



THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2021



Welcome back to the Greater Houston Train Show!



Houston N'Crowd participated in the downsized Greater Houston Train Show on August 14 with our DC locomotive test track and a small T-TRAK layout. Thanks to everyone who helped with our show effort!

This year's show was delayed from its usual February date due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibit hall was set up with one less row of vendor tables to meet social distancing requirements at the venue, the Stafford Centre. There was a good crowd in the hall after the 10 a.m. opening, but it thinned out in the early afternoon.

Show officials with the host organization, San Jacinto Model Railroad Club, reported that the paid attendance at plus-or-minus 1,000 people was lower than usual. Vendors and other exhibitors were not included in the count.

This was the last year for the Greater Houston Train Show at the Stafford Centre. Next February the show moves to the Pasadena Convention Center. The Pasadena site is similar in size to the Stafford Centre. We hope to participate with a larger T-TRAK layout next year.

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Tom Marsh, President

BC&G ops to resume, and other notes

BC&G operating session: I'm happy to announce that operating sessions will return to the Bayou City & Gulf in October thanks to the efforts of everyone who worked on the layout recently to improve operating reliability. Chief Operating Officers Gordon Bliss and Eddie Aycock will coordinate the session, which will take place Sunday, Oct. 3, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Watch your email for more information as the date approaches!

Goodwill ambassador: We recently received this email from Mike Burgess of Michigan:

"Hi. I recently had the pleasure of meeting and talking to a member of your N scale Houston N'Crowd group this past week. I work part time at our local hobby shop where I met this gentleman (can't recall his name), up here in Traverse City, Michigan. We had a great conversation concerning N scale, being that I too, am an N scaler.

"He told me all about your organization, including inviting me down to observe for myself. In return, I told him about my YouTube channel which has a number of video presentations of my N scale layout. All in all, it was good for me, since up here there are virtually no N Scalers that are all that serious in the hobby.

"So, it was really nice of your representative to spend some time talking with me. When you discover who it was visiting up here, be sure to thank him for stopping in the hobby shop and sharing our love of N scale trains."

The N'Crowd member Mike is referring to is Naz Hally. Thanks, Naz, for being our "goodwill ambassador" to hobbyists in other areas. This is a great example of the camaraderie our hobby engenders.

Elections loom: We'll soon start the process to elect N'Crowd officers and board members for 2022. The Nominating Committee will be seated no later than Oct. 1, 2021; we'll discuss this at our September membership meeting. The committee will submit the slate of 2022 officer and board candidates to the board no later than Oct. 13. The approved slate then will be submitted to the membership at our Oct. 20 membership meeting. The election will be held during our Annual Corporate Meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021.

2022 Greater Houston Train Show: San Jacinto Model Railroad Club confirmed that the 2022 Greater Houston Train Show will take place Saturday, Feb. 12, at the Pasadena Convention Center. I've sent an email expressing our interest in setting up a T-TRAK layout at the show. I also said we would like to set up our two-table N'Crowd display with multi-scale locomotive test track, and I let them know we purchased new Digitrax equipment to add DCC locomotive testing capability.

In reply, I was told: "Thanks Tom. We are still working on the table setup arrangement - it is a bit challenging moving to a new venue." I will follow up with the San Jac folks later this year.

Stay safe, and happy railroading!

Tom

Condolences: Our condolences go out to long-time N'Crowd member Harvey Stalarow, whose wife Shelly recently passed away.



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings: September 15 / October 20 / November 17 / December 15
Meetings start at 7 p.m. at Papa Ben's Train Place.

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

N'Crowd Even-Month Ops Sessions: Sunday, Oct. 3, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Operating sessions return to the Bayou City & Gulf!

Boy, oh boy: Big Boy!

Union Pacific “Big Boy” No. 4014 returned to Texas in August, and the crowds - and N’Crowders - turned out as expected. N’Crowd members shared these photos.



Above, Charles Goldmeyer caught the Big Boy surrounded by admirers in Hempstead. Below, David Crawford found this scenic location at the Navasota River.





Above, more Big Boy action near Navasota by David Crawford. Below left, another trestle shot by David, this time at Lake Houston. Below right, Ray Byer experienced the Big Boy thundering over the FM 625 grade crossing east of Dayton.



Below, the inviting dome level interiors of a Union Pacific dome coach and dome diner were captured during Big Boy's Houston layover by Charles Goldmeyer.



Walker Warbonnet update

by Vincent Walker

Work is progressing on the A-B-B-A set of EMD F7s for my *Texas Chief*. The nickel-plated models were produced years ago by Bobbye Hall's Hallmark Models. These are great models, but were not factory painted and had few extra details. I painted and decaled the locomotives in Santa Fe's Warbonnet scheme, and made modifications and added details that were appropriate for my modelling era, the late 1960s/early 1970s. Decals came from Micro-Scale.

Work on the models included removing the skirting around the fuel tanks; installing later style Plano Models Pharr Air grills; replacing the original dual airhorns with a Sunrise Enterprises five-chime horn; adding a Sunrise Enterprises nose lifting kit; adding JnJ Trains Santa Fe style spark arrestors; installing Gold Medal Models windshield wipers; adding BLMA utility air hoses and side mirrors; adding boiler feed water overflow piping to the B-unit; and adding nose grab ladders and grab irons over the cab windows. A unit No. 341 is equipped with a Z-scale front coupler for better appearance; it will always be the lashup's lead unit.

Still to come is remotoring the models with Sagami can motors, along with changes and details to the underbodies. I will be posting a video showing the work on the F7s to my YouTube channel "Eagle Route 3" in the near future.

In addition, my Rock Island GP35s are out of the paint shop. I'm going to keep them clean for operation on my layout to represent newly-delivered locomotives.

With the addition of the GP35s, I have equipment representing all the railroads that were active in the Houston, Texas area in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

Search YouTube for "Eagle Route 3" to see more on my layout and the related motive power and rolling stock.



Three above, N'Crowd Past President Vincent Walker is making progress on the set of EMD F7s that will power the *Texas Chief* on his "Eagle Route 3" layout. Below, Rock Island GP35s are fresh out of Vincent's paint shop.



Use this tool for gauging wheels *by Vincent Walker*

I've collected a number of brass engines that I plan to run on my "Eagle Route 3" layout, including some EMD E7s that I'm working on. All of the models run great, but it seems the metal wheels are out of gauge on most. I never could find a tool that would gauge these metal wheels properly until now. The Mascot H220 wheel and gear puller works great. Now my Hallmark brass Santa Fe F7s will be gauged and running as smoothly over the layout as my newer plastic locomotives.

I use the NMRA N scale standards gauge for gauging wheels for all my engines. I plan to inspect and gauge all my brass diesel locomotives with the standards gauge and Mascot H220.

As you can see from the photos, the Mascot is easy to use. You gently turn the screw pin until the wheel slides on the shaft about a 1/4 turn. Check the wheel gauge and repeat until the wheel is in gauge. This is a good item to have in your tool arsenal.



Speaking of Warbonnets...

Photo courtesy ATSF N Scale Models

New 3D printed kits will let N scale modellers add the unique Santa Fe "One-Spot" twins to their locomotive rosters. The kits, which represent the two locomotives as they appeared in the 1940s, are available from ATSF N Scale Models.

The kits are designed to be powered by a modified Kato E8/9 chassis.

For more information, go to www.atsfnscalemodels.com.



Finished N-scale models of Santa Fe No. 1 and booter 1A.

Road trip to the train show

Conclusion, by Tom Marsh

In the last issue, we had started out from Temple on our return trip to Houston on Sunday, April 25, after photographing Amtrak's *Texas Eagle* approaching Temple's former Santa Fe station. We had ideal train chasing conditions: sunny skies and temperatures in the high 70s.



Above, if you're a Texas railfan, you know that State Highway 36 follows more or less alongside the BNSF's busy former Santa Fe mainline from Temple all the way to Rosenberg, offering many spots for the classic 3/4 view train photo. Somewhere between Rogers and Cameron we came across this coal train, led by BNSF GE AC44CW No. 5627. This locomotive apparently was involved in some kind of incident that required repairs to the front end, and the repairs were done on the cheap as far as repainting the nose was concerned.



Above and right, Milano, where the BNSF crosses the Union Pacific's former Missouri Pacific mainline between Palestine and Austin, is a good place to stop for a while and wait for trains. We got nothing on the UP, but our new BNSF acquaintance with the bad nose job caught up with us here. The crossing, which I always thought was called Milano Jct., now has station boards reading "Freeman" on both the BNSF and UP, although the BNSF signal box visible in the two photos is still labeled "Milano"; does anybody know why?





Above, we took a quick side trip to the west along the UP to maybe catch a train and also check out the restored Rockdale train station. The station was built in 1889 by MoPac predecessor International & Great Northern. The restoration included rebuilding of the shingled cupola, which had been removed long ago. The station is now a city-owned museum.



Left and three below, our next stop was Somerville, where the BNSF's line east to Beaumont takes off from the Fort Worth to Galveston mainline. "Bad Nose Job" caught up with us again, and we also got a shot of the DPUs on the rear end of the train. Two smoking EMD SD40s were switching the Somerville yard using the line to the east as the switch lead, while a war-weary Warbonnet unit in the form of BNSF GE C44-9W No. 660 waited for the call to duty at the north end of the yard.





Above and right, Brenham offered no train action, but compensated in the form of cold beer at Brazos Valley Brewing Co. From the brewery's patio we could keep an eye on BNSF shoving platform No. 888593. Unfortunately, the local never showed to pick up the car.



Above, right and below, Sealy proved more interesting from a railroad action point of view, with a unit grain train flying through the town to entertain us. In the lead was BNSF GE C44-9W No. 5140, while bringing up the rear in the end DPU position was GE C44-9W No. 4028. Several locomotives were tied up in the yard, and with the passing grain train, three different BNSF paint schemes were in evidence. And as an industry you can model, two tank cars were spotted on the now disconnected MKT interchange track, where a transload company offloads product to tank trucks.





Above and right, to finish out our road trip to the train show, we planned to follow the BNSF from Sealy to Rosenberg, then the UP's ex-Sunset Route from Rosenberg to Houston. We hoped this would give us maximum action. However it was not to be.

We saw no more trains on the BNSF, and at Rosenberg we found the UP main and siding both occupied, one by a UP train and one by a BNSF train. Hopes for UP action were dashed further east of Rosenberg near Harlem, where both tracks were occupied, this time by a UP train and a KCS train. That's the way it goes sometimes!

On your next road trip, take your camera and share your adventure with The Orderboard.



Tug-of-war for KCS



You never know what might show up on our own Bayou City & Gulf Railroad. With the battle for KCS between Canadian Pacific and Canadian National continuing, we decided to have a bit of fun and stage a tug-of-war on the BC&G to foreshadow the outcome. There was no clear winner, just spinning wheels. Maybe the BC&G should enter the fray and make its own bid for KCS!

Members go trainspotting

N'Crowd members captured these recent scenes of modern railroading, sometimes with less-than-modern equipment.



Above, Allan Melton took this photo of Union Pacific No. 1943, an EMD SD70ACe honoring America's armed forces, at College Station when the unit delivered another special locomotive, UP No. 4141, for permanent display at the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum at Texas A&M University. Below, Allan captured two veteran hopper cars still in BN and Santa Fe paint 25 years after the two railroads merged to form BNSF. He found the cars in tie service at Rosenberg.



Below, Mauricio Varon came across two GE AC44CW locomotives in obsolete paint schemes. KCS de Mexico AC44CW No. 4570 was built in 2000 for TFM as No. 2670. UP No. 6367 was delivered as Southern Pacific No. 321 in 1995.



Above, a classic "grab shot": Richard Hanna caught the action at a Houston grade crossing.

LCL

Less than Car Load: a few notes from your editor

Thanks to our contributors: To everyone who provided material for this issue of *The Orderboard*, thanks for taking the time to make your submissions. The newsletter is always better when we have more members' contributions. What has caught YOUR train fancy lately? Let us know! Deadline for the November/December issue is Saturday, Nov. 6.

STB updates railroad history resource: Most people are unaware that the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) maintains a website in support of railroad history. The Rail Heritage Map is published by the STB's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA). According to the agency, after a late June update the map shows the locations of 1,596 rail-related structures, buildings, and sites that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It also shows the estimated boundaries

of 3,105 National Register-listed historic districts that overlap mapped active or abandoned rail lines or that have a known historical connection to railroads. The updated Rail Heritage Map also provides information about other rail-related historic properties that OEA has identified, including certain historic railroad bridges and historic districts that OEA has researched and evaluated in cases requiring historic review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

OEA will use the Rail Heritage Map as a repository for historical documentation produced during the Section 106 process for railroad abandonment and construction cases. The site is expected to support Section 106 consulting parties, other stakeholders and the public about railroading history. To access the map, go to: <https://stb.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>

HOUSTON N'CROWD 2021 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

September 1

N'Crowd Test & Tune, Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd, Houston, 6 p.m.

September 15

N'Crowd Membership Meeting, Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd, Houston, 7 p.m.

September 18-19

39th Annual Temple Model Train Show, Frank W. Mayborn Civic & Convention Center, Temple

October 1-2

Fall Houston Metro Postcard and Paper Show, Holiday Inn Houston Intercontinental Airport

October 2-3

Annual Fall Plano Train Show, Plano Centre

October 3

N'Crowd Operating Session on the BC&G, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

October 20

N'Crowd Membership Meeting, Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd, Houston, 7 p.m.

October 23

Texas City Museum/Galveston County Model Railroad Club 21st Annual Train Show, Texas City Museum

October 30-31

33rd Annual New Braunfels Train Show Jamboree, New Braunfels Civic Center

November 3

N'Crowd Test & Tune, Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd, Houston, 6 p.m.

November 5-7

East Texas & Gulf Rail Modelers Association 2021 Annual Model Train Show, Hebert Public Library, Port Neches, Texas

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News from Houston N'Crowd

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

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 any and all submissions for clarity and length.

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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