

News from Houston N'Crowd

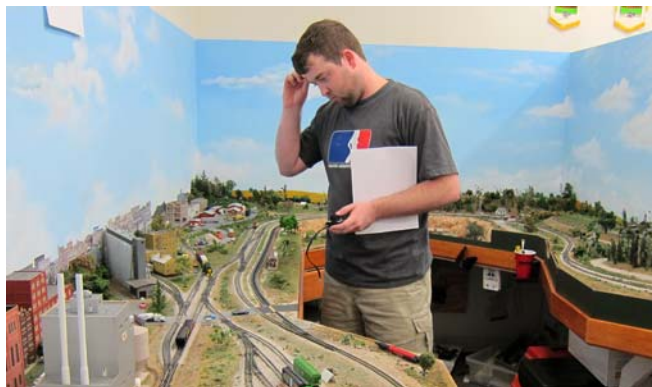


THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2012



We have a throttle for you at a BC&G operating session!



"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

Order from chaos?

Boy am I tired!

I just spent a lot of time over the past few days trying to resolve the issue of who is a current at-large board member. Those of you who were at last month's meeting will remember that we were a ball of confusion about this.

Secretary Richard Bartlett's research of the 2011 minutes after the meeting did not answer the overall question, "Why would we elect two at large board members in one year?" (This happened on last year's ballot, with both Joe Kingsberry and Ray Byer being elected to different terms.) A possible explanation would be a current board member winning another post, resulting in the need to fill the vacancy. Another possibility would be the resignation of a board member.

I thought Eddie Aycock's being elected treasurer was the reason we needed a replacement board member, but my records show his board membership expired at the end of 2011 anyway. It was also suggested that Steve Redd had resigned, but I talked to him and he said he had not resigned but would do so if it helped sort it all out. The record shows that Steve was elected to serve on the board from 2010 to 2012.

This means that we were not electing a board member to finish either Eddie or Steve's terms, but a new member to the board to serve until 2014. I believe that person to be Ray Byer, based on a review of the 2012 vote tally. That still leaves us

with the question of why we voted in two at-large board members last year.

Based on my study of the newsletters and other information as far back as 2006, I believe the correct list of current at-large board members is as follows (the list published in the July/August issue of the *The Orderboard* was not correct):

Board Member (term ends 2012) Steve Redd

Board Member (term ends 2013) Joe Kingsberry

Board Member (term ends 2014) Ray Byer

So, at our next meeting, we will need to elect someone to serve as an at-large board member for the 2013 to 2015 term, replacing Steve, whose term is ending.

I find it interesting that at-large board members have trouble remembering their terms. Maybe we need to consider simplifying the bylaws.

There's more to do!

In other matters, we need someone to organize volunteers for the upcoming open house tour. Our published open dates for the annual layout tours sponsored by San Jacinto Model Railroad Club are Saturday, Dec. 1 and Sunday, Dec. 2.

We also need a volunteer to arrange for a place for us to hold our annual end-of-year holiday party. Your ideas and assistance are welcome!

Finally, we wish to extend happy birthday greetings to Eric Baughman and Dominic Valdez. Also note that Samuel Townsell and Justin Coder have been members for a year now!



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:
October 17 / November 21 / December 19

BC&G Operating Sessions:
TBA - come to the next meeting to learn more!

Meetings start at 7 p.m. at 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 15, 2012**

Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

President's Report: The August 2012 meeting started at 7:04 p.m. with Ted announcing Charlie was resigning as Layout Master. Whereupon, Ted announced the new layout Committee: Ted Davis as Chair, Tom Marsh, Harvey Stalarow, Gordon Bliss and Charlie Aselin. A Missing Member call went to Al Hague and there was no answer. The next call went to Joe Kingsberry, and he called back and the members gave him a hearty shout-out! Joe was at home exhausted from a rough day at work!

Vice President's Report: Door prizes were drawn and Harvey won a Golden West boxcar and Charlie won a Rock Island double door boxcar. VP Steve Lancaster reported that his new workshop has shown progress. He has broken ground, poured a slab, and put up walls with some sheathing. Steve predicts everything will be dried-in by the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Eddie Aycock reported that as of 15 August we have \$11, 673.23 in the bank, gift certificates totaling \$99.72, and \$4804.08 in a CD. For those members interested in our high-yield CD, that is an increase of just \$4.61 during the course of the last 13 months - money well invested!

Tom Marsh presented a bill for website upkeep of over \$100. Eddie indicated that this would require a membership vote. Richard made a motion to pay in full and Harvey seconded. Motion carried with no opposition.

Secretary's Report: We have only eight members attending this meeting... WHERE IS EVERYONE? Members present included: Ted Davis, Tom Marsh, Charlie Aeslin, Harvey Stalarow, Ray Byers, Richard Bartlett, Eddie Aycock and Steve Lancaster.

Layout Master's Report: Charlie Aselin resigned. Ted announced that an email would be sent to ask for layout change proposal submissions.

Quartermaster: Harvey brought out the cars still in stock. Ted and Harvey showed them and their respective prices were announced. No cars were purchased at the meeting.

OP Session Report: Insufficient numbers responded to the call in August, although this member and several others did not receive the emails. Eddie suggested that perhaps we should alternate between Saturdays and Wednesdays. Eddie suggested opening up OP sessions to the other operators he frequently has OP sessions with in Houston so that N'Crowd OP sessions could continue with a full complement of operators. Most members agreed that this would be reasonable. It was suggested that we plan on Saturday, 15

September, for the next OP Session. Richard will provide a new email list to Ted and Eddie that is more up-to-date. As Ray Byer had requested that no engines on the layout be put on the grass to prevent getting scenery in the trucks, Richard proposed that any engines that needed to be removed for an OP session might be put on a small piece of track on the scenery. Harvey noted that plenty of track is in the drawer at the back of the layout.

Old/New Business: Richard showed his son Will's Sequoia Tree, which was entered and won Second Place at the National NMRA Meeting in Grand Rapids. Clearly, Ray Byer's helpful suggestions regarding the write up were right on target! A picture will be forwarded to Tom Marsh for inclusion in *The Orderboard*. In Al Hague's absence, Richard provided copies of Al's proposed new show loop to the new members of the layout committee that Ted announced. At Al's request, Richard drew up the proposal, and included several suggestions including three possible ways to modify Danville. Ted stated that NO PROPOSALS would be accepted by the committee members before the Layout Committee meeting, the date for which would be announced later by email. Ted stated that this proposal could be submitted and presented at that meeting. This member will make certain that all materials are provided to Al for his potential submission when that meeting is announced.

The meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.

**Houston N'Crowd
Membership Meeting Report
September 19, 2012**

Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

President's Report: President Ted Davis started the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Ted passed a get-well card around for Cheryl Aycock, and Richard will mail it. Ted announced a Board Meeting to be held after the monthly meeting to discuss the upcoming officer elections. There was extended discussion regarding the two present at-large board members due to some confusion as to differences between the meeting minutes and what was published in the volunteer box in *The Orderboard*. After the meeting, Richard sent the copies of the September to December, 2011, minutes to Ted for review.

Vice President's Report: VP Steve Lancaster picked up some N-scale rolling stock from a man in Humble who was donating everything to the club because he was getting out of the hobby. Ray made a motion to make the donor an honorary member, Charlie seconded and all present were in favor of the motion. Steve also reported that his backyard train facility does have a roof on it now as predicted last month.

See **Meeting Report**, page 8

Grand time in Grand Rapids

by Richard Bartlett, PhD
Secretary, Houston N'Crowd

The Grand Rails 2012 NMRA national convention took place in Grand Rapids, Mich., from July 29 to Aug. 4. My son William and I attended the meeting primarily to demonstrate our video system for any interested companies that were in Grand Rapids for the National Train Show, which pairs with the NMRA meeting annually.

We left Houston for Grand Rapids on Sunday evening, July 29, and arrived Monday afternoon after stopping in northeast Arkansas on the way. We were able to get a really nice room in the older section of the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. These rooms had just been renovated, and I was impressed with its size. We had two queen-sized beds and more than enough room to set up a 4-ft. by 7-ft. triple oval layout with plenty of room all around for our demonstration track. The inside was a Kato super-elevated double track oval in N scale and the outside was a Kato single track oval in HO.

Will entered his Giant Sequoia Tree in the Judged Scratch-built Diorama contest on Tuesday just before judging was to begin. He won second place and received 69 points and a plaque. I entered several boxes of N scale items in the silent auction and came away with enough to pay for registration and three nights at the hotel.

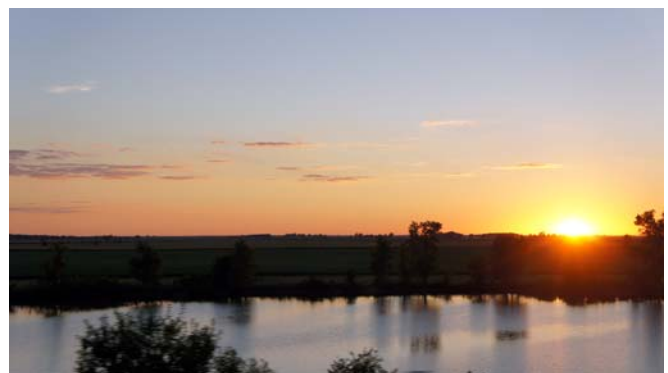
On Saturday morning, I presented a clinic on wireless video, which had some 25 to 30 attendees. Many questions were asked to try and find out the specifics of the electronics, but our answers were limited to how to install the cameras and thoughts on how to enhance the view now that the underbelly of everyone's layout would be visible! All comments were positive, with attendees noting that their various attempts had not produced the clarity and stability of video that we had achieved.

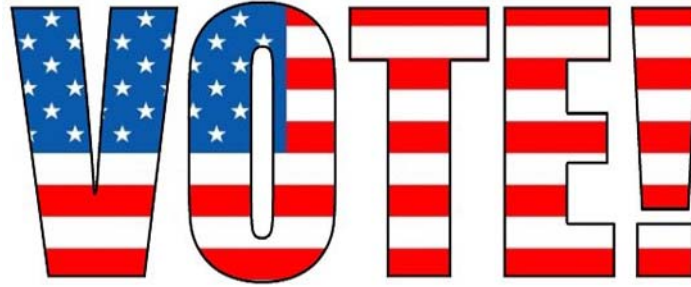
After the clinic, we attended the National Train Show in the Devos Place Convention Center next door. Will and I talked with and showed video images to representatives from Kato, Bachmann, Walthers, Horizon and SoundTraxx, and several made appointments to see our demonstration layout at the hotel Sunday morning. Three companies are very interested in seeing our third generation version.

We packed up and left Grand Rapids Sunday afternoon, and 60 miles south of town the interstate was blocked completely. Since there was no way we were making Hot Springs, Ark., for our reserved room, we drove west and stopped at a state park on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. William was surprised to find the shore much like the Atlantic shore in North Carolina we visited when he was much younger. A south central Illinois sunset provided additional photo opportunities for William that evening. We didn't arrive home until Tuesday evening, as we were not in as big a rush to get home as we were to get to Grand Rapids when we left.



At left, William Bartlett and his award-winning Giant Sequoia Tree. Above, the Lake Michigan shore. Below, an Illinois sunset.





No, we haven't gone all political on you in *The Orderboard*. This is just a reminder that it is time for N'Crowd elections again!

The official slate for 2013 officers and board members to be presented at the October membership meeting is shown below. Per the club's bylaws, nominations will also be taken from the floor before the official vote.

The meeting will convene at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 17, at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd., Houston. You must be present to vote; per the bylaws, no proxies are allowed.

President, vice president, secretary, treasurer serve one year terms. At-large board members serve three year terms. Finally, remember: If you don't vote, don't complain!

N'Crowd Model Railroad Society 2013 Officer/Board Nominations

For President:
Gordon Bliss
Ted Davis

For Secretary:
Tom Marsh

For Vice President:
Richard Bartlett
Leslie Bodak
Mike Bodak
Steve Lancaster
Harvey Stalarow

For Treasurer:
Eddie Aycock

For 2013-2015 At-Large Board Member:
Gordon Bliss

Layout Committee recommendations to be presented October 17

In addition to the vote for 2013 officers, the October N'Crowd meeting will include recommendations from the Layout Committee to the membership on two recent proposals for changes to the layout.

Both proposals involve changes to the mainline that are designed to allow trains to run more-or-less unattended over more of the railroad during those times that the layout is open for the public to view.

The proposed changes also would facilitate the operation of more trains during these times, enhancing our visitors' experience. Neither proposal will have a significant effect on timetabled operating sessions.



Meeting Report *from page 3*

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Eddie Aycock was not able to attend the meeting. Ted reported that Eddie had indicated the balances were the same as last month except for a check to Papa Ben's to pay our account balance.

Secretary's Report: Members in attendance were: Ted Davis, Steve Lancaster, Richard Bartlett, Dejan Suskavcevic, Ray Byers, Joe Kingsberry, Harvey Stalarow, Terry Hooks, Tom Wayburn, Tom Marsh and Charlie Aselin. Brian Luney took off just before the meeting began to attend to business at home.

Layout Master's Report: A Layout Committee Meeting was held and two formal proposals were accepted. No new proposals were submitted, so no more will be accepted at this time. Next meeting of the committee is proposed to be on 10 October, 2012, at 6:00 p.m. at Papa Ben's. Tom Marsh and Ted reported on several electrical faults in Englewood Yard.

OP Session: Both Eddie and Gordon Bliss were not in attendance, so Ted asked for a report from those present at the first Saturday OP Session held on 15 September. Dejan and Richard reported that it went well with a full complement of operators. Richard also reported a problem in Englewood Yard during the session with the third track from the back. As stated by Gordon during the session, the lack of a drop for the inside rails from the third track turnout headed toward the successive 4, 5 and 6 tracks causes a power loss when negotiating these turnouts unless the next turnout is pre-turned to enter one of track 4, 5, or 6.

New Business: NMRA LSR Division 8 is having its annual business meeting and picnic 13 October at Zube Park. Contact Jim Lemmond regarding side dishes you plan to bring. Division 8 will provide coldcuts for sandwiches and light beverages. The time will be 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and train rides will be provided by meeting hosts Houston Area Live Steamers.

Old Business: The list of club cars for sale was brought out and Tom Marsh read the list. No one indicated any interest in paying member prices.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.



TIME TABLE

2012

October 17

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

October 27

Austin Model Railroad Jamboree, First United Methodist Church, Round Rock

November 3

Railroading 2012, George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station

Flatonia Pavilion Party & Swap Meet

November 3-4

Texas State Railroad Railfest 2012

November 10

Galveston Railroad Museum Grand Re-Opening

November 10-11

New Braunfels Fall Train Show, New Braunfels Civic Center

November TBA

BC&G operating session

November 21

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

December TBA

BC&G operating session

THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Tom Marsh, Editor

Published fairly regularly for members and friends of N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc., Houston, Texas.

Send newsletter contributions to:

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Please note: We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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