

DON'T MISS THE GREAT TRAIN EXPO WHEN IT COMES TO

Resin Traction Kits. . . Why Not?

Over the past years, many individuals have made traction kits available in various scales with shell cast in resin. Resin casting allows very small numbers of kits to be made at one time from a rubber mold. Relatively crude at first, resin casting has continued to improve until at the present time, the castings of some manufacturers are excellent.

It is no secret that the average model railroader continues to get older. This is even more evident when examining the average age of traction modelers. Most prototype trolley car systems disappeared over fifty years ago. In the heyday (1960s to 1980s) of traction modeling in HO scale, brass imports ruled. Labor costs in Japan were relatively low and many models were imported by Bert Sas, S. Soho, Ed Suydam and others. We remember buying an HO scale Suydam Pacific Electric Modernized "Hollywood" car for \$29.95 in the early 1970s. Quantities as large as 600 (i.e. Chicago 101-700 series Pullman Streetcar) were often imported at a time. But by the mid-1990s quantities of 100 to 150 became the rule and this drove average model costs even higher. At this time, traction brass models are approaching \$500.00 each. So unless the traction hobby grows significantly, cast resin models offer the only hope for any variety at a reasonable price. The Times has always thought that it would only take one quality HO scale ready-to-run accurate trolley model to rejuvenate the entire HO traction market but that is another subject for another time.

Last month, we published a model train club review of three HO scale resin kits, a streetcar, an interurban and a pair of subway cars. Each of these contained some of the better resin castings seen to date. Better yet, each of them used the now proven Bowser traction mechanism.

The 1999 introduction of the Bowser traction drive when combined with a resin shell made some traction models available that would not be possible otherwise. Many years ago there were the HO scale Brooklyn and St. Louis PCC shells available from Q-Car, made to fit the original Bowser/ PSM drive. MTS Imports issued a resin shell of the Boston 1951 "Picture Window" PCC car made to fit the Bowser 125141 PCC mechanism with floor. During the 1990s, HO scale resin shells for a Kansas City All-Electric PCC, a Pittsburgh All-Electric PCC and a SEPTA Kawasaki LRV became available, all of which have since been re-released in improved versions. Within the last few years, more traction kits with resin shells have been released, all of them with increasing levels of detail and sophistication. With good solid business practices and some judicious advertising, these castings can be sold to the "brass only" folks.

One fact of resin castings is that they can be made in small quantities such as 20 to 25 units. Also they are relatively easy to modify. We have done minor modifications on PCC cars but feel that it must be much easier than the same modification in a similar brass model. We tried to get a "Red Arrow" 1949 St. Louis Quasi-PCC shell to attempt to convert the model to a San Francisco 1006-1015 double end PCC. However, we were unsuccessful as vendor refused to make the shells available separately.

During our review of resin kits that use the Bowser traction mechanisms, we had several revealing discussions with several manufacturers, including Imperial Hobby Productions, KND Enterprises, and Transit Classics. The discussions that we had had with KND Enterprises and Transit Classics were enjoyable and we learned about resin casting, including some of the pitfalls. These two manufacturers, John Kennedy and Greg King, were extremely candid about their products and the mutual exchange of ideas was extremely productive. We hope to have more information about the method of resin casting in one of our future issues. We will also be reviewing some of their products in future issues.

In the previous issue, we reported the Southern California Traction Club review of three resin kits. We found that despite some minor problems, they can be made into worthy models to operate on anyone's model railroad. We believe that traction modelers should consider acquiring and operating resin kits that use Bowser drives. Right now it is the best combination out there. Assembly and modification of the cast resin shell is enjoyable and watching the final product emerge from almost nothing is very rewarding. Watching the final product running is another reward. Operating from live overhead wires is an additional bonus!

Trolleyville would like to let all traction modelers know about resin shell kits, no matter how small the production run. So if you are a manufacturer of resin traction kits, please contact the [Trolleyville Times!](#)

How Some Internet Businesses Can Irritate Their Customers!

Last January, a group of model train vendors attending a local model train show in Bakersfield were sitting having breakfast at the local IHOP on a Sunday morning, when the subject of internet businesses came up. Athearn, Roundhouse, Walther's

New, Friendly Allied Model Trains Opens!

For 62 days since May 12th, when the old Allied Model Trains closed, Los Angeles westside train lovers had to go to Hollywood or as far as Pasadena for their model railroad supplies. Most of the time, these are not pleasant drives and for most Angelenos there is no reasonably direct public transit. So it was a welcome event when the new Allied opened on Saturday, July 21st and Trolleyville was there.



The store is a work in progress with Fred Hill hanging the stained glass Pacific Electric herald in the window just after the store opened.



Fred Hill and Nick Barone, two of the owners, clad in Allied Model Train shirts, were on hand for the opening.



When Bob, Allied's DCC guru, finally opened the doors promptly at 10:00 AM, the first customer was John McWhirter of Ladera Heights. John is also a member of the Southern California Traction Club.



Preparations for this day started around the end of May with acquisition of the 5,000 sq ft facility at 4371 Sepulveda, along with a portion of the inventory from the old Allied and with one of the treasures of the old Pico Boulevard store, the Allied Models Sign (shown below) which will be rehabilitated and displayed in the rear of the store.

and the other major model railroad manufacturers do not make trolley models of the quality being advertised today. There are no HO scale DCC/Sound traction models. Most of the current model traction suppliers are internet businesses. Since more and more hobby shops are closing and more internet businesses are being formed every day, model traction devotees have to rely more and more on these businesses. During this impromptu discussion, several irritating practices were mentioned and they fell into five to ten areas. To find out whether they were in the ball park, we are asking you, our readers, to voice your gripes. Tell us the things that these suppliers do that annoy or irritate you. This is the time to tell us your gripes. Please do NOT identify the vendor/business, just the offending practice. If you share your opinions with us, we will be printing a summary of these gripes in a succeeding issue.

The Transit Classics San Francisco Muni Class K/L Streetcar Kit with BullAnt Power!

For some time, the Times had heard rumors that Greg King of Transit Classics, Sunbury, Australia was developing an HO scale model of one of San Francisco's "Iron Monsters". When Greg furnished a preliminary shell of the Muni Class K/L streetcar to Custom Traxx, they started working on three decal sets for the car. In early February, we finally obtained a complete kit of the Class K car along with the BullAnt power and trail trucks.

San Francisco's Class K consisted of twenty cars numbered 169 to 188. They were constructed by Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company and delivered between July and September 1923 at a cost of \$16,500 each. They were very similar to the 125 Class B cars, delivered in 1914 from the Jewett Car Company, except that they were not constructed in the "California" style with a closed center section and open ends. They were enclosed except for the lack of doors. Class L streetcars were the last conventional streetcars built for San Francisco. They were purchased for the 'N' line and they differed little from Class K. They were built by Saint Louis Car Co at a cost of \$19,200 each and delivered in 1926 and 1928. There were 25 cars in this class and were numbered 189 to 213.

In our February 2007 issue, we had introduced you to the Transit Classics HO scale kit of the San Francisco Municipal Railway Class K/L "Iron Monsters". The kit consists of a nicely detailed resin cast shell, with separate roof casting, which can be powered with the power unit of your choice or the BullAnt. Transit Classics even provided a separate floor for mounting the BullAnt. The Times reviewed the BullAnt power truck in our [February 2006 issue](#). In this kit we would get to install and evaluate both the power and the trailing (dummy) truck. For more details on the BullAnt power and trailing trucks, please check the [Hollywood Foundry](#) website.



We obtained our kit and rushed to have it assembled, painted and lettered for the East Penn Traction Club meet. We intended to demonstrate the kit with the BullAnt power truck by operating it at the meet but the floor got broken in four pieces during the flight from Los Angeles to Philadelphia. We could not get a replacement floor until early July. Then, the trucks, weights, and underbody equipment had to be transferred from the damaged floor to the new one and the new floor painted and re-installed in the car. Additionally, Custom Traxx is in the process of trying to get a stronger floor made of either aluminum or pewter for this car. This stronger floor could be used for models of Muni Class A and B cars if Greg decided to make them also. After the new floor had both trucks installed and the weights and underfloor equipment added, the car was reassembled. Then the Southern California Traction Club put the car through its paces over the last two weeks in July. Shown below is a photo of the car operating during a display at the Homestead Museum on July 14-15.



Everything in the store is new from the carpet up. All of the owners and their employees worked feverishly especially after the July 4th holiday to try and get the store opened as soon as possible. One of the long poles in the tent was the design, construction and delivery of the main counter (shown below), which did not arrive at the store until July 12th.



At this time, there are also four knowledgeable and cheerful employees there to serve you; Bob, Cyndie, George, and Sam. So if you have had "reasons" not to patronize Allied Model Trains prior to May 12, 2007, we are willing to bet that your "reasons" are long gone. Be on the watch for the announcement of a September "Grand Opening". It will be something for model train lovers to remember!

Model Traction Display at the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum

Following a similar appearance in 2005, Custom Traxx was invited to return to the "Ticket to the Twenties" celebration held at the Homestead Museum, 15415 East Don Julian Road, City of Industry, CA. This is a City of Industry Historic-Cultural Landmark. This years celebration was held on two days, Saturday, July 14 from 4:00 to 8:00 PM and Sunday, July 15 from 3:00 to 7:00 PM. Our display of 1920s era streetcars along with some newer ones meshed well with silent movie screenings, vintage automobile displays, bands playing 1920s music and fashion shows. This appearance is part of Custom Traxx' and the Southern California Traction Club to bring the joy of traction modeling to the general public.

As was the case in the previous visit, the "Red Car Display" was present to educate the public on the role of the Pacific Electric in the lives of 1920's Angelenos. the display was presented in the "Tepee". This structure was built in 1927 by Walter P. Temple as his private office. The structure contained a fireplace with mantel, his desk, filing cabinets, a "Victrola" record player, a bed, some rocking chairs and a separate bathroom. Below is the structure as it looks today.



Bruce Battles in Menlo Park, CA assembled the Class L kit, painted it Muni 206 in the "as delivered" paint scheme and lettered it with Custom Traxx decal set CN-168.



There may be a limited number of these kits, so to be one of those elite modelers who acquire one of these cars, contact Transit Classics. Greg King at transitclassics@netspace.net.au. Greg states he can deliver within two or three weeks and can also provide you with the appropriate BullAnt drive.

[For a complete report of the club experience with this kit, click here!](#)



In the next photo, the "Tepee" is shown in April 1928 at the same time the last 50 of the 160 Pacific Electric "Hollywood" cars were being constructed. Walter P. Temple is wearing a white sombrero and is surrounded by members of the Altar Society. [For more information on the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, click here!](#)



Custom Traxx demonstration module 970 was operated during the show with models of San Francisco F Class K 181, Philadelphia PCC-II 2335, Los Angeles Class M 2602, Pacific Electric "Hollywood" car 717 and New Orleans 451 running at times during the two-day show. The Museum always places a docent at the "Tepee" to explain the significance of the structure. Docent Ann Sui, who is her other life is a fourth grade teacher, is greeting some visitors in front of the Red Car display in the next photo:



This was a fun experience in almost a county fair atmosphere while we introduced many visitors to the fun of trolley modeling and the Pacific Electric Railway!

