

- Watch for deliveries by the end of the year! - - -Also more HO scale PCC cars coming next year!!

## Bowser Manufacturing Changes to ESU LokSound!

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Bowser Manufacturing recently announced that it was switching to ESU LokSound for the sound decoders used in its engines and trolley cars. Trolleyville asked why Bowser changed to ESU LokSound. We were told that this had not been a simple decision. Lee English stated that he could not help but notice the advances in technology being promoted by ESU LLC (LokSound).

One of the first advantages to the user is that no power booster is required to readdress or reprogram the locomotive. This is key to the design of the LokSound decoder, a more efficient use of power.

Secondly, ESU provides a two-year warranty, which is beneficial to an Original Equipment Manufacturer such as Bowser.

Third, the units seems to have much better low speed control than others we have tested.

Fourth, ESU LokSound has refined the use of the F-8 button. F8 (Mute/On-Off) is preset in the LokSound decoders to have the sound off when the loco is placed on the track. This allows the user to decide if he wants the sound on. Our previous sound units have the sound come on when the track is powered up. If you have many units on the track, such as in the typical club environment, you would have to select each unit and turn the sound off, if the multiple sound prove annoying or distracting. If the user does not like this feature it is easy to change to be like the former units. The CV setting will be included with the Bowser Quick Start Guide. The Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) tested this function and cautions users to become as familiar with this button as possible before complaining. After using this for a while, we definitely preferred this method of using F8.

Fifth, the ESU LokSound units are really dual mode in that you get the essential sounds in both the DC mode and the DCC mode. In the DC mode, sounds and motion are activated at 6 volts.

Sixth, the ESU LLC sound modules plug into a 21-pin socket, allowing for easy replacement. Future Bowser Executive Line locomotives and streetcars starting with the New Orleans streetcar will be sound ready so upgrading a non-sound locomotive and streetcar to sound means plugging in the ESU module and attaching the speaker. So locos not equipped with sound can now be considered sound ready as DCC and Sound are contained in one single module.

Finally, there is one more distinct advantage to the real DCC hobbyist. Customers who wish to do so can now program new sounds into the loco if they acquire the ESU LokProgrammer.

Of course, one cannot underestimate the advantage of having the offices of ESU LLC North America very close to the Bowser facilities. Bowser has been in business now for over 50 years and is hoping for great results from this change which they feel will greatly benefit their loyal customers. In their release, they published a "Thank you" to the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) of Baldwin Hills, California. They did extensive testing of their DS 4-4-1000 and compared this unit to similar Bowser Baldwin diesels. The SCTC evaluators felt that the sound quality was equal if not better than the those formerly evaluated.

## The NMRA/LA Division Botanic Garden Show No SCTC Display This Year"

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There had been a very soft spot in the hearts of all the members of the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) for the NMRA/LA Division Model Train Show that normally takes place every April or October at the South Coast Botanic Gardens in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. But all good things usually come to an end and Southern Californians will not get to see them there late this month.

The club had barely been formed when the show promoter at that time, Mary Barstow, asked the club if they could participate in the April 1997 show. They hastily developed and connected five modules to operate at that show. That was the very first appearance of the SCTC. Standards had to be suddenly developed and implemented, some of which last to that very day. Although a traction club with the attendant small radius curves, the club wanted to operate [electrically powered trains](#) similar to those operated by the Pacific Electric so [broad curves up to 24"](#) in radius would be necessary. The club finally achieved their 16' by 26' layout size in 2006 and have remained at that size ever since.

For those of you who have never seen the SCTC layout, the club requires that the modules match scenery wise to avoid that modular "thrown together" look. Unfortunately, this makes sudden adjustments in size difficult if not impossible.

When the club was developing, the club had an understanding that the club would maintain the 16' by 26' size to ensure that the club could continue to participate in the Botanic Garden Show. The club had presented a 22' by 27' layout at the NMRA National Train Show in San Jose in 2000 but settled on the 16' by 26" limit so that there would never be a problem with the Botanic Garden Show. The club had appeared at the Botanic Garden thirteen times in their 18 years existence, including April 1997, April 1998, April 1999, April 2000, April 2002, May 2005, April 2006, April 2007, October 2008, November 2009, October 2010, October 11, and October 2012. For the last seven years, the club display had been the same size and virtually in the same location in the main hall with no issues. So when the announcement of the show was made for October 26 & 27, 2013, the club naturally sent in their request.

Suddenly, in early September, the SCTC received an email stating that they were to be located in a classroom, used many years earlier, when the club layout was much smaller. The club Directors met and notified the current show promoter, Lloyd Lehrer, that that classroom presented a few problems. Because of the size of the layout and the room, the club would have to place their very popular and highly detailed city section, including the child friendly subway module, directly against a wall where no one, including the younger set, could not see it and the club would have difficult access to the cars if there was a dewirement or a derailment since there were large buildings between the operators and the tracks. The club could place the opposite side against the wall which would negate the use of the lift bridge section. This section allows easier entry to the interior of the rectangular layout without crawling under the modules. Some of the members have physical limitations that make that unworkable. The club informed us that when they attempted a dialogue with Mr Lehrer on these matters, they were told "... I recognize that you have a rigid configuration and sorry to see that it cannot fit in the space as comfortably as you would like. You are certainly welcome to participate in future botanic garden events...".

Of course when the club tried to explain their position, they got inanities such as *...you chose your layout size and it appears you live or die by that decision... ..It's your turn in the barrel so to speak...*" This is a show that pays layouts nothing for their appearance and the club was to do all that work to show only part of their fine layout. So with that "my way or the highway" response, the club has asked the Times to tell their fans why they will not see the club at the Botanic Garden later this month or maybe even succeeding months.

With that comment, the Times spoke with George Huckaby, a member of the Southern California Traction Club and owner of Custom Traxx. The Southern California Traction Club did the recording of the PCC sounds in San Francisco in 2007 for the Bowser PCC car and arranged for Soundtraxx to accompany them on their October 2011 trip to San Francisco to record the sounds of a New Orleans streetcar. George told us that they enjoyed the trip and the professionalism of [Dan Szabo, Soundtraxx Sound Engineer](#). "I was not surprised at the eventual decision for Bowser to move to ESU LokSound, just the suddenness", George told us. "We had just finally had the opportunity to listen to the New Orleans streetcar sounds recorded in 2011 and had just given their approval to Soundtraxx when we learned of the decision. In mid-September we received a few LokSound 73900 universal decoders ready for programming and a 53452 LokProgrammer Set only to find out that at this time, these items work only with PCs and not with MACs, and since Custom Traxx is a total MAC user along with the majority of the Southern California Traction Club. So we will be using DecoderPro with our LokSound decoders and not programming anything and hope that ESU LokSound better start considering MAC compatibility if they seriously want a US market presence.

As far as Bowser trolleys are concerned, beginning with the New Orleans cars, you may hear the term **"Sound Ready"** or a similar term. This will mean that any Bowser streetcar not sound-equipped will be able to be upgraded to have sound capability with only the addition of a plug-in decoder. No other action will be needed by the user. By the time you read this, Bowser may have made the decision to include an installed speaker with all trolleys, making upgrading to sound truly a mere plug-in.

One last thing, all new Bowser trolleys will have the overhead-track power switch located under the floor rather than inside the car as it has been to date. More later.

## Orange Empire Railway Museum hosts the Southern California Traction Club and a Huge Book Sale!

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The Southern California Traction Club had been invited to display their 16' by 26' traction layout in Town Hall for two successive weekends on Saturday, October 18, Sunday, October 19, Saturday, October 26 and Sunday October 27, 2013. The layout will be available for viewing from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM all days except October 27, when the layout will close at 3:00 PM. This club usually appears at the museum during Pacific Electric Weekend in June. However, the club could not initially accept that invitation due to a previous commitment made with the NMRA LA-Division to appear at their October 26-27 show in Rancho Palos Verdes. When the SCTC was told early last month they had to cram the layout into a small classroom (see story in column 2), the club declined. One of the displays that would have been forced to be placed against the wall in that small classroom and unseen by the public was one of the most popular SCTC exhibits with the younger set. This is their subway station with moving trains, which is located about 30" above the floor and shown below:



They told us that they are not going to take their "turn in the barrel" this year or any year. There are other places for a club to display without compensation. This appears to be mutual loss for both the show visitors and the club as it was a 'fun' show for the club and the layout with their streetcars and interurbans operating from overhead wire is uniquely popular. However, clubs exist to display their handiwork and if this is going to be treated lightly, there is no reason to support another organization at their expense.

The challenge for model railroad show hosts is simple. There are less model railroad shows but there are also less model railroad clubs since the "graying" of the model railroad crowd continues. But the number of people who love model trains is not. Those promoters need to consider the comfort and convenience of the clubs that they are asking to participate, especially when they are expecting the clubs to travel, set-up and teardown their displays for no remuneration just to benefit whatever cause they are pushing at the time. The attitude that we are the great NMXX or whatever organization will not work much longer. Here we see a locally popular club that had prize displays told that they could not display unless they were willing to place their layout in a position where some of their prize displays could not be seen by the public, especially the children, or be forced to crawl under a layout all weekend to gain access just to benefit a show promoter who wanted to cram every layout that he could into a show. This resulted in a long time popular layout being eliminated for this years show and possibly permanently.

[OERM/SCTC from column 1]

Another scene shows Philadelphia PTC Safety car 2128, built from one of the original Bowser pewter PCC kits, crossing in front of PTC 1923 single end Brill Peter Witt car 8334, a brass import by MTS Imports, Inc. Both are signed for PTC West Philadelphia Route 41, abandoned in August 1957. Both were painted by Custom Traxx and lettered with Custom Traxx decal sets.



On another module are five Bowser R-T-R PCC cars representing in the foreground San Francisco (Muni 1056 dress in Kansas City Colors) while cars representing Philadelphia (SEPTA), Los Angeles (LAMTA), Toronto (TTC ) and another San Francisco Car (Muni 1062 representing Louisville) are shown. This 36" square display module features some Hartel tram track along with the ORR turnouts and girder rail.



There is one more good reason for coming to the Orange Empire Railway Museum on October 19, 20, 26 and 27. They are having a huge book sale that will make available a lot of railroad books, some of them having been out of print for a long time. The prices will be unbeatable too! The sales will start at 1:00 PM on October 19, 20, 26 and 27. The sales will be held in the air-conditioned Town Hall facility along with the Southern California Traction Club layout.

Another view of the Subway module with Philadelphia's former "Almond Joy" cars:



Here are some other scenes on the SCTC layout taken a few shows ago. In the first photo, San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) 1061, originally PTC 2116, a 1948 model PCC now painted in Pacific Electric livery passes a Muni ex-Milan Peter Witt 1811 at an intersection similar to Duboce and Church in San Francisco. The 1061 is a Bowser RTR PCC car and the Peter Witt is a Miniatures by Eric shell with a Custom Traxx floor and Bowser power. Notice the stairs to the subway station below on the extreme right of the photograph.



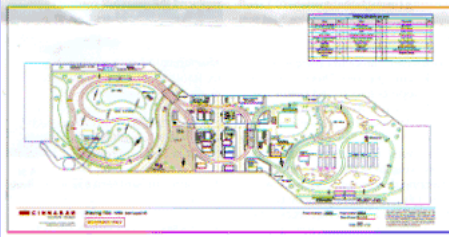
[See OERM/SCTC, column two]

## Western Railway Museum Traction Lab!

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from The BAERA Review

Late last month, Phil Kohlmetz, WRM Executive Director, and the Traction Labs Committee started working with Cinnabar California on the installation of that museums newest exhibit: Traction Labs. They hung signage, ran wires and placed graphics in Cameron Hall. The Western Railway Museum Visitor Center, 5848 State Highway 12, Suisun City, CA 94585 will change as the team places the exhibit modules, artifacts and a 9' by 18' model train layout. Traction Labs is the first WRM exhibit focusing on children in grades 3 though 8. But there will be plenty of interesting information for people of all ages. In Traction Labs, the year is 2040, which is far enough in the future to encourage imagination. Below is a drawing of the layout provided by Cinnabar.



We do not know much more at this time except that four sound-equipped Bowser PCC cars are used in this display.

### TO OUR READERS:

*The Trolleyville Staff would love to hear from you. Our hobby is changing faster than most of us would like and we would love to publish any of your ideas, hobby hints, opinions and suggestions. Send any article in either MS Word or html format to [the Trolleyville Times!](#)*