

Train Control Systems (TCS) KAT14/16/24/26 & KAM4 Decoders !

When the DCC-ready Bowser San Francisco F-line PCC cars were introduced to HO scale trolley modelers a few years ago, TCS responded with the M4T decoder. When the SEPTA PCC cars with their Subway lights and the Beacons were introduced later, TCS responded with the T6XT. TCS has always been there for the trolley modeler.

The M4T was a plug-in decoder that required no further action of the part of the user unless the car was a TTC (Toronto) PCC requiring one wire to be soldered to the circuit board to enable the TTC Advance light to work. The T6XT decoder was still a plug-in but required soldering two wires to the circuit board to enable both the Subway light and the Emergency Beacon that were installed on SEPTA PCC cars to operate. Everyone seemed to be satisfied with the operation of both the TCS M4T and T6XT decoders.

Of course, reliable operation from overhead wire can be a problem even in the DC arena but in DCC strange things happen including cars going into reverse when dirty wire is encountered. TCS came up with the Keep-Alive™ capability which allowed operation to continue during brief power losses. This unexpectedly also permitted much slower, smoother operation under wire. The SCTC has placed these cars under wire without cleaning our test track overhead (unused for weeks) and they have performed without hesitation of any type.

The newest units were the KAT14P-1inch for most of the Bowser PCC cars. 1inch refers to the length of the 8-pin plug harness that should be shipped with the decoder for the Bowser PCC. These are intended for the same cars formerly using the M4T. For the Bowser Philadelphia PCC cars with two operational roof lights, the decoder would be the KAT16P-1inch. The same installation procedures used with the M4T and the T6XT apply here except that this decoder is a little larger and will fit after some preparation and coaxing. We reported more details about installation of these decoders in our August issue.

TCS is now using a computer chip with much more capability allowing the user to select which program is desired. All TCS decoders are planned to have the trolley features. The user selects the trolley program by setting CV8 to the appropriate number.

When CV8 is set equal to 11, the car is set up for traditional PCC brake light operation. When CV8 is set equal to 12, the car is set up for the San Francisco tail light / brake light combination

Since DecoderPro does not allow writing into CV8, users will have to use their DCC Control System. Please remember that CV8 is a factory reset CV and the value entered will NOT read back. Only the manufacturers code will show, which in the case of TCS is normally 153. One must test the car in operation to verify the acceptance of the CV value.

One of the reasons for this article is a problem discovered with some of the early decoders in setting CV8 equal to 12. In some of the early KAT14/16 decoders, when we attempted to set CV8 equal to 12, the car would not respond. We found that our Digitrax Zephyr Xtra had somehow readdressed to car to 12 but we still had no taillights. We use both the Digitrax Zephyr (DCS50) and the Digitrax Zephyr Xtra (DCS51) DCC equipment on our test tracks and have experienced peculiarities with the Digitrax Zephyrs previously, so we initially could not determine whether this was due to the decoder or the Digitrax Zephyr, so we contacted TCS and we discovered what could be the source of our problem

Since the Muni PCC cars, 1050 (San Francisco-Muni 1950) and 1058 (San Francisco-Chicago) are now available, we thought it

Orange Empire Railway Museum! [Then & Now!]

by George L. Huckaby

Recently, we came across the March 1971 issue of Pacific Rail News, which contained a pictorial of what was then called the Orange Empire Trolley Museum (OET). These picture brought back many memories as I joined the Museum in May 1971. The first photo shows the Reception Center and loading platform.



This photo was taken before the current loop was complete and the ticket window was added to the west wall of the Reception Center. So loop cars changed ends and returned to the Reception Center as Los Angeles Railway 525 has just done in the above photograph.



Of course, today is far different story. Single end PCC cars can now operate on the completed loop as shown in the above photo. Note the Reception Center now with a ticket window added.

The south leg of the loop looked as shown in the next photo in 1971. Most of this track is still in existence today except that Car Barn 2 is at the extreme left. Note the San Diego PCC 508, which was the first car to operate on the property, along with San Francisco Municipal Railway 171 and Pacific Electric 5166. There were no standard gauge car barns then so the weather really killed these cars.

appropriate to relate the corrective procedure to all readers should this problem arise.

TCS and Custom Traxx recommends the following:

When installing the KAT14/KAT16 decoder into a 126XX series non-Muni Bowser PCC car, set CV8 equal to 11 to ensure that the brake/stop lights work. When testing the car, be sure to activate Button 3 to turn on the brake lights. Run the car and then activate button 6 to stop the car and turn on the brake lights. The brake lights should operate in both forward and reverse.

When installing the KAT14/KAT16 decoder into a 125XX series F-line Muni Bowser PCC car, initially set CV8 equal to 12. When testing the car, be sure to activate Button 3 to turn on both the rear tail lights and the brake lights. Run the car and then activate button 6 to stop the car and turn on the brake lights. The brake lights should operate in both forward and reverse. If this does not occur, go ahead and set CV8 equal to 11 and verify that the brake/stop lights work.

Repeat the CV8 equal to 11 procedure at least one more time if the car does not work.

If you still do not get tail lights but have brake/stop lights and the car still runs, change CV61 to 137 and the tail lights should appear. If the car does not run, perform a complete factory reset by setting CV8 equal to 2, then set CV8 equal to 11 and then set CV 61 to 137. This should work. Then you can readdress the car as you originally desired.

TCS states that these problems have been corrected in later production runs of the KAT14/16 decoders. But for now, we love the KAT series. Put the pole up, wait for the unit to charge up and go. Cars equipped with these decoders are our wire cleaners. We take a Muni PCC, put both poles on the wire (*turning the front pole around of course*) and run it around the layout and all the dirty wire problems are gone. In fact, we never see them, they just sort of disappear.

One last point with TCS. Before the ready-to-Run trolleys were available, we approached TCS about making a decoder, with the stop function and the brake-light feature. They were always ready to do something with their technology. Once you can get their attention with a rational business-like approach, they are willing to develop special decoders for you. These can cost you some but they are worth it. We collaborated with them for a KAT series decoder for the double ended PCC with both stop/brake lights, taillights and headlights at each end and reversible. They should work great in our San Francisco Torpedo models. We were sent a test decoder in mid-September and will be installing this in one of our cars shortly. They need to talk to John Forsythe or Jordan for technical ideas. They are always our "Go-To" guys.

Look for the new KAM series decoders. These are same as the current KAT series except they will eliminate the JST plug, thus making the entire KAM series decoder smaller and a little easier to fit into the Bowser PCC. They will shortly be available from Custom Traxx.

Custom Traxx has installed KAT14 decoders in two Bowser PCC cars (including Johnstown Traction Company 417 and pre-production model of San Francisco Muni 1058 decorated in the latest paint scheme). They have also installed and tested a KAT24 and KAT26 decoder in two Bowser powered PCC cars.

That have just started testing and running samples of the KAM4 decoder in another Bowser PCC car, a model of San Francisco Muni #1051 (SKU 12551). The performance of these decoders in the overhead wire environment is no less than remarkable.

The 35th International Railfair in Roseville, CA

First of all, we realize that we have written about this show in many earlier editions of the Times going back to the year 2000, but we continue to be amazed at how much the show has changed and how little the show has changed. everyone knows that the hobby has lost a lot of participants in the last few years and the hobby is gradually changing from kit-building to ready-to-run items. But this has not seriously degraded the quantity and



Today the view is so much different. Note the refurbished 717 passing the puzzle switch in the next photo taken on November 17, 2012.



Newest Group of Bowser PCC cars arrived on November 19th!

As expected, the latest released group of seven Bowser PCC cars arrived at the Montoursville facility on November 19th. All cars have windshield wipers, B-2 truck sideframes with simulated super resilient wheels. They are also available with Soundtraxx-Tsunami sound. This delivery contains the following:

Philadelphia 1948 PCCs 2171 & 2200:



Shaker Heights PCCs 53 & 55:



Birmingham Electric PCCs 820 & 847:



Pittsburgh Railways PCCs 1748 & 1795:

quality of the show over the over twenty years that we have been involved. First of all the show is hosted by more than one model railroad club and there is local community involvement.

This was the 35th year that the show has been offered at the Placer County Fairgrounds in Roseville, CA, a suburb of Sacramento, CA. Four model railroad clubs basically host the show, the Sacramento Modular Railroaders, the Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club, the European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) and the Sierra Division of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). Two of the three buildings that house this show will have snack bars operated by the Rainbow Girls, a local organization devoted to the development of young women. Displays by Operation Lifesaver are featured along with miniature train rides courtesy of the Sacramento Live Steamers.

Lines start forming before the show opens and by the time the

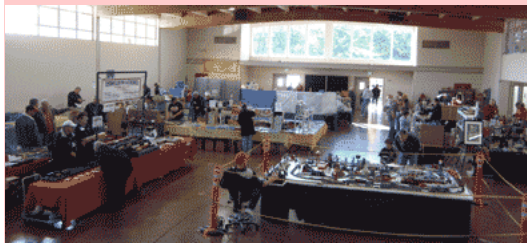


gates opened at 10:00AM on Saturday, the crowd just poured in.



The weather, which had been threatening up to the show, was great although it was a little cold in the morning with temperatures in the high 30s.

Yet there was much to see. In the next photo is the interior of [Johnson Hall](#), which is one of the three halls used for the show.



The other two halls used are [Jones Hall](#) and [Lauppe Hall](#), all named for individuals that had major impact on the community and the fairgrounds themselves. Jones Hall is the largest of the three halls and usually has two or more large layouts inside. This show featured a large scale layout with a ten-car passenger train.



The Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club has permanent layouts in both N and HO scale adjacent to Jones Hall and they



Boston Elevated Railway PCC 3197 & 3221:



Two F-line cars, San Francisco Muni 1950s, car 1050:



and San Francisco Chicago Transit Authority car 1058:



are also being released but like the others, they are available with sound. Contact your dealer for more information. Some of the cars are sold out at Bowser already.

IRF, from column 1:

On Saturday evening, there is always the opportunity to visit the local Hobby Shop in downtown Roseville at 119 Vernon Street.

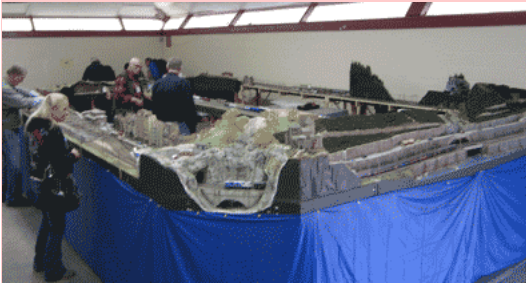


The shop, Railroad Hobbies, stays open late that evening just for International Railfair visitors. The store is well-lit, spacious and well stocked. It caters to all scales and is located in a building with a little history of its own. On the face of the building is a plaque, shown below, outlining all the functions that the structure has supported in the last one-hundred five years.

both are beauties. The next photo is of the HO scale layout.



Lauppe Hall normally houses their train mart where modelers can sell items that they wish but the ETE layouts are normally here and there are usually two of them, complete with electric locomotives operating from the powered catenary.



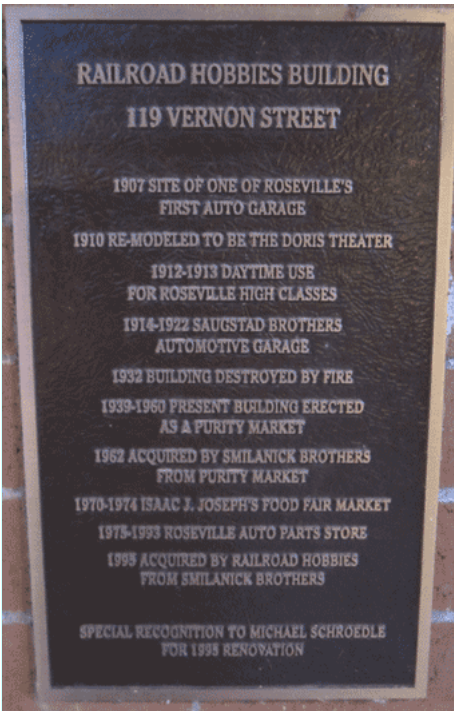
One thing did catch our eye was ETE member Gurdon Miller's five section LRV:



Of course, nothing thrills train lovers like an operating steam engine. In this case, it is the 4-6-0 live steam model, shown in the next photograph, of the Sacramento Live Steamers which pulled riders around a large loop of track to their enjoyment.



See Column 2, IRF



The interior of the store is pleasant and shopping is enjoyable. In the next photo, Michael Schroedle, one of the store owners, is assisting a customer at the register.



For the collector hobbyist, the shop maintains a large brass display as shown below:



A detour from Interstate 80 to visit Railroad Hobbies is definitely worth your while when traveling from Reno to Sacramento.

Of course, we do not like to report negative items but in this case it is so warranted. Since 1992, when we have attended this show, we have often stayed for the three days of the show at a place known currently as the *Heritage Inn, 204 Harding Boulevard* in Roseville. I can tell you that Custom Traxx has stayed there every year since 2005. This older but nice facility was well known locally for its "sunken" bath tubs. Trolleyville vendors such as Custom Traxx, Railway Miniatures (Ken Dively) and Holland Traction Supply (Guy "Mitch" Holland) had used this place for years. Last year (2011) when we visited, we noted several issues such as plugs missing in the sink and tub, televisions that did not work properly etc. We discussed these items with management and were assured that these were anomalies and we would be happier when we returned. Well none of the Trolleyville vendors were when they did this year. One

vendor has requested a specific room every year. Last year they noted a room discrepancy. They found the same discrepancy this year. Discrepancies included magnetic keys that would not work, rooms assigned that had not yet been cleaned, rooms assigned with lights not working and other issues. We notified motel management via a detailed two-page letter on November 13, 2012 about all of our concerns and as of the date of the publication of this article have not even received the courtesy of a written or telephone response. Since we have now concluded that management does not care about the feelings of a customer who has used their services seven years in a row, we are warning our readers here.

The show currently lists four motels on their web site, [1] The Best Western Roseville Inn, [2] Days Inn, [3] Oxford Suites Motel and [4] *Heritage Inn*. We highly recommend that you attend the 37th International Railfair in November 2013. It is always held over the Veteran's Day weekend so for most people there is no late night drive on Sunday evening required. But at the same time, we highly recommend that you avoid the motel [4] *Heritage Inn* mentioned above and shown below no matter what the price advantage may be:

