



, Walthers, etc..!!

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CURRENT EVENTS.....

Custom Traxx to Modify Direction on Decals!

Custom Traxx was founded in 1995 as a traction dealer and started to make decals in 1995 mainly in HO scale. They produced a few O scale sets and even some 1:50 scale decals for the Corgi PCC cars. They acquired the ORR line of HO scale streetcar track in 2003 and started to sell HO scale trolley poles made by Eric Courtney in Busby, Alberta, Canada. They have since expanded that trolley pole line to include both N and O scale.

The coming of the Bowser HO scale Ready-to-Run F-line PCC cars in 2009 changed all of that. With the addition of the Bachmann Birney and 1930 Peter Witt, the Con-Cor Air-Electric PCC and the Bowser New Orleans 900 series streetcar, the necessity to paint and letter your own HO scale streetcar models was drastically diminished. Some of these vehicles had lights, operating brake lights, DCC and sound! Add to this the aging of the traditional streetcar modeling crowd and the demand for decals continued to diminish.

So now Custom Traxx will be turning its attention to two areas. They will be amassing data to develop and produce quality decals for light rail vehicle and modern streetcar models that will be available via the 3D Printing process and they will be making decals for 'unique' streetcars that would not be available otherwise.

Last month, we reported that Rail Graphics was exiting the decal making business at the end of this year. They had been the sole printer of Custom Traxx decals since 1995 so Custom Traxx is in the process of evaluating replacement suppliers. They are working with several sources of decals at this time, including Microscale in Fountain Valley, California.

At this time, Custom Traxx is working on two new decal sets. The first would be for the Los Angeles MTA P-1 PCC #3002 which was painted as the ("Goodbye Forever ole Sweethearts and Pals") Crying Trolley in the last days of operation in 1963. The second will be a set of decals for the San Diego Siemens S70 Light Rail Vehicles. This second decal set will be intended for the 3D printed bodies now being developed in both scales by Custom Traxx in conjunction with Volkmar Meier of Paris, France. It is now planned to make most if not all decal sets developed in the future available in both HO scale and N scale, recognizing the future of this smaller scale.

Those of you who have interest or wish to make input to these new products should not hesitate to [contact Custom Traxx](#) with your feelings.

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

by Edward Havens

The Omaha World-Herald newspaper reported on February 5th that a new business nonprofit group wants to see a streetcar line developed to stimulate economic development in the Nebraska city's midtown area. Midtown 2050 Corp. wants to connect business and university campuses and fill in vacant land between them. Midtown Vision 2050 projects the streetcar construction cost at \$150 million to \$160 million with an annual operating cost of \$7.5 million and presents various funding options. Former congressman Brad Ashford, hired as the group's president, said the streetcar is a "critical element" for economic development. The Omaha & Council Bluffs Railway made its last streetcar runs on March 4, 1955, making it one of the last street railway operators in the Midwest.



One of the O&CB 800 series cars.

"The Advocate" in New Orleans reported on February 4th that the New Orleans police arrested a 26-year-old man on charges of vandalism for graffiti "tagging" of an historic Perley Thomas streetcar used on the St. Charles streetcar line. Officers arrested the suspect on the previous day with paint on

his hands and spray cans in his SUV. That followed vandalism that defaced Perley Thomas car Number 921. Casey Miller of Winter Springs, Florida, was jailed in lieu of \$100,000 bond -- an amount typically reserved for violent criminals. The magistrate feared Miller might be a flight risk.



Car 921 after vandalism!

As Philadelphia area residents sat in front of their televisions, mart phone, tablets and laptops, to watch the pro football Super Bowl LI Extravaganza in Houston on the evening of February 5th, the "plan philly" site reported that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) had decided to withdraw 40 Market Frankford Line [MFL] rapid transit cars from service because of cracks found in the suspension assembly. It was a very similar issue that forced SEPTA to withdraw all of its Hyundai Rotem Silverliner V electric multiple-unit Regional Rail cars from service last July. SEPTA offset the withdrawal of the 20-year-old rapid transit cars by implementing shuttle bus service during rush hours to augment the remaining MFL fleet. The 220 Adtranz (now Bombardier Transportation) cars, classed as M-4, series 1001 through 1220, were delivered between 1997 and 1999, each costing \$1.29 million.



SEPTA M-4 six car train at Frankford Terminal.

At the opposite end of the MFL from the Frankford Terminal shown above, three SEPTA MFL rapid transit trains collided at about 8:10AM on February 21st on the reversing loop of at 69th Street Transportation Center at Upper Darby just west of Philadelphia. KYW television reported on February 23rd that the section of track has Automatic Train Control which in theory should have made the collision impossible. Four SEPTA employees were injured, one critically. A team from the National Transportation Safety Board was sent to investigate the collision, which occurred during the morning peak period commuter rush.



Car 1078 is completely off the rails and one of its trucks while its mate 1077 seems to be still on the track!

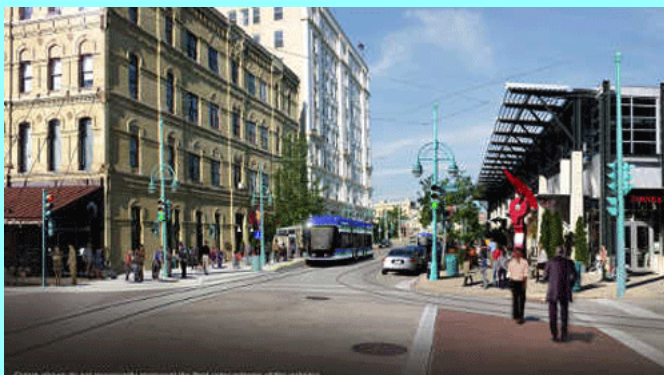
As one could expect, the Philadelphia City Council planned to hold a hearing on the safety of SEPTA rail operations and defects in rolling stock following a number of problems, the "philly dot com" site reported on February 23rd. Another view of the February 21st SNAFU below:



Car 1077 seems to have hit what appears to be car 1001 in addition to another car when it left the rails!

At issue would be, of course, [1] this collision of three Market Frankford Line [MFL] rapid transit trains at 69th Street Transportation Center on February 21st, [2] an earlier collision of two Route 10 trolleys in West Philadelphia that injured 45 people, plus [3] structural defects found on some Adtranz (now Bombardier) MFL cars and [4] on Regional Rail Silverliner V electric multiple-unit cars that sidelined 120 cars built by Hyundai Rotem. The problems with MFL and Silverliner V cars were found by SEPTA inspectors. City Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, head of the transportation committee, said SEPTA has a good track record in delivering services but it's time to take a step back and find out why there have been so many problems lately.

Milwaukee, the largest city in Wisconsin, will begin construction in April of its downtown modern streetcar line, The Journal-Sentinel reported Feb. 17. The starter 2.5-mile section has a budget of \$128 million. Four Brookville Equipment of Pennsylvania "Liberty" model streetcars will be purchased with the first expected in December 2017. Dual mode (battery and pantograph) cars will be supplied under the contract because the Lakefront extension to the Couture high-rise real-estate development will be wire free. Rail sections for the initial line will be delivered during March. Almost five-hundred 80-foot-long rail lengths will be distributed along the planned route in preparation for welding. Service on the starter line is expected to begin in the fall of 2018 with Lakefront branch opening in 2019. The starter route has a \$3.2 million annual operating and maintenance budget.



Artists conception of Milwaukee streetcar on West Paul Avenue in downtown Milwaukee!

A third reconitioned streetcar for the St. Louis area Delmar Loop heritage trolley line arrived in the Missouri city February 16, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. Gomaco Trolley of Iowa rehabilitated the cars, shown below. The cars were originally built as replica Council Crest Brill semiconvertibles for Portland, Oregon, TriMet. These cars became excess to their needs after heritage service was discontinued over downtown light

rail tracks. The 2.2-mile, \$51 million Delmar Loop is being built at suburban University City just west of St. Louis city line as a visitor and tourist attraction. Passenger service may begin in late spring. Ex-Seattle "W" Class trams from Melbourne, Australia, will be used as Delmar rolling stock backups. They became surplus after Seattle dropped its Waterfront trolley service to demolish the car barn and build a sculpture garden on the site. The Gomaco-built cars will use pantographs on Delmar Loop rather than the bow collectors they sported at Portland for current collection.



Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) was set to open its "R" Line light rail through suburban Aurora east of Colorado's capital city on February 24, according to a Denver Business Journal article. The \$687 million FasTracks project spans 10.5 miles on a north-south alignment, connecting existing light rail at Nine Mile with the "A" Line electric multiple unit service to Denver International Airport. Kiewit Infrastructure built the "R" with eight stations and half of them have park-and-ride lots. LRVs will operate every 15 minutes during peak travel periods and every 30 minutes during off-peak. The transit agency predicts 12,000 riders on the new light rail route by February 2018.



More Urban Rail Happenings!

CALIFORNIA, BAY AREA. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has decided to halt a \$647 million full funding agreement for Caltrain's electrification project until President Donald Trump develops his fiscal-year 2018 budget, according to a February 21st report from Progressive Railroading.



This electrification project includes electrical multiple unit (EMU) cars such as shown above.

The FTA notified Caltrain Executive Director Jim Hartnett last week. In a February 17, 2017 letter, FTA Executive Director Matthew Welbes said the delay will allow the project to be considered in conjunction with Trump's FY 2018 budget, as well as the companion FTA report to Congress on annual funding recommendations for its Capital Investment Grant program.

The railroad is evaluating options for maintaining the project's viability in the face of uncertainty over the timing of the grant approval, Caltrain officials said in a press release.

"Clearly, the FTA's evaluation demonstrates that this federal investment should be made based on the merits of the project, and we expect that the [U.S. Department of Transportation] will continue with a fair process," Caltrain spokesman Seamus Murphy said in a statement. "We will continue to work with our congressional delegation, stakeholders and funding partners to support whatever actions are needed to provide our communities with the transit system they deserve."

Late last month, Republican legislators representing California in Congress asked the Trump administration to delay approval for the project, which would lay the foundation for eventual high-speed rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The lawmakers argued that providing funds for Caltrain's electrification project would be "an irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars." They also called for an audit of California's overall high-speed rail project's finances. Caltrain has been planning for the electrification project since the 1990s, before voters in 2008 approved selling bonds for the high-speed rail project. The electrification project would allow the railroad to reduce travel times and increase capacity, according to Caltrain.

CASSELTON, N.D. Progressive Railroading reported that on February 7th, The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined that a broken axle set off a series of actions that resulted in a BNSF Railway Co. train accident in which 476,000 gallons of crude oil spilled and ignited near Casselton, N.D., on Dec. 30, 2013. The incident involved a crude-oil train and a grain train. The board found that the chain of events for the accident began when the grain train derailed because of a broken axle on one of its cars. The second train, which was carrying crude oil on an adjacent track, was unable to stop in time before colliding with the derailed grain-train's cars, NTSB officials said in a press release.

The oil spilled from 18 of the 20 derailed DOT-111 tank cars, formed pools and caught fire. Other derailed tank cars eventually ruptured as the heat from the fire weakened the tank steel and increased the internal pressure until oil vapor erupted into fire balls.



The above NTSB photo taken on December 31, 2013 shows part of the tank car pileup and residual fire resulting from the train collision the previous day near Casselton, North Dakota. The DOT-111 tank car in the center of the photo sustained a thermal tear and is still burning at the time.

On the same day, the board released a [YouTube video](#) of the accident. (*It is a rather long video but it clearly shows the accident.*) There were no fatalities or serious injuries as a result of the accident. But nearly 1,500 people were evacuated from nearby homes, NTSB officials said.

NTSB investigators found a void in the middle of the grain-train car's axle, which was used previously on another train car. In response to the board's urgent safety recommendation on the matter, the Association of American Railroads has moved to require testing of secondhand-use axles.

The accident also raised additional concerns about the widely used DOT-111 cars. The NTSB has long had concerns about the cars, which have a "relatively thin" 7/16-inch shell thickness, are not puncture-resistant and lack thermal protection as well as top and bottom fittings protection. The board yesterday reiterated its call for quickly phasing out DOT-111 tank cars.

Since the accident, Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation have established requirements for the new, stronger DOT-117 tank car to replace the DOT-111 and its variants. The deadline for replacing the tank cars and its variants extends to 2029, however.

Although relatively few DOT-111s remain in crude-oil service, a vast fleet of them continues in service for ethanol and other flammable liquids, the board said. "The fact remains that trains carrying flammable liquids in DOT-111 tank cars continue to roll through America's towns and cities," said NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart. "Progress toward removing or retrofitting DOT-111s has been too slow."

As part of its investigation into the accident, the NTSB also studied advanced brake systems. While their use in this instance would not have prevented the accident, "it may have mitigated the damage," NTSB board members said.

"In other scenarios, advanced brake systems have the potential to prevent train accidents altogether," they added.

Among its recommendations following the accident, the board suggested studying the use of additional "buffer" cars between locomotives and cars carrying hazardous materials to protect crews. The oil train in the Casselton accident had one buffer car between the locomotives and the cars carrying crude oil.

The NTSB's final report on the accident will be available later on ntsb.gov.

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA: The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Board of Directors in early February approved a series of upgrades for the El Cerrito Del Norte Station, their busiest station in that county. Progressive Railroading reported that this modernization program calls for improving the area inside the fare gates, building new public restrooms and upgrading station lighting. The project is aiming to make it easier for riders to get into and out of the station.

To that end, BART will install more fare gates, expand the paid area and add two sets of stairs and escalators. The \$33.9 million project will be funded from Prop 1B, Contra Costa Transportation Authority Measure J Funds, BART's capital allocation and parking fees, according to BART officials.

This station experiences more than 18,000 entries and exits on a typical weekday.

HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA: Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario have issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) for firms to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Hamilton B-Line light-rail transit project, according to Progressive Railroading on February 3rd.



Artists Conception of Hamilton Light Rail/Modern Streetcar!

The 6.8-mile route will include 14 stops between McMaster University and Queenstown Circle in Hamilton, Ontario. The project also includes an operations, maintenance and storage facility for light-rail vehicles. The RFQ marks the first step in the procurement process to select a team to deliver the project, Infrastructure Ontario officials said in a press release. The state-owned company and Metrolinx will evaluate submissions to pre qualify project teams with relevant experience and financial capacity for a project of this size and complexity. Qualified teams will be invited to respond to a request for proposals this summer. "This important investment in Hamilton will provide a new way to travel on a fast, efficient and reliable integrated transit system," said Bob Chiarelli, Ontario's minister of infrastructure.

LOS ANGELES, CA: The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO) has advanced four unsolicited proposals that could accelerate two major projects. Progressive Railroading reported that two proposals were submitted by Skanska USA Civil West and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor, where the agency is considering building a light rail line. Parsons Transportation Group Inc. and Cintra US Services LLC submitted proposals for the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor, which may involve building a rail line. More about these projects in later issues.

NEW YORK CITY, NY: According to a January 23, 2017 report on their website, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is expanding sleep apnea screening and treatment that began in 2015 with Metro-North Railroad train engineers to Metro-North's conductors, Long Island Rail Road train engineers and conductors, New York City Transit subway train operators and conductors, and bus operators for New York City Transit and the MTA Bus Company, becoming the first public transportation agency to systematically screen employees for obstructive sleep apnea and offer priority, specialized treatment to employees. The program will expand to nearly 20,000 employees.



New York City Subway Train.

"Safety is our top priority and MTA is going further than any other transportation agency in the country to prevent the risks of apnea. With this proposal, we are not just working to implement industry best practices, the MTA is defining best practices," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "Sleep apnea is a serious illness and treatment will improve the quality of life for those who have it, and help them live longer."

Sleep apnea is a medical disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts while a person is sleeping, sometimes hundreds of times, when the patient's throat muscles intermittently relax and block his or her windpipe. This results in insufficient sleep. Left untreated, someone with the disorder functions with reduced alertness and may involuntarily fall asleep.

Using a similar methodology to that already underway at Metro-North Railroad, sleep apnea screenings will include an evaluation of an employee's Body Mass Index, neck circumference, a medical questionnaire related to sleep and sleep patterns, and relevant medical history. Employees who are deemed at risk based upon the screening will be referred for further testing and potential diagnosis and treatment.

Those referred for more detailed testing will be given a take-home overnight sleep test administered by a medical firm that specializes in sleep disorders. Based on the results, some employees may be required to undergo medical treatment for sleep apnea, which is generally treated through the use of masks that deliver continuous positive airway pressure, or oral devices that keep the airway open, either of which is worn at home during sleep.

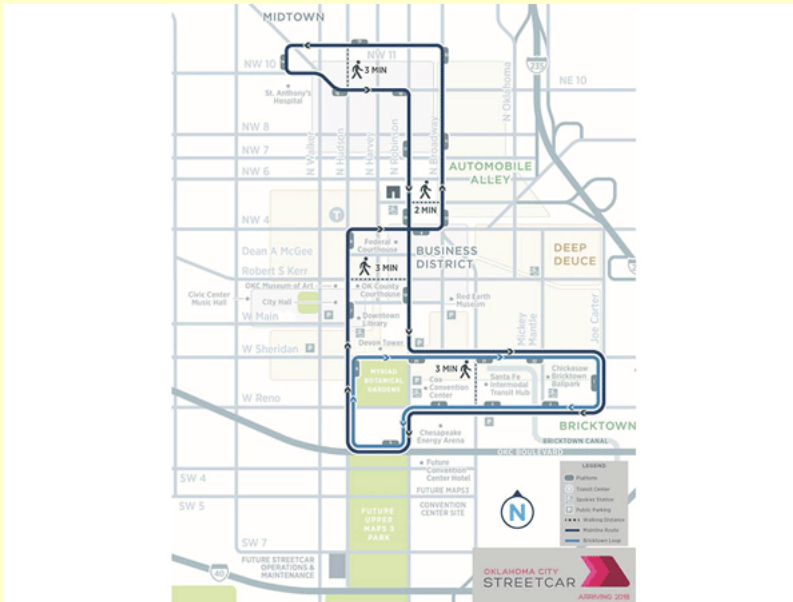
The MTA has evaluated proposals from 13 healthcare companies who responded to a request for proposals issued last April.

To expedite the implementation of this critically important program, the MTA is maximizing capacity and geographic coverage by proposing the use of four separate firms to administer screenings, conduct sleep studies and make physician referrals. They are CHSLI of Rockville Centre, N.Y., ENT & Allergy / Night & Day Sleep Services of Tarrytown, N.Y., Northwell Health, Inc., of New Hyde Park, N.Y., and Respira, Inc., of Linthicum, Md., and based regionally in Paramus, N.J.

OKLAHOMA CITY: The City held their official groundbreaking for their MAPS3 modern streetcar line on February 7. A local restaurant, the Melting Pot, provided coffee, tea and chocolate fondue immediately after the ceremony.



Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett attended the groundbreaking ceremony. A joint venture of Herzog and Stacy & Witbeck is building the line, with ADG, Jacobs Engineering, Aecom and SOJ providing consultancy services. Opening is currently scheduled for December 2018.



The main route would consist of a figure-of-eight linking Bricktown with Midtown (see above map). Mainline Route services are envisaged to run in one direction around this 7.5 route-km loop, supplemented by a 3.2 km Bricktown Loop that overlaps with part of the Mainline Route at the southern end. There would be 22 stops in total, including nine shared between the two routes. Brookville Equipment Corp is supplying five low-floor trams, the first of which is due to arrive in October. These will run in mixed traffic, and will be equipped with batteries for off-wire operation, which will be required on parts of the route. A maintenance depot is being built at SW 7th Street and Hudson Avenue. Regional transport authority Embark is negotiating an operations contract with Herzog Transit Services. The project budget is \$131m, funded through the proceeds of a 1% sales tax under the MAPS 3 capital improvement programme. 'The MAPS 3 OKC Streetcar is one of the most ambitious projects in Oklahoma City's history, and it will forever transform the way we live, shop, work, play, eat and get around downtown and the surrounding districts', said Cornett.

Los Angeles Metro and 'The Bloc' Open Connecting Portal!

by A. J. Staley

On February 7, 2017, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) finally opened the connecting portal at the 7th Street Station to reveal The Bloc shopping center complex. The joint project was undertaken by Metro and The Bloc to provide a much-needed pedestrian passageway at the 7th Street Metro Center Station. It will greatly improve safety for pedestrian access to and from the busy downtown Los Angeles Metro Hub. The 7th Street station is the 2nd busiest station within the LA Metro System, and is the transfer point for Metro's Blue, Expo, Red and Purple lines. These lines together carry nearly 50,000 average weekday boarding's, making it one of the busiest transit stations on the Metro system.

The passageway connects the station's mezzanine with The Bloc (*formerly Macy's Plaza*) on the southern side of 7th Street in the Financial District. This will be the first-time LA Metro will connect from a station into a private building and is a precursor to additional opportunities for future direct connections elsewhere on the Metro system. Congestion at both the street level and in existing station portals will be reduced as well. The

passageway will also create needed capacity for thousands of new riders when the Regional Connector Transit Project connects the Metro Blue, Gold and Expo lines in 2021.

In the 1990's LA Metro had the foresight to build its underground stations with knock-out panels to facilitate these types of expansion. A similar panel was removed to make way for Metro's recently opened North Hollywood Station underpass.

The Bloc allows passengers a chance to get a bit to eat, grab a cup of coffee, or just do some shopping. It is in its final stages of a \$180 million renovation which included removing the roof to create an open-air plaza. The project was originally started and announced in early 2015, and was expected to open by the end of that same year. The 25-foot tunnel cost was \$9.3 million and was split between Metro and The Bloc. Under the terms of the partnership, the Bloc is responsible for keeping the tunnel open to the public from at least 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.



l to r, Michael Taylor, Director of Construction and Property Management for The Bloc; Jose Huizar, City Council Member; John Fasana, Metro Board Chair; Ed Begley, Jr., Actor and Environmentalist, Heather Border, National Real Estate Advisor, Jacqueline Dupont-Walker, Metro Board Member; Wayne Ratkovich, President and CEO of the Ratkovich Company; Milan Ratkovich, Senior Development Manager for the Ratkovich Company.

On hand to celebrate the tunnel opening were actor Ed Begley, Jr., Metro Board Chair John Fasana, City Council member José Huizar, Metro Board Member Jackie Dupont-Walker, The Ratkovich Company President Wayne Ratkovich, and others, shown in the previous group photo. Speakers emphasized the win-win benefits of the portal which expands LA Metro's station capacity, and improves foot traffic for The Bloc.



Jose Huizar, City Council Member

Wayne Ratkovich, president of the Ratkovich Company, shown above, stated “We are proud to have the first truly urban Metro Portal open into The Bloc's dynamic square at the heart of Down Town Los Angeles”. “The power of the Bloc and its mixed uses will now be fully realized. People from all parts of the region will be able to take Metro and walk through this portal into what will be the future of Los Angeles.”



Wayne Ratkovich, President, Ratkovich Company

The Bloc passageway is an excellent example for how a successful public private partnership can bring tremendous benefits to our transit customers,” said Metro CEO Phillip A. Washington. “By bringing private sector resources to the table we can keep our infrastructure projects moving forward. Look for more such partnerships in the future as Metro continues to transform transportation in our country.”

The Bloc’s renovation and the Metro tunnel construction have taken longer than expected. It had originally been announced in early 2015 and the tunnel was expected to open later that year. Two years later, the tunnel and many stores are open. Several storefronts remain boarded up but expect to open soon.

World's Greatest Hobby on Tour Returns to California!

After a four year absence, The World's Greatest Hobby on Tour (WGH on Tour) Show returned to California at Pomona-Fairplex in Pomona, CA. This was their sixty-first show since they were founded in 2004.

The WGH on Tour show was the brainchild of David K. Swanson and Michael Stephens, both persons with an extraordinary knowledge of the model train industry. David was the founder and organizer of the Great American Train Show (GATS) that toured the United States and Canada from 1985 until 2006. They were *'the'* model train show during that time. Michael had been Vice-President of Marketing, Kalmbach Publishing Co, President of Athearn Trains, and was Vice President of Proprietary Products at Wm K. Walther's at the time he passed away in April 2013.

The WGHoT was designed from the outset to serve the general public who like the romance associated with trains. This is a very large group of people who had been largely ignored by the model railroad industry .

This show has the distinction of regularly having the largest number of visitors for model trains shows including over 40,000 visitors on more than one occasion. The main reason for this is that this show, unlike many model railroad shows, aims the core of its advertising to the general public rather than to the continuously shrinking and aging core of avid model railroaders. They also have almost all of the major model manufacturers at their shows, such as Athearn, Atlas, Bachmann, Con-Cor, Kato, Lionel, MTH, Walther's, etc.

The introduction of this show 13 years ago was a remarkable marketing change for the hobby when these shows began. Previous to this time, the major manufacturers supported the then plentiful model railroad hobby shops and the train shows, such as the Great American Train Show (GATS) were almost universally disliked since it was felt that they were "killing" the hobby shops. Of course most hobby shops were "done in" by the aging of the hobby shop owners, the aging of their customers, the shift to offshore manufacturing of hobby items, and the arrival of the internet which caused on-line shopping to explode.



The GATS Logo - very familiar to many 1980-1990-2000 Era Model Railroaders!

The Pomona Show was huge. It was held in Building Four which is the largest building at Pomona-Fairplex (105,600 square feet). It contained an unbelievable number of model train layouts. Over one half of the show was devoted to these "top-of-the-line" modeling efforts. We stopped counting after 15. [Click here for show floor plan.](#)

The WGH on Tour shows held so far have shown great interest with the public. Here are the top ten shows by attendance and year.

SHOW LOCATION	YEAR	NUMBER OF VISITORS
Washington, D.C.	2010	41,036
Philadelphia, PA	2009	40,152
Edison, NJ	2011	36,049
Saint Louis, MO	2013	34,727
Cleveland, OH	2009	33,616
Houston, TX	2006	33,431
Saint Louis, MO	2005	33,390
Schaumburg, IL	2016	32,533
Chicago, IL	2012	31,758
Hampton, VA	2015	31,379
Indianapolis, IN	2012	31,276

By the way the smallest crowd to date to attend one of these WGH on Tour shows was 12,067. And this occurred during a blizzard in 2008. That number would be considered a smashing success by most other model train shows.

For the record, WGH on Tour has held seven shows (11% of their total) in California over the past ten years. They have presented in Long Beach (2005 & 2010) , Sacramento (2008 & 2013), San Diego (2008 & 2013) and San Francisco (2013). Do not get sticker shock when you see the ticket prices. Read further into the announcement and find the discounted tickets. Always check the [WGH on Tour web site also.](#) It is better to purchase tickets before coming to the show.

For years, vendors have had to contend with onerous move-in and even more onerous move-out arrangements forced upon them by various hall managers and so-called fire marshals. The WGH on Tour features the major model railroad manufacturing companies and as such they aim to keep these people happy and encourage them to come to their shows. And some of these halls leave a very bad taste in these vendors mouth after the rigors of doing a three-day show. So after many years of operation, WGH on Tour enlisted the expertise of one of their vendors, who has a background in logistics, to work with these halls and nowhere were his talents more needed and visible than at the conclusion of the WGH on Tour show at Pomona.

Enter Robert Brown from Remington, Illinois, owner of "The Peanut Butter of Trains". This is a hobby store open only by appointment since Robert is constantly on the road with a huge display. The WGH on Tour organization acquired Robert five years ago but has just recently allowed him to use his background in logistics and "let him loose" on the hall management. Pomona-Fairplex has often been ranked as one of the worst in the business. The arrangements made by show promoters seem to NEVER reach the "yellow jackets" that actually run things on the grounds. There is often confusion, last minute changes, changes on top of changes and any other idiotic thing that you can imagine. Robert was a vendor at the Great Train Show the following weekend in Del Mar, CA where these photos were taken. Note the large display behind him in the photo below:





Those show vendors who were at this show can attest that getting out of this Pomona-Fairplex on Sunday evening was the easiest ever achieved at this facility.

Great job.....WGHoT!!!!

MODELER EFFORTS

This section is for modelers who have provided us with photos of some of the excellent work that they are doing.

Our photo this month is an HO scale model of one of San Francisco's Milan cars. The scene did capture the flavor of downtown San Francisco, didn't it?



Milan F-Line car #1811 approaches the Castro district on Harvey Simon's new traction layout that is currently under construction. The car is a kit from [Miniatures by Eric](#) and includes the Diablo motor package from [Hollywood Foundry](#). The trolley poles were also from Miniatures by Eric and the car was finished with [Custom Traxx](#) decals. The TCS KAM4-LED decoder was hardwired to provide for overhead operation, and to also power both the front and tail lights. This decoder also features a braking function which when activated slows the car to a stop while simultaneously illuminating the brake lights. The buildings behind the car include the prototypically based Bank of the West, Fitness SF, the It's Tops Coffee Shop and Grooves, a vinyl record store near the Castro district.

Harvey Simon, recently retired, is currently splitting his time between Charlotte, NC and Boone, NC where he teaches marketing part time at Appalachian State University. His new layout--the San Francisco F-line--is about 1/3 complete. He hopes to finish it in about three years.