

Another Enjoyable International Railfair in Roseville, CA

International Railfair is held on a weekend around Veteran's Day each year in Roseville, CA, a suburb of Sacramento. Each year, four of the Fairgrounds buildings are filled with model train and railroad artifacts for the entire weekend. This year it was November 14-15, 2009!

While most model railroad shows have suffered serious contractions over the past few years, this one has seen the least negative growth and there are many reasons for this. Refer to the [December 2004 issue](#) of the Trolleyville Times for an in-depth discussion of this show.

The first four models of the San Francisco F-line PCC cars from Bowser were displayed at this show in both the powered and souvenir (unpowered) versions. In each case in the next photo, the souvenir version is on top of the powered version. The body shell and windows are the same in both versions



Shown left to right are 1055/Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC), 1057/Cincinnati Street Railway (CSR) 1052/Los Angeles Railway (LARY), and 1061/Pacific Electric Railway (PERy). The cars had just arrived at Bowser on November 9th and Custom Traxx had one example of each of the powered and souvenir models available for public examination. Also a pre-production model of the San Francisco Municipal Railway 1050, which is scheduled to be released in January 2010, was operating with a breadboard Train Control Systems M4T decoder. The car ran flawlessly from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. both days of the show.



The brake lights, which only work with the M4T decoder are actuated on the 1057 in the next photo, while the tail lights are functional on the 1050. Also shown in the photo is one of the Custom Traxx Boston ex-Dallas PCC cars.



The new PCC uses the same motor, motor mounts, power and trailing trucks as the current 125XXX drive, which are all fabricated in Pennsylvania and provided to China for assembly. The improvements are a new balanced flywheel, sound isolators under the motor mounts and a new drive line, along with blackened nickel-silver wheels. The cars shown above are stock except for the addition of

Piracy Does Not Only Happen On The High Seas. It Happens In The Model Railroading Field As Well!

Importers spend tens of thousands of dollars and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop and import a brass model from the Orient. What gives any individual the right to go ahead and duplicate the brass model into a resin model without permission or compensation to the importer of the original model?

Any duplication, or even an announcement of the same model, will guarantee a loss in sales of the brass model. If this happens, why should the importer put his money at risk knowing he will lose a portion of it? The market for brass traction models is shrinking due to the age factor of the modelers involved.

Years ago, the production of a resin model usually did not affect the sale of a brass model of the same prototype. That is not the story today, especially in the model traction field which is presently less than 2% of the model railroading hobby.

Most traction modelers today are well into their 70's and 80's and they prefer models of prototypes that operated when they were much younger. They are not interested in the modern trolley's (or Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs) that are in use today.

The younger traction modelers want the modern LRVs that are in use today, but usually they cannot afford them so the market for a brass LRV is extremely small. This means that an importer will not bother investing his money to have a model produced, knowing that somebody may pirate the results of his investment, produce a resin model, and reduce the sale of his brass model.

Is this what we want?

There are many opinions as to whether or not duplicating a model is against the law. If there is a copyright marking on each model, it is definitely against the law to duplicate that model as is.

I will give you two instances where our court system came into the picture.

A number of years ago, a company called Paige Enterprises was duplicating kits produced by SS Limited. Paige enterprises just took the castings in these kits and duplicated them. I do not know the results of the court case, but Paige Enterprises went out of business shortly thereafter.

More recently there was a case involving MTH (Mike's Train House) and Lionel. If I got the story straight, the builder in Korea was using tooling and/or drawings developed by MTH for the production of models for Lionel. Lionel lost and paid a hefty sum to MTH.

In the traction end of the hobby, MTS Imports, Inc. had an O Scale model of the New Orleans 900 series produced in Korea in 1998. The builder then used the drawings provided by MTS to produce metal models (not brass) for Western Hobbycraft. When MTS found out about this piracy issue, they confronted the builder, and ended up receiving a monetary settlement without any court action.

When Q-Car Company found out that some of his castings were duplicated and used on the MTS New Orleans Trolley (without MTS's knowledge) he refused to produce any power trucks for use on the MTS models until he received compensation for each casting that was used. Even though MTS had no hand in the duplication of the Q-Car parts, MTS paid Q-Car a fee for each part used.

This also happened to models that were produced for The Car Works, but The Car Works refused to pay any royalty to Q-Car, and Q-Car refused to provide power trucks or any detail parts for use on any Car Works Models.

Who gets hurt by this. We do! Piracy of any kind is not good

two trolley poles and between 1.8 and 2.0 ounces of weight under the floor between the trucks.

The day before the show, Custom Traxx made their first delivery of 48 of the Bowser PCC cars to the San Francisco Railway Museum and Gift Shop, 77 Stewart Street. George is shown with John Charles Hogan, Shop Manager with one of the first Cincinnati cars.



The Western Railway Museum in Suisun City, CA and the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, CA all received their Bowser trolleys this month.

Occasionally, the Bowser 79 motor used in this and all the 125XXX traction mechanism may require initial lubrication, especially the motor bearings. Bowser has placed the following data inside of the cars which will help in the [disassembly of the cars](#). Disassembly is necessary to change the car from two-rail to overhead operation and to install a DCC decoder. Custom Traxx has found it beneficial to run the car about five to ten minutes before lubrication to allow the bearing to 'seat' and then perform the lubrication recommended by Bowser.

The Custom Traxx Boston, ex-Dallas PCC Car Kit!

During November, the Custom Traxx Boston ex-Dallas PCC (3322-3346 series) kits became available. This kit was delayed by many factors, including health issues with one of the suppliers, but a significant cause of delay was the effort to eliminate any problems with the kit. We talked to Custom Traxx specifically about this kit and they told us that it is Custom Traxx policy to assemble and thoroughly test each kit prior to offering the kits for sale. This time there were some issues so Custom Traxx assembled two of the kits to ensure that all suspected problems were corrected. The Bowser motor and A-line flywheel have sufficient clearance and there is sufficient head room for a DCC decoder. They also told us that the majority of Custom Traxx customers run cars under overhead wire and/or around city type curves and that makes weight a big consideration. After considerable testing, they were forced to conclude that the resin floors seen so far in the IHP Shaker Heights and Illinois Terminal PCC cars just do not "cut the mustard". At first Custom Traxx embraced aluminum floors but they became expensive and are very light. After a lot of study and testing, they have selected on cast pewter floors for their kits. Now the pewter floors are not as rigid as the aluminum ones but they do help with the weight issue. Three different methods of mounting the chassis to the shell were evaluated before the final mounting method was chosen. Custom Traxx feels that it is just plain pathetic of any supplier to force customers to do the supplier's system engineering as the Southern California Traction Club had to do last summer with the HO scale [Illinois Terminal PCC kit](#), released earlier this year. This was a kit supposedly designed for the Bowser mechanism but there was insufficient clearance designed for the Bowser motor. Both Custom Traxx test cars are equipped with TCS M1 decoders. One car has operational headlights and tail lights and the other will be a test bed for an illuminated destination sign.

So for you Boston fans, the car kits are now available in limited numbers for \$175.00! They are being shipped as shells arrive!

Converting the New Bowser San Francisco F-Line PCC to Overhead

for the model railroading/traction hobby. It will only lead to the elimination of products for our wonderful hobby.

Joel Lovitch
President
MTS Imports, Inc.

Southern California Traction Club's 80th Appearance!

Founded in 1995, the mission of the Southern California Traction Club is to display traction operating from live overhead wire to West Coast audiences. Starting with their first appearance in April 1997 at the South Coast Botanic Garden in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, they have become one of the most popular displays at Great Train Expo, World's Greatest Hobby on Tour and local NMRA train shows. The club is featured once each year at the Orange Empire Railway Museum.

So it was fitting that their 80th appearance would be at the same place as their first, [the South Coast Botanic Garden](#) at the NMRA LADIV show hosted by Mary Barstow, MMR on November 7-8, 2009.



This is a show designed for the modular clubs to enjoy operating their model trains. Mary, shown at the welcome desk, ensures that there is coffee and doughnuts available each of the mornings of the show for the show participants.

There were many clubs featured at this show including the award-winning 20s & 30s modular group and the Southern California Traction Club. Over the weekend 1000 visitors admired the layouts and displays. During the show, one of the pre-production Bowser PCC cars was spotted on one of the 20s & 30s modules.



This show featured the Southern California Traction Club's clubs city streetcar line and the underground subway station, both of which are controlled by Digital Command Control.

The SCTC, despite its localized name, firmly believes in displaying a variety of traction vehicles. One of the many problems in getting traction models manufactured is the variety. Except for PCC cars, very few cities used the same type of streetcar. Traction fans tend to be very narrow in their modeling scope. Modelers living in one area like the cars they knew, mainly that areas vehicles, and sometimes have absolutely no interest in any other area's vehicles. We know a traction modeler that, when you showed him a model, would immediately ask, "...Did PE have any of 'em...? ". If the answer was NO, you knew that your model was worthless in his eyes.

Nevertheless in the pursuit of this variety, the club has embraced resin bodied kits as they offer the variety sought.

Wire Operation!

Converting the new Bowser PCC to overhead wire operation requires a little work for the modeler. Modelers should know that while this trolley was designed to acquire new participants for the traction hobby, the car was designed for two-rail operation. Souvenir versions of this car, that is the same body shell on plastic trucks are being sold in the many trolley museums throughout the United States along with display cases designed by Transquip Company. Eventual conversion to overhead wire operation by true modelers was considered as when the car is in the overhead wire mode, all eight wheels are grounded. The first problem was the location of the circuit board for the DC ready capability. It had to be located high in the roof above the standee windows. This forced holes to be made in the circuit board for poles to pass through. Since there are two major sizes of pole bases used in the hobby, the Bowser 3/32" pole shaft and the Custom Traxx/MTS 2mm bushing plus a few others ones, it was desired to accommodate all of them. So the hole was placed in a location on the board that could be enlarged if possible, forcing the electrical connection to be adjacent to the hole for the pole. The modeler will have to bridge that gap.

First of all there is the required [removal of the shell from the chassis](#) and the repositioning of the switch on the circuit board from track to ANT.

*NOTE: Modelers should be aware that when the selector switch on the circuit board on the Bowser F-line PCC is moved from **RAIL** to **ANT**, all eight wheels of the car are now grounded for power pick-up. Do not set such a car on two-rail track as a direct short will result.*

Then the modeler must carefully remove the plastic trolley poles and add two pieces of brass bent into a U shape with about 2mm between the legs of the "U" and position them right over the holes in the circuit built to clear the trolley poles.

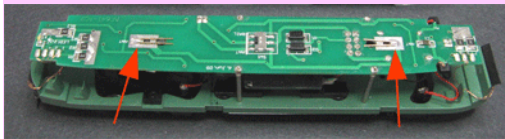


Figure 1 - Chassis [[For a larger view, click here.](#)]

The red arrows are pointing to the pads which are the electrical connection for the trolley poles. Because the board must be placed above the standee windows, holes were placed in the circuit board to allow for the trolley pole base as shown by the blue arrows in Figure 2. These holes are not the ones in the pads.

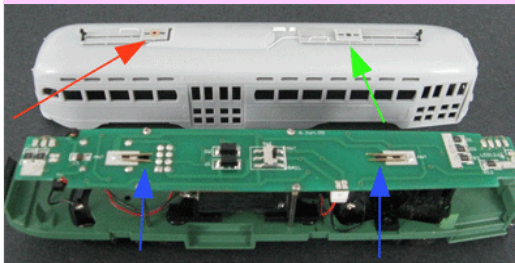


Figure 2 - Chassis and Shell. [[For a larger view, click here.](#)]

These are the ones next to the pads toward the center of the car. Fashion these clips out of .019" brass wire and solder the base of the U-shaped clip to the pad. After the shell is placed back on the chassis, gently push the SCTC-1 pole pivot as should in Figure 2 above by the red arrow or your Bowser 1250 trolley pole into the hole provided for the trolley poles as shown by the green arrow in Figure 2 above and you should be in business. should you have any questions about this process please contact Custom Traxx.

The IHP Shaker Heights 71-95 series PCC model! (A Second Look!!)

In the July 2009 issue of the Trolleyville Times, we reviewed the Shaker Heights PCC from Imperial Hobby Productions. The car had a few minor problems with the shell details and we found a major deficiency in the resin floor supplied with the kit. But after considerable work, we were able to get two working kits operating in two-car train, with both cars powered using only one trolley pole. During the process of getting these cars running, we found a few [more](#)

Most of the items currently available in resin will never see duplication in brass or by injection molding. When the Bowser traction unit was introduced in 1999, many subway cars and PCC cars could now be made available. Because of resin casting, we now have HO scale models of the Boston 1951 Picture Window PCC cars, Kansas City All-Electric PCC cars, Shaker Heights Pullman PCC cars, Pittsburgh 1700 class Sealed Window All-Electric PCC cars, the Philadelphia PCC-II, and the Boston ex-Dallas PCC cars to name a few. There have also been the Philadelphia 1960 "Almond Joy" subway-elevated cars and the Lehigh Valley Transit 1030 lightweight cars. Various club members have embraced all of these cars. shown below are a line-up of Philadelphia area cars.



In the above photo are three resin-bodied 1981 Philadelphia Kawasaki Light Rail Vehicles, all Bowser powered with A-line 20040 flywheel kits. Each one is equipped with a Train Control Systems four-function DCC decoder. Shown in the next photo is car 9094, with decal striping provided by Bob Dietrich and signed for Route 15, Richmond Westmoreland. The prototype of this model was observed operating on Philadelphia's Route 15 in May 2007:



After what has seemed to be an eternity, the club finally got to operate their two-car train of Shaker Heights Pullman PCC Cars, both equipped with TCS Z2 decoders, in both the DC and DCC modes. The cars are shown below in the SCTC main yard with PCC-II and Kawasaki LRVs during the show.



The cars were operated on club mainline in MU under one trolley pole as shown in the next photo:



A pre-production Bowser San Francisco Municipal Railway PCC was displayed at this show. This model of San Francisco Car 1050 had been equipped with a test version of the new Train Control Systems M4T computer. The brake light function operated as predicted but there were even more refinements made to this decoder which is now available from Custom Traxx. Car 1050 had been converted to overhead operation with a pair of Bowser 1250 poles converted to 1mm pin bases and SCTC-1 pivots. This test car arrived with one defective dash light and the production cars do not have the bluish interior lights shown on this model.

concerns that we feel that our readers should know about. But, unfortunately, our story does not end here,

The most disturbing feature of this kit is the complete lack of support from IHP on defective parts. We noted at the time of the review that there were very defective windows with the kit. The car is advertised with "...Clear flush fitting window inserts...". The windows supplied with the IHP Shaker Heights PCC were anything but clear. They were filled with so many air bubbles that it appeared that they had been lightly sprayed with white paint. IHP was notified in July about this problem. They admitted knowledge of the problem and promised to send replacements. They have now promised over five different times over a five month period to supply the replacement windows and have consistently failed to do so. They even gave a sixth un kept promise as late as November 22th. As you have guessed by now, no one is holding their breath!

As of this moment, those who have had business dealings with IHP over this window situation feel that IHP just may be the most difficult and unprofessional supplier in the traction field and, possibly, the entire model railroad hobby. Fellow club members and other traction modelers should note that the requests for replacement windows were made by both Jonathan Werner and John McWhirter who are known to IHP as Trolleyville Times reporters. Even the possibility that very poor customer service might be reported in the Trolleyville Times did not provide incentive for the windows to be replaced. Up to this point, we had never experienced a supplier selling defective parts that were obviously defective when originally packaged into the kit. IHP (Mr Mike Bartel) has stated on more than one occasion in writing that he "...works alone...". This led both the club and the Times to the conclusion that if bad parts were packed into his kits, he must have been the one that did it. These windows were so obviously bad, that he had to do it knowingly. After all this time, we have no idea when we will ever get the windows that we paid for. The Southern California Traction Club has yet to receive the third car that they ordered in October. The check has been cashed but they still have absolutely no idea when they will get this car, advertised as "AVAILABLE" on the IHP web site. So this experience with IHP basically means that you pay your money and take your chances. You get whatever you get whenever you get it! Promises appear to mean absolutely nothing. Caveat Emptor!



Everyone who saw this car whether standing and in operation was impressed. At the end of last month over two thirds of the cars were already sold with some versions sold out.

Bowser Increases the Versatility of their HO Traction Mechanisms!

Bowser announced to the Trolleyville Times that they will soon be making their traction mechanism available with 28" and 33" wheels, in addition to the 26", 30" and 34" wheel versions currently offered. There will be no price increase and the new part numbers will be 125105 for the mechanisms with 28" wheels and the 125115 for those with the 33" wheels. All the 28" and 33" wheels will be the blackened nickel-silver wheels similar to the 26" wheels currently being offered in the Bowser F-line PCC and all traction units with 26" wheels. When these units are available, there will be announcement right here in the Trolleyville Times. Custom Traxx is expected to stock the new units.

Announcements from Custom Traxx!

The Train Control Systems M4T decoder designed for the Bowser F-line PCC car is now available exclusively from Custom Traxx. The price is \$39.95 plus \$3.00 shipping (Add 9.75% sales tax if shipping to California). The M4T is a plug-in decoder equipped with the NMRA 8-pin plug.

Custom Traxx is working with Train Control Systems for a decoder that will bring the brake light and automatic stop function to the HO scale Bachmann Peter Witt. Keep an eye on their catalogue and expect some news during January 2010.

Custom Traxx is slowly receiving shells from Eric for the HO scale Boston, ex-Dallas PCC. Those of you who wish a car should get your orders in. They will be filled in order received.

One last fact. If you have not purchased your Bowser F-line PCC and want to get one, you may soon be too late. The cars have been available only for fourteen days and, as of November 24th are 70% gone.

The Times learned on November 25th that Custom Traxx is making arrangements to begin accepting credit cards. Hopefully this will be completed by January 1, 2010. Please note their ordering page for instructions on or after that date.