



THE ORDERBOARD

July/August 2013



N'Crowd member Hugh Boyd and his new N-scale layout, which is designed for a smaller space than his previous pikes.

Model Railroading Part II by Hugh Boyd

Editor's note: In the April/May 2011 issue of The Orderboard, Hugh Boyd told us about his "Layout MD-11" being built in his garage. With a change in residence at hand, Hugh embarked on construction of a new layout, which he tells us about here.

I recently moved from my condo to a retirement community on the west side of town. Like most of life's situations, there were upsides and downsides to my relocation. Principal on the downside was the requirement for me to demolish my room-sized layout and settle for one built on a door. For someone who

has been there, a door-sized layout is not nearly the fun of a bigger spread. But that's enough whining.

My new N-Scale layout is built on an 80-in. x 36-in. hollow core door, with folding legs and carrying handles. The legs are a pair of metal carpenter's trestles from The Home Depot. Something taller would have been better, but that's where I am. The whole rig was carefully but easily picked up and moved by my relocation team.

The track plan has an oval outer route at grade and a figure "9" that grades up, over, and then down. I am familiar with Kato Unitrack, so I went that way

Continued on Page 4

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Gordon Bliss, President

Stepping up

President Kennedy famously said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." So now I will ask what you can do for your club!

When I joined this club, I was a young 13 years old and I learned a lot from the members on how to do many things, from laying track correctly to scenery and setting up the NTRAK layouts. So far this year only Richard Bartlett and I have put on a

clinic, but it's easy to take 20 or 30 minutes to just talk about a trip you took or some new thing you saw trackside.

We always have things that need fixing on the layout. If something breaks, please list it on the board and mark the location on the layout so a crew can do the repairs if you can't.

So again I will ask: What can you do for your club? Stepping up is easy!

Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report April 17, 2013 Prepared by Gordon Bliss, President

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. 15 members were present: Gordon Bliss, Richard Bartlett, Al Hague, Ray Byer, Charlie Aselin, Dan Gutierrez, Dejan Suskancevic, Joseph Kingsberry, Tom and Amy Wayburn, Eddie Aycock, Ted Davis, Steven Lancaster, Samuel Townsel and Dominic Valdez. VP Richard Bartlett presented the monthly clinic, this one on LED lighting.

President's Report: Welcome

Vice President's Report: Richard said the Texas State Railroad trip was a success; 27 people attended and had a good time even though we had no steam power. A dozen antique Model A cars showed up from Austin; we had a shop tour at Rusk (and almost left some people behind). Back at Palestine we toured ex-T&P No. 610 and No. 316 (still warm), and the T&P business car.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported we have \$11,598 in checking and the CD is at \$4,804.

New Business: Layout Master Al Hague reported that the engine roster had been updated, and he will now check into the car inventory. Al discussed issues with sections of the layout and asked for volunteers for projects.

Richard showed pics from his fishing trip.

Old Business: The April operating session was cancelled due to not enough people. We will not have a May session as both Eddie and Gordon will be out of town operating! Next session will be June 5. We have a short circuit and turnout problem in Austin.

Train shows are appearing on the RFTV cable channel.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m. to the layout room.

Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report May 15, 2013 Prepared by Richard Bartlett, PhD and VP

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Presidents Report: President Gordon Bliss began the meeting with a one-hour Show and Tell from the trip he and Eddie Aycock



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:
July 17 / August 21 / September 18 / October 16

BC&G Operating Sessions:
Saturday, September 7 / Wednesday, October 2

Most activities take place at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Membership meetings start at 7 p.m. Saturday operating sessions start at 5 p.m. Wednesday operating sessions start at 7 p.m.

took to Cheyenne, Wyo., and Denver, Colo. Gordon had over 900 pictures of the Union Pacific facilities, operating sessions and other subjects. (I for one was quite envious!) Gordon urged all members to go out, have fun and do some railfanning!

We had an extensive door prize drawing: five cars and three buildings from the club stash of unfinished club cars and extra buildings stored under the layout. Two-thirds of those in attendance won a door prize! So for the members that were absent: You really missed out! There are plans to continue this for the next few meetings.

Vice President's Report: The Texas State Railroad has approved a loose budget for VP Richard Bartlett to build an N scale layout emphasizing the logging work done in the area in years past. The layout will be located in the TSRR Society's room at the Palestine station. Sam Townsel will build a replica of the Palestine station to be located on the upper level.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Eddie Aycock reports we have \$11,598.72 in cash, and \$4804.08 in the CD (same as it has been for over two years!). Net equity is \$17,777.93.

Acting Secretary's Report: Secretary Harvey Stalarow was absent, so Richard took the minutes. Eleven members and one visitor attended the meeting.

Members present were Eddie Aycock, Richard Bartlett, Gordon Bliss, Mike Bodack, Ray Byers, Al Hague, Joe Kingsberry, Steve Lancaster, Dejan Suskavcevic, Samuel Townsel and Tom Wayburn. A new member joined today, Aaron Serwetman, and Sam brought a visitor, Najee Bell.

Old Business: As there was no May operating session, the next operating session will be June 5. Eddie will send out an email invitation before the session. As a reminder, please remember that operating sessions for the coming year will be scheduled as follows: In odd numbered months, sessions will be the first Saturday, and in even numbered months, sessions will be the first Wednesday.

New Business: Two layout modification proposals were brought up to be presented to the Layout Committee: Sam's new refinery layout, and Gordon's proposal that the Kato track on the back staging be replaced with Atlas code 80 and Peco turnouts. The Layout Committee will meet to prepare final proposals for members to consider.

Layout Master's Report: Layout Master Al Hague indicated that some of the club-made runs of tuscan colored cars were sitting under the layout in various stages of decaling, but have trucks and couplers. These cars will be candidates for future door prize giveaways. Al also indicated that Joe is working on several engines found in the boxes to determine if they are salvageable. Joe is also working on several cars to make them run better and apply weathering.

Al has asked that more members volunteer to work on the layout, or unassigned tasks will be assigned to those not presently working on the layout!

The meeting adjourned by 8:29 p.m.

Houston N'Crowd
Membership Meeting Report
May 15, 2013

Prepared by Harvey Stalarow, Secretary

Tom Marsh made two pre-meeting announcements. He requested that items for the newsletter to be sent in. Also, he announced that the Houston Railroad Museum is having a raffle for a private car train trip to be drawn on Dec. 8, 2013.

Gordon Bliss put on a track maintenance clinic before the meeting was called to order.

The meeting was called to order at 7:26 p.m.

President's Report: President Gordon Bliss welcomed everyone and said he was preparing for upcoming events.

Vice President's Report: VP Richard Bartlett noted that a computer vacuum was purchased from Amazon. Richard also said that he was working on the Texas State Railroad layout.

Treasurer's Report: The club has \$11,446.93 cash in the bank. The CD is at \$4,804.08. The club spent \$731.25 and has taken in \$567.50.

Layout Master's Report: Al Hague asked for volunteers to clean track before operating sessions. He reported that a turnout in Bennet needs to be replaced. He also asked for a scale to weigh cars, which should be under \$30. Because it is under \$100, he will buy one.

New Business: A motion to buy two UT4R radio controllers was made, seconded and passed.

A motion was made and seconded to sell extra boxcars to members. We have 41 with trucks and 11 without. The price will be \$7 and \$4, respectively, and one per meeting will be sold. The motion passed.

Gordon brought up a potential meeting of the layout committee for the second week in July. The committee consists of Gordon, Ted, Charlie, Harvey and Ray.

Operating Session Report: Eddie Aycock discussed the most recent operating session, noting that the layout did not run well. Austin is a particular problem area. Operating sessions are being suspended because the layout needs repairs and participation has been low.

Also, it is requested that members do not leave trains unattended on the main line as a courtesy to others.

Old Business: Gordon talked about the upcoming move of the UP Big Boy from Dallas to Frisco.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Model Railroading Part II *from Page 1*

again. This time I used regular at-grade and viaduct pieces, plus some concrete tie double track. Somewhere on the web, I learned how to cut odd-ball lengths of Unitrack without a rail joint. That method got a good workout this time around.

Of course I built another control panel with block occupancy indicating LEDs and remote turn-out activation and annunciation. However, this time all the power, most of the DCC items, and all the turnout control switches and reporting paraphernalia are on a separate trolley with a detachable umbilical cord to the layout. Yes, I needed quite an assortment of electrical connectors to make that work.

I reinstalled my TrainSpeed PCB to indicate scale miles per hour, and my RampMeter to indicate system amps and volts. The TrainSpeed board is very useful in helping me separate two trains running in the same direction at close spacing. The block detection is hardly necessary on such a small layout where everything is visible in a single glance, but I already had all these items and wanted to get more mileage from them. I also

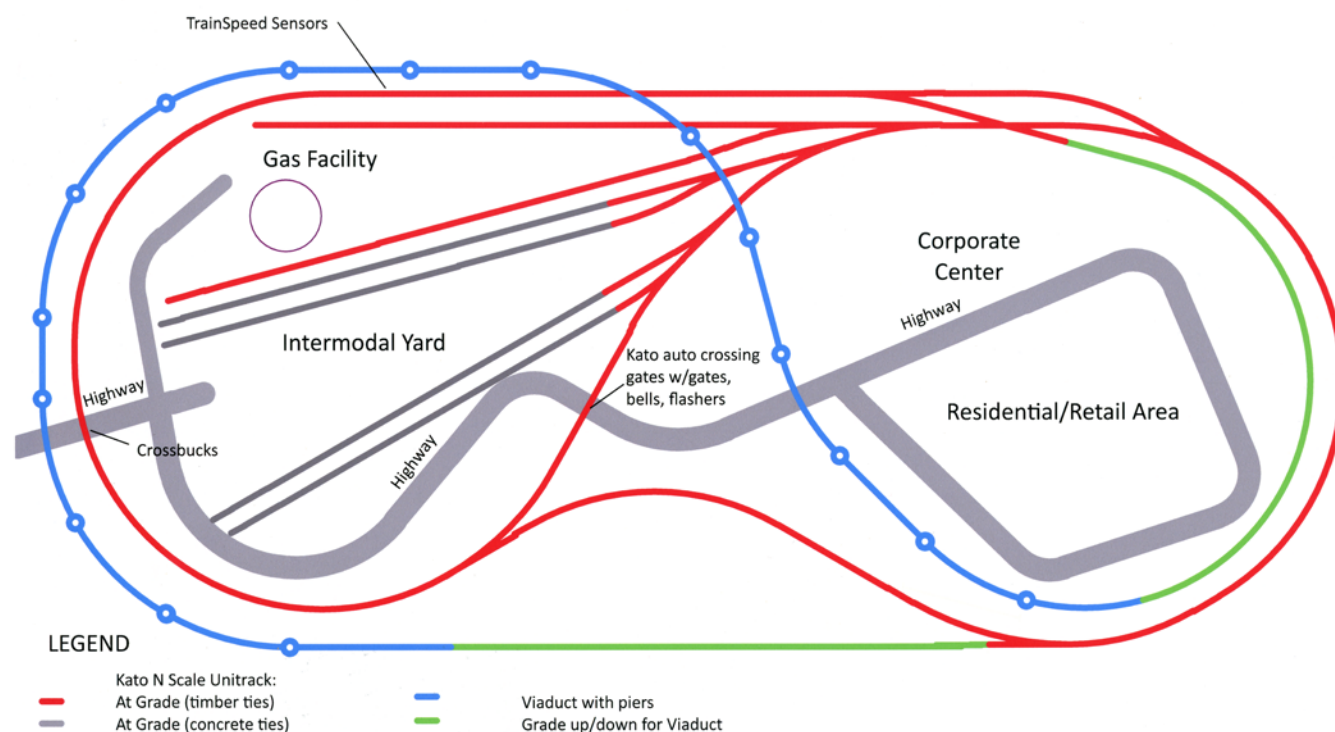
reinstalled a set of crossbucks with flashing lights (sans bells). However, my highlight is the Kato grade crossing gates set with flashing lights, bells and auto-gates. Nobody notices that it's intended for left-hand driving. Maybe I can fix that.

I designed the track alignment on my computer with a popular software application. Oh boy, did I get some really weird results when I joined the two ends! Eventually, it all came together, especially when I introduced my odd-ball track lengths. I applied a trick often seen in highway design: Where one track ramps up over the other, the grade continues on and the summit is some distance beyond the track below. This trick helped me reduce the severity of the grades.

One thing about small layouts like this is the tight track radii and steep grades, and necessarily my trains are short; two-loco consists manage everything satisfactorily. Initially, I used a Digitrax Zephyr controller, but I missed the convenience of the walk-around radio throttles, the untethered loco acquisition and the ease of controlling two trains simultaneously. I went back into my storage boxes and rescued my idle

An overall view of Hugh's new Independence Railroad. In the foreground is the top of the mobile trolley, with the RampMeter front bottom, the TrainSpeed green PCB above it, the Digitrax equipment on the left and the panel graphics, LEDs and switches in the center. An astute observer comparing this picture and the track plan on page 5 with the cover photo will notice that Hugh has realigned the front part of the viaduct. This is not reflected in the control panel graphics.





Above, Hugh developed the track plan for his Independence Railroad with Kato Unitrack in mind. The layout is designed to fit on a hollow core door and is portable.

Digitrax DCS100 gear and got it functioning again.

On the web I found a neat gas treatment plant. When it arrived I immediately noticed all the assembly instructions were in Japanese. This was a disappointment to me, so I put everything aside for a couple of months. Then I took a closer look and found that the arrows on the assembly diagrams were simple enough, so now I have a gas facility.

I also have quite a number of pre-built house and corporate structures (Kato, Atlas, Imex and others) that I have reused and some more may be in the offing. I made a highway system and yard areas using thin cork sheets held in place with a clear water-based adhesive. Preventing the painted sheets from returning to their original curl caused a few headaches.

Those who visited my former layout noticed I'm not too heavy on scenery. So it will be again, but hopefully I will achieve a higher level this time around.

On my previous layout I maxed-out at around 500 rolling stock items. This time I'm busy if I get 50 pieces into action on the same day. Several of my five-unit intermodal cars are now running with only two or three pieces. Too bad my autoracks were too long to transit the tight viaduct curves; they've gone now. Instead, I'm running trains with two or three modern locomotives and coal gons, well/spine cars, covered hoppers and tank cars. They're all contemporary items, of course.

Perhaps another downside of this smaller layout is that now I don't get to purchase as many model railroad related items as I did previously. However, maybe that's an upside.

I call my layout IRR-11, as in Independence Railroad. The name derives from my commencement of track laying on July 4, 2011. That was my starting date and I've made some recent realignments, but I have a feeling this layout, like so many others, may never be finished.

My last contribution to *The Orderboard* told the tale of a layout that actually was dumped in the early stages. It was too heavy and too big, hence the current door-sized effort that fits into my smaller apartment.

Come by some time and help me run some trains on the new Independence Railroad!

What have you been up to?

Send us photos of your layout, your efforts on the club's BC&G layout or other model railroad work you are tackling.

Remember, *The Orderboard* depends on your contributions. We want to know what you have been up to!

New autoracks available in 1:1 and 1:160 scales

by Tom Marsh

New autoracks (or “automotive railcars” in Greenbrier parlance) spanning multiple generations have debuted in full and N scales. The full size cars are built in Texas at the historic former ATSF shops in Cleburne.

Innovative new car from Greenbrier

On May 29 in Cleburne, The Greenbrier Companies, Inc. introduced Multi-Max, an automotive railcar that company officials say significantly advances the options for transporting autos by rail. Multi-Max features a patented adjustable deck to allow railroads to shift between bi- and tri-level service using previously unavailable techniques.

Multi-Max allows for complete deck adjustments in as little as five hours, without removing the deck during reconfiguration. The new car is fully compatible with the bi-level and tri-level fleet currently on the rails, so operators do not need to segregate Multi-Max or manage it separately from other railcars. With Greenbrier’s proprietary sealed end-door, Multi-Max limits theft and vandalism, providing vehicle safety and

protection over long-distance hauls. Multi-Max also keeps new automobiles looking new with enhanced door edges that provide smooth cargo loading, reducing the risk of damage in transit.

“Greenbrier designed Multi-Max to help railroads meet the changing requirements of today’s automobile manufacturers,” said William G. Glenn, senior vice president and chief commercial officer. “Consumer preferences for automobiles are less predictable, causing automakers to build factories that can quickly transform from manufacturing large vehicles like SUVs and light trucks to smaller vehicles like sedans and subcompacts. With its proprietary adjustable decks, Multi-Max means railroads no longer need to place a bet on whether they will need bi-level rail service to transport large vehicles or tri-level service for smaller vehicles. Multi-Max means railroads always have the right mix of equipment ready to move automobiles.”

Multi-Max was developed with input from Class I railroads and automotive manufacturers and joins four other automotive railcar designs

The Greenbrier Companies debuted the new Multi-Max autorack at its facility in Cleburne, Texas, in late May. An animation illustrating the method by which the car can be converted for bi-level or tri-level operation can be found at www.gbrx.com/Multi_Max.php. Photo courtesy of The Greenbrier Companies



Eastern Seaboard Models and Micro-Trains are collaborating on a 1980s vandal panel-equipped variant of Micro-Trains' open autorack. ESM has posted this and other photos of the EL car on Facebook, along with a video. Pre-orders are being accepted through July 31. Photo courtesy of Eastern Seaboard Models



offered by Greenbrier in North America and Europe. In its current fiscal year, Greenbrier has booked worldwide orders for 2,100 automotive-related railcars or racks. According to Greenbrier officials, railroads carry approximately 70 percent of all new vehicles manufactured in North America, where automotive production has shown strong gains since 2011, and increased demand for modern automotive railcars is forecast.

“Greenbrier took the lead with several railroads to capture ideas, design those concepts and now build a railcar that meets our needs today and tomorrow,” said Paddy O’Neill, senior director equipment planning at Norfolk Southern Corporation. “The convertibility features of Multi-Max enable railroads to more cost effectively serve their customers. This truly innovative design demonstrates Greenbrier’s ability to make its customers’ desires a reality and places Greenbrier at the vanguard of rail innovation.”

Mike Nelson, national rail strategy and operations manager of Toyota Logistics Services, Inc. said, “Toyota’s ongoing efforts to localize production in North America require flexible production capacity at our seven automotive assembly plants. Multi-Max’s new design enhancements are adjustable and support quality vehicle delivery in the quickest, most efficient way possible. Our 12 North American built vehicles require a rail delivery product that can match our ability to quickly respond to fluctuating market demands.”

Greenbrier’s automotive railcar products, including Multi-Max, are also manufactured in Mexico, which recently surpassed Japan as the largest exporter of light vehicles to the United

States. Mexico’s share of North American light vehicle production is expected to increase substantially over the next decade. Greenbrier officials believe this “locational shift” will further support growth in automotive rail loadings, with rail as the preferred transportation method of light vehicles manufactured in Mexico.

Greenbrier, headquartered in Lake Oswego, Oregon, builds new railroad freight cars in its four manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and Mexico and marine barges at a U.S. facility. It also repairs and refurbishes freight cars and provides wheels and railcar parts at 38 locations across North America. Greenbrier builds new railroad freight cars and refurbishes freight cars for the European market through both its operations in Poland and various subcontractor facilities throughout Europe. Greenbrier owns approximately 9,200 railcars, and performs management services for approximately 225,000 railcars.

Return to the '80s with ESM and Micro-Trains

Eastern Seaboard Models is collaborating with Micro-Trains to build an Erie Lackawanna bi-level open frame auto rack with vandal panels. ESM has designed the 1980s-era scheme to be as accurate as possible on the model, which will include etched stainless steel panels and white deck tops. Some assembly will be required. The model will also feature etched ladders, and will include standard ladder stanchions to backdate the model into the early 1970s.

The pre-order period is through July 31, and the models are expected in November. Reserve yours now!

LCL

Less than Car Load: a few notes from your editor

BC&G operations suspended: N'Crowd Treasurer and Train Master Eddie Aycock reports that BC&G operating sessions are suspended until September so that repairs and upgrades to locomotives, rolling stock and track can be undertaken. Eddie says, "Last time things did not run smooth at all so we need to do the work on the layout before the next ops session."

Overland Models exits N scale: On the heels of Testor's announcement that production of Floquil, Poly Scale and other hobbyist paints will be discontinued, Overland Models has cancelled all previously-announced N-scale models. The company said pre-order reservations were too low to justify production. Announced models affected include EMD SD70ACe/SD70M-2 Isolated Cab; GE Evolution Series; NRE 3GS21B in two versions; NS Heritage Series locos; and the GN W-1 Electric.

Overland also will not exhibit at the NMRA national convention in Atlanta, citing high travel costs and the expense of show space at the National Train Show.

It's your newsletter: Thanks to Hugh Boyd for this month's article on his new layout. We need more members' support for future newsletters.

Houston N'Crowd 2013 Officers and Volunteers

President	Gordon Bliss
Vice President	Richard Bartlett
Secretary	Harvey Stalarow
Treasurer	Eddie Aycock
Board Member (2013)	Joe Kingsberry
Board Member (2014)	Ray Byer
Board Member (2015)	Justin Corder
Editor & Webmaster	Tom Marsh



TIME TABLE 2013

July 14-20

NMRA National Convention, Atlanta, Georgia

July 17

N'Crowd Membership Meeting at Papa Ben's Train Place, 7 p.m. Gordon Bliss will share recent trip photos.

July 27 - 28

San Antonio Model RR Association 11th Annual Summer Train Show, Live Oak Civic Center

August 21

N'Crowd Membership Meeting at Papa Ben's Train Place, 7 p.m. Tom Marsh will report on the NMRA national convention in Atlanta.

September 7

Saturday BC&G Operating Session, 5 p.m.

September 18

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

October 2

Wednesday BC&G Operating Session, 7 p.m.

October 16

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

November 2

Saturday BC&G Operating Session, 5 p.m.

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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