned staff and they are knowledgeable about that building. The Sahuaro Central staff in Phoenix, AZ wear fluorescent yellow hats. You can pick those guys out in a crowd.

7. ENSURE ENJOYABILITY. Make sure that your show staff realizes that the best way to ensure the success of a model train show is to make it enjoyable for both the public and the vendors. Nothing turns the public off more than a group of vendors being overheard complaining about the show promoters and how they have "let the ball drop" on this or that issue. If you keep your vendors happy, and advertise in the correct forums, the public will come and be happy. Both vendors and the public will come again for the next show. That ensures success!

In short, International Railfair, Inc. knows how to present a great model train show. The Placer County Fairgrounds is neither a Taj Mahal nor a Pomona-Fairplex, but it is an adequate, clean facility with clean rest rooms, level concrete floors in all buildings and friendly competent people. Every year that we arrive, we can see evidence of some upgrade, improvement or repair.

All Aboard for Roseville in November 2005!

train shows. These shows will be aimed primarily at the general public, who have a demonstrated love of trains instead of the continuously dwindling number of avid model railroaders. WGHoT is sponsored by the Model Railroad Industry Association and managed by CIA Incorporated. CIA Incorporated is headed by the Chairman, Dave Swanson, who with a team of other model train enthusiasts, developed the Great American Train Show in the 1980s CIA Incorporated still operates the most successful monthly train show in the country, the Great Midwest Train Show in Wheaton, Illinois.

The show schedule is:

- Dec 11-12, 2004 - Edison NJ, Expo Center;
- Jan 8-9, 2005 - Saint Louis MO, America's Center
- Feb. 19-20, 2005 - Long Beach CA, Convention Center
- Feb. 26-27, 2005 - Denver CO, Convention Center.

Each show will feature over 50,000 sq ft of railroad oriented entertainment including a live musical stage; Choo Choo Charlie the Railroad Robot; a huge children's Railroad Playland; and The Walt Disney Railroad story Exhibition.

Those of you who always wanted to try model trains and have been put off by indifferent hobby shop employees, confusing instructions by experienced model railroader associates and any other reasons, should visit this show and find out what you have really been missing. For more information, contact the WGHoT staff by phone at 630-279-5094 or by email at Staff@wghshow.com.

You owe it to yourself as a lover of model trains to attend these shows if you are in these areas. The future of model railroading will be affected by these shows, one way or another, so be there and see for yourself.

Pomona-Fairplex Revisited

The Great American Train Show was again held at Pomona-Fairplex, Pomona, CA, in Bldg 7A on November 6-7. Custom Traxx had made the commitment to appear at this show prior to the last show. They were extremely unhappy with the condition of this building and we told you about it in the April 2004 Times. So after all this time, what is the state of this building and Pomona-Fairplex? Well, the hole in the wall is gone, replaced by a roll-up door. The rest rooms are the same and they are still too "gross" to be shown here. The same putrid smell wafted from the floor in the same location where the Southern California Traction Club had set up last March. Curtis Noffsinger of Fairplex was on hand and verified that the odor was still there and they had to do something about it. He also stated that the Fairgrounds was going to renovate that building within the next year. Restrooms would be upgraded and a concrete floor would replace the current asphalt.

As it turns out, The Great American Train Show is the **ONLY** bargain at this location. It costs only **\$7.00** to enter and kids are free. With some coupons, you can get in for \$6.00. The most inexpensive parking at Pomona is \$6.00 [Signs posted at the parking lot entrance call this "**GOOD PARKING**"] and that is the rear of the open, uncovered lot. If you desire closer parking in the same uncovered lot, you can pay \$10.00 [Signs posted call this "**BETTER PARKING**"]. Either way you have a trek down the "Burma Road" through a dark and sometimes unlighted tunnel under Whyte Avenue. Of course, Fairplex makes the adjacent Hotel parking lot available to Fairplex visitors at \$10.00 per car. Even the employees taking your money in the lots admitted that the price was excessive. It seems so odd that parking your car costs more than attending the show which was the main purpose for coming. Getting a snack is another hit to your wallet. Check the menu below left and notice that the first sandwich costs more than admission to the show!

GRINDERS & MORE	
Ham - Turkey - Roast Beef	
Super Hero - 3 Meats	7.25
TRY OUR COMBO MEALS <small>INCLUDES CHIPS & HERO DRINK</small>	
Hero - 1 Meat	6.25
Chef's Salad	6.75
Hot Dog	3.50
Chips	1.50
Add Cheese	.75
SODAS	
Lg	3.50
Reg	2.80
Coffee	1.50
Bottled Water	2.50
Plus Tax	



Fortunately, the excellent garden railway has *not yet* been "kicked-out" like the O scale club was last July. They still are around as the sign, above right, shows.

In summary, Pomona-Fairplex, especially Building 7A, is a class D facility charging Class A prices. We still recommends highly that you go almost anywhere else for an enjoyable outing!