



News from Houston N'Crowd



THE ORDERBOARD

September/October 2017



Bob Folser

N'Crowd visits the Hub of the Gulf Coast



Tom Marsh



City of Rosenberg

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Samuel Townsel II, President

Stay engaged in the hobby!

Greetings again my fellow model railroaders!

If your life has been anything like mine, you have been running a mile a minute and there never seems to be enough hours in the day. Houston and the surrounding areas have been through a lot lately. Fortunately, at the time of this writing, I am happy to report that no model railroaders in the Houston area perished during or after Hurricane Harvey. While most came through the storm without suffering damage, some did not. Let's keep those friends in mind as we go about our day-to-day activities.

Let's talk about the hobby for a minute. As we know, the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club provides the opportunity for model railroaders across the Houston metro area to open up their layouts for all to see each year with their fall layout tour. I encourage each of you to go out and take a look at some of the budding railroad empires as well as some that are museum ready! It will be a great opportunity to sit and talk to fellow modelers, pick their brains a bit and allow them to show off the hard work and dedication we all know it takes to commit to the hobby.

Lastly, I would like to take the time to encourage each of you to stay engaged in the hobby. Trust me, I know that life has its priorities and model railroading can be placed on the back burner. However, take the time to complete the simplest tasks to get back into the groove of things. Head out to your favorite railfanning spot and watch train movements. Better yet, get more active in your model railroading club and yoke up with people who share the same passion as you. You will build camaraderie that will surely last a lifetime.

With everything going on in the world, I for one appreciate the chance to slow down a bit and enjoy the things that make me happy. Model railroading and railfanning provides that escape from our sometimes frantic world. If you let it, the hobby can do the same for you.

Happy Railroading!

Samuel

Houston N'Crowd 2017 Officers and Volunteers

President Samuel Townsel II
 Vice President Richard Bartlett
 Secretary James C. Senneff, Jr.
 Treasurer Eddie Aycock
 Board Member (2017) Scott Gordon

Board Member (2018) Joe Kingsberry
 Board Member (2019) Allan Melton
 Layout Master Al Hague
 Editor & Webmaster Tom Marsh



N'Crowd Wednesday Membership Meetings:
 September 20 / October 18 / November 15

N'Crowd Operating Sessions: First Sunday of even-numbered months. Watch your email for information.

Most activities take place at Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd. Our monthly membership meetings start at 7 p.m. and are open to all. Operating sessions take place at various locations.

From mainline master to yard goat

by Tom Marsh

A friend sent me these recent photos of Lehigh Hanson SD40-2 No. 4297 working the company's aggregates plant in Garden Ridge, Texas, about 25 miles northeast of San Antonio. I'm always interested in the history of former mainline workhorse locomotives that have "aged out" and moved on to new careers, so I did a little research and learned that No. 4297 is former Missouri Pacific No. 3297 built in July 1979 by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors at La Grange, Ill.

According to multiple online sources, the locomotive became Union Pacific No. 4297 in late 1990, some eight years after UP took over the MoP. In late 1992 the locomotive was rebuilt for trailing-service only. The "rebuild" was more of a downgrade, consisting of removal of refrigerator, toilet and cab seats. At that time, the unit number was changed to B4297 to designate its status as a trailing unit only. Another 69 UP SD40-2s underwent the same conversion.

No. 4297 soldiered on with UP until being retired in early 2000. I have not been able to learn when Lehigh Hanson acquired the locomotive.

EMD's 3,000-hp SD40-2 was arguably the most successful diesel locomotive produced in North America. According to James W. Kerr, author of the book *General Motors Phenomenal SD40 Series Diesel-Electric Locomotives*, EMD built 4,149 SD40-2 and related variant locomotives. Production began in 1972 and ended in 1989.



Lehigh Hanson SD40-2 No. 4297 working at Garden Ridge, Texas, earlier this year. The locomotive is now remote controlled, as evidenced by the equipment and antenna mounted on the rear of the locomotive. Photos by Leonard Ruback



When No. 4297 worked on the MoPac as that road's No. 3297, it is likely to have been in the Houston area at one time or another. MoPac rostered 306 SD40-2s, according to North American Locomotive Production 1968-1989 by James T. Bradley. Every identifiable locomotive in this September 1979 view of the MoPac locomotive servicing facility at Settegast Yard in Houston is an SD40 or SD40-2. Photo by Tom Marsh



No N-scale models of a MoPac SD40-2 are currently available, although InterMountain Railway Co. is taking reservations for this all-new model. Photo courtesy InterMountain Railway Co.

Layout tours inspire and teach by Tom Marsh

The 2017 San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Fall Layout Tour schedule has been released, and once again the tour offers great opportunities to be inspired by and learn from model railroaders in the Houston area. This year's tour schedule runs weekends from Nov. 3 to Dec. 3 and includes more than 40 destinations, including our own Bayou City & Gulf Railroad on the weekend of Dec. 2. (We'll need volunteers to run trains.)

There really is something for everyone on the annual fall tour, so check out the San Jacinto Model Railroad

Club's website and plan your visits. The URL is: <http://sanjacmodeltrains.org/>

I had the opportunity to tour several layouts during the 3rd Annual Fall Plano Train Show, which took place over the last weekend in September. The show, which is organized by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs, featured 16 destinations as part of its club and home layout tour. Some highlights from the tour layouts are shown here. You will find equally fine modeling during the upcoming San Jacinto club tour.

North Texas N-Trak

This 16-ft. x 36-ft. N-scale club layout can be operated as point-to-point, six continuous loops or three figure 8s.



Dakota Northern

Ole Melhouse's N-scale Dakota Northern models the former Great Northern mainline between Grand Forks and Minot, N.D. Ole hosts operating sessions on the 12-ft. x 20ft. layout on the first Tuesday of each month.



Tarrant County Modular Model Railroad Association

Here are two views of a locomotive servicing facility on the TCMMRA's HO scale layout, which is built to the Free-Mo modular standards. Structure lighting is used effectively to enhance the scene.



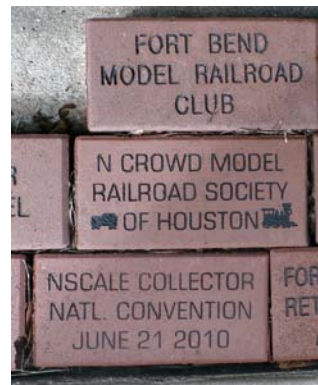
Rosenberg welcomes the N'Crowd

N'Crowd members headed to Rosenberg on Saturday, Oct. 7, to visit the Rosenberg Railroad Museum and watch trains at the "Hub of the Gulf Coast's" busy junction. We were not disappointed! Along with a special guided tour of the museum, we also saw plenty of mainline action courtesy of the UP, BNSF and KCS. The museum provides two viewing platforms and the restored Tower 17 to catch the action. We also checked out the paving bricks that recognize the N'Crowd and other model railroad groups that have provided support to the museum. You should join us next time!

Tom Marsh



Ted Davis



Ted Davis



Tom Marsh



Tom Marsh



LCL

Less than Car Load: a few notes from your editor

Elections ahead: N’Crowd elects officers and one board member each year, and that time is now upon us. As of the September membership meeting, only the Board Member (2020) position has more than one nominee. The current 2018 candidates are:

President Tom Marsh
 Vice President Richard Bartlett (incumbent)
 Secretary Jame Senneff, Jr. (incumbent)
 Treasurer Eddie Aycock (incumbent)
 Board Member (2020) Randy Ollett
 Board Member (2020) Samuel Townsell II

Publication of the list of candidates fulfills the requirement of the N’Crowd bylaws whereby the slate of candidates shall be presented in writing, preferably by publication in N’Crowd’s newsletter, to the general membership at least 30 days prior to the annual election.

The election will take place at the November 15 membership meeting, which also constitutes the annual meeting of the organization. Nominations will be accepted from the floor after presentation of the slate of candidates.

Bylaws: A copy of the current N’Crowd bylaws accompanies the email distribution of this newsletter. An electronic copy (PDF) of the bylaws can be requested at any time by sending an email to me at: tom@houstonncrowd.org.

Saturday BC&G run sessions: There is an ongoing discussion within the N’Crowd about procedures that should be followed on Saturdays when the layout is open to the public. Some issues are covered by the new Code of Conduct, which is posted on the bulletin board in the layout room, however, a few other issues are outstanding.

Many of these have to do with younger visitors and parental supervision, or lack thereof. While we want

to be polite and engage every visitor, if unaccompanied non-member minors enter the layout room, they should be asked politely to leave and return with an adult. The adult should be thanked for visiting and asked to prevent children from touching the layout.

There are other issues about Saturday run days that may need to be addressed in the near future.

Hurricane Harvey, Part 1: We received this note from the Lawrence Model Railroad Club in Kansas:

*From: Jim Turner
 To: Houston N’Crowd
 Subject: Hurricane*

*Hey...
 On behalf of the Lawrence Model Railroad club in Lawrence, Kansas: We are all hoping you all made it through that stinking Hurricane. Cheers and good thoughts going your way.*

We have thanked Jim for his group’s concern and let them know that the BC&G and most members seem to have weathered the storm well.

Hurricane Harvey, Part 2: I had intended to put together a Hurricane Harvey story in this issue of *The Orderboard*, but quite frankly I am tired of hurricane stuff. As a result, I am presenting here one photo provided by Randall Wilson, an active member of the NMRA and the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club. I think this will be the extent of Hurricane Harvey coverage in our newsletter.

For a model railroad connection, this scene could easily be modeled in N scale with a little selective compression using one Atlas Code 83 straight track section to bridge the gap. Atlas sectional track is strong enough that you could probably still run trains over the structure at reduced speed. Sounds like an idea for a Free-MoN module!



Union Pacific’s ex-SP “Rabbit” line bridge across the San Jacinto river near Humble was partially washed out due to flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey’s late August passage. The bridge has since been repaired and the line to east Texas has reopened. Photo by C. Randall Wilson

HOUSTON N'CROWD 2017/2018 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE**September 20**

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

October 1

N'Crowd Operating Session

October 7-8

Galveston Railroad Museum Railroad Days

October 14

NMRA LSR Division 8 Clinic Series: Modeling Water; go to www.texasgulfdivision.org for info.

October 18

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

October 28-29

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

November 11

NMRA LSR Division 8 Clinic Series: DCC Decoder Installation and Programming; go to www.texasgulfdivision.org for info.

November 15

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

November 30 - December 3

Southern Plains N Scale Convention, Oklahoma City

December 2-3

Oklahoma City Train Show

December 2-3

Bayou City & Guif Railroad open for fall layout tour

December 10 *NOTE DATE CHANGE!*

N'Crowd Operating Session

December TBA

Annual N'Crowd Holiday Bash and Combat Gift Exchange

December 9

NMRA LSR Division 8 Clinic Series: Topic TBA; go to www.texasgulfdivision.org for info.

December 20

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

2018**January 17**

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

January 20-21

Dallas Area Train Show, Plano Centre

February 3-4

World's Greatest Hobby on Tour, NRG Arena, Houston

February 4

N'Crowd Operating Session

February 18

Greater Houston Train Show, Stafford Centre; N'Crowd will have tables

February 21

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

February 24

Proposed bus trip to San Antonio for the SAMRA 42nd Annual Jamboree & Train Show and a visit to the Texas Transportation Museum

March 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.

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

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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