

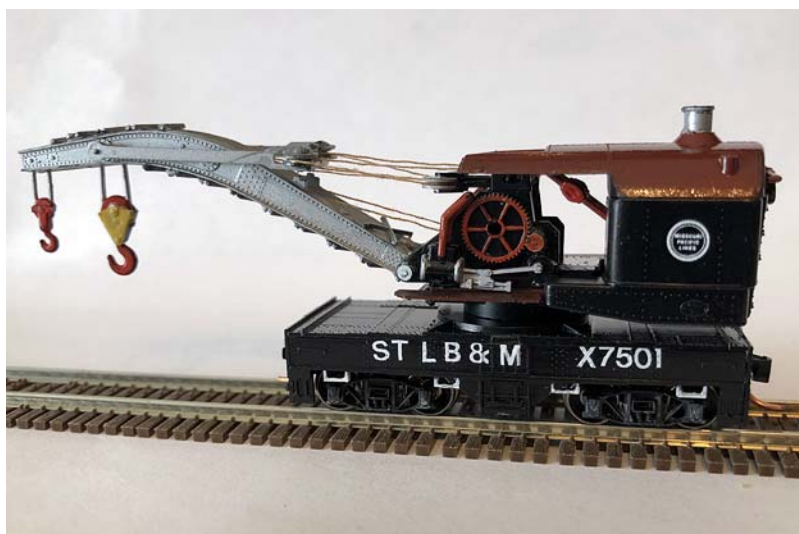


News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2020



## *In this issue:*

- Layout Updates
- Trek to Temple
- Cartier 1997
- Colorful Diesels
- Railfan Reports
- New Look for Amtrak

# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Tom Marsh, President

## By-laws vote, meeting issues and more

**By-laws proposal passes:** The proposed amendments to the N'Crowd by-laws have been approved by vote of the members responding to the call for votes that was emailed to all members on Sept. 20, 2020. According to the previous by-laws, "These By-Laws shall be amended only by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast."

Response was low, as only 17 members voted. However, all votes were in favor of adopting the amended by-laws, thereby meeting the two-thirds majority requirement. The new by-laws are attached to the email delivering this issue of *The Orderboard*. The document will be available on the N'Crowd website with the site's October update.

**Meetings and other activities:** With the relaxing of some Covid 19 restrictions, a few organizations have restarted certain activities, such as the Temple Model Train Show (see page 4) and NMRA LSR Division 8's clinics, which have taken a hybrid form with 12 in-person attendees allowed along with a simultaneous online presentation. Personally, I am not inclined to proceed with any N'Crowd activities for the remaining three months of this year. This means no meetings, Test & Tune sessions, operating sessions or our annual party/combust gift exchange. Our Sunday limited BC&G operating sessions will continue.

I propose we tentatively plan to hold a membership meeting in January 2021, possibly at a venue other than Papa Ben's

so those attending can social distance. With planning, we could also incorporate a Test & Tune session into the gathering. Our next big event will probably be the 2021 Greater Houston Train Show, which will take place Saturday, April 10, at the Stafford Centre.

What do you think? Let me know with an email to [tom@houstonncrowd.org](mailto:tom@houstonncrowd.org).

**Have you been working on the railroad?:** We have layout updates in this issue from members David Crawford and Vincent Walker. I find that stories like these can help the creative juices flow. Vincent's work always inspires, but it was David's photos that really caught my eye this time. I've always thought of structure lighting as something that would be nice to have, but maybe not really important enough to bother with for most structures. Seeing David's town scene with practically every building lit, and the warm glow of his travel trailer reflected in lake "water" made me realize that I should plan ahead for structure lighting. Of course, this assumes I will eventually get around to building a layout...

What can you share with the club about your recent modeling efforts? We want to hear from you!

Happy - and safe - railroading!

Tom

### Houston N'Crowd 2020 Officers and Volunteers

N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization incorporated in the State of Texas.

President ..... Tom Marsh  
Vice President ..... John Sweigart  
Secretary ..... Bill Busch  
Treasurer ..... Eddie Aycock  
Board Member (2020) ..... Samuel Townsell II

Board Member (2021) ..... Randy Ollett  
Board Member (2022) ..... Allan Melton  
Immediate Past President ..... Samuel Townsell II  
Layout Master ..... Randy Ollett  
Editor & Webmaster ..... Tom Marsh



**N'Crowd monthly Membership Meetings:** CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. See the back page for more information.

**N'Crowd monthly Test & Tune Sessions:** CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. See the back page for more information.

**N'Crowd Even-Month Ops Sessions:** CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. Sunday BC&G running sessions are ongoing.



# BNSF/UP Crossover is poised for expansion

by David Crawford

I call my layout the BNSF/UP Crossover. It is 12-ft. by 3-ft. and fits against one of the walls in my game room and office. I have been working on it for about two years during my spare time, putting in two to three hours here and there.

The BNSF/UP Crossover started out as 7-ft. by 3-ft. but quickly grew larger. The layout has a lot going on in a fairly

small space, including a coal mine, oil refinery, lumber yard, container facility, gravel and rock operations and warehousing. The layout has two small yards, one BNSF and the other UP. In addition to the industries and yards, scenery includes a town scene and at each end, mountains with streams and lakes.

Most of the buildings are lit with Woodland Scenics' Just

Plug Lighting System on individual dimmer switches. The next phase will be to add street lighting and signs, and I still have to finish adding water and other scenery at one of the lakes.

Also, there are two expansion lines that currently dead end, so you never know where this will lead in the future. I think there's lots of room for growth. My girlfriend is worried!



*The BNSF/UP Crossover packs a lot of interest into a compact space. The numerous lighted structures bring the layout to life..*





# N'Crowd members trek to Temple

by Allan Melton

Houston N'Crowd was well represented at the 2020 Temple Model Train Show on September 19. The first train show to be held in our area since the March shutdown for COVID-19, the highly anticipated event drew a good crowd. Mask and social distancing requirements were observed, and the number of participants limited per state regulations, but Eddie Aycock, Gordon Bliss, Randy Ollett and myself made a point to be early for when the doors opened.

This was the 38th annual Temple show, which is sponsored by the Central Texas Area Model Railroaders (CentraMOD). There were a few less vendors than normal, but coupled with a few less attendees this made the show enjoyable because it wasn't too crowded. The selection of items for sale was varied and we all made some good deals within a few hours.

We then ventured over to the former Santa Fe Temple depot which now houses Amtrak and the Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum. We were lucky to catch the *Texas Eagle*, which was about two and a half hours late as it made its stop in Temple and picked up quite a few passengers.

We toured the museum, which I highly recommend to anyone who has not visited before. We also checked out the CentraMOD layouts in the former Santa Fe Moody depot, which sits next to the Temple station right alongside the BNSF mainline and engine service facility.

All of the photos here were taken at the museum and in the Moody depot. CentraMOD has a large N scale layout, and their HO layout is even larger, filling the entire north end of the depot.

Before leaving the depot and yards, we checked out the engine



Above, social distancing and Amtrak at the Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum. Below, a superb model of the Temple station on the CentraMOD HO scale layout, which is housed in a former Santa Fe station.





house and found an old EMD GP50, formerly BN, now freshly painted as BNSF No. 3138. Next to it was a blue and yellow EMD SD40-2, formerly ATSF No. 5192, now patched BNSF No. 1760. We also spotted a green former BN unit amongst the BNSF “Pumpkins”.

The remaining sand tower in the Temple engine facility still proudly displays its Santa Fe heritage with its Warbonnet-inspired paint job.

We then stopped by the boarded up MKT depot for a quick photo, then headed for the BNSF fuel racks where we caught BNSF No. 9675, one of the few remaining cream and green EMD SD70MACs.

Heading back to Houston, we came across an interesting re-invention of a BNSF flat car in Cameron. The car has been converted for use as a “shoving platform”. These are used when a train has to make a long backing move and the brakeman needs to be on the rear end for protection.

Our final catch of the day was another blue and yellow former Santa Fe EMD SD40-2. Now BNSF No. 1645, the locomotive was in the BNSF yard in Somerville.



*Above, this refinery module uses a mirror backdrop to make the facility seem larger than it is. Below, a modern signal bridge on the CentraMOD layout.*



*Below, Warbonnet sanding tower; old paint on an SD70MAC; the former MKT station at Temple.*





# New views of Eagle Route 3

*photos by Vincent Walker*

N'Crowd Past President Vincent Walker has been busy with his Eagle Route 3 layout, as evidenced by these recent photos. Vincent is using MoPac in the Houston area from the 1960s to 1980s as his

inspiration. You can see more of Vincent's layout on YouTube, thanks to his son Caleb. Two videos have been posted to date. Search YouTube for "Eagle Route 3" and enjoy!



*Above, a busy junction on the Eagle Route 3. Below, classic T&P diesels idle in an area that will feature a refinery.*





Above, Vincent recently completed this wreck crane. He writes: I've been working on my maintenance-of-way train. I pulled out my Dimi-Trains 120-ton industrial Brownhoist wrecking crane. This kit is 31 years old; I bought this thing when I had hair on my head and have finally put it together. This is my version of St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico No. X7501.



Left, this grain elevator is a major customer on the Eagle Route 3. Note the lighted signals on the mainline. Vincent has not yet selected the signalling system, but is considering systems by NJ International and Logic Rail Technologies.

Below, a passenger car repair facility will also provide a good view of some of the many cars that Vincent has custom painted.





# Scenes on the Cartier 1997 *by Hugh Boyd*

The pictures appearing here are of the railroad arm of Canada's Quebec Cartier Mining Co., which runs from the Quebec/Labrador ore fields to the port of Cartier on the St. Lawrence River. The pictures were taken in August 1997, before I became interested in trains, so these were tourist-type photos.

The pictures were taken on 35mm color negative film that I have recently scanned. Maybe this is what started me in railfanning!



*Above and right, three big Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW) M636 locomotives on the head end of a string of ore cars at Wabush, Labrador, on the Quebec/Labrador border. In the lead is Quebec Cartier Railway No. 41, followed by No. 49 and what appears to be No. 85. No. 43 and No. 49 were built for Canadian National in 1970 and 1971, respectively. No. 85 was built new for Quebec Cartier in 1975.*







Above, a pair of MLW RS18s are teamed with an M636 on a Quebec Cartier Railway freight train. Leading is No. 68, built in 1960. The middle unit, No. 62, was built in 1959. The trailing M636's number is obscured.



Left, in February 1977 I worked on a project related to a twin silo ore loading railroad facility at Fire Lake in eastern Quebec. When I returned in August of 1997, the ore lode had been exhausted and the entire facility, including the townsite, had been erased from the landscape. Everything, that is, except my twin silos.

Editor's note: You can see a Cartier Alco - in Arkansas! Cartier C630 No. 34 started life as UP No. 2907 in 1966. The restored loco is on display at the Arkansas Railroad Museum in Pine Bluff. Photo by Robert D. Grant





# Multiple generations from Monaghan

N’Crowd member Andrew Monaghan recently completed custom paint jobs recreating locomotives spanning the range of North American diesel generations. And it was just our luck that the

railfan cameras were trackside when many of these colorful units visited our own Bayou City & Gulf Railroad. This is just another example of why everyone should keep a camera handy!



Above, first generation diesels are represented by this pair of GM&O Alco-GE S2 switchers. No. 1005 was built in 1942. No. 20 was built in 1945 and was acquired by GM&O in 1947 when it purchased the Alton Railroad. Below, EMD’s SD40 is the quintessential second generation diesel locomotive. More SD40s and SD40-2s were built than any other locomotive model. Production ran from 1965 to 1989; over 5,500 were built. The railroad merger trend is represented by these locomotives as well: The “G” in ICG represents the “Gulf” in GM&O. IC and GM&O merged to form Illinois Central Gulf in 1972.





This page features modern, third generation locomotives. The two Southern Pacific GE AC4400CW locomotives were built in 1995, while the two Montana Rail Link EMD SD70ACe locomotives were delivered in 2005. The four units from the KCS and its affiliated Mexican companies include No. 2613 and No. 4612, which are GE AC4400CW locomotives built in 1998 and 1999, respectively. No. 4008 is an EMD SD70ACe built in 2005, while No. 4679 is a GE ES44AC unit built in 2006.





# N'Crowders go railfanning

A number of N'Crowd members have shared photos from recent expeditions. In some instances, the outing was railfan-focused from the start. In others, the photos were taken in the course of

business or family trips. Either way, keeping a camera handy is always a good idea.

Thanks to everyone who shared their photos. Let's have more for the next issue!



*Above and right, Charles Goldmeyer came across this former Indiana Railroad EMD just north of Plainview. The locomotive was built as a high-nose SD7 in 1952 for Milwaukee Road. Since a rebuild, No. 2001 is now generally referred to as an SD10.*

*Below, Allan Melton caught this varied KCS lashup in Sugar Land. Leading the trio is No. 2951, a rebuilt EMD GP40-2 originally delivered to Frisco in 1979. Tattered gray No. 2014 is an EMD GP38-2 that started life in 1973 with Boston & Maine. The trailing unit, No. 4843, is a GE ES44C delivered to KCS in 2014.*







Above left, Allan Melton also snapped this picture of Progress Rail EMDX No. 7210 at Sugar Land. This image was shared in an email to members in August, but your editor liked it enough to reprint it here. This is an EMD SD70ACE-T4 or some variation thereof; online sources differ as to the exact model designation. Progress Rail is the subsidiary of Caterpillar that owns EMD.



Above right and below, Allan came across these two locomotives in Sulphur Springs. GMTX No. 3008 is showing its Green Mountain heritage. The EMD GP40 was built for Baltimore & Ohio in 1971. The unusual unit below, lettered for Blacklands Railroad, is a Whitcomb RS-4-TC built in 1954 for the U.S. Army. Allan says it appears No. 4014 is out of service.



Your editor continues to document variations in the Sunset Limited's consist as circumstances allow. The usual pre-pandemic consist shown at top left was two locomotives running cab forward, baggage car, two sleepers, diner, lounge and two coaches. Pandemic variations as seen in the other photos have included locos running back-to-back, one loco, one sleeper, and no baggage car.







Mauricio Varon and his daughter Magnolia have been doing some trainspotting around Houston in recent weeks, and here are some of the results. Above, a heavy-duty flat car awaits its next job.

Below, a set of hump engines at Englewood Yard. Nos. 443 and 343 carry UPY reporting marks, indicating assignment to yard duties. Note the lack of dynamic brake blisters, radiator fans and exhaust stacks on No. 443; this is a yard slug. No. 343 is also listed as a yard slug in some online references. No. 1753 is an SD40-2 built for Missouri Pacific in 1980.



Above, here's a colorful scene to brighten our day! Two Port Terminal Railroad Association locomotives keep company with some big BNSF GE road units. PTR locomotives Nos. 9616 and 9622 are MK1500D locomotives built by Motive Power Industries in 1996 using frames and trucks from retired EMD GP7s and GP9s. Below, two BNSF locomotives on the move. Both are GE ES44ACs. No. 6281 was built in 2008, while No. 5782 was built in 2005.



Above, Magnolia surveys the scene. Below, amusing graffiti.





# New look for latest Amtrak locos

Amtrak has released new information about the diesel-electric locomotives that will replace the current fleet of GE P40 and P42 locomotives on the national Amtrak network, including all long distance and many state-sponsored routes. Five of the first six locomotives will feature the blue and red livery shown here; the other will have special Amtrak 50th anniversary paint.

Apparently another paint scheme is in the works as well. Amtrak said, "A final livery will be unveiled later as part of a fleet-wide plan."

The 75 new Siemens ALC-42 locomotives, which Amtrak ordered in late 2018, will be capable of 125 mph. Amtrak has not indicated when the first of the locomotives will be delivered, saying only deliveries are "expected through 2024."

The ALC-42 locomotives are being built in Sacramento, Calif. They are similar to the SC-44 locomotives purchased by some state agencies and operated by Amtrak, but have greater fuel capacity for longer routes and increased head end power generating capacity for bigger trains.

The national passenger train operator has tagged the locomotives "a new face of Amtrak."





# LCL

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

**We appreciate your contributions:** Thanks as always to everyone who sent photos and other items to share in *The Orderboard*. It was great to have so much material for this issue.

**N'Crowd Time Table note:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, most events, including N'Crowd gatherings, have been cancelled until further notice. This issue's Time Table includes only N'Crowd activities and omits trains shows and other non-club events.

N'Crowd activities that have been cancelled are marked as such in the Time Table. Activities that are tentative are marked as TBC (to be confirmed).

**Amtrak wins award:** One of Amtrak's *Pacific Surfliner* "Hug the Coast" social media campaign videos has won a marketing award. The series of short videos include beautiful aerial views of the trains travelling along the California coast. Search YouTube for "Hug the Coast" to see the videos.

## HOUSTON N'CROWD 2020 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**BC&G Running Sessions take place most Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. under terms agreed with Allyn Pearlman of Papa Ben's Train Place.**

Notice of each week's session is sent to members by email several days before the event.

### September 2

N'Crowd Test & Tune **CANCELLED**

### September 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **CANCELLED**

### October 4

N'Crowd Operating Session **CANCELLED**

### October 21

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **CANCELLED**

### November 1

Holiday season BC&G running schedule begins **TBC**

### November 4

N'Crowd Test & Tune **CANCELLED**

### November 18

N'Crowd Annual Corporate Meeting **TBC**

### December 6

N'Crowd Operating Session **CANCELLED**

### December

N'Crowd Holiday Bash and Combat Gift Exchange **TBC**

### December 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **CANCELLED**

### December 27

Holiday season BC&G running schedule ends **TBC**

### 2021

### January 6

N'Crowd Test & Tune **TBC**

### January 20

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **TBC**

### February 7

N'Crowd Operating Session **TBC**

### February 17

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **TBC**

### March 3

N'Crowd Test & Tune **TBC**

### March 17

N'Crowd Membership Meeting **TBC**

## THE ORDERBOARD

*News 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](http://www.houstonNcrowd.org)

Copyright © 2020 N'Crowd

Model Railroad Society, Inc.