

Houston N'Crowd

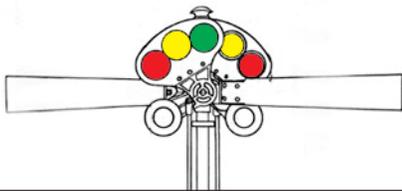


2013 Highlights

# THE ORDERBOARD



Having our cake and eating it, too!



News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

March/April 2013



Houston N'Crowd once again supported the Greater Houston Train Show, providing DC test tracks and snappy patter. Above, President Gordon Bliss and member Dejan Suskavcevic man the N'Crowd table at the Feb. 16 show. Thanks and congratulations again to San Jacinto Model Railroad Club for a show well done!



# N'Crowd marks 35 years!

Your Houston N'Crowd celebrated its 35th anniversary on Friday, March 15, and the next day several members showed up at the club layout for a great run day!

Club Vice President Richard Bartlett and President Gordon Bliss supplied most of the trains and, running the recently-completed full show loop, at one point had four trains running with a total of 145 cars. It was really something to watch two 43-car trains pass on the two mainlines behind Bayou City Yard!

Cake and drinks were provided and Gordon supplied pictures of every N'Crowd special run car, as well as pictures of past convention items.

Several members stopped by, including Eddie Aycock, Tom Wayburn, Barry Miles and Dan Gutierrez. Steve Lancaster and Harvey Stalworth were manning the store and popped in to check out the action from time to time.

N'Crowd member and SP super-detailer Joseph Kingsberry worked on putting decoders in some new locomotives. In addition, the BC&G turntable at the Hardy Street shops is working.

Other things have been going on with the N'Crowd and even more are planned in this 35th anniversary year. Richard hosted a great hands-on building clinic at Papa Ben's in late February. Joseph Kingsberry, James Seneff and Gordon Bliss attended and all three built buildings with Richard's assistance and the materials he supplied. James was working on a larger building and took it home to finish. Richard donated one-half of the \$10 clinic charge to the club.

Tom Wayburn also stopped by the store to see about the LED strip lighting for building interiors that Richard has been developing.

More clinics are planned throughout the year, and Richard is organizing a Texas State Railroad tour as well (see page 2). Be sure to come to the next N'Crowd meeting on March 20, check out the progress on the BC&G and find out what's happening next!



*At right top, N'Crowd members celebrate the club's 35th anniversary. Second from top, Richard's building clinic resulted in new structures for several members' layouts and a donation to the club. Two lower, Gordon's realignment of the track between Bayou City Yard and the lead to Union Station has opened up a longer run for the show loop, and allowed operation of multiple long trains at the 35th anniversary gathering. Photos by Gordon Bliss*

# N'Crowd: 35 Years of fun

by Gordon Bliss and Al Hague

Members Al Hague and Gordon Bliss presented this history of the Houston N'Crowd Model Railroad Society at the March 2013 membership meeting. Our club's initial meeting was held March 15, 1978, but the first seeds were planted the year before, as Gordon and Al recount here.

## 1977

At the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Jamboree, Greg Johnson puts out a notebook, asking anyone interested in starting an NTRAK club to sign up.

## 1978

On March 15, 1978, 17 people attend the first meeting of what will become the Houston N'Crowd Model Railroad Society. Club members start building NTRAK modules at Greg's valve warehouse in South Houston. We set up and run our first layout at warehouse.

## 1979

Our first public show is at the San Jac Jamboree, held at the Royal Coach Inn; we set up a 24-ft. by 32-ft. NTRAK layout. Member Don Bozman builds the Granite Falls module (now mounted over his dispatcher's panel). He takes the module to the NMRA national convention in Calgary, Canada, and wins the Con-Cor award. Don and crew start work on the Houston Yard modules, first at Greg's warehouse then at Don's home. Loren Nuefeld builds a model of Houston Union Station. The club is asked to set up at the Lone Star Region NMRA convention in New Orleans; we had the only running layout set up at the show. The club's first special run cars, Kato tank cars imported by Con-Cor, arrive in September. We produced 320 cars, 260 in black for general sale, and 60 in dark blue for club members only. Members paid just over cost, or about \$3 per car. Today, black cars go for \$25 and dark blue for \$50.



## 1980

The club is asked to set up and run the NTRAK layout at the NMRA convention in Orlando, Fla., since there is no club in the area. We rent a box truck to haul our modules to Florida. Ben Pearlman wins the Con-Cor award with his roundhouse corner module. Back home, Foley's hires the N'Crowd to set up in the downtown store from Thanksgiving to Christmas, and run trains during lunch, evenings and on weekends. Ron

Miller builds an extended corner module on which the red line bypass goes into a tunnel and spirals down three loops and back up three loops. Entire 20 car coal trains disappear and then reappear; the crowds go wild!



## 1981

The club goes to the NMRA convention in San Mateo, Calif. Phil and Gordon Bliss carry five modules and Al Hague, Bob Standley, along with Tom Cotton from Dallas, haul five others. Gordon falls asleep near Barstow and wrecks the truck, luckily not damaging any of the modules. Club coins the term "The Bliss Brothers Event". N'Crowd helps set up the largest NTRAK layout ever to date in one evening! Jim FitzGerald asks the N'Crowd to take over the set up and operation of the layout. With walkie-talkies we run a total of 25 trains at one time! The club wins the Con-Cor award at San Mateo with our Houston Yard module. Don Bozman starts his HO railroad at home, invites the N'Crowd over for a "canyon raising" party. Club sets up modules at Lakewood Country Club for Christmas.

## 1982

Ideas start floating around for an N scale only convention! The club runs its second special run, a Con-Cor three car set with a Houston Belt & Terminal boxcar, Texas Mexican Railway boxcar and a Texas & New Orleans open hopper car. The club is hired to rebuild the HO display layout inside the Galveston Railroad museum. Greg Johnson and Al Hague head up the project, and the club works for three months on weekends to complete it. Several club members take modules to the Kansas City NMRA convention.

## 1983

Houston N'Crowd hosts the first ever National N Scale convention on August 11-14, and the big hit starts a trend! Greg Johnson chairs the event, which attracts over 250 attendees. Key Models gives away five brass locomotives. Jim FitzGerald brings his special LONG train layout, but due to the size of the ballroom Jim runs ONLY 959 CARS! This sets a new world record. Our third special run is a rerun of the three Con-Cor cars (HB&T/Tex Mex/T&NO). We also run a Galveston Wharves boxcar, a Moscow Camden & San Augustine boxcar and a smooth side blue passenger car named *Houston*.

**1984**

The club sets up at every local show over the next ten years: San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Jamboree, GATS, Memorial City and Pasadena Shows.

**1985**

Ben Pearlman opens a new video production studio at the Lakes of 610, and N'Crowd is offered a room above the garage. Our first meeting takes place June 8 at the new, 2,000 sq. ft. club house. The club orders Atlas coal cars in black with yellow ends and dimensional data only.

**1986**

The club produces more Atlas dim-data only cars, including covered and center flow hoppers (gray and tuscan). The club also places an order for a Houston Belt & Terminal business car and a re-run of the Kato tank cars in white. Both runs eventually are cancelled as we cannot get the cars. The first issue of the club newsletter *The Orderboard* is printed in October. The club also hosts the first of many "Mini-Cons" at the clubhouse in November. Don't miss Ben Pearlman and Greg Johnson at the very LIVE auction. Club starts layout of modules at the clubhouse. Our fifth annual pool party is held at Greg's house.

**1987**

Greg Johnson resigns as president of the N'Crowd due to work conflicts; he not only organized the club, but held the president's office keeping things going for 10 years! The club hosts its second Mini-Con, and sets up a layout at The Galleria in November.

**1988**

The N'Crowd produces its first Kadee special run car, a Missouri Pacific express boxcar.

**1989**

The club hosts the N-Scale "Come'N of Age" convention at the NMRA Astrorail national convention in Houston. Ben has a leftover LARGE Texas-shape module built for a power company commercial, and the club converts it to a giant NTRAK module. Ben tapes a "Good Morning America" intro that airs the week of the convention. Special runs for the convention are a shrink-wrapped two-pack of Kadee blue boxcars (our first two pack); Atlas Come'N of Age boxcar; Texas State Railroad boxed set with a 2-8-0 steam loco and three passenger cars, a boxcar, express box and caboose. Danny Dotson chairs the event. Charter member Philip Bliss passes away.

**1990**

On March 4, the club rents out the observation-lounge car on the Houston to Galveston *Texas Limited* excursion train and around 30 members ride. Joe Coen wins the contest to name our club railroad with "Bayou City & Gulf". The club hosts its third Mini-Con. "Port City" is added to the club layout on the end of Houston yard. Loren Neufeld builds a 34 story building from plaster after seeing George Selios build a 28 story HO building.

**1991**

The club purchases 200 Kadee undecorated cars and has BC&G decals made. A special run Houston & Texas Central boxcar is produced.

**1992**

The club starts work on its next national convention. A special run of Galveston Houston & Henderson wood reefers is produced. Joe Coen wins the Con-Cor award with his cement plant module at the NMRA national convention in Tulsa, Okla. This makes four Con-Cor awards for the club and its members!

**1993**

Houston N'Crowd hosts the national NTRAK convention "Mak'N Traks to Houston" June 23-27, with 289 attendees. Ralph Roddy chairs the event. Special run convention cars include a Micro-Trains Mak'N Traks to Houston boxcar and MDC Roundhouse two-pack of modern tank cars lettered for NASA featuring "worm" and "meatball" logos. Lamar Williams retires and makes a large donation to the N'Crowd; The club runs three different auctions: silent, live and collector. The club does very well with the convention and proceeds help pay for stairs on the club building.

**1995**

The N'Crowd sets up at the Great American Train Show at the George R Brown Convention Center in Houston.

**1996**

A rough year for the club, with lots of politics. Ben is offered a cable TV show, and needs our space over the studio garage, so we move out of the clubroom and tear down the newly-started permanent layout after 10 years in the space. The club sets up at Almeda Mall and is open every Saturday. Loren Neufeld builds the Jurassic Park and Grimy Gulch modules.

**1997**

The club continues to open every Saturday at Almeda mall. A special run bathtub coal car in UFIX black with orange end is produced for the club by DeLuxe Innovations.

**1998**

The club's 20th anniversary special run cars are two Micro-Trains tank cars, black for general sale and dark blue for the club members. In April, the club moves out of the mall location and is homeless again.

**1999**

The club produces a special run Comanche & Indian Gap steel reefer.

**2000**

This year sees a two-pack of special run boxcars in yellow and green lettered for International & Great Northern.

**2001**

Special run two-pack this year features San Antonio & Aransas Pass boxcars in green and black.

**2002**

In January, the club buys a DCC system. Ben Pearlman opens Papa Ben's Train Place in June and again offers the N'Crowd a club room upstairs. The club sets up at its last two modular show layouts, one at the Astrohall and the other at the Pasadena Convention Center.

**2003**

N'Crowd hosts the 20th national N Scale convention "N to the Future", attracting just under 200 attendees. Marty Giesecke chairs the event. Special run Micro-Trains convention cars are a gray N'Crowd box car (included in every registration packet), a 60-ft. N to the Future "moon" boxcar and a NASA tank car with "meatball" logo. Kato donates business cars lettered *Schaumberg* for every packet. The club orders 70 Kato business cars for Bayou City & Gulf named *Houston*; these are given to convention helpers. A group photo of most of the original members is taken. The club sets up modules at Papa Ben's Train Place in the new clubroom. Early member Dale Farney passes away.

**2004**

A permanent layout committee is established. Early member Bob "Captain Video" Sunderland passes away.

**2005**

Early member Jimmy Fontenot wins the “hospital layout” raffle. Early member Bob Standley passes away. In November, the club hosts an open house and runs the first train on a temporary loop on the new layout.

**2006**

In January, Gordon hosts a helix cutting party for the club layout. Work progresses on the BC&G. In June, charter member “Papa” Ben Pearlman passes away unexpectedly, having served 28 years as club treasurer and having provided clubhouse space twice.

**2007**

Work progresses on the BC&G, which is now open every Saturday to the public from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.. The club names the major display town Bennett in honor of Papa Ben. Ben’s brother Allyn Pearlman takes over the store. Early member Ralph Roddy passes away.

**2008**

On March 15, the Houston N’Crowd celebrates 30 years! Irene Pearlman decides to sell the building housing the shop and the club, and Allyn moves the store to its present location. Allyn offers space to the club, so N’Crowd dismantles the BC&G layout and recycles as much as possible at the new location, which opens Dec. 12. Hurricane Ike destroys the Galveston display layout.

**2009**

Work progresses on the new BC&G layout. In June, Bennett is in place with plexiglass protection and lighting in the main part of the store. On August 19 the new BC&G opens for service with a 12-car passenger special.

**2010**

The N Scale Collector national convention is held in

suburban Sugar Land in June. Work continues on the layout, and in August the club buys RailOP software to support operations on the BC&G.

**2011**

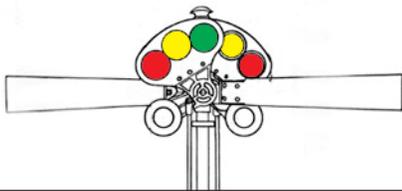
Houston N’Crowd hosts a Boy Scout troop to help with the Railroading Merit Badge program. Gordon presents a “history of the railroads clinic” for the troop. In May, a special run BC&G yellow modern boxcar is produced. Vince Walker paints four “new” BC&G locomotives, which roll out in June. On July 6 the club starts operations on the BC&G, followed on July 20 with a golden spike ceremony marking completion of the mainline. Robert “Doc” Moore makes a real gold spike in N scale, which charter member Gordon Bliss drives in the main at Bennett. Two BC&G locos meet pilot to pilot to mark the big event. In September, club member Steve Lancaster is contracted to build an O scale layout in the restaurant Tookies, which was damaged during Hurricane Ike. Later in the year Steve also rebuilds our Houston Union Station model.

**2012**

Vince Walker paints the BC&G Alco PA locomotives in a blue and gray passenger paint scheme. At the March operating session, Gordon debuts *The Bluebonnet*, the BC&G’s new six-car lightweight passenger train. *The Dome Express*, a six-car heavyweight passenger train debuts at the next session. Unfortunately, that session is cancelled due to the “Great Bam Bam Flood” when water pours down from the martial arts academy above the store. Work continues on the BC&G layout.

**2013**

On March 16, the N’Crowd Model Railroad Society celebrates 35 years of fun and friendship! Is everyone ready for another 35?



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# THE ORDERBOARD

November/December 2013



## New power for the BC&G

The Bayou City & Gulf Railroad has taken delivery of several six-axle locomotives from the Joe Kingsberry Paint Shop. In addition to the General Electric C44-9W pictured here on its first day on the property, two Electro-Motive SD60s have joined the roster.

The locomotives will be available for inspection by N'Crowd members at the November 20 membership meeting. Be sure to stop by and check out the latest BC&G power!