

The Trolleyville Times wishes all readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

## Two Fine Great Train Expos in Southern California!

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The Great Train Expo (GTE) held two shows in Southern California during December. The first was at the Ontario Convention Center on December 5-6. The family-oriented show was conducted and effectively managed by Bill Grove and his son Trevor.



Bill, now 41, has been involved with model train shows for almost half his life, starting with the old Great American Train Show in 1989. It is no surprise that he now owns the Great Train Expo and can navigate through some of the situations that he encountered at the Ontario Convention Center.

This was the first time that GTE has had a show at this relatively new facility and it was not without "teething" pains. The first was that the facility chose not to allow more than two vehicles inside the hall at the same time. This was blamed on the fire Marshall and then a city ordinance. Regardless of the source of this rule, this is not what model train vendors expected, since drive-in is almost standard at most exhibition halls. Many model train vendors are "Mom & Pop" type shops with a station wagon or a mini-van used for their business. This was to be a real problem at move-out. So Bill Grove, owner of the Great Train Expo, and the show manager for this show, adapted quickly to the situation. First, move-in times were extended and entry times were scheduled as early as 9:00 A.M. on the Friday before the show. Each vehicle was given 30 minutes to unload and leave the hall. As difficult as it seemed that it would be, Bill and Trevor Grove made it work and by 3:00 P.M. there were no more vehicles waiting to enter the hall. Every one feared move-out would be horrible on Sunday night but the Groves made that happen with relative ease. The Southern California Traction Club feels that Bill Grove earned the title of Master Train Show Manager (MTSM). The show, according to GTE, was designated a success by Saturday evening. When vendors arrived on Sunday morning they were greeted with a flyer containing the move-out instructions within which the following statement was made:

*"With over 2000 people through yesterday, considering we have not been in the market for years, I am convinced this is a market that we need to be in. Whether it is here, or Fairplex, I would look to be back in the area for years to*

## Traction Modeling - A Newcomer's View -

by Jonathan Werner

### Introduction

Since the traction modeling world is a small one, most of you reading this likely are familiar with the publisher and conversely have no idea who I am. Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Jonathan Werner and I am not your average traction modeler. Even though I am a second generation modeler, I only recently fell under the power of overhead wire. Prior to that, I was a modeler of modern freight rail.

Another trait that sets me apart from many in this hobby is my age. Being in my early 40's places me junior to the majority of other traction enthusiasts I have met. I mention this only because my being relatively new to traction, both in terms of age and tenure as a traction modeler has a direct impact on some observations I have made over the past two years; observations that I wholeheartedly believe will affect both the short and long-term future of this hobby.

In short, being a small sub-set of niche market, it is my considered opinion that all of us in the traction modeling world could benefit greatly from some honest assessment of the current state of the hobby, as well as an open discussion on what it may take to keep this hobby a viable one for years to come.

### Professionalism

Almost all professions have either formal or informal societies in which people get together to talk about current events in their particular profession. This is because, for example, the best forum in which to discuss issues related to neurosurgery is one that consists of other neurosurgeons. In fact, I belong to several of these types of groups in my own profession, and I find them generally to be a tremendous means of sharing knowledge, ideas, thoughts, and concerns across the discipline.

Hobbies are no different. Model Railroading has several formal organizations such as the National Model Railroading Association (NMRA) and the Toy Train Operating Society (TTOS). As a sub-set of model railroaders, the traction community has organizations like the East Penn Traction Club (EPTC) and the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC), and it has been my experience there is a very symbiotic relationship amongst the vast majority of suppliers in this field.

### "Cooperate and Graduate"

Twenty-some years ago when I was applying to colleges, I knew that there were certain criteria that degree-granting institutions held in high regard. Granted, everybody knows about grade-point averages, test scores, and personality traits such as intelligence, work ethic, and character. But one factor that rated much higher than I had anticipated was an applicant's ability to cooperate and communicate with others, since these skills are also most important in a career in engineering. It only stands to reason since no great feat of engineering occurred solely through the work of one person.

It matters little whether you are building the Panama Canal or PCC cars; the principle holds true. Go back to the aforementioned symbiotic relationship I mentioned amongst the major players in this hobby. Whether it be Bachmann, Bowser Manufacturing, Con-Cor, Custom Traxx, GHB, Miniatures by Eric, MTS Imports, Inc., Proto 87, or Train Control Systems (just to name a few), the principals of these suppliers often share information in order to move the hobby forward. After all, a rising tide lifts all boats.

Consider what I believe to be some of the most interesting recent developments in the HO scale traction hobby; the Bachmann Peter Witt, the Bowser San Francisco MUNI PCCs, the Con-Cor Electroliner and the M4T Decoder from Train Control Systems. The journey of all of these products from concept to finished product involved some amount of interaction amongst one or more of the suppliers mentioned above.

That's just the direct positive result of such cooperation. But there is an indirect positive component as well. One of the issues the builders of the Panama Canal had to deal with had nothing to do with engineering. In order to keep the workers from dying of malaria, advances had to be made in both the areas of medicine and pest control. These advances occurred as a result of many disciplines that did not have a reason to cooperate before being compelled by circumstance to do so.

come and we can keep building it better and better each year."

Although the Ontario Great Train Expo was the Southern California Traction Club's first visit to the Ontario Convention Center, it was the eleventh such visit to the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

This show was managed by Nick Zorn of the Great Train Expo. Nick, now well known for his professional appearance and demeanor, is shown below in the show office:



This show opened on Saturday during a heavy rain storm which definitely reduced the number of visitors. The weather improved a little on Sunday but over 3200 attended over the two days of the show.



The main exhibit hall used for the show was a little cold as there was no heat in the building. This did not help things either. However, Trolleyville was on hand displaying the hot new Bowser PCC cars. The case showing all four of the current cars available was under constant examination by visitors.



In the case of traction modeling, the cooperation between the developers of the Bowser MUNI PCCs and Train Control Systems' M4T decoder allowed for the marriage of these two products allowing an advance that wasn't necessarily in the scope of either project at the conceptual phase; the new controlled acceleration/deceleration combined with realistic brake-light function.

#### **A Real Eye-Opener**

Last May, I traveled to Philadelphia to attend my first East Penn Traction Club meet. I wore two hats during my time at this event. First of all, I was there in an official capacity as a photojournalist for the Trolleyville Times. But more importantly, I was there as a modeler.

I was eagerly looking forward to the opportunity to put faces to the names of fellow modelers whose words I had read on modeling-related user groups such as 'hotractionmodeling' on Yahoo. I circulated through that hall shaking hands, swapping stories, and most of all, buying all sorts of stuff indulging my rail-geekery. The highlight of my wallet-emptying was the purchase of four model kits from Imperial Hobby Productions (IHP). This supplier had just introduced these new kits; the Shaker Heights PCC, the Illinois Terminal PCC, and the Kawasaki car currently operated by SEPTA in Philadelphia.

I was one of the first people bellied up to IHP's table; I couldn't wait to hand over some cash and get my hands on these kits. Like many other modelers to whom I had been talking, I was eager to work with these "ready to finish" kits, and even more interested to see them operating on a layout. Anybody who read my review of the Shaker Heights car in the Trolleyville Times knows the ordeal I went through trying to get that kit into an operational condition.

There's an old saying about hindsight being 20/20. There's also a saying about rose-colored glasses. Little did I know that trying to assemble one streetcar would cause me to get a whole new education on the value of cooperation and that non-cooperation not only impedes progress, it can be an exceptionally regressive force.

#### **What Really Drives Quality?**

I just outlined how I believe cooperation drives advancement, but what drives quality? What makes the difference between a "good" product and a "bad" one? It really is all about two things: the expectation of the consumer and how that consumer is treated by the supplier.

#### **Expectations = Defining Moments**

Although I posted very infrequently to 'hotractionmodeling', I was an avid reader. The vast majority of the posts were very informative, which was an important factor to somebody new to traction modeling. Of course, there were posts that were off-topic, or initiated the bane of the use group, the "flame war." But for the most part, I found this group to be a valuable asset, and therefore I had the aforementioned "rose-colored glasses" on when it came to some posts regarding some very ugly topics. Since the group in general was useful and informative to me, I simply separated the wheat from the chaff, ignoring what was of no interest to me.

That proved to be a **BIG** mistake!

#### **Defining Moments: Positive**

At first, when I realized that I had purchased an IHP product with which I had some issues, I contacted IHP and was told that I could expect replacements to be shipped for some defective parts within a week or two.

#### **Defining Moments: Negative**

As of this writing, I have yet to receive the replacement parts. The original request was six months ago, and subsequent requests were met with the same "shipping in a week or so" promise. My most recent request didn't even get a response.

#### **Eye-Opener Number Two**

As I stated before, I am a relatively new traction modeler, and as such, I'm finding more challenges with the IHP kits I've purchased, challenges that required to seek out a more expert hand in an attempt to salvage what I've purchased. After a few conversations with some other modelers, I was directed to the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) for assistance.

While working with this group is when I discovered what a mistake I made ignoring some of the commentary on 'hotractionmodeling' that fell outside my area of interest. In all honesty, had I been paying attention to all of this, I would have never done business with IHP on principle. But since I had saved many of the auto-emailed digests of post to this board as many of them contained valuable information, I went back and re-examined the material I had previously ignored.

For those of you that don't know, George Huckaby is both the owner of Custom Traxx and one of the founders of the SCTC. Mike Bartel is the owner of IHP, the moderator of 'hotractionmodeling', and a past president of the East Penn Traction Club (EPTC). On the face of the two prior sentences, one would assume these two gentlemen are heavily invested in the general welfare of the traction modeling hobby and would therefore encourage activities that promote the hobby. However, in the case of

And as a result, these Bowser PCC cars and the Train Control Systems M4T decoders, designed specifically for them, continued to sell at this show also.



A pre-production model of the San Francisco Muni F-line car 1050 due to be released next month was operating on the Trolleyville display module along with another model of San Francisco Cincinnati PCC car 1057. This was the same module that was awarded third place in the Outstanding Operational Display category at the East Penn Meet last May.



The car is seen in the next photo in the background crossing directly behind San Francisco F-line PCC 1057. Also shown are models of Boston ex-Dallas double-end PCC car 3322, Shaker Heights PCC 79 and Illinois Terminal double-end PCC 457.



The incredible amount of exterior detail present on this new model, including items such as the Philadelphia clearance bars, the exterior speaker next to the front door and the center door open light are clearly visible on the model in the next photo.



The Southern California Traction Club added a new module, soon to be the General George S. Patton Circle, to the city streetcar line. It served as the new terminus of the line while

Bartel, one would be hard-pressed to convince me that he provides anything other than a negative influence on the hobby.

### The Power of Non-Cooperation

In short, there are two main reasons why I believe that as they exist now, Bartel and IHP are entities the traction world could easily survive without. But they have a common theme. On numerous occasions, both the business practices of IHP and controversies that have erupted on 'hotractionmodeling' have forced me to the conclusion that both these entities share a self-centered view of the traction modeling hobby.

On more than one occasion, Bartel has stated that "he works alone," which in my opinion is precisely the problem. Not only does such a "lone wolf" attitude preclude any hope for true achievement, it can also foster a "me against the world" mentality that can lead such a "lone wolf" into business practices so dishonest their questionable nature is surpassed only by the flawed judgment allowing one to rationalize such behavior.

Some may consider that to be a strong statement, and they may be right. However, before drawing your own conclusion, I would ask you to consider a rather substantial number of examples that have lead me to such a stance.

### 'hotractionmodeling'

#### The "Non-Denial" Denial

I joined 'hotractionmodeling' in January of 2008. As I've stated before, despite the "flame wars" and needless controversies that erupt here on occasion, I have found it some respects to be a very useful forum for the exchange of knowledge and experiences in the traction hobby.

However, one the first instances of a needless controversy appeared over Bartel's denial of membership to Custom Traxx. Several other suppliers previously mentioned in this article were at the time members of this user group. Along with a significant number of Custom Traxx customers, many of those suppliers had encouraged Custom Traxx owner George Huckaby to join.

What user group that purports itself to be "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" wouldn't want to include somebody like George? Along with the Southern California Traction Club, George Huckaby and Custom Traxx have built a fleet of over 500 HO scale trolleys, interurbans and electric locomotives, as well as the modular layout on which these models are operated. A [recently made video](#), placed on YouTube last month clearly demonstrates the extent of this clubs modeling capacities.

This explains why at the time I can't understand why this is happening. Naturally, this is where I started to ignore all this "controversy." All I know at this point is that for some reason, a person who has been involved in traction longer than I've been alive, and concomitantly has an undeniable wealth of knowledge and experience in the hobby is not welcome in this group, and that seems to have made a lot of people very angry.

Sometime later, I found myself in a conversation with George Huckaby because I'm trying to help another modeler locate a good set of decals for an IHP kit of the ex-Kansas City cars operated by the Philadelphia Transportation Company. What I discovered was that Custom Traxx made decals for several IHP kits, but IHP doesn't mention that on its website, even though it clearly mentions several other suppliers (more on that later).

Of course, at this time, I am blissfully unaware that there is some sort of "history" between Mike Bartel and George Huckaby, and I am equally unknowing of a brewing storm. Then one day, a very interesting issue of the group's email digest lands in my in box, and even my previously disinterested eye can't help but give this a read.

Much to my disbelief, I find myself reading a post written by Bartel in response to an article that appeared in the Trolleyville Times. George Huckaby was displeased about having not been allowed to join a venue that reaches across the hobby, and not even being given an explanation as to why. In what will prove to be a pattern, Bartel expends several paragraphs telling a story about nearly everything under the sun EXCEPT the matter at hand, that being why somebody with such a wealth of knowledge is being kept out of this forum. Even more perplexing is why Bartel chose this opportunity to publicly level some vague allegations about previous "behavior" on the part of George Huckaby.

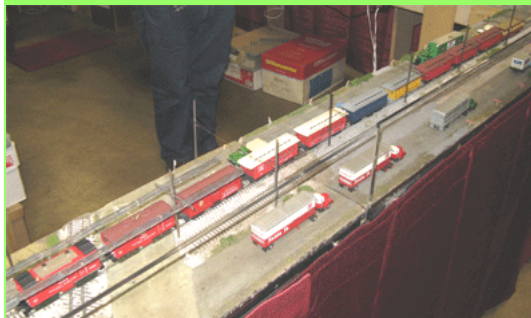
I'm even more amazed when I discover that really the "behavior" that George Huckaby engaged in was to raise performance issues with some model kits he had purchased from IHP in 2007. Bartel's writings suggested that he felt he was being "disrespected" by the raising of legitimate performance issues with some of his products.

To sum up, while 'hotractionmodeling' purports itself to be a forum for the free exchange of knowledge and ideas in the hobby, its moderator clearly cannot handle honest criticism, and won't allow it. Apparently, it is "free and open" in the same manner that all those former Stalinist regimes were "democratic."

module 970 returned to its display role in the Custom Traxx booth.



George Jones ran his special "olde tyme" nine-car passenger train headed by two Roundhouse Pacific Electric box cab diesels using trolley pole power. This is a crowd favorite when it runs due to the colorful Overton cars.



## More Great Streetcar News from San Francisco!

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The Winter 2010 issue of the Market Street Railway's periodical, 'Inside Track' reported that a decision has been made concerning the final paint schemes of the four 1948 double-end 'Torpedo' streetcars currently at Brookville for complete rebuilding. Cars 1006, 1008, 1009 and 1011 will emerge in the paint schemes shown below:

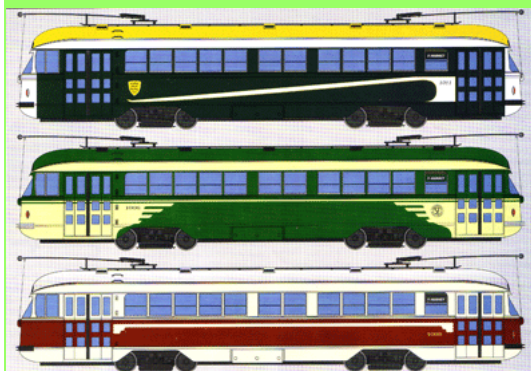


Figure 1 - The Next Torpedos

Car 1009 will be painted in the original PCC colors of the Dallas Terminal and Railway (the bottom car in Figure 1 above). DT&R bought 25 double end PCC cars in 1942 and ran them until 1956. A few years later Boston bought the entire fleet and used them until the end of the PCC service. These were the only double-end PCC cars that were essentially the same length as a single end car.

Cars 1006 and 1008 will be finished in the original 1948 Municipal Railway green and cream as (the middle car in Figure 1). So of the ten double-end PCC cars originally built for San Francisco in 1948, seven of them will eventually be

### The "Elephant in the Room"

If you aren't familiar with this saying, it refers to a problem that everybody can see, but nobody wants to deal with. There is just such an elephant camped in the traction modeling hobby. I first became aware of it when Bartel (for reasons I still can't understand) posted what was a private email conversation and his response to that conversation on 'hotractionmodeling'. In short, the letter raised concerns of possible racism.

This peaked my interest both as person who is very interested in the future of this hobby and as a member of the same ethnic demographic as the author of the original e-mail. As a result, I made it a point to have a face-to-face discussion with George Huckaby of Custom Traxx while we were both at the East Penn Meet in May of 2009, not only because of his standing in the hobby, but because he is also a member of the aforementioned ethnic demographic.

What I discovered really shocked me on several levels. The email that Bartel posted was not the first time Custom Traxx had been contacted by this person. Initially, Custom Traxx was contacted by this person about one year previously complaining that she was unable to obtain a product that had been clearly advertised on IHP's website as available. In her second message to Custom Traxx, she identified her ethnic background, inferring that that had something to do with her problem. In an attempt to squelch such a controversy in the hobby, Custom Traxx provided the letter privately to IHP so that Bartel had a fair chance to rectify the situation.

Sadly, not only did Bartel not rectify the issue; rather he made it worse in many ways. First of all, this whole issue arose from a simple business transaction between a supplier and a consumer. In another defining moment, IHP was presented with a dissatisfied customer, and easily could have avoided all of this mess by simply providing the product that had been advertised as being available.

But Bartel chose not to do that. He didn't even bother to tell her when and/or if she could still get the model she wanted. Instead, he chose to take a private communication public, posting not only the letter that had been provided by Custom Traxx so that he may make this defining moment positive rather than negative, but adding his own exceptionally self-centered response.

Despite the fact that he had clearly been caught in a "failure to perform" issue, Bartel only reacted with an opening line of "I am deeply offended by this" followed by eight paragraphs reacting only to the comments concerning his business practices. Worse yet, he laid this problem he created on the doorstep of the East Penn Traction Club and every member of 'hotractionmodeling' by posting this material on both Yahoo groups.

This response from Bartel showed a complete lack of respect to this woman not only as a customer, but as a fellow modeler, and to all the modelers he needlessly exposed to this. He chose to completely ignore the original complaint and returned to his previously established pattern of deflecting attention away from the root cause of the problem and denying the credibility of any criticism directed at him. Posting this material on both hotractionmodeling and the Yahoo group of the East Penn Traction Club not only ensured that he had just completely alienated a potential customer, he also gave a young modeler the most negative impression that he could of both all modelers and the hobby in general.

A crucial component of an "elephant in the room" is knowing that all the people in the room know the elephant is there. You would have a hard time convincing me that in the days after this controversy was needlessly thrown into the traction community that it wasn't noticed and actions weren't taken. For example, I found it curious that in the aftermath of this incident, East Penn took down its user group and that IHP changed verbiage on its web site stating that it was a "proud member of EPTC" to "proud supporter of EPTC."

In other words, it doesn't seem very likely those events are coincidences, and therefore it doesn't seem very likely that I am the only one in this hobby that sees what a grave issue this is.

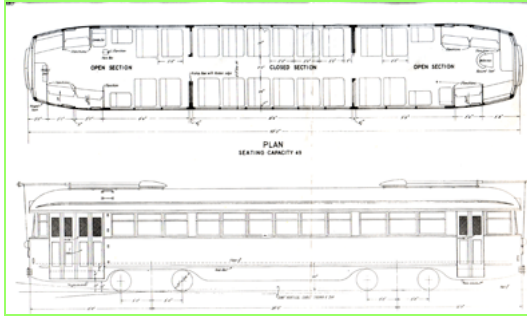
Of all the examples cited in this article, this one has the most damaging implications for the future of the hobby. Modelers tend to model the equipment they saw in operation when they were kids. The same reason I started modeling Soo Line and Great Northern freight is the same reason a guy in his late 60's from Atlantic City might be interested in modeling single-end Brilliners. If you look at the neighborhoods through which today's LRVs run, you will see the kids that are tomorrow's modelers. You will also notice immediately why this is such an issue. If traction modelers are seen as a group to be unwelcoming to new blood, this hobby will die—and much sooner than one might think.

If you are a supplier in this hobby, or more importantly, if you would like anybody to care in 20 years about the great things we have done with traction modeling and to continue that progress, then you must also notice what the new face of the hobby looks like. East Penn was a gathering with a decidedly older, suburban culture; which is exactly the opposite of what tomorrow's modelers will be.

In a small niche market, suppliers need to be held to a high standard by the consumers to ensure growth and progress. Suppliers must also not be allowed to engage in practices that alienate a current rich target market; one that carries the future of the hobby with it. Over the long term, the effect of

operating in San Francisco. An eighth is in Australia at the Sydney Tramway Museum. Cars 1012 and 1013 were scrapped in the 1970s.

Car 1011 (the top car shown in Figure 1) will be painted in a "what-if" scheme for the long gone Market Street Railway. As reported in the same issue of the Inside Track, the Market Street Railway drew up plans for a double-end PCC streetcar but their precarious financial condition did not allow them to go much beyond the planning stage. Charles Smallwood's book, "The White Front Cars of San Francisco" showed the following drawing of a proposed Market Street Railway PCC:



[For a larger view, click here.](#) Note that the car is 48' long with 24' truck center-to-center wheelbase. The car is designed for two-man, pay as you leave fare collection and is a California style car with open ends. Notice that there is no glass in the doors, only grilles. This Engineering Department drawing, number 5822, is dated December 14, 1939.

Following are photographs of cars 1006, 1008, 1009 and 1011 in service years ago:



such suppliers is to in fact shrink the market by magnifying the effect on attrition while capping growth. Therefore, it is incumbent on the consumer to support only those suppliers that provide quality, and at the very least do not inhibit growth.

## IHP

### The ex-KCPS PTC Car

This is the incident that allowed me to discover first-hand what happens simply by asking Bartel a simple question and what happens when you point out an error in an IHP product. In an attempt to get a clarification as to whether the car he advertised as a "Kansas City car" was in fact a car as run by Kansas City Public Service (KCPS) or was in fact an ex-KCPS as modified and operated by the Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC).

I sent Bartel an email cataloging the differences between these two cars, and took photos from his web site pointing out where I needed clarity as to whether this was a KCPS car as they ran in that city after World War II. Being in Minnesota, I am mostly interested in modeling cars from the Midwest, and the ex-KCPS cars modified by PTC would not be accurate, as the shell pictured on the IHP web site shows a car with teardrop roof lights, no dash lights and only two tail lights. From my research, I knew that KCPS post-war cars as operated by Kansas City had no roof lights, had dash lights, and four tail lights below the belt rail. KCPS post-war cars from everything I have seen all had blinker doors, but the IHP shell as pictured had folding doors.

This query was met with a response consisting of three sentences, none of which sufficiently answered my question. I sent Bartel another email, and again he really doesn't answer my question. Rather, he asks me if I would like to help him produce an accurate model of a KCPS post-war car. The trouble is that by now, I have found another supplier that is making a shell that suits my needs. To close conversation on the matter, I send a third message to Bartel that concluded with the following:

*"...that goes back to your request for assistance in creating a KCPS shell. As a modeler, and since there is already a supplier making a very good product of this nature, I believe that the traction market is so small and contracting so quickly that such duplication may in fact be detrimental to the future of the hobby and may in some cases also be unethical. I'm not sure if you are familiar with the Trolleyville Times, but its latest issue has an interesting article on this very subject. As a modeler and supplier, it would be interesting to hear your thoughts on that subject."*

Little did I know that paragraph would keep resurfacing. A few months later, while I am looking for decals for the aforementioned KCPS post-war car, I sent Bartel another message:

*"If you recall, we had a discussion a while back about your Kansas City PCC cars. As I am in Minneapolis, I am interested in modeling PCC cars from the central U.S. Now, in addition to that, I see you will be bringing out Shaker Heights and Illinois Terminal PCC Cars, both of which will be using the Bowser drive...But, I am curious about something. I've noted that you point out where to get decals for these two cars, but you don't mention decals made for the Kansas City car. Luckily, another friend pointed me toward Custom Traxx. Not only do they make decals for the KCPS car, they also do the TTC and PTC versions. Not only that, but they also do decals for your Air-Electric PCC, Brilliner, and your St. Louis Red Arrow car. May I suggest that you also mention the decals from Custom Traxx? It seems to me that telling people where the decals can be obtained can help you sell models. It would be a big help for us modelers not having to search as much."*

This inquiry from a potential customer again was met with a series of contradictions, statements that I considered to be at the very least misleading, and a completely unnecessary personal attack accusing me of being some sort of agent of Custom Traxx or actually of being George Huckaby hiding behind a false identity.

The great irony of this situation is that Bartel's accusation of being a spy for Custom Traxx infuriated me so much that after purchasing the Custom Traxx decals, I called George Huckaby to relay my experiences during this time. This began a series of conversations that led to my becoming a contributor to the Trolleyville Times and some time later the Director of Procurement for Custom Traxx.

### The San Francisco Magic Carpet/Torpedo Project

Now that I had become affiliated with Custom Traxx, I got the opportunity to discover what dealing with Bartel as a business partner is like. At the urging of some of the senior East Penn Traction Club membership, Custom Traxx attempted to enter into a joint project with IHP to produce or co-produce a model of the San Francisco "Torpedo", a 1948 1006-1015 Double-end PCC car.

An agreement was reached in June 2009 that in support for the production of a prototype shell for the "Torpedo" (Ten San Francisco double-end PCCs built in 1948), Custom Traxx' John McWhirter would visit the Western Railway Museum (an 800-mile round trip from Custom Traxx facilities in Los Angeles) and obtain measurements of the Magic Carpet car for another IHP project. IHP agreed to produce the aforementioned prototype in November 2009.



Meanwhile, car 1076, another of the ex-Minneapolis, ex-Newark PCC cars entered revenue service. Only four of the eleven cars, 1075, 1076, 1077 and 1078 have seen extended service due to wiring problems that plague the rest of the 1070-1080 fleet. These cars were never completely rewired as the ex-Philadelphia 1050-1063 series were in the 1980s, making them much less reliable. The same issue of 'Inside Track' showed a rare photo of three of the ex-Newark cars together at Fisherman's Wharf. Shown below are 1076 (D.C. Transit), 1077 (Birmingham Electric) and 1078 (San Diego Electric Railway).



When these cars go into service, twenty-one cities that operated PCC cars will be represented in San Francisco, where the hits just keep on coming!

On another subject, ex-Philadelphia car 1058, which was involved in a wreck in September 2006, striking the rear of a trolley bus, will soon emerge in a different paint scheme similar to the Corgi PCC car shown below:

However, without any prior coordination, we discovered in October 2009 that IHP had arbitrarily decided to postpone the project and the agreed-upon deliverable until spring 2010. This forced Custom Traxx to re-evaluate the viability of continuing this project. Coupled with the fact that I was still waiting for the replacement windows Bartel had promised me for the Shaker Heights PCC I bought from him at the 2009 East Penn meet (at this point I had five months worth of "I'll get them to you next week"), we felt we had no other option than to cancel the project.

Upon notifying IHP in writing of this cancellation, Custom Traxx was treated to another off-topic Bartel response, this time adding needless *ad hominem* attacks against George Huckaby in what seemed to be an attempt to deflect the fact this decision was made based on yet another IHP "failure to perform" issue.

### IHP, Piracy, Duplication and Respect

The following instances clearly demonstrate the lack of respect that IHP shows to other traction suppliers.

#### MTS Imports, Inc.

Joel Lovitch, President of MTS Imports, Inc (MTS), provided an in-depth discussion and description of the piracy issue in the December issue of the Trolleyville Times. Piracy is simply copying another person's work without their approval or permission. Twice in the recent past, the issue of piracy has been raised on 'hotractionmodeling'. Both times the controversy was either initiated by or propagated by Bartel.

A prime example is the incident that made Lovitch sensitive to this issue. A few years back, MTS Imports, Inc announced a brass model of the 2000 series San Diego Siemens SD-100 Light Rail Vehicles. A series of circumstances prevented MTS from hitting the market window it had been aiming for, yet during this period IHP announced a resin model of the same car. Naturally, this could do nothing but damage the prospects for adequate sales of the brass car, thus certainly ensuring a large loss for MTS.

MTS contacted IHP and voiced an objection to this sort of predatory business practice. During a subsequent face-to-face discussion between the two, Bartel stated that he "...could do anything he wanted..." but followed that with a statement via the IHP website that its resin SD-100 project was "delayed." Of course, this did absolutely nothing to repair the damage caused to MTS Imports, Inc.

#### Proto 87

MTS Imports, Inc (MTS) is not the only supplier to have experienced this. Proto 87 became another victim of "killing the messenger" when a member of 'hotractionmodeling' asked Bartel if he would be willing to make a resin model of a particular car. Bartel, showing complete disregard for both copyright law and fellow suppliers, openly stated that if someone had a model in brass and was willing to "sacrifice" it, he would cast a resin shell. It could be inferred by all who read this thread that Bartel intended to use the brass model directly to make a pattern, without any regard for the effort expended by the originator of the model; using it to make a mold to cast models for his own purposes. Proto 87 challenged Bartel on the impropriety of doing such and the disrespect in the form of name-calling began. While Bartel again did nothing to avert that impression, the furor that ensued ended with Proto 87 removing himself from the yahoo site moments before Bartel ejected him. But, again, no statement disavowing the use of piracy was ever forthcoming from Bartel.

#### The R10 Project

This again came back to the surface recently with the announcement of IHP's R10 project. Given recent history, MTS Imports, Inc (Joel Lovitch) asked Bartel if he intended use an original tooling or if he was just copying someone else's model. Also, given recent history, one would like to assume that lessons had been learned. Bartel responded very disrespectfully off-line to Joel telling him that Joel could print his response if he wished and that the entire matter was none of his business. However, instead of avoiding the previous firestorms that erupted over this practice (which could have been easily been done by stating that he would obtain permission from the appropriate source prior to casting any models) and the extinguishing value of doing so, Bartel again chose not to state emphatically that he does not condone or support piracy and in my opinion such a statement wasn't even considered. Rather, the now well-known Bartel pattern of deflecting, denying, and deceiving was employed. This allowed the group discussion to deteriorate into name-calling and other useless chatter, leaving the readers to conclude that Bartel would do whatever he wished with the property of others.

This goes back to a comment I made to Bartel during our discussions of the KCPS car. The fact of the matter is that the traction market is so small and contracting so quickly that such duplication, aside from being a violation of copyright law, is detrimental to the future of the hobby. This is a hobby supplied by small, independent suppliers there isn't likely to be any new suppliers entering the market knowing that any new product they introduce is likely to be stolen.

In addition, this shows the level of hypocrisy to which IHP operates. This is an entity that has shown on at least three known occasions to have



## The Bowser PCC car and DCC

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The new HO scale Bowser San Francisco PCC is DCC ready and contains the NMRA 8-pin plug. Every powered car has interior lights, illuminated rear roof lights and front destination sign lights but these are not operational unless you add a DCC decoder. Although any plug-in three or four function decoder will work only one decoder will give you some unique features.

The Train Control Systems M4T decoder has been jointly designed by John Forsythe of TCS and George Huckaby of Custom Traxx expressly for the Bowser PCC. Although most plug-in three or four function decoders will work in the Bowser PCC, only this decoder provides realistic brake lights and the controlled car stop/start. Function 0 activates the front headlight. Function 1 provides the interior lights, rear roof lights and front destination sign lights. Function 3 activates the brake and tail lights. Function 6 activates the controlled car stop. When the Function 6 button is depressed, the brake lights illuminate and the car decelerates to a complete stop and the brake lights remain illuminated. When Function 6 is again depressed, the brake lights go out and the car accelerates back to the original speed. The TCS M4T decoder is currently available from [Custom Traxx](#).

The next San Francisco F-line PCC cars due from Bowser Manufacturing in January or February 2010 are :

1050 - San Francisco



absolutely no regard for the intellectual property of others, yet ensures that all of its shells are clearly marked as having been [copyrighted by IHP](#).

Piracy is a larger problem than the instances listed here. David Rygmyr of NorthWest Short Line stated the following in his recent newsletter: "...A catalog retailer recently brought in Asian clones of most of our tools and we don't know what impact that will have on our development budget. Piracy hurts this hobby in a big way, and we ask you not support piracy. Pirates have it easy; they don't have to bother with pesky details like R&D, development costs, marketing expenses and so on. Bringing something new to the market is more expensive than most people realize, and piracy stifles this effort. Encourage innovation, not duplication..."

We cannot do a lot about overseas piracy but we sure could show some respect for each other here in the United States ...right?

### Conclusion

The traction modeling hobby is a very enjoyable and rewarding one. Those of us fortunate to be blessed with a passion for it have a responsibility not only to do what we can to further the hobby for more than just our own enjoyment, but to do so for the generations of modelers after us. I am neither prescient nor presumptuous enough to say I have all the answers as to what we need to do to accomplish that. However, the complete lack of even the most rudimentary business ethics shown by IHP and the unbelievable lack of respect for its customers, coupled with the utter insolence shown toward fellow modelers by Mike Bartel makes a perfect example of what not to do.

Over the past few years, IHP and Bartel have steadfastly refused to cooperate on projects to put more products into a traction hobby market yearning for new models. Not only that, he has engaged in practices that could inhibit suppliers from bringing a new product to market. He isn't even willing to engage in an honest discussion about product improvement. In fact, he actively suppresses discussion if it involves his products.

If that weren't enough, IHP and Bartel consistently offer products as available that in fact are not. He makes it a common practice to ship substandard parts, then reneges on promises to provide suitable replacements. Inquiries about parts, order statuses, or comments on his products are met with denials, accusations, and insults.

This is precisely the behavior that will drive away new modelers, and this is precisely the behavior that anybody who cares at all about traction modeling as a hobby must not tolerate. It is for these reasons that I can not recommend conducting business with IHP or Mike Bartel as long as both continue to perform badly as a supplier and act badly as a member of the hobby.

1058 - Chicago



1059 - Boston



1063 - Baltimore



## The Next Trolley From Bowser! (What do you think?)

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As of now, the Bowser San Francisco F-line PCC cars have proven to be a success. So the natural question will be.....What's Next?

Several cars are now under consideration including:

The San Francisco 1952 1016-1040 class PCC car,  
The Philadelphia 1948 2091-2200 class PCC car,  
Generic or Specific Light Rail Vehicle,  
1906 Brill Semi-convertible with new 5'0" WB trucks,  
The San Francisco 1948 1006-1015 class "Torpedo" PCC car,  
1920 era arch roof double end streetcar.

Speak now or forever hold your peace! Potential sales will be a major factor in any decision. This is the time to let Bowser know [what you think!](#) A rationale for your choice would be most desirable.



