



News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

May/June 2014



**N'Crowd goes Santa Fe *All the Way!***

# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Vincent Walker, President

## Trains big and small

I would like to thank all who came out to the Galveston Railroad Museum in April, and a special thanks goes out to Mr. Morris S. Gould, the museum's executive director. Our tour would not have happened without his approval. He explained to me that the Warbonnet F-units will make a run from the museum later this year if everything goes right. Mr. Gould also will be retiring from his position sometime this year.

N'Crowd member and SP/T&NO fan Joe Kingsberry had a real treat sitting at the throttle of an ex-T&NO F7 engine. Turn to pages 6 and 7 for photos.

Changes for the better have taken place at the museum since Hurricane Ike. If you have not seen the indoor exhibit area where the model trains are, you are missing a treat. There is also an area where the museum's large collection of dining and business car china and silver from well-known railroads is displayed, including the Santa Fe, Missouri Pacific and others. It is really nice.

With the museum visit complete, member Gorden Bliss gave us a tour and recounted the history of the railroads that service the island, not surprisingly with a focus on ATSF. A great and fun time was had by all.

We had a good turnout for our club operating session on April 2, not as big as the first session of the year in February, but still a good turnout. Let's remember our upcoming operating session will take place June 4; see the calendar in this issue of *The Orderboard* for more details about this and other events.

Just because we can run trains on the BC&G does not mean the layout is complete; we still have items that need to be worked on around the layout. Stop by and lend a hand!

Remember, this is your layout. If you are an N'Crowd member in good standing, you can come down and run trains, either yours or the club's. If you have a problem with some equipment that you can't sort out,

bring it to the club room to work on. Someone who can help is almost always there on Wednesday when Papa Ben's is open until 7 p.m., or on Saturday, when we open the layout room to the public. Or just stop by and talk trains. Where else can you run model trains if you don't have a layout or are still working on yours? This is a good way to get ideas and have a laugh, so support your club and our host Allyn Pearlman at Papa Ben's Train Place. We would not have these opportunities if Allyn was not supporting us!

Finally, don't forget our upcoming membership meetings and clinics. On May 21, member Ray Byer (seen below) will come out from under the layout long enough to talk to us about wiring, and I'm working on a special guest for later in the year.

Until next time, happy railroading!



**N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:**  
May 21 / June 17 / July 16

**BC&G Operating Sessions:**  
Wednesday, June 4 / Wednesday, August 6

Most activities take place at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Our monthly membership meetings start at 7 p.m. The BC&G Wednesday operating sessions start at 7 p.m.



**Houston N'Crowd  
Membership Meeting Report  
March 19, 2014  
Prepared by James Senneff, Jr. - Secretary**

Past President Gordon Bliss called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. President Vincent A. Walker arrived slightly after the meeting came to order.

Vice President Samuel Townsel had earlier brought in several pieces of the new oil refinery for the layout and everyone was encouraged to take a look after the meeting. Samuel reached the point that he wanted to bring some of the structures to the club room even though there is some detailing still left to do.

Four door prizes were presented.

**President's Report:** Vincent noted that the next meeting is April 16 at Papa Ben's at 7:00 p.m.

**Vice President's Report:** Samuel was not in attendance for work reasons.

**Treasurer's Report:** The club checking account has \$11,025 cash. We have taken in \$385 in club dues, and have spent \$270. The CD is still at \$4,816.73.

**Secretary's Report:** Fifteen members in attendance; Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Tom Marsh, Richard Bartlett, Steve Lancaster, James Senneff, Jr., Ted Davis, Gordon Bliss, Vincent Walker, Al Hague, Harvey Stalarow, Ray Byer, Eddie Aycock, Charlie Aselin, and James Dikeman.

**New Business:** Vince noted that the layout room is now clean and looking good. He stated some rules to keep the room clean. If you bring something into the room then please take it out when you leave. If you pull something out from inside the room, please put it back before you leave. The chairs have a designated area on the south wall, so once they have been used they need to be put back in place.

Ted Davis brought out the 2003 convention banner. Tom Marsh made a motion to have the president throw out the banner. Gordon Bliss seconded the motion. Motion passed. A suggestion was made to get clips and a pulley system to hang the remaining large club banner without putting holes in the wall. That will allow us to bring it down as needed. Tom Marsh moved to spend the money for the pulley system. Gordon Bliss seconded. Motion passed.

The president brought up that the club's train show test track in the layout room needed a better storage location. There was discussion of hanging it somewhere or finding a place under the layout for it. The decision was made to store it under the layout on top of the car storage boxes, which will have the added benefit of keeping people from rum-maging through the boxes.

President Walker also asked about the portable layout sitting behind the club room door. This is the layout we have used at some train shows. Richard Bartlett owns it and said he would take it to his storage facility.

President Walker invited Layout Master Al Hague to give details on a proposal to put together a third club-owned passenger train. Al said that in addition to three inherited UP cars, the club owns a few other passenger cars and Papa Ben's has several other good quality, used passenger cars for sale at about \$20 each. He proposed either a mixed-road consist or asking Joe Kingsberry to paint the cars for the BC&G, giving us a seven-car passenger train for the layout. Discussion followed; four of the club cars need new trucks at \$10 per car. Al moved that the club buy the used cars from Papa Ben's and purchase replacement trucks for the club cars. Motion seconded by Vincent Walker and passed.

Al mentioned that the club has three storage boxes of center beam and other cars that are not used on the layout or in operating sessions. Discussion followed; there was a suggestion of making some of the cars door prizes. We will keep one of the boxes of cars, and all of the BC&G cars. Other cars were offered for sale and sold.

Some electrical problems have arisen on the layout, including a dead area along the south wall. Gordon said that he would fix it if he is shown where it is. Ray noted that some feeder wires have come unsoldered in the freight yard on the ladder tracks. He will be fixing them soon.

The Kato track from the refinery/port area staging yard was previously taken off the layout and put in a box. During the layout room clean up, a decision was made to auction off the Kato track. Motion made, seconded and passed to sell six Kato switches.

Al suggested we have a club swap meet. The meet should not take place at Papa Ben's. Gordon offered to have it under the breezeway at his house, and everyone agreed. Gordon can provide some tables, but asked that anyone that has a table to feel free to bring it. Tentative date for the swap meet is May 10.

President Walker wants a committee to install structures and scenery along the south wall of the layout. Discussion followed and it was decided that the old club-owned buildings referred to by Al are not good enough for that use. The club decided to bring the box of buildings to the N'Crowd swap meet (free buildings!). Al said he will put the committee together and make a sketch of options for the south and west walls. This will take a few weeks. The committee will consist of Al, Richard Bartlett and a member to be named. Once the sketch is completed, it will be presented to the membership. The focus is to use buildings that the club already owns instead of going out and buying buildings. The president said that the committee is a good idea and blessed it.

Club member news: The new issue of Railroad Model Craftsman has our own Eddie Aycock as the star. He is pictured during an operating session in Vancouver.

The clinic schedule is being put together:

March: Joe Kingsberry - painting postponed as Joe ill

April: Richard Bartlett - lighting

May: Ray Byers - wiring

June: Jason Smith - rock formations

July: Vince Walker - painting

August - December: TBA

Gordon Bliss put to the floor that if there are any subjects on which the membership wants clinics, please let the club officers know and they will try to find people to present the clinic, even if they are not N'Crowd members.

#### **Upcoming club events:**

April 19, Saturday - Galveston Railroad Museum has an EMD F7A, and they will let N'Crowd members tour the cab of the engine. Members must pay the normal entrance fee. The membership must be there by 10 a.m. and the tour will end no later than 11 a.m. All members attending the meeting had interest in going to the event. Gordon said that we could also go around Galveston and see the historic sites of the Santa Fe Railroad, including the roundhouse location. Gordon will bring his blueprint of the roundhouse. Club members agreed to extend an invitation to the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club to join the tour.

May 17, Saturday - Zube Park crawfish boil. Get there early, the pavilion is first-come, first-served. There also are picnic tables by the tracks so that you can watch the trains. Gordon said he has tents he can bring. The membership was interested. Vince said that we would need a headcount so that we can find out how much crawfish was needed. We decided to extend an invitation to the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club to attend as well.

#### **Other events:**

May 3-4, Saturday and Sunday - Richard Bartlett provided information about the railfan photography event at the Texas State Railroad. Richard will look into it and let us know more details.

April 12, Saturday - Tom Marsh reported that Gulf Coast Chapter NRHS is chartering two busses to go to the Kansas City Southern Depot Museum in DeQuincy, La., for the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival. The group will then go to Lake Charles to take Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* back to Houston. The busses will leave the Houston Amtrak station at 7 a.m. and the group will return on the train around 5 p.m. or after, depending on when the train arrives. Bus tickets are \$30; Amtrak tickets are currently \$25.00. Members can go to [www.houstonRRmuseum.org](http://www.houstonRRmuseum.org) to get tickets for the bus. Note: Buy your Amtrak tickets first so that you will have a way to get home guaranteed!

Vince said that he found some good items to purchase at San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's Greater Houston Train Show at the Stafford Centre in February.

#### **Old Business:**

Eddie Aycock wants to advance our plans for using JMRI software for locomotive programming. Eddie said in order for that to happen we need to get the JMRI program installed on the computer in the layout room and get the computer hooked up to the programming track. Gordon Bliss said that the club has the required PR3 and he has hooked it up before, but we need to invest in some cable so that the computer can stay in the computer drawer. Gordon nominated Ray Byer to make the cables, and Ray said he would but that he has to know how long the cables need to be. Eddie Aycock made a motion to move ahead on the proposal.; Gordon Bliss seconded. The membership voted and the proposal passed.

Eddie Aycock asked if the members wanted to have an operating session on the first Wednesday of April. Members said that they would like to have the operating session. Eddie said that he would get back to the membership with more details.

President Walker brought up the Galveston trip on April 19. He was asking to make sure that there is still interest. Club members said that they are still interested in the trip.

Tom Marsh said that the negotiations between the museum and the City of Tomball are going well and that he will keep us informed of progress on the museum's efforts to reopen.

President Walker motioned to adjourn the meeting and go to the layout room for the clinic. Seconded by Charlie Aselin and the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

### **Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report April 16, 2014 Prepared by James Senneff, Jr. - Secretary**

Vice President Samuel Townsel called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The president was not in attendance.

The next meeting is May 21 at Papa Ben's at 7:00 pm.

The door prize winners tonight were:

Ray Byer - centerbeam car

Joe Kingsberry - centerbeam car

Al Hague - tank car

Daniel Shaw - covered hopper

Bill Moss - boxcar

**Treasurer's Report:** In the bank, \$10,807 cash; CD is at \$4,816; monies taken in for the year, \$773; spent, \$585.

**Secretary's Report:** Eighteen members in attendance: Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Amy Wayburn, David T. Shaw, Thattaya Shaw, Tom Marsh, Richard Bartlett, Steve Lancaster, James Senneff, Jr., Ted Davis, Gordon Bliss, Al Hague, Ray Byer, Joe Kingsberry, Eddie Aycock, Charlie Aselin, Bill Moss and Samuel Townsel.

#### **New Business:**

This week's event at the Galveston Railroad Museum - touring the F7 Warbonnet engine from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Discussion of carpooling ensued. Carpool leaves Papa Ben's at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

Al Hague initiated discussions about club cars for sale, sale of auto rack cars and which trees from the tree box to use on the layout. Al proposed to put club cars for sale on consignment at Spring Crossing Hobby Shop at \$10 a car. Members concluded that cars that are not numbered should be sold first and voted to sell the three cars. The club sold two gondolas to Gordon Bliss and one to James Senneff, Jr. after the meeting. Discussion followed on selling auto rack cars because they are long and out of place on the club layout. Eddie agreed to the sale of his donated auto rack cars. Proposal made to sell two packs of cars for \$10.00 and members voted to proceed with the sale after the meeting. The club voted to sell Eddie's donated cars.

After discussion and by a unanimous vote, we will not use the violet trees on the layout.

Editor Tom Marsh informed the members that the next newsletter will be out before the May 21 N'Crowd monthly meeting, and all submissions should be made soon.

Eddie Aycock gave information about the April club operating session. Six or seven members and one guest participated. The guest was Mike Bedford from Dallas. Not all the trains were run during the operating session. Eddie suggested that next time the train moves be simpler and the train sizes smaller.

The next club operating session will be on the first Wednesday of June. Eddie said that after operating sessions, trains need to be taken off the layout. Ted Davis requested that the cars that were on the layout prior to the operating session be put back in place after each session.

Al Hague started a discussion about replacing the switch in the refinery. He also stated that reverse loop wiring needed to be installed in Buda before the next operating session. It was decided that Ray Byer would be able to do that.

Vice President Samuel Townsel brought up the club swap meet. After discussion, Gordon Bliss agreed to host at his house on May 10 (National Train Day), starting at 10:00 a.m. Gordon's layout will be open to run trains, and Gordon invited members to bring trains to run, even if they are not Santa Fe. The swap meet will be set up in the carport, and

Gordon will grill hot dogs and burgers. Tom Marsh will send an email to members with driving directions and other information about the event.

Richard Bartlett gave details of the Texas State Railroad railfan photography event that is scheduled for May 3-4.

Ted Davis said the club computer is not working on battery power after about five minutes of use. Charlie Aselin will determine if a new battery is needed and can be sourced. Ted also said that it would be a good idea to supply Papa Ben's with a current list of members. The club agreed.

Eddie welcomed returning "missing" member Bill Moss.

Tonight Joe Kingsberry will present his postponed clinic on air brush techniques.

#### **Upcoming Club events:**

April 19, Saturday - Galveston Railroad Museum EMD F7A tour; carpool leaves Papa Ben's at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

May 17, Saturday - Zube Park crawfish boil.

#### **Old Business:**

Samuel Townsel announced clinic changes: Richard Bartlett's lighting clinic is now scheduled for July. President Vincent Walker is doing a painting clinic in August. Joe Kingsberry said that after Mr. Walker finishes his painting clinic, he would do a clinic on what to do after the painting is completed (decals, Dullcoat finish, etc.)

Eddie Aycock informed the club that five or six new members who joined last year who did not renew for this year. Eddie wanted to know if anyone knew Phil Pardy, Randolph Hoover and Erin Webman and could get in contact with them to invite them to renew.

Gordon Bliss showed scanned historical documents of the N'Crowd from back in the summer of 1978.

Tom Marsh motioned to adjourn, seconded by Richard Bartlett, and meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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### **Houston N'Crowd 2014 Officers and Volunteers**

President .....	Vincent Walker
Vice President .....	Samuel Townsel
Secretary .....	James Senneff, Jr.
Treasurer .....	Eddie Aycock
Board Member (2014) .....	Ray Byer
Board Member (2015) .....	Justin Coder
Board Member (2016) .....	Al Hague
Editor & Webmaster .....	Tom Marsh



# N'Crowd goes Santa Fe *All the Way!*

*Photos by Vincent C. Walker*

On April 19, N'Crowd members were afforded a special tour of Galveston Railroad Museum's ex-T&NO EMD F7, which is now painted in Santa Fe's famous red and silver warbonnet scheme and numbered 316.

No. 316 is one of two ex-SP F7s the museum acquired to replace the two F-units that were heavily damaged when Hurricane Ike struck Galveston Island in 2008. The second, also painted in warbonnet colors, is now numbered 315.

The 315 is ex-SP No. 6443, built in February 1953. The 316 is ex-T&NO No. 365, built in May 1953. After being retired by SP/T&NO, both locomotives travelled a similar path, first working for the Wellsville, Addison & Galetton Railroad in Pennsylvania. Both units were subsequently acquired for service on Pittsburgh's PATrain commuter railroad, and then both wound up in New Haven McGinnis colors working Connecticut Dept. of Transportation commuter trains.

Owner/No. sequence of No. 315:  
SP 6443  
WAG 2200  
PAT 6690  
CDOT 6690  
RPCX 6690 (for move to GRRM)  
Now "ATSF" 315

Owner/No. sequence of No. 316:  
T&NO 365  
WAG 2300  
PAT 6691  
CDOT 6691  
RPCX 6691 (for move to GRRM)  
Now "ATSF" 316.

N'Crowd thanks the Galveston Railroad Museum for arranging the special F-unit tour.



*N'Crowd members Eric Baugham, Gordon Bliss and Vince Walker pose in the classic cab unit at the Galveston Railroad Museum. Member Bill Moss is in the cover photo.*





Above Joe Kingsberry, left, and Richard Bartlett, right, try out the engineer's seat in No. 316's cab.

Below, some members also toured railroad sites in Galveston, including the former Galveston, Houston & Henderson Railroad freight house. The GH&H was jointly owned by the International & Great Northern (MP) and Missouri, Kansas & Texas (later M-K-T without the "&"), hence the appearance of all three railroads' names on the building.



# Ted's been working on the railroad!

*by Ted Davis, with photos contributed by friends of the WTH&WE*

My WTH&WE was conceived a decade ago. The project started by joining two bedrooms by removing a closet wall. The result was two spaces approximately 12-ft. by 15-ft each.

A plan was devised for an around-the-room layout with two peninsulas. Early plans for a second level, which was to be accessed by a helix, have since been abandoned.

The layout is intended to allow trains to run continuously with the option for switching at multiple industries when desired.

The railroad is fictitious and therefore freelanced. Major industries modeled will be a steel mill, oil refinery, chemical plant and intermodal yard. A five-track passenger depot will occupy the smaller of the two peninsulas.

At this time, the mainline track has been laid, as have the passing sidings and spurs. The main yard and steel mill yard are in place. In addition, track has been laid in the intermodal yard.

N'Crowd member Steve Lancaster has assisted in the construction process from the early demolition of the closet walls to the current stage.



*Ted at work on the railroad in February of this year.*



*A view through what was a closet between the two rooms. The closet walls were demolished to connect the layout spaces.*



*Steve Lancaster lays track for a mainline return loop.*





*Above, peninsula's progress: Only about a week separates these two photos. Below, urban renewal: towns and industries take shape on the WTH&WE.*



## N'Crowd clinic series continues

The N'Crowd clinic series continued at the April membership meeting with a presentation by member Joe Kingsberry on painting with an airbrush and portable paint booth. Joe showed the techniques he uses to achieve the great results he gets with his custom painted and detailed SP and BC&G locomotives and freight cars.

The clinic at our May 21 meeting will be presented by Ray Byer. Ray, who can be seen doing his thing on page 2, will talk about wiring. Future clinics will be presented on lighting, scenery techniques for rock formations and more painting techniques.





# Petrochemicals return to the BC&G

by Samuel Townsel

Some months ago, a daunting task was put before the club: Who wanted to design and build the new refining complex to be served by the club's Bayou City & Gulf Railroad? After a couple of seconds of silence and many shifty glances between the club members present at the meeting, I put my name in the ring.

Not being one to shy away from a challenge, I quickly realized that this project was going to be a major challenge for me for a variety of reasons. Leaning on my architecture background, I know that everything great starts with solid planning and common sense. So I put my thoughts on paper and came up with a plan to repurpose the refining complex to a petrochemical plant that would allow me to scale the project down considerably, but still provide an interesting "job" for BC&G operations.

Generally speaking, the new petrochemical plant will be divided into two divisions. One division will be the liquid chemical division that will produce various liquid products for tank car loading. The other division will be the polyethylene plant that produces plastic pellets for loading into covered hoppers. Truck loading platforms and the control room will be between the two plants.

The beauty of the design is that the complex is serviced through the New Orleans staging yard, which is being repurposed a bit to handle the petrochemical plant. This allows plant rail operations

to happen without affecting mainline traffic on this part of the layout.

After breaking ground in late September, currently the fractionating towers are about 80 percent complete. Most of the superstructure is complete, so now it is a matter of how much piping I want to deal with, while trying to be as prototypical as possible. Although much has been accomplished, this project is far from being complete. Heck, I have not even thought of a name for the plant! Stay tuned, more is to come!





# Variations on an Amtrak theme

by Tom Marsh

Amtrak trains don't always look alike, as these photos of the east-bound *Sunset Limited* leaving Houston illustrate.

From top to bottom, these photos were taken in 2013 on April 21, July 26, and Dec. 27, respectively. The April 21 photo shows Amtrak's Phase IV heritage unit in charge, while the loco on the head end on July 26 is in Amtrak's current standard scheme. On Dec. 27, the veteran's salute unit leads. This engine has made several trips on the *Sunset Limited* in recent months.

Eastbound Train No. 2 from Los Angeles regularly arrives earlier than the scheduled 11:10 a.m. arrival, and generally departs for New Orleans on time at 12:10 p.m. from the former T&NO depot in downtown Houston. Eastbound departures are on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday. Westbound Train No. 1 generally arrives early or on time as well; scheduled arrival is 6:18 p.m. and departure is at 6:55 p.m. The westbound trains run on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

A reasonably accurate N scale model of the *Sunset* can be assembled with Kato cars and locomotives, however, the Superliner II transition sleeper-dormitory car used in the consist is not available (send an email to Kato asking for it!). Most trains are made up of two GE P42s, a heritage baggage car, and six Superliners: transition sleeper-dormitory, sleeper, diner, Sightseer lounge (or diner-lounge on occasion), coach-baggage and coach. The train carries additional cars from the *Texas Eagle* between San Antonio and Los Angeles.



## WANTED!

Your contributions to *The Orderboard*.  
As with most aspects of your club, this only works if you participate.

# LCL *Less than Car Load: a few notes from your editor*

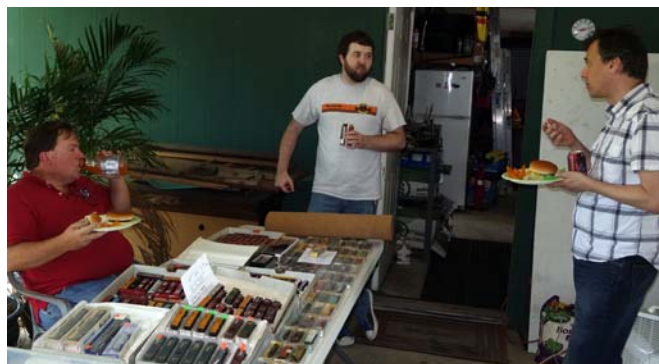
**Swap Meet:** Our May 10 swap meet at Gordon Bliss' home was a success, as Gordon reports: Twelve N'Crowd members made it out to Crosby for a swap meet, run day, hot dogs and hamburgers. A lot of foreign power ran the rails on the Santa Fe-All the Way; even a British passenger train made a few stops, which left some of the passengers bewildered!

A modern autorack train was run by Samuel Townsel, who had to check the clearances on the temporary highway bridges in KC West Bottoms before departure. Apparently he didn't lose any paint off the roofs! Swapping and purchases were on the light side, but food and throttles were plentiful, and a good time was had by all!

*Thanks, Gordon, for hosting the swap meet!*



Above, N'Crowd members enjoy a day of Santa Fe - All the Way. Below, left, a detouring British IC125 High Speed Train crosses the Mississippi River. Below, trains, food and friends.



## HOUSTON N'CROWD 2014 TIME TABLE

### May 17

N'Crowd crawfish boil at Zube Park/Houston Area Live Steamers; the fun starts about 10 a.m.

### May 21

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

### June 4

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

### June 4-8

Lone Star Region NMRA Annual Convention, Wyndham Hotel & Convention Center, Round Rock

### June 10-15

NRHS National Convention, Springdale, Ark.

### June 18

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

### July 13-19

NMRA National Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

### July 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting at Papa Ben's Train Place, 7 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: tom@houstonNcrowd.org.

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

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[www.houstonNcrowd.org](http://www.houstonNcrowd.org)

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