The Trolleyville Times

July 2014

Next group of Bowser PCC Cars (SEPTA Phase 2, Toronto, Pittsburgh's Moc

Unique Characteristics of Train Control System (TCS) (post 2012) Decoders for Traction Modelers!

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In our last issue we discussed a method of preparing the inside of the model shell for installing decoders in HO scale vehicles. We used a single end vehicle because the TCS technical people in 2009 designed a decoder to be used with the HO scale ready-to-run Bowser PCC. This decoder, called the M4T, was programmed to give the PCC model the brake lights unique to the PCC car in 1938 but now commonplace on most vehicles. The same decoder can provide the rear taillights used on PCC cars that operate on San Francisco's F-line from Castro to Fisherman's Wharf. Additionally they have a passenger stop feature that is activated by pressing one button. When this button is pressed, the car is brought to a gradual stop. Pressing that same button allows the car to accelerate to the former speed. In late 2011, TCS decided to give all of their decoders the capability for the trolley features, (automatic stop/start, brake light activation, etc.). Model traction users can access them by writing a certain value into CV 8. So all decoders manufactured by TCS after January 2012 have these trolley features. Check CV250 (Month of Decoder Manufacture), CV251 (Day of Decoder Manufacture) and CV252 (Year of Decoder Manufacture).

Changing CVs (Configuration Variables) have various degrees of difficulty associated with it depending on the age and make of the command system that you may be using. Early in my DCC experience, I was made aware of DecoderPro. By downloading this program onto your PC or MAC computer and my getting an interface, such as Digitrax' PR3, one could talk to decoders using my laptop computer. This was great for readdressing a vehicle and for keeping a record of the CVs associated with each of the vehicles. But to write the value of 11 into CV 8 did not seem to be possible until one of the DecoderPro experts from the JMRI (Java Model Railroad Interface) group showed me the method. Basically, when using DecoderPro 3, one of the first menus that you will see is as follows:

DecoderPro **File** **Edit** **Settings** **Action** **LocoNet** **Window** **Help**

This menu normally accompanies the list of models that you have read and saved. Pull down the **Action** menu and there will be a **Single CV Programmer** selection. In older versions of Decoder Pro, it is the **Tools** menu, then **Programmers** and then **Single CV Programmer**. Select it and the rest is self-explanatory. Remember that CV 8 will always read back **as 153 for TCS decoders.** CV 8 = 11 is merely a special factory reset that sets up a slate of CVs that activate the trolley features. Also note that the trolley features are defaulted to a single end PCC car.

Since the car that we are working on is a double end car with just headlights on each end (Suydam PERy Hollywood Car), we had to change some of the CVs to get the rear headlights to work. The following CVs were changed in this case:

CV 34 = 2; CV49 = 0; CV 50 = 16; CV 61 = 9; CV 64 = 6!

Note: For the record, when we are using DecoderPro, we are using a MacBook running System 10.8 using a Digitrax PR3 as the interface between the computer and the programming track.

Tucson's Sun Link Opens This Month!

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Last month is was officially announced that Tucson's' modern streetcar system, Sun Link, will open on Friday July 25th with a celebration along the route. Free rides will be offered to the public on Friday, July 25th, Saturday, July 26th and Sunday, July 27th. The new line covers the same route as Old Pueblo's vintage 18 year trolley operation, but there were extensions on both ends. The system, as we showed in our last issue, runs from the University Medical Center, through the University of Arizona campus, down University Boulevard, 4th Avenue and through downtown to the Interstate 10 freeway.

The eight Tucson Streetcars, the last of them, car 108 shown above, were all constructed by United Streetcar. United Streetcar is the first manufacturer of modern streetcars in the United States. They are a subsidiary of privately-owned Oregon Iron Works, a premier manufacturer in the hydro-electric, marine and nuclear industries.

So soon streetcars will return to Congress Street. Tucson Rapid Transit (TRT) Company was formed in June of 1905, a name which would be maintained in Tucson until 1967. TRT purchased five double truck, two man electric streetcars which had originally been used in Los Angeles. Painted green and yellow, and renumbered 1 to 5 each car could carry thirty passengers with room for standees. After heavier track was laid and overhead wire was strung, Tucson entered the electric streetcar era on June 1, 1906. In 1915, four new cars, numbered 6 through 9 were purchased from the Wason Manufacturing Co. These were one man single truck cars of light construction, specifically designed for TRT. Each held about twenty people seated on side facing benches reminiscent of the herdics* of 30 years previous. In 1924, three used cars were purchased to supplement the fleet: Number 10, a single truck, one man Birney Safety Car from Douglas, Arizona with a 32 passenger capacity, and Numbers 11 and 12, both single truck Southern Car Company cars from Trinidad, Colorado. Buses were added to the TRT fleet starting in 1925. Fifteen minute service was maintained around the University on 6th Street, Campbell and Speedway. In 1930 a petition to have the trolleys replaced by buses was narrowly passed by the City Council and at midnight on December 31, 1930, the streetcar age in Tucson ended as Car Number 10 made its final run. That narrowly passed Council decision was to last for almost 84 years.

**Note: A herdic was a type of horse-drawn carriage, used as an omnibus, invented by Peter Herdic of Williamsport, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania in 1881. A predecessor of the taxicab, it was a small two-wheeled carriage that had side seats and an entrance at the back. The major improvements over previous types of carriage were in the springs, the way the body was mounted on the springs, and the manner in which the axles, springs, body and shaft were connected. Herdics were designed as passenger vehicles, and, in particular, for use in public transportation. Their low entry made it easy for passengers to enter and exit the cars. The first herdic cabs carried up to eight passengers. The earliest herdics were painted bright yellow and quickly acquired the canary nickname. Each cab was small enough to move freely through the city streets of Williamsport and leave its passengers at the curb instead of the middle of the street as other modes of public transportation were forced to do. Peter Herdic had moderate success with his cab and it was soon adopted in the cities of Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Washington, D.C., and numerous other cities. The herdic cab was in service in Washington D.C. as late as 1918.*

This new streetcar line shows what responsible streetcar fans can accomplish when they promote what some of us knew was a clean, efficient method of intra city transit.

Tucson Sun Link No. 108, the last of eight units delivered by United Streetcar LLC, makes an operator training and test run June 30 on the 3.9-mile streetcar line in Arizona's second largest city. Service debut is still set for July 25. No. 108 was delivered in late May. (Photo from Ed Havens).

Installing a Decoder in an HO scale Bowser Brill!

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Bowser and Pennsylvania Scale Models (PSM) have produced three HO scale metal-shelled streetcars for over 50 years. The most known one is the 1948 all-electric PCC car, based on the Philadelphia 2091-2200 series PCC cars. The second is the Brill Suburban car, a 1906 semi-convertible based on a similar Hershey Transit vehicle and, last, the IRR Lightweight Interurban. Bowser shifted their PCC car to Ready-To-Run status with an injection shell with DCC and sound a few years ago and is considering doing the same thing to the Brill Suburban. However, there are many of them running on model railroads all over the country so this article is to document the installation of a typical non-sound decoder.

This particular car is the first HO scale streetcar ever owned by Custom Traxx webmaster, George Huckaby. He acquired it in 1959 at Todd's Hobby Shop in Upper Darby, PA. It was first painted as a Philadelphia Transportation Co green trolley and repainted in PRT orange and renumbered 3121 in the late 1960s while on alert in a Minuteman II Launch Control Center near Grand Forks, North Dakota. The unit was upgraded to the Bowser 1999 drive with an A-line 20040 flywheel in January 2001. The first decoder, a TCS M1 decoder had been installed in 2013 but there was an issue with it and it was removed. During 2013, the car was selected as a test bed for the 4'10" wheelbase drive being developed for the Bowser New Orleans 900 class streetcar.

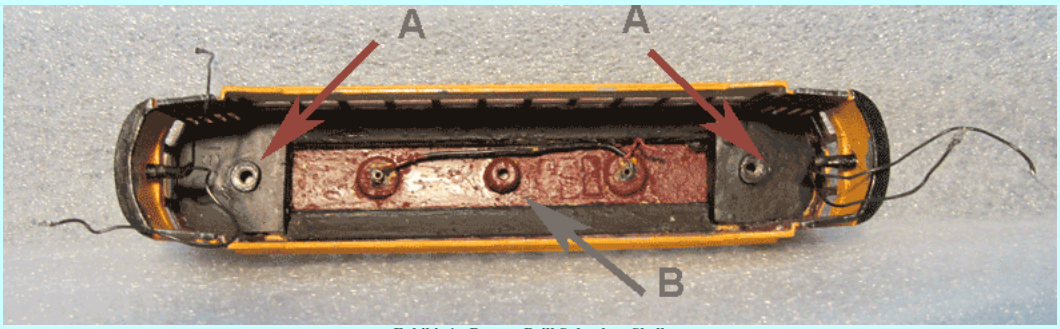


Exhibit 1 - Bowser Brill Suburban Shell

The shell as shown in Exhibit 1 above shows its age. It shows the mounts at each end, "A" required for the 1999 mechanism. The older 1966 mechanism mounted in the center of the shell as marked "B". Note that headlights are already installed on both ends and the original connections to the trolley pole bases are still in place.

Originally we planned to install a TCS "Keep Alive™" decoder in this car, most likely a KAT12. However, due to the use of the Bowser breadboard 4'10" wheelbase mechanism with flywheel, there was not enough room for an easy installation, so we elected to use a TCS M1 decoder as it would fit easily in the deck portion of the roof.

In the next exhibit, Exhibit 2, we have replaced the original connection to the trolley poles with red wire and installed all the printed circuit "pads" as shown by the arrows. W (White wire for front headlight), BLK (Black wire for Track Ground), ORG (Orange Wire for Motor plus) , B (Blue Wire for Lighting Common), R (Red Wire for Overhead Wire Power) and GRAY Gray wire for Motor minus)

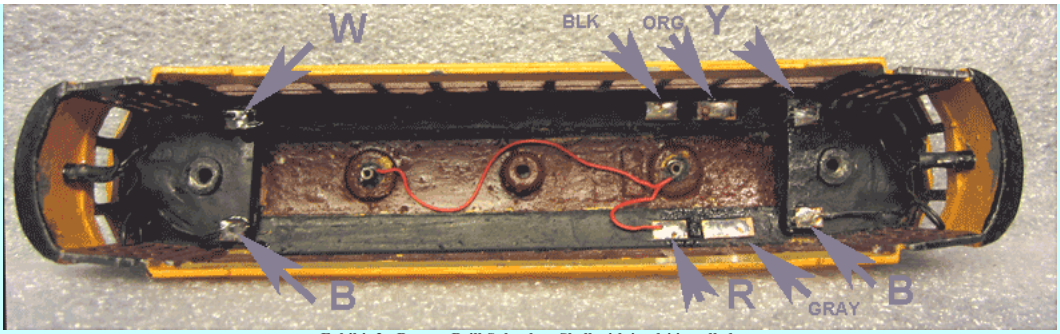


Exhibit 2 - Bowser Brill Suburban Shell with 'pads' installed.

In Exhibit 3 below, all wiring and the M1 decoder has been installed. All that it left to install is the Miniatronics three-pin plug. Yes, for the record, it is our practice to install decoders in the roof on cars running from overhead wire especially when the headlights are installed on the shell. By doing this, we only have three wires to have to pass from the shell to the chassis. These are the orange and gray motor control wires and the ground (track) negative from the wheels. Hence the use of the Miniatronics Three-pin Micro Mini Connector (Model 50-003-01). All other wiring is on the shell itself, as you can see for yourself.

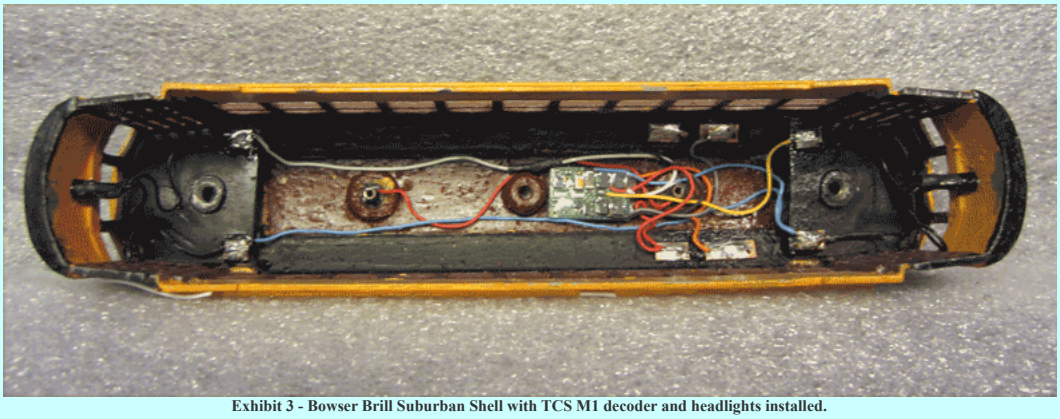
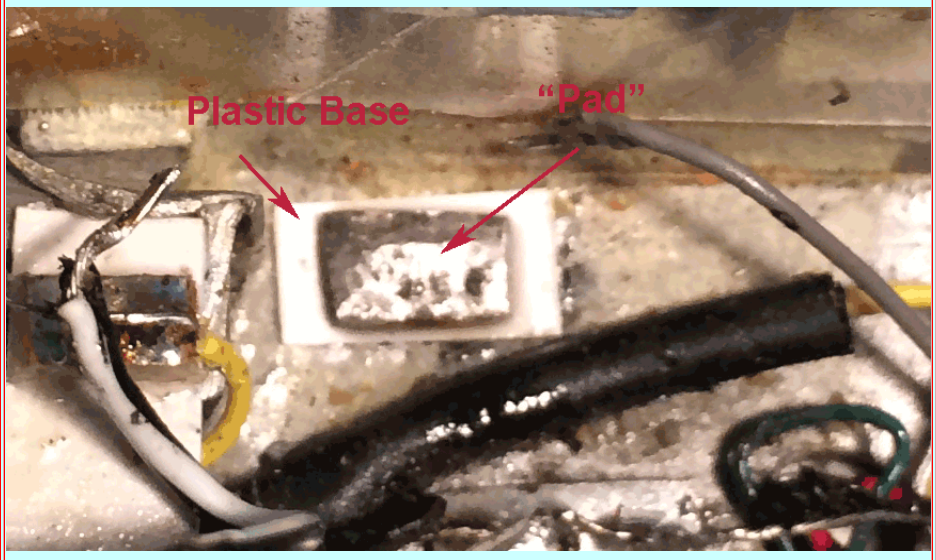


Exhibit 3 - Bowser Brill Suburban Shell with TCS M1 decoder and headlights installed.

*Note: Shortly after this Bowser/PSM Brill streetcar was completed and satisfactorily tested, we experienced problems with our "pads" when we installed them directly on cars with unpainted metal bodies *. Our normal practice is to paint the interior of all cars with weathered black before exterior painting, which always precedes decoder installation. Note that the Brill above is old (vintage 1959) and has a thick coat of paint under the "pads" that we installed. Somehow, the "pads", even though made from single sided circuit board, managed to partially or totally short to the unpainted body in some installations. After discussions with TCS and investigating the possibility of faulty printed circuit boards, the possibility of the electrical conductivity of our ACC adhesive and even the ACC Accelerator that we use, we chose to change our procedure and place a small piece of plastic between the metal shell and our "pad". We cut little bases from .005" plastic and fastened them to the metal body prior to placing our connection "pad". A typical "pad" installation now looks as shown in the next photo:*



Naturally, we will be keeping an eye on our Brill for any "weird" occurrences. We were unaware of this issue as we normally paint the interior of all models Weathered Black before exterior painting. All painting is completed before decoder installation.

**These were an HO scale Suydam brass Hollywood Car and a BEC metal PCC shell.*

This article and any article on DCC installations are being provided to elicit comments and other opinions. Please feel free to let us know if you have other ideas or tips that you feel are better.

Modeler's Showcase !

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In this section, which we will be printing from time to time, we will be featuring the work sent to us by modelers. This month we will feature two traction modelers that have scratch built or extensively modified a kit to produce a very nice result. We are all aware of the ready-to-run trend in the hobby today so it is really great to see the results of those talented modelers still at work.

In the first example, Bruce Battles of Menlo Park, CA recently shared with us a model of the 942-943 series Market Street Railway Cars he fashioned from another kit. These two four-motor cars had been built by the MSRy in 1930. They were 47' long, 8' 9"wide and rode on Standard 0-40 trucks. They were among a group of cars called California Comfort cars and both retired in 1948. With the recent appearance of San Francisco Muni PCC 1011 in MSRy colors, shown below,

it is a great time to look at an actual MSRy car in that same paint scheme. This car "started out in life" as one of Greg King's Muni B-types. Bruce discovered one day that the two types of cars were dimensionally pretty close, so with that in mind, he started on this car. It has a Hollywood Foundry Bull-Ant drive, geared 27:1, so it runs very nicely.

When Bruce started on the car, he wanted it to be a "door car", so he wouldn't have to make all those platform details. It had to have the Zip Stripe paint, and it had to have Standard trucks, since they were the only sideframes he had. The two cars that qualified were 942 and 943, and since there's a shot of 943 in the Arcadia book on the MSR, he knew it had the Zip Stripe, so he went with that car. Interestingly enough, those were the only two 900s that never had the roof mats on the ends, so Bruce was spared making that rather troublesome bit of detail.

Our second example is from David Klein from Cape Canaveral, Florida, he kit-bashed a model of Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company Jewett Car #44.

Cars 40-44 were built in 1914. They were 44' 6" long and 8' 10" wide. They rode on Baldwin Curved Equalized trucks. They were ordered due to increase patronage on the four lines (Ardmore, Media, Sharon Hill, West Chester) of the then Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company. They were equipped with Brill 77E High-speed trucks in 1926 and all scrapped in 1949 with the arrival of the 14 St. Louis "Quasi-PCC" light interurban cars.

David started with the Bowser "Liberty Bell" Jewett 800 series interurban (the steps gave that away) and the methodology that he used was detailed in the October 2011 edition of the Trolleyville Times. The decals are from Custom Traxx. The model, shown below left, was taken on Bruce Elfreth's layout in Palm City, Florida. One of the prototype vehicles is shown below right in front of the Llanerch Barn.

A color photograph provided by David.

Happy traction modeling!

Another advantage of DCC in Traction Vehicles!

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A while back, about thirty four year ago, while working on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Project, Trolleyville Webmaster George Huckaby discovered New Orleans Public Service Inc. (NOPSI) car 453. It was an American Car Company semi-convertible that looked very similar to the Bachmann and Bowser Brill semi-convertible cars then available in HO scale.

Car 453 was one of 25 cars built in Saint Louis. MO and delivered to the New Orleans Railway & Light Company in 1906. Originally equipped with Brill 27-G trucks, the cars were rebuilt in 1917, renumbered to 450-474 and equipped with Brill 76-E2 trucks. A photo exists of car 457 on Brill 39E trucks. The NOR&L would last from 1905 until 1922 until a disastrous fire gutted the upper floors of their main office building at Baronne & Common streets. New Orleans Public Service Inc. (NOPSI) emerged from the reorganization and would operate the streetcars for the next 60 plus years. They would also supervise the elimination of all but one streetcar line, Saint Charles.

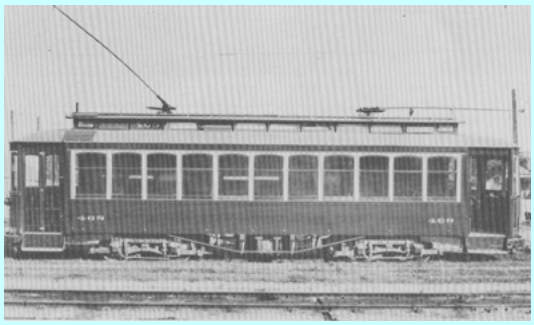

Exhibit A - Car 468 is shown after the first rebuild before retrucking.

Exhibit B - Car 453 on display at the Flea Market.

The cars served the Crescent city until 1935 when all were removed from service except for car 453 which was retained as a training car.

George obtained a Bachmann Brill shell, made appropriate modifications and went to Carrollton shops and got some paint samples (while they were painting car 963 at the time), modified the front and rear ends somewhat and finished the model. At the time there were Brill 76E power and trailing trucks available from Ken Kidder, so George obtained one and finished his model. The model ran but George never liked the motor noise level and the lack of a flywheel from what was essentially "slot car" type motor.

The car was resurrected in 2013 as a color sample for the Bowser New Orleans Car project and at that time, it was decided to make the car a subject for a TCS KAT decoder. The low profile of both the power and trailing trucks made locating the larger than normal "Keep Alive™" decoder much easier. The conversion of this vehicle to DCC became significant as we discovered that the introduction of the TCS "Keep Alive™" decoders and other similar products tip the scale for overhead wire operation in favor of DCC.

The shell was prepared using our so far proven 'pad' method. Small pieces of single-sided circuit board about 1/8" square or a little larger are secured to the roof of the shell with ACC and used as solder terminals. There would be reversible headlights on each end but no other lights. The deck roof presents challenges in mounting the decoder and in the location of our 'pads' but they were overcome when some thought was applied. As a rule, we mount our decoders on the underside of the roof over the trailing truck in cars using the Bowser traction mechanism. Four 'pads' are usually mounted near the decoder [1 - Red wire for overhead power; 2 - Black wire for Truck Ground; 3 - Orange wire for Motor Plus; 4 - Gray Wire for Motor minus]. Two pads are placed at the ends of each cars. The front headlight needing the white and blue wires and the rear headlight using the yellow and blue wires. Where feasible, one long printed circuit strip is affixed to the roof from end-to-end for the blue wire (common). This was not done in this case. We mount the decoders on the roof since the lights will all be body mounted, requiring only three wires (Truck ground, Motor plus and Motor minus) to be connected to the chassis. Having the wires close to the rook normally removes most of them from view. A Miniatronics 3-Pin Micro Mini plug #50-003-01 is normally used to connect the chassis to the shell.

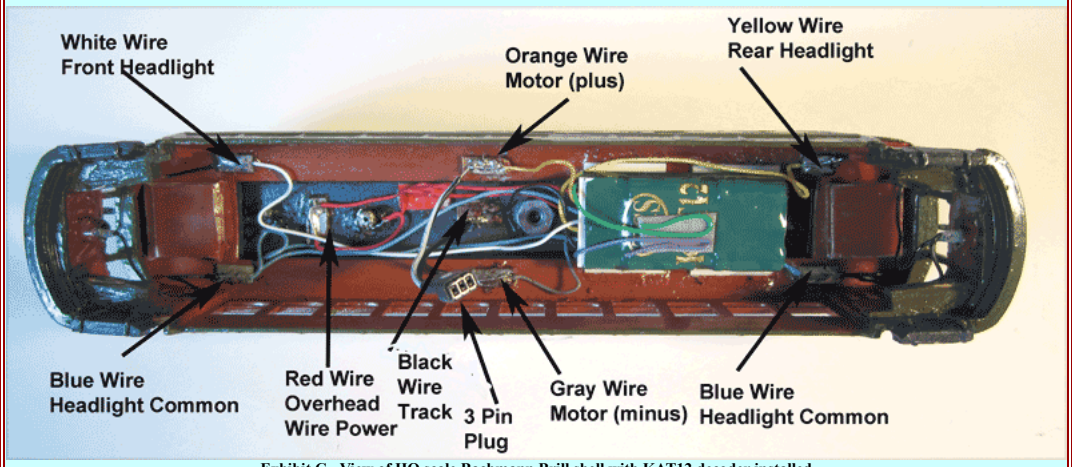

Exhibit C - View of HO scale Bachmann Brill shell with KAT12 decoder installed

Sharp eyed readers can see the red wire (power +), the black wire* (power -), the white wire (front headlight), the yellow wire (rear headlight), the blue wire (lights common), the orange wire* (motor +) and the gray wire* (motor -).

Exhibit D - View of modified HO scale Bowser 1285 floor with Ken Kidder drive unit installed.

The three wires identified with an asterisk (*) are connected to a three-pin plug for connection to the chassis. Note that the black wire is always the center of the thee pin plug so that the plug can be reversed if the car runs in reverse when it should be running in the forward direction.

Note: Readers should be aware that this procedure shown here on essentially a Bachmann Brill shell on a Bowser Brill floor could be used on older Bowser/PSM Brill shells upgraded with the Bowser 125144 mechanism or Bachmann shells upgraded with the Bowser and 125144 mechanisms with floor. We understand that these mechanisms will soon be unavailable due to lack of the floor castings. Bowser is no longer die casting in house. However, modelers should check with Custom Traxx as we learned that they have a few floors left from planned conversions that never materialized. For the Bachmann Shell the correct part number for the floor is #1333. For the Bowser shell, the correct part number for the floor is #1285.

The unique feature of the TCS post January 2012 decoders are the several factory resets. Naturally setting CV 8 = 8 resets the decoder to original factory settings. But setting CV 8 equal to 10, 11 or 12 can have other effects also and we will be discussing them in a later article. For now setting CV 8 equal to 11 results in a slate of CVs that give the trolley features that were created just for them. These features include but are not limited to the passenger stop, brake lights, tail lights etc.

Those of you using JMRI's DecoderPro (more about JMRI in another article) know the great utility of this program. What you may not know is that you can set CV8 = 11 using DecoderPro. Using the initial menu, just go to **Action** and go to Single CV Programmer and write 11. Remember that this CV will always read back **153** for a TCS decoder. If the value in CV 49 is 32 (Constant Bright Light) and CV 50 is 46 (Brake Light), entering the value of 11 did what we wanted.

This is standard for a single end PCC Car. Since this is a double end car, we will need to change the following:
CV34 to **2**. CV49 to **0**, CV50 to **16**, CV 61 to **1** and CV 64 to **6**. After that you will be in business.

Train Control Systems has a Comprehensive Programming Guide and a List of Default CV values on their website. These two documents contain twenty-two pages of great information. There is also a list of CVs and what they control! This is great reference data and is highly recommended!

DecoderPro and How It Unravels the Mysteries of DCC for Traction Enthusiasts!

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George L. Huckaby

Running trains around in loops, circles or back and forth was a thrill for spectators (back in the stone age) but today so much more is possible with what we call Digital Command Control (DCC). DCC, an update from analog to digital is sort of the same process we went though a few years ago with television transmission. We had a house full of converter boxes. Now we have none. All of our television sets are now digital. The younger generation is as comfortable with computer technology as some of us with yo-yos (many years ago)!

Ten years ago, I wanted nothing to do with DCC. I constantly told Bob Santelli at Allied Model Trains that I wanted nothing to do with it. The old comfortable way was fine. Two years later I was placing my first decoder in a Bowser PCC and accompanying Lee English, Bowser CEO, to China for design and production of the Bowser Ready-to-Run PCC cars. The next year it was San Francisco for the recording of sounds for the Bowser PCC cars. The next year we were teaming with TCS to develop the M4T for the Bowser PCC cars. This allowed realistic brake lights for the cars. When I saw Con-Cor stubbornly trying to make realistic PCC brake lights in the DC mode, I knew that the time for DCC was definitely here. When sound was introduced with the Bowser PCC cars, that was it. Today I have over 143 vehicles with ether DCC or DCC/Sound capability.

JMRI (**J**ava **M**odel **R**ailroad **I**nterface) was created by some forward thinking model railroaders who knew that the mechanical features of older trains could be vastly superseded with electronics means. We highly recommend that you take the time to check out their web site and learn of the effort that has gone into the development of DecoderPro. You will find that over 200 individuals who have made major contributions to this excellent software. JMRI claims to have had input and coordination with Atlas, Bachrus, C/MRI, CTI Electronics, CVP Products East DCC, DCC Specialties, Digi, Digitrax, ESU, Fleischmann, Hornby, Lenz, Trainmaster, Marklin, MRC, RPS, NCE, Oak Tree Systems, Open LCB, ProTraxck Grapevine, QSI Solutions, RailDriver, Roco, Sprog DCC, SCRP, Uhlenbrock, Viessman, Wangrow, X120, Zimo and ZTC Controls.

Bob Santelli passed away a few years ago but not before convincing me of the utility of JMRI/DecoderPro. So beginning in 2008, I hooked my MacBook Pro to my programming track with a Digitrax PR3 and have been able to read all of my traction models DCC decoders. I have to use a DCC Specialties POWER PAX booster in series with the PR3 for most of the sound decoders (but not ESU).

As an ardent Mac User for over fifteen years, I was surprised to know that two of those 200 mentioned, one of them being a software programmer for Apple, came up with the name "Decoder Pro" over a series of lunch conversations. Both of them were Mac Users that wanted to program their decoders with their PowerBooks. However, since Apple was in somewhat of a decline at the time (middle 90's), they wanted Decoder Pro to work on PCs as well. They knew that the success of the program directly related to having widest PC base possible. Some proof of concept code was developed on the Macintosh and hence it was not PC compatible. At that time, the Java language was an up and coming independent cross platform language that allowed a Java program to run on any PC based operating system that supports java (MacOS, Windows, Linux..). Switching to Java would also allow the decoder description files to be created and edited by any ASCII text editor. I currently use Decoder Pro to change addresses and to record the CV's on every piece of DCC equipment.

HO traction is a latecomer to DCC. The first true HO scale ready-to-run injection molded streetcar from Bowser came in late 2009 but the first streetcar with factory sound did not come from any manufacturer until late 2011. Custom Traxx started testing for Bowser in 2011. Everyone knows that model steam, diesel and electric locomotives were around long before that.

The first resistance to DCC was expected. It was new and most traction modelers were old and they had invested time and money in DC operated vehicles. Of course, I was told that it would never work with overhead wire (trolley poles) due to the single point of contact. I bought that for a while until Bob Santelli introduced me to Track & Rail Cleaner, ACT-6006, a conductive lubricant, produced by Aero-Car Hobby Lubricants, Western Springs, IL. After using this on a DC module and finding it to be just short of amazing, I wondered if it could be effective in a DCC application. So I converted the Custom Traxx three foot square display layout to DCC and use the ACT-6006. The rest is history. Within months the Southern California Traction Club had a four module city streetcar line operated with DCC. The operation of the DCC trolleys on overhead wire was no less reliable than those operated on similar DC layouts. The TCS "Keep Alive™" decoders just made operation virtually flawless.

We have been using DecoderPro for over six years for our decoders and found it to be an excellent tool. The uncompensated volunteer members of JMRI have done a great service to the model railroad industry. We firmly believe that if the model railroad industry had embraced DCC and other computer related features earlier, the model railroad hobby could have found itself in a better state than it is today. After seeing the technological leap made in ESU LokSound decoders and what they can do, it is no wonder that they have been able to enthrall larger numbers younger hobbyists in countries like Germany, where it is estimated that 25% of households have a model railroad in them.

Recently, we discovered that DecoderPro may have some performance issues when reading ESU LokSound Select decoders due to the vast amount of information contained therein. I have experienced some of these personally and are working with JMRI to try and correct the issues. But JMRI is a volunteer organization and fixing this quickly may not be in the cards but they are working with it according with Bob Jacobsen, JMRI spokesperson. We know that Bowser is planning more streetcars and maybe even some light rail vehicles and is amassing recordings of these vehicles for sound decoders. As of today, they will all be using ESU LokSound decoders.

Decoders for the HO scale Bowser New Orleans Streetcar!

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If you were fortunate enough to have secured your HO scale Bowser DCC/Sound Ready New Orleans Car or any of the clones (Atlantic City, Chicago, Philadelphia PRT & PST) and decide you would like to change your car from DCC Ready to DCC equipped, you can get the ESU Lok Pilot decoder designed for that car. The SKU is **#93633** and the **MSRP is $36.99.** If you want to upgrade the car to DCC/Sound capability, you can purchase the ESU LokSound decoder **#93433** and the **MSRP is $99.99.**

Train Control Systems (TCS) has also been very receptive of the needs of trolley modelers for years. They also make a DCC (non-sound) decoder that can be used for the Bowser New Orleans streetcar. Since 2012, TCS has included their automatic passenger start/stop and brake light features in every decoder they make including the 21 pin **EU621** decoder. **The MSRP is $37.40.** When the car is running and button 6 is activated, the trolley starts to decelerate to a complete stop. When the button is pressed again, the trolley will slowly accelerate to the previous speed without ever having to touch the throttle control. The Brake light features are not applicable to the New Orleans car. To activate these trolley features requires some CV changes that have been discussed elsewhere in the Trolleyville Times. This combined with their "Auto Adjusting BEMF", for super smooth operation, could make TCS the good choice for the Bowser New Orleans streetcar.

Remember that the Bowser New Orleans car and the clones are the first Bowser trolleys equipped with the new 21 pin receptacle for the DCC decoder so only decoders equipped with a 21 pin plug can be used in this and any future HO scale trolleys released by Bowser.

BONUS COVERAGE: The Custom Traxx Facebook page has photo albums where you can see the first examples of the Custom Traxx/Bowser New Orleans cars compared to the real thing on the streets of the Crescent City. You can see the models here, then you can see our shots of the Riverfront line here, the Canal Street line here, and the St. Charles line here. You do not need a Facebook account to see these photos.

Southern California Traction Club Inviting New Members!

(New category of membership being added!!)

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The Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) was founded in October 1995 by five trolley modelers. The SCTC is a modular group that operates model electric streetcars, interurban, and subway vehicles from live overhead wires. The scale used is HO scale, which is 87 scale feet to one actual foot or 1/87 scale. The club made its first public appearance with five modules at the South Bay Botanic Gardens in Palos Verdes, CA. Since that time, the club has displayed their modules 108 times in California and Nevada. The SCTC currently has members from as far north as Saugus, CA; as far south as Laguna, CA; as far east as Lafayette, IN and as far west as Tokyo, Japan. Their clubhouse is located in Baldwin Hills and members can be found there most Tuesday or Thursday afternoons and most Sundays working on modules or rolling stock. All cars, except for the subway cars, are converted from the conventional two-rail operation to operate from overhead wire via trolley poles. Almost all of the rails on the SCTC modules are grounded so two-rail operation is NOT possible.

Most of the club modules are four feet long and all have a double-track main line with code 83 rail. Originally, the club completely rebuilt an old trailer that had been donated to the club to carry eleven modules and stored this trailer at the clubhouse. Within two years, the club had more than the eleven modules that trailer could transport, so a second trailer was acquired. Yet some modules most be carried in privately owned vehicles as the trailer capacity has been exceeded. The club added both an operational subway train module an a multiple module City Streetcar Line controlled by Digital Command Control. Currently, the normal main display consists of twenty-three modules arranged in a 16' by 26' rectangle. However, the current display is an 8" by 12" City Streetcar Line due to low staffing available at appearances. Always seeking the unusual, the club added a special lift-up module to avoid the dreaded "duck-under", the "Rush Limbaugh High School" module, which gets all types of comments, and trolley coaches with illuminated headlights powered from live overhead wire. The operating subway line is at "small-fry" level, which is a hit with the younger set.

The club performed all operational testing on the Bowser HO scale San Francisco F-line PCC, which was released in November 2009 and performed final testing on the production sample chassis for the next Bowser trolley to be released in early 2011. The club also participated in the final test program for both the Train Control Systems (TCS) M4T and T6XT decoders for PCC cars that simulated actual prototypical brake light operation along with a passenger stop function. The club continues to test other proposed TCS decoders, all of which since December 2012 have traction oriented features. The club also tested the first of the Soundtraxx Tsunami DCC/Sound decoders to be used in the Bowser PCC cars that were released in December 2011. Most recently, the club participated in the development of an upgraded ESU LokSound decoder for the next run Bowser PCC cars.For more information, please contact the club via email. At the 2008 National Train Show (NMRA/PSR Anaheim Special 2008) in Anaheim., CA, the club received Honorable Mention in the Group Module Contest and the NMRA Design Preservation Models (DPM) City Classics Award. In May 2009, the club's stand-alone module won third place at the East Penn Traction Club Meet at Villanova University, Villanova, PA. The club has won three other awards at model train shows over the years.

Up to now, if you lived in an area that did not have many traction modelers or had a model railroad club whose members really did not show any interest in traction or in some cases were hostle to traction, you were stuck with your little layout or maybe nothing at all. Starting very soon, the SCTC will have a membership category just for you. You will be able to join the club, receive the club activity report and share your ideas with people who will be interested in your ideas. You will

not have to risk your ideas being ridiculed on one of those hostle chat rooms on yahoo or other websites. What you will be able to do is to share your ideas with interested knowledgeable fellow traction lovers. The details are being worked out and the final announcement will be coming during this summer so stay tuned. So if you are interested in what you are reading or what this club does, please give John McWhirter a call at 323 445-5144 or email him at jverne@aol.com.