

News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

March/April 2012



## New BC&G streamliner debuts! *By Gordon Bliss*

Bayou City & Gulf rolled out its new streamliner *The Bluebonnet* at the N'Crowd's March 7 operating session. Fresh out of the BC&G shops were the sleek PA-1 and PB-1 locomotives No. 2201, painted by club member Vincent Walker in the BC&G passenger livery. A set of six lightweight cars also rolled out of the shop, including RPO No. 1121, dormitory-lounge No. 71, sleeper *Galveston*, full dome-lounge *Austin*, sleeper *Texas City* and observation-lounge *Bluebonnet*. The new streamlined cars were painted by member Gordon Bliss.

New member Samuel Townsell was the engineer on the streamliner's maiden run, which departed westbound on time from Bayou City's Union Station as BC&G No. 1. A couple of foaming railfans caught No. 1 departing Austin, and making the station stop in Bennett.

Rumor has it that with the delivery of the new lightweight cars, the original heavyweight equipment has gone into the BC&G shop to be overhauled and emerge as *The Dome Express*.

*Below left, No. 1 speeds through Austin. Above and below right, the new streamlined Bluebonnet at Bennet on the BC&G.*



# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

## Short column, big meaning

I recently wondered what the definition of a hobby was, so I turned to the handy copy of Webster's Dictionary on my desk. In this quest I found that the word "hobby" has several older meanings, such a small horse, a falcon and even a stupid fellow. Sometimes I feel that I fit the third meaning because of all the time and money I spend on model railroading (laughter OK here!).

The modern meaning that we commonly associate with the word is "an activity engaged in primarily for pleasure also to pursue a favorite pastime or obsession."

Below is a space for you to make note of your own:

We all know that there are too many elements of our hobby to name here, operating, building the models, constructing the layout, running trains and more. Not everyone gets the same enjoyment from the same parts. Sometimes we lose sight of the best reason to engage in the hobby, which is to have FUN! Don't become "de-railed" in your model railroading pursuits.

As of this writing, most of our members have renewed their memberships, but if you have not, it's not too late to reenlist!

Welcome to new members James Dikeman and Stephen Gaydos. In closing, we send birthday wishes to Barry Miles, Steve Redd, Ted Davis and Charlie Aselin. I don't know about the others but I feel older if not wiser!

### Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report Jan. 18, 2012

Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

President Ted Davis was a no show, so VP Steve Lancaster began the meeting with our door prize drawing at 7:07 p.m. Lindsay Bodak won an NMRA 2012 calendar and Gordon Bliss won a car. Ted was the missing member call, and Ray Byer dialed him repeatedly during the meeting.

**President's Report:** Steve made the announcement that there was no report from Ted, which was followed by an ovation by some.

**Vice President's Report:** Steve reported that he had begun the sad task of tearing down Ben Pearlman's layout on Tuesday. Otherwise, except for the layout article in *The Orderboard*, he had nothing new.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock was ill, and former Treasurer Tom Marsh forgot the final 2011 stats, so there was no treasurer's report.

**Secretary's Report:** We had 20 members present for this meeting, which was up from our previous meeting number of 13. Members present included: Richard Bartlett, Al Hague, Gordon Bliss, Robert "Doc" Moore, Dan Gutierrez, James Senneth, Terry Hooks, Ray Byer, Justin Corder, Charlie Aselin, Mike, Leslie and Lindsay Bodak, Rick Gonzales, Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Marsh, Joe Kingsberry, Harvey Stalarow, Tom Wayburn and Steve Lancaster.

**Layout Master's Report:** Layout Master Charlie Aselin reported that the engine facility is moving right along at a good clip. Charlie also indicated that the Bayou City area was progressing as well. The naming of the refinery was tabled by Steve. A member suggested that it be named for Terry Hooks to honor him for all his work on the layout.



**N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:**  
March 21 / April 18 / May 16

**BC&G Operating Sessions:**  
April 4 / May 2 / June 6

Meetings and operating sessions start at 7 p.m. at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Come and check out progress on the BC&G!

Tom Wayburn sought support for the "Peak Oil" name, but several members objected as they consider the name a political statement.

**Other Business:** Ray Byer provided information on several upcoming events, such as San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's Greater Houston Train Show Feb. 18 in Stafford, and the LSR Convention in June. Steve was wondering if the club was going to have a presence at the San Jac show, but no one knew.

**New Business:** Steve offered a number of different styles of (rather high priced) cars from the Keller collection that are on consignment to Papa Ben's. Then some N'Crowd special run cars were almost offered. Since no one knew the cost for the club cars, none were sold and an auction for these cars was proposed for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**Houston N'Crowd  
Membership Meeting Report  
Feb. 15, 2012  
Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary**

President Ted Davis opened the meeting at 7 p.m. on the dot. Door prizes were drawn and Charlie won a poster, James Dikeman won a car and Richard Bartlett won a dozer. Leslie Bodak was the missing member call, but she didn't answer. A message was left by all present.

**President's Report:** Ted announced that N'Crowd will have two tables at the San Jacinto show on Saturday, Feb. 18. There will be a test track as well as Richard's dual N and HO gauge DCC show track. Ted offered several clock face designs for an N'Crowd BC&G clock and Dan Gutierrez asked that "Railroad" be added to one of the designs. Club members will be able to choose from among various designs at the next meeting. Ted re-offered the cars that were not sold last month. No takers. Ted asked Tom Marsh about the decals for BC&G. According to the company that makes the decals, the art needs to be converted to vector files and volunteers were sought to revise the artwork if they had the skills. The current file is a Photoshop document. Ted indicated that the Keller estate provided the blue N'Crowd tank cars that were sold at last month's meeting, and then found another and offered it to club members for \$75.00. Ted announced that Dejan Suskavcevic and his family were sworn in as new U.S. citizens. All congratulated Dejan. Ted then introduced Mike Dikeman as a new member, and Mike was welcomed by all.

**Vice President's Report:** Nothing to report.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported a beginning balance of \$11,375.10 for Jan 1 with deposits of \$598.00 and checks totaling \$11.80 for a final balance of

\$11,961.30. As of the meeting, Eddie indicated the club checking balance was \$12,052.30, CD is valued at \$4,804 and we have \$329.72 in Papa Ben's gift certificates.

**Secretary's Report:** We had 20 members present for this meeting, which was the same number as our previous meeting, but with some different members. Members present included: Ted Davis, Richard Bartlett, Al Hague, Gordon Bliss, Eddie Aycock, Dan Gutierrez, James Dikeman, Ray Byers, Justin Corder, Charlie Aselin, Mike and Lindsay Bodak, Rick Townsend, Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Marsh, Vince Walker, Harvey Stalarow, Tom Wayburn, Dominic Valdez and Steve Lancaster.

**Layout Master's Report:** The subject of the refinery name was reopened from the last meeting. Different names were proposed but the final decision is still pending; the motion was tabled until the refinery is finished. Tom Marsh made a motion to NOT change the turnout controls in the refinery area. Motion was seconded, discussed and then the motion carried unanimously. The money spent on the refinery was brought up by Ted, who indicated that there apparently is no record of what has or has not completed on the refinery or what money was spent. Al Hague suggested that Tom Wayburn be asked to come in and present his refinery as it is, and provide the group with his plan and let the group decide. A motion was made to have Al, Charlie Aselin and Ted meet with Tom to discuss and define the refinery project. The motion carried with unanimous support. Harvey pointed out that the BC&G roundhouse is going really well; Richard indicated he had installed the electroluminescent (EL) wire lights in the structure just before the meeting.

**Op Sessions:** Operations for the Feb. 1 session required a lot of additional preparation work due to some member(s) moving cars around. Eddie has decided that all cars that will be used for OP Sessions will be taken off the layout afterwards and put in car boxes so that they will be readily available for setup just before the next OP Session. Eddie also indicated that some engines were misprogrammed, and some are in need of Micro-Trains couplers.

**Other Business:** On Feb. 19, Al Hague will have his N scale layout open for visiting as part of San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's Greater Houston Train Show. Barry Boggs, who lives near Al, will also be having an open house.

Dominic Valdez reported on Eddie Carroll's HO layout, which is about 3000 sq. ft.

**Show and Tell:** Train Dog fought his way out of the mouth of a pitbull and lost a tooth in the process.

**Old Business:** What to do for the 35th anniversary? The committee will have meeting on March 7 at 6:00 p.m. before the next OP session.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.



# Raising the roof on the BC&G



Construction of the BC&G roundhouse at Bayou City Yard is proceeding at a rapid pace under the direction of prime contractor (and N'Crowd secretary) Richard Bartlett.

Check out Richard's progress here from early January to mid-March, and head on over to Papa Ben's soon to see other recent progress on the new Bayou City & Gulf!

*At left, Richard and the roundhouse in early January 2012.*

*At left below, the roundhouse on Jan. 28.*

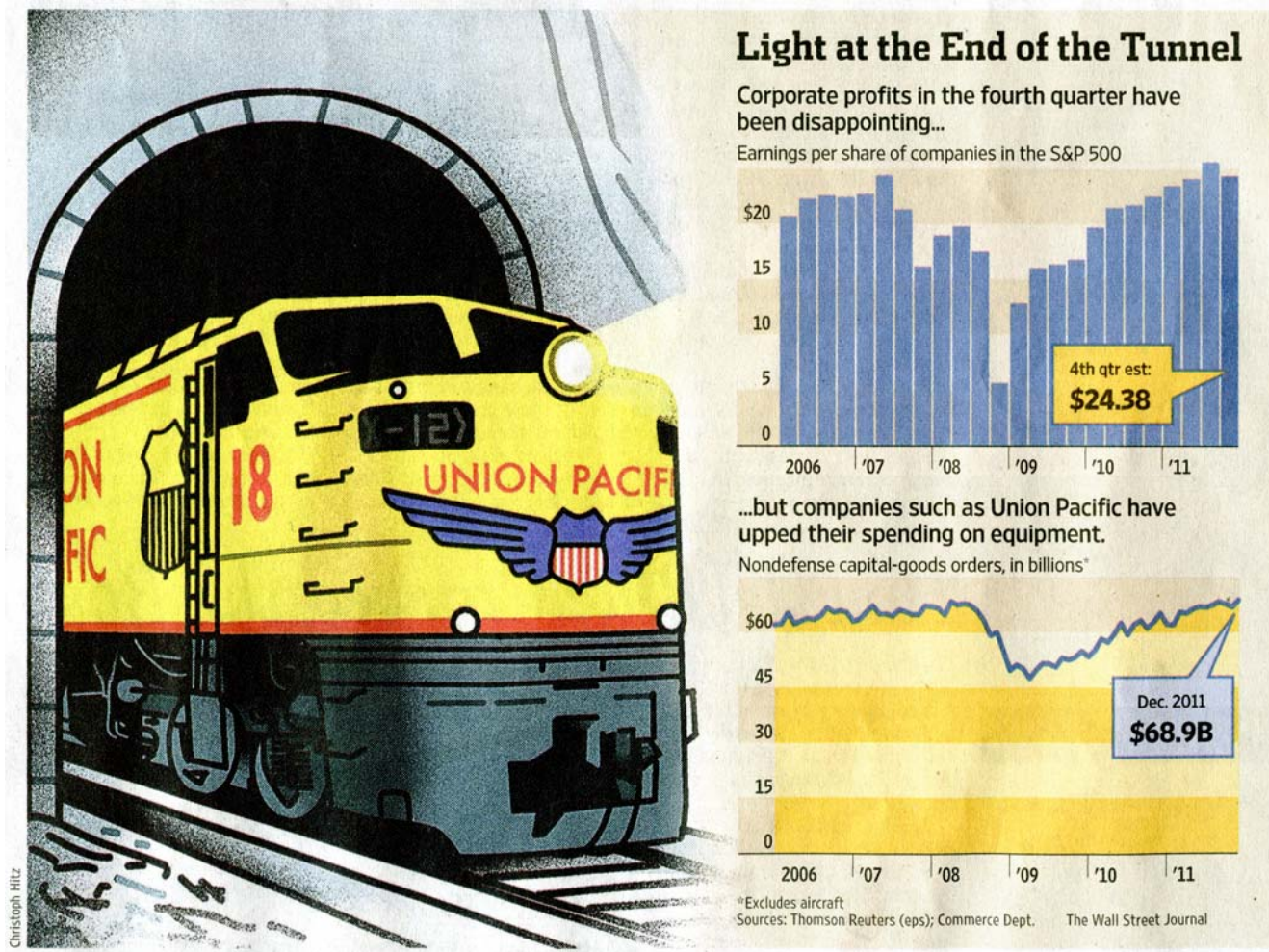
*At right below, progress as of Feb. 8.*

*Bottom left, Feb. 15 and the electroluminescent wire lights are in place.*

*Bottom right, raising the roof on March 10.*







## New turbines for Union Pacific! *by Tom Marsh*

Well, it is the April issue, but you probably weren't fooled. The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran a story titled "U.S. Market Shines Brighter" with the gas-turbine graphic reproduced above. The authors noted that "Union Pacific Co. expects to buy twice as many locomotives this year, spending upward of \$400 million."

Apparently the WSJ art department likes the look of classic 1960s locos more than the utilitarian countenance of modern motive power.

The photo at right shows the real gas turbine-electric locomotive (GTEL) No. 18 stored in Kansas City in July 1981. At the time, the locomotive was slated for a museum that never materialized. The locomotive is now displayed at the Illinois Railway Museum. It was cosmetically restored in 2008.

No. 18 was built in 1960 and retired 10 years later. No ready-to-run N-scale model of this particular GTEL design has been produced, but Con-Cor is re-releasing its UP "Veranda" turbines in the near future; orders are being taken now. The photo of the pre-production sample at bottom right was taken at the 2010 National Model Railroad Association National Convention in Milwaukee. Production models will come in DC or DCC versions and with finer handrails, according to Con-Cor.





# The Downe and Owl is Down and Out

by Steve Lancaster

All good things must come to an end. Such has been the case with Ben Pearlman's freelanced N-scale Santa Fe offshoot. Ben's wife Irene had been asking us for some time to disassemble the majority of the layout, leaving only a small portion for posterity's sake. In early February, after the hectic Christmas season had passed, I managed to tear out the doomed real estate over a total of four days.

The original plan was to lay new loops of track at either end of the mountain section so that trains could continue to run the line. However, Irene decided to chuck the whole thing, instead

preferring to repurpose the entire room. The remainder of the layout was removed in two days.

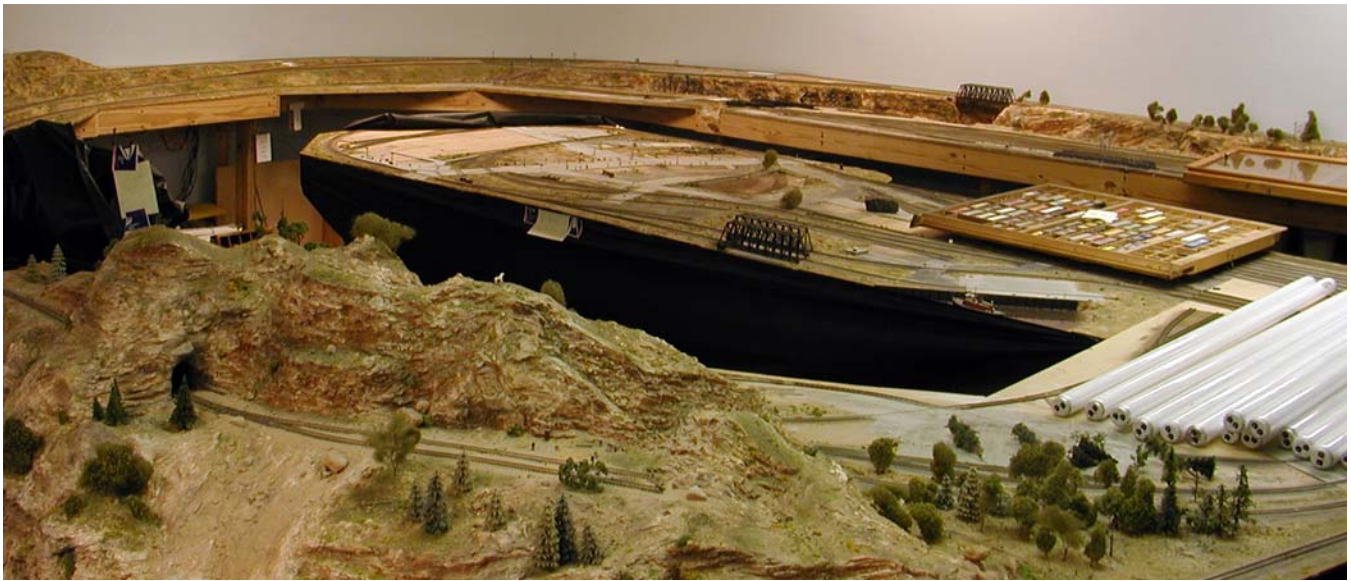
If there is a positive side to this, it is that all of the rolling stock, buildings, Digitrax equipment, and hundreds of detail parts have been saved and consigned to Papa Ben's for sale, ensuring that they will go on to grace many a layout for decades to come.

Irene was adamant that the mountains be spared, if possible, because they were built by Gil Freitag. I'm happy to report that most of the pieces have found new homes.



*This page and next: end of the line, before, during and after.*



[illegible]





*The 1907 I-GN depot in New Braunfels, seen here in 1994. Photo by Tom Marsh*

## Road trip to New Braunfels

*by Mike Bodak*

My wife Leslie and I made a road trip to the New Braunfels Model Railroad Jamboree over the weekend of March 17. Our morning started early at 4 a.m. and we were on the road and headed west by 5:30 a.m.. We arrived about 9:20 a.m. at a half-full parking lot. We entered the show a little after 10 a.m. as they had some technical difficulties getting open. At \$7 for adults, the cost was about average for a show. The event is sponsored annually by the New Braunfels Historic Railroad and Modelers Society (NBHRMS).

The hall had a stage on one side and five rows of booths in the rest of the room. On the stage were a couple of N-scale modular layouts, including one from the San Antonio club. Also on stage was a vendor table with more Santa Fe stuff in one place than I have ever seen (Gordon would be happy). While walking through the rows of vendors there appeared to be a great deal of old Tyco trains in HO and a decent amount of N scale. The vendors were some of the same as from past Houston-area train shows.

Prices were about the same as other shows. The only thing I found I could not live without was a GRR pen and pencil set. Leslie bought an SP book and that was it. We looked around for about a hour and left. We were disappointed that they had no layout tours.

After lunch at Oma's Haus, Leslie and I went to the NBHRMS train museum at the old I-GN (MP) depot. They have a nice HO layout which is DC only, and an old box car with a children's working/interactive N-scale layout and a Marklin layout.

After leaving New Braunfels, we headed to Flatonia. We met up with Tommy Shults from the Flatonia Historic Rail Park and discussed the new 11,000 foot siding going in there. When we left Flatonia, we headed to El Campo with scanner in hand to chase the KCS on the Macaroni Line. We saw one train at mile post 23 going south through a detector. Our next stop was Rosenberg, where not much was happening, but we did get a few pictures of a UP cement drag headed out. By now we were both beat, so we headed home. All-in-all the trip was a 10 on a 1 to 10 scale.



## TIME TABLE

2012

### March 21

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

### April 4

BC&G operating session

### April 18

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

### April 21

NMRA LSR Division 8 Chili Cook-off, Alvin Depot

### April 20-21

Rosenberg Railroad Museum Rail Fest 2012 and 24 Hours of Rosenberg Rail

### May 2

BC&G operating session

### May 16

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

### June 6

BC&G operating session

## THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Published fairly regularly 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](http://www.houstonNcrowd.org)

Copyright © 2012 N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc.