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## Geneva Yard Renamed in Honor of Cameron Beach!

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Geneva Yard, the home of the San Francisco heritage streetcar fleet, was renamed in honor of Cameron Beach on October 25, 2011.



Cameron is shown at left aboard one of the fourteen ex-Philadelphia PCC cars that opened the now famous San Francisco F-line in 1995. It has often been said that Cameron loved Muni more than anyone and was one of the main proponents for the new covered facility!

It was a beautiful day in San Francisco with absolutely no low clouds no fog and plenty of sunlight and with that, some welcome warmth. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) decided to rename the yard that houses its historic streetcars after a member of the agency's Board of Directors passed away unexpectedly earlier this year. Cameron Beach, who died in March of natural causes, will now be the namesake of the yard formerly named Geneva. Since 1900 this yard has supported Muni's streetcar fleet and now supports the heritage streetcar fleet that runs on its F-Market line. Cameron, 62, served on the SFMTA Board of Directors more than four years as part of a career in transportation that spanned 44 years, according to Muni officials. San Francisco Mayor Lee is shown speaking at the ceremony in the next photo:



Karl Johnson, Acting Shop Superintendent, also spoke at the ceremony.

## Suggestions for Modelers when Dealing with Manufacturers!

by Jonathan Werner

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Time moves forward. With that movement comes change. This is a universal and inviolable rule and the model railroad hobby is not exempt from this. As a subset of that hobby, traction modeling has felt those very same impacts.

For all practical purposes, brass models are gone. In their place have come the painted ready-to-run models. Then came DCC, which will soon branch out into sound. The technology and innovation happening now in the hobby is at a level which is unprecedented. In other words, there are many things possible in this hobby that weren't even on the radar 20 years ago.

What is really amazing about this growth is that it is largely being fueled by smaller dealers. As the Director of Procurement for Custom Traxx, I have had the privilege of talking to and working with many such small dealers. I had several conversations during last spring's East Penn Traction Club meet, and during several of these conversations a theme emerged which concerned me greatly.

Many of these small dealers told tales of interactions with modelers and hobbyists that threatened to drive them from the manufacturing arena. I've been in these conversations myself. Regardless of motive, it is time hobbyists and modelers realize they need to treat the manufacturers with civility if not respect, because most of them are really the same person you are. Let's be honest, as a man in my mid-40's, I'm a youngster as both a modeler and a manufacturer. The vast majority of people in both categories are significantly older than that. This is a crucial point for the following reason.

Let's be honest, whether you are a modeler or a manufacturer, when you aren't gaining a large monetary reward, and when you have reached a certain age, there comes a point where the amount of flak you take for doing something precludes your enjoyment of doing it.

Many of these manufacturers are talented pattern makers and casters who love to make these models just for the love of it. Being that none of these people are wealthy, they sell their products mainly to cover the cost of materials. Make no mistake about it, none of these model makers will ever retire on the fruits of their efforts.

In their quest to make the best models possible, they will interact modelers and ask for their input. Far too often, these small manufacturers are met with an overwhelmingly negative tone, which often leads to bad feelings and in some cases, cancellation of entire projects. Of course, this goes both ways.

One such incident forced us (Custom Traxx) into the resin casting business. At one point, we were content selling decals, special traction parts, Bowser drives and ORR track. We entered the resin casting business only because we had been working on a decal set for the Kansas City All-Electric PCC for three years. By the time that our decal set was finished and ready for sale, the manufacturer of the resin shell, for which that decal set was intended, absolutely refused to make a shell available to us to demonstrate the new decal set.

When Eric Courtney of Miniatures by Eric heard about this, he made one for us. We found his shell superior to the original in many ways but some corrections were needed. During this interchange, we learned a lot about dealing with vendors and how to convey suggestions and corrections without making problems. We encouraged him to make more. He did and we sold a lot of them. That original shell is still pictured in the description for set CN-750 in the Custom Traxx catalog.

The point here is there is a way to offer information to modelers and manufacturers alike without starting World War III. The best of intentions can get lost in one wrong word. Let



As should be expected, there was plenty of cake to be served.



And to top it off, since the weather was so cooperative, the "Boat" tram was on hand to take most of the dignitaries downtown at the conclusion of the festivities.



## The 35th Annual International Railfair in Roseville, CA!

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There are two model train shows that Custom Traxx can be counted upon to attend. The first is the East Penn Traction Club Meet in the Greater Philadelphia, PA Area in May of odd years and the International Railfair in Roseville, CA every November. Economic conditions during the past few years have forced reduced participation at most out-of-town shows but there are these two that just can not be missed. As we have reported in past issues, this show is presented by many model railroad clubs, including the European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) with community support from the [Rainbow Girls, Roseville DeReimer Assembly #263](#) providing meals for both the vendors and the public. There is a vendor dinner on Friday evening and pancake breakfasts on

us all remember the point here is to enjoy the hobby which is our common interest.

To that end, allow me to offer the following guidelines for keeping such discussions positive and productive:

1. When making suggestions to a manufacturer, always remember that there is a MAJOR difference in perspective between modeler and manufacturer. Modelers are usually unaware of production and cost limitations to any project. What sounds like a simple change to a modeler can be very expensive to the manufacturer. Modelers MUST understand that prototypical accuracy is a goal, but cost constraints cannot be ignored.
2. As a modeler, when a manufacturer reaches out to you for information, remember this is not an invitation to tell your life story. Do not give more information than requested, but do let the manufacturer know that he can contact you if they desire additional information. It is crucial to understand that most large manufacturers (and many small ones) do not know a lot about the product. They are not hobbyists and can be confused easily and frustrated. This means offering too much information up front is like trying to fill a teacup with a fire hose.
3. When offering information to a manufacturer, always supply proof in the form of clear, explainable photographs. Input without documentation is virtually useless, because for each observation that begins with "When I was a kid, I remember (insert road name here) operating (insert car type here) with (insert customization/paint scheme here)," that manufacturer likely already has one that completely contradicts it.
4. Skip the rhetoric. This one applies to both sides. Negative tones get negative responses. Modelers have to understand the constraints of manufacturers, and manufacturers need to appreciate the zeal of modelers. Together, those can combine to achieve great things. It all goes to waste if the effort is lost in hurling invectives and name-calling.

I've seen far too many of these discussions which started with the best of intentions but ended in some manufacturers simply refusing to talk to modelers anymore. But don't think I am hanging this all on modelers; I completely recognize there are manufacturers who are very unprofessional, if you are a long-time reader of the Trolleyville Times, you know that I've called out manufacturers for such behavior in the past.

The main point here is that this is a time in which both modelers and manufacturers could come together to do some things nobody dreamed possible 20 years ago. It would be a shame to waste such an unprecedented opportunity on rivet-counting and egos.

*(Editor comments: No article published in the Times is more dear to my heart than this one. As most of you know, I have been a trolley modeler for over 50 years, hanging my first overhead wire when just 16 years old. Many times over the first 40 years or so of my modeling career, I talked to manufacturers about products and I must admit made my share of mistakes. When Custom Traxx was founded in 1992, I began to realize how a modeler can really tip the scales for or against a product being produced by the choice of language employed in the conversation. The development of the Bowser PCC car really brought this home. During the exploratory phase, I had the pleasure and displeasure of talking to both modelers and manufacturers and can closely relate to this subject. One modeler warned that if the trolley for his specific road name did not have a certain feature specific to that road name, the model was "worthless" and he would "...leave his money in the bank". Another modeler told another smaller manufacturer that if he did not incorporate a change that he felt the model needed, that the model would be "unacceptable". That project came close to being cancelled. After a manufacturer has sweated through the hundreds of details necessary to produce a model, threats not to buy a model are not appropriate. I personally know of at least two trolley models that have been shelved after modelers so annoyed the manufacturer with some of these comments or similar ones. As Jonathan so related, there are a few manufacturers that have also been very unprofessional in their conduct with modelers but their business usually suffers in one way or another. But even in those cases, modelers have lost a product that they may have liked. I hope that readers of this article take these suggestions seriously and think carefully when critiquing a proposed model with manufacturers.*

Trolleyville Webmaster

both Saturday and Sunday mornings. Lunch is also served to the public during the two days of the show.

A few days before this show, the weather forecasts were not favorable, with rain being forecast for the entire show. However, the weather could not have been better with not only no rain but temperatures in the 60s most of the day, both days. Attendance appeared to be lighter on Saturday than in previous years as slightly less than 1100 people attended.

One product usually available at this show and used extensively by the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) is **Brillianize**, a plastic cleaner and one-step cleaner & polish. This product is used on the "grabber shields" used by the club on their modules to attempt to deter the people who can not look only with their eyes. This product assists the club in keeping their shields clear and sparkling clean. **Brillianize** is a product of Brillianize, Inc 4966 Industrial Way, Benicia, CA 94510, phone 707-751-0656, [www.BRILLIANIZE.com](http://www.BRILLIANIZE.com), For Product and Ordering Information Call 1-800-645-9344.



The International Railfair is held at the Placer County Fairgrounds, 800 All-American City Boulevard, Roseville, CA and has been an annual event since 1976. Trolleyville & Custom Traxx have attended this show almost every year since 1992 and we have reported about this show often in the Trolleyville Times (December 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 issues) because it is so much fun to attend. It has not lost much of its luster over the years as a lot of model train shows have. The Placer County Fairgrounds has also been home to the [Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club \(RRMRC\)](#) since November 2005. They operate every Tuesday and Saturday from 8:00 AM to noon and are a co-founding participant of International Railfair. The club has both an N scale and HO scale layout and are located adjacent to Johnson Hall in the Patio Room.



There's a lot going on at Roseville. There is a very nice model train shop downtown in a former supermarket. Railroad Hobbies, 119 Vernon Street, 916-782-6067, seems to have a little of everything in all scales for your enjoyment. An exterior view of this fine shop is shown in the next photo:

## Richard Allman Does it Twice !

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A clear example of a proper way to work with a supplier can be had with the development of the Detroit and Brooklyn Peter Witt models from Miniatures by Eric (Eric Courtney). Eric decided to take a bold move and try to adapt the Bachmann Baltimore Peter Witt mechanism to other Peter Witt cars. The cars used a 54" wheel base Brill 77E truck which was almost ubiquitous in 1920's-1930's. Eric devised a drive with a larger motor and flywheel but that limited his options to permit the cars to take small radius curves. In a very responsible manner, Richard worked with the chassis, developed a method to improve the car, discussed it with Eric in a non-combative manner and provided the information to all in the [July 2011 issue of the Trolleyville Times](#).

Recently two cars built by Miniatures by Eric have entered service on his Main Line Transit. The first was Detroit Street Railways (DSR) 3967, built by St. Louis Car Company in 1930. These cars turned out to be the last standard cars built for Detroit with the characteristic bay window destination signs. He signed the car for the Baker line, which carried workers to and from the huge Ford plant at River Rouge and was one of the heaviest and longest on the system. He painted the car in the DSR cream and red scheme and used decals provided by Bob Dietrich for the car. The second car to enter service would be the Eric's HO scale of Brooklyn car 6046, built by Osgood Bradley in 1931-32 as part of a 200 car order. These cars turned out to be the last conventional streetcars built for Brooklyn. He finished it in the final New York City Transit System green and gray with the Custom Traxx CN-8111 decals set.

Once again, a bit of work was required to get it correctly operating through the 6 1/8" radius curves of the ORR turnouts, but check out the procedure provided in the [July 2011 Trolleyville Times](#). It can be done! Both cars are shown below negotiating an ORR 2400 Right Turnout. Another noisy critter and the electrical contacts in the trucks still need just a wee bit of tweaking. Richard initially concluded that on his layout this car really needed a shorter trolley pole than normal for reliable tracking through overhead frogs. But after more pole tracking grief with the NYCTS 6046, he decided to go "big" and try a longer pole. In this case, it worked well. Pole length sometimes seems to be some element of witchcraft, but it actually is a function of 1) length of the trolley pole 2) height of overhead wire, 3) tightness of the overhead wire, 4) type of collector used, 5) type of overhead frogs used, and 6) location of the trolley pole base relative to the kingpin of the rear truck.

As was the case with the Detroit car, it needs a fender applied, and some other detail work, but it makes a nice model of a distinctive and historically significant trolley. This car is signed for Boro Hall on the very heavy and long Flatbush line. Deepest thanks to Eric for the effort that he expended in making this excellent and very affordable model. Rich told us that at one time he toyed with the idea of scratch building one but it would not have happened in this millennium and it is highly unlikely it would have been nearly as nice and precise. He still needs to apply pole hooks to both cars, operators, tow bars, and lots and lots of passengers. Now we can wait for George Barsky to do the Brooklyn 8000 series car. Richard has a older resin casting of the Brooklyn 1000 Clark-bodied PCC car ready for powering, so he might end up with a nice Brooklyn fleet! Richard provided some photos of both cars on Thanksgiving Day for your enjoyment.

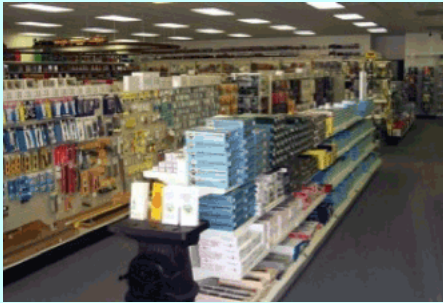




Railroad Hobbies was established in 1989 and is a 100% model train store covering all scales Z through G. They carry the popular brands such as Athearn, Atlas, Kato, Lionel, LGB, Marklin, Micro-Trains, Exactrail, BLMA, Intermountain, Walthers and Red Caboose, just to name a few.



Working with manufacturers in a professional manner can produce some beneficial results!



They still do special orders and have a great deal of scratch building supplies and railroad and modeling publications. So a visit might be very worthwhile when you are in the Sacramento, CA area.