



News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2016

## Galveston Warbonnets strut their stuff! *See page 6*



*Galveston Railroad Museum's Warbonnet F-units made a run over BNSF from the island to Brenham and back on Sunday, Oct. 2. N'Crowd member Gordon Bliss caught the gleaming units rolling at track speed about five miles south of Brenham on the return trip.*

# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

*by Samuel Townsel II, President*

## Breaking through the modeling block

Do you remember when you first decided to get into model railroading? Do you remember the excitement that you had trying to decide the what, when and where you were going to model?

Most model railroaders remember these times and strive to keep their excitement strong for the hobby. Quite often, the vagaries of life catch the best of us and we get to the point where our excitement and progress in model railroading stagnates. If you're not careful, frustration will set in and push you out of the hobby.

So what can you do to avoid what I call "modeling block" and if you find yourself there, how can you break through? First, be honest with yourself in regards to your time, finances and space needed to keep yourself excited. You may have the time, but not the finances. You may have the time and finances but not the space.

Regarding time, weigh the amount that you can spend on the projects that you take on. In other words, don't bite off more than you can chew. Find small projects that you can accomplish and hang your hat on those. Nothing is more gratifying than looking at something that you can be proud of completing.

Be realistic concerning the finances needed to get what you want out of the hobby. This may be one of the biggest shockers to new model railroaders. The hobby can be expensive. I have found that talking to people who have done this a lot longer than I helped me avoid expensive mistakes and spend my money wisely.

Remedying your space issue may be the easiest hurdle to overcome. All of us long for the largest layout humanly possible, but reality prevents that from happening. So look into joining model train clubs to run your trains (you can belong to more than one if you have many interests). Network with model railroaders who have layouts, and run on their layouts. Finally, scale down your own layout expectations and consider building a shelf or switching layout.

In the end, the goal is to remain enthusiastic for the hobby and keep yourself engaged. Life happens, but you can take some time for model railroading to be your space away from the hustle and bustle of the world. Spend some time in YOUR world!

Happy Railroading!

*Samuel*



**N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:**  
September 21 / October 19 / November 16 / December 21

**BC&G Operating Sessions:** TBA

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  
July 20, 2016  
Prepared by James Senneff, Jr. - Secretary**

The next meeting is 17 August 2016 at Papa Ben's at 7:00 p.m.

**President's Report:** President Samuel Townsel II called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Digitrax UTR4 is malfunctioning; unit sent to Digitrax and problem was confirmed by Digitrax. It should be back in two weeks or so. The old Code of Conduct that we thought we had is missing and cannot be found. We will have to start from scratch on the Code of Conduct. Samuel asked for volunteers for a committee for drafting of the new Code of Conduct. Gordon Bliss and Vice President Harvey Stalarow volunteered. The committee will consist of Samuel Townsel II, Gordon Bliss and Harvey Stalarow. The rough draft should be ready for review at the September N'Crowd meeting.

No door prizes today.

**Vice President's Report:** No report.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Eddie Aycock reported as of July 19 our cash balance is \$11,220.34; CD \$4,819.25. Total \$747.50 collected in dues. We are ahead of last year by \$401.00

**Secretary's Report:** Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr. reported 17 members in attendance: Dejan Suskavcevic, Tom Wayburn, Dr. Richard Bartlett, Steve Lancaster, James Senneff, Jr., Ted Davis, Gordon Bliss, Garrett Schoen, Harvey Stalarow, Joe Kingsberry, Eddie Aycock, Samuel Townsel II, Barry Miles, Allen Melton, John Sweigart, David Garver and Randy Ollett. Visitor Jan Garver was also present.

Harvey made a motion to accept the June meeting minutes as documented by the secretary; seconded by Gordon Bliss, passed without objection. David Garver, member since December 2015, and his wife Jan were in attendance. He has a 12 square foot layout which will grow to fill 80 sq. ft. of layout space. Today is Garrett Schoen's 12th birthday.

**New Business:** Garrett noted that there is not enough power for programming sound decoders on the programming track. Gordon tried to program sound engine and it failed. Gordon moved the club purchase an amp/booster for the programming track at a cost of about \$70. Expenditure okayed by Samuel, per club bylaws. Bylaws state that expenditures of

less than \$100 can be authorized by the club president without a club vote. Ray Byer will acquire and install the booster unit.

**Upcoming Clinics/Events:** None scheduled.

**Old Business:** The replacement of the switch behind Union Station will be delayed until after the August operating session so as not to interfere with the session. Garrett asked when the passenger lead would be fixed; there is already a passed motion to move and replace the switch in the back of Union Station by the bus depot. Ray noted that there is a way to work the area of the switch to bring it around the corner and go to the outside. This would make the siding long enough to meet the 6 ft. length as required by layout rules. Someone has done some work with a building that would be affected by this modification. Discussion about this option followed. The switch will take one day to complete. The passenger lead would take a few days to complete. The siding modification will be tabled until the August N'Crowd meeting. Samuel and Tom Marsh will make sure they discuss the new proposal with layout master Al Hague before the next meeting.

Gordon said the 2016 N Scale Convention in Kansas City was really cool. A lot of barbeque was eaten. The high point was operating on all the layouts in the area and meeting all the guys. Rodney Eddington's layout was kind of neat. Six trains were run at one time. Most trains were 45 cars or longer; two were 60 car trains and a 22-car *California Zephyr* ran as well.

Ray reported that the 2017 NMRA Lone Star Region Convention will be held in Houston in early July at the Westchase Hilton. Some operating sessions will be on Wednesday and Thursday of that week with layouts to be confirmed. There is also discussion of having a super tour by bus that will be for layouts closed to the public. The convention web page should be up soon, with the most complete information becoming available in January of next year. One modeling contest theme will be outhouses. Ray said that the Lone Star Region will be doing clinics on the different aspects of scenery on a 12-in. x 12-in. piece of plywood for displaying the outhouse. This will make a nice diorama.

### 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



Fall layout tours will held in November and December.

Samuel mentioned that if you missed the Kansas City NSE convention, you got a consolation prize. If you are a UP fan could have seen the "Katy" Heritage Engine at the Katy Depot in early July. Samuel and Allyn Perlman saw it; the event was not highly publicized.

Ray mentioned that the Galveston Railroad Museum on October 1/2 will be having a train festival sponsored by Amtrak. Amtrak has said that they will bring down their railroad history cars. BNSF has said that they will have an engine there for display. Admission will be free on the dates. On October 2 an excursion train will run a round trip from Galveston to Brenham. Two F-units will be on the point with a Genesis unit behind it. You can purchase a ticket to ride this train (first 50 people) for \$250 per person. You will be able

to railfan the train in spots. Samuel would like to have a club outing during the event to visit the Galveston Railroad Museum since it is free to the public. Ray also mentioned that the following weekend October 8/9 at the Galveston Railroad Museum there is a model train show. Admission will be charged. There will be special model exhibits and some vendors.

On September 23 NMRA LSR Division 8 will hold its annual business meeting at Zube Park. This is for members and people who are joining the NMRA that day. There will be some type of food. HALS will be having an operating session on that day. Check the Texas Gulf web page for more information on this.

Motion to adjourn made by Samuel and seconded by Gordon. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

## Tony's Train Exchange offers DCC advice

*by Richard Bartlett*

I sent the following to Tony's Train Exchange and received a most informative reply.

"I am planning to use a common rail for HO and N scale trains over a 9-ft. bridge in my layout. I am wondering how to wire the track. I am thinking that I will need two boosters, one set for HO and one set for N scale voltages.

"When an HO train travels the common track the HO booster will be used to power it and vice versa for the N booster. Will I need a double throw on/off/on switch to select between the two boosters? Can this switching be controlled by a stationary decoder or a switch machine?"

Tony's President Erik Fiske responded as follows:

"There is no need to use two separate boosters or different voltages for HO and N scale. The NMRA specifies 12 volts as the motor voltage for all scales. While recommended practices for DCC are 12V DCC for N and 14.5V DCC for HO, this is more because HO requires more power than N. So, your first option is just to use the HO voltage for both the N scale and HO scale track.

"If you go with this approach, remember that the full voltage is not applied to the motor except at full throttle, so running the N scale train at a slightly lower throttle speed than the HO is equivalent to using a lower track voltage. By NMRA specification, any N scale decoder must work with up to 24 volts DCC applied, so using 14.5V on an N scale decoder is fine.

"If you really want to go with the dual voltage/dual booster approach, you will need a three position center off switch: ON-OFF-ON. This will look like a DPDT switch and be wired as a DPDT switch except it will have a center off position. This is important because it will ensure that you cannot connect the two boosters together. With a DPDT switch, it is possible to have some amount of time during which both boosters are connected. This is very likely to

damage your boosters. With the ON-OFF-ON configuration, you are guaranteed that you cannot connect them together. Go to Digikey (or other vendor) and search for DPDT switch. Then under Switch Function, look for ON-OFF-ON. An example is Digikey part number EG2414 or EG4821."

So, I'll be using the HO setting. I find that Mouser in Dallas ships faster and their part numbers could be: 612-R5DBLKBLKEF0 or 611-S202031MS02Q.

I hope members found this as informative as I did. For more information about the services offered by Tony's Train Exchange, go to: <https://tonystrains.com/>

### San Jac Fall Layout Tour details now available online

The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Annual Fall Layout Tour schedule is now available at: <http://sanjacmodeltrains.org/Tour/Tour.html>

Houston N'Crowd is on the schedule for December 3/4 and we will need volunteers to run the layout on that Saturday and Sunday.

More than 50 individuals and clubs are included in the 2016 tour. Four of the layouts on the tour are open for the first time this year.

The fall layout tours start Nov. 4 and continue until Dec. 4.

# N'Crowd operators go foreign road

by Gordon Bliss

The first official operating session for the Houston N'Crowd not held on the club's Bayou City & Gulf Railroad took place Oct. 2 on Treasurer Eddie Aycock's Union Pacific, Town Creek Subdivision layout.

Alan, Fred, Randy, Richard and youth member Michael answered Eddie's crew call for this session. Richard held down Hearne Yard and the rest of the gang ran the railroad, while Eddie and I worked as hosts/helpers. Eddie has working signals and the road crews really liked them.

Everyone had a good time.

Thanks, Eddie!

*Top right, Michael is having a good time on the road.*

*Right, Fred is watching closely, and Alan says, "I did not do it."*

*Below, Randy running a road job.*

*Below right, Richard concentrates while working Hearne Yard.*





# High iron run with Warbonnets caps Galveston Railroad Days weekend

The Galveston Railroad Museum pulled together an impressive lineup of equipment and activities for its 2016 Railroad Days over the first weekend in Oct. On site for the event were Amtrak's Exhibit Train, a variety of cars from the BNSF executive fleet, a BNSF GE road unit, a privately-owned dome and matching sleeping car, and the museum's two Warbonnet F-units.

A number of N'Crowd members were spotted touring the exhibits at the museum on Saturday,

while Sunday saw members headed trackside to capture images of the museum's *Texas Chief Special* speeding on its journey from the island to Brenham and back. The train, which was made up of BNSF, Amtrak, museum and privately-owned passenger cars, was powered push/pull style by BNSF GE ET44C4 No. 3962 and the two F-units. The big GE was in the lead from Galveston to Brenham, while the Warbonnets did the honors on the return to the island.



*Galveston Railroad Days displays included a BNSF locomotive and business cars, privately-owned passenger cars and Amtrak's Exhibit Train. The Exhibit Train was originally set up to celebrate Amtrak's 40th anniversary in 2011. The train's Galveston appearance was its last scheduled display stop for the time being. Exhibits ranged from HO models of Amtrak trains to memorabilia from Amtrak's first 40 years, including groovy 1970s TurboTrain crew uniforms.*





Above, Galveston Railroad Museum's Texas Chief Special has crossed the causeway from the island and is picking up speed over the former ATSF mainline through the coastal wetlands. Photo by Tom Marsh.



Two above, the special approaches Rosenberg with BNSF 3962 in charge and the F-units along for the ride. Note the searchlight signals are soon to be replaced. Photos by Tom Marsh. Below, a high school band and others greet the train at Brenham. Bluebell ice cream from the nearby creamery was given to the passengers. Photo by Gordon Bliss.



# LCL

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

**Home layout tours are worth the effort!:** As noted on page 4, the preliminary schedule for the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's annual layout tour is available on the SJMRRC website. Everyone should take advantage of this opportunity to see some of the area's best model railroads!

This year nine N-scale layouts are on the tour, each of which provides a wealth of ideas for your own efforts. But don't limit yourself to visiting only the N-scale layouts, as there is much to see and learn from layouts in every scale.

Several new layouts that have not previously been included are on the tour schedule. These include an O27 layout with a lot of operating accessories; an HO freelance layout set in the 1950s with scenery 100 percent complete; and an On30 layout set in Maine.

The schedule is subject to revision, so for any given week-end you should check the SJMRRC website for changes. The schedule and photos of some of the layouts on the tour can be found at: <http://www.sanjacmodeltrains.org>

**And now for something completely different:** The next NMRA LSR Division 8 clinic will stray a little from the usual format and will cover "Railway Recollections Around Southport, United Kingdom". The Nov. 12 presentation will start at 10 a.m. at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston.

The clinic will be presented by Keith Hick, who will share his personal recollections of the railway network serving the Lancashire coast's premier seaside bathing resort from 1840s to the 1960s.

Southport and Bournemouth were the two pre-eminent seaside resorts of the early Victorian era and five railway companies vied for the commercial benefit in helping to grow and serve the town with varying degrees of success. Seventeen stations, more than any other provincial UK town and including three termini, served the resort at its peak.

Keith will discuss various railroading activities in this area of England.

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

### September 21

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

### October 1-2

Alamo Model Railroad Engineers 2016 Train Show, Freeman Coliseum, San Antonio

### October 8

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston

### October 19

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

### October 29-30

8th Annual New Braunfels Fall Train Show, New Braunfels Civic Center

### November 12

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: British Model Train Layouts

### November 16

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

### December 10 (tentative)

N'Crowd Annual Holiday Party and Combat Gift Exchange

### December 10

NMRA LSR Div 8 Clinic, Bayland Park, Houston: Building Reefers

### December 21

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](mailto:tom@houstonNcrowd.org).

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

### Visit our Web site:

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

Copyright © 2016 N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, Inc.