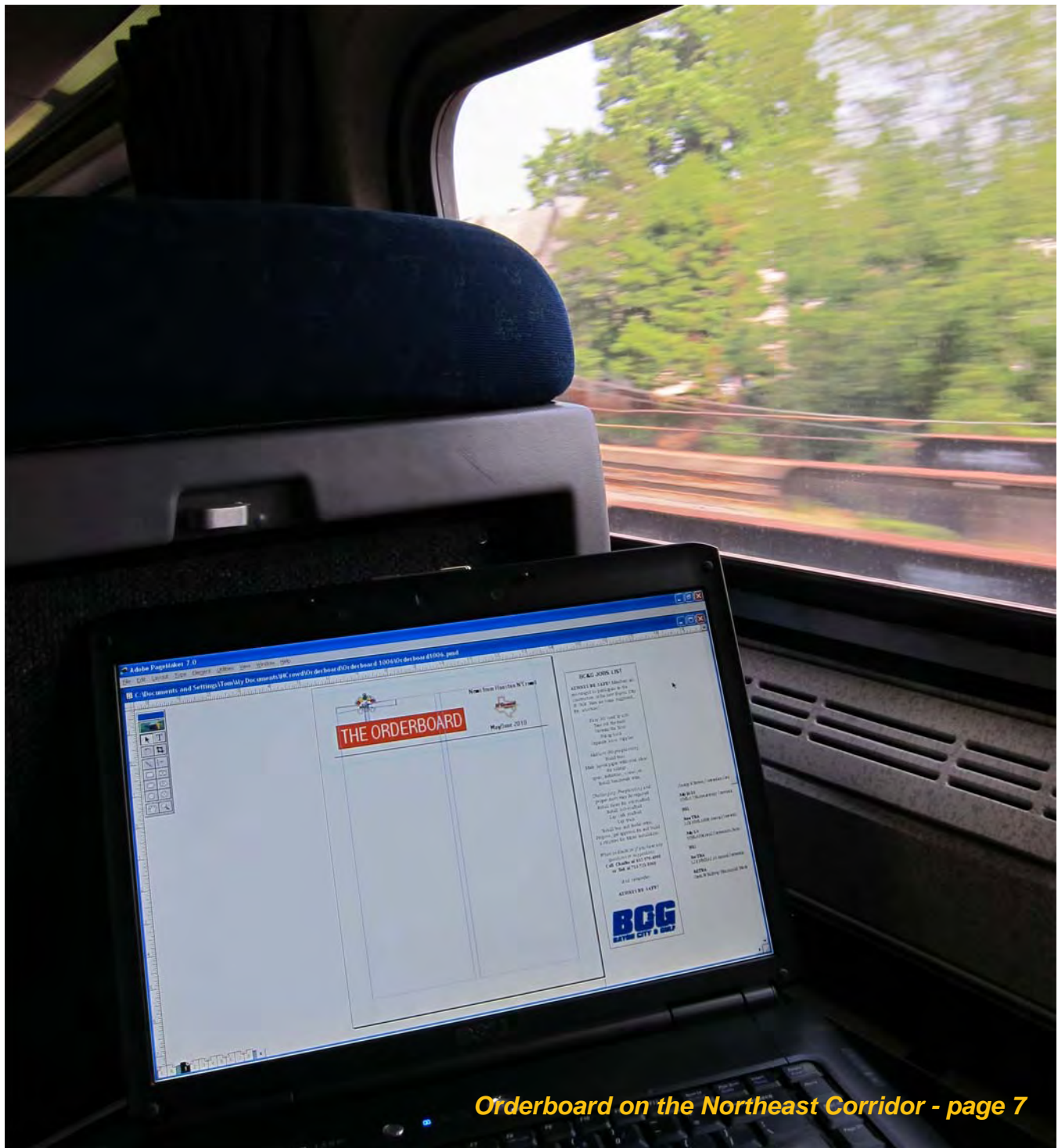


News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

May/June 2010



*Orderboard on the Northeast Corridor - page 7*

# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

When I start to write my column it is my habit to review the past issues. I look for anything which might need following-up, and that was when I discovered how special this issue is. So without further ado: I welcome you to the one year anniversary issue of the "new" *Orderboard*! Thanks to everyone who has contributed to make it the great publication that it is today. Special thanks to our editor Tom Marsh. Without his talent and skill, *The Orderboard* would not be as slick as it is. Honors also go to Steve Lancaster for his many articles!

The N Scale Collector National Convention arrives in June and I hope you get a chance to go. There should be something of interest for everyone. Club member Tom Marsh has contributed a lot of his time to help organize the event. N'Crowd cars will be sold at the Swap-Arama, and Papa Ben's will have a big presence as well.

Since the last *Orderboard* we have had no new members join, but we have had one membership renewal: Welcome back to Trenton Iocca!

No word yet on our TrainCat brass structures order. Please be ready to pay for your items when they do arrive.

Since the last newsletter we sold the remaining club shirts, shipping one to a member who we have not seen in a while.

Sales of club cars on eBay continue at a "brisk" pace of one per week average. See the back page of this issue for our current inventory. Pictures of the available cars are on the club's website.

We have had relatively large expenditures of club funds recently - see the minutes for details. This started me to wondering if anyone has an idea for a fundraiser or if anyone was interested in making a cash donation. In the past we awarded donors with an N'Crowd special run car.

If the minutes for the May meeting seem lacking in their usual quality, I will have to take the responsibility. Secretary Rick Gonzalez was not able to attend the meeting so Eddie Aycock volunteered to substitute for him. After the meeting I took Eddie's meeting notes and the

attendance sheet. With good intentions I set out to copy them on the shop's copy machine. The plan was to keep one copy and send Rick the other. However, I was distracted and did not complete the task. To cap it off, I left the notes at the store. I called early the next morning to ask that someone put them in a safe place. Well, the rest is history as all that was retained was the attendance sheet!

Several club members managed to attend Gordon Bliss's special open house, which was advertised in the last *Orderboard*. Everyone was impressed with the purpose built layout room, and all were able to run a train. Steve Lancaster and Tom Wayburn worked the yard job and LaChaude Chandler ran his Union Pacific Heritage locos. They enjoyed snacks served by the host and in the end all agreed the "Santa Fe All The Way" was more impressive in person than in a national magazine!

At the last couple of meetings, we discussed ordering more BC&G decals from RailGraphics. At the May meeting we decided to price 50 of each color (blue, yellow and white) totalling 150 sets. Final pricing totaled \$260. I sent an e-mail to the club to get feedback, however, I only received five e-mails in response. Before we go forward with this project, please "preorder" by sending an e-mail to me at tedjr1@swbell.net. That way we will know that there is enough interest to commit club funds to this project. A reduced scan of the decal sheet appears below.

Finally in closing, happy birthday wishes go out to Steve Redd!







## Next N'Crowd Meeting: 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 16

Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd.  
Come and check out progress on the BC&G!

### Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report April 21, 2010 Prepared by Rick Gonzalez, Secretary

#### President's Report

- Our latest newsletter was emailed out today.
- Door prizes were given out, including a couple of pins and a framed picture of Union Pacific's 844, courtesy of Gordon Bliss.
- Missing member call to Steve Redd.
- Home tour this Saturday to Gordon Bliss' layout.

#### Vice President's Report

- Steve Lancaster brought some undecorated rolling stock for the Club members to paint for the BC&G.
- It may be time to order some more Bayou City & Gulf decals.

#### Treasurer's Report

- As of March 1, the Club had \$14,113.05 in our checking account. The CD has \$4,787. We had \$299 in deposits, and \$513 in expenses last month.
- We have a PayPal credit of \$220.99 from eBay sales.
- The Club has no outstanding bills as of today.

#### Secretary's Report

We have 18 members and one visitor present for today's meeting.

- Anybody needing to update their information please see the Secretary.

#### Layout Master's Report

- Charlie's phone number was incorrect in the last *Orderboard*. The correct number is 713-206-5763.
- Eddie Aycock put risers up in the Union Station area.
- We're having problems with the reverse module.
- We still have lots of trees to build and add to the layout.

- Any scratchbuilt building ideas from the members? Any volunteers?
- It's time to start thinking about operating sessions.
- Eddie Aycock suggested RailOps. He will investigate further and report back.

#### Old Business

- We still have two Club polo shirts available. Oops, we just sold one, so we have one left.
- Hugh Boyd placed the control panel. Now we need to run it and work any bugs out.
- Dominic Valdez brought in some old *Orderboard* newsletters for the Club's archives.
- Tom Marsh had a report on this April's Flatonia Photo Pavilion event. Apparently there were two trespassers. There were also two Norfolk Southern locos pulling 150 RBOX boxcars to Eagle Pass. A presentation was held on the history of the San Antonio & Aransas Pass. The next event will be in November.

#### New Business

- We welcomed visitor Rolf Schroots.
- The Lone Star Region of the NMRA will have a Chili Cook-off at the Alvin depot May 8th.
- The 24 Hours of Saginaw event will be held Friday from 7:00 p.m. to Saturday 7:00 p.m. this Memorial Day. Saginaw is just north of Fort Worth.
- Motion to adjourn was passed at 8:07 p.m.

#### Members in attendance:

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Rick Gonzalez    | 10. Richard Bartlett   |
| 2. Gordon Bliss     | 11. LaChaudre Chandler |
| 3. Ray Byer         | 12. Ted Davis          |
| 4. Charlie Aselin   | 14. Eddie Aycock       |
| 5. Vern Burnett     | 15. Tom Marsh          |
| 6. Steven Lancaster | 16. Kirk Poorman       |
| 7. Bob Folser       | 17. Tom Wayburn        |
| 8. Robert Moore     | 18. Vince Walker       |
| 9. Mike Anawaty     | 19. Dominic Valdez     |

**Houston N'Crowd  
Membership Meeting Report  
May 19, 2010  
Prepared by Ted Davis and Eddie Aycock**

- BC&G Decals: President Ted Davis had only a rough estimate of cost. Members suggested we order 50 of each color totaling 150. Ted to follow up.
- Rail Ops software and laptop computer: Eddie Aycock reported his research. It was agreed that we want to be able to run an operating session by next November and that it could take three months to setup Rail Ops. Gordon Bliss offered to help Eddie with this. The purchase discussion was tabled until June.
- BLMA brass bridges: Purchase for layout had been under discussion. A motion was made to order two instead of three as they cost \$325 each and spending money makes Ted nervous. The motion passed and the order was placed through Papa Ben's. Tom Marsh agreed to donate a new Central Valley truss bridge kit as a replacement for the third BLMA bridge.
- New member: Daniel Gutierrez attended his first N'Crowd meeting.
- Doors prizes: Consisted of two Santa Fe box cars.
- Treasurer: Made a full report, since lost, but we have money. Also reimbursed Eddie for three auto reversers for the BC&G and Ted for eBay sales postage.
- Show & Tell: Kirk Poorman brought in the BC&G sign he was commissioned to make. Tom gave out posters of an ICG GP-38 from a painting done for EMD's marketing group by Tom Fawell.
- BC&G: Hugh explained how he was planning to automate turnout Number 1. After some discussion, he decided to rethink his plan and will report later.
- Newsletter: Suggestions and contributions for *The Orderboard* were solicited.
- Special Run Cars: Review of the Club's Special Run cars to be undertaken; we want to be sure we have an accurate record of what the Club has done.
- Missing members: Refused to answer the phone!



*Above, your editor and treasurer, an advocate of quality, American prototype bridge construction, shows off one of the new BLMA bridges purchased for the BC&G. Below, President Ted Davis reluctantly turns over the check for the bridges to Tom Cobb of Papa Ben's.*





# Still working on the railroads

by Steve Lancaster

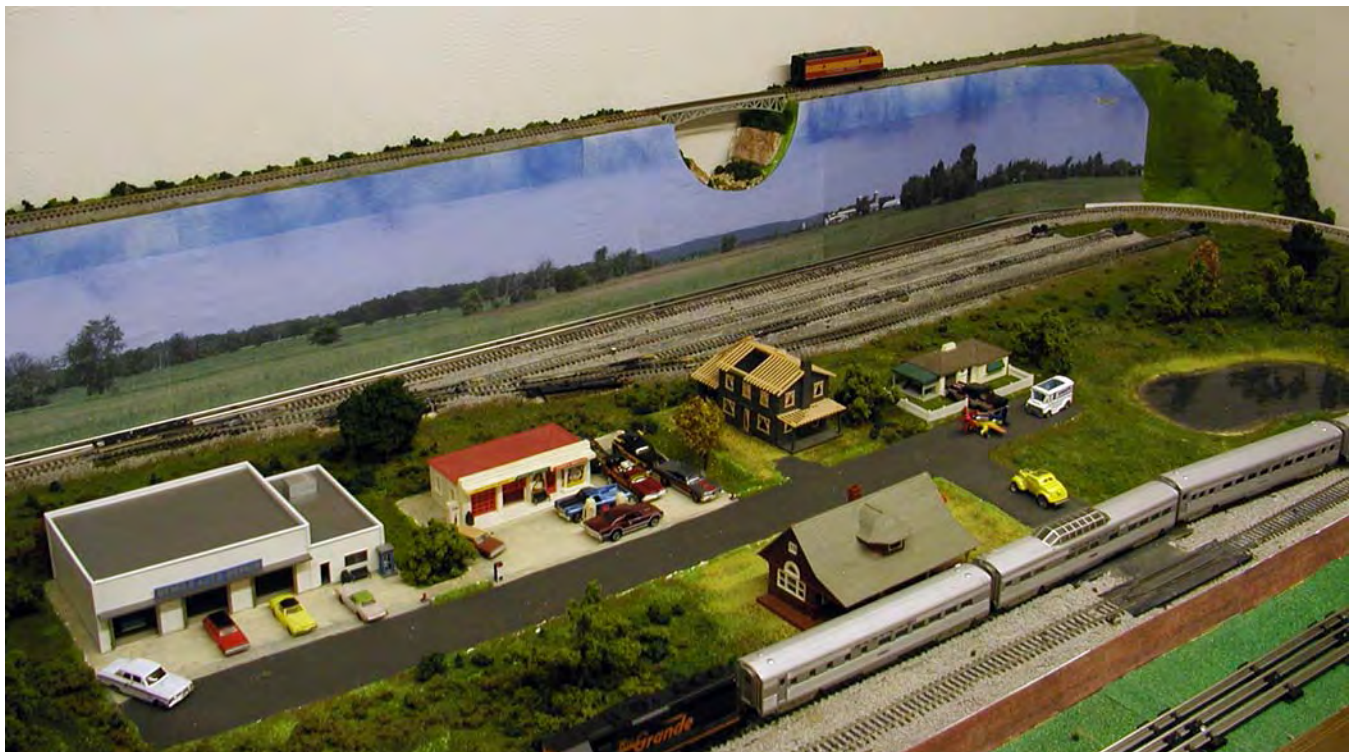
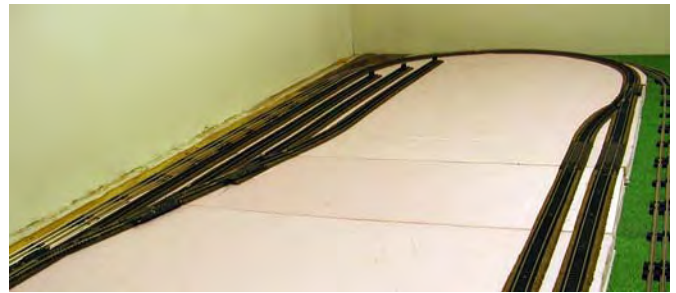
If you read my article in last month's *Orderboard* you know I spent many of my "days off" last winter with Gordon Lakey, helping to bring his Kato layout to life. Well, the remaining days off were spent building two other project layouts for hire. Actually, two of them: An HO and O gauge layout, both of them crammed into a 6x10 foot closet with a sloped ceiling. Come to think of it, it was three layouts.

Demo and Elaine Kouzounis approached Papa Ben's owner Allyn Pearlman at a bromeliad sale about rebuilding their HO layout for their grandchildren. The existing layout was a double track oval with a single spur, and no more scenery than a spilled bag of ballast.

Demo wanted an HO oval with a siding and a small yard, surrounded by an O gauge loop. Though he had never seen the store's test layout, I knew he wanted a similar "wedding cake" arrangement. He also wanted a shelf layout to run along the back wall, with a single track rigged with a reverser to send a trolley back and forth.

As the photos show, the construction was fairly routine. The O gauge track is all new, but most of the HO turnouts and flex track were salvaged from the original layout. Demo had several boxes of assorted model supplies and I tried to use as much of it as I could. He left the scenery pretty much up to me, though he owns a mechanic's shop in Rice Village and asked me to include one in the town. I scratch built the shop from styrene and gave it a basic interior, though it could stand more detailing. The other structures are veterans of previous layouts.

The decision to embed the panel into the hillside was easy. There was nowhere else to put it in those close quarters. The shelf along the back is one inch foam cut into ten inch strips and stacked on edge. I used Scenic King backdrops to tie it all together.





# More than meets the eye

by Tom Wayburn, photos by Amy Wayburn

Hugh Boyd's recent article in *The Orderboard* does not begin to capture the scope and significance of his layout. Upon entering the layout room one is nearly overwhelmed by the fine bench work, the complete command and control system, the vast array of motive power and rolling stock, and, finally, the pristine cleanliness of the entire operation.

The layout features many structural details to protect the equipment and to keep visitors safe, including safety nets under benchwork where trains run close to the edges and plastic walls strategically placed along the edges of the platforms to prevent visitors and operators from bending any of the many signal towers or knocking trains off the track.

The layout is supported by metal channels and other metal structural elements to keep the equipment level and otherwise in perfect operational shape. All support pieces are securely attached to the walls and nothing touches the floor except for the perfectly clean carpet and one or two well-placed items of furniture. This makes everything under the table easy to get to. Hugh's work bench is small, portable and mounted on casters so as to roll under the layout when not in use. Apparently this is all he needs to do the unimaginable amount of work that has gone into this layout.

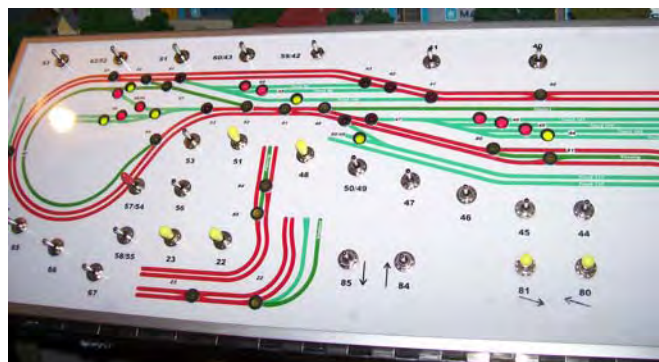
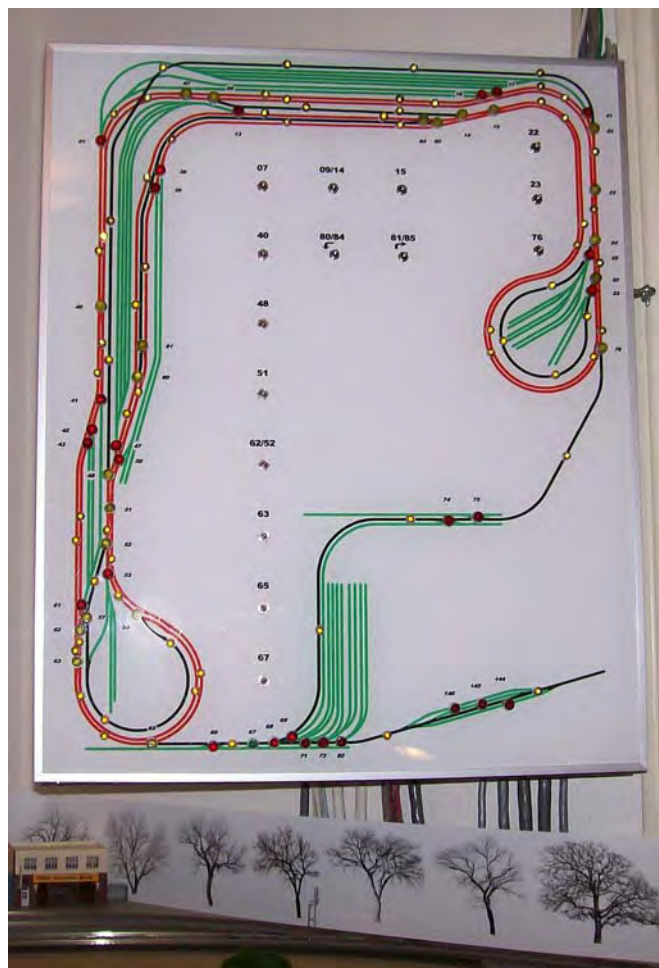
Many of us have seen the fine control panel gracing the southwest corner of the Club's layout. If anything, the many control panels on his home layout are even finer. They have frames assembled from readily available metal parts. The track plans for the panels, prepared with Atlas's RTS 8.0 Freeware, tax the capabilities of home and commercial printers because of their generous sizes. The momentary contact switches for the Kato turnouts actuate relays so that the routes can be indicated by LEDs with dual lighting.

Many circuits are devoted to preventing collisions between trains. Each main line track has 22 separate blocks grouped into a smaller number of ensembles for signaling purposes. Video cameras are strategically placed to aid the operator with areas that are out of view of the control panels.

The wiring is a thing of beauty. Cables run in well-directed secure bundles out of the way but accessible, because no structural members touch the floor blocking access. Circuit elements are mounted on panels that swing on hinges into a horizontal position just under the benchwork. The connecting wires enter in just one bundle for each panel so as not to prevent the panel swinging down for free access to the elements. It is amazingly simple to reach every part in the unlikely case that something needs to be debugged.

The trip to Hugh Boyd's layout was a lesson to me on the importance of layout tours, to which I have devoted very little time previously. In the future, you can expect to see me if you hold an open house!

Many more of Amy's photos can be seen in the file <http://tomwayburn.net/hb.ppt> using the free version of Microsoft's PowerPoint Reader.





*On the cover:*

# The Orderboard (and more) on the Northeast Corridor

*by Tom Marsh*

A quick business trip to New York the first week in June gave me the opportunity to sample both Amtrak and New Jersey Transit trains. In addition, I tried to take advantage of the time aboard Amtrak to get a start on this issue of *The Orderboard*.

I took a window seat, broke out the laptop and began laying out the issue. While watching the scenery fly by at 100 mph and pondering what to put on the cover, on came a light bulb and here you have the results.

My Amtrak journey was from Baltimore-Washington International Airport to Penn Station. My NJT trip was from Penn Station to Newark International Airport. Both services ran exactly on time.

*Above*, an Acela pulls away from BWI station, where the platforms are being rebuilt. *Middle*, powering my train was Amtrak AEM-7 No. 931. *Below left*, a New Jersey Transit commuter train approaches Newark International Airport station. *Below, right*, a monorail carries passengers from the station to the airport.



## N'Crowd Sales Inventory

The following items are in stock and available for purchase on a first come (and paid), first served basis. The number after each item represents the items in stock as of May 31. All items subject to prior sale. N'Crowd special run cars also will be sold at the NSC National Convention in Sugar Land.

### 2003 "N to the Future" Convention

#### *Special Run Micro-Trains Cars*

2003 Convention Moon Boxcar (1)

2003 Convention 2-Pack NASA tank + Moon Boxcar (20)

2003 Convention Registration Car (22)

#### *Other Convention Items*

"N to the Future" Patch (166)

"N to the Future" Lapel Pin (17)

### Special Run Micro-Trains Cars

SA&AP Green Wood Boxcar (3)

SA&AP Black Wood Boxcar (2)

SA&AP Wood Boxcar 2-pack (14)

Comanche & Indian Gap Wood Reefer (12)

IGN Wood Boxcar 2-pack (loose) (2)

### Other Items

Houston N'Crowd Bayou City & Gulf Patch (32)

Cap without patch (31)

Kato Precision Railroad Models Business Car (3)



## TIME TABLE

### June 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

### June 22-26

N Scale Collector National N Scale  
Convention, Sugar Land Marriott

### July 10-18

NMRA 75th Anniversary Conven-  
tion and National Train Show,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### July 21

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

### August 18

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

### September 15

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

### October 16-17

Big Texas Train Show, George R.  
Brown Convention Center, Houston

### October 20

N'Crowd Membership Meeting



Coming soon! Register today!

The National N-Scale Convention  
Sugar Land, Texas June 22-26, 2010  
[www.nationalscaleconvention.com](http://www.nationalscaleconvention.com)

## THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Published as close to monthly  
(but no promises!) as possible

for members and friends of

N'Crowd Model Railroad

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