

The new Bowser New Orleans 900 series streetcar is now entering produc

The 21st East Penn Traction Club Meet!

The East Penn Traction Club is a group based in the Philadelphia Delaware Valley, with over 300 members located all across the United States and abroad. Their common interest is the history and modeling of electric powered rail transit vehicles, known more affectionately as trolley cars. Most of the models actually take their operating current from miniature overhead wires just as the prototype did. East Penn is perhaps best known for its adoption and promotion of modular traction layouts, having developed standards back in 1969. These standards allow individually-built, portable sections to be connected to each other. The layouts, built in HO (1:87 scale), O scale (1:48), 1/2" and 3/4" scales, are very familiar to those who have attended hobby shows along the East Coast, and have done much to introduce trolley, interurban and rapid transit modeling to the general public.

In the spring of odd-numbered years, the club sponsors the largest trolley-only model meet in the country. Check their internet web site, www.eastpenn.org, for the latest information on the meet and club activities. The meet, which occurred this year on May 2-4, 2013, drew premier modelers and manufacturers from all over the country for a weekend of viewing models, layouts, films, photos, slides, model contests, and "how-to" clinics on subjects ranging from hanging operable trolley wire to modeling subway cars. Also the latest in trolley kits, parts, bodies, etc are offered for sale as is prototype data such as photos and books. A very popular annual calendar featuring photos of former local trolley cars is also produced by the club and sold to both members and the general public. The club meets on the first Friday of every month from September through June and are held at various places around the greater Philadelphia area. Members receive a monthly newsletter which can be sent electronically. For the complete club story, check their web site at www.eastpenn.org.

This issue of the Trolleyville Times was delayed intentionally to give you the first recap of this great meet. We had information that this meet was to be a good one due to the size and it almost exceeded our expectations.

In today's economy, it makes good business sense to combine business with pleasure when going to the East Coast. With almost \$1000.00 in costs just to attend the meet, we usually combine the trip to the meet with a visit to Bowser in Montoursville, PA and Boyer Machine in Northumberland, PA. This year we also visited Train Control Systems in Blooming Glen, PA. But the climax of the week is always the East Penn Traction Club meet, held for the second time at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks, PA.



As customary, the meet gets underway on Friday afternoon with many of the vendors already set up and almost all of the

The Bowser Manufacturing Company!

Our reason for visiting Bowser this year was for final collaboration on the drive and shell for the New Orleans 900 series streetcar. Both Custom Traxx and Bowser have been testing the new drive to ensure that the drive is as smooth, quiet and durable as desired. Many of the parts used in the 1999 drives were used in the new drive for the New Orleans car. The extensive testing is to ensure that the customer will not be disappointed when the final product is released. Bowser hold a very unique position in the model train business. Not only do they have a very fine retail store (English's Model Railroad Supply) and a manufacturing facility (Bowser Manufacturing) but they have a large internet presence also. These three avenues provide needed sources of customer feedback to support product decisions. The decision to develop and produce the San Francisco F-line PCC cars were a direct result of customer input provided. Keep in mind that streetcars vanished from the Montoursville-Williamsport, PA area in 1933.

While Bowser had moved significant amounts of production to China, they maintain a large manufacturing presence in Montoursville, PA. They still manufacture, paint and assemble freight car kits and supply plastic parts to China for some of the Ready-To-Run kits. The power and trailing trucks for their PCC car is made by Boyer Machine in Northumberland, PA. Boyer Machine is operated by Ron Boyer and his son, Nate, and is located just east of what was a large yard of the now defunct Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR).



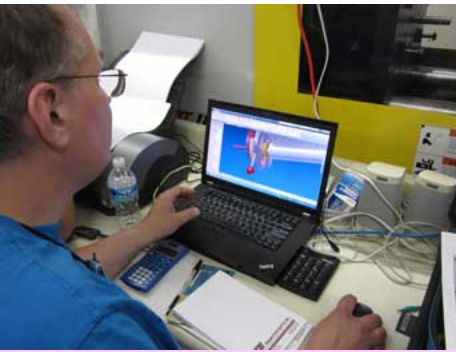
While Ron Boyer has been supporting Bowser Manufacturing for many years with quality plastic injection molding, the business is well known for a process that they developed to perforate plastic wrapping used on meat and produce for grocery stores. Ron is not exclusively model trains by any means. He is always working on some project that makes the use of his skills. In the next photo, he was demonstrating his use of a 3D computer program to design a part for one of his projects.

layouts operating. This year a Detroit club brought their modules, set them up and won an award for their efforts. For the third straight meet, the Custom Traxx / Southern California Traction Club display module was present, having been driven cross country from Los Angeles by SCTC member George Jones. Another fine traction layout has been nick named the ViMooreko layout, since it was developed by Richard Vible, Chet Moore and Larry Loyko. Larry could be found running the layout, playing his violin or [conducting clinics on paving street railway tracks in streets](#). This year, MTS Imports, Inc (Joel Lovitch) announced it was time for him to retire. The HO scale brass traction business has indeed run its course, having been replaced by quite a few excellent ready-to-run streetcars in the last few years by Bachmann, Bowser and Con-Cor. These ready-to-run cars have seriously impacted the decal business according to Custom Traxx, who does not foresee making any new decals in the future. Remember Custom Traxx started making decals for the excellent brass traction models imported in the 1950-1990 era including those made by MTS Imports, Inc. One of their first decal sets was their CN-2001 Philadelphia PRT/PTC PCC complete decal lettering set which supported Joel's Philadelphia 1938 PRT/PTC 2001-2020 series PCC car. The reduction in the number of modelers interested or capable of painting and lettering traction vehicles has led to a shrinking of the resin shell market. That market may have also been hurt by a somewhat negative confrontational attitude by one of the principals in that business. Speaking of resin shells, Mike Bartel, owner and founder of Imperial Hobby Productions, which is now dubbed, the "NEW IHP", as stated on advertising brochures distributed at the meet, was on hand demonstrating his new HO scale 1981 Philadelphia Kawasaki Single End LRV "souvenir" model. IHP has now been in business for 20 years (1993-2013) and has apparently decided to transition from a resin-based business to a computer-aided-design (CAD) business using the latest 3D printing technologies. They are also beginning to use styrene injection molding and the first product is to be the HO scale Philadelphia Kawasaki LRV. These cars have been operating on Philadelphia's Routes 10 (Lancaster/Lansdowne Avenues), 11 (Woodland Avenue), 13 (Chester Avenue), 34 (Baltimore Avenue) and 36 (Elmwood Avenue). Occasionally, they have seen service on Route 15 (Girard Avenue) which is now served by PCC-II streetcars.

These models, reportedly made in China on the hotraction modeling yahoo site, are expected to be available painted and lettered in the as-delivered 1981 paint scheme. But they will only be available from the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Company store. According to IHP, they may be available powered eventually. If this was to come with a nice heavy die-cast floor, powered with a Bowser or equivalent drive, this could be quite a good running model. Some of the initial unfinished, models are shown in the next photo.



The model uses a similar assembly technique used by the Bowser PCC, a solid body casting with separate roof parts and a window casting that holds the floor to the body in a snap together method, reducing assembly costs to an absolute minimum. We found it curious that the "NEW IHP" would choose to make their first injection molded model of a prototype that they made on three previous occasions as a resin shelled vehicle. Although their first attempt was riddled with easily avoidable errors, the quality demonstrated in the third one was very comparable to what we saw at the meet. At first, we felt that the Suburban Kawasaki double-end LRV as used on the SEPTA Media and Sharon Hill Lines west of Philadelphia may have been a better choice until we realized that this model is NOT intended for the EPTC modeling crowd. This model is intended for the 'toy-souvenir' market



Although the PRR is long gone, diesels of the North Shore Railroad now run on the remnants of this huge yard. We caught a train of gondolas as it passed behind Boyer Machine during our visit.



Back in Montoursville, English's Model Railroad Supply is the Bowser retail arm. The main entrance is shown next:



The store encompasses 6500 square feet of display space, is managed by Richard Cox. He runs the store with two other employees. Shown below (l to r) are Frank Passero, Verne Trego and Richard Cox.



This is a well, efficiently managed store that is completely stocked. Note the plentiful Athearn stock in the following photos:



that visits the SEPTA store, the same audience for which the souvenir Bowser San Francisco F-line PCC was intended. However, the F-line cars pass within 20 feet of the front door of the San Francisco Railway Museum and you have to go into a subway blocks away to see the Kawasaki cars. Anyway, we wish good luck with this new model to IHP and their embracing of not only injection molding but the new 3D printing process. If implemented correctly with the best materials available and combined with improved customer relations, the new IHP has to be better than the old one.

Demonstrated at the show also was the prototype of the new Bowser New Orleans 900 class streetcar that will be available later this year in both New Orleans and San Francisco versions, DCC ready and Tsunami-sound equipped. The ViMooreko Richard Vible, Chet Moore and Larry Loyko layout was used for test runs of it and a PSM/Bowser Brill Suburban equipped with the same drive. Both cars ran excellently on the layout except for an issue with one of the sideframes on the New Orleans prototype, which caused some derailments on right turns. This was corrected on the spot and will not be a problem on production units



At the same time, the new Bowser Brill 76E power and trailing truck was installed in a PSM/Bowser Brill Suburban to test the possibility of producing the Brill Suburban in injection-molded plastic Ready-To-Run. The unit ran flawlessly on the same layout and Richard Vible remarked how smoothly the car ran.



See more about this car in a separate article. Meanwhile there were trolleys in all scales at the meet. We found an O scale Electroliner on one table:



Additional O scale models were also running at the show including models of the SEPTA 1949 St. Louis Cars



The next photo gives an idea as to the size of this store.



There is also a Thomas play area for the youngsters and it is in a somewhat private area that allows the kids to play without impacting the other shoppers.

Bowser considers a 4' 10" wheelbase traction mechanism!

For longer than we can remember, we have never been happy with the Bowser 6' 4" wheelbase drive on this car. Most of the photos that we came across show this car with outside hung motor trucks such as a Brill 27G. We were elated when Bowser decided to make the 4' 10" wheel base truck for the New Orleans 900 class streetcar.

So we took one of the precious few breadboard drives and attempted to mount it in a Bowser Suburban. In fact we chose a PSM Brill Suburban which is the first HO sale streetcar that I acquired when still a teenager. The results are shown below but it was not that easy.



Bowser will have to design a bolster just for this car. The car above has the 33" wheels intended for the New Orleans 900. This car may look better with the 30" wheels for which the floor was originally designed.

Bowser is also considering re-introducing the 1906 Brill Semi-convertible in Ready-To-Run injection-molded plastic with Brill 27E Truck sideframes. Some prototype examples are shown in the next four illustrations:



Eleven Window Model



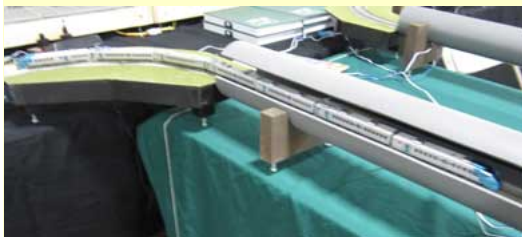
No Philadelphia trolley show can be complete without Nearside cars. 1500 of these venerable cars were delivered to the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company from September 1911 through November 1913 in five separate orders. 1160 of them were converted to the Peter Witt configuration, Nearside Center Exit (NSCE), as demonstrated by the model in the next photograph. Some of them lasted as revenue vehicles as late as September 1955 with the last cars removed from the property on October 18, 1955. The longest serving car was 6040, finally scrapped on May 19, 1955. George Huckaby told us that he remembers riding that car on Route 33, while that route was being operated from Ridge Depot in the 1953-55 timeframe. A great O-scale model with operating doors was on display at the show.



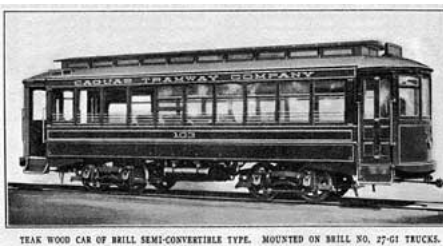
Almost all scales were represented somewhat at the meet. There were at least two N scale traction layouts at the meet. One of them is shown in the next photo.



A second N scale layout featured simulated subway operation and is shown in the next photo.



Custom Traxx was also at the show with the set-up shown in the next photo. Their 2009 award winning module, located in the extreme left of the photo was also driven from Los Angeles by member George Jones of the Southern California Traction Club.



TEAK WOOD CAR OF BRILL SEMI-CONVERTIBLE TYPE. MOUNTED ON BRILL NO. 27-G1 TRUCKS.

Ten window Model



Eleven Window Model



Ten Window Model

If any of you readers would like to make suggestions about this car, please feel free to email us at decals@customtraxx.com We urge you to provide photographs, drawings and or color scheme information if you can. Every little bit helps in making such decisions.

Train Control Systems - WOW Sound!

When we first heard of Train Control Systems WOW Sound, we anticipated to be another Soundtraxx imitator but to be fair to the company that gave us the M4T decoder, exclusively designed for PCC streetcars, we thought that they deserved a chance to show their product. So on Friday, May 3rd, we left Bowser Manufacturing in Montoursville, PA and stopped by Train Control Systems in Blooming Glen, actually Perkasio, PA according to the USPS to hear for ourselves.

The TCS facility is a very peaceful looking house set far back from Blooming Glen Boulevard. You will easily miss it unless you are given great instructions as you can barely see it from the road.



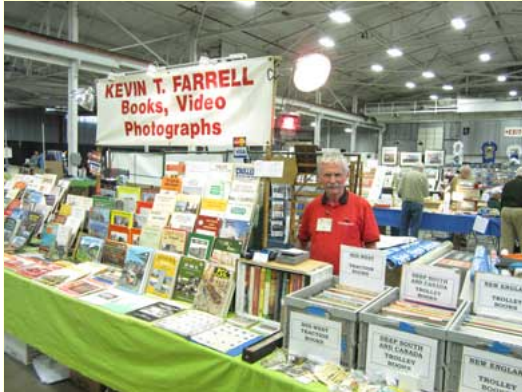
There is a huge basement under this house which has been transformed into a working facility, containing offices, test and production facilities and an operating test layout. Shown in the next photo from left to right is Jordan McBride, Webmaster and Product Development, Dave Strouse, Technical Support, John Forsythe, TCS Founder and Owner, and John (JD) Forsythe, Product Engineer



Kevin T. Farrell, well known for his traction books, was at the Meet with many rare publications.



Behind them are some of the decoders that they produce. The heart of the facility is under the twin garages and it is shown next.



Many other interesting sights were found including this HO scale model of a Shaker Heights PCC car fabricated from an older PSM/Bowser PCC Streamlined trolley.



TCS demonstrated their WOW Sound using an HO scale Berkshire (2-8-4) steam locomotive operating on their large test layout.



There were even modules available for sale including two very nice O scale modules shown on the next photo:



Large scale was also represented but one of the good examples was this model of a Route 10 air-electric PCC 2647, which was assigned to Callowhill Depot in the 1955-1968 timeframe and ran on both Routes 10 and 15.

From the moment they turned the power on, I was impressed and astounded. It was hard to believe that the sound was coming from that locomotive. I actually thought there were speakers somewhere similar to the Soundtraxx Surroundtraxx System. But there were none and believe me I looked hard for them. Although I am mainly a traction modeler, I do have an extensive model train collection including 31 Steam locomotives of which 11 are DCC/Sound Equipped. I am having them install WOW Sound in an HO scale brass model of a PRR L1 (2-8-2) Mikado. I promised them that I would take that locomotive and display it on my next trip to the fabulous Bakersfield layout of the Golden Empire Modeling & Historical Society. WOW sound is awesome. It is so far the best that I have heard. They have spent a lot of time getting all the sounds of a stem engine correct, including variable loudness as the engine works harder and is coasting. Look for these decoders as they arrive at your dealers. We are confident that you will not be disappointed.

[East Penn, from Column 1]

Smaller than O Category - William Flatt - 1917 GE Steeple Cab #20.



As usual, several awards were given late Saturday afternoon. Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to:

Richard Allman,
Quentin Carnicelli,
Bob Dietrich and,
Dave Gairo.

There were several contest winners, some of which we were fortunate to obtain some photographs:

Popular Model Contest:

Larger than O Category - Donald Grant - Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company Jewett Car:



O scale Category - Dave Gairo - Lawn Crest Funeral Car



[See *East Penn*, Column 2]



Judged Model Contest:

The Outstanding Model Masters Competition (Richard M. Wagner Memorial Award) - William Flatt -1917 GE Steeple Cab #20.



Trolley Model Builders Award - John Wright - Third Avenue Railway #555.



Cincinnati Car Co Cars (This Meet's Theme) - Glen Whitehouse - 1924 Niagara St. Catherines & Toronto #301



Several layouts were brought for display:

O Scale Module Trolley & Elevated (Outside third Rail Powered):

John V. Gallagher, Jimmy Boylan, Joe Frank, Rich Kerr, Steve Olsen, Vern Gilman, Chuck Crouse, David Gallagher, Gary Reign & Rick Crooks.

HO Scale Modules / Layouts:

Detroit United Railways Traction Modeling Club;
Richard Vible, Chet Moore, Larry Loyko;
Chris Brown, Adam Eyring, George Huckaby, Tom Lederer,
Drew McCann, Tom O'Donnell,

N Scale Modules / Layouts:

Larry Bok, Chris Hyland, Ed Hyland, Pat Hyland, John Wright.

In all this was a great meet. We cannot wait for 2015!

