

January 2013

----- **HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF OUR READERS!** -----

## Muni Celebrates 100 years ! *[And it was great!]*

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December 28, 1912 was the birth date of the San Francisco Municipal Railway. December 28, 2012 was the beginning of their second 100 years and they did celebrate. They have been celebrating a little at a time starting in the late summer and this culminated with the events of December 28th. Isn't it amazing that only San Francisco has revered its streetcar past and not only kept its first streetcar but felt so proud of it that they spent over \$1 million to refurbish the car. Another city, which will not be mentioned here because everyone knows of their stupidity had a beautiful 1920's streetcar on the property which was operable and literally threw it off their property. Thank God for the minds at Muni! San Francisco even started their marvelous F-line with cast-off PCC cars from the same city. Those same cars, despite the harsh climate of San Francisco, always look like they just came out of the paint shop. So we owe the beginnings of this great line to the stupidity of people almost 20 years ago in a place 3000 miles east of San Francisco.

Trolleyville arrived at Beach Yard late Thursday afternoon, December 27, 2012 and demonstrated the latest Bowser model of Muni 1058 with Tsunami sound to the amazement of all present. The F-line must have been running mainly with ex-Newark cars, ex-Milan cars, Torpedos and heritage cars when we arrived because here is what we found at Beach when we got there at 2:30PM.



Figure 1 - 1055, 1057, 1053 and 1061 at Beach Yard on 12-27-12.

Shown above are four of the ex-Philadelphia PCC cars: 1055 (Philadelphia 1955), 1057 (Cincinnati), 1053 (Brooklyn) and 1061 (Pacific Electric).

## The TCS KAM4 Decoder!

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On October 30, 2012, Custom Traxx and the Southern California Traction Club received two test decoders from Train Control Systems (TCS). One was a KAM4 (SKU #1467) equipped with an 8-pin plug and the KAM4-LED (SKU ).

Custom Traxx decided to use a Bowser Muni F-line PCC car for the test of the KAM4 to see if the smaller unit made the installation easier. After much deliberation, it was decided to place the KAM4 into a Bowser #12551, San Francisco Municipal Railway 1051. We decided to upgrade the car with the newer Bowser 1381 Windshield Wipers, 1382 Super Resilient Wheels and 1383 B-2 Truck Sideframes.

We had already installed two of the KAT14 decoders in Bowser PCC cars. While it was a snug fit, we were always afraid that we would break one of the wires going to the motor, to the rear truck or to the rear lights. The dimensions of the KAT14 were 1.31" x .65" x .29".

TCS drastically reduced the size of the decoder in the KAM4, with dimensions of .945" x .66" x .33. The almost 28% reduction in length will really be appreciated by the modeler. See the next photos of the installed KAM4.

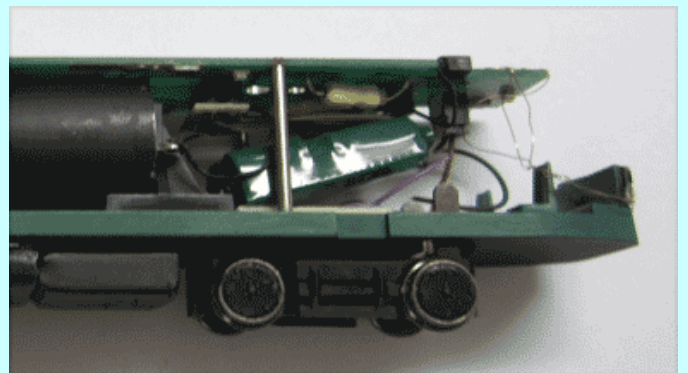


Figure 1 - KAM4 installed in Bowser PCC- Left Side View!



Figure 2 - 1060, 1051, and 162 at Beach Yard on 12-27-12.

Also at Beach were ex-Philadelphia PCC cars 1060 (Philadelphia 1938), 1051 (San Francisco 1960) and 162 (San Francisco Class K, 1914). Hidden behind the 1055 was 1052 (Los Angeles).



Figure 3 - 1052 and 1055 at Beach Yard on 12-27-12.

Sharp eyed readers will notice that 1052 now has the correct black lettering, correcting the mistakes made in 1994. Early the next morning, the ex-Milan car alarm clock went off at 5:00 AM. These cars are very noisy but loved by the locals except for those residents who lived along the J-line. When these cars rolled by between 5:00 and 6:00 AM on their way from Beach to 17th & Castro, they disturbed the neighbors so they are now based at Muni East.

So these cars start rumbling by our motel at 2222 Market Street about 5:00 AM going westbound to the Castro terminal. Here is the view of car 1062 later in the day from the window of room 104 as we were preparing a portion of this article.

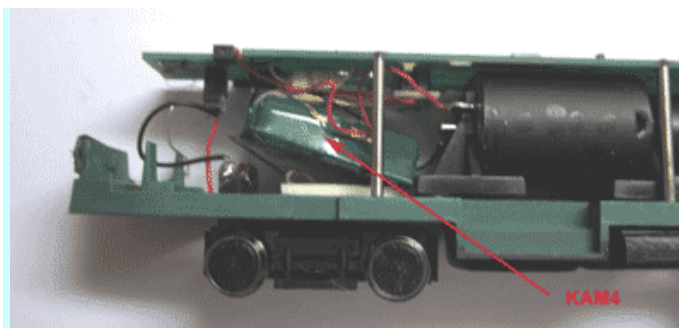


Figure 2 - KAM4 installed in Bowser PCC- Right Side view!

By now, we have installed several KAM4s and KAT14 decoders in Bowser PCC cars. We like either one but the KAM4 is an easier installation due to the reduced size. The bottom line is that we loved the M4T. It gave some action to the DCC trolley. The M4T has been replaced by the M4P-SH and it is also great. We also loved the KAT14 with the Keep Alive™ feature. This is great for those who operate under powered overhead wires. The KAT14 is a tight fit. That tight fit problem is somewhat eliminated with the KAM4 so we highly recommend the KAM4 in the non-sound market.

## For Users of Bowser PCC cars with Tsunami Sound!

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Recently, Bowser imported models of San Francisco Muni PCC cars 1050 and 1058, PTC PCC cars 2171 and 2200, Shaker Heights PCC cars 53 and 55, Birmingham Electric PCC cars 820 and 847, Pittsburgh PCC cars 1748 and 1795 and Boston PCC cars 3197 and 3221.

Only the prototype San Francisco PCC cars, such as 1050 and 1058 have tail lights and brake lights. Original PCC cars, except for Kansas City, had only brake lights.

The Tsunami board currently defaults to the San Francisco configuration since it is more striking on a model. This default scheme sets CV 33 and CV34 equal to 3. To remove the taillights, set CV 33 and CV 34 equal to 1.

## Some Tips For Users of Bowser PCC cars!

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Now that over 10,000 HO scale Bowser PCC cars have been delivered to mostly happy and satisfied customers,



Figure 3 - The view from Room 104 at Beck's Motor Lodge on 12-28-12.

So when we heard the cars going southwest we grabbed our cameras and went out along Market Street and caught some of these cars before first light. We always stay at Beck's due to the inspiration provided by the passing cars. What goes southwest by our window will most likely be back very soon as the terminal is only two blocks away.



We were only able to photograph 1893 and 1818. 1807 eluded us as a large truck got in the way of our attempt to photograph it. We also caught 1006 turning from Church onto Market to begin her duty day.

we have been advised of some problems that modelers have experienced in operation.

### 1. Grades and Overhead Wire Operation:

The Bowser R-T-R PCC car was designed using an upgraded version of the 1999 proven Bowser mechanism. That mechanism was designed for the heavier metal shells used at the time. As such the current cars have little problem normally on the two-rail mode on flat surfaces. We recommend that between one and two ounces of weight be added between the trucks under the floor and under the front platform when operating on grades and under overhead wire. ensure that any weight is placed as close to the pow truck as possible without fouling the swing of the truck.

Spring pressure from the trolley pole, which is over the rear unpowered truck, is a not only a drag on the car but it can act as a lever to lift the front end causing decreased traction. Using the Miniatures by Eric HT-P2 poles can exacerbate the traction problem due to their heavier springs. they were designed for heavier cars and for excellent overhead wire contact in the DCC environment. The Bowser 12600 pole has spring pressure in accordance with NMRA Specification S-5.

We have found that total HO scale Bowser PCC vehicle weight between 7.0-7.8 ounces seems to work best.

### 2. Derailments through ORR turnouts:

Several isolated instances have been reported about this condition. Some times it was a problem with the ORR turnout. But other times it has been out-of-gauge wheels, specifically wide gauge. A great deal of these were the fact that the wheel sets had not been sufficiently pushed into the gears, part #1258 in the power truck, or the sleeve, part #1291 in the trailing truck. Squeezing the wheelsets together solved the problem. We have not found a wheelset out of gauge to this date. Narrow gauged wheelsets are not possible unless the parts 1258 or 1291 are actually defective.

### 3. Trolley poles and current carrying capacity:

A few of the Bowser 12600 trolley poles have demonstrated erratic current caring



The quiet morning soon gave birth to lots of activity by the time San Francisco Municipal Railway #1 arrived on Market Street. We caught the car a little after 10:00 AM and rode it down to the museum, back out to 11th Street then back to the Ferry Building and out to Pier 39 and back to the Ferry Building. Muni #1, built by Holman Car Company in 1911-1912 was the star of the show.



Figure 4 - Muni 1 with Operator Chu toward the end of the day.  
(Photo from Aleksandr Prodan)

We were fortunate to have the car run by Operator Chu. His "silk" handling of the car made the ride on this blustery day a pleasure. This 15 year veteran operator is a credit to Muni and his trainers as it was obvious that he knew he was handling a 100 year old piece of history. You could tell that he was in tune with this car.

capacity in the DCC environment. Examination showed that the pole stock had not been secured well into the base. We also found that the pole base had not been drilled deep enough to ensure a good contact. We have removed the pole stock by desoldering it from the base and drilled out the base to a depth of at least 2.0mm. Resoldering is not a snap. You must clean the pole stock very well removing all traces of the black paint/blackening agent used on the poles. In fact, we found it easier to use a fresh length of .020 inch spring wire and at the same time replace the slightly undersized shoe with a Miniatures by Eric HT-C4 shoe or a Bowser 12507 turning. The latter, which conforms to NMRA Specification S-5, while large, seems to give the best performance though frogs, crossings and in the DCC environment.

#### 4. Cleveland PCC cars:

There was a minor goof between Bowser and the manufacturer of the #12654/55/56/57 PCC Cars. A white stripe that continued through the front doors and under the operators window was omitted. Paul Mayer of Shoreline Models developed two stripes that can be applied to the model. Custom Traxx obtained a set and applied it to one of their Tsunami-Sound-Equipped Models. One the door side, they pried away the windows and inserted a piece of paper between the windows and the shell and applied the stripes, allowed them to dry, applied some Walthers Decal Set, allowed that to dry and after masking the upper half of the car, sprayed a little Dullcote over the decals. See the results in the comparison photos below:





Figure 5 - Operator Chu earlier in the day at 11th Street.

During that ride we got to photograph many of the cars on the line including San Francisco heritage cars double-end PCC Torpedos 1006 and 1008 (1948); PCC car 1040 billed at the last PCC car manufactured in the United States (1952), Class B car 162, (1914) along with 1948 Marmon-Herrington trolley coach all mixed in with the normal F-line service. By the way, all rides were free on this that 100th anniversary of the birth of Muni. Most of the photographs were taken from Muni #1 as we made our way down Market Street.



[Muni 100 - from column 1]



Figure 15 - Muni 1062 (Louisville) & 1058 (Toronto).



Figure 16 - Muni 1807 (Milan 1928) & 1 (SFMRy 1912).



Figure 6 - 1006 heading toward Castro.



Figure 17 - Muni 1818 (Milan 1928) in 1930's colors.



Figure 7 - 1008 heading toward Castro.

Other cars out but not photographed included Muni 1010, 1050 (Muni 1950), and 1059 (Boston).



Figure 18 - Muni 1050 in front of Beck's Motor Lodge. (May 2010)



Figure 8 - 1040 at the Museum heading toward Fisherman's Wharf.

Naturally, there were so many photo stops that I wondered if we would get through the day without a photographer being run over by something. Fortunately, it did not happen or at least we did not hear of it happening. Here is one of the posed photos at Kearney & Market. This was the site of the original Muni celebration 100 years ago. Below from left to right are former Coit Tower bus 042 (rear only shown), Marmon- Herrington trolley coach 776 and Car 1. As you can tell, this had to be a quickie. One can not hold up traffic on Market Street too long, even on a day like today.



Figure 9 - 162 on Embarcadero heading toward Fisherman's Wharf.



Figure 17 - Muni 042, 776 and 1 at Market & Kearney.

Another photograph of this bus is below. Passenger s were taken on rides in this bus. In fact, rides on Muni were FREE all day.



Figure 10 - 776 on Embarcadero eastbound on Market Street.



Figure 18 - Muni 042 on Stuart Street

Operator Chu insisted on taking this photograph. He said that I would want to remember that I was there today.



Figure 11 - 776 on Sacramento at Powell with Muni 21  
(Photo from Aleksandr Prodan)

Many other cars were also out, including many of the ex-Philadelphia and ex-Newark PCC cars including:



Figure 19 - Guess who on Muni 1 on the Embarcadero.

At the end of the day, it was PCC 1079, dressed in Detroit colors that bought me back to Beck's to prepare to go back to Los Angeles the next day. Car 1079 is an ex-Newark car which actually began it's life in Minneapolis, Minnesota in the 1940's!



Figure 12 - 1075 (Cleveland) on Market St with Muni 042.  
(Photo from Aleksandr Prodan)





**Figure 13 - Muni 1052 (Los Angeles) & 1058 (Chicago)**

Historic buses were also parked near the San Francisco Railway museum for public viewing and rides.



**Figure 14 - Muni 1948 Trolley Coach 776 and 1938 White Bus 042 on display at Steuart Street**

[See **Muni 100**, column 2]

What a great day this was and we just might have to thank SEPTA (Philadelphia) for their part in making this happen!