

VISIT THE WORLD'S GREATEST HOBBY ON TOUR SHC

Two Southern California Great Train Expo Shows

It seemed like an eternity since Southern California hosted two quality model train shows within the same month. But that is just what was the case in December 2007. At the first show in Del Mar on December 1-2, we had the opportunity to meet Nick Zorn, one of the show managers for the Great Train Expo, which is now owned by Bill Grove, a long time model train show professional with roots back to the pre-2001 Great American Train Show (GATS).



Nick's appearance, demeanor and professionalism reminded us of the golden pre-2001 years of the old Great American train Show. It is so nice to see show staff that you can easily identify and it is even greater to work with show staff that have command of the situation, contact with company ownership and the good will of the vendors. The erroneous sign on the Del Mar Fairgrounds announcing the "Great American Train Show" was changed to Great Train Expo in record time. In short time, The Great Train Expo (GTE) folks have awakened all of us from the nightmares of the 2001-2006 era Great American Train Show. GTE brings back the fun of train shows, the good-ole-days when you had a great time regardless of how much you bought or sold. So after a six year hiatus, the fun of model train shows is clearly back, so Trolleyville recommends that you get out and enjoy the Great Train Expo!

As expected, all scales of model trains were represented at the Del Mar Show. Several traction items were exhibited, showing the stealthily gain of this portion of the model railroading hobby:



Electric Railway Modeling Clubs Opening to New Members

The Times learned recently that two Southern California electric railway clubs are looking for new members. The first club is the European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) and the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC). The ETE has been quite visible lately with layouts at both the International Railfair in Roseville, CA and the Great Train Expo in Del Mar, CA. Both the ETE and the SCTC are actively searching for new members who would love to build modules, create scenery, build structures and just enjoy the fun of modeling electric railways.

The [ETE](#) was founded in 1973 as the premier North American organization focusing on modeling European railroading, their Southern California Chapter has members in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. For more information, contact Don Gaw, President at 949-697-6945.

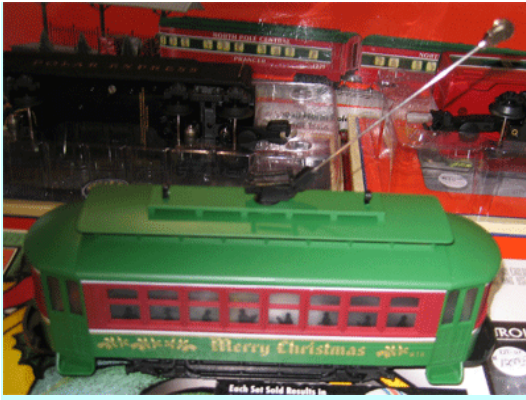
The [SCTC](#) was founded in 1995 as the HO scale modular club devoted to modeling U.S. electric railways using powered overhead wires. Since 1997, the club has made 70 appearances in California and Nevada. The club is experimenting with DCC and has an active operating subway module that is a big hit with the younger visitors. Although model railroading is largely thought of as exclusively a male hobby, the SCTC has consistently advertised that the club is open to anyone wanting to make a contribution. So if you have any interest, [please contact the club at 310-990-5422](#). This is a great time to learn all about DCC and the future of model railroading. Modular clubs have the additional problem of ensuring that modules work together at appearances so sometimes the scenery takes a back seat to maintaining the operation of the trains or trolleys. Having some members devoted to the backgrounds and scenic aspects would be great.

So you don't have to be a model train lover, just someone who likes creating and working with miniatures! You will have a lot of fun and the pride in seeing your creations exhibited!

A Remotored Pacific Electric 1544 with the BullAnt LoBoy(s)!

The Hollywood Foundry recently discovered Pete DeBeers repowering of his HO scale Suydam PERy 1544 steeple cab electric locomotive with two BullAnt Low Boy Units and displayed the unit on their web site. These LoBoy units were designed by Hollywood Foundry owner Geoff Baxter with some assistance from Fred Gurzeler expressly for those Soho and Suydam models using the blue plastic gears, most of which have long deteriorated. Until the coming of the LoBoys, repowering some of these models has long been a very difficult task, reserved to only the most experienced of hobbyists. Both Fred and Pete are members of the Southern California Traction Club. The photo was taken on one of the modules of the Southern California Traction Club during the Great Train Expo in Del Mar, CA.



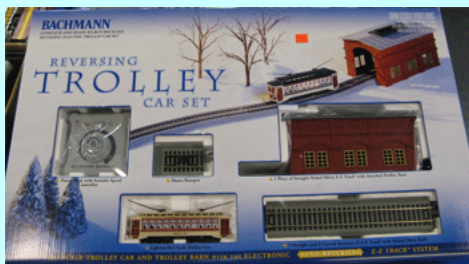


Custom Traxx displayed flawless DCC operation of trolleys under powered overhead wire along with the first of the new Bowser Executive line freight cars and the last of the recently released Bicentennial Southern Pacific U-25B locomotives. Custom Traxx also told us that two new HO scale decal sets were in work. The first is a set for the San Francisco ex-Milan Peter Witt cars, set *CN-1807*, and the second will be a set for the Kansas City PCC cars, set *CN-750*. The first set can be used to decorate shells made by Miniatures by Eric. The latter set can be used to model San Francisco "F-line" car 1056 and to decorate Kansas City All-Electric PCC resin shells which are occasionally available. The latter set has been in the works for over three years but it was not until recently that photographs of an actual front and side KCPS destination roll sign was made available to Custom Traxx. Check [their web site](#) for release dates!

The second GTE in Southern California was held at the Anaheim Convention Center. The Southern California Traction Club was there along with Trolleyville vendors, Railway/Traction Miniatures and Custom Traxx. Excellent preparation for the show was made by the GTE staff and vendor set-up, tear down and exit went very smoothly.

Vendors arrived with their own copy of the "Train of Thought" newsletters outlining how over \$18,800 was spent advertising the show including newspaper ads in both the Los Angeles Times and the Orange County Register, television commercials and full page color ads in both Model Railroader and Class Toy Trains. But the real improvement was the change in the use of the hall from earlier shows. Hall E has the capability to allow patrons to enter from either the front or the back. It had become normal practice to use the rear entrance and the rear of the hall for the displays. When Bill Grove, current owner of GTE, saw the hall for the first time during the January 2007 show, he could not understand why this was done. Why not use the front half of the hall for the show, allow the patrons to enter from the more grand front entrance and use the back half of the hall for the riding train and the indoor parking of the club layout trailers. This made drive-in entry much easier and exit a breeze. Kudos to the management of GTE and their process improvement program. Vendors and club layouts also found that the show management had provided no cost parking passes for them, saving them the burden of the outlandish \$10.00 per day to park at that facility. It does not get better than this.

As soon as the show opened, we found vendors with traction items not seen for some time as shown below:



Pete currently has over 61 models certified for operation on the modules of the SCTC. The club certification process identifies the speed of each vehicle at 7.0 scale mile per hour. This helps identify the best cars to run at the same time during the club displays. For more information see the [Hollywood Foundry web site](#).

First Impressions of the Bachmann HO scale Peter Witt

by Bob Dietrich

The Bachmann Peter Witt Cars, announced at the National Train Show last summer began appearing at hobby shops and from Micro Mark orders just before Christmas. This is my impression of the undecorated #86401 Peter Witt from Bachmann Spectrum.



The packaging of the car was impressive – a large red box with a clear cover showing the model. This was so well done it was difficult to open the box. The model was held in place between two clear plastic extrusions. All roof detail, most underbody detail, electronics, and other parts are packaged separately, they must be added by the modeler. Everything is clean, sharp, and free of flash – there is literally no clean-up needed for this model.

The model includes a DCC decoder and a dummy plug for those of us still in straight DC. A slide switch under the car allows selecting overhead power pickup or two-rail operation. I do not know at this time if it has eight-wheel pickup when using the overhead. The instruction sheet is somewhat lacking – it consists of a little information on DCC and three exploded views of the car. A little more information would at least take some of the apprehension out of attacking this model.

Detail on the model is excellent. I found only two items that were less than satisfactory. The trolley pole has an operating wheel. The yoke and wheel are much too large. This must be replaced with a solid wheel/shoe if operating from overhead wire. There is a fine blackened mesh simulating the window guards for the outside of the left side windows. These were designed to keep arms and heads from getting chopped off by passing streetcars. Sometimes there was a little as four inches between passing cars. I have never seen a mesh fine enough to look realistic and this one is no exception. On the bright yellow Baltimore car this mesh will be an eye-catcher but it should not be so noticeable. I will not add this part to my model.

I removed the underside motor cover and found a small can motor. This is connected to both trucks via drive shafts and universals. Two small brass turnings are on the shafts, I believe they are supposed to be flywheels but at 1/4" diameter I doubt they will do much good. In our operation we hope that a flywheel will push the car past dirty spots on the wire or track. We'll see how effective these are.

Editor: Trolleyville received their #86401 model on December 22nd and have not had time to complete testing of the unit. The car weighs about 5 ounces and it does appear that it will traverse the Hartel curves on the Custom Traxx HO scale



For the large scalers there was even some LGB track, that is now almost unavailable. Sales were greater than expected. Almost everyone left carrying huge numbers of packages.



This show was really enjoyable. The good old days seemed to be back, at least for this show.

The Southern California Traction Club unveiled its Pacific Electric Troop Train, put together by Pete DeBeers and George Jones. The train consisted of eight Walthers Troop Sleeper cars, one Troop Kitchen car, an express box car and a Pullman sleeper. The train was hauled by both an 0-6-0 steam engine and a steeple cab electric locomotive, both powered. This is no easy feat since both rails of the layout are grounded and the steam engine must get electrical power from the steeple cab.



Not everything went smoothly all day as you can see below, but the show was the best we've attended in a long time.



So you owe it to yourself to visit any of the Great Train Expos. They are really worth it.

Inside the "New & Friendly" Allied Model Trains

demonstration module. More will be reported in a later issue. However, we concur with everything stated by Bob!

Protection, Censorship or ? Unprofessionalism at the Very Least!

Recently, one of Trolleyville's major companies reported to us that one of his customers thought that it would be a good idea if their new products would be posted on a yahoo trolley modeling "chat" group. The customer had seen many questions that would be easily answered by this supplier and had always found that supplier to be open and rather quick in answering questions. The traction portion of model railroading has always been a small group of a hobby whose numbers seem to be both aging and dwindling so it is a good business practice that communication between all customers and suppliers be encouraged and maintained. This particular group, "hotractionmodeling" advertises that it is open to all facets and eras of trolley modeling. This should be a no-brainer.....right? The group is described as "...A dedicated chat board for those HO scale model railroaders interested in modeling trolleys/streetcars, trolley/streetcar systems, interurbans, and light rail transit in the most popular scale in the world: HO scale. New product announcements from manufacturers are welcome. Questions, opinions, modeling notes, layout tours, are also welcome. Post your model/layout photos in our Photo section for everyone to see. All eras from the earliest traction lines to the immortal PCC to the most modern low-floor LRVs are welcome. All agencies, all companies, all cities, all nations..." But the group also states "...Memberships must be approved by the moderator. This is to keep certain unwanted elements that have been plaguing other boards off of our corner of the Internet. Members may post freely. Manufacturer new product announcements are most welcome..." The company told us that they had attempted to join the group three times and was held in "pending" status awaiting "approval" by the "moderator" for awhile. Then, the company got an early Christmas present from the "moderator" on December 22nd in a form letter stating that their "...request to join the hotractionmodeling group was not approved..."

After such an unfavorable response, this "moderator/censor" currently remains comfortably and conveniently unidentifiable and therefore inaccessible to that company. We definitely feel that the vendor is entitled to know on what grounds they are refused admission. What rules had they broken even before they were admitted? Who is the "hidden" rejector? The company is well known in the field and has been in business over 15 years, so this appears to be nothing more than pure censorship or something even worse. It now appears that only companies, products or modelers "approved" by the "moderator/censor" are permitted. Since it is no longer acceptable to deny persons admission to facilities based on race, sex, religion and natural origin, could this be a new one, that we have not heard of yet? Since Trolleyville was created in 1997, we have met and have had business dealings with most of the major players in the model traction arena. Unfortunately, as of this date, we know of only one individual in the traction/trolley/light rail vehicle hobby capable of such infantile, unbusinesslike and unprofessional behavior. For the good of the hobby, we hope that this individual is the moderator of this group because the model traction field does not need any more than this one. We are sure that the members of this group know who the moderator is and someone will probably tell us after reading this article. When we find out who that "moderator" is, we will let you know. In any view, such an action is totally counter to the advertised purposes of the site. The members of this particular group should now be wondering how much and or how many other companies with relevant products, traction modeling solutions and helpful "hints" are being randomly prohibited from joining this site and sharing information with them. All of this seems counter to the stated purpose of encouraging the "free" exchange of ideas and information, don't you think? It appears that the "moderator/censor" has forgotten that one of the most cherished freedoms in the United States is freedom of speech. Many have died in the protection of this constitutional right. This is trolley modeling, not national defense! The Soviet Union has long collapsed. So why not approach this very adult hobby with some corresponding adult behavior?

Trolleyville also is cognizant of the problems that have plagued some chat groups and deplore that type of activity. For that reason, we suspended the Trolleyville chat room some years ago. We replaced it with an open line via email, open to anyone and excluded to no one. But you have to identify yourself. So, if you have a question on these or any other HO traction topics and are not really getting the answer you

The Times learned that one of our vendors, George Huckaby (Custom Traxx) was asked to join the staff of the "New & Friendly" Allied Model Trains, Culver City, California for the Holiday shopping season. From November 16, 2007 through the end of December, George was at the new store on 4371 Sepulveda Boulevard for 25 days for shifts of 4 to 8 hours. So we asked him what it is like to work in a model train store.

George told us that he did not think most model railroaders and toy train lovers know how much work is involved in running a model train store. He told us that he had no idea about the logistics of acquiring stock, dealing with cartons, packing materials, stocking shelves and using the computer to decide what and how much of any items to buy. George told us that working at Allied during the Christmas season was the hardest and at the same time the most fun job that he has had in his almost 50 years in the workplace. By hard work, he explained that there is no end to the work that is required. It just can not be described. Keeping up with the stock that is being sold and getting more stock in a timely manner is the name of the game. Assisting customers is the first priority in the "New & Friendly" Allied but many other tasks must be done to ensure that you can help customers get what they want. George stated that he had never moved or opened so many heavy boxes in his life. Nick Barone and Fred Hill, two of the "New & Friendly" owners, continually remind everyone that the purpose is to enjoy what we do while we are doing it and they lead by example. George said he never saw either of them not congenial or pleasant. There are only smiles. There are no tantrums, threats or yelling.....ever! In fact, the only observed yelling in the store was from a visitor who had been accused of not being "friendly" of all things. Despite the obvious pressures of operating a new store during the Christmas season, both owners made the job so enjoyable. George remarked that it was sometimes a 'sad' experience to leave at the end of the day as he had never worked with better management or fellow employees.

(See Allied, Column 2)

sought, check the lessons in the Trolleyville Schoolhouse. If you do not get your answer there, then email the [Trolleyville Schoolhouse](#). You will get normally get a rapid, and complete response!

(Allied, from col 1)

Not surprisingly, there was an objection from a no longer relevant source in describing Allied as, "New And Friendly", which it so obviously is. When we visited the store during one of the December Sundays that the store is open, we found Allied to have an extremely pleasant atmosphere with all employees seeming to enjoy themselves and their work. So if it is fun for the employees, it should be fun for the customers. So if you like trains and want to enjoy yourself, please take time to visit the "New, Friendly, Fun" Allied. The store is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

**Allied Model Trains
4371 Sepulveda Blvd
Culver City, CA
310-313-9353**