

THE ORDERBOARD

July/August 2011

Survey says...



The steam-to-diesel transition era topped the results of the N'Crowd's "What's Your Era" survey.

N'Crowd members who gathered at the July membership meeting completed the "What's Your Era?" survey and as the results seen below indicate, we have a wide range of railroad interests.

The transition era topped the results with 10 votes. The 90s followed with seven votes, and the 60s and 70s tied with six votes each. Everyone was allowed to choose as many eras as they wanted so we could measure everyone's full range of interests.

If you were not at the July meeting you can still participate in the survey: Send your choices to tom@houstonncrowd.org, or drop them off at the BC&G layout room. If we receive any additional survey input, we will publish an update.

The survey results may be helpful in choosing an appropriate car should we decide to produce a special run car in recognition of the club's 35th anniversary, which is coming in 2013.

Era	Years	Your Era?
Antebellum	1826 - 1859	0
War Between the States	1860 - 1865	0
Transcontinental Expansion	1866 - 1883	0
Golden Age	1884 - 1900	0
Early 20th Century	1901 - 1913	1
World War I	1914 - 1918	1
Heavyweight	1919 - 1933	1
Early Streamline	1934 - 1940	2

Era	Years	Your Era?
World War II	1941 - 1945	3
Steam to Diesel Transition	1946 - 1960	10
The 60s	1961 - 1970	6
The 70s	1971 - 1980	6
The 80s	1981 - 1990	5
The 90s	1991 - 2000	7
Early 21st Century	2001 - 2010	2
Modern	2011 -	4

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

Ted and TrainCat no longer missing

Hello from your "somewhat" missing club president. Because of events, explained elsewhere, I have missed some club functions. While in Sherman, Texas, for a funeral, I managed a brief visit to TNER's former T&P depot and took the photos seen here. Wish I could have "visited" the scrap yard more completely!

As you read this, the second BC&G operating session will have taken place. Hope someone in attendance took photos and will report on it for us. Remember that operating sessions are now scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month.

In this *Orderboard*, check out which era was more popular with our members by reviewing the results of Tom's "What's Your Era" survey.

If you visit the BC&G in the not-too-distant future, you will see that TrainCat brass models do exist. In Tom Marsh's recent travels to the NMRA convention in Sacramento, he purchased some on the club's behalf. As we had previously been unable to get a large order filled for the general membership, all records of what everyone wanted had been deleted, so the best we could do on short notice was purchase some of the items we knew we needed for the BC&G. The TrainCat website does now say "Now Shipping" for many items.

In club news, we finally staged the BC&G "Golden Spike" celebration; see the details and photos elsewhere in this issue. Also, the latest N'Crowd club shirt order has been delivered. Only half have been picked up; if you have not picked yours up yet, our own Harvey Stalarow will be glad to get them out of the trunk of his car!

It is with deep regret that we have to report the passing of two of our members. Both Vern Burnett and Sven Engdorf will be greatly missed by the N'Crowd and others in the modeling community.

Finally, we welcome our newest member Samuel Townsel II, and we extend "Happy Birthday" to Eric Baughman and Dominic Valdez.



Next N'Crowd Meeting:
7 p.m., Wednesday, August 17

Next BC&G Operating Session:
7 p.m., Wednesday, September 7

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

Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report July 20, 2011

Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

President Ted Davis called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

President's report: Ted reported that his father-in-law passed away on Monday, July 11. As Ted is executor of the estate, some of the club functions might be missed because of his obligations to take care of those affairs.

Door prizes were drawn and Tom Wayburn won a boxcar and Dan Gutierrez won some Model Power containers.

Vice-President's report: None

Treasurer's report: N'Crowd checking account June beginning balance was \$12,832.35 and after expenditures ending balance was \$12,554.51. Treasurer Tom Marsh introduced the subject of the club CD soon to be maturing, and with the balance being \$4800.47 and earning less than 0.1% interest asked for suggestions for alternative investment. In the end, Tom steered the group to just roll over the CD again.

Secretary's Report: There were 21 members present for the July 2011 meeting - an increase of 50 percent over last month (must be the Golden Spike!). Members present included Richard Bartlett, Ted Davis, Charlie Aselin, Terry Hooks, Ray Byer, Tom Wayburn, Joe Kingsberry, Gordon Bliss, Eddie Aycock, Dan Gutierrez, Harvey Stalarow, Rick Gonzalez, Robert "Doc" Moore, Steve Lancaster, Dejan Suskavcevic, Steve Redd, Barry Miles, James Sennett, Vincent Walker, Tom Marsh, and our newest member, Samuel Townsel II.

Layout Master's Report: The first operating session on July 6 discovered two small track power problems and several engines were non-functional. These problems are in the process of correction. Scenery is still an ongoing process, with the layout of Bayou City in progress with Charlie spearheading that with Ted, Tom Wayburn and others.

First Operating Session Report: Eddie reported on the N'Crowd's First Operating Session (First Ops), which was held Wednesday evening, July 6 beginning at 7 p.m. Members ran eight to nine trains. Some minor glitches were noted indicating some minor changes needed for future sessions, which Eddie stated he will address. Eddie suggested that we might consider having the next session on Aug. 3. It was further suggested by Eddie that we tentatively plan for the first Wednesday every month for Ops Sessions to give two-week intervals between our monthly meeting and the Ops Sessions, and Ted supported this suggestion. Ted and Eddie reminded members to try not to

disturb staged trains. Eddie stated that, "We're in the shakedown (the SH of the shakedown). It will be three or four sessions before everything is running smoothly."

Richard commented that the Aztec track cleaning cars that Gordon brought in to prepare the layout for the session were incredible. Richard was so impressed he bought two for his own layout. Gordon suggested a motion to order two Aztec track-cleaning cars for the club, and Richard volunteered to order them. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The cars have been ordered and should be here next week. For those of you interested in getting your own cars, contact info is as follows:

Aztec Model Railroad Accessories
2701 Conestoga Dr. #113
Carson City, NV 89706 Phone: 775-883-3327
www.aztectrains.com aztecmfg@usa.net

New Business: Ted introduced our new member, Samuel Townsel II. Introductions went around with all members present greeting and welcoming Samuel.

Harvey brought in the new blue club polo shirts that were pre-ordered. Shirts were paid for by roughly half of members. The remaining members present indicated when they might pick theirs up and Harvey willingly will provide shirts on Saturdays and some Wednesdays. Members paid \$24 per shirt. Samuel asked how he could get one, and Harvey indicated that the artwork was stored in the maker's computer, so another run was readily possible.

Tom Marsh went to Sacramento for the NMRA National Convention and the Traincat man was there. After a quick call to Ted, Tom twisted the owner's arm into selling the club most of the items previously ordered except for the oil tanks. Gordon was one of several members who had made a personal order, but Ted indicated that those were cancelled and that's why only the club order was pursued.

Eddie asked about club locos because of some of the problems encountered during the First Ops, but we need a status on all locomotives. Joe Kingsberry and Vincent Walker are working on several BC&G locomotive additions. Ted suggested a status will be forthcoming. Gordon volunteered to do a loco repair clinic. In addition, he also brought some tools for tuning locos which he generously donated to the club

Tom Marsh announced several NMRA LSR Division 8 clinics at the Houston Railroad Museum. The first will be on airbrushing on Saturday, July 23, at 10:00 a.m. On Saturday, Aug. 20, Jim Lemmond will present Building Trees and Bushes from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Then a decaling clinic will be presented on Saturday, Sept. 24 by Tracy Mitchell from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Houston Railroad Museum is located at 7390 Mesa Rd.

Golden spike ceremony marks completion of BC&G mainline

by Richard Bartlett, Ph.D.

The Bayou City & Gulf Golden Spike Ceremony capped off the July 20 membership meeting. As Gordon Bliss was the longest continuously active club member present, he had the honor of driving the spike to mark completion of the BC&G mainline. The real gold spike was donated by "Doc" Moore.

The spike was placed in front of the Bennett passenger station. Two opposing BC&G locos were brought in a la May 10, 1869, when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads joined rails at Promontory Summit, Utah. Photos and videos recorded the historic moment... and a good time was had by all!



Above, the spike ready for driving. At right, Gordon drives the golden spike to mark the completion of the BC&G mainline, and moments later two BC&G locos couple up alongside the newly-driven spike. Below, Gordon gives some DCC tips after the golden spike ceremony. Photos by Tom Marsh



Trains run to timetable (more or less) at first BC&G operating session

by Gordon Bliss

After a move and multi-year rebuilding of the layout at Papa Ben's Train Place, operations began on the Bayou City & Gulf on July 6, 2011.

It took a lot of work getting the railroad wired, running and set up, and it ran in a prototype manner. The club purchased a computer and the RailOP software for car forwarding; Eddie Aycock did most of the keypunching and set-up for the first operating session.

During the first session, two passenger trains were run by Richard Bartlett. These were the eastbound and westbound BC&G *Bluebonnets*, which ran from Bayou City and New Braunfels. Steve Lancaster was in charge of the large freight yard at Englewood, Charlie Aselin ran the town of Bennett and Joseph Kingsberry ran the town of Austin.

Rick Gonzalez ran a freight train out of New Orleans and picked up cars in Englewood, and Tom Wayburn ran a freight train out of Gulf to Bennett. Club President Ted Davis stopped by to see how things were running.

Eddie and I oversaw the session. We ran trains until almost 10 p.m. and overall the operations went very well with only a few glitches.

The plan is to have operating sessions on the first Wednesday of each month, so if you are interested, come on down! If you have never run trains in a prototype manner we can show you the ropes; it is a lot of fun.

If you would like to reserve a slot at a particular operating session or you have any questions, send an email to Eddie at efaycock@aol.com.



At top, Eddie Aycock works on layout set-up a few days before the first BC&G operations session. Above, Steve Lancaster works the main yard during the session. Below, Eddie and Gordon Bliss confer during the operating session. At left, action on the outskirts of Bennett on the BC&G. Top photo by Tom Marsh, all others by Rick Gonzalez.





Several N-Trak layouts were featured at the NMRA's National Train Show in Sacramento. This module recreates the look of California's Altamont Pass. Photos by Tom Marsh

New N-scale models shown at 2011 NMRA national convention

by Tom Marsh

The National Model Railroad Association held its annual convention from July 3 to July 9 in Sacramento, Calif. Highlights of the event included a tour of the former SP Sacramento shops, soon to be owned by the California State Railroad Museum, a host of layout tours (although relatively few were N-scale), and the annual National Train Show, where a number of manufacturers showed off new items.

Despite the recession, the convention and the train show were well attended. While some manufacturers indicated they had delayed introduction of new models and re-runs of others due to the economy and manufacturing issues, particularly in China, most were upbeat about the future.

The 2012 NMRA convention will be held in Grand Rapids, Mich., from July 29 to Aug. 4. More information is available at www.gr2012.org.

Below left, InterMountain displayed N-scale EMD F-units in three variations of Santa Fe's post-Amtrak "yellow bonnet" scheme. Below right, Kato showed a pre-production sample of its new MPI MP-36PH commuter locomotive.

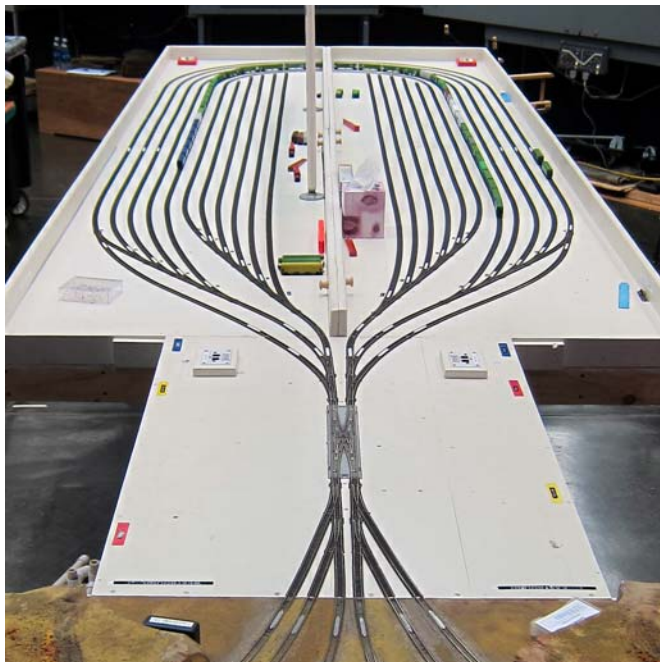
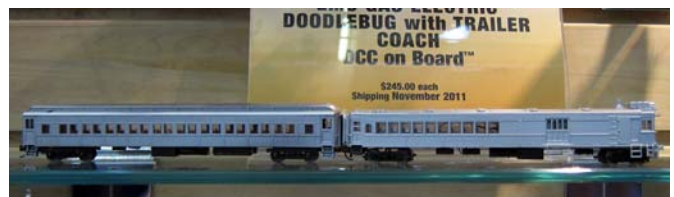




Above, Atlas had early production versions of its new 42-ft. coil steel car on display. This is a superb model!

At right, Bachmann showed a full stable of its new 2-10-2, which should be a hit with big steam fans. Bachmann also showed the new version of its EMC "doodlebug" with DCC on board and a trailer coach from new tooling. The rivet detail on the new trailer is much finer than that on the EMC motor car, which is based on older tooling.

The ExactRail P-S 7315 L&N and Southern boxcars shown here are HO scale; an ExactRail representative said the company plans to release these and most of its other HO scale models in N scale as well.



Above, one of the staging yards on the N-Trak layout.

Two at right, tour of the SP Sacramento shops. California State Railroad Museum uses the facility, parts of which date to the 1860s, for restoration, maintenance and storage.



Meeting Report from page 3

Lastly, on Saturday, Oct. 1, at Zube Park, Division 8 will hold its annual business meeting and elections, with hamburgers, hot dogs and Houston Area Live Steamers trains rides beginning at 10 a.m.

Discussion was then begun by Steve Redd over several sound decoders for P42 Amtrak engines, but nothing was determined as to the status of either donated or needed decoders for those engines.

Tom Marsh reiterated the call for a survey of what railroad era(s) people were modeling. He asked for member input and a form was circulated. Tom will provide the results in the near future.

Old business: Tom again indicated that he has progressed but not finished with the BC&G decal artwork, but when it is finished, he will circulate it to some members for input. As with previous meetings, they will be forthcoming.

Tom Marsh brought up that the club still needs to decide on a commemorative car for our 35th Anniversary meeting. He indicated that we might consider a modern era car rather than the previous suggestions. Nothing further was discussed or decided. Ted and Tom will call the next 35th anniversary planning meeting to develop ideas for the club to consider.

Show and Tell: Dejan Suskavcevic again left members with their usual WOW! response to some modules with handlaid track he has been working on, pictured below. This member is certainly on track for a super layout!

Vincent Walker traveled from Los Angeles to Seattle by train last month and enjoyed it immensely.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.



TIME TABLE

Mark your calendar now for these upcoming events!

August 17

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

August 27

Division 8 tree clinic, 10 a.m. at
Houston Railroad Museum, 7390
Mesa Rd.

September 7

BC&G Operating Session
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

September 21

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

October 5

BC&G Operating Session
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

October 8-9

Big Texas Train Show, Houston
Houston Railroad Museum's Big
Texas Train Show, George R.
Brown Convention Center

October 19

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

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for members and friends of
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Tom Marsh, Editor

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Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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