



News from Houston N'Crowd



THE ORDERBOARD

March/April 2015

What's happening on the WTH&WE?



WTH&WE President Ted Davis (left) and Construction Superintendent Steve Lancaster congratulate each other on the progress made on Ted's WTH&WE Railroad. Turn to pages 6 and 7 for more photos.

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Vincent Walker, President

Mudbugs and more

Heads up! Thanks once again to Eric Baughman, the N'Crowd crawfish boil is set for April 18 at Zube Park, home of the Houston Area Live Steamers. April 18 is a HALS "run day" and the park opens at 9:00 a.m. Crawfish will be served at noon. We need a good head count so we have enough food for everyone, so if you plan to be there, send an email to tom@houstonNcrowd.org and let us know how many will be in your party.

We still have some operational issues on the club layout. Ray Byer has checked most of the wiring and reports that more changes need to be made to make the layout more reliable. Some tracks need new electrical drops or repairs, some switches need maintenance, wiring in the locomotive service area needs attention, etc.

Much of the layout work taking place now requires access under the benchwork, so we need to do some housecleaning again. If you have anything stored under the layout, you may want to remove it.

While work has been underway on the layout, we have kept the "show loop" running, and the entire mainline is likely to be in service when you read this. Take advantage of your club membership and bring your DCC train to run any Saturday (or other days, for that matter).

Your dues help offset the cost of keeping the Bayou City & Gulf Railroad running, so please send in your 2015 renewal if you have not done so. Better yet, come to the next meeting and pay your

dues then! If you know someone who has not yet renewed, please ask them to do so soon.

Here is a good photo resource. I recently ordered 14 photos taken in and around Houston Union Station. Subjects include MoPac, ATSF, Burlington, Rock Island and a shot with an HB&T switcher making moves.

The photographs are offered by Forrest Becht through his company FLBTRAIN, Inc. The web address for the railroad photos he has for sale is www.flbtrain.com/Railroads. The Houston Union Station photos are in the Pre-Amtrak Passenger Trains section; you have to scroll through the images to find them, but there is a lot of other interesting stuff on offer. A low-resolution version of one of the Houston photos is reproduced below.

Until the next time we meet, happy railroading!

Vincent



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:
March 18 / April 15 / May 20 / June 17 / July 15

BC&G Operating Sessions:
April 1 / June 3 / August 5 / October 7 / December 2

Most activities take place at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Our monthly membership meetings and the BC&G Wednesday operating sessions start at 7 p.m. Come earlier to join us for dinner!

**Houston N'Crowd
Membership Meeting Report
January 20, 2015
Prepared by James C. Senneff, Jr. - Secretary**

President Vincent A. Walker called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The winners of the door prizes were: Gordon Bliss, two box car shells; Ray Byer, two Santa Fe Warbonnet engines; Christian Nauls, centerbeam car; Tom Marsh, MKT cattle car. Two club cars were auctioned. CW Bulkhead Flat car, Ted Davis, \$6; BNSF scrap load gondola, Richard Bartlett, \$6.

President's Report: The next meeting is Feb 18, 2015 at Papa Ben's Train Place, starting at 7:00 p.m.

Vice President's Report: VP Samuel Townsel II is a proud father again today; mother and baby doing well.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Eddie Aycock reports as of Dec. 31, 2014, cash is \$10,790.04, CD is \$4,818. The club took in \$170.12 more than was spent in 2014.

Secretary's Report: Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr. reports 17 members in attendance: Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Tom Marsh, Richard Bartlett, Steve Lancaster, James Senneff, Jr., Ted Davis, Gordon Bliss, Vincent Walker, Al Hague, Harvey Stalarow, Christian Nauls, Eddie Aycock, Charlie Aselin, Samuel Townsel II, John Sweigart and Ray Byer.

New Business: San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Greater Houston Train Show - we will have one or two tables. Show date is Saturday, Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Volunteers are Gordon, Vincent, Samuel, Eddie, Dejan and Charlie. Vince will bring the club banners and test track.

Officer elections confirmed: President - Vince A. Walker; Vice President - Samuel Townsel II; Treasurer - Eddie Aycock; Secretary - James C. Senneff, Jr. New board member - Richard Bartlett; replaces Ray Byer.

Eric Baughman has offered to do the crawfish boil again this year. Club members agreed that it would be a fun event. President Walker will let us know when the date is set.

Tom Marsh started the discussion on possible club train trips for this year. An Amtrak trip from Lafayette or Lake Charles, La., is being considered. This would be a bus ride to either location and then a train ride back. There is also the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival at the DeQuincy Railroad Museum in April; this would require going to Lake Charles for the return train trip to Houston. A visit to Texas State Railroad is also under consideration. The club decided to have further discussion at the next N'Crowd meeting when updated information from Tom is available.

Al Hague suggested that instead of auctioning off two club cars at meetings, we auction off three club cars. We will use

the money from the sales to purchase other cars from Papa Ben's Train Place for door prizes at N'Crowd monthly meetings. The club voted to increase the number of auction cars.

Eddie Aycock requested expense reimbursement of \$100 for the 2014 Christmas party. A motion made by Gordon and seconded by President Walker unanimously passed to pay Eddie the \$100.

Discussion on how current the club truck pin color chart is: Tom Marsh said that it was up-to-date as of last April. The chart will be in the next *Orderboard* so that club members can review it and provide updates if necessary.

Discussion on who is handling club shirt and name badge orders for new club members: Ted said that there are no more club shirts in stock. Harvey will get with some suppliers for shirts and find out about pricing and minimum order requirements. The name badge template is in the layout room; badges can be made at Office Depot.

Samuel started a discussion about gathering information on different aspects of model railroading such as wiring, track laying, etc. He would like to video club clinics to gather this information and post the videos on the club website for future reference. Discussion also took place about having a tech talk section added to the *The Orderboard*. Editor Tom Marsh would like members to submit ideas to him for what kind of clinics they would like to have. He will put those ideas in *The Orderboard* and members can vote on what clinics we should have for the year.

Upcoming Clinics: March - Gordon will present a passenger train operations clinic.

Old Business: Ray informed the club that the layout had a major meltdown the week of January 19. Trains would not run in many areas. He found three track lead wires reversed and many short circuits. He is still trying to address the wiring issues as of this meeting. This brought up a discussion on what to do about the wiring issues at Austin. The club decided to pull the switch near Austin and temporarily lay some track to complete the big show loop. No major scenery will be done until the track is running well. No new ballasting will be done until all the track problems are fixed.

Call to adjourn was made by President Walker and seconded by Gordon. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Have you paid your 2015 dues?

First 2015 operating session draws a crowd

By Vincent Walker and Tom Marsh

The February BC&G operating session attracted a good member turnout. Two new members participated in the session, which lasted about two and a half hours. Members who worked the railroad for the first time included Christian Nauls and James McLurkin. Also taking part were members Richard Bartlett, Dejan Suskavcevic, Charlie Aselin, Justin Coder, Samuel Townsel II and his son Samuel.

Leading the action were Roadforemen Eddie

Aycock and Gordon Bliss. Extra board engineers Ted Davis and Harvey Stalarow were on standby, as was maintenance superintendent Ray Byer, just in case.

The next BC&G operating session will take place on April 1, and that's no joke, so plan now to join in the fun!

Below, Eddie Aycock briefs the crews at the start of the February BC&G operating session.





Above, James McLurkin prepares for his first run on the BC&G.

Below, Christian Nauls is in charge of a BC&G passenger train as it pulls into the Bennett station.

Below, the Townsels team up to work Bayou City Yard and keep the freight moving.



Home layout update:

What's happening on the WTH&WE?

With the help of Construction Superintendent and N'Crowd member Steve Lancaster, N'Crowd Past President Ted Davis is making significant progress on his WTH&WE. Compare these

photos with Ted's earlier report on the WTH&WE in the May/June 2014 issue of *The Orderboard*, which can be downloaded from the club's website: www.houstonncrowd.org



The WTH&WE occupies two former bedrooms in Ted's home; the rooms are linked through what had been closet space.





Above, Ted tests for electrical issues at one of the industries served by the WTH&WE. The connecting space between the two rooms formed by partial removal of a closet wall is visible in the background.



Left, the brewery complex takes shape.



Left below, the mainline passes through Twin Peaks Park.

Below, WTH&WE passengers will soon be departing from Union Station.



Make a fashion statement: Order an N'Crowd shirt!

We will be taking orders over the next month for blue Houston N'Crowd polo shirts with a pocket and embroidered logo. Each shirt will cost \$25. We will not be buying any shirts for stock in the company store, so please order soon to avoid disappointment!

Deadline for orders is the April 21, 2015, member-

ship meeting. All orders must be prepaid. You can pay with cash or by check made out to Houston N'Crowd.

Orders can be placed at the membership meeting or you can mail your order with shirt size and payment to: Houston N'Crowd, c/o Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77025.

Time for an update to the truck pin color chart

If you regularly bring your own equipment to run on the club layout and you leave any cars or locomotives on the railroad, you should select truck pin colors and mark your personal equipment. Two spots of color on the truck pins or underframe is all it takes.

The most recent truck pin color chart appears below and it will be posted on the bulletin board in the layout room. If you want a truck pin color assignment, please print your name on the chart posted in the layout room prior to the April N'Crowd membership meeting.

Houston N'Crowd Truck Pin/Car Owner Color Chart: December 2014

	Purple	Brown	Gray	Silver	White	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red
Red	Vincent C. Walker	Eddie Aycock	Mike & Leslie Bodak	James Senneff, Jr.	Steve Redd	Rick Gonzales	Steve Lancaster	Vincent A. Walker	Gordon Bliss	Richard Bartlett
Orange									Joe Kingsberry	
Yellow			Ray Byer				Tom Wayburn	Ted Davis		
Blue			Charlie Aselin		Tom Marsh	Harvey Stalarow				
Green				Dominic Valdez	Al Hague	Marty Giesecke				
White				Dan Gutierrez	Justin Coder					
Silver				Terry Hooks						
Gray			Rick Townsend							
Brown										
Purple	N'Crowd Club Equipment									

Houston N'Crowd 2015 Officers and Volunteers

President Vincent Walker
 Vice President Samuel Townsel II
 Secretary James Senneff, Jr.
 Treasurer Eddie Aycock
 Board Member (2015) Justin Coder

Board Member (2016) Al Hague
 Board Member (2017) Richard Bartlett
 Layout Master Al Hague
 Editor & Webmaster Tom Marsh

Lone Star Region NMRA heads to Beaumont for annual meet

The 2015 Lone Star Region NMRA convention is shaping up to be an interesting event for modelers and railfans alike. The “Tex-La Doodle-bug” convention will take place Wednesday, July 22, through Saturday, July 25. The host facility is the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Beaumont Plaza.

Beaumont is less than 90 miles from Houston, and thus presents a great opportunity to participate in an LSR meet. The convention will have all the good stuff, including operating model railroads, clinics, silent auction, layout tours, contest and non-rail events.

Prototype tours are a highlight of most NMRA meets, and the 2015 Beaumont gathering is no exception. Convention organizers have arranged for a tour of a full-service railroad car maintenance and repair facility and shortline Sabine River & Northern Railroad’s locomotive shops.

The car repair facility is one of five full-

service plants operated by Rescar Cos. in the U.S. Rescar is a privately-held company that offers mechanical repair, exterior painting, interior coating, cleaning and other services to private shippers, leasing companies and railroads. In addition to the company’s five full-service facilities, Rescar has a network of more than 100 “mobile” and “fast track” locations in the U.S. and Canada.

Engine servicing is a point of interest on many model railroads, and the tour of the SR&N shop will provide plenty of inspiration for modelers looking to capture the feel of a locomotive servicing facility.

Convention registration is now open. For more information, point your browser to <http://lsr2015.com>. Not an NMRA member? Then see the registration form for information about a special introductory NMRA six-month new membership rate of just \$9.95.



A satellite view of Rescar's car repair facility near Orange, one of the tour destinations for the 2015 LSR NMRA convention. Imagery ©2015 Google

A winter Sunday afternoon in Houston

by Tom Marsh

It's Jan. 25, 2015, and the temperatures are in the low 70s. Skies are partly cloudy: Looks like a good day to chase some trains!



Amtrak Train No. 2, the *Sunset Limited*, is seen departing Houston about 12:40 p.m. The train is running about 25 minutes late because two private cars were added to the tail end at Houston.



A little more than 10 minutes later, we have moved to nearby Tower 26 in time to catch a Kansas City Southern freight train powering through the junction behind a pair of Electro-Motive SD70ACe locomotives in the railroad's bright "Southern Belle" paint scheme.

Another 20 minutes and a BNSF train motors through. This train has a pair of General Electric C44-9W locomotives in the lead.

It's now about 1:40 p.m. and we've moved to the east end of Union Pacific's Englewood Yard, where a train is waiting to enter the yard. UP No. 7509, a GE AC45CCTE, and another unit are in charge of a long string of covered hoppers which are in soda ash service.

Many views of Englewood Yard are safely accessible as it is surrounded by public roads.



Note that the fuel truck driver at the far left of the photo below appears to be taking our picture!



This is a view near the west end of Englewood Yard. It's now about 2 p.m., and this train appears to be headed to the port.



Here's a lucky shot! We headed over to the north shore of the Houston Ship Channel in the suburb of Galena Park and happened across Louis Dreyfus No. 2012 working outside the fence of the Port Authority of Houston Public Elevator No. 2. Louis Dreyfus operates the elevator under a long term lease. No. 2012, carrying the name "Buffalo Bayou", is an EMD GP9 built in 1956 for Northern Pacific Railway. The original high nose has been chopped at some time in the locomotive's 59-year life.

We found a pair of Helm Leasing rebuilt EMD units spotted at Union Pacific's yard office a few blocks from the Louis Dreyfus gate. HLCX 1045 was built by EMD as New York Central GP40 No. 3097 in 1967; it has had a major rebuild to GP38-2 specifications for its new life as a lease unit.





Many other locomotives built for major railroads have found their way to Houston's industries in their twilight years. More exploration in the vicinity of the ship channel brought us upon WAMX 1513 at Watco's Greens Port Industrial Park. This EMD SW1500 was built for Southern Railway in 1968. Note the building to the right, which has a track along one side and a track leading into the structure. This would be a good industry to model in a narrow space along a wall.

About 3:30 p.m. we found ourselves at Union Pacific's Strang Yard in La Porte, 24 miles southeast of downtown Houston. UP serves many of the large refinery and chemical complexes that line the south shore of the Houston Ship Channel from Strang Yard; these road units are awaiting their next assignments. The locomotive servicing area and ready tracks are the only part of the yard that can be photographed from a public right-of-way.





The many switchers visible at Strang this day are all RailPower RP20GE “Gensets”, which reportedly are generally disliked for numerous reasons by the crews who have to run them.

Just a few minutes away from Strang Yard is the Port of Houston’s Barbours Cut Terminal, which was looking positively tropical this winter day with swaying palm trees and colorful containers.



While exploring the area around Barbours Cut, a set of UP Gensets with a string of covered hoppers crossed our path about 4:20 p.m.



We also spotted one of the yard switchers and a couple of road units in the container yard. The switcher is ITSL 3452, an EMD SW1500 originally built for the Great Northern Railway in 1967. The road unit in the foreground is KCS 4029, an EMD SD70ACe built in late 2005. This was one of the last locomotives delivered in the railroad's gray livery; subsequent units have been delivered in the "Southern Belle" paint scheme.



With the hour closing in on 5 p.m., we found our afternoon efforts had left us quite thirsty. We happen to know an establishment with a patio that sits trackside to the Union Pacific's Sunset Route mainline on the west side of Houston (it's very close to Papa Ben's as well), so it was here that we ended our winter Sunday. Cheers!



LCL *Less than Car Load: a few notes from your editor*

N'Crowd at GHTS: Club members Gordon Bliss, Samuel Townsell II and Vincent Walker were among the volunteers who manned the N'Crowd table and test track at the Greater Houston Train Show.

Show sponsor San Jacinto Model Railroad Club reported attendance at the 2015 show at the Stafford Centre was close to 1,600 including exhibitors and vendors.

Congratulations to the San Jac gang for another great show, and thanks to the N'Crowd members who volunteered at the show!



HOUSTON N'CROWD TIME TABLE

March 18

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

April 1

Wednesday BC&G Operating Session, 7 p.m.

April 9-11

Louisiana Railroad Days Festival, DeQuincy Railroad Museum

April 11

Arkansas Railroad Museum Railroadiana Show & Sale, Pine Bluff

April 11-12

New Braunfels Railroad Museum Train Show Jamboree, New Braunfels Civic Center

April 15

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

April 25-26

Cotton Belt RHS Annual Train Show, Tyler

May 9

Shreveport Train Show, RiverView Hall

May 16-17

Jefferson Train Days and Train Show, Jefferson, Texas

May 20

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

May 22-23

North Texas Chapter NRHS 24 Hours @ Saginaw Railfan Event

June 3

Wednesday BC&G Operating Session, 7 p.m.

June 24-28

National N-Scale Convention, Sacramento, Calif.

THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Tom Marsh, Editor

Published fairly regularly for members and friends of N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc., Houston, Texas.

Send newsletter contributions to:

tom@houstonNcrowd.org.

Please note: We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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