



News from Houston N'Crowd



THE ORDERBOARD

March/April 2022



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Joe's open loads

Andrew's latest paint jobs

Mauricio's T-TRAK renovation

And more!



"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Naz Hally, President

Time is flying!

Wow! Where did the first two months of the year go?

Last month, N'Crowd exhibited at the Greater Houston Train Show at the Pasadena Convention Center. By all accounts, it was a very successful show. It's been reported "the gate" totaled about 1,700 people; counting children admitted free of charge, exhibitors and vendors, estimated total attendance rises to about 1,900. Personally, I think that most of the 1,900 were there from shortly after the opening until about 1:00 p.m.; the parking lot, aisles and vendor tables were very crowded for a while. The photo shows the crowd in the late afternoon as seen from our exhibit area. Our exhibit featured an impressive T-TRAK layout, which stretched over 30 feet and was composed of more than a dozen individual modules. Fellow N'Crowders ran some impressive passenger and freight consists.

N'Crowd also had a table for testing patrons' locomotives. A steady stream of visitors left our test table delighted with the results; others, perhaps not so much. It was fun to see "repeat" visitors testing "new" locomotives they'd acquired after returning earlier "rejected" units to vendors.

Of course, the work that goes into exhibiting just doesn't happen by itself. We're very fortunate to have many members who devote a lot of time and effort behind the scenes as well as staffing the exhibit. I'd like to recognize the following N'Crowd members for making our exhibit a success: Tom Marsh, Allan Melton, Bill Busch, David Crawford, Russell March, Bill Belsher, Phil Poirier, Michael Angiolillo, Randy Ollett, Gordon Bliss, Eddie Aycock,

and Ezra Boer. Thanks a lot, guys!

And, a special thanks to John Sweigart for hosting visitors "solo" back at the layout room at Papa Ben's on the day of the show.

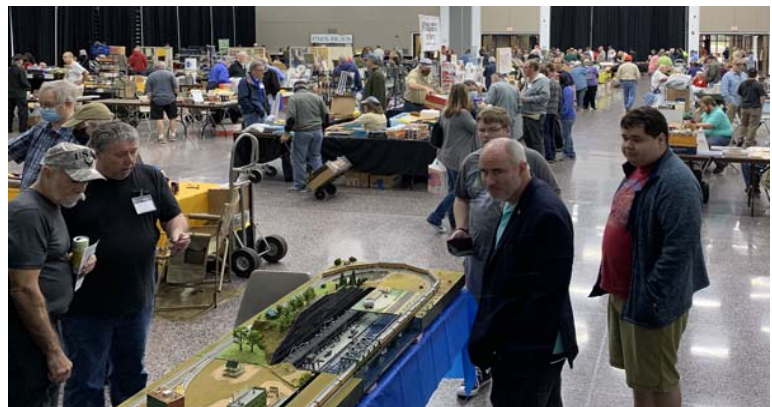
Up ahead just around the bend: The layout shutdown should begin before the end of March. I'll update you at our March meeting as to timing and duration. We're planning some clinics on various topics and working out the possibility to run trains on some parts of the layout while other parts are shut down.

Finally, we've had a number of new members join our club in recent weeks. Some have some brought new and interesting trains to run on the layout, including Kato Japanese commuter trains, literally, brought directly from Japan; also, a very cool Battle of Midway consist, a sharp-looking Shinkansen bullet train, as well as some nice-looking LED-based FRED accessories.

Perhaps we can encourage a bit of "show and tell" at the next meeting?

Naz

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N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:
March 16 / April 20 / May 18 / June 15 / July 20 / August 17
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: June 5 / August 7 / October 2 / December 4. Operating sessions subject to change or cancellation.

From bits and pieces to open loads

N'Crowd member and super super-detailer Joe Kingsberry has been busy creating new open loads from bits and pieces found around the house and

other places. Joe's open loads add an additional level of interest to freight trains running on our own Bayou City & Gulf Railroad.



Above, Joe brought together parts with a heavy industrial look, scale wood cribbing and simulated steel strap tie-downs to make this interesting open load.

At right, two ways to load steel coils into gondolas. Joe scratch-built the coils. The cover photo illustrates how the coils are cribbed.

Below left, plastic gears become a heavy flat car load with the addition of appropriate paint, cribbing and straps.

Below right, metal beams need heavier strapping to keep them in place during transit. Photos by Tom Marsh



Houston N'Crowd 2022 Officers and Volunteers

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Layout Master Randy Ollett
Editor & Webmaster Tom Marsh

New venue a success for GHTS

Photos by David Crawford

San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's annual Greater Houston Train Show attracted an estimated 1,900 attendees, exhibitors and vendors to its new venue, the Pasadena Convention Center. This is one of the largest attendance figures for the show, according to one San Jac official, and most attendees, vendors, exhibitors and the organizers were pleased with the turnout and the facility.

The Pasadena venue will be home to the Greater Houston Train Show in 2023 and 2024;

San Jacinto Model Railroad Club inked a three-year deal with Pasadena last year after the group was unable to negotiate an acceptable deal with long-time previous venue Stafford Centre.

N'Crowd member David Crawford captured the upbeat mood of the show in these images taken around the N'Crowd's T-TRAK layout. The N'Crowd T-TRAK division will also attend Galveston Railroad Museum's Railfest over the April 23-24 weekend.



And now for something completely different...

Photos by Mauricio Varon

N'Crowd member Mauricio Varon recently decided to renovate his first T-TRAK module, a corner unit that originally incorporated a deserted beach landscape. As Mauricio's photos illustrate, the module has been transformed into an urban Japanese scene.



Mauricio started the project by removing the original beach and other scenery, replacing the "water" corner with grass color ground foam. He also decided to add a fenceline along the right-of-way.



Individual fence posts were cut and installed trackside. A stand of trees was placed on the outside corner as well. The fence posts and tree trunks are made from twigs from Mauricio's back yard.



Next, Mauricio laid out the compact town scene.



Mauricio selected and built structure kits by TomyTec for the module. Other detail items came from TomyTec as well. The catenary poles are from Kato. The finished module showcases the scenic variety that is possible with T-TRAK.



More MoP (and more) from Monaghan



N’Crowd member Andrew Monaghan has been busy in his paint shop, turning out multiple Missouri Pacific locomotives and cars in the famous *Eagle* paint scheme, along with modern motive power from Montana and Mexico. To top it all off, three “what-if” fantasy schemes show us what might have been if Union Pacific hadn’t been so inconsiderate and swallowed up two of our favorite railroads, the Katy and the SP. Nice work, Andrew!

Above, Missouri Pacific and Texas & Pacific EMD E-units pose at Austin on the N’Crowd’s Bayou City & Gulf Railroad.

Right, with striping in multiple colors, the Eagle scheme is challenging to paint in any scale.

Below, the MoP Eagle cars, which are all from Kato smoothside car sets, were painted for a friend of Andrew’s. Lighting and passengers were added by the models’ owner after Andrew painted the cars. Photos by Tom Marsh





Above, in contrast to the flowing curves and orderly striping of the streamliner era exemplified by the Eagle's locomotives, modern locomotives have a more angular look in both design and decoration. Andrew's Ferromex and Montana Rail Link locomotives illustrate modern era design practice. Below, in the "what if" category, Andrew speculates on possible modern interpretations of Southern Pacific's 1940s "Black Widow" and 1960s "Bloody Nose" paint schemes, and the Katy's 1970s "John Deere" green scheme.



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

Thank you!: Thanks to everyone who contributed photos and information for this issue of *The Orderboard*. I look forward to hearing from more of you before the next issue!

Reward for capturing a Charger: Amtrak's new Charger locomotives are entering service, and it's just a matter of time before we see one in Texas, so we're offering a reward. The first person who submits a usable photo of a Charger in Texas to *The Orderboard* will receive a copy of Lance Mendheim's new book *How to Design a Model Railroad* published by Kalmbach/Model Railroader. Keep your cameras handy!



Above and left, Amtrak Charger No. 301 in heritage paint on the day of its first revenue run, Feb. 8, 2022. The new locomotive was supposed to lead Amtrak's Empire Builder west from Chicago, but a technical issue resulted in the 301 not being able to run in the lead, so GE P42 No. 84 was hastily added to lead the consist. Photos courtesy Amtrak

Kato has announced it will produce an N-scale model of the new Chargers; Bachmann reportedly plans one as well.

HOUSTON N'CROWD 2022 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

March 2

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

March 16

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

March 18-20

Indian Nations 2022 Layout Design and Operations Weekend, Tulsa, Okla. Info: <https://tulsanmra.org>

April 3

N'Crowd Operating Session **CANCELLED**

April 9-10

New Braunfels Model Train Show, New Braunfels Civic Center

April 20

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

April 23-24

Galveston Railroad Museum Railfest. N'Crowd will have a T-TRAK layout at the show.

May 4

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

May 5-7

NMRA Lone Star Region annual convention, Temple

May 18

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

THE ORDERBOARD *News from Houston N'Crowd*

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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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