

## National Train Show, July 2008, Anaheim, CA!

### Another Fine Model Train Show!

\*\*\*

The National Train Show chugged into California with over 23,000 passengers during the week of 13-20 July. The NTS is held annually in conjunction with the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Annual Convention and is held in a different location each year.

Festivities began with the arrival of twenty-five modular layouts in scales from Z to Large Scale on Wednesday, July 16th. Debbie and Tom Draper from Phoenix, AZ have been arranging these shows for some time now and they have managed to get most of the snags out of the process.



The difficulty is that there is a new hall with different local rules and customs along with a new group of people to interface with every single year. But these two veterans are professional and easy to deal with. Small planning and oversights are solved once you bring them to their attention.

Bowser Manufacturing set up their booths using the Custom Traxx display module 970, normally shown with the Southern California Traction Club. The Bowser booths, 101-102, were manned by Lee English, Bowser CEO; Matt Herman, Product Consultant and George Huckaby (Custom Traxx), Product Consultant for the 'F-Line' car project. They had just received their first "test" bodies of the new [San Francisco 'F-line' PCC cars](#) and unveiled them to the public at this show. These will be models of the 1050-1064 class PCC cars obtained from Philadelphia in the early 1990s and will be DCC-ready with full window glass and flywheel drive.



After the shells were examined along with the plans for the prototype cars, it was decided to make some changes prior to final production. Meanwhile the upgraded Bowser traction drive with flywheel is being tested by Custom Traxx. Also at the Bowser booth was the pre-production SD-100 Light Rail Vehicle from MTS Imports, Inc. The brass unit is scheduled to be provided painted in San Diego, Sacramento and Denver liveries. Reservations are being accepted directly from MTS. Quality modern U.S. LRV models are quite rare so if you want one, please reserve quickly.

### Honorable Mention and an Award for the Southern California Traction Club!

\*\*\*

The Southern California Traction Club was very surprised during their 73rd public appearance by receiving [Honorable Mention at the National Train Show in Anaheim, CA.](#)



The Judges' Score Sheet critiques individual or group modules layouts in seven individual areas:

1. CONSTRUCTION - 25 points maximum
2. DETAILS - 20 points maximum
3. CONFORMITY - 10 points maximum
4. ELECTRICAL - 15 points maximum
5. FINISH & LETTERING - 20 points maximum
6. SCRATCHBUILDING - 20 points maximum
7. INGENUITY - 15 points maximum

**TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE - 125**

The judges awarded the SCTC 104 points (83.2%) based on the following evaluation:

1. CONSTRUCTION - 21 points (84%) - The SCTC modules have no mountains, grades, tunnels or fancy scenery. Also there are few scratch built structures so this is an expected score.
2. DETAILS - 19 points (95%) - The SCTC display which is 16 x 26 ft, has over 600 personnel figures, over 200 motor vehicles and an underground subway station with two moving subway trains. Many of the modules have been under development for over ten years, so this score was also expected.
3. CONFORMITY - 8 points (80%) - This score was also expected due to the nature and purpose of the club. Non-traction modelers have a different environment in which to model. Most steam railroads serve several states with different topographies. Streetcars and Interurbans serve very specific areas. A Los Angeles or San Francisco streetcar would not look correct in a snow scene. A Philadelphia or Boston streetcar would not be seen with Saguaro cactus in the background. The SCTC operated model streetcars from all over the United States and the World, so the SCTC has purposely made generic scenery not particular to any location. Except for the four-track section, almost all background scenery and buildings are made as generic as possible.
4. ELECTRICAL - 14 points (93.3%) - The club powered overhead wire with its flawless operation was most likely the predominant factor in this evaluation.
5. FINISH & LETTERING - 17 points (85%) - The club does not weather many of their cars, especially the city streetcars, preferring to show the era of traction where cars were kept shiny and new, so this score was expected.



Shown behind the LRV are models belonging to George Huckaby, including, at left, a partially decorated prototype CLR shell from Miniatures by Eric, a Philadelphia LRV model, two models of San Francisco F-line PCCs converted from Bowser PCCs and, at right, the first pre-production shell of the new KND Enterprises Lehigh Valley Transit 1030 Lightweight interurban decorated with Custom Traxx' new CN-1030 decal set. Also displayed at the Bowser booth were three new Custom Traxx traction body shells (See Column 2). All three are to be leased in the coming months.

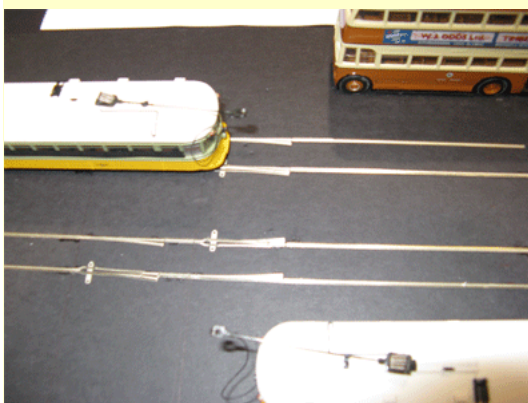
Walters was displaying their R21/22 Subways cars that will be released in the Silver/Blue paint scheme in the not-too-distant future. MTH showed their O-scale PRR GG-1 and P5 electric locomotives.



Bachmann showed some new artwork on its aging HO scale PCC car shell. Shown were Los Angeles (LATL), Brooklyn (NYCTA), Philadelphia (PTC) and Chicago (CTA). Now if they would only correct the ends and upgrade the long obsolete power chassis.



Proto87, Andy Reichert, showed [several items of interest](#) for traction buffs, including their street railway track that can be used with both RP-25 and fine scale wheels, a new small power truck that would allow interior detailing of HO scale streetcars and interurbans and a very small turnout machine.



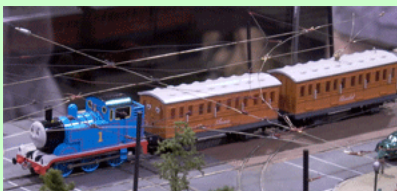
The NMRA has taken a page from the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour and has a Kids Play Area right in the front of the show. The

**6. SCRATCHBUILDING - 12 points (60%)** - This is the only area in which the club had great heartburn. The luxury of ready-to-run painted and lettered units are not afforded to HO scale traction modelers. Most model streetcars are either fabricated from brass or constructed from resin/wood/plastic kits. It was not until 2007 that a ready-to-run, completely finished streetcar became available and that car was solely a Baltimore prototype. Not one powered car running on the layout is out-of-the-box as is the case on most of the other layouts, including the first prize winner. Every single vehicle must be converted to run on overhead wire and in most cases, remotored, rewired and in some cases totally repowered. Pete DeBeers Suydam Pacific Electric "Electra", shown below, has none of the original drive train. In fact, the drive train used came from Australia.



All track in paved streets is hand laid and many crossings are fabricated. Every foot of operable overhead wire must be constructed from wire and brass detail parts. This is a problem when non-traction modelers judge traction layouts.

**7. INGENUITY - 13 points (86.6%)** - The visible subway station under another operating module was a key factor in this evaluation. To run anything on the SCTC layout a trolley pole is necessary since both rails are grounded and not insulated from each other. For the younger public, even Thomas must be converted to run on overhead wire.



The Club told us that they really appreciated the awards but like most traction modelers, they sometimes feel like they are the stepchildren of the model railroading hobby. After all, you can become a Master Model Railroader (MMR) or even a Grand Master Model Railroader (GMMR) by building a freight car from popsicle sticks but without ever hanging one foot of operable overhead wire. Almost every diesel locomotive that has been introduced in the last twenty years has been represented in an injection-molded HO scale plastic model but there are no 1/87 scale models currently available of any of the light rail vehicles that are in service today.

The club was also presented with the NMRA Design Preservation Models DPM City Classics Award.



The club has made extensive use of DPM kits, especially the #109, #110 and #111 town homes kits, converting and modifying them to represent east coast type row homes as found in Boston/Philadelphia/Baltimore in the city modules of the display.

area has some Thomas the Tank Engine and Brio items for the youngsters to explore and play with. The next photo shows the area before the visitors arrived.



The Kid's Play Area was located right next to the wonderful Canfield Circus display and was well used by those for whom it was intended.



The National Train show is slowly making efforts to attract more youngsters. This is a good thing considering the rate that the hobby is losing participants. One of the biggest attractions in the show was the huge Lego layout. This layout is nowhere close to scale model railroading but it is among the most popular with show attendees. We could not get close enough to it to find out if they had any traction represented or get some photos for this issue. We hope for better luck next time!

Despite the awards, the Baldwin-Hills based west coast traction club still feels treated like a "red-headed step-child" in both the NMRA and the MR model railroad community for numerous reasons. First, the club has appeared in two National Train Shows, Anaheim in 2008 and San Jose in 2000. There has never been one photo, color or black & white of the club at either of these two shows in either Model Railroader or the NMRA Scale Rails magazine. Second, the September 2008 edition of the Scale Rails magazine has a two-page color spread of the First Place Group and Individual Module Winners including three photos of the First Place Winner, including two photos of modules with trolleys under either no operating overhead wire or non-operational overhead wire but could not see fit to show one photo of a large traction layout, on which all vehicles must operate under powered overhead wire. There was not one photo of any of the layouts that did not receive awards but did much to make the show great, especially considering the exorbitant amount of parking fees these layouts had to pay for the "privilege" of displaying at the show. Third, while the club was awarded the two awards stated above, neither award is listed anywhere in the magazine despite that allegations of a complete listing on page 32. Fourth, the same edition of Scale Rails Magazine did a very [incomplete review](#) of the Bachmann Peter Witt, obviously conducted by someone unfamiliar with traction modeling. They could not wait to show their "disapproval" of the model by placing in large red letters at the beginning of the article "(NOTE: This product did NOT receive a Conformance Warrant)", thus prejudicing the reader before he even read the review. While they "picked apart" the model for small violations of their obsolescent specifications, they failed to point out that the model is a very detailed model of a Baltimore 6000 class Peter Witt car which did not run [in any other cities](#). Cars of various degrees of similarity did operate in the cities represented but not [that](#) car. We are surprised that the "rivet-counting" mentality of the magazine missed this. The Southern California Traction Club has been running over thirteen of these cars without major problems on both DC and DCC powered overhead wire without significant problems.

## Arnie's Model Trains - Don't Pass It By!

\*\*\*

For years, Southern California train modelers have known there are two major model train stores in the area, mainly Allied Model Trains in Culver City, well known for its landmark "Union Station" type building, and the Original Whistle Stop in Pasadena, CA, known for its complete stock of detail parts and hard-to-get items. When Allied Model Trains changed owners last year and reopened as a 'Friendly' store, we started looking at other friendly hobby shop owners. At the Anaheim 2008 National Train Show we met one, Greg Arnold, owner of Arnie's Trains in Westminster, CA. Although relatively unknown nationally, they have been around for a long time. When Greg told us how long he had been in business and invited us down to his store, we jumped at the opportunity.



Arnie's Model Train is [located just off the well-traveled Interstate-405 between Los Angeles and San Diego](#). The store is just northwest of the heavily used Westminster Mall and is easy to find. There is ample off-street parking right in front of the store.

## Custom Traxx Traction Kits with Resin Car Bodies!

\*\*\*

Custom Traxx displayed three HO resin body shells that will be offered in the coming months. All three shells were shown at the Bowser booth for all to examine.



From left to right are a Kansas City all-electric PCC shell, a San Francisco 'Milano' Peter Witt shell and a Toronto CLRV body shell. There will be Custom Traxx decals available for all three shells. Bowser mechanisms along with metal floors will also be available. The Kansas City PCC body shell [TS-19] is available now with a complete decal set [CN-750] and a Bowser 125141 drive. The San Francisco "Milano" Peter Witt [TS-18] became available on August 1st also with a complete decal set [CN-1807] and two different Bowser aluminum floors. One floor, 125161, is designed for the Hollywood BullAnt In-line drive and a second floor, 125162, is designed for a Bowser 125100 mechanism. See the Custom Traxx catalog for more information. The final body shell is for the [TS-17] Toronto Canadian Light Rail Vehicle (CLRV) and it should be available during September. There will be an aluminum floor for this vehicle designed for the 125100 Bowser mechanism. All body shells are being produced by Eric Courtney and these kits all should be available by late September or early October. A Custom Traxx decal set for the CLRV, CN-4100, will allow modelers

If you are coming north from San Diego,

- \* Get on I-405 North,
- \* Exit Westminster Ave. East,
- \* Turn Right on Westminster Ave. (from exit)
- \* Turn Right on Edwards Street (first major traffic signal)
- \* Drive over big hill (overpass over the I-405), at bottom of hill, make right turn on Industry Way.

If coming south from Los Angeles,

- \* Get on I-405 South,
- \* Exit Westminster Ave. East
- \* Turn Right on Edwards Street (first major traffic signal)
- \* Drive over big hill (overpass over the I-405), at bottom of hill, make right turn on Industry Way.

Greg told us that he and his father purchased the business in 1977. They were originally located in a small 800 sq. ft. store on Westminster Avenue. They expanded twice by growing into adjacent stores until they had grown to 2400 sq. ft. After ten years in the same location, they moved to the corner of Edwards and Westminster where they conducted business for another ten years. The current 3600 sq. ft. facility was obtained in 1997 and is currently undergoing a complete renovation. Greg had obtained a group of jewelry store cabinets and is using them to display a large amount of model trains rolling stock.



These display cases allow visitors to carefully examine pieces without handling them, allowing more complete and swift shopping. For more photos of the store, [click here!](#)

Arnie's Model Trains has the largest selection of model trains in Orange County. They have a bargain table in the front of the store that is well known by their geographically diverse customers. This table is not a "junk" table. It is filled with real bargains. When Greg gets a deal on an item, he passes that on to his customers. Arnie's Model Trains is a member of a 10 Southern California hobby shop group, [www.hobby411.com](http://www.hobby411.com), whose purpose is to make sure that customers all over the area can get the best service possible. The shops are located from Burbank (north) to La Mesa, CA (south).

Some time ago we told you about the great deals once available at the All Aboard Model Railroad Emporium in Torrance, CA. We enjoyed their prices for years but that store is among those that we have lost. With the shrinking of the hobby, we need to support the hobby shops that are left or they won't be there when we need them. We are not advocating abandonment of the internet or the discount houses as they have a place in the hobby. But try to visit your local hobby shops monthly and purchase something that you want or need. We did. In the process of visiting them and developing this article, we found some items that we really needed.

## Mattapan PCC News!

\*\*\*

The PCC cars on the Mattapan-Ashmont line in Boston are in the process of having air-conditioning installed. So far, two cars, 3230 and 3234, have had the units installed. The Times was provided this photo of PCC 3230 under testing. The installed unit looks very similar to that used on Philadelphia's PCC-IIs.

to finish these models and an ALRV model if one becomes available. For CLRV data and photos that may aid in finishing models of the cars, [click here](#).

Custom Traxx is also testing the upgraded Bowser mechanism with flywheel that will be used in the new "F-line" PCC cars. It is also anticipated that the minimum radius that the PCC will negotiate will be lowered as a result of the upgrade.



Three different flywheels and drive trains are under testing at the current time. No photos of the third are available at this time.

## The National Train Show & Layout Displays . . . Time For A Policy Change!

\*\*\*

There were 25 layouts in all scales displaying at the National Train Show in Anaheim in July 2008. All of the noteworthy Southern California modular layouts were present with the notable exception of one, Del Oro Pacific, a large scale layout which gets the highest number of public favorable comments at other model train shows. The club members of this group and other groups have begun to question the policies of the NMRA toward the clubs. The National Train Show presents a train show during the summer months in a different city every year. In their advertising for any model train show, they promote the model train layouts in order to draw the public to the shows. They are willing to devote anywhere from 33% to over 50% of the rented floor space to these clubs. The floor plan of the [Anaheim NTS](#) shows the areas with the 800 series numbers where the module displays were located. These displays were allowed to set up on the Wednesday prior to the show. Most of the major manufacturers displaying at the show (those in the blue background curtain areas) are NOT normally permitted to sell product. These are mostly large corporations with substantial resources. Some of the costs of their booths runs into the thousands of dollars. But they rely totally on large crowds attracted by these modular layouts to make it worthwhile for them to promote or display their products.

Most of the modular layouts are put together by small groups of private individuals, many of whom are retired and on pensions, who use large amounts of their own time and money to develop, store, improve and repair these layouts. So these layouts and the clubs who construct, develop and maintain them are being used to draw in these large crowds. Unfortunately, parking fees at the Anaheim show were \$10.00 each day and this amounted to \$50.00 per module participant for the entire five day show. On top of this there are no in and out privileges for parkers during the days of the show, so if you desired to have lunch at one of the offsite eateries, it would cost you another \$10.00 to park when you return. All of this while module participants were dealing with \$4.30/gallon gasoline prices, prevalent at that time. So Trolleyville supports the position taken by the Del Oro Pacific in refusing to attend the show.

What is irritating to increasing numbers of layout operators is while they are the main draw for the National Train Show, they are forced to defray all sorts of expenses to be there for the purpose of making money for the show promoters, and manufacturers. Without previous advertising of layouts there would never have been 23,000 visitors to that or any other model train show. The World's Greatest Hobby on Tour



(WGHoT) and the Great Train Expo (GTE), both highly respected national train shows, all make token contributions to the participating clubs and have been known to provide free parking for them in facilities with exorbitant parking fees such as this one but this apparently has not even been considered by the NMRA.

While the clubs are not asking for any remuneration for the show, they do feel they should not be required to absorb such large expenses especially since they are 'the' public draw to the show. The Trolleyville Times wholeheartedly concurs. Since other prestigious model train shows have already recognized this fact, the NMRA needs to recognize that this resentment is continuing to grow and must be addressed and soon! Without quality layouts there is no quality show! This policy already prevented one of the most popular modular layout displays from being seen at Anaheim 2008 and if it is not changed, will prevent more fine layouts from been seen at future National Train Shows.

## Great Train Expo Schedule!

\*\*\*

The first quarter 2009 schedule for the Great Train Expo was released in early August. [Click here for more data!](#) We have still never attended a Great Train Expo that was not worth the price of admission. In fact, each one that we have attended has felt better than the previous one. The shows are professionally managed by the most knowledgeable model train show professionals and they always ensure that the finest and most entertaining local layouts are on hand for public enjoyment