



News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

December 2010

**Houston N'Crowd and Bayou City & Gulf Wish You a Very Happy New Year!**



*Have you seen the progress made in 2010?  
Be sure to check it out in 2011!*



# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

*by Ted Davis, President*

At the November meeting, the Houston N'Crowd had the elections for 2011. It was a fun time had by all. The results are as follows: Ted Davis, President; Charlie Aselin, Vice President; Tom Marsh, Treasurer; Richard Bartlett, Secretary; Eddie Aycock, Board Member expires 2011; Steve Redd, Board Member expires 2012; Robert Moore, Board Member expires 2013; and last but not least Steve Lancaster, President-in-Ttraining.

A layout committee will be formed. Any members interested in being on the committee contact me. Charlie and I will pool all the names and come up with a committee that represents all facets of our club

The open house was a great success this year. On Saturday, Dec. 4, we had 36 registered visitors and Sunday saw 27 registered visitors. I would like to take time to thank the members who worked the open house Saturday: Richard, Harvey, Terry, Tom Wayburn, Dan, Charlie, Leslie and myself.

On Sunday the real motley crew was on hand: Mike, Richard, Charlie, Ray and myself. I would also like to thank everybody who showed up on

the Wednesday night before to clean up before the open house.

As always, Steve was at the clean up session and Thursday he was putting extra engines and cars on the layout. On Sunday, Steve put his circus train to work behind a set of BC&G locomotives following the common practice of using local power to pull the train. Richard put a coal drag

together and Charlie found a way to stop an unstoppable train was to put his engine on the program track and have it stop the main line. It's my impression that everybody had a good time.

The holiday party was another great time. Steve Lancaster tried but could not beat his record and settled for a tie of five trips to the buffet line. I heard a rumor next time Steve will be ordering off the menu. The combat gift exchange went off without a hitch.

It has been a great year and I look forward to a very exciting and fun filled new year. I would like to see us do more things such as trips to museums and layouts tours. I feel this would be a great time for fellowship and to share ideas with other modelers.



*Traditional N'Crowd holiday party fun at the Silver Palace Chinese Buffet!*



## Next N'Crowd Meeting: 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19

Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd.  
Come and check out progress on the BC&G!



**Houston N'Crowd**  
**Membership Meeting Report**  
**October 20, 2010**  
**Prepared by Rick Gonzalez, Secretary**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

- Before the membership meeting, the Board of Directors held a meeting. There was no business to discuss. In attendance were Gordon Bliss, Tom Marsh, Ted Davis, Eddie Aycock and Rick Gonzalez.

**Membership Meeting**

- Missing member call to Ray Byer.

**President's Report**

- Discussed election, passed out sample ballot.
- Members signed a get well card for Vern Burnett. We also signed a congratulations card for Steve Redd for his wedding.
- Door Prizes were awarded to Charlie Aselin, Eddie Aycock, and Gordon Bliss.

**Vice President's Report**

- The Vice President had no report.

**Treasurer's Report**

- As of Sept. 30, we had \$11,612.58 in our checking account. We paid out \$376.15, and had no deposits. This year, we have paid out \$5,673.53, most of it for layout expenses.
- We also transferred \$300 from our PayPal account to our checking account from car sales.
- Our Certificate of Deposit has \$4,973. We've earned \$12.60 in interest!
- Our CD will roll over in a few weeks, unless we elect to do something else with that money.

**Secretary's Report**

- Twelve members present for today's meeting.
- Chris Martin has paid for a family membership for 2011.

**Layout Master's Report**

- We'll have our Golden Spike ceremony when the last piece of track is electrified.
- Hidden track runs fine, except when Charlie forgot to throw the switches.
- The yard is ready to be electrified.
- Discussion on the possibility of placing cameras on the hidden tracks to keep track of trains.

**New Business**

- The T-Track modules need to be refurbished. Any

volunteers? We'll tackle this after our open house.

- The club's 2003 convention registration cars will be converted to track cleaning cars. The club will keep four, and the rest may be given out as door prizes.
- The Big Texas Train Show had 6,000 paid admissions, with 11,200-11,500 people thru the door. They'll know within a few weeks whether they'll have another show next year.
- The club's test track at the train show was well used, but not everybody knew about it.
- Kirk Poorman brought posters of the train disaster movie "Unstoppable" for those in attendance. Thanks Kirk!

**Old Business**

- No old business.
- Motion to adjourn passed at 8:10 p.m.

**Members in Attendance:**

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Richard Bartlett | 7. Tom Marsh       |
| 2. Tom Wayburn      | 8. Eddie Aycock    |
| 3. Ted Davis        | 9. Gordon Bliss    |
| 4. Rick Gonzalez    | 10. Bob Folser     |
| 5. Steve Lancaster  | 11. Kirk Poorman   |
| 6. Terry Hooks      | 12. Charlie Aselin |

**Houston N'Crowd**  
**Membership Meeting Report**  
**October 20, 2010**

**Prepared by Richard Bartlett acting for Rick Gonzalez, Secretary**

**Membership Meeting**

- Missing member call went to Tom Marsh who was apparently late due to attending a Rum Tasting. Tom didn't answer. He did arrive after the meeting started with a sly grin on his face!

**President's Report**

- Ted requested that all newsletter contributions be sent to Tom Marsh for next *Orderboard*.
- A single door prize was handed out to Dan Gutierrez
- Ted announced that the N'Crowd open house for the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Fall Layout Tours will be on Dec. 4, 2010. Discussion occurred regarding preparations for the OH. Charlie stated that no new construction would be planned but cleaning and detailing would continue. Gordon Bliss and Tom Marsh pointed out that the Oklahoma Train Show was at the same time. Discussion was that for next year we

would seek to not have this type of conflict for the N' Crowd open house if we participate in the San Jacinto tour.

- The N' Crowd Holiday Party is planned for the evening of Dec. 4, 2010, at the Silver Palace Chinese Buffet. Ted indicated reservations have been made for 15 people and a hand count suggested that of those present, at least 15 would be there.

- Ted handed out ballots for the coming year's club officers. Ballots were filled out and Ted asked Tom Marsh to tabulate.

- Officers for the N' Crowd for 2011 are:

President ..... Ted Davis

Vice President ..... Charlie Aselin

Treasurer ..... Tom Marsh

Secretary ..... Richard Bartlett

New Board Director ..... Robert Moore (expires 2013)

Eddie Aycock will continue as a director until the end of 2011.

- Club cars were brought out and several were sold.

### **Vice President's Report**

- Steve indicated he had no report.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- Tom stated we have \$12,049.29 in the checking account.

### **Secretary's Report**

- Today we have 15 members present for the meeting. (Richard Bartlett is substituting as Secretary for Rick Gonzalez.)

### **Layout Master's Report**

- Charlie stated that there will be no new construction until after Open House. Then, electrifying the new track will be top priority.
- There are always things to do, and volunteers are always appreciated.

### **New Business**

- Kirk Poorman began a presentation for an elevated passenger line to be added to the layout. Ted suggested that we re-activate a layout Committee and have that Committee review Kirk's presentation. Ted suggested that he and Charlie be standing members of this Committee and asked for volunteers. Terry Hooks, Mike Bodak and Richard Bartlett volunteered.
- Rail Ops: Eddie Aycock has requested that the

various sidings and buildings on the layout be named. Ted suggested using the layout Committee to select the names.

### **Old Business**

- Tom Marsh detailed the Big Texas Train Show results and indicated that, by and large, the participants thought it was a great success. However, when asked if the costs were recovered, Tom stated that with the participating club honoraria, the show would be approximately \$1,000 short. A motion to forgo the honorarium for the N Crowd was made by Richard Bartlett and seconded by several members present including Charlie Aselin. Motion was unanimously approved.

- Motion to adjourn passed at 8:06 p.m.

### **Members in Attendance:**

1. Richard Bartlett	9. Mike Anawaty
2. Terry Hooks	10. Eddie Aycock
3. Ted Davis	11. Tom Marsh
4. Charlie Aselin	12. Tom Wayburn
5. Dan Gutierrez	13. Robert Moore
6. Steve Lancaster	14. Dejan Suskavcevic
7. Gordon Bliss	15. Kirk Poorman
8. Mike Bodak	

## **Houston N' Crowd Membership Meeting Report December 15, 2010**

**Prepared by Rick Gonzalez, Secretary**

- Missing member call to Steve Redd, who did not answer. We then tried Dan Gutierrez, who also didn't answer.

### **President's Report**

- Christmas gifts and cards were handed out by Ted Davis.
- The Houston Railroad Museum sent us an honorarium of \$100 for our participation in the Big Texas Train Show. Thank you!
- Our president, Ted Davis, made a donation of \$500 to our club. Thank you very much!
- Allyn Pearlman has donated a \$250 gift certificate to the Club. Thanks to you, too!

### **Vice President's Report**

- No report from the Vice President.

### Secretary's Report

- Only nine members present for today's meeting, our lowest turnout this year. Must be the holidays.

### Treasurer's Report (via email)

- Chase Checking: 30 Oct to 30 Nov - Beginning Balance: \$12,049.20 - Paid one check: \$20.00 - No deposits. - Ending Balance: \$12,029.29.

### Layout Master's Report

- The club had a lot of visitors for our Open House. Last weekend the club went to see the movie "Unstoppable", about a runaway train. Hopefully nobody got any crazy ideas...
- There's always things to do on the layout, volunteers are always welcome. Charlie doesn't see much work getting done until after the New Year.

### New Business

- A complaint has been brought up by Papa Ben's of some club members interfering with the store's customers. If someone is in the layout room and has questions, it's okay to answer them. If they're looking to buy merchandise, please refer them to the store's staff.
- Ted received a call from Glen Holloway, Jr., whose father passed away. He was a member of the club a few years ago. His widow wants to know if we have any of his trains. If anybody has one of the club's older color pin charts, it would be very helpful.
- Club activities? Any ideas? A visit to Zube Park to see the live steamers was brought up.
- Charlie Aselin reported that he has started on his home layout.
- After the meeting, club members will head to the layout room and name some of the industries so that Eddie Aycock can enter them into RailOps.
- Motion to adjourn was passed at 7:55 p.m.

### Members in Attendance:

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ted Davis       | 6. Ray Byer       |
| 2. Rick Gonzalez   | 7. Terry Hooks    |
| 3. Steve Lancaster | 8. Charlie Aselin |
| 4. Robert Moore    | 9. Tom Wayburn    |
| 5. Eddie Aycock    |                   |



*Mike Bodak and Little Stinker (says so on the shirt!) helped out at the N'Crowd's booth at the Big Texas Train Show. The show was held Oct. 16-17; the 2011 show will take place Oct. 8-9 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.*

## Houston N'Crowd at the Big Texas Train Show

Houston N'Crowd's Test Track at the Big Texas Train Show was a hit with both attendees and vendors. According to one estimate, the club tested around 100 locomotives over the course of the two-day show.

The show, sponsored by Houston Railroad Museum/Gulf Coast Chapter NRHS, attracted about 11,000 visitors in all. In addition, 83 commercial exhibitors signed up, although two canceled and one was a no-show. However, two vendors signed up as walk-ins on Friday during setup.

A total of 425 tables were leased, of which 380 were for vendors and the rest were for participating clubs and organizations, including Operation Lifesaver, Houston Maritime Museum, Houston Children's Museum, Lone Star Region NMRA and more.

Altogether, 33 non-commercial exhibitors participated, including 14 operating model railroads. One of the model railroad clubs canceled at the last minute, but another club took their place. Operating clubs received honoraria ranging from \$100 to \$786 depending on their level of participation.

One local model railroad club signed up more than 20 new members, and the Lone Star Region NMRA added 16 new members.

All-in-all the organizers believe it was a successful first effort, and a lot of positive feedback was received from attendees, vendors and exhibitors. Many vendors commented on how well organized they thought the show had been, and most vendors and exhibitors indicated they would return in 2011. In fact, several wanted to sign up right then on the Sunday of the show.

The 2011 Houston Railroad Museum Big Texas Train Show will take place Oct. 8-9.



# More electrical gadgetry

by Hugh Boyd

Those of you who are regular readers of this publication will be getting the idea that I'm heavily into uncomplicated electrical gadgetry. Here are two items I have on my layout that add to my enjoyment of our hobby.

The first is Tony's RRampMeter. This instrument reports DCC voltage and amperage on my system. It also has a green LED that indicates current DCC operation and a red LED that indicates current DC operation. It has an upper and lower display to indicate volts and amps in three digits. I have mine installed immediately downstream from my Digitrax booster so electrically it reports pretty much everything that's going on. It operates on on-line power so it does not require an independent power supply. I needed two cables with banana connectors to get it up and running. I procured mine without the trimmings and mounted it under the fascia near my DCC booster. It's available with fancy extras to enhance its appearance, but I didn't bother.

My layout would function quite well without this item, but I find it reassuring that my system is not getting outside operating limits. In fact, on those rare occasions when I run eight locomotives concurrently, the amperage does not get much above 1.30 A. One thing I especially like: The display lights up as soon as my DCC system is on-line, thus indicating I can next select the train I wish to run.

The second item is TDP & Associates Inc.'s TrainSpeed, which reports train speed in scale miles per hour. It has a good sized LED display that reads out to three digits. It requires an independent power supply; AC or DC, six to 18 volts seems to be OK.

I needed to make a little panel to house the display. It comes in models with two or four sets of detectors that have to be set between the rails at specified distances apart. The detectors are connected to the display by 10-conductor ribbon cables. I acquired the four place model but messed up in the installation so that I only have train speed reporting on two tracks. In the installation I selected N-scale and MPH, but other scales and KPH are also selectable. The scale and MPH/KPH selected

determines the distance that must separate the detector pairs. I think best results are obtained by placing the detectors on a long straight level track.

Again, my layout would function quite well without this item, but I find it interesting to know my train's velocity. Many operators use this equipment when matching the throttle response for consisted locomotives. Now that's a little complicated for me.

These two items don't cost a fortune, are simple enough to install and provide useful feedback data. Yes, they do enhance my train operating experience.

I'm sure Allyn at Papa Ben's will be able to acquire both these items for your layout.



*RRampMeter, below; TrainSpeed, at right above; and at bottom right, both installed on Hugh's layout.*





# A great combo: Southern Plains N-Scale Convention and Oklahoma City Train Show *by Tom Marsh*

Oklahoma N-Rail put together another successful Southern Plains N-Scale Convention. Held each December in conjunction with the Oklahoma City Train Show, the convention offers prototype and layout tours along with the opportunity to participate in one of the region's largest N-Trak layouts and train show.

Here are a few photos from this year's gathering, which took place Dec. 2-5.



*Clockwise from above:* The Southern Plains N-Scale Convention included a visit to the former Santa Fe station and Round House Manufacturing, both in Shawnee, Okla. Roundhouse has been making bib overalls in the U.S. since 1903. The 1902 depot's architecture was inspired by a Scottish lighthouse. The N-scale BN snowplow and GP are standing by on the N-Trak layout at the Oklahoma City Train Show. Train rides at the LOCO club were among the convention activities. Amtrak's Heartland Flyer stops at the festively-decorated Ardmore station. Amtrak No. 500 is a GE P32-8 modified to run on a 20 percent biofuel, 80 percent diesel mix during a one-year test. Below, the OKC show in full swing.





# A G-scale layout in N scale

by Steve Lancaster

At the September N'Crowd meeting I offered to provide a small table top layout for the club to run at the Big Texas Train Show. This was an easy promise to keep since, at the time, I was only days from finishing a 2-ft. by 4-ft. oval set in a park. The only problem was, it wasn't N scale. It was G!

Of course I used N-scale track and rolling stock, but in G scale, the gauge of N-scale track is roughly seven and a half inches, which is a common gauge for the small trains that you can ride on that are found in many parks. So after adding G-scale figures and details by Ozark miniatures, along with scratchbuilt seats for four flatcars, my simple N-scale oval became a G-scale model of a 7 1/2 in. gauge park train.

Unfortunately, I was unable to acquire any sitting figures to pass for riders, so several people required an explanation before they got the joke!



*Above and below, a G-scale park, complete with 7 1/2 in. gauge park train!*



## TIME TABLE

**Happy Holidays from N'Crowd  
Mode Railroad Society!**

**December 15**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

**2011**

**January 19**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

**February 16**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

**February 19**

Greater Houston Train Show,  
Stafford Center

**March 16**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

**April 20**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

**May 18**

N'Crowd Membership Meeting  
Papa Ben's Train Place

## THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

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**Tom Marsh, Editor**

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**Visit our Web site:**

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# 2011

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