

News from Houston N'Crowd



THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2011



BC&G operating sessions are underway!

We have a job for you on the first Wednesday of each month.



"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

Busy times at hand for the N'Crowd

Welcome to the September/October issue of *The Orderboard*. Steve Lancaster has submitted another fine article; if he is not careful we will promote him from just a freelance contributor to a staff member with a regular column! Also in this issue, see the second installment in Joe Kingberry's load and detailing series.

On another front, Leslie Bodak is working on an index of past *Orderboard* issues. For the future, all contributions are welcome!

We still have two undelivered polo shirts in stock, as the members who requested them have not picked them up. These members should contact the Quartermaster soon so we can consider the next club regalia project.

Editor and Webmaster Tom Marsh recently updated the website to include second quarter 2011 photos of our layout construction project and an updated events calendar. The calendar now extends into 2012, although we still need to pick a date for the holiday party. Tom also is taking suggestions for the 2012 N'Crowd print calendar: What's your favorite scene on the BC&G? Let us know!

The next web update will have two more of our special run cars. The rediscovered items, sent to us by former member Loren Neufeld, are the Texas City Terminal Railway Co. boxcar by Micro-Trains and the Exxon tank cars kits with two different road numbers by Roundhouse.

Speaking of cars, I hope that at the next board meeting we will decide how many of the recently

assembled, BC&G-decorated Micro-Train kit cars can be sold to members. We also have custom-lettered Atlas BC&G ACF Precision Design boxcars for sale.

Layout Master Charlie Aselin reports that recent developments include Steve committing to repairs to Loren's aging Union Station model. Steve wants to add some details, including lights and fencing. Charlie continues to work on the section of track representing street running in the Union Station area. Soon we will finalize the layout of city streets and building placement.

Harvey Stalarow and I spent time updating the club locomotive roster and company store inventory. The inventory is on page 6; the roster will appear in the next issue. We also have included a revised Truck Pin Chart this month.

Next month promises to be an "event-full" month as the NMRA open house season starts in mid-October. The club will be taking part by having an open house. Our date has not been set yet but is usually the first weekend of December.

However, first we have the Big Texas Train Show on Oct. 8-9 to look forward to; N'Crowd will be taking part by manning three tables. Steve plans to have a small layout for display and like last year we will have the multi-scale test track available for use by show attendees.

In closing, we wish Happy Birthday to Eric Baughman and Dominic Valdez, and we welcome our newest member, Justin Coder.



Next N'Crowd Meeting:
7 p.m., Wednesday, September 21

Next BC&G Operating Session:
7 p.m., Wednesday, October 5

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

Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report August 17, 2011 Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

President Ted Davis called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Ted re-announced Samuel Townsell as a new member and noted some membership renewals. Drawings for two door prizes were held and Terry Hooks won a D&RGW Cookie Box car while Ted won a Texgas tank car donated by Richard Bartlett.

President's report: The N'Crowd received official notice that they will have three tables and a power hookup as requested at the Big Texas Train Show. Ted called for a new meeting of the 35th Anniversary Mini-Con Committee. It was decided that the meeting would be on 31 August at 7:00 p.m. at Fuzzy's Pizza.

Vice President's report: Nothing new to report.

Treasurer's Report: Tom Marsh reported a beginning checking balance for July of \$12,554.51 and after income and expenditures, the ending balance was \$12,029.57. The treasurer also indicated that the applications for obtaining tax-exempt status for the club have been on hold while other duties were being performed. Ted noted that these same papers had been submitted by Tom for Lone Star Region Division 8 NMRA in his capacity as their treasurer, but Tom noted that the documents being prepared for Division 8 were for reinstatement of the group's corporate status with the State of Texas and were not related directly to obtaining tax-exempt status for the group.

Secretary's report: Fifteen members present for this meeting, which was down from the 19 present last month. Members present and signed in included: Ted Davis, Charlie Aselin, Tom Marsh, Richard Bartlett, Terry Hooks, Ray Byer, Eddie Aycock, Gordon Bliss, Harvey Stalarow, Tom Wayburn, Joe Kingsberry, Robert "Doc" Moore, Dejan Suskavcevic, James Senneff and Steve Lancaster.

Layout Master's Report: Charlie reported some scenery progress in the Bayou City area, and that the pump jacks were repaired by Ray Byer just before the meeting.

New Business: Tom Marsh announced that the Lone Star Region Division 8 NMRA will hold the clinic "Trees II" at the Houston Railroad Museum this Saturday, 20 August, at 10:00 a.m. Eddie and Gordon discussed the N'Crowd Ops session #2, which occurred on 4 August. Present were members Dejan Suskavcevic, Charlie Aselin, Richard Bartlett, Tom Wayburn, Steve Lancaster.

Gordon and Eddie ran the session. Eddie indicated that this session ran much smoother as he "dialed back" the level of sophistication. Tom Marsh asked if people could bring their own trains, and Eddie indicated that they would be welcome as either a through train or as a multi-stop pickup and drop off train. The next session, OP3, will be on 7 September. Both Eddie and Gordon expressed that inexperience makes no difference; members should just come and enjoy.

Gordon and Eddie described an Arkansas trip they took recently for local operating sessions. One such was the Hog RR, an HO layout with no scenery but a true 4 percent grade modeled on Tennessee Pass in Colorado. They described a three-engine lashup to make the grade, a Challenger and two additional steam engines, one mid-train and one at the end. They coordinated the throttles going up the grade. This coordinated action on the layout blew them away. They also described two additional layouts where they participated, one HO and one N. The one N-scale layout was 25 ft. x 50 ft. in a basement and modeled the Frisco and MoPac. The owner was a prototype specialist with details documented from old photos, etc. However, the layout was in a sad shape. Trains did not run well due to poor track, locomotive and rolling stock maintenance. Gordon indicated that he always cleans his tracks and the engines he plans to use before each op session at his layout.

Old Business: Tom Wayburn let the cat out of the bag for Steve Lancaster. Steve went on to tell us about a Houston Chronicle article that described his layout work at Tookie's reopened restaurant in Seabrook. Members wanted to know if Steve had a lifetime bonus of free meals at Tookie's. Steve mentioned something about lots of burgers...

Ted described going through his father-in-law's stuff and found that his grandfather-in-law was a Frisco worker and fell off a boxcar and broke his leg. Certainly fewer than six degrees of separation there between Ted and railroad work!

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.



Gordon Bliss presented a clinic on locomotive cleaning and maintenance after the August 17 membership meeting.

The Tookie's Job

by Steve Lancaster

Apparently this Tookie's place was a pretty big deal, though I had never heard of the restaurant before head chef and general manager Ali Velasco called Papa Ben's looking for someone to install an around-the-room O-gauge shelf layout in the main dining room.

Located just north of the Kemah Bridge in Seabrook, the iconic burger joint was devastated by Hurricane Ike. Some feared permanently so. I must admit, when I first set foot inside to take measurements and make drawings, I was skeptical myself. However, after three months of work in the sweltering heat by a lot of talented people, the place came back together quite nicely.

I spent the first two months of the job at home building the 120 feet of shelving, including three 90-degree corners, two 45-degree corners, a nasty s-curve, and three scratchbuilt bridges. I used plain 1-ft. by 8-ft. pine boards ripped to six inches wide and store-bought corbels to brace them level.

Based on the previous décor of roughhewn wood, the selectively chaotic scattering of eccentric items such as old signs covering the walls and traffic signals hanging like chandeliers, the shelves needed to look sturdy but not factory milled and polished. That, I believe, would have only detracted from the overall look of the place. What a great excuse not to sweat the minor mistakes and imperfections! If only they could all be that way.

Although this job more resembled the mill-work installation from my old contracting days than a modeling project, I did get to stretch my modeling legs a bit with the bridges. They were cobbled together from 1-ft. by 4-ft. boards, strip wood, dowels and quarter inch underlayment plywood, giving them more of a toy-like appearance than that of a scale model, but again, that more closely matches the existing décor.

The Tookie's train appeared in a KTRK Channel 13 news report on Sept. 2.



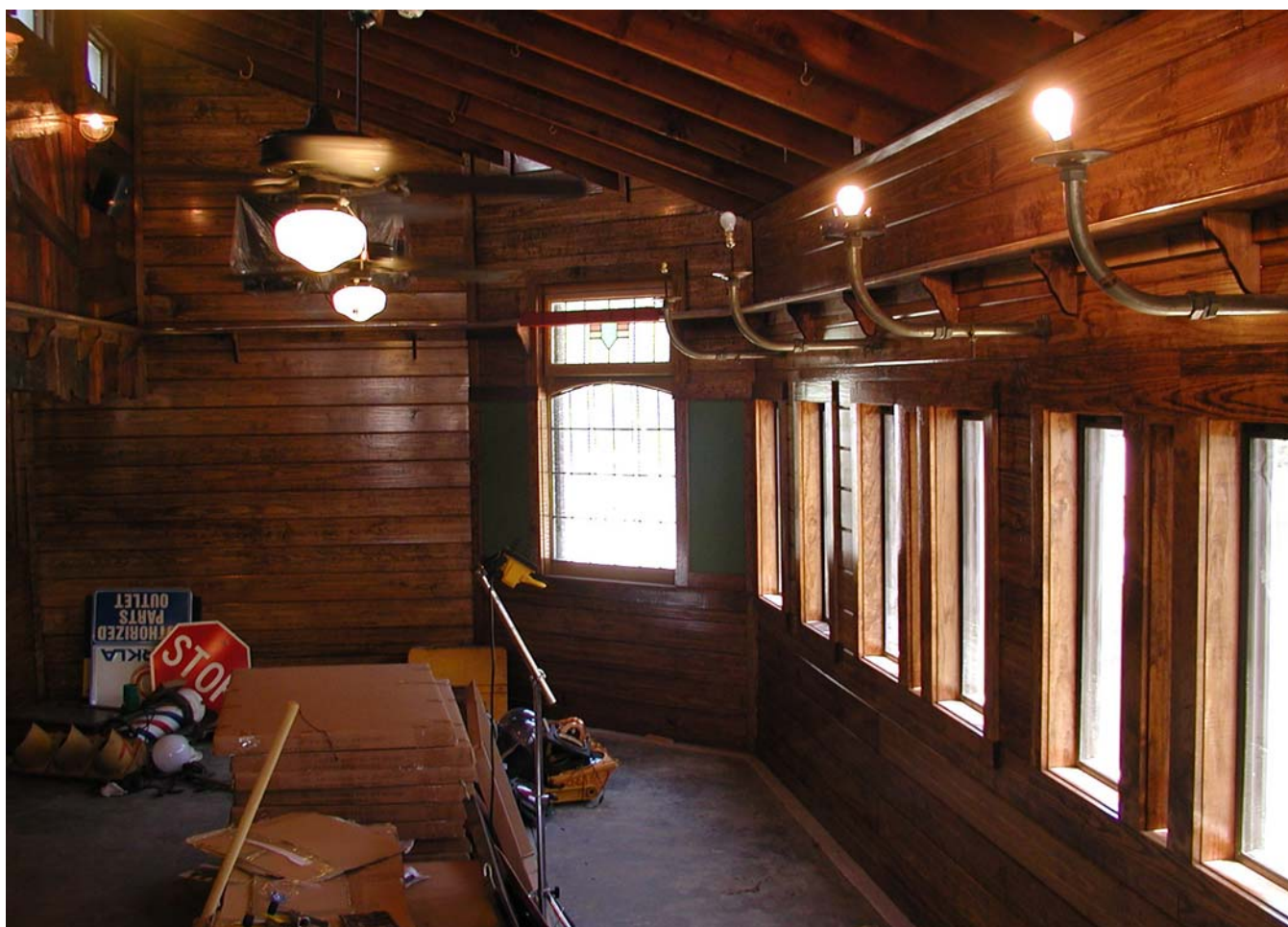
The main dining room at Tookie's with post-Hurricane Ike restoration work underway.



Among the challenges associated with the Tookie's job were bridging windows and and a tight S-curve.



The O-gauge shelf layout at Tookie's is nearing completion in these photos.



Waste not, want not... for boxcar loads

by Joe Kingsberry

Now that I'm no longer the newest member of the N'Crowd, I feel more comfortable writing articles for the newsletter. This assignment, we'll discuss waste paper loads.

We have all seen boxcars moving in trains and yards full of waste paper (newsprint and magazines) headed back to mills and other facilities to be recycled into "new" paper. Some of these boxcars are so jammed with paper, the doors can't be closed completely.

It's easy to make these loads. I started with a Plastruct 3/8-in. square tube, which has an inside dimension of about 1/4-in., or 3-ft. 6-in. in N scale. I cut the tube into several N-scale 5-ft. sections. A small, deep-sided pan or dish is also needed, along with white glue (Elmer's), water and newsprint.

Cut or tear the paper into small strips or, better yet, if you own a shredder the paper bits can be a lot more uniform.

Mix water and white glue in the pan and place a round of shredded paper into the pan. Compact the paper into the Plastruct sections and allow to dry. Push the formed paper "brick"



Waste paper loads for boxcars are easy to make using Plastruct square tubes for forms.

through the sections. Now you have waste paper bundles ready to be loaded on to your boxcars to be returned to the mills.

Houston N'Crowd Company Store Inventory - August 2011

Type	Description	Status	Qty in Stock
car	BC&G Atlas 50-ft precision design yellow/blue boxcar	for sale	35
car	Comanche & Indian Gap Micro-Trains 40-ft wood reefer	for sale	4
car	Exxon Roundhouse modern tank car kit	to layout	1
car	Exxon Roundhouse modern tank car kit	to N'Crowd museum	1
car	Exxon Roundhouse modern tank car kit 2 different numbers	pending sale	2
car	Exxon Roundhouse modern tank car kit 2 different numbers	TBD	4
car	LSR-NMRA Intermountain Waco, Austin & Bryan 50-ft double door boxcar	for sale	59
car	LSR-NMRA Micro-Trains Ironhead Timber Co. wood boxcar 2-packs	for sale	6 sets
car	SA&AP Micro-Trains wood boxcar 2-packs	for sale	7 sets
car	Texas City Terminal Railway Co. Micro-Trains 40-ft boxcar	for sale	3
car	Texas City Terminal Railway Co. Micro-Trains 40-ft boxcar	pending sale	2
regalia	"N to the Future" lapel pin	for sale	17
regalia	"N to the Future" patch	for sale	166
regalia	Houston N'Crowd Bayou City & Gulf patch	for sale	32

Houston N'Crowd
35th Anniversary Committee Meeting Report
August 31, 2011
 Prepared by Tom Marsh

1. Meeting called to order 31 August at Fuzzy's Pizza by Ted Davis at 7:03 p.m.

2. Attending committee members: Ted Davis, Ray Byer, Richard Bartlett, Gordon Bliss and Tom Marsh

3. Attending N'Crowd members: Charles Aselin and Harvey Stalarow

4. Discussion of TSRR excursion proposal; concluded that the cost and time involved put it outside the scope of the event. However, strong support for an N'Crowd trip to TSRR in spring 2012.

5. Discussed tentative schedule, agreed tentative revisions (possible times added for this document):

Thursday

Registration: all day

Local Tour: Metro Light Rail morning?; HALS/Zube Park lunch/afternoon?

Meet 'N Greet/Swap Meet: evening

Friday

Registration: all day

Clinics: mid-morning

N-Trak/Big Texas Train Show setup: afternoon/evening

Self-guided layout tour: afternoon

Saturday

N-Trak operations: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Contest registration and display: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Contest display, judging and awards preparation: 12 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Clinics: 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Contest entry pick up: 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Awards/Manufacturer event: 6 p.m.

Sunday

N-Trak operations: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

N-Trak/BTTS tear down: 4 p.m. to finish

6. Discussed special run cars and agreed a prototype "transition era" box car is the best candidate; Tom noted that 40-ft. box cars built in the late 1950s were in grain service to at least the mid-to-late 1970s to Galveston on the B-RI and MoPac and similar age SSW Blue Streak Fast Freight 40-ft. box cars were in sugar train service between Galveston and Sugar Land through about the same time. A Blue Streak box car generated the most interest, with T&NO and T&P box cars also considered.

7. Some early action items remain outstanding; Tom Marsh to follow-up:

a. Recruit an experienced N-Trak layout master, possibly from NWX?

b. Contact Jim FitzGerald (N-Trak) about possible participation

c. Get information/pricing/minimums on special run private cars; George Hollwedel of Prototype N-Scale Models has offered to assist with this effort

8. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Houston N'Crowd Truck Pin Color Chart: August 2011

	Purple	Brown	Gray	Silver	White	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange
Red	Vincent Walker	Eddie Aycock	Mike & Leslie Bodak	James Senneff	Steve Redd	Rick Gonzales	Steve Lancaster	Vince Walker	Gordon Bliss
Orange									Joe Kingsberry
Yellow			Ray Byer	N/A			Tom Wayburn	Ted Davis	
Blue			Charlie Aselin		Tom Marsh	Harvey Stalarow			
Green			Doc Moore	Dominic Valdez	Al Hague	Marty Giesecke			
White				Dan Gutierrez					
Silver				Terry Hooks					
Gray			Rick Townsend						
Brown									
Purple	N'Crowd Equipment								

BC&G JOBS LIST

ALWAYS BE SAFE! Members are encouraged to participate in the construction of the Bayou City & Gulf. Here are some suggested, fun activities!

Easy: No need to ask

Take out the trash
Vacuum the floor
Put up tools
Organize loose supplies

More challenging: Pre-planning and proper tools required

Install bus and feeder wires where needed
Ballast track
Propose, get approval for and build a structure
Detail a section of backdrop
Stop by and hang out - per photo below

When in doubt or if you have any questions or suggestions:

**Call Charlie at 832-578-4900
or Ted at 713-721-8960**

And remember: ALWAYS BE SAFE!



TIME TABLE

Mark your calendar now for these upcoming events!

September 21

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

October 5

BC&G Operating Session
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

October 8-9

Houston Railroad Museum's Big Texas Train Show, George R. Brown Convention Center

October 19

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

November 2

BC&G Operating Session
7 p.m., Papa Ben's Train Place

November 5

Fifth Annual George Bush Presidential Library "Railroading in Texas" program

November 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
7 p.m. Papa Ben's Train Place

THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Published as close to monthly (but no promises!) as possible for members and friends of N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc., Houston, Texas.

Tom Marsh, Editor

Send newsletter contributions to: tom@houstonNcrowd.org. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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