

The first production HO scale Bowser PCC cars with Tsunami sound are due by the e

San Francisco's Market Street 1905 and 2005!

By now, almost every traction fan knows about the renaissance of streetcars in San Francisco begun in 1995 with the establishment of the F-line. Beginning with 14 1947-48 era PCC cars cast off by Philadelphia, they added Peter Witt cars from Milan, Italy and then ex-Newark, ex-Minneapolis PCC cars. The collection has been topped off with other cars from San Francisco, Melbourne and New Orleans.

Over twenty five years ago, some of us in Southern California were treated each spring to a concert in the San Gabriel Valley during which Gaylord Carter would play the magnificent Wurlitzer organ while a silent film of San Francisco's Market Street would be shown. The film had been made with a hand crank camera being mounted on a cable car and had been made prior to the 1906 great earthquake and is reputed to have been put on a train just before the earth quake struck. The complete film is on You Tube titled "**San Francisco Market St, Full & Repaired Version**"

Almost 100 years later, the same trip was taken, this time with the camera mounted on an electrically powered vehicle. This film is also on You Tube titled "**San Francisco Market Street 2005**".

The Southern California Traction Club Mentoring Program!

For the last four years, a constant discussion within the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) was how to attract new traction modelers and once they are identified to cultivate interest in the hobby and allow them to get to the enjoyment stage as fast as possible.

In 1997, The Trolleyville web site had been created based on the feeling that the internet was the new 'hot' communication medium and the newer and perhaps younger candidates would be most likely to be reached there. But Trolleyville had become mainly HO scale traction and there needed to be a way of reaching out to N, S, O and large scale tractioneers.

The yahoo and other traction groups could be a great means of reaching and educating new traction modelers but it was noticed that when some questions were asked, they were not really answered. In some cases, arguments ensued with various posters that strayed far from the original question and sometimes there was even some unpleasantness inconsistent with a "fun" hobby atmosphere that seemed to turn off a lot of readers.

The club then decided to start their own mentoring program and it works very simply. At this time the club has four mentors identified. When they come across a "beginners-type" question asked by any individual via an electronic media, they will contact the individual using the same media and answer the question or have another more knowledgeable person contact the questioning modeler. All mentors will share information so that no modeler is contacted by more than the one mentor.

So far the following mentors have been identified:

Pete DeBeers, Pasadena, CA
George Huckaby, Los Angeles, CA
Dave Lyman, Saugus, CA
John McWhirter, Los Angeles, CA

These mentors have pledged to give or get the requested pertinent information for anyone that they contact.

You do not have to be a member of the SCTC to be one of these mentors. If interested, just contact the [Trolleyville Times](#). Tomorrow's models depend on tomorrow's modelers!

Testing the Bowser Tsunami PCC!

In 2007, Custom Traxx recorded the sounds in San Francisco. Sounds were recorded from 1007, 1059 and 1063 along with 1859.

It took years to convince any of the DCC/sound manufacturers to even talk to us about a sound decoder for a trolley. But perseverance always pays off and in late 2010, Soundtraxx was persuaded to develop a unit for the Bowser HO scale PCC.

The first test units did not arrive until the last of the Bowser F-line cars had already been fabricated and sold.

One of the concerns that we had was the behavior of a DCC/sound decoder when the car was operating on overhead wire. The Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) had demonstrated that DCC worked remarkably well on their City Streetcar line using the Train Control Systems M4T and T6XT decoders.

The first test unit arrived at the Custom Traxx facility in January 2011, originally in an S. F. Muni F-line Baltimore 1063 shell. The shell was removed and replaced with an S. F. Muni F-line Philadelphia 1055 since it would be demonstrated at the East Penn Meet. It worked well but there were timing issues and function mapping issues. This was the first trolley with sound so we had to come up with the best way to map functions. There would be light functions for the headlights, taillights, brake lights and interior lights. There would be an automatic stop function with passenger signal, brake light activation and controlled deceleration along with an automatic start function with the brake lights going out, two gongs and acceleration.

Just before the East Penn Traction Club Meet, the second and third units arrived on May 5th and immediately it was discovered that all of our concerns had been accommodated. The unit was operated at the Meet and worked perfectly except for one peculiarity. We operated the unit with our new Digitrax Zephyr Extra (DCS51). We did query the technical staff at Soundtraxx and were give several tests to run. The peculiarity did not disappear until we tried an older Digitrax Zephyr (DCS50). We operated the unit on the SCTC/Custom Traxx display module 970 and the club test track. Only when controlled by the Digitrax Zephyr Extra did the peculiar operation appear.

National Train Show, Sacramento, CA!

Over 19,000 ardent model train fans visited the Sacramento Convention Center under clear blue skies during the weekend of July 8-9-10 and most of them left impressed and happy. Athearn, Bachmann, Bowser, Con-Cor, Digitrax, MTH, Soundtraxx, Walthers and others were on hand demonstrating their latest offerings.



Figure 1 - Electroliners from Con-Cor

The Great Train Expo in Pomona, CA!

For the second time this year, the Great Train Expo visited the Pomona-Fairplex. This facility, long listed as the worst, most difficult place for vendor setup, tear down and parking, has made some changes over past few years. They have a long way to go. The geography of the place will make this difficult. Without building a huge parking structure, the place will always feature long walks from show attractions to the parking area.

Still the best thing going at Pomona-Fairplex is the food from R' & R's Productions. Mary Lee and Tom Ricketts started this business many years ago and called it Ours and Ours, stressing it was theirs together.



That translated to R's and R's. On a sad note, Tom passed away on May 27th after long battle with diabetes. It is apparent to us that giving great service and food to her customers keeps Mary Lee going. We waited for our great breakfast sandwich on both days of the show. We also got a great slice of apple pie during the afternoon.

Concession food is seldom cheap. The harsh economics of running such a stand with the politics surrounding the maintenance of the vast acreage of any fairground complex make that almost impossible. But if the food is good, the price can be tolerable. It is much more than tolerable here. The food is great and served by great people.

Mary Lee even visited the Trolleyville booth to hear the sounds of the Bowser all-electric PCC car.



There is more to be happy about at Fairplex. Finally parking is now on site for both vendors and the public without having to walk through the tunnel under Whyte Avenue, which inconveniently flooded during the last show, trapping people who wanted to go back to their cars after visiting the show for a couple of hours. That was the good news. The bad news is parking is still \$9.00 (with a long walk required) and \$12.00 (with a shorter long walk required). Again, good news for vendors is the elimination of having to use the tunnel to get your vehicles and line up at the entrance to get them back in the show after the show ends. This was the easiest departure from this location in the fourteen year history of the Southern California Traction Club appearing there. The club was out of the hall, traveled the 40 miles back to the clubhouse and had put away both trailers within 3 1/2 hours of show closing.

It also helps that the Great Train Expo show manager, Bill Grove, stays on site during teardown to ensure that paths are made to expedite vendors getting their vehicles into the hall. The Great Train Expo does not rest on their laurels. Already eclipsing the performance of the previous, now defunct model trail show, they conducted a survey among the vendor to see if improvements can be made. Vendors were very happy (90%) with the current noon to 7:00PM Friday set-up time. But they wanted two changes and they will get them. First of all, 72%

At the Bowser booth, several of their HO PCC trolleys were displayed. From top to bottom are:

1. San Francisco Muni PCC #1062 dressed in Louisville Railway livery;
2. Johnstown Traction PCC 417;
3. Los Angeles MTA PCC 3165;
4. Pittsburgh Railways PCC 1600;
5. SEPTA (Philadelphia) PCC 2168;
6. San Francisco Muni PCC #1056 dressed in Kansas City Public Service livery.



Figure 2 - Bowser HO scale PCC cars

Bowser has announced plans for more PCC cars in SEPTA GOH, Cleveland, Toronto, Detroit, Los Angeles Transit, Shaker Heights, Birmingham, and Boston Elevated Railway along with re-runs of F-line cars 1050 (San Francisco) and 1058 (Chicago in the Corydon Cream/Colorado Spruce Green/Swamp Holly Orange scheme released earlier this year by Muni for service). Interested modelers need to let Bowser know of their desires!

Those of you who stopped by the Bowser booth also got to hear the first prototype of the new Tsunami Sound unit that will soon be available on the HO scale Bowser PCC trolleys.

Los Angeles MTA PCC 3072 Arrives at Orange Empire Railway Museum

In our last issue, we mentioned the desire of the Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM) to acquire this almost perfectly preserved PCC car which had been found in Inyokern, CA. Well due to the efforts of many and the generosity of many more, the car arrived at OERM on Friday, July 22, 2011 and was placed in front of Barn 1 for all to see. So it appears that this valuable find will be preserved after all!



As most of you know, OERM have been trying for the last three years to bring home what is believed to be THE very last Los Angeles streetcar which was not in a museum. An individual, Jack Richer, bought PCC car 3072 when the streetcar system closed in 1963 by bidding \$1550 (outbidding Cairo, Egypt by \$50). Jack was an aerospace engineer who was fascinated by 1930's technology, and bought what is believed to be one of the last cars to have received a major overhaul before the end of service. (Another car, 3087, was also privately sold, but it was vandalized and destroyed sometime in the late 60's or early 70's.)

He moved the car to his mobile home community in Norco, but it was not appreciated there by the neighbors. He then moved it to the Owens Valley, in a little community called "Dunmovin" north of Ridgecrest, California. He built a shelter and about 150 feet of track and ran it occasionally on batteries somehow, which kept it serviceable. "Cadillac Jack", known for his other hobby of collecting old Cadillacs,

wanted some more shows and they will be added to the schedule. Second, the vendors (65%) wanted a small change in the show hours beginning in the fall of this year, the hours of the Great Train Expo will change to 10:00 A. M. to 5:00 P.M. on Saturday and 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on Sunday. Many vendors are traveling operations so another hour to grab an additional sale or two can not hurt.

To help ensure that there would be as many visitors as possible. Bill made arrangements for KTLA, Channel 5 to be on hand at 6:00 AM on Saturday for a live feed from the show. They filmed N and G scale layouts, the Southern California Traction Club, Custom Traxx' display of the Bowser prototype Tsunami-equipped PCC car and George Huckaby dressed in his authentic 1947 Philadelphia Transportation Company's motorman's uniform. [These latter items were shown during the 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM newscasts on the same day.](#) enhancing the Sunday attendance at the show.

passed away in 1999 or 2000. His family gave the car to one Matt Boggs, who had it moved to his parent's rural backyard in Inyokern, where it was placed on a short stretch of track. Matt and his family began to primer the back end in prep for painting it, but never completed the project.

In 2008, with the help of John Smatlak, Gary Starre discovered the car and looked at it on a vacation trip. The owners were interested in donating it to the museum, but things moved slowly. In late 2009, Dave Garcia, John Smatlak and I did a second survey trip and were impressed by the good condition of the car.

Finally, with the help of Phil Palmieri, Rex Atwell, Ray Ballash, Warren Buchanan, and Ryan Keck, all of us arrived at the Boggs house on Thursday, July 21, 2011. First, we tied down the trolley pole and secured all the loose items. The truck arrived from Santa Fe Springs about 11:00 AM, and then promptly got stuck in soft sand, unable to move. The entire neighborhood turned out with shovels and a couple of tractors, and 2 hours later, the rig was freed, and the PCC 3072 finally loaded.

We anticipated an uneventful 2 1/2 hour drive back to the Museum. It was but only for those of us in cars. The truck got stopped at the CHP scales on Cajon Summit. It was discovered that there was a paperwork error on the permit obtained by the truckers. The CHP would not let the truck and our streetcar pass until the paperwork was cleared up, so our streetcar was "arrested" and spent the night at the scales on the Summit. The driver slept in the rig, and we had ample CHP police protection all around.

Finally, the paperwork got cleared on Friday, and the load arrived on Friday about 2:00 p.m. The car was unloaded by Warren Buchanan, Danny Giles, and others and placed on its temporary home, the stub on Broadway, so that it would not block Saturday's regular loop operations.

On Saturday, new member Bob Morris and Gray Starre began cleaning out 50 years of dirt and grime, and gave the car its first bath in a half century. It now needs to go over the pit to be surveyed and to check its operational condition. Of course, its batteries are long dead, but the expectation is that the car is in operable condition. Originally sought after as a source of parts, this car is far too intact not to be preserved as an example of a streetcar in 1963 when service ended and made completely operable.

Many thanks to those mentioned above, and also to members Byron Brainard, Mel Miller, and others of whom we may not yet be aware, who have donated generously to pay for its move, and will provide funds needed to help it be restored and also the Yellow Car Fund.