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World's Greatest Hobby On Tour 2006 Edition

Beginning in late 2004, model train lovers were elated to have a new show supported by most of the large model train manufacturers. Here was a show that would visit at least four different cities each year, featuring the newest train items and the best local model railroads. By March 2005, the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour (WGHT) had delighted over 100,000 visitors in Edison, NJ (WGH-I), Saint Louis, MO (WGH-II), Long Beach, CA (WGH-III), and Denver, CO (WGH-IV). These shows were light years ahead of any previous train shows and the reaction by the public surprised many a hobby manufacturer and most of the avid hobbyists themselves.

Trolleyville had both reporters and vendors at the Long Beach show and we reported the show in our [March 2005 issue](#). We were elated at the 19,000 visitors, the quantity and quality of the vendors, the live music and the extra attractions. Even a leaky roof from a poorly maintained building and a partial freeway closure early Saturday morning due to heavy rains could not dampen the spirit and intensity of a great show. But by the end of the 2005 season, the shows were averaging over 25,000 visitors per show.

For 2006, shows were presented in Houston, TX (WGH-V), Salt Lake City, (WGH-VI) Washington, DC (WGH-VII) and the Twin Cities (St. Paul, MN)(WGH-VIII). So far a similar large number of visitors have attended these four shows. Even with the now well known 16" of snow which fell beginning on Saturday, February 11, 2006, 20,000 visitors visited that show. With the estimated 25,000 people that attended this show in Saint Paul, attendance at the 2006 version of the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour shows, exceeded the 2005 records by 10%. The growth in the attendance figures is really more impressive when you consider that in 2005, two of the largest U.S. markets were visited and that the markets visited in 2006 were smaller. Watch out for 2007!

Trolleyville was on hand for the Twin Cities show (WGH-VIII), since it is the last 2006 show. We were curious to see how the show had progressed since we reviewed the Long Beach Show (WGH-III) in 2005. We were not disappointed. At 10:00 AM the doors opened and people literally swamped the ticket sellers. By 10:30 AM the crowds were so large and movement in certain areas was next to impossible. We even purchased over \$100.00 of model train items. In clear, 12 degree weather, the cars and the people were lined up waiting for this show to open.



Since we have received many emails from readers about another train show which seems to advertise more than it produces, we checked the advance material for these shows. The WGHT ads say that they will have (1) Huge Operating Layouts, (2) 300 booths of manufacturers and retailers, (3) Over 100 trains for kids to operate, (4) Demos, seminars and new products, and Live music and much, much more! Large manufacturers such as Atlas, Bachmann, Digitrax, Kalmbach and Kato have their company logos featured in the multi-color ads placed in Model Railroader.

Trolleyville was on site when the hall opened on Saturday at 8:00 AM for the last vendor set-up times. The World's Greatest Hobby on Tour allows vendor set-up on the preceding Thursday, Friday and early Saturday morning. This permits even the most complicated vendor displays to be presented at the show for the public enjoyment. One major manufacturer told the reporter that this was the easiest set-up ever.

Not only were those firms at the show with great displays but they were joined by Athearn, Broadway Limited, Hartland Locomotive Works, LGB of America, Lionel LLC, Marklin, MTH Electric Trains, Overland Models & Tower 55, Railway Classics, The Walt Disney Railroad Story and Woodland Scenics. But these were among the

San Diego begins planning for a heritage trolley line!

Following the lead of sister California cities, San Francisco, San Jose and Los Angeles, San Diego obtained two PCC cars on December 14, 2005. Cars 1122 (foreground) and 1123, formerly of San Francisco Municipal Railway are shown just outside the city on Interstate 5 just before delivery. (Photo from Karl Johnson).



Both were moved into the shops for eventual restoration. It is hoped to have both cars in operation by mid-2008. Car 1123 is shown inside the 12th & Imperial San Diego Trolley facility (photo courtesy of John Smatlak).



This will be no easy task. Both cars were built in 1946 for the Saint Louis Public Service, where they ran until purchased by San Francisco Muni in 1959. They ran in San Francisco until 1982 and were not exactly in pristine condition at the time that they were removed from service. The cars were purchased from Gunnar Hendroule of South Lake Tahoe, who acquired them from the Muni after regular PCC service ended. Since that time, the two cars were sitting outside in Nevada until they arrived at San Diego. According to P. Allen. Copeland, the cars are to be operated on the downtown loop in San Diego starting from 12th & Imperial, via the PRW along the waterfront to the Union Station, B St., and 12th back to Imperial. A non-profit subsidiary of the San Diego Trolley (SDT), "San Diego Vintage Trolley" is being set up to own and operate a special downtown service using older cars and to offer additional service in the downtown area that will be operated on the present SDT tracks on a loop by the SDT. Both cars are equipped with GE electrical equipment. To operate over the SDT, the trolley poles will have to be replaced with pantographs. Car numbers and a paint scheme have not been decided at

over 80 different vendors and 20 different operating layouts that were at the show. [For a complete list of the activities at this show, click here!](#)

We were impressed with the large model of the famous Aerotrain provided by the National Railroad Museum, having never seen this model previously.



We stopped physically counting booths after 200 as the hall was completely filled with displays, selling vendors and layouts. There were continuous demos at the Woodland Scenics booth which was aimed to the level of show attendees. There were nine other demos in the show, all very interesting and well presented. There were so many trains in the hall for the children to operate or to play with. So that area was mobbed all day as you see in the next photo.



Truth in reporting forces us to state that there was no live music. The live band had been introduced at the first show to differentiate this show from the not-so-great shows that dare to call themselves great. The band scheduled to provide live music cancelled just before the beginning of WGH-VII due to the forecasted snowstorm. This was the same snowstorm that dumped 16" of snow on the area between Saturday evening and Sunday morning and reduced the overall attendance at that show to 20,000. Not ONE complaint was ever received. The plain fact is that the show is so interesting for the visitors that the live music was not missed. There was a low level of tasteful music in the background of the PA system and it was just fine.

Another feature of all the WGH shows is the riding train for the public. Considerable floor space is devoted to this operation for both the pleasure and safety of the public and it is a real winner with families with small children.



Trolleyville interviewed over 16 of the major manufacturers and vendors at the show and their reaction to the show was universally extremely positive. Statements such as "...unbelievable crowds...", "...sold thirty model structures in four hours...", "...best thing happening in the model railroad hobby...", "...have never seen this many young people at a train show before..." and "... should have done this five years ago..." were some of the comments made.

We spoke extensively with H. Lee Riley, Vice-President Product Development, Bachmann Industries. Mr. Riley has been involved in the model train hobby for over 38 years and was in dead center or the edges of the design

this time. But we are betting on the San Diego PCC paint scheme with numbers 529 and 530.

More traction decals from Custom Traxx

After considerable research, decals have been made available for another Fairfield Traction Models brass imported car. In 1966, Fairfield Traction Models imported 300 HO scale models of the seven lightweight interurbans delivered in 1918 to the Cincinnati, Lawrenceburg & Aurora Electric Street Railway Company. These cars ran until 1930 when operations ceased on the CL&A. The cars were then transferred to the Sand Springs Railway in 1934 where they ran until 1948. One of the cars has been preserved at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL.

These cars were noteworthy as they had 24 inch wheels and four 25 horsepower motors, allowing the lowest step to be only 12" above the top of the rail head. This feature would be one of the main features of the PCC car, which would not be introduced to the public until eighteen years later.

Finding information about the color scheme of cars on a railroad that ceased operation in 1930 was not an easy task. It it were not for two Cincinnati area railfans, namely Ross Aldrich and Earl Clark, the decal sets for these cars would not have been possible.

Last month, Custom Traxx released two decal sets for these cars in HO scale. Set CN-915 finishes these cars in the green paint scheme they had while in service on the CL&A. Although it is hard to see in the next photo, the C L & A E STR R. R. CO. lettering is provided for the letterboard. Both the original scheme with the gold letterboard lettering and pin stripes and the later scheme with the striping eliminated and white lettering are contained in this set, which retails for \$3.95.



Set CN-68 finishes the same cars as they looked when they ran on the Sand Springs Railway in Oklahoma. This set includes the Sand Springs herald, both silver and white lettering and the black and white striping on the anticlimber skirt. It retails for \$4.95.



Southern California Traction Club starts new urban module!

and development of many major model train projects, including the HO scale Bachmann Cityscapes structures introduced a few years ago. He was extremely supportive of the approach being used by the operators of the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour shows, CIA Incorporated. He told us "...this is the only way to do it...". He stated very strongly that the model train hobby needed to get to the kids but he reminded us that they had to get to the parents before the kids. He noted that kids do not drive and do not have money. Their parents have all of that. So the hobby must target the parents. This show was going in that direction.

We noted several airings of a television ad for the show on Friday evening and Saturday morning at times when parents would most likely be watching. The commercial shown was developed by the CIA Incorporated staff and would catch the eyes and ears of anyone who liked model trains of any type.

The show is open to the public on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and then on Sunday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, thus giving ample time for visitors to check out every display to their satisfaction.

In conclusion, Trolleyville reporters have visited National Train Shows since 1996, The Great Train Expo and the other national train shows and have concluded that your best bet for a train show is the World's Greatest Hobby on tour show when it comes to your neighborhood. There are only four of these currently each year so don't miss one when it is anywhere close to you. You will not be disappointed!! After eight shows, all of which were resounding successes, the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour shows are proven worth attending and if you like model trains and you live in the area of a show and do not attend, you lose and lose BIG TIME!

At a meeting on February 5th, members of the Southern California Traction Club began working on module 060, which will be an urban module similar to one of their current modules. This one, as is the current plan, will have an operating double track subway line, under the main street, visible to the public from the front of the module. Past experiences have taught the club that it will take twelve to eighteen months to complete this module, but, it is the current plan to complete the main line, make it operational and work on the module at club shows so that the public can see how modules are constructed. The module, which is 48" by 28" will have another module, 48" by 24" directly behind it and a streetcar will be able to continuously run on these two modules independent of the main line traffic. Several of the Bachmann Cityscapes structures, stored for years in pristine condition, will be assembled and used for these new modules. DCC may even be introduced to the club via these two modules.

When finished, this should be a beauty.