



News from Houston N'Crowd



March/April 2016

# THE ORDERBOARD



*Waiting to board: N'Crowd members and friends pose at Lake Charles, La., for Amtrak's Sunset Limited. For more photos from our visit to the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival, turn to page 6. Photo from Vincent C. Walker*

## We've been busy!

Look inside for more on recent N'Crowd activities, including the Greater Houston Train Show and the most recent Bayou City & Gulf operating session.



*Action on the BC&G: See page 9. Photo by Samuel Townsel II*

# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Samuel Townsel II, President

## Getting started on your home layout

Greetings fellow modelers!

I think it would be safe to say that most people who get into model railroading dream of one day designing, building and operating a basement- or garage-sized layout. For those who consider yourselves novices, there are three general things to consider before laying pen to paper or even buying locomotives or rolling stock. Although each of the considerations listed below can get granular, keep in mind that at a high level getting an idea on what you like or want now can save you time, money and frustration in building your model railroad empire!

First, where will your model railroad reside? This is often the first hurdle to tackle and also dictates what you are "able" to model. Some people have space only for a shelf layout while others have bedrooms or garages to utilize. If all you have is space for a shelf, don't let that discourage you. You will be able to design and build a nice industrial complex capable of presenting interesting switching opportunities. For those of you who have a bedroom, you have the opportunity to model an entire subdivision or even your favorite area. For those who are fortunate to have a large garage space, you have the opportunity to model a railroad that covers several states in a region.

The next question is whether or not your aim is designing for operations or not. The modeler's definition of operations is running your railroad like the prototype or "real world" railroads. This is a key decision that will affect aisle widths and industry locations, particularly if you are planning on having a multi-deck layout.

If running like the prototype is tickling your fancy, then a lot of the work is already done for you; all you have to do is a little research. Whether it's modern day Class I railroads or railroads of the past, plenty of material is available that can help you model what interests you. On the other hand, you may not want to do anything that was

done in real life and create your own railroad. In that case, just build what your heart desires!

Finally, deciding on the era you want to model has a downstream effect on what types of locomotives and rolling stock you need to buy. It also gives you guidance on what your minimum curves and other track tolerances will be as well. Modeling the modern era (1960 to present) lends itself to large six-axle locomotives, 89-foot autoracks and five-car articulated intermodal well cars. If you go with the transition era (1940-1950), then you know you'll have the last of the large steam locomotives in service alongside early diesels. This is the time when the famous streamlined passenger trains were riding off into the sunset. The steam era (railroading up to 1940) lets you have all kinds of steam locomotives, as well as way freights, milk trains, iced reefers and cattle cars.

With the steam and transition eras, you get the opportunity to run the famous passenger trains like Union Pacific's *City of Los Angeles*, Southern Pacific's *Sunset Limited* and *Morning Daylight*, and Santa Fe's *El Capitan*, *Super Chief* and *Texas Chief*. I have to admit, modeling this era seems a bit less stressful.

As I stated from the outset, there is a lot to think about when deciding your approach to how you want to design and build your model railroad. Consider these three points as you start deciding what you want to do next. I am confident that if you do, you can take what I call the laser approach rather than the shotgun approach. You will have an idea on what types of items you would like to buy at your local hobby shop to help your railroad empire come to life. We all know that money does not grow on trees so why not focus on what you want or need rather than picking up everything you see? Just a thought.

Happy railroading!

Samuel



**N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:**  
March 16 / April 20 / May 18 / June 15 / July 20

**BC&G Operating Sessions Even Months 1st Sunday:**  
April 3 / June 5 / August 7 / October 2 / December 4

Most activities take place at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Our monthly membership meetings start at 7 p.m. Sunday Ops Sessions start at 5 p.m. Come early to join us for dinner!



**Houston N'Crowd  
Membership Meeting Report  
January 20, 2016  
Prepared by James C. Senneff, Jr. - Secretary**

**President's Report:** President Samuel Townsel II called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The next meeting is Feb. 17, 2016, at Papa Ben's at 7:00 p.m.

The winners of the door prizes were Al Hague, bulkhead flat car; Randy Oslett, hopper car; James Senneff, flat car; Tom Marsh, Northwest Crossing covered hopper; Jackson Cadengo, Santa Fe coal hopper; Amy Wayburn, N'Crowd pin; Dejan Suskavcevic, transformer. No club cars were auctioned.

**Vice President's Report:** VP Harvey Stalarow had no report.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported cash \$10,818.73 and CD \$4,819.25 as of Nov. 18, 2015. We ended 2015 \$29.87 ahead compared to the first of the year.

**Secretary's Report:** Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr. reported 24 members in attendance: Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Allen Melton, Randy Ollett, Samuel Townsel II, Richard Bartlett, James Senneff, Jr., Kyle Senneff, Vincent Walker, Fred Keal, Eddie Aycock, Harvey Stalarow, Tom Marsh, Al Hague, Gordon Bliss, Barry Miles, Joseph Kingsberry, John Sweigart, Ted Davis, Amy Wayburn, Dave Holguin, Jackson Cadengo, Dominic Valdez and Ray Byer.

**New Business:** President Samuel Townsel opened a discussion about issues related to recruiting young members and related club matters. Harvey Stalarow said that we need to keep in mind that Papa Ben's owner Allyn Pearlman has graciously given us a place for the layout. That being said, we all need to remember that this is a place of business and should be treated as such:

- When we leave after N'Crowd meetings, sometimes people walk out without letting someone know. This leaves the entrance door unlocked. When you leave, please have someone lock the door behind you. We need to make sure the door is always locked when the store is closed.

- When children are in the train room, their parents should be with them. We need to determine what age children need to be accompanied by an adult. It is not Papa Ben's nor the club's place to supervise children coming into the shop. Harvey has seen parents sitting in the shop area not paying any attention to their children in the layout room. Harvey has also seen John Sweigart, one of our most frequent layout room volunteers, telling kids not to run in the room or the store. This should be the responsibility of the parents.

- When people, children or adults, are doing what they are not supposed to do in the store or the train room, we need to say something to them.

- There are times when the kids will be very noisy, running around and screaming.

- We need to show both adults and children how to use the equipment because they do not know.

- Harvey gave an example of one child in the train room derailing a train by running it too fast. Harvey asked the child about it and he said that he was not paying attention. Harvey told him that if he is going to run trains that he will run them right. The child was ringing the bell and horn constantly. Harvey told him to stop it. The child

asked why and Harvey told him that it was annoying to the store's customers and employees. The child had the throttle by the cord and was swinging it around. Harvey is trying to get the children to act like the equipment is theirs and take care of it properly.

A discussion started about a minimum age for individuals to run the layout; Harvey suggested 16. Jackson Cadengo noted he is not 16. Tom Marsh said that we need to make a distinction between members and non-members. It was then noted that one of the kids not following the rules was a younger member.

Ray Byer brought up a question about whether or not these children are being instructed by members how to operate the trains properly. Joe Kingsberry said that the children in question were instructed but chose to ignore the instructions. James Senneff said that Ray made a good point that we as a club have the responsibility to teach the kids and their parents how to operate the trains properly so that the parents can help their children run the trains right.

Vincent Walker reminded everyone that we have written guidelines for running the layout. He said that we should make sure all young members and parents read it, understand it and sign it. If children do not follow the guidelines, then we can tell them to put the equipment down and leave. The guidelines can be modified if necessary, but the important thing is that we have guidelines and they should be followed.

Gordon Bliss said that we need to have parents take note of prices around the store so they have an understanding of the cost of the trains. This may make them take more responsibility for their kids while in the layout room and store. The trains are not cheap. Gordon suggested revising the guidelines to include some dollar figures of what the trains cost.

Harvey was asked what Allyn's comment was when the child in question was ringing the bell and horn over and over again. Allyn did not say anything because Harvey said something first, Allyn was not happy because he is trying to run a business. Allyn's general thought is that kids should not be club members until age 16 or 17. Gordon said we need to get young members before 16. Harvey agreed, but said the kids need to be supervised. Gordon said that he would make a handout to show the proper operation of a bell and a whistle on a train.

Ray said he has seen both adults and children not following the rules, and that we need to be more concerned about applying a code of conduct to all instead of pigeon-holing it by age. Harvey asked who is going to deal with an issue at the time it occurs.

After discussion, it was decided that a more specific code of conduct should be posted in the train room. With this code of conduct, any member can discuss improper behavior with the individual or the parent of the individual if they are a youth. The revised code of conduct should be in an easy-to-read format.

Samuel said that since club renewals are due, we should make the code of conduct part of the renewal application. A motion was made and passed to make the code of conduct part of the application process. With this vote, it was also decided that renewing members will by signature indicate they have read, understood and will abide by the code of conduct.

Samuel proposed that Saturdays in the layout room be more an adult running day to demonstrate model railroading to everyone

### Houston N'Crowd 2016 Officers and Volunteers

President ..... Samuel Townsel II  
Vice President ..... Harvey Stalarow  
Secretary ..... James C. Senneff, Jr.  
Treasurer ..... Eddie Aycock

Board Member (2016) ..... Al Hague  
Board Member (2017) ..... Richard Bartlett  
Board Member (2018) ..... Joe Kingsberry  
Layout Master ..... Al Hague  
Editor & Webmaster ..... Tom Marsh

who comes into Papa Ben's, and designated Sundays will be set aside for interested youths to help them learn and become more interested in model trains. This will give them a chance to learn more about railroads and how to run and take care of the trains. Samuel emphasized the importance for the N'Crowd to be diligent in infusing the hobby with youth so that it will survive in the future.

Jackson said he had a YouTube channel, and offered to let the club use his channel to attract younger members and keep them informed of when the youth sessions will take place.

Samuel asked who was willing to put the time aside once a month on a Sunday to teach and groom young people on how to operate and maintain trains, detail models, etc. A show of hands indicated that there is significant interest among club members to do this.

Ray said he was glad that we are planning to do this because the NMRA is having a problem of attracting youth to our wonderful hobby. Ray recommended that the N'Crowd board meet and prepare a proposal to establish goals and how to accomplish them. A motion was made and passed for the board to prepare a proposal to encourage youth participation in the hobby. The board will come up with a schedule of events for further club discussion.

Ray said that the layout was not running very well because the MRC auto reverser in the refinery area is shorting out, and the reverser needs to be replaced. Ray suggested that we upgrade to a Tony's Train Exchange PSX solid state programmable autoreverser. The new part will cost less than \$100.

Tom Wayburn proposed purchasing folding chairs for club meetings. After some discussion, a motion was made, but it died due to lack of a second.

**Old Business:** Ray brought up old business related to the siding in the corner by the roundhouse that had been proposed for removal a few months ago. Ray proposed that a decision be made by the members present, resulting in a decision for the members present to inspect the area in question after the meeting. The issue was tabled until the February meeting to allow members time to look over the current track and consider the removal proposal.

Tom Marsh reported that the estimated cost for the April 9 road and rail trip to the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival in DeQuincy will be \$55.00 per person. The fare will include the bus trip to DeQuincy and the return trip from Lake Charles on Amtrak. Capacity is limited to 90 people on a first come, first served basis. The trip is being operated by Gulf Coast Chapter NRHS. More information will be available soon.

Ted Davis brought up the subject of undelivered name badges from last year. Ted learned that one of the badges belongs to Bill Moss, who unfortunately passed away. The badge will be retired out of respect for Bill Moss. Eddie Aycock said the other badges belong to people who are not members anymore. The badges will be kept in case the members rejoin in the future.

Eddie discussed upcoming BC&G operating sessions. The Feb. 7 session is cancelled due to it being Super Bowl Sunday. The next operating session will be on the first Sunday of April.

Tom Marsh said that the Eagle Lake Depot Museum is offering limited run Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio wood reefer cars in O scale for a \$75 dollar donation. The artwork is based on a photograph in the museum archives. Since the cars were produced by Atlas, the museum would consider making some in N scale. Tom wanted to know who would be interested in a car. The cost would probably be around \$40. Six club members expressed interest.

Samuel opened a discussion about the upcoming San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's Greater Houston Train Show that will take place Saturday, Feb. 20. Gordon said that the test track is ready for the show. We will have two tables provided at no charge, one for the test track and one for flyers. Sale of club merchandise is not allowed at these tables. We will need members to man the table. Gordon will be doing a passenger train clinic at 2:30 p.m. on Passenger Trains -

Santa Fe Style.

Samuel said that the N Scale Enthusiast Convention is in Kansas City this summer during the week before the 4th of July. There will be home layouts to be visited, and a trip to the Union Pacific Railroad Museum. Eddie asked people to fill out their renewal applications tonight if possible. Ray said that Division 8 LSR is starting their clinic series on Feb. 13. The clinics will take place at Bayland Park on the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon. You do not have to be an NMRA member to participate!

Meeting adjourned after the group inspected the proposed track changes in the layout room.

### Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report February 17, 2016

Prepared by James C. Senneff, Jr. - Secretary

**President's Report:** President Samuel Townsel II called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is March 16 at Papa Ben's at 7:00 p.m.

The winners of the door prizes were Tom Wayburn, Micro-Engineering deck girder bridge; Steve Lancaster, *Model Railroader's Guide to Industries #4*; James Senneff, transformer. No club cars were auctioned.

**Vice President's Report:** VP Harvey Stalarow said that two medium N'Crowd shirts and one small shirt that had not been paid for should be sold at the train show. Gordon Bliss made a motion to sell the shirts at the train show; motion seconded and passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported cash of \$11,171.08 and CD of \$4,819.25 as of Feb. 17. Eddie is still encouraging everyone to submit their renewals now.

**Secretary's Report:** Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr. reports 20 members in attendance: Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Allen Melton, Randy Ollett, Samuel Townsel II, Richard Bartlett, James Senneff, Jr., Fred Keal, Eddie Aycock, Harvey Stalarow, Tom Marsh, Gordon Bliss, Barry Miles, Joseph Kingsberry, John Sweigart, Ted Davis, Amy Wayburn, Dominic Valdez, Charlie Aselin and Steve Lancaster. January meeting minutes were read by James Senneff and approved as presented.

**New Business:** Tom Wayburn said that the N'Crowd needs to have more external presence with the public through train shows and with other clubs this coming year. He thought that a good vehicle would be Free-moN modules, noting that some members already have personal modules that could be part of the effort. Gordon Bliss liked the idea as a whole, but noted that due to space limitations, shows in our area have a club layout display rotation. This means that the club would display one year and then might not come back into the rotation for a few years. During the discussion, it was noted that only one show is likely to take place each year in Houston. Charlie Aselin said that to gauge interest he brought up the topic with a few members prior to the meeting since he was interested in Free-moN.

Ted Davis mentioned that we have more public presence than many other clubs due to having the layout in Papa Ben's Train Place. Ted did say that we do not have as much presence at train shows as we used to, and expressed concern that there is not enough interest and dedication in the group to make the train show circuit. Samuel Townsel said he does not have an issue with members participating in shows or other events with modules if there is no cost to the club. Gordon reviewed the club's history with modules and shows. In the past, payment was made to participating clubs if the show made a decent profit. Some shows started making it a layout competition, and only layouts with animation or super impressive scenery would receive any compensation to offset costs.

Gordon said he would build a module but is not interested in

going back to train shows and crawling around on the floor to set up modules, especially if only a few members do all the work then the rest come in and enjoy the fruits of their labor without helping. Gordon knows that Free-moN is a good idea when it comes to operational flexibility and offered his driveway and carport for some modular operating sessions. Gordon said the club should not expect participation in train shows to generate any significant income given the potential expenses involved.

Dominic Valdez said modules could be used to promote the club and he does not have an issue if some members want to use Free-moN to promote the club if there is no cost to the club. Gordon noted that there is only one local train show and the others will require travel. He said we should concentrate on our layout at Papa Ben's. Gordon asked for a show of hands of who would be interested in building Free-moN modules; three or four members raised their hands. Gordon recommended that people review the Free-moN standards and then have further discussion at the next meeting. The discussion was tabled until the April meeting.

Barry Miles asked about adding more plexiglas around the layout to protect it from children and others. Ted Davis added that the only place we have plexiglas on the layout is to protect the expensive bridges, and installing more would require modifications to the fascia. Richard Bartlett suggested removing the fascia and replacing it with plexiglas. Several people said that would not look right. Ted expressed the opinion that when we have visitors in the layout room, members are not paying attention and continue with their projects, which is why things get broken. Harvey Stalarow said he cannot be in the room much when he is on duty at the shop, but when he is, quite often members are not watching visitors. Samuel asked if there was a motion to add plexiglas to protect the layout. Barry made a motion, which died due to lack of a second.

More discussion took place about what to do when visitors come in; suggestions included putting up signs and making sure that visitors are greeted. No decisions were made on the proper thing to do, as it is related to the board of directors finalizing the code of conduct guide as discussed last month.

Ted asked what the Digitrax PR3 was for. Gordon explained that it was an interface between Digitrax and JMRI computer programs.

Samuel brought back up that members Bill Moss and Mike Welmer passed away and he asked Tom Marsh to make note in *The Orderboard* in their memory.

**Old Business:** Ted Davis said that the PSX auto reversers have been received. Ted also again brought up the Burlington *Pioneer Zephyr* resin kit that was donated years ago. This is a kit only, no chassis, motor or decoder. There was a discussion on what to do with the kit; Tom Marsh brought up that the kit is not worth the cost to get the motor and the other parts needed to make it run as a ready-to-run model is available from Con-Cor. Gordon made a motion to dispose of the kit, and it was decided that Ted will take it to the San Jac train show and try to sell it for \$10.00 or less.

Tom Marsh said that the Gulf Coast Chapter NRHS Louisiana Railroad Days Festival road/rail trip is on April 9, 2016. He had copies of the order forms with details. The trip cost is \$70 for adults and \$50 for kids 12 and under.

Samuel brought up that the vote to remove the siding switch in Englewood Yard going to the corner on the way to Gulf was tabled in the last meeting. Samuel moved to remove the switch; the motion was seconded passed 18-2. It was agreed that the area would be made to look as if the siding was abandoned, and Richard Bartlett volunteered to do the scenery once the switch was removed.

Samuel called for volunteers to man the N'Crowd tables at the Greater Houston Train Show. Dejan Suscavcevik, Gordon Bliss and Dominic Valdez will cover in the morning. Samuel Townsel and Charlie Aselin will cover in the afternoon. Gordon will be presenting a clinic on passenger train operation at 2:30 p.m. Joe Kingsberry

and John Sweigart will be covering Papa Ben's during the show.

Samuel will organize the board of directors to finalize the rules and guidelines for club membership and the operating code of conduct while at Papa Ben's Train Place. Samuel will bring the information to the next N'Crowd meeting.

Samuel discussed the use of youth member Jackson Cardengo's YouTube channel to help attract youth members and promote youth-related events. Samuel recommended filming members's clinics for posting on YouTube. Gordon said that he would try to film the clinic at the San Jac show.

Samuel asked what we were going to do with the Digitrax DT 300 throttle. Gordon said that he does not believe that Digitrax will repair the DT300 throttles anymore, and he will investigate.

Eddie Aycock asked what the situation was with the throttles in the layout room as the next operating session is coming up in April. John Sweigart has marked the faulty throttles. The club has already agreed to send the broken throttles back to Digitrax. Samuel will take care of shipping the throttles for repair.

Motion to adjourn made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

### Houston N'Crowd Membership Meeting Report March 16, 2016 Prepared by Samuel Townsel II - President

**President's Report:** President Samuel Townsel II called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The club welcomed new members Farrell Pitts and David Nardecchia.

The winners of the door prizes were Allan Melton, coil car; Richard Bartlett, covered hopper; David Nardecchia, covered hopper; Harvey Stalarow, boxcar; Michael Cianciolo, bulkhead flatcar.

**Vice President's Report:** VP Harvey Stalarow brought to the floor a proposal for the club to visit the METRO light rail maintenance facility. Harvey will provide more details next month.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported \$11,360 cash in the bank, \$4,819 in the CD

**Secretary's Report:** Secretary not present. The president reported that 17 members were present.

**New Business:** President Samuel Townsell said that to further our outreach efforts to youth about our hobby, there is an opportunity to work with the Boy Scouts of America. Several merit badges are uniquely tied to modeling and railroading. Merit badge requirements are posted on the BSA website. The requirements can be presented and reviewed at upcoming meetings.

Gordon Bliss is interested in hosting another swap meet at his home; details are pending. Conversation arose again concerning the Free-moN modules standards. The issue was tabled.

**Old Business:** The road/rail trip to the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival in DeQuincy is sold out. Currently, the Union Pacific mainline is flooded at the Texas/Louisiana border and Amtrak *Sunset Limited* service east of San Antonio is suspended. The hope is the floodwaters will recede, repairs will be made and the trip can take place on April 9 as scheduled. N'Crowd member Bill Van Pelt is selling his N scale inventory soon. Al Hague will provide details to the club when available. Several N'Crowd members participated in an operating session in Baton Rouge. The host's layout modeled mainline operations from Texarkana, Arkansas, to Westwego, Louisiana.

The president recognized that the tabled discussion concerning the 3D printer had not been settled and the issue was re-opened. A motion to purchase a 3D printer was made and seconded. The motion failed on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



# N'Crowd takes to the high iron!

A number of N'Crowd members, families and friends (see the front page photo) joined a group from Gulf Coast Chapter - National Railway Historical Society on April 9 for a trip by road and rail to the 34th Annual Louisiana Railroad Days Festival at DeQuincy, La.

The day started with an early morning departure via motor coach from Houston's Amtrak station for a mid-morning arrival at the DeQuincy Railroad Museum, site of the annual festival. After enjoying food and fun at the festival, the group

reboarded the motor coaches in the afternoon for the short trip to Lake Charles, La., to board Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* for the return to Houston.

Amtrak arranged an early dinner seating in the diner for our combined group, which consisted of 76 people. Everyone who wanted to dine was easily accommodated in the Superliner dining car as Amtrak had put on extra staff so they could operate both sections of the car for our group.

The train arrived in Houston 23 minutes early at 5:55 p.m., capping off a fun day for all!



Above and below left, the area around the DeQuincy Railroad Museum in the former Kansas City Southern depot is transformed every year by the Louisiana Railroad Days Festival, which includes a traditional midway with games and food. The track in the foreground of the top photo is the KCS line to Lake Charles.



Above, to augment the permanent museum exhibits during the festival, the East Texas & Gulf Rail Modelers Association of Beaumont, Texas, set up and operated their HO modular railroad. Photos this page by Tom Marsh





Above, KCS provided some prototype railroading activity during our group's visit to DeQuincy. The engineer gave the crowd some special whistle action as the train passed. Photos by Tom Marsh



Above, while awaiting the arrival of Amtrak's Sunset Limited, which was running a little late, our group was treated to some freight train action courtesy of Union Pacific. Left photo by Tom Marsh, right photo by Vincent C. Walker

Below, Amtrak Train No. 1, the Sunset Limited, arrives at speed at Lake Charles, and our group prepares to board. The engineer overshot his spot by several cars and the conductor took to the ground to guide him back. The engineer then backed the train too far, and had to pull forward again. Once the train was properly spotted for boarding our large group and the other passengers, the conductor made a comment to the effect of "What a day to have a rookie." Photo by Tom Marsh







Above and below, dinner in the diner! Amtrak put on extra dining car crew and opened the car early to seat our group. Where should we go next? Photos by Tom Marsh



### Modeling “our” *Sunset Limited* by Tom Marsh

You can assemble a reasonable N-scale approximation of the train we rode with currently available models. The consist appears at right; note that we had two private cars bringing up the markers, adding something a little different to our train. The photo below shows the train headed west after dropping our group at Houston.

N-scale models of the GE P42 locomotives and the Superliner cars are available from Kato. Until someone offers a Viewliner baggage car, substitute a Kato Budd baggage car in Amtrak Phase VI paint. For the *Pacific Sands*, use the Budd 10 roomette/6 double bedroom (10/6) from the Kato UP *City of Los Angeles* 11-car set. Finally, a Kato Budd *California Zephyr* dome coach is a good stand-in for the splendidly-named *Silver Splendor*. All aboard!

#### Amtrak Train No. 1 *Sunset Limited*

Arrived Houston, Texas, April 9, 2016, at 5:55 P.M. (23 min. early)

16	GE P42
83	GE P42
61061	Viewliner II baggage
39045	Superliner transition sleeper
32037	Superliner sleeper
38058	Superliner diner
33027	Superliner lounge
31026	Superliner coach/baggage
34079	Superliner coach
800355	<i>Pacific Sands</i> Budd 10/6 sleeper (originally UP)
800604	<i>Silver Splendor</i> Budd dome/diner/lounge (originally CB&Q dome coach)





# Train time on the BC&G

by Gordon Bliss, photos by Samuel Townsel II

Since Eddie was not able to attend the April Bayou City & Gulf operating session, I set up and ran the session, although Eddie set up all the paperwork and dropped off the cars at the store.

Alan and James D. helped to clean locomotives and turnouts, and run track cleaners around, while I set out the cars in the proper spots. About a half hour before the session was to start and people were showing up, we sent a train around the operations main line and discovered a dead section of track. A quick and dirty repair had us running before a slightly late 5:15 p.m. start.

Randy ran Englewood Yard, Joe K. ran Austin Yard and Alan ran Bennett, while Tom W., Samuel, Vince, Fred and Dejan ran the mainline trains. Tom W. and Vince brought trains in on time with a well-timed meet at Austin. We ran all nine scheduled trains plus our two BC&G passenger trains, *The Bluebonnet* and *The Dome City Express*.

A couple of problems were found. Several engines were squealing and Joseph took one home to repair, and throttle 7566 would not shut off completely. A fun time was had by all.

If you have not run with us at an operating session, you should give it a try! The next session is scheduled for Sunday, June 5.



**BC&G**  
BAYOU CITY & GULF RAILROAD

# Striking Aspen Gold, and other colors

*by Samuel Townsel II*

If you have been railfanning heritage units in the Houston area lately, you have been blessed by several sightings. In the past couple of months, I have been able to catch a few of both Union Pacific's and Norfolk Southern's heritage units.

I caught Union Pacific's Chicago & Northwestern unit on the drill track in UP's Settegast Yard. This heritage unit was introduced on July 15, 2006, to honor the former Chicago & Northwestern Railway, which was merged with Union Pacific in 1995. The livery here adapts the green zig-zag band over the yellow background used by the C&NW.

Union Pacific's Aspen Gold Denver & Rio Grande Western unit was spotted just east of the Port Terminal North Yard. This heritage unit was introduced in June 2006 to honor the memory of the former D&RGW Railroad, which Union Pacific acquired in 1989. The livery used here clearly acknowledges the challenges the Rio Grande endured operating through the Rocky Mountains. Can you see the mountain silhouette?

Union Pacific's Winter Olympic Torch Relay unit 2001 was captured just north of Tower 87. This is one of two heritage units Union Pacific painted as part of the Olympic Torch Relay to the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games. Along with sister unit 2002, this locomotive is due to be repainted sometime this year. I just hope to catch 2002 before she visits the Jenks Shops.

Norfolk Southern's Wabash heritage unit was seen at the refueling rack in Englewood Yard. This is one of 20 units NS painted as part of its 30 year celebration.

If you are a railfan, I recommend you know safe locations in high traffic areas to sit and watch trains. In addition, it helps to research where the rail lines are throughout the Houston area and where those lines normally terminate.

As far as catching these elusive heritage units, there's an app for that! No really, there is. Check out "Heritage Units" on GooglePlay or the App Store and download it. This app is operated and maintained by railfans across the country who track every UP, NS, KCS, BNSF and Amtrak heritage or commemorative unit.

Until next time, happy hunting!



## WANTED!

Your contributions to *The Orderboard*.

As with most aspects of your club, this only works if you participate.



# Greater Houston Train Show draws a crowd

Hundreds of train enthusiasts, including many Houston N'Crowd members, flocked to the 2016 Greater Houston Train Show, held this year on Feb. 20 at the Stafford Centre.

Bargains were had, trains were run and bull sessions were in abundance, so a good time was had by all. Congratulations and thanks to the

volunteers of the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club for producing another great show. Thanks also to the N'Crowd volunteers who manned our table and multi-scale test track.

If you missed this year's show, be sure to set aside the third Saturday in February for the 2017 Greater Houston Train Show!



*Above, Vince Walker and Dejan Suskavcevic man the N'Crowd booth at the 2016 Greater Houston Train Show. Below, the show attracted train enthusiasts of all ages. Photos by Tom Marsh*



# LCL

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

**Final Departures:** We extend our sympathies to the families of recently-deceased N'Crowd members Bill Moss and Mike Welmer.

**Have you seen the tree flocking machine?** Here's your chance: The N'Crowd's own Ray Byer will be presenting the next NMRA LSR Texas Gulf Division (Division 8) clinic, and the topic will be "Making of a Tree Flocking Machine". If you need to make a lot of scale trees, you need this clinic. Even if you don't need a lot of trees but you haven't seen the tree flocker in action, you should still check it out. The clinic will take

place Saturday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Jim & JoAnn Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonnet St., Houston.

Division 8 clinics are held on the second Saturday of each month. Upcoming topics include completing NMRA contest entry forms; a hands-on session on how to install DCC decoders (bring your loco and decoder); applications for LEDs; English model railways; scratchbuilding refrigerator cars and more. For additional information, go to the new Division 8 website: [www.texasgulfdivision.org](http://www.texasgulfdivision.org)

## HOUSTON N'CROWD 2016 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

### March 16

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

### April 3

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

### April 9

Trip to Louisiana Railroad Days Festival, DeQuincy, La.; bus out, Amtrak return

### April 9

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: Graffiti On Railroad Cars

### April 20

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

### May 14

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: Tree Flocking Machine

### May 18

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

### June 5

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

### June 11

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: Preparing NMRA contest entries

### June 15

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

### July 9

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: Installing DCC Decoders (bring your loco and decoder)

### July 20

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

### July 30-31

14th Annual San Antonio Model Railroad Association Family Summer Train Show, Austin Highway Event Center

### August 7

BC&G Sunday 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: [tom@houstonNcrowd.org](mailto:tom@houstonNcrowd.org).

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

### Visit our Web site:

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