



News from Houston N'Crowd



THE ORDERBOARD

November/December 2018



John and Yoshie Sweigart are ready to board!
N'Crowd rides the rails - page 4

Photo by Michael Cianciolo

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Tom Marsh, President

Meeting date change, party and more

November meeting date change! We voted at the October meeting to move the November meeting to Nov. 14 (one week early) due to Thanksgiving. We'll start as usual at 7 p.m. At the meeting, we'll be electing club officers and one director for 2019. We'll also be seeking more volunteers for our Saturday and Sunday BC&G activities during the holiday season. As you know, running trains on weekends in November and December is part of our agreement with Papa Ben's Train Place that enables us to have our layout space at no cost to the club.

December operating session: The next N'Crowd operating session will be hosted by Gordon Bliss on his Santa Fe - All the Way on Sunday, Dec. 2. Trains are scheduled to run from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Watch your email for more details.

But wait, there's more: Holiday bash set for Dec. 15: Our annual holiday party and combat gift exchange is set for Saturday, Dec. 15, starting at 6 p.m. Our hosts this year are Past President Vincent Walker and his very understanding wife Ingrid. Thanks to them both.

We'll have a flyer out soon with all the details.

First Test & Tune rescheduled: Our first Test & Tune session will take place Wednesday, Jan. 2, from 6 p.m. to

8 p.m. at Papa Ben's Train Place. An email confirmation will be sent beforehand.

We had planned to have the first Test & Tune session on Wednesday, Nov. 7. However, we had to cancel due to electrical issues with the layout. The weekend before the session, the DCC system shorted out numerous times, sometimes affecting one of the two power districts, sometimes shutting down the entire layout. Instead of the Test & Tune session, we spent several hours recreating the issues. The following Saturday, our own Ray Byer spent many hours testing and troubleshooting. While a number of issues were resolved, some problems persist and work to address the issues is ongoing.

Time to look ahead to 2019: We had a busy 40th anniversary year, with monthly meetings, regular operating sessions, visits to the Texas State Railroad and Tomball Depot Museum, and a ride on Amtrak. Now we're planning for 2019 and we welcome your suggestions for special club activities. If you have some ideas for us to pursue, let us know at any meeting or send an email to tom@houstonncrowd.org.

Happy Railroading!

Tom

Houston N'Crowd 2018 Officers and Volunteers

President Tom Marsh
Vice President Richard Bartlett
Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr.
Treasurer Eddie Aycock
Board Member (2018) Joe Kingsberry

Board Member (2019) Allan Melton
Board Member (2020) Samuel Townsell II
Immediate Past President Samuel Townsell II
Layout Master Joe Kingsberry
Editor & Webmaster Tom Marsh



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:

November 14 (Date Change) / December 19 / January 16
Meetings start at 7 p.m. at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. and are open to all.

N'Crowd Test & Tune Sessions: First Wednesday of odd-numbered months. 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Papa Ben's.

N'Crowd Operating Sessions: First Sunday of even-numbered months. Watch your email for information.

Walker shop crane nears completion

N'Crowd Past President Vincent Walker reports that the overhead crane for his Missouri Pacific locomotive shop is nearing completion. The scratch-built crane will be a focal point of the locomotive heavy maintenance facility on Vincent's layout.

You are invited to tour the layout and see the crane during the N'Crowd's upcoming holiday bash on Dec. 15. Vincent will probably be showing some of his custom-painted locomotives as well. Plan now to join the fun!

A MoPac Geep has been hoisted off its trucks by the overhead crane being built by Vincent Walker for his Missouri Pacific-themed N scale layout. Photo by Vincent Walker



Vincent's shop has painted a variety of locomotives destined for use on his layout. Photo by Tom Marsh

N'Crowd rides the rails

Photos as credited

N'Crowd members joined friends from Gulf Coast Chapter - NRHS for an entertaining road and rail excursion to Lake Charles, La., on Oct. 6. Our day trip included a motor coach ride to Lake Charles, a tour of the USS *Orleck* Naval Museum, lunch at the Golden Nugget Lake Charles (with a few trying their luck in the casino), and a ride back to Houston on Amtrak Train No. 1, the *Sunset Limited*.

On board the train, Amtrak arranged a special early seating for us in the dining car for dinner before arrival in Houston. The train ran close to schedule, arriving in Lake Charles 11 minutes late and at Houston 22 minutes late. The *Sunset* would have been on time in Houston, but Union Pacific dispatchers sent the train the long way around to the station via Belt Junction rather than the direct route through Englewood Yard.



Above, a KCS train rumbles through Houston's Amtrak station just prior to our group's early morning departure by bus for Lake Charles. Photo by Tom Marsh

Below, the group boards the USS Orleck in Lake Charles. Photo by Tom Marsh



Below left, according to museum staff, Elvis regularly patrols the waters around the destroyer. Below right, a 1946 Railway Express Agency shipping tag is part of a display on the USS Orleck. Photos by Michael Cianciolo

USS Orleck

The USS *Orleck* was commissioned on Sept. 15, 1945, just a dozen days after the end of World War II, and so became one of the earliest "Cold War Warriors." The destroyer operated primarily with the 7th Fleet in the Pacific, serving in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. In Korea, the *Orleck* was the first member of what became the "Train Busters Club", taking out two enemy supply trains with her main guns on different occasions. During the Vietnam war, the *Orleck* fired more rounds in support of ground troops than any other ship.





Above, our group enjoys dinner in the diner. Photo by Tom Marsh



Above, our train approaches Tower 26 near downtown Houston. Below, the Sunset Limited after arrival in Houston. Photos by Michael Cianciolo



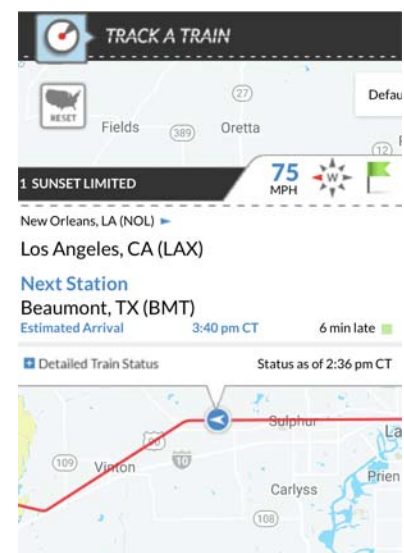
'Our' *Sunset Limited*

This *Sunset Limited* consist made up Train No. 1 (westbound) on Oct. 6, 2018, with N'Crowd members on board. The train arrived at Lake Charles 11 minutes late at 2:06 p.m., and at Houston 22 minutes late at 6:40 p.m.

159 GE P42DC
167 GE P42DC
39011 Superliner II transition sleeper
32094 Superliner II sleeper
38019 Superliner I diner
33031 Superliner II lounge
31007 Superliner I coach/baggage
34007 Superliner I coach

The *Sunset Limited* east of San Antonio for most of 2018 has included a new Viewliner baggage car, but recently the train has been running without one. A Houston station agent said they had been informed that the lack of a baggage car would be temporary. Not having a baggage car means that checked luggage is handled in the Superliner coach/baggage; station staff does not like having to use the coach/baggage cars because the baggage space is poorly lit and not laid out in a manner that makes for efficient baggage handling.

Below, Amtrak's Track A Train app showed us highballing at 75 mph between Lake Charles, La., and Beaumont, Texas.



‘Cat yellow’ loco spotted on the BC&G

Another Kato locomotive model in a special one-off paint scheme has been released from the paint shop of N’Crowd member Andrew Monaghan. The locomotive is painted in a special Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) demonstrator yellow, black and silver paint scheme that was applied to the prototype EMD No. 1201 when the new SD70ACe was displayed at the MINExpo Show in Las Vegas, Nev. in September 2012. The “Caterpillar yellow” paint reflects EMD’s ownership by Progress

Rail, a subsidiary of equipment manufacturing conglomerate Caterpillar, Inc.

The prototype No. 1201, along with sisters 1202 and 1203, now works on the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. Before delivery, Progress Rail’s Mayfield, Ky., shop painted the three locomotives into a new A&M paint scheme, renumbering them 70, 71 and 72, respectively.

A video featuring No. 1201 on display at Las Vegas, is at: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Zmlg_DERFrg



Above, Andrew Monaghan’s custom painted EMD SD70ACe demonstrator No. 1201 on the N’Crowd’s Bayou City & Gulf Railroad. Photo by Tom Marsh

Below, the prototype No. 1201 is seen in an EMD publicity photo. Photo courtesy Progress Rail



Working on the railroad

Work continues on various BC&G projects, including realignment of the Union Station yard ladder and track in the refinery area, changes to the DCC wiring and components, and repairs and upgrades to locos and rolling stock.

Gordon Bliss has completed the Union Station track realignment and the changes have brought about the desired result: Trains can now back into the stub-end station reliably, with derailments at a minimum. Passengers are no doubt relieved that our Union Station apparently is now working better than Amtrak's Penn Station in New York.

Allan Melton has made progress on the first phase of the work to complete the refinery. Track changes have tied in all refinery sidings to the mainline in front of the refinery, and connections to the main behind the refinery have been abandoned.

Ray Byer has put in a lot of hours addressing electrical issues that have cropped up in the power district that includes Union Station and the main yard. Ray has discovered some interesting things about the existing wiring, which may warrant an article on some model railroad electrical dos and don'ts.

Joe Kingsberry continues to undertake maintenance on BC&G motive power and rolling stock, as well as equipment owned by members, helping to keep things moving smoothly on the railroad. In addition, Joe is working to add several "new" locomotives to the BC&G roster.

Thanks to these volunteers and others who give their time to support the N' Crowd!



Above, Gordon Bliss works on the Union Station track realignment. Below, Allan Melton implements track changes in the refinery area. Photos by Tom Marsh



Temporary operational changes implemented on the BC&G

Part of our agreement with Papa Ben's Train Place is to run trains over extended hours on weekends in November and December. The store can be very busy this time of year, and we are also faced with some operational challenges at present.

Through the end of the year, members running trains on the BC&G on Saturday and Sunday should follow these guidelines:

- Freight trains should be limited to two locomotives and 25 cars.
- Passenger trains should be limited to two locomotives and six cars.
- Testing of locomotives and other equipment should be kept to a minimum and should not interfere with the running of trains.
- Boxes and tray tables used during set up of equipment should be placed under the layout once the equipment is on the tracks. The room can get very crowded, and equipment boxes and tray tables can block access to parts of the layout by visitors.

We thank everyone in advance for their cooperation. If you have any questions, contact club president Tom Marsh.

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

Thank you! Thanks to all of the contributors to this issue of *The Orderboard*. Remember, this only works with your support. Your contributions are encouraged and welcomed!

Send us an update on your model railroad (see page 3 for a good example) and/or railfan activities to share

with the club. So make a note: The deadline for the January/February 2019 issue is Friday, Jan. 4.

Best wishes: This is the last issue of *The Orderboard* for 2018, and I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and happy holiday season, and happy railroading in 2019!



"Our" train rolls through Dayton on its way to Houston on Oct. 6, 2018. See page 4. Photo by Gordon Bliss

HOUSTON N'CROWD 2018/2019 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

November 7 **CANCELLED**

N'Crowd Test & Tune, Papa Ben's Train Place, 6 p.m.

November 10 **CANCELLED**

LSR NMRA Division 8 Clinic Series, Bayland Community Center, Houston

November 14 **NOTE DATE CHANGE!**

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

December 1-2

42nd Annual Oklahoma City Train Show, Oklahoma State Fairgrounds

December 2

N'Crowd Operating Session, hosted by Gordon Bliss. Watch your email.

December 8

LSR NMRA Division 8 Clinic Series, Bayland Community Center, Houston

December 15

N'Crowd 40th Anniversary Holiday Bash and Combat Gift Exchange, hosted by Vincent and Ingrid Walker. Watch your email for details.

December 19

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



2019

January 2

N'Crowd Test & Tune, Papa Ben's Train Place, 6 p.m.

January 19-20

Dallas Area Train Show, Plano Centre

January 16

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

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:

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

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonncrowd.org

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