



News from Houston N'Crowd



January/February 2011



How many layouts are there in a year?
(Answer Inside)

2011 N'Crowd Dues are Due!
Please use the renewal form that accompanies this issue.

"GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

by Ted Davis, President

Firsts

Well the *first* meeting of 2011 has been held and the "new" officers were "initiated" to their responsibilities.

The membership renewal drive continues through Feb. 19, and several members took advantage of 2011's *first* monthly meeting to renew. FYI the *first* renewal received was from Past President Marty Giesecke via mail.

One thing I have noticed over the years is that members are curious as to why they are required to fill out a renewal application. *First*, I believe that it is required by the bylaws and if you consider that it insures your contact information is correct it makes sense. Also the renewal application is used instead of a receipt for your payment.

The *first* local train show is to be held Feb. 19. Of course, I am referring to the Greater Houston Train Show to be held at the Stafford Centre. For details see the fliers at Papa Ben's or online at the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club website: <http://sanjac.leoslair.com>.

As in the past several years we will participate with an organization/club table located in the lobby. This year we plan to display our banner, story boards, T-Track modules and one of Steve Lancaster's layouts. We also will have memberships applications and 2011 BC&G calendars available to the public. Lastly, I hope to give "missing members" a call and get renewals from those members still pending.

We need members to volunteer to man the table(s), at this time I have Harvey down for 11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. To sign up please e-mail me at tedjr1@swbell.net.

This is the *first* Orderboard of the year. I expect we will continue the high level of quality thanks to Tom Mash's expertise. As always we hope you will consider submitting articles and/or photos for your publication.

We have formed a committee to work on an event to celebrate our 35th Anniversary, which is in 2013. The *first* meeting of the committee was held on the 36th (use your decoder ring here!) of this month. See Tom's report in this issue, and be sure to attend February's meeting for more information.

Thanks to the latest website update we have for the *first* time included the past issues of *The Order-board*, so if you lost your e-mail attachment or printed copy you are in luck!

For the *first* time ever I have included what I call a "blast from the past": A copy of a club flier from time that the club had space at Ben Pearlman's "Studio On The Lakes" is reprinted on page 6. Thanks go to Gordon for this historic N'Crowd document.

Enjoy!



Next N'Crowd Meeting: 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16

Papa Ben's Train Place, 4007-E Bellaire Blvd.
Come and check out progress on the BC&G!

**Houston N'Crowd
Membership Meeting Report
October 20, 2010**

Prepared by Richard Bartlett, Secretary

- Meeting called to order 7:10 p.m.
- A drawing was held for two door prizes. Dan Gutierrez won a car and Steve Lancaster won the second prize, a box full of flex track.

President's Report

- Ted reported that the N Crowd website now has last year's newsletters in archive including the December issue.
- Newly elected officers were announced as beginning their terms effective with this meeting.

Vice President's Report

- Steve was asked to sub for our absent newly elected VP, Charlie Aselin, and reported that there was no VP's report.

Treasurer's Report

- Our checking account balance at the end of November was \$12,029.29, up approximately \$670 for the month.
- Treasurer Tom Marsh did not have the Certificate of Deposit amount, but it's about the same as last month.

Secretary's Report

- The following 15 members were present for today's meeting: Richard Bartlett, Robert Moore, Ted Davis, Tom Marsh, Gordon Bliss, Steve Lancaster, Ray Byers, Tom Wayburn, James Senneff, Dejan Suskavcevic, Terry Hooks, Eddie Aycock, Joe Kingsberry, and Dan Gutierrez. La'Chaudre Chandler was also present and indicated that this would be his last meeting for quite some time due to night school.

Layout Master's Report

- As our Layout Master was absent, we had no report.

Old Business

- Ted asked Eddie if he was caught up entering the rolling stock and the local destinations on the layout into RailOps. Eddie indicated that he was except for several new additions of which he had not been informed. Eddie suggested that any new additions be identified in an "in box" so he could keep RailOps current.
- Ted brought up a discussion of potential purchase of additional engines, but no conclusion was reached.
- Terry Hooks offered some tankers and covered hopper rolling stock for use on the layout.

New Business

- Gordon Bliss, Ray Byers, Steve Lancaster, Terry Hooks, James and Angie Senneff, Robert Moore and Dejan Suskavcevic renewed their membership at the meeting. Ted also reported that Trent Jocca and Harvey Stalaro renewed the previous week
- Ted reminded all of the Greater Houston Train Show

hosted by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club to be held in Stafford on Feb. 19, 2011. Free parking is available and admission for adults is only \$6.00.

- Discussion of N'Crowd table having a table at the show resulted in Ted volunteering Tom Marsh to contact the San Jacinto group for space and an electrical power source. Tom suggested that even if we could not obtain the latter, we could possibly share an outlet dedicated to another group to run what we chose to bring as demos.
- The next Big Texas Train Show will be Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 8-9, at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The club expects to participate in this show. Due to the success of the last show, Tom Marsh indicated that the Houston Railroad Museum anticipates it be a yearly event.
- Tom and Ted began a discussion of the N'Crowd's upcoming 35th anniversary, which will occur in 2013. Tom, Ted and Gordon reminded the members present of the previous 10-year incremental anniversaries, and the associated celebrations and events. Gordon made particular reference to the success of the 1993 convention as being responsible for producing the bulk of the club's present treasury. Discussion centered on whether the club should use the Treasury funds to have a member-oriented celebration (train excursion to New Orleans or Banff, Canada!), or follow previous patterns of having Anniversary Meetings.
- Tom Marsh suggested that a satellite meeting associated with the 2013 Big Texas Train Show (BTTS) to be held in one of the first two weekends of October 2013 would have significant advantages of drawing more visitors to our club's anniversary event, providing a ready made venue, and allowing the potential of having layout tours with high attendance. As the BTTS is likely to have access to meeting rooms at the show venue, Tom Marsh indicated that our event possibly could utilize these for clinics, etc.
- Four options for our 35th celebration were laid out by Ray and Tom, but only two stirred member enthusiasm. A vote was called by Ray to determine which of the two alternatives would be preferred. 70 percent of those present voted in favor of a satellite meeting associated with the 2013 BTTS.
- Motion to adjourn the meeting was passed unanimously at 8:00 p.m. and members went to check out the latest progress on the Bayou City & Gulf. (That's Dejan looking over Union Station, below.)



Table Tops For Everyone

by Steve Lancaster

Question: How many layouts are there in a year?

Answer: Why 12, of course!

I didn't exactly set that as a goal, it just happens to be working out that way. You may recall my N scale/G scale City Park layout (#1, featured in last month's *Orderboard* and pictured again below), which sold at the Big Texas Train Show in October. As that one came off the work bench, it was quickly replaced by a 3-ft. x 5-ft. layout (#2, at top, page 5) that was complete except for scenery and wiring.

Encouraged by the sale of the park layout, I set #2 aside temporarily because it was too large and heavy to display in the store, and began what would become The Island Of Gloom And Doom And Possibly The Portal To Hell Like In That Show I Never Watched, or The Island for short (#3, seen on this month's cover). I completed it in about six weeks. I took it to the shop before Christmas, and after three nerve-wracking weeks it sold at two-thirds the asking price. Disappointing, but still profitable.

And so began #4 (at bottom, page 5). This latest layout is my favorite so far. The Island was okay, but because of the time I spent on the water, and the need to eliminate the growing pile of stuff I ordered at the shop, I didn't have time to detail it to my satisfaction. #4, which represents a mine to coal trestle run, has gone together much quicker, and at the time of this writing has already surpassed the Island in structures and details.

I've just been contracted to build a 3-ft. x 12-ft. layout (#5, not pictured yet) which will take a while and may throw off my 12-in-12 schedule, but in the meantime I'll continue to build more table tops for sale in the shop. I guess we'll find out in October if there really are 12 layouts in a year!

By the way, I won't be including my own layout in this endeavor, since it probably won't be finished for years and may soon, once again, suffer a massive revision.

Below, the G-scale City Park, aka #1, was featured in last month's Orderboard.





Above and below, two-twelfths of the goal.



N'CROWD MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

CLUB INFORMATION

The Houston N'Crowd held its organizational meeting on March 15th, 1978. Seventeen enthusiastic N scale model railroaders met to help create Houston's first N scale model R.R. Club. The initial goals of the organization were to promote N scale modeling and to participate in the fledgling NTRAK modular program. Eleven months after its inaugural meeting, the club set up its first layout, a 24' x 32' "L", for the 1979 San Jacinto Model R.R. Club Jamboree.

The greatest opportunity for modular N scale layouts (NTRAK), has always been the National Model Railroad Association's, yearly conventions. Since the Calgary Convention in 1978, N'Crowd personnel have participated in every national convention. The club also has had modules in six of the layouts, and served as host club twice. The largest NTRAK layout ever assembled was in San Mateo, CA, in 1981, with the N'Crowd coordinating the layout operations. In addition to NMRA national conventions, the N'Crowd has participated in many other regional and local NTRAK set-ups.

The first N scale & NTRAK convention was sponsored by the N'Crowd in 1983. This inaugural N scale event drew 250 delegates for the four days of N scale fun & excitement. Since then, N scale conventions have been held each year, usually in conjunction with the NMRA national convention. The N'Crowd also sponsored the N scale convention at the 1989 NMRA national convention held at the Astrohall.

Each November, the N'Crowd holds its annual N Scale Mini-Convention. This one-and-a-half day event draws an average of 150 dedicated N scalers from the region and out of state. The mini-convention features N scale clinics, N scale layout tours, a rousing live auction and a lot of N scale fun & fellowship.

Throughout its existence, the N'Crowd has been blessed with many extremely talented modelers, including one NMRA Master Model Railroader. Club members have won an unprecedented three "Con-Cor Best Module Awards" at NMRA national conventions. Club members have also won dozens of individual contest and module awards at regional and local conventions. These winners have also unselfishly shared their talents and abilities through clinics and demonstrations at monthly club meetings.

In 1986, the N'Crowd was offered permanent space for a layout in a 2000 sq. ft. room at Ben Pearlman's "Studios On The Lakes" production facility. This opportunity has resulted in a large operating club layout, which does not have to be erected and torn down for each operating session. The NTRAK modules comprising the layout have been augmented with several non-standard layout sections, to provide more operating interest. One of the highlights of the layout is the large depot and yard, with an exact scale model of Houston's Union Station as it appeared in its heyday. A new downtown section is being completed, complete with many huge structures including a mammoth 30 story office building.

With an extensive new walk-around control system, the club layout is being readied for timetable and car-card switching operations. The layout is configured to run either point-to-point for operation, or in a continuous mode for public shows. Up to 6 trains can be independently controlled and operated on the large layout. In addition to working on the large club layout, club members are active in several impressive N scale home layouts. Three of which have been featured in Model Railroader Magazine & Rail Model Journal.

The club has also produced more special run N scale cars than any other club in the country. The sale of these collectible cars has helped finance club activities and enabled admission fees to its conventions & mini-conventions to remain reasonable. The N'Crowd has also distributed N scale special run cars for the Lone Star Region of the NMRA.

The N'Crowd is not resting on its laurels. Future plans include further refinement and expansion of the club layout, as well as construction of a highly detailed, prototypically designed portable layout. The N'Crowd is always looking for new members who are interested in N scale model railroading. If you are an N scaler and would like to be a part of this organization, please contact any of our members for meeting information.

2401 W. BELLFORT AVE., HOUSTON, TX 77054



N'Crowd Model Railroad Society
Application for Membership/Renewal
Calendar Year 2011

Mail to:
4633 Hummingbird St.
Houston, TX 77035-5125

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member (requires \$10 initiation fee) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corresponding Member |

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (M.I.) _____

Family Members' Names (if applying for Family Membership) _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Occupation _____ Spouse's Name _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Cell phone _____ E-mail _____

Current Membership in Other Organizations:

☐ NMRA ☐ San Jacinto Model Railroad Club ☐ NRHS

☐ Other _____

Do you have an N Scale layout? ☐ Yes ☐ No Modules? ☐ Yes (Feet) _____ ☐ No

Do you collect or model in other scales? ☐ G ☐ O ☐ S ☐ HO ☐ Z ☐ Other _____

Annual dues: ☐ Active \$15 ☐ Family \$30 ☐ Youth \$7.50 ☐ Corresponding \$5
(Active, Family and Youth Memberships require Attendance and/or Participation)

Applicant's Signature _____

Sponsor's Signature _____

Date _____

Date _____

Date accepted into Membership _____

35 + 30 = 2013

Yes, that is some odd-looking math, but that's how things are adding up around here.

In two years, 2013 will be upon us. That year will mark the 35th anniversary of the founding of the N'Crowd Model Railroad Society, more commonly known as the Houston N'Crowd.

2013 will also mark the 30th anniversary of the first national N-Scale and N-Track Convention, which the N'Crowd sponsored in 1983.

As most of you are aware, we followed up every 10 years thereafter with another N-scale event. 1993 is a distant memory for some of us, 2003 a little more clear.

And now, 2013 is almost upon us!

At the January membership meeting, a committee was formed to prepare a recommendation for an event to commemorate 35 + 30; the general feeling among the members present was that a mini-convention along the lines of the events we organized some years back would be the best approach (see page 5 for more about those past events.)

The committee met on Jan. 26 and outlined a proposal, which will be discussed further at the Feb. 16 meeting. The Mini-Convention idea was deemed the best approach, with a possible tie-in or loose affiliation with Houston Railroad Museum's Big Texas Train Show. We would invite other clubs to participate as well.

Proposed events include a Meet-n-Greet welcoming reception, Contest, Swap-a-Rama, Clinics, Layout Tours, Prototype Tours, Operating Session(s) on local home layouts, a dinner event and an expanded N-Trak layout at the Big Texas Train Show, assuming we are having our event at the same time.

There's a lot to decide, not the least of which is whether or not we actually want to do this! Your input is important - be sure to join us at the next meeting.

Help Wanted at the Zoo Train

The Hermann Park Railroad is looking for part-time engineers, conductors and mechanics. Visitor Services Director Ron Misrack says he is particularly looking for people with a love of trains and a strong focus on customer service. If you are interested, email Ron at RMisrack@hermannpark.org or telephone 713-528-0827.



TIME TABLE

**Happy Holidays from N'Crowd
Model Railroad Society!**

2011

February 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
Papa Ben's Train Place

February 19

Greater Houston Train Show,
Stafford Center

March 16

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
Papa Ben's Train Place

April 20

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
Papa Ben's Train Place

May 18

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
Papa Ben's Train Place

June 9-12

LSR NMRA 60th Annual Convention,
Lubbock

June 15

N'Crowd Membership Meeting
Papa Ben's Train Place

THE ORDERBOARD *from Houston N'Crowd*

Published as close to monthly
(but no promises!) as possible
for members and friends of
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Tom Marsh, Editor

Send newsletter contributions to:
tom@houstonNcrowd.org. We
reserve the right to edit submissions
for clarity and length.

Visit our Web site:

www.houstonNcrowd.org

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