The Trolleyville Times

October 2010

**be displaying at the South Coast Botanic Garden in Rancho Palos Verdes on October 23-24, 2010!**

# Window guards on the Boston, ex-Dallas PCC car!

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*by Richard Allman & Bob Dietrich, EPTC*

Richard Allman obtained a model of the Boston ex-Dallas, series 3222-3346 series PCC. It was made from a TS-16 Custom Traxx kit powered with a Bowser 125100 drive. At the time of this writing, a few finishing details still remain, such as the side destination signs and couplers. Boston installed couplers for towing purposes but these cars were never MU capable. Also, the mounting of the pole bushing still needs a tad of tweaking to get it to run exactly perfectly. But he assembled and painted it and he was happy with the results except for one thing. The distinctive window guards were missing.

Richard wanted very much to have those guards on the windows so he employed a method developed by fellow modeler and current East Penn Traction Club President, Bob Dietrich. Most of the tools and supplies required are shown below:

Shown above are the following items: First is the pewter floor with Bowser 125100 power unit installed; some scotch tape, a frame built to hold and position the guards on the car; a cream marker; Micro Krystal Klear (not shown); EZ-line Stretch Line, and a toothpick to apply the Micro Krystal Lear.

First, my frame used wood ends with styrene separating rods securely screwed together. The frame in constructed such that when placed over the shell, the EZ-line that will form the guards will lay right on the window posts. The line should be stretched a little by the car when the frame is placed over the car so it is desired that the frame be slightly lower than the car sides.

*Note 1: The effort in building this frame will be useful for other cars, as demonstrated in the original Bob Dietrich article. Keep it handy for the coming Bachmann Birney cars.*

Using the Bob "Flex Window-Guards" technique of applying the window guards, I made one small adjustment. I made only three guards per side rather than four as on the prototype. Edges of the frame are fabricated from styrene with grooves about six inches apart in which the EZ-line will be positioned. The line is stretched between the edges of the frame, positioned as desired and held securely in place with the scotch tape on the ends.

Using the Cream marker, which you can usually get at an Art Supply Store, color the guards to get the color close to the cream body of the car. Make sure to wait until the EZ-lines are completely dry before proceeding further.

*Note 2: If you plan to install these guards from the beginning, the EZ-line could be placed in the same frame and airbrushed with the same cream color used for the top half of the car.*

*Note 3: You could also place two sets of grooves on a slightly larger frame so that you could paint or mark the lines for both sides of the car at the same time.*

# Taking Traction Modeling to the Public!

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For what now has seemed an eternity, we have been urging traction modelers to share their craft with the general public. Both the East Penn Traction Club and the Southern California Traction Club have participated in the model train shows, sometimes to be referred to as those "nuts" or "crazies" who like to hang overhead wire.

When the Southern California Traction Club was formed in 1995 and started making public appearances in 1997, they learned what the East Penn Traction Club already knew, that is, that the public loves trolley cars and the idea that these little models are running off the overhead wire fascinates most show attendees.

After years of trying to get a show sized model traction display, the club was faced with trying to get a smaller sized display that was appealing to visitors while being small enough to show in the smaller venues. Custom Traxx had a 3' by 3' display that they had been using at public displays but it was basically a small circle that could be missed in some environments. So the club decided to build a city streetcar display consisting of three to five modules featuring street running streetcars. The line would be operated by DCC. Of course the 2009 addition of the TCS M4T decoder combined with radio control gave the ability to run individual cars at set speeds.

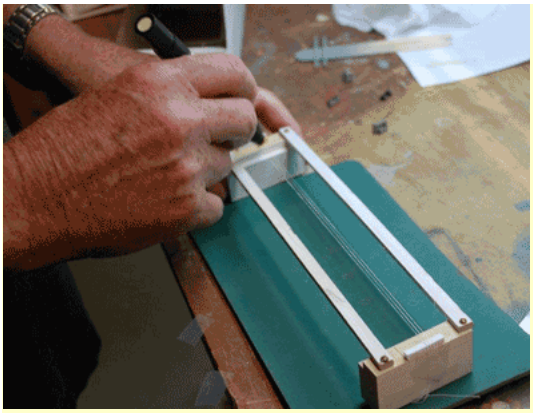
**Photo 1:Bowser San Francisco PCC car 1061, Philadelphia Kawasaki Car 9094 and Suydam Pacific Electric "Hollywood" car 717 all operating under DCC control on the display.**

So a smaller layout, currently 10' by 3', was created for these smaller venues and debuted at the Homestead Museum on September 18-19. This smaller layout is operated by Digital Command Control (DCC) and allows the club to experiment with all the features of DCC. Community displays are such fun in which to participate. The public loves the cars along with the details of the modules and there are few "know-at-all" rivet counters to irritate you. So these shows turn out to be not only enjoyable but educational.

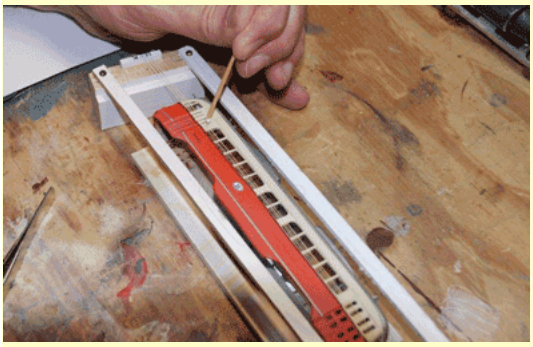
The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum in the City of Industry has quite a history as the plaque below and their internet site states.


**Photo 2: Homestead Museum Plaque at the entrance.**

These community displays often feature historic artifacts such as cars and early electrical appliances:



When dry, using a tooth pick, begin dabbing the Micro Krystal Klear on to the four major (wide) window posts on the car, the two next to the doors and the two in the center between the two groups of five windows. Micro Krystal Klear does dry clear but do not apply excessive amounts. All we want to do is secure the EZ-line to the side of the car.



You will most likely need more that one application of the Micro Krystal Klear to get the level of adhesion that is needed.

The line is then carefully cut at the end pillars with a sharp blade and if you are fortunate, your car is completed.

One last point, if you feel intimidated by this procedure, try it first with an old Bachmann Brill shell or one of those Readers' Digest "Desire" shells that most of us have laying around somewhere.

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The above Custom Traxx ex-Dallas PCC was painted by Bruce Battles for Mitch Laird's private road, the Central Coast Southern Electric.

**Photo 3: Two of over a dozen antique cars on display.**

**Photo 4: Portable antique phonograph playing music.**

On top of all this, there is always at least one vendor with fantastic food. One of these had a Santa Maria Tri-Tip Sandwich. They gave out free samples to the club members and immediately they got in line for theirs.

**Photo 5: Santa Maria Tri-Tips on the barbeque.**

Another item of interest. Because of the crowds expected, the Museum contracted with United Services of El Monte to furnish the finest portable restroom facilities that we have ever seen. You felt that you were in a fine hotel. There was even background music.

For the first time in club history, the club allowed visitors to run trolleys. DCC and TCS decoders permitted this to happen. Our first such motormen, two brothers, Adrian & Julian Spitzzeri, got to run SEPTA Kawasaki car 9094. In photo 6, you can see one of our junior motormen at work controlling Philadelphia Kawasaki car 9094 which you can see behind the glass to the right.

**Photo 6 - Junior motorman, Adrian Spitzzeri, with Digitrax DT400.**

The club hopes to see a lot more of this type of activity in future public showings of the City Streetcar Display. This is one method to get "new blood" into traction modeling!

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# Sound for the Bowser PCC!

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In late August, Custom Traxx and the Southern California Traction Club received a Bowser Municipal Railway Baltimore (#12563) PCC back from Fred Miller. Fred had installed the Digitrax SoundBug along with a speaker into the car as a display of his sound methodology. Custom Traxx along with the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum had provided sounds for Fred to use for this project.

This is sound. there is a motor-generator background noise, a gong and a horn. There are track sounds, door opening and closing sounds and the sound of super resilient wheels.

For those of us that are intimately familiar with PCC cars and their sounds, you will probably notice the frequency limitations of the Digitrax SFX004 Soundbug. But this is sound and they are recognizable.

This should not be allowed to detract from the huge amount of effort that Fred Miller has expended to achieve what we are now experiencing. This is the first sound equipped Bowser F-line PCC cars.

To read more about the entire project, click here!

# An upgrade for the Con-Cor PCC Car!

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In our last edition, we mentioned to you that we were disappointed that the wiring in the Con-Cor PCC did not allow the full functionality of the TCS M4T to be realized. We had sent one to Charlie Long of the East Penn Traction Club to see what he could do. Early last month, we received our answer.

Out of the box, Charlie noted that the Con-Cor car had many issues. The headlights, taillights and interior lights had not been wired in accordance with NMRA standards.

DCC is one area where the NMRA has been very relevant. If the car had been wired per NMRA standards, this car would work perfectly when an M4T decoder was inserted into the NMRA 8-pin plug as is the case with the Bachmann Peter Witt and the Bowser PCC. But combine this error with the obvious lack of knowledge by the Con-Cor "engineer" who designed their so-called brake light, and you get something like this. In other words, Con-Cor locked out some features of DCC by insisting on a "gimmick" that was wrong in the first place.

The same walls built to keep so-called secrets in, sometimes keep needed information out. We have said before that trolley modeling is not national defense.

The procedure developed by Charlie requires some talent of soldering and working with miniature components on circuit boards. But the car that Charlie provided to us works perfectly. Download the complete procedure here!

Next, we will be reviewing Bob Dietrich's method of modifying the car, which was reported in the July 2010 Trolleyville Times, so that it can negotiate our ORR turnouts.

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