

January 2007



Adobe Flash Player is no longer supported

Great Train Expo arrives in Southern California

After enduring continuously deteriorating model train shows since 2002, over 5,500 model train lovers in San Diego finally got to experience a professionally run train show during the weekend of December 2-3 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Dave Swanson, CEO of Competitive Intelligence Advertising (CIA) was on site on both Friday and Saturday ensuring that the show would meet the high standards adopted by their company. Dave and CIA are also responsible for the fine World's Greatest Hobby on Tour shows presented during the last three years. Kurt Jablonski was the show manager and, as can now be expected, provided an excellent show for the vendors and the general public at large.

One of the great features of the Great Train Expo (GTE) is its diversity, as all facets of the hobby are represented. Due to the fantastic level of advertising for the show, more out-of-town vendors are participating in the show. These vendors add much needed variety to the shows and encourage more visitors to come.



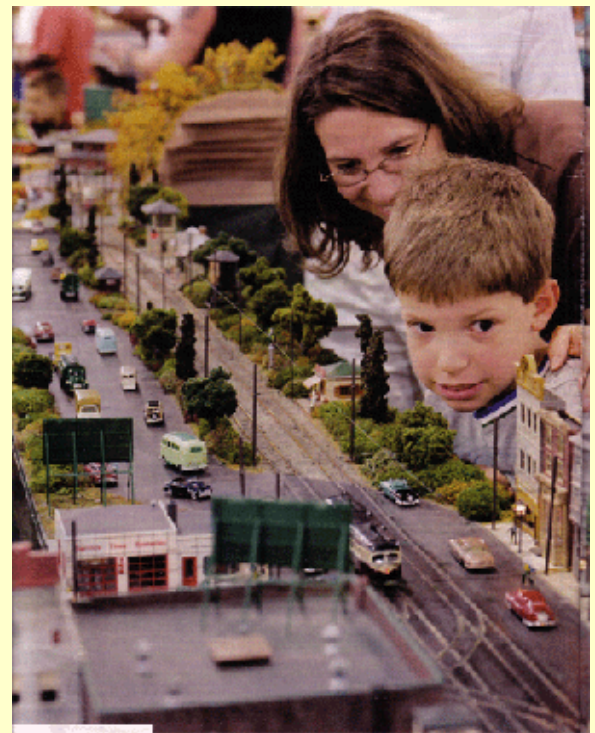
Speaking of advertising, the GTE folks expended almost \$17,000.00 among the following resources for this show:

1. Forty-four TV commercials on XDTV (UPN) and KSWB (WB).
2. Thirty ads in the San Diego Union Tribune.
3. 3,079 email addresses emailed three times prior to the show.
4. 7,933 direct mail postcards to past attendees.
5. Full page, four color ad in Model Railroader magazine.
6. Full page, four color ad in Classic Toy Trains magazine.
7. PR Campaign to all major media outlets. This led to a comprehensive article in the Sunday San Diego newspaper with a lot of photos.

The above data is readily available and is provided to the vendors upon their arrival at the show. After reviewing the advertising effort, it is no wonder that such a large attendance was achieved. All vendors are provided a complete floor plan at least two weeks prior to their arrival at the show. This really facilitates the move-in process. There were twelve excellent layouts at the show ranging from Z-scale (shown below):

Trolley Modeling Featured in Life Magazine!

Life Magazine, now America's Weekend Magazine, featured a collection of photos taken at the July 2006 Convention of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The largest photo shows a modular trolley layout with six-year old Timothy Vogel having just watched a model of Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Co 11-24 series St Louis Cars pass by. The modules belonged to Jack Spedden of the East Penn Traction Club.



The article, which was enclosed in the December 3, 2006 Sunday Los Angeles Times, stated that 23,000 train lovers had attended the show, that \$500,000,000 is spent on model railroading each year and that one of the largest model railroad layouts ever assembled was the size of a football field and that a round trip on that layout takes a model train over 90 minutes.

Now if we can only get model train manufacturers to make models of light rail vehicles, subway-elevated cars and other items that are less than ten years old.....

Trolley Modelers on Another Continent!

During one of the Southern California Traction Club appearances last year, we were provided some excellent photos of an 8' by 2' HO/OO trolley module in Great Britain by a member of the club, Terry McElarney. The photos were of such quality that we thought one of them should be shown here. Enjoy!



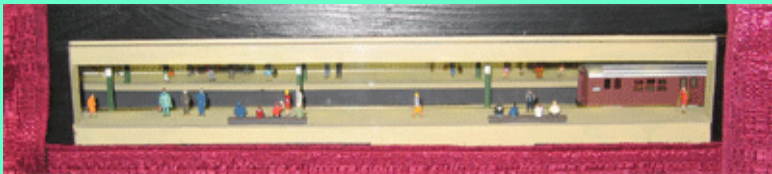
to large scale. The next photo shows a nice large scale double cab work car that was spotted on the Door Hollow Short Line.

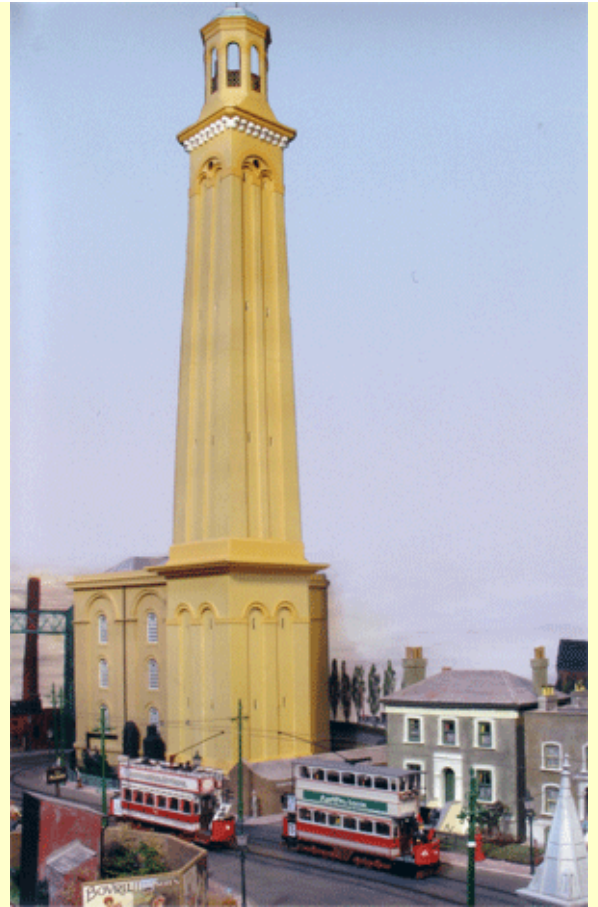


The European modelers are not ignored as the European Train Enthusiasts were one of the HO scale layouts at the show.



The Southern California Traction Club was present, displaying subway trains, trolley buses along with their normal trolley cars operating from live overhead wire.





These pictures are from the Tramway and Light Railway Society (TRLS), which is one of the United Kingdom's three tramway societies each having special aims. The major aim of TRLS is the promotion of tram modeling. The Thames Valley group of the TRLS is a semi-informal group formed from within the societies membership to organize lectures, modeling, completions, film / DVD shows of interest to anyone interested enough to come along. Their meetings are advertised in the magazines of all three groups.

The other two societies are The Tramway Museum Society (TMS) aiming to fund restoration projects and maintain interest and contact with the National Tramway Village At Crich; and the Light Rail Transport Association (LRTA) which aims to study and promote expansion of new tramway systems world wide.

KCPS 551 Returns Home!

After almost 50 years of traveling and carrying passengers in Kansas City, Toronto and San Francisco, all-electric PCC 551 recently returned to Kansas City. Car 551 was one of 85 cars ordered by the Kansas City Public Service in December 1946 and delivered in December 1947. After just ten years of service, 551 was sold to the Toronto Transportation Commission where it was renumbered 4752 and ran for around 20 years. In the mid 1970's during the construction of BART in San Francisco, car 551 was sold to the San Francisco Municipal Railway and assigned number 1190. When the Boeing Light Rail Vehicles began to arrive in the early 1980's, car 551 was idled and eventually ended up at the Bay Area Electric Railway Museum. A Kansas City urban renewal group, bought the car and sent it up to the Seattle area for repair. All old body rot and damaged steel was replaced and the car's exterior was repainted into the final Kansas City colors, and it was shipped off to the Kansas City Union Station redevelopment area, where the car is now, and seen in the photo below:



A detailed very old Mantua single trucker shown above was spotted on one of the vendors tables during the show.



So the bottom line is, when the Great Train Expo visits your area, plan to go! Most likely, you will be really glad you did! The next shows in the Western half of the United States are:

- Anaheim, CA - January 6-7, 2007
Anaheim Convention Center, 800 West Katella Avenue
- Sacramento, CA - January 13-14, 2007
California Exposition & Fairgrounds - 1600 Exposition Blvd
- Salt Lake City, UT - February 10-11, 2007
Utah State Fairpark - 155 North 1000 West
- Denver, CO - February 24-25, 2007
National Western Complex - 4655 Humboldt Street
- San Francisco, CA - March 3-4, 2007
Cow Palace - Geneva & Santos

San Francisco Gets Another PCC!

Showing the effects of a winter trip across the Rocky Mountains, car 1073, dressed in one of the colorful paint schemes used by El Paso (Texas) City Lines, arrived in San Francisco early Monday morning, December 18th.



El Paso was one of only two Texas Cities to operate PCC cars, the other being Dallas.

[See 'San Francisco PCC' Column 2]

HO scale Traction Modeling Today's Reality!

[A Trolleyville Editorial]

For a few years now, the model railroading hobby has become dominated by ready-to-run items. Older modelers have regretted the disappearance of many of the familiar kits but they bought many of the new items. The truth of the situation is that today's modelers want to see something move as quickly as possible and after that they will try to add items. Experienced modelers all know that you get more for your budget when you use kits. But it takes time for newer modelers to realize this. Other than Bachmann trolleys with their questionable quality and appearance, there are no ready-to-run trolleys in HO scale. Now there is on-board sound, some of it fantastic, in the rest of the hobby. Just a few days ago, we viewed and heard the sound of a new HO Athearn Santa Fe diesel at a well known hobby shop in Culver City, CA. While some modelers were questioning the quality, it sounded impressive to me. What was even more impressive is that this sound system can be operated on DC layouts with a separately supplied control box. The model train manufacturers know that there are many modelers with funds to spend on their hobby who have not and will not embrace DCC, so they are marketing to them. Then, we saw a demonstration of the new MTH PRR K-4 Steam Locomotive with the synchronized smoke and sound. You have to see this to believe it. This engine has sound and smoke, with puffs of smoke synchronized with the chuffs of the pistons. Even non-Pennsy fans love this engine. We also saw the overwhelmingly amazed reaction of the public, many of whom had never seen a steam engine. There are many models of other diesels currently on the rails, also with on-board sound. Meanwhile, despite the crowds on the PCC cars in San Francisco and all the public school children who get free rides on every new light rail system when it opened, efforts to persuade model train manufacturers to provide HO scale models of modern light rail vehicles or heritage trolley cars have fallen largely on deaf ears. Colorful PCC trolleys run continuously in San Francisco so recording sound and paint schemes should be much easier than a Union Pacific "Big Boy" but still nothing is on the horizon.

Without a quality ready-to-run trolley with sound option, traction modeling may be in more trouble than the rest of the hobby. Model train shows are normally the best place to get new hobbyists, but as far as encouraging new traction devotees, with no ready-to-run quality models and the competition from the rest of the hobby, the shows may not produce many new traction modelers. Custom Traxx revealed to a Times reported that during 2007, they will migrate to being a 100% internet business and catalogs will normally only be available on-line. So today's traction suppliers continue to serve mainly established traction customers, who continue to age and there are almost no entry level ready-to-run models of today's electric vehicles for today's modeler. This is not a healthy situation for the traction portion of model railroading or any business in general. But it is such a pleasure to assemble and paint a trolley car and watch it operate from powered overhead wires. The public really enjoys watching these cars at model train shows. Ask any member of the East Penn Traction Club or the Southern California Traction club about the public reaction to their operating trolleys.

Kansas City all-electric PCC cars were unique due to the then KCPS President, Powell C. Groner. After purchasing 24 air-electric PCC cars and liking the large windows on those cars, he immediately disliked the standee windows and the smaller windows on the standard all-electric PCC car. So, he told the Saint Louis Car Co that he would have "none of those little apertures" on his cars, so larger windows were used only on the 160 all-electric PCC cars delivered to Kansas City. These unique cars would run in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Tampico, and Toronto during their lifetime.

Southern California Traction Club Elects New Board of Directors!

Entering their twelfth year of operation, the Southern California Traction club decided to embark on a different course when they elected their Board of Directors on November 26, 2006. This is truly the beginning of the second generation of the club since none of the original club founders is now on the Board of Directors. The three members of the Board, which oversees all club operations are (left to right) Pete DeBeers, George Jones and John McWhirter.



Pete DeBeers lives in Pasadena, CA, joined the club in May 2002 and has forty certified models that can be used during club appearances. George Jones is a Culver City, CA lifetime resident, joined the club in October 1997 and brought many innovations, including the six-foot module and special effects, to the club. John McWhirter resides in Ladera Heights (Los Angeles, CA), joined the club in April 2005 and can be credited with bringing DCC, the subway module and a push to add detail to all club modules. The next appearance of the club will be January 6-7, 2007 at the Great Train Expo at the Anaheim Convention Center. It should be worth the trip!

['San Francisco PCC' from Column 1]

El Paso City Lines purchased 20 of the 28 San Diego PCC cars in 1949, added front trolley poles and ran them on the 3.2 mile international car line between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez. The trolley service lasted until 1973. Car 1073 is shown at Geneva next to car 1077 after being towed into the yard by Melbourne Tram 496. The car will be given final touches by Muni's crack maintenance team and eventually readied for service. The first of these Newark cars has been released for training purposes so expect these beauties on Market Street in early 2007.



For you modelers, here is a rear end view.

Meanwhile, for those of you who engage in this very rewarding portion of the hobby, please visit www.trolleyville.com for information, vendors and a list of traction publications available. If you are a new or potential trolley modeler, make sure that you review the Custom Traxx coupon at the end of this issue. Custom Traxx, in addition to their decals, provides A-line/Proto Power West repowering parts, Bowser traction drives and accessories, trolley poles in both HO and O scales from Miniatures by Eric, NWSL Nickel Silver Wheels for Bowser traction drives, other traction related parts and a few traction brass models. For more information, please call 310-990-5422.



CUSTOM TRAXX OFFER TO NEW HO SCALE TROLLEY MODELERS!

If you are a model railroader interested in traction, Custom Traxx will assist you in obtaining your first operating trolley. Custom Traxx will fully assemble, paint and letter one HO scale Bowser trolley at a low introductory price.

[Final price depends on the complexity of the paint scheme desired and decals needed!]

1. The Bowser trolley (PCC, Brill, IRR or Jewett), decals, and any other items for the car must be purchased from Custom Traxx;
2. Total price to be pre-negotiated with the customer prior to the order being placed;
3. Full payment must be received at the time of the order and this coupon must be sent with the order;

4. This offer is limited to *new trolley modelers and one per individual*, and,
5. This offer expires on January 31, 2007. Call 310-990-5422 or email at decals@customtraxx.com for more information!

[Trolleyville](#) | [Factory](#) | [Trolleyville Times](#) | [Info Center/Real Estate Office](#) | [School](#) | [Library](#) | [Clubhouse](#) | [Downtown](#)

Copyright 2006-2007 Custom Traxx