

DCC-ready complete power chassis' for F-line souvenir PCC cars are now available

## Noteworthy Resin Traction Kits under development!

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As most of you know by now, Miniatures by Eric (Eric Courtney) has been working on a San Francisco Breda Light Rail Vehicle during the past year. This project involved designing a transition section that looked like the prototype but allowed operation on small radius curves desired by most model traction operators.

Eric chose Custom Traxx and the Southern California Traction Club to conduct testing on the initial operation of the vehicle. The car has a metal floor designed and produced by Eric to use the Bowser mechanism. Several problems were discovered and are in the process of being solved. The kit contains flush fitting windows, which have not yet been installed on our test car. Custom Traxx has a decal set, CN-1499, for this car and they are now available at \$9.95. The first test car is shown below:



We hope to have the cars available by the end of this month. Another car being developed by Eric is a model of the Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company center-door cars series 55-76, built in 1925-1926. These were the first steel cars built for that operator and some of them lasted way into the 1970s as school trippers and to keep lines open during snow storms. This car has a metal floor designed and produced by Eric and will use the Bowser mechanism. Truck sideframes will be available from Custom Traxx as part 13-15. The next photo shows the shell on top of an MTS Imports, Inc model of the same car.



An unusual Pullman-built PCC car model is also under development. This one will represent the 225 cars of the Boston "Commonwealth" class of PCC cars, series 3022-3196, 3222-3271. To ensure the most correct shell possible, Eric will make several "breadboard" shells and have them reviewed by knowledgeable modelers before settling on a final production shell. The next photos are the very first of these. So much work remains to be done.



## The Kawasaki Light Rail Car Procurement for Philadelphia – The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of K 9000!

by Joe Boscia

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By the mid 1970's, SEPTA was planning a procurement of trolley cars for the five Subway-Surface routes in West Philadelphia. The disastrous Woodland Carhouse fire of October 1975, that destroyed so many PCC cars, brought new urgency to the effort. In addition, there was pressure from Boeing to purchase the locally manufactured Standard Light Rail Vehicle (SLRV). Still, it would be several years before funding was set and a spec completed.

Potential bidders were invited to complete a two-day PCC car familiarization training program out of Woodland. The course was offered to enable bidders to better understand the operating conditions and environment the car would deal with. Only one company showed any interest – Kawasaki Heavy Industries. They and representatives from their proposed suppliers, like Westinghouse, participated in three courses.

On 9-13-78, a Request for Proposal was issued. Six bids were received in December. On 3-29-79, a contract with Kawasaki was approved for 141 total vehicles, 112 Single End (SE) for the City Division, and 29 Double End (DE) cars for Red Arrow. The agreement called for a mock up, and two pilot cars, one single end car, and one double end car, to be delivered and tested *before* production cars were manufactured.

The SEPTA Light Rail Car was Kawasaki's first rail transportation venture in the United States. At that time, people here thought of Kawasaki in terms of motorcycles. However, the firm was building ships, railway rolling stock (including the famous Bullet trains) for customers in Japan and around the world, and assembling Boeing airplanes for the Asian market. It would eventually win the SEPTA Broad St. subway car order, build U. S. assembly plants, and follow up with multiple rolling stock orders for New York City, PATH, and others.

Kawasaki accelerated its efforts, and a DE half-car mockup was ready for inspection by the SEPTA Team at the factory in Kobe, Japan, in late August of that year. Based on changes identified during the visit, Kawasaki went ahead with the prototypes.

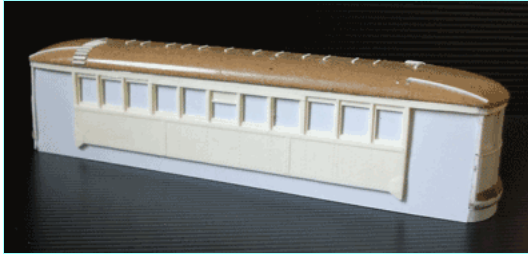
By late May 1980, the two prototypes were ready for the SEPTA Team. After a thorough going over, a Completion Presentation Ceremony was held at the factory on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Car 9000 was shipped first, and arrived at Woodland on July 29, 1980. Car 100 came shortly afterward. Only 16 months had elapsed from Contract award to delivery of the prototypes, a record not equaled by any other modern Light Rail Car purchase.

After strenuous testing and operator training, K Car 9000 entered revenue passenger service on Route 11 with two back-to-back runs totaling 13 hours on October 10, 1980. Approval from passengers and operators was immediate. Some changes to the car were identified and incorporated into the production run. Facilities changes were made to several Surface Car Subway station platforms, and a number of newly created non-clearance curves on the street were relayed to provide clearance to passing Light Rail Cars. Overhead wire was modified on Red Arrow to allow pantograph operation, but the City Division Facilities Department fought conversion in West Philadelphia.

Production cars were shipped starting in 1981, and final assembly to meet Buy America requirements was performed at the Boeing plant outside Philadelphia. By 11-29-82, the last K Car, 9018, was delivered. *The Kawasaki car is also the only Light Rail Car procurement to date in the United States that did not utilize an outside consultant to manage the specification, construction, and testing process.*



Transit Classics' Greg King is also developing a model of San Francisco's Class B Streetcar. San Francisco currently has two of these cars, 130 and 162, currently in operation on its F-line. Their first attempts at the Muni-B shell are shown in the next photograph.



A recommendation to use the Kawasaki cars in base line service on Route 15 and the five Subway-Surface lines, supplemented by PCC Cars in peak hours, was quickly rejected by bus-oriented top managers who didn't want the cars in North Philadelphia, lest the people there lobby for new trolleys.

Today these veterans soldier on, serving the people of West Philadelphia and Delaware County. For how much longer, no one knows, as SEPTA has announced no concrete plans for their replacement.



The Kobe plant was the only place and time that both the single end and double end cars could be seen side-by-side, and front differences highlighted. *Joe Boscia photo.*

*Editor:* Recently, the 30th anniversary of these cars was [celebrated with a fan trip](#). The fan trip was organized by Joe Boscia, who was a key member of the team that produced these cars.

## Another Enjoyable International Railfair at Roseville, CA!

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We can't overstate what a fun show that this is. We have been involved with this show since 1992 and it never seems to disappoint us. The show is presented by a group of model railroad clubs and they include all facets of model railroading. The community supports the show with the Rainbow Girls providing refreshments not only for the public visitors but also for the vendors setting up on Friday evening. A lot of variety exists at this show from the European Train Enthusiasts layouts to the live steam trains running and even a riding train. This year a Southern Pacific Cab-Forward was operating under steam.



Of course, this year's riding train featured Also RS-2 motive power.



Then there are the pancake breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday mornings for the vendors provided by the Rainbow Girls.



At this show, the next line of Bowser PCC cars were announced using a huge banner hung behind the Trolleyville display.

## Changes at Custom Traxx!

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Recently, while evaluating the latest Bowser PCC cars and the M4T decoders, we had a chance to discuss the status of the hobby with Jonathan Werner of Custom Traxx. First, he told us that the future of traction modeling at this very moment just might be as good as it has ever been. The recent group of HO scale ready-to-run trolleys from Bachmann (Peter Witt and the coming Birney), Con-Cor PCC and the Bowser PCC cars have seen an increase in the number of new traction devotees. One of every two Custom Traxx sales in the past six months have been to new customers, most of them indicating that they have just bought one of the new R-T-R trolleys and are starting on a "long-awaited" streetcar layout.

In the same conversation with Jonathan, Custom Traxx Director of Procurement, we were told that the Bowser PCC, Bowser traction drives and parts along with the TCS traction decoders (M4T, M4T-NP, MIT) are accounting for over 80% of Custom Traxx business. He further said, "...The Bowser trolleys, no matter how many we order, are sold out within 30 days. Some of them sold out within a week, particularly the San Francisco and Boston models".... But Jonathan cautioned us as he noted that despite the current good position of traction modeling that there will be a few casualties. He noted that although Custom Traxx started out as a traction decal maker. Decals now account for less than 8% of their sales and getting less every year. "...Do not look for a lot of new decals from us and you should not expect a lot of them to be re-run when they are exhausted. Traction decals used to be between 33 and 50% of our total sales each year until about 2004, when the slow decline began. We really enjoyed the research and the development of decals and we will really miss it. But that research was not wasted. A lot of it is being put into the new Bowser trolleys. Demands for TCS decoders, ORR rail and special work, trolley poles from Miniatures by Eric and the Bowser trolleys continue to escalate and demand more of our attention..."

George Huckaby also told us that the long time policy of attending many train shows is also being revised. He is now a Product Consultant to Bowser Manufacturing on HO scale streetcars and this is keeping him very busy and tied to his computer. He also told us that there are many more trolleys coming from Bowser, the first of which will be available early next year and another after that is already in the works. So in 2011 expect to see Custom Traxx only at local Southern California model train shows and traction only shows like the fantastic East Penn Traction Club Meet.

Finally, Custom Traxx has just received its second overseas order of Girder Rail from our Swedish suppliers. Although the price is the same, the value of the dollar has declined



The cars, due in early 2011, include Philadelphia SEPTA "Gulf Oil", Toronto, Johnstown, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles MTA. Each car except Pittsburgh will be available in two road numbers. Pre-Production samples arrived at Custom Traxx for evaluation on November 29th. Even better news is that two different companies are working on a sound decoder for the Bowser PCC cars. While we do not expect these decoders to be available for these first five cars, we are hopeful that later road names will be available with these sound decoders. Watch for status reports in future editions of the Trolleyville Times. These cars will have the improved truck detail and simulated super resilient wheels shown at last summer's National Train Show.

The complete staff of Clover House was on hand for this show.



Shown left to right, are Russ Clover, Jane Clover, Tom Dempsey and Kathy Dempsey. Clover House is the main source of printed circuit ties recommended for use in the installation of ORR rail and specialwork. With the renewed interest in street railway track due to the many ready-to-run streetcars introduced in HO scale over the past three years, we hope that this small Northern California company continues to prosper.

## Bowser SP and PE V-1000s (with trolley poles) !

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In late October, Bowser introduced models of the Southern Pacific and Pacific Electric Baldwin VO-1000 locomotives equipped with trolley poles. The trolley poles were used on prototype Pacific Electric lines where the highway crossing signals were activated by contacts on the trolley wire. As these crossings were changed to track activation, the poles became unnecessary and were removed.

Bowser provided models of Pacific Electric VO-1000s 1321 and 1327 along with Southern Pacific 1320, all equipped with trolley poles and trolley pole platforms and in both DC and DCC with Tsunami sound. These items were provided in the package but not installed on the car. The instructions for installing the poles were inadvertently left out of the boxes when the cars were packaged. [The missing instructions](#) are located on the Bowser web site and are provided here for your information.

relative to Swedish currency and forced another price increase. Hans Josefson personally brought our order on an airplane as he was attending a conference in San Francisco and we picked it up in that city while attending the International Railfair. Without this personal, unique delivery, the price increase may have been greater.

## Next Bowser Trolleys!

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By now, most of you know that Bowser will be introducing their next trolley, the traditional 1945 all-electric PCC Car early next year. The basis of the model is the 1948 all-electric PCC car delivered to the Philadelphia Transportation Company and operated in that city from 1948 to 1992. Several of these cars were included in the 110 cars upgraded with Federal Funds during the 1980s. Fifteen of these cars ended up in San Francisco and fourteen of them were base service on the F-line when it opened in 1995.

The first five road names have been selected, announced and are currently in development. Other road names being considered are: SEPTA Phase 1, SEPTA Phase 2, Minneapolis TCL, Cleveland CTS, Detroit DSR, Birmingham BEC, New Jersey Public Service PSCT, Los Angeles LATL, Shaker Heights SHRT, and Cincinnati CSR. Some special cars such as Philadelphia's Safety Car 2128 and Pittsburgh (PAT) 1730 Mod Desire are also under study. Even being discussed are road names such as Washington D.C. and Saint Louis. The Bowser-Custom Traxx team wants to hear from you but it should be soon and definitely before the end of this year. The first pre-production samples of the first five road names of these arrived at the Custom Traxx facility on November 29th for evaluation. These cars all have working trolley poles very similar to the HT-P2 poles currently available from Custom Traxx. With the current rate of pre-orders, we just may see the cars shown below from Bowser in the future...



