



La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
Grand Voiture du Texas
TEXAS VOYAGEUR NEWS



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND du TEXAS, THE FORTY et EIGHT

Winner of the Arthur McDowell Award 1991 – 1992 – 1993 – 1994 – 1995 – 1996 for the Best Grand Voiture Publication in the Nation without Advertising

September – December 2010



The Grand Chef Speaks...

Fellow Voyageurs,

Hope that everyone is doing great and looking forward to the New Year.

I have been in El Paso for the past 11 days and just got home last night. I had the pleasure of attending V-605's Promenade. I also recruited one new PG for them while I was there. I know they will be 100% within the next week or so.

It is great to report that this was a great week for membership. Not only did we have a lot of turn-ins we also have a New Voiture in Division 1. V-689 in Amarillo, congratulations to them and hope for a bright future. We also moved up to 20th place at Nationale.

We have five (5) Locales below 75% which is the goal for the 15th of January. If they had achieved the goal of 75% we would be at 86.83% and needing 59 for Quota. These Locales need to work hard on getting in their renewals. We have two Voitures at 100% which are V-542 and V-175. With Officers doing their job all Locales could be at 100%.

At the end of the first six (6) months of the Membership year we stand at 80.36% which is good but not great because all Voyageurs should have renewed by now. If we had all the renewals in we would already be over a 100%. Chefs, Correspondents and Voyageurs work on getting these renewals.

We have six (6) months left in the Membership year and we need to get 112 to reach goal. My goal for the year is 516 or more. This is the kind of growth we need to get back on top. It takes everyone to get new members and get their dues in on time.

As I said before when a Voiture reaches a 100% I will pay the \$20.00 to National for the next two Voitures in there Locale. The cut-off date for this will be April 1st as all Locales should be at 100% before that date.



Don't forget to register for Merci Box Car. You cannot beat the price of the hotel and we need to show our guest speaker how we support our organization and Grand du Texas.

If you need me are any Grand Officer please let me know. We are here to serve you and Grand du Texas. So please don't hesitate to call.

If you are an Officers in the Locale are Grand you should be doing the job you accepted!

IF EVERYONE DOES THEIR PART
 GRAND du TEXAS WILL GROW AND
 PROSPER!

"JUST ASK"



"SAM" = "SPONSOR ANOTHER MEMBER"
EVERYONE KNOWS SOMEONE

Yours in Service to La Societe

Ronnie L. Wheeler
 Grand Chef de Gare
 H – (254) 690-7389
 C – (254) 291-4706

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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GRAND du TEXAS MEMBERSHIP
JANUARY 13, 2011

Voiture Locale		2010	2011	Percent
1st Division				
689	Amarillo	0	5	100%
939	Wichita Falls	16	15	94%
1123	Longview	22	0	0%
1185	Ft. Worth	41	37	90%
1601	Lake Dallas	17	9	53%
Total		96	86	90%
2nd Division				
163	Houston	32	27	84%
266	Copperas Cove	32	19	59%
312	Beaumont	22	7	32%
980	Willis	36	32	89%
1031	Killeen	62	47	76%
Total		184	132	72%
3rd Division				
175	Austin	14	14	100%
231	La Feria	27	22	81%
542	San Antonio	41	41	100%
1077	Edinburg	9	2	22%
1134	Kingsville	12	4	33%
Total		103	83	81%
4th Division				
605	El Paso	23	21	91%
1055	Kerrville	27	26	96%
1096	Odessa	15	12	80%
Total		65	59	91%
Grand Total		448	340	76%
Nationale Standing		11	25	70%

100% shown in blue
100% plus shown in red

Dear Dames:

We hope you had a joyous and peaceful Christmas and are looking forward to the New Year. This message is just a small reminder of what the Grande Cabane de Texas is doing or trying to do. Without your help this will not be accomplished. Please count your hour's mileage and money you spend for your La Cabane. Just keep in mind if you WORK IT you can count it. These reports are important archival and informational about the work we accomplish. Please let me see a good turn out this year on getting reports done. It really breaks my heart to see the other states out do Texas when we are suppose to be BIG.

Another reminder about the drawing for luggage, please turn in your money and tickets to me and should you need more tickets, please contact me. The information is attached.

Also, attached is the information on Merci Box Car in February. It would be greatly appreciated if each Voiture or Cabane could donate a gift in the range of \$25.00 for a drawing for the Grande Cabane and bring it with you when you go to Box Car. This will be one of the most interesting guest we have ever had that can give us a great deal of information of what is actually going on right now in the war we are involved in from a doctors perspective. It will be quite an honor to have him as our guest. Please join us for one of our most important functions we hold Merci Box Car.

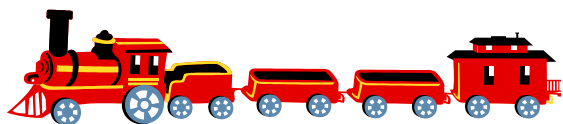
Merci,
Kathy E. Wheeler
La Grande Presidente de Texas



La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux

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From the Grand Correspondant

Grand officers have their name, email address, and phone number on the website (follow the Grand Officer link) so if you have any questions you can contact them directly.

See the "Correspondant's Corner" on the Grande du Texas website www.texasboxcar.com for information and updates from the Grand Correspondant.

Daniel Thompson
334 Oak Ridge
Ingram, Texas
Home phone: 830-367-1355



Nurses Training

Grand Chef Ron Wheeler and La Presidente Kathy Wheeler reported they had the pleasure of visiting Voiture Locale 542, San Antonio, for their Annual Pearl Harbor Pancake Breakfast. Voiture 542 awarded seven Nurses Training Scholarships and also reached a 100% in membership.

Everyone also had the pleasure of having Chef de Chemin de Fer 2010 (Jerry Brady) attend. It is very nice to see Jerry and Karen back home in Texas.



Box Car Program

The Box Car Program is an important program for Nationale and needs the support of all Voyageurs. Every Voyageur should have a Crew Card and Pin. If your Locale has not ordered them please let them know.

Last year we did not do well at all. We were last in Area H. When in the past we were first. With a little work we can be first again but it will take all the Locales and Voyageurs to make it happen.

Some Locales include \$1.00 in their dues for Box Car Cards, this is a great idea. If all Locales did this then we would be 100% every year. This is something for your Locale to look at.

Thanks to the Cabane for buying a 100 Associate Cards. They do this each year to help out the Grand. Without them we could not do as well as we do.

The money raised from Box Car is all spent at Nationale each year. No money is carried over for the next year. It supports all the programs at National to include the 40/8er, Children's Party, Box Car Maintenance, and other programs. So your money is not stashed away somewhere, it is all spent a Nationale.

Please order Cards and Pins and let's do better than last year.

Yours in Service

John Bares
Grand Directeur Box Car
Phone: 409-832-8231



La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux

Grand Voiture du Texas

TEXAS VOYAGEUR NEWS

Joseph Edwin Bird

June 9, 1934 - December 17, 2010



Funeral services for retired Staff Sgt. Joseph E. Bird, 76, of Killeen were held at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 21, 2010 at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home in Killeen with Capt. Mark Edwards, an Army chaplain, officiating. Burial was at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery.

Mr. Bird died Dec. 17, 2010, at a Round Rock hospice. He was born June 9, 1934, in Lufkin, to Hally Uwin Bird and Estelle Lorraine Whittington.

Mr. Byrd entered the Army in 1954. He thoroughly enjoyed being a paratrooper in the Special Forces. He retired in 1974 at Fort Hood. In 1959, he married May Ann Harrison in San Antonio. After retiring, he sold insurance for National Life Insurance Company and later sold used cars for Fogle Dodge.

Mr. Bird was a member of American Legion Post 223 and the 40&8 Voyagers 1031. He loved telling jokes, fishing and playing softball. He was an excellent pitcher. In his later years, he enjoyed going to Killeen Independent School District elementary schools and teaching first-graders about the American flag. He became known as "The Flag Man."

He was preceded in death by his brothers, Hally, Bennie and Maurice, and his parents.

Survivors include his wife, May, of Killeen; son, Charles Raymond Bird of Killeen; daughter, Robin Lynn Hamm and her husband, Randy, of Bryan; grandchildren, Joshua and his wife, Rebecca Hamm, and Jonathan Hamm; and great-grandchild, Katah Hamm.

John Baylor McKinney

January 10, 1940– January 15, 2011

MCKINNEY John Baylor (Van Vranken) McKinney, LTC, USA (Retired), died peacefully Saturday, January 15, 2011, with his wife by his side. He was born on January 10, 1940, in Spokane, Washington, to Gerald Baylor Van Vranken, Captain, USA (Dental), of Walla Walla, Washington, and Ruby Estelle Thompson of Galveston, Texas. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers Donald and Harry Van Vranken, sister Gerry Lee McKinney, and step-father Allan McKinney of Walla Walla. He is survived by his wife Yolanda Garcia McKinney and step-daughter Letitita Marie (George) Riley of San Antonio, Texas, and daughters Rayett (Joe) Porchia of Osceola, Arkansas, Marlett and Lynett McKinney (James Belanger) of Salt Lake City, Utah, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. John graduated from Jordan High School in 1957. He was a Past Master Councilor of the Salt Lake Chapter, Order of DeMolay and in 1961 was elected to and inducted into the Order of Chevaliers. Also in 1961 John graduated from the University of Utah with a Degree of Bachelor of Science (Political Science). Upon his graduation, John joined the U.S. [Army](#) (Air Defense) and retired in 1988 with over 27 years' service. His last assignment before his retirement was as the Deputy Director of the Air Defense Artillery Patriot Department. After retirement John began his career in volunteer work, beginning as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff and then as a Chief Deputy Constable for Precinct 2. He went on to join and serve as an advocate for veterans' rights as Commander of The American Legion Law Enforcement Post 74, as President of the National Association for Uniformed Services Rill Ryerson El Paso Chapter and currently Vice President of the Southwest Region and special advisor to the members of the Society of Military Widows Desert Sun Chapter 30, as Co-Chairman of local Congressman Reyes' Citizens Advisory Panel to include his televised Town Hall Meetings, as Commissioner appointed by Governor Rick Perry in 2008 to the Texas Veterans Commission for a six-year term, as President of the Military Officers Association of America, as President of the Military Coalition of El Paso, as Service Officer for the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 165, as Advocat of La Societe des 40 Hommes et 8 Chebeau Voyager 605, and in his weekly stint doing volunteer service at the El Paso Veterans Affairs Health Care System.



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**Students from Halstead Elementary School celebrates Veterans' Day on 12 November 2010.
Flags distributed by members of Voiture 266, Copperas Cove, Texas.
A total of 1500 flags were distributed to two local elementary schools.**



**Students from Clements/Parson Elementary School celebrates Veterans' Day on 10 November 2010.
Flags distributed by members of Voiture 266, Copperas Cove, Texas.
A total of 1500 flags were distributed to two local elementary schools.**

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To Voyageurs and La Femmes of Grand du Texas

Monsieur or Madame

Enclosed, please find information on Merci Box Car 2011.

We had a good turnout at the Fall Cheminot. Your Grand hopes that we can have a big turnout for Merci. We are in need of a big turn out if we want the room rate to come down. Last year we had a small turnout and the room rates went up so if you want the rates to come down please attend Merci Box Car this year.

We have a very important Guest Speaker at Box Car this year. It is with a great deal of respect and honor to have COL. Joseph A. Brennan who is the top ENT Doctor in the Air Force. He has been to Iraqi and Afghanistan and with the knowledge he has gained by his experience. It will be a good time for us to get some great information. Please come and show our support for Grand du Texas and our guest.

This will be the 62nd Anniversary of the Box Car.

Please get this information out to all the Voyageurs in your Local as soon as possible so that they will be able to register and make reservations.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely

Ronnie Wheeler
Grand Chef de Gare

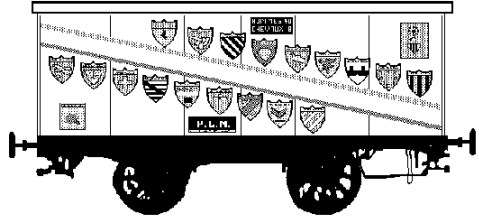
Monsieur Voyageurs, Dames and Guests:

We would like to extend to each and every one of you an open invitation to attend our Central States Promenade 2011. All the fun and festivities will start on Thursday, April 28, 2011 and will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel Kansas City International Airport, 7640 NW Tiffany Springs Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64153. Their phone number is 1-816-891-7788.

For more information go to www.texasboxcar.com



La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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AGENDA FOR MERCI BOX CAR
ALL ROOMS AND EVENTS ARE NON-SMOKING

FRIDAY

2 PM to 6 PM
1 PM to till

February 18th

Registration Open
Hospitality Room Open

SATURDAY

9 AM to NOON
9 AM to 12:30 PM
9 AM to 11 AM

February 19th

Registration Open
Hospitality Room Open
Grand Committee Meetings (At Hotel)
Committee on Committees Meeting after Grand Meetings
Grand Cheminot (Post 83)
La Femmes Rendezvous at (At Hotel)
After Cheminot hospitality room reopens until 6 PM
Social Hour (Post 83)
Dinner (Post 83)
Hospitality Room Reopens

SUNDAY

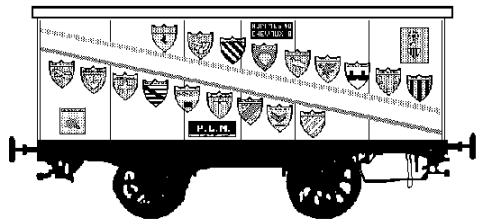
9:30 AM

February 20th

Merci Box Car Pilgrimage at Post 76
Memorial service by Grand and La Femme Aumioner
Pictures
Memorial Over

DRIVE CAREFUL AND HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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ADVERTISEMENT REQUEST FORM
MERCI BOX CAR 2011
18, 19 & 20 February 2011

It is requested that the attached ad copy be included in the Merci Box Car 2011 Souvenir Program Book. I have checked the size of the ad as shown:

_____ Full Page Ad _____	\$30.00
_____ Half Page Ad _____	\$20.00
_____ Business Card _____	\$10.00
_____ Booster Sheet _____	\$ 1.00

(Mr. & Mrs. Counts as two names = \$2.00)

NOTE: Attach Ad copy to this form.

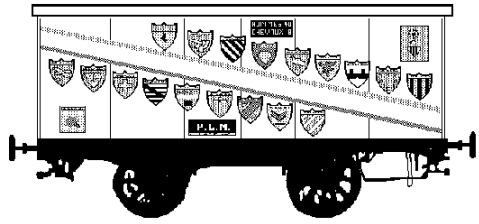
Memo: Each Booster Club name will be printed in a special section of the Souvenir Book. You are not required to register nor attend the Merci Box Car in order to have an ad in the Souvenir Program Book or to have your name in the Booster Club special section of the book. Full payment for your ad must accompany this ad request. Make all checks payable to Merci Box Car 2011.

THE FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF ALL AD REQUESTS AND AD COPY IS 1 FEBRUARY 2011.

Please submit all ad request and ad copy to: davidknutson@sbcglobal.net
or via mail to:

David Knutson
1904 Rutherford Dr.
Leander, Tx. 78641
Phone: (512) 736-2377

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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**REGISTRATION FORM
MERCY BOX CAR 2011
18, 19 & 20 February 2011**

Please fill in the following information to register for Merci Box Car 2011

Name: _____ Title or Highest Office held: _____

Voiture or Cabane # _____

Name: _____ Title or Highest Office held: _____

Voiture or Cabane # _____

Name: _____ Title or Highest Office held: _____

Voiture or Cabane # _____

Name: _____ Title or Highest Office held: _____

Voiture or Cabane # _____

_____ X \$20.00= \$ _____

Advance registration will be \$20.00.

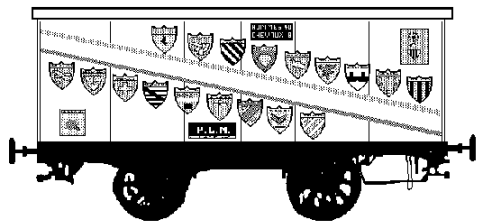
All advance registration must be received by the 1st of February 2011.

After February 1st 2011 the registration will be \$25.00.

All registration must be mailed to:

Daniel J. Thompson
Grand Correspondant
334 Oak Ridge
Ingram, TX 78025
(830) 367-1355
djthmpsn44@hctc.net

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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MERCI BOX CAR 2011

FEBRUARY 18, 19 & 20
HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Show your support and attend Merci Box Car this year.
It is going to be great fun for all.

BE SURE TO SAY YOU ARE WITH THE 40/8

The Wyndham Garden Hotel Phone: (1-800-996-3426)
3401 South I-35 Hotel Direct: (512-448-24444)
Austin, Texas 78741

These room rates are good 2 days before and after
Room Rates: Single or Double \$89.00 Triple/Quad \$119.00 Suites \$129.00

Rate includes
Two Complimentary Breakfast Buffett Coupons per room per day.

Room rates are only good until January 28, 2011.
After this date the room rates will be regular rates. No exceptions.

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
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November 17, 2010

Film to document restoration work on Maine's Merci Car

Juliana L'Heureux

In February of 1949, a merchant ship entered New York's harbor containing forty-nine boxcars filled with gifts of thanks from the French people to the citizens of the United States.

These cars were filled with personal gifts donated by ordinary French citizens, to show gratitude to Americans for the generosity extended to France during two World Wars and for providing food assistance following World War II. Together, the group of box cars were known as the Gratitude Train, but later earned the name "Merci Cars."

A film documentary is in production to tell the story of the French Merci railroad cars, which includes the one on exhibit at the Boothbay Railway Village in Boothbay Harbor.

A box car was designated for each of the 48 states as well as one for the District of Colombia to share with the territory of Hawaii. Wayne Sheridan of Boothbay is the Director of Development and Community Relations at the railroad museum. He and Railway Village board member Ron Ginger are leading fund raising and restoration work for the Merci Car.

Maine's Merci Car restoration work is included in a film documentary currently under production by Beth Spiegel, a Los Angeles independent film maker and an editor for National Geographic. Spiegel went to Boothbay last spring to cover the museum's restoration of the Merci Car. Her documentary titled "A World of Thanks" will be ready by January 2012.

Spiegel first learned about the Merci Cars while filming another job in Idaho. She visited the Idaho transportation museum where she saw the box car in an exhibit.

"Something about the Merci Cars struck my heart," she says. "They are a historic connection to a time when people were struggling after the World War II Nazi occupation of France. These people still found the time to show gratitude to Americans," she says. The reciprocal humanitarian efforts following World War II are almost unknown to Americans today, she says.

"Why don't more people know about this history," she asked?

Prior to 2007, aided by connections made over the Internet, an informal national network of train enthusiasts began looking for ways to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Merci Train's arrival in New York Harbor. Enthusiasts like Earl Bennett of Tampa FL have been catalysts for the Merci Car restoration around the nation, says Sheridan Bennett visits the sites in the states where each of the cars are located.

Bennett self published a book, "The Merci Train: A Big Thank You From France" about his journeys to visit each car. On his website www.mercitrain.org, Bennett lists where each car is located in every state.

Maine's boxcar was given to the Railroad Museum for protection and eventual restoration by the Maine State Museum, after being found stored in Lisbon, says Sheridan. Most of the original box car contents are housed in the Maine State Museum.

Spiegel's film builds on the grass roots momentum for the Merci Car restoration. "This is a little known story and I want to bring it to the attention of more people," says Spiegel. Spiegel archives the stories she collects for her documentary on her blog, posted at www.aworldofthanks.net. "I'm fascinated by how the struggling people of France took time to make the effort to send thank you gifts to a World War II allied country, but they never knew who received their offerings," she says.

Sheridan says a low key fund raising effort is keeping Maine's Merci Car restoration going. Funds are needed to build a protective and interpretative pavilion to house the railroad car. More information is available at www.railwayvillage.org. Hit the "Opportunities" icon on the website for information on donations.

Portland Press Herald

Find this article at:

<http://www.pressherald.com/people/ctf/maine-Film-document-restoration-work-Maines-Merci-Car.html>

CONGRATULATIONS GRAND DU TEXAS! NATIONAL STANDING WENT FROM 55 IN 2009 TO 11 FOR 2010! GREAT JOB!

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'TRICARE Young Adult' Will Be Expensive

January 13, 2011 • Terry Howell

Since the passage of the Health Care Reform Act last year, many TRICARE beneficiaries have been asking when TRICARE would begin offering coverage for military dependent children up to age 26 — like the civilian world. Last week the President signed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2011, which includes a provision to offer the “TRICARE Young Adult” program which does just that. Great, right? Maybe not.

What Congress didn't do was spell out the guidelines for how much the new program would cost service members and retirees in additional premiums.

In October, I reported that the Military Officers Association of America was warning that the actual premium increase to TRICARE beneficiaries who opt-in for the TYA program could be as much as \$2,400 a year.

This was confirmed today in [Tom Philpott's Military Update](#), which reports that the projections for the annual TYA premiums being tossed around the Pentagon range from \$1,400 to \$2,400 (\$116 to \$200 a month).

Philpott points out, ‘Congress didn't achieve for military families what was gained for other American families, at least on adult dependent coverage, through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.’”

Simply put, it's going to cost military families who choose to enroll in TYA, a lot more to cover adult children than it will for most civilian families.

Health Care Repeal Won't Affect TRICARE

January 20, 2011 • Terry Howell

3 Reasons the attempt to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act won't change TRICARE.

A recent article by [Leo Shane of Stars and Stripes](#) explains how and why any actions to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will not make any immediate changes to [TRICARE](#) or the new [TRICARE Young Adult](#) option. In fact there are three main reasons why the actions taken by the House to repeal the act won't change anything right away.

Reason 1. When PPAC was passed, Congress quickly followed up by passing the [TRICARE Affirmation Act](#), a law which ensured that TRICARE wouldn't change due to PPAC. Simply put, TRICARE was shielded from the rules for PPAC in the first place, so any repeal won't have an effect anyway.

Reason 2. The expansion of TRICARE coverage to include adult children over 21 (known as the TYA option) was not included in the original Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In fact TYA is part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2011, which means that any effort to repeal PPAC will not have an immediate effect. Congress would have to pass a separate bill to eliminate the TYA program.

Reason 3. Although the House passed the repeal, it is not likely to get any traction in the Senate and there is no chance that this president will sign any such repeal.

But, this may serve as a gut check, of sorts. How would most TRICARE beneficiaries react to a repeal of the TYA option? Just asking...

Note: The above articles were found at the [military.com](#) website

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La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
Grand Voiture du Texas

Monsieur Voyageurs,

Just a short letter to let you know what is going on in Grand du Texas.

GRAND DU TEXAS IS ON THE MOVE

We have a New Voiture in Amarillo, Texas V-689 was reinstated.

Congratulations and we wish them the best.

We have three (3) Voitures at 100% of quota or better. V-542, V-175 & V980

Each of them deserves a big THANKS

We have one Voiture at 100% of Goal and that is V-980.

I had to send them \$40.00 for the two new Voyageurs over 100% of quota.

It would great to be able to put all Locales on here at 100% of Goal or better. Make a 100% of quota and I will send you \$40.00 for the next two new Voyageurs.

I know with a little work we can reach 100% of Quota by the 15th of February and 100% of goal by 1 April. Then we could say April fool to Nationale. Just like I told Kathy when we got married on 1 April in 1995.

Thanks to all of you and what you do for your Locale and Grand du Texas.

As always if I am needed please let me know.

Yours in Service to La Societe and Grand du Texas

Ronnie L. Wheeler
Ron Wheeler
Grand Chef

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux

Grand Voiture du Texas

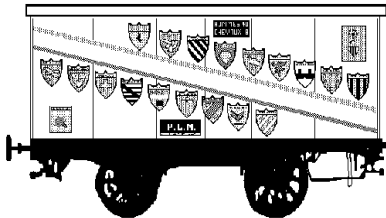
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**La Grande Voiture du Texas
La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux
1904 Rutherford Drive
Leander, Texas 78641**

Affix
1st Class Postage
Here

Addressee



ADDRESSEE: Please notify sender of name/address correction
Chef de Gare – Ron Wheeler, Correspondant – Dan Thompson, Commissire Intendant – Tom Larsen, L'Editeur – Dave Knutson

CONGRATULATIONS GRAND DU TEXAS! NATIONAL STANDING WENT FROM 55 IN 2009 TO 11 FOR 2010! GREAT JOB!