

The latest information about the Bowser-Tsunami PCC! [...and it's all good!...]

Just before last month's East Penn Traction Club Meet, Soundtraxx provided the Bowser Team with the second and third prototypes Tsunami-equipped PCC Bowser drive. The second unit, housed in a SEPTA "Gulf Oil" #2111 unit, was capable of operation in the Bowser 12600 series traditional "single-pole" PCC, while the third unit, housed in a Muni 1056 Kansas City Public Service PCC shell, was capable of operation in the 12500 series San Francisco F-line PCC cars and the traditional PCC cars now being released by Bowser. It is the Bowser Team goal to make the drive applicable to any HO scale model of the all-electric PCC car, with the circuit board capable of use with any scale model. It also had to handle the roof lights on both the SEPTA (Philadelphia) and TTC (Toronto) cars and have the automatic start-stop functions of the Train Control Systems (TCS) MIT, M4T and T6XT decoders.

As soon as both units were readdressed to 2111 and 1056, respectively, testing began. Unknown to us at the time, both units had the motor and light functions disabled on DC. We would find out later that CV 29 should be 38 instead of 34. The motor-generator sound function was enabled for DC operation. So this sound was activated as soon as DC or DCC power was detected by the decoder. Procedures exist to make all the lights operational in the DC mode.

SEPTA 2111 operated as specified. The destination sign now operates along with the interior lights. The Soundtraxx unit operated the SEPTA Subway light and the Emergency Beacon. The Beacon intensity appeared to be greater than those operated by the TCS T6XT decoder. The unit did exhibit some stalling in the two-rail mode going through our test track turnouts, indicating to us that one side of the trailing track may not be picking up power. We examined that when we removed the shell to convert the car to overhead wire power for the East Penn Traction Club Meet. We found that one of the wires was not properly "crimped" in the plug, thus causing a "break" in that circuit.

MUNI 1056 also operated as specified. However, the drive used in this car was one of the second batch from Bowser that was incorrectly wired by the supplier so it ran in reverse. The standard addition of a value of 1 to CV 29 (in this case the value from 34 to 35) corrected that problem. However, the unit would now give three bells when moving forward and two bells in reverse when the passenger stop function was activated. Consultation with Soundtraxx revealed that the best way to correct this problem was to swap the motor leads and since we had readdressed the unit to 1056, ensure that CV29 was set to 38. For those modelers that may acquire Bowser-Tsunami units in the future, this issue will not be a problem as they will be getting the latest, correctly wired, manufactured Bowser drives mated to the Soundtraxx circuit board. In the next photo, cars 1056 and 1055, both Tsunami-equipped are being tested along with Torpedo 1006. Car 1006, shown between 1055 and 1056, was constructed using the procedure outlined in the August 2010 Trolleyville Times.



There will be much more information on this issue before the units become available. At this time, Bowser does NOT plan to make the decoders available separately. If available at all, Bowser may offer entire PCC drive chassis with Tsunami sound capability. If you have interest in such an item, let Bowser know.

All technical problems that were experienced with the units seemed to have been solved as of the end of last month so there seems to be no reason why the sound units would not be available in Bowser PCC cars due the end of this year.

SEPTA tests new Frankford Avenue Trackage!

On Monday morning May 9, 2011, the first test runs were made on the new Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) track on Frankford

The 20th National East Penn Meet! [Another great one....maybe the best ever!]

The 20th East Penn Traction Club Meet was held in Hall D of the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA on May 13-14, 2011.



This is the same location of the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour show in January 2009 that had an attendance of over 40,000 people, and brought traffic almost to a complete standstill in the town. This new Expo Center is actually an old building and the heritage shows. It should be deemed a work in progress.

Almost all the traction players were present at this show; the large, the small, the major, the minor, the relevant and the opposite. Several events of interest to trolley fans occurred. Two major manufacturers received President's Awards at this meet, Joel Lovitch of MTS Imports, Middletown, NY, below left and Lee English of Bowser Manufacturing, Montoursville, PA, below right.



Joel Lovitch's longevity in producing quality (...run as good as they look...) brass traction models was the major reason for this award, not to mention that he had produced models of over seven Philadelphia area prototype models.

Lee English was recognized for the 1999 HO scale trolley mechanism that has provided quality inexpensive power for many HO scale traction models and also for putting the traction hobby "on its car" with the R-T-R PCC models beginning in 2009.

Best of all, the long promised Tsunami-sound-equipped PCC car was demonstrated from about noon on Friday until 5:00 P.M. Saturday. A member of the Southern California Traction Club drove the module from Los Angeles to Oaks, PA in his SUV just for that show and then drove it back to Los Angeles. The module is shown with the Tsunami-sound-equipped Bowser SEPTA PCC operating with George Huckaby behind it.

Avenue from Girard Avenue to Delaware Avenue in Philadelphia, PA. This track and the loop at Delaware Avenue are to be used while construction on Interstate 95 forces reconstruction of Richmond Street on which the Route 15 trolley line currently operates. The estimate for this detour is two & one-half years. The first car, Kawasaki car 9103, arrived at Girard and Frankford at 10:04 AM as scheduled!



Car 9103 was followed by PCCII 2336.



All went well to Delaware and Frankford, the only hitch being the dewirement of 2336 both entering and leaving the passing siding.



The clearance for 9103 was very close to the line poles in the loop, but everything worked fine. Car 2336 also lost ground going into the loop, so a front end loader gave a nudge and everything started and the car proceeded OK. Losing ground can be expected with new rail covered a lot with concrete and asphalt but the occurrence is not as rare as some might think. Sometimes, when streets are given a fresh coat of asphalt, complete contact with the rail can be lost by all eight wheels. Consider that all-electric PCC cars have no brake shoes to "polish" wheel treads.

The State of Traction Decals (HO)!

In a complete surprise to Custom Traxx and other decal makers, there has been an upsurge in HO scale decal sales so far in 2011. While they were trying to ascertain the reason for all of this, sales of Custom Traxx decals at the recent East Penn Meet were 142% over the levels at the 2009 Meet. Frankly, with all of the HO scale Ready-To-Run trolleys introduced since 2009, all of us expected a downturn in demand for decals, which was apparent in 2010. But 2011 abruptly reversed the trend. Custom Traxx plans begun in 2010 to scale back HO scale traction decal production will now be put on hold. They have accelerated work on a decal set for the Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company (P&WCTCo) 40-44 series Jewett interurbans and the 45-76



George Huckaby and Chet Moore are shown in the next photo in their conductors uniforms. Chet is one of the presenters of a fine modular display, known as the ViMooreko Company, that also won an award at the show. Richard Vible and Larry Loyko were the other two developers of that excellent layout that caught everyone's eye.



Reliable and smooth trolley pole operation in N-scale was demonstrated using the new GHB double truck Birney equipped with trolley poles by Miniatures by Eric. Such smooth operation has been possible for some time but unknown to non-N scalers.



The Trolleyville Times would like to let everyone know that N-scale has turned this corner some time ago and we have invited them to provide some articles for the Times as it is time that non-N scalers know the progress that has been made. We can only hope that they take us up on our invitation. One of the new GHB double truck Birneys equipped with the Miniatures by Eric poles and a Bachmann drive effortlessly kept circling the loop shown in the previous and following photo.



Several N-scale models as seen in the next photo were seen along with fine N-scale modules.

series Center Door Cars. The decals will also letter the cars for the period after 1936 when they were operated by the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (PSTCo).

HO scale models of the P&WCTCo/PSTCo 40-44 series "Jewetts" are shortly going to be available from John Kennedy (KND Productions) and similar scale models of the P&WCTCo/PSTCo 45-76 series Center Door Cars are now available from Eric Courtney (Miniatures by Eric). Both cars will be able to be powered with now proven reliable Bowser drives.

It is planned to issue one decal set, CN-044, for both cars. Also the current CN-1030 set for the Lehigh Valley Transit (LVT) 1000 series cars will be expanded to cover the LVT 700 series cars.

Despite this trend, Custom Traxx will soon be forced to cancel further effort on their planned CN-1013 set for the San Francisco "Torpedo" series 1006-1015 PCC and abandon the project. When asked for a reason for this, they stated that it was due to the refusal of the current model manufacturer, Imperial Hobby Productions, to provide/loan a shell for final measurements. They went on to say that they determined some time ago that it was a best practice to have a shell for measurements before printing decals. In this case, there was a need to precisely fit both the the S. F. Muni single-end and double-end "Wings". Since the manufacturer refused to do this, a correctly fitting set is impossible, so they have no choice but to terminate the project. This is especially regrettable since the set was about 85% complete.

Don't Forget English's Model Railroad Supply!

When driving across Interstate 80 in Central Pennsylvania, it is just plain insane for a model railroader not to take a small detour on Interstate 180 and visit English's Model Railroad Supply in Montoursville, PA. This fantastic store rivals any of the well-known stores in Colorado and California. It is huge and well-stocked with items not commonly seen in many hobby shops. When entering the store, the visitor passes a cabinet filled with various Bowser products, some from years ago. Bowser, now in business for over 50 years, made a lot of items not commonly known by modelers.



Detail part selection is greatly eased by the large sliding shelves that the customer can pull out to check for, locate and select the parts that they wish. there are over seven such sliding racks. Just one of them has ben pulled out and is shown below:



Fine sound was emanating from a SEPTA PCC car at the Custom Traxx booth. The gong was clear; the motor generator was very discernible and the start and stop sequences crowd pleasing. There were crowds around the Custom Traxx module throughout the show.



The above scenes were repeated all throughout the two-day show. HO scale traction is about to turn another corner. Look for the new Bowser-Tsunami PCC cars by the end of 2012 in SEPTA, Cleveland, Toronto, Minneapolis and Detroit colors.

Custom Traxx' George Huckaby attended the show in this authentic 1947 Philadelphia Transportation Company motorman's uniform provided by Transquip. The cap badge was supplied by Richard Vible.



John Kennedy (KND Enterprises) unveiled his new Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Co (P&WCTCo) Jewett 40 series car in HO scale. the shell looks very promising as shown below. Decals are being made by Custom Traxx as you read this.





And of course, there are all the publications that any modeler may want:



But we have barely entered the store at this time. Not only may customers shop in the store but they can also browse the back stock shelves. Some of the traction items available for immediate purchase were:



MTH O-scale Liberty-Liner

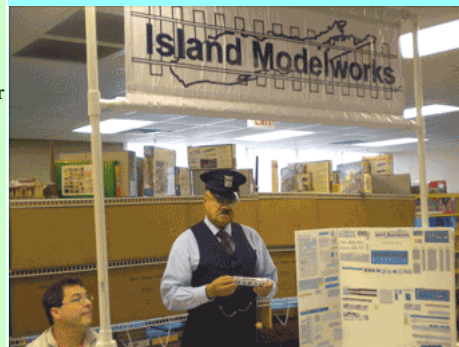


MTH HO-scale Little Joe

The decal set will also letter the P&WTCO series 45-76 Center Door Car models from Miniatures by Eric. One such model, modernized by Custom Traxx, was exhibited at the East Penn Meet. This particular model is the test bed for a Bowser drive with revised axle bearings.



Another supplier that we finally got to meet and examine his excellent products was Island Modelworks (Joe Ogden). He makes quality resin castings in N, HO and O scales. He offers subway/elevated cars from [Chicago, Boston and New York City](#) along with [Long Island Railroad and commuter diesel locomotives](#) and is a pleasure to deal with. Joe makes extensive use of rapid prototyping in his casting process. George Huckaby is discussing the Boston subway car with Joe Ogden in the next photo.



All castings that we observed looked very impressive.



We imagine that placing these cars on some Bowser or Life-Like drives would make some impressive trains.

In contrast to the East Coast flavor in the products of Island Modelworks, a new model was on display which would be of interest to West Coast traction enthusiasts. Imperial Hobby Productions (IHP) was displaying a new item of interest to San Francisco Municipal Railway modelers. Imperial Hobby Productions (IHP) displayed an HO scale ["Torpedo"](#). [These 1948 double End PCC cars](#), were the first PCC cars in the City by the Bay.

In support of this new model, IHP posted the following announcement on their single-page web site:

NEW ITEM AVAILABLE 13 May 2011



HO SCALE SF Muni 'Torpedo' Double End PCC Powered, Ready-to-Finish \$275.00

Trolleyville was able to [examine the model displayed](#) at the Meet. That model was equipped with an older Bowser 125100 mechanism with brass wheels, the IHP simulated super resilient wheel covers, and two Bowser 12600 trolley poles. Trolleyville associates were not able to check the shell



MTH HO-scale Bi-Polar

All of the above locomotives and much more are in stock at this shop for your immediate purchase. By the way, the prices are comparable to most internet sites.

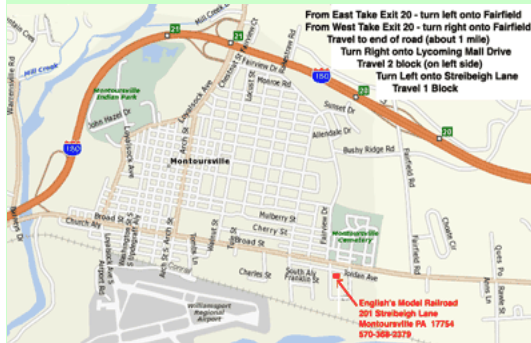
The store is managed by Rich Cox, shown in the middle of the store in the next photo:



On top of this, the capability of their repair facility, run by Vern Trego, is unequalled especially in the case of the older trains. The number and variety of older parts is breath-taking.

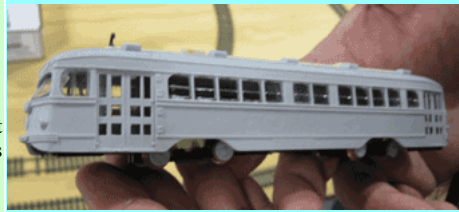


The store carries N, HO, S, O and large scale trains, a large assortment of detail parts, an operating HO, N and O scale (Lionel) layout, a Thomas the Tank play section and at least four road race sets that can be operated by customers. So if you find yourself on I-80 in Pennsylvania, take the I-180 loop and follow the map below:



At this same location, you can meet the Bowser staff that has brought to you all these new model traction items. You will find that enjoyable also!

for measurements but it appears to match the overall dimensions of the prototype car.



The above photo was provided by Trolleyville Associate Byron Brainard. Byron along with Custom Traxx Director of Procurement, Jonathan Werner, provided many of our photographs of the East Penn Meet.

After examining a detailed series of photographs provided to the Trolleyville Times, and comparing those with pictures originally published by the manufacturer on the Yahoo group "htractionmodeling," we noted several issues with the shell and subsequently informed IHP.

With what we know about the shell, and the uncertain nature of the availability of decals for this model (as of this writing, we are unaware of the existence of a suitable decal set nor of plans by any known manufacturer to produce a decal set for this model), we were astonished by the manufacturer's suggested retail price for this model. The price asked for this unpainted, ready-to-finish model is in excess of the price currently advertised by Bowser Manufacturing for a completely professionally finished, operational PCC streetcar with lights, DCC, and sound.

One of the crowning HO scale features of the show was a new modular display by Richard Vible, Chet Moore and Larry Loyko, dubbed the Vimooreko Company. The 2 feet by 10 feet display consists of a 5 foot center module, with the two end pieces 2 1/2 feet by 2 feet. There will be two more five foot long pieces built and spliced between the current end module. One will be attached to the city end (city scheme), and the other, a "country" piece with the cars running through the woods, will be connected between the current center piece and the other end module. Some of the great views of this layout are provided:



Work started on this layout during the summer of 2010 but work started in earnest by January 2011. The center section is actually more than three years ago but the two ends are new. The final photo is of Chet Moore, Larry Loyko and Richard

Vible showing their well-deserved Outstanding Operational Display Award.



A total of 577 trolley fans plus another 153 family members attended this meet. Although 69% of the attendees were from New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, representatives from 25 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Germany and Sweden also were at the show. As Rich Crooks, former East Penn Traction Club President, stated: "...Great National Meet - one to be remembered!!..."