



News from Houston N'Crowd



# THE ORDERBOARD

November/December 2017



## Milwaukee Trainfest

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# "GREEN EYE" - CLEAR BLOCK

*by Samuel Townsel II, President*

## Happy Holidays!

2017 has come and gone and most that are reading this, like others in the Houston community, have gone through some ups and downs this year. With the holiday season in full swing, I hope that you take the time to reflect on things, be thankful for others and appreciate what is around you. As this year and my tenure draws to an end, I would like to thank the N'Crowd for supporting me and the initiatives we set forth during my two-year tenure as your president. Although my absence of late may have slowed some progress, I thank my board for covering for me during the meetings. I really appreciate you guys.

That said, the election results are in and I would like to announce my successor to the presidency who is none other than Mr. Tom Marsh. Tom is no stranger to the club as he has been key to the success of some of the most important club business, some through his affiliation with railroad societies as well as model railroad clubs. I have no doubt that the club is in good hands and I am just as confident that we will continue making progress and move forward during his tenure.

We have some exciting things coming up with the club. First is that because of the holiday

season, we have our operating schedule up and this provides a great opportunity to run trains on the BC&G while supporting our great host Allyn. In addition, we have our final meeting coming up where we will further refine our club business as well as discuss future plans. What I can tell you now is that in keeping with our past precedent, yours truly will be hosting the annual holiday party. So come out and have some laughs, great food and engage in our combat gift exchange. I am also quickly preparing my Union Pacific "Ark-La-Tex" line to show it to you for the first time at the holiday party as well. So I am excited about having everyone come out.

Lastly, the holiday season is time to recharge your batteries and spend some time with friends and family. I encourage everyone to stop and take care of yourself. If you are like me, you may have some hours of PTO (and NOT Pretend Time Off) that you can use to take a load off and maybe, just maybe, spend some money at Papa Ben's to finish that model railroading project you have not touched since January! In any case, whatever you do, be safe and again, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

*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:**  
 November 15 / December 20 / January 17

**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.



# Dust is not our friend

by Tom Marsh

Dust is a problem for most model railroaders, and the problem is exacerbated by the N'Crowd's particular circumstances with our BC&G Railroad located in a space with an open ceiling underneath a kids martial arts training center. When the kids at the appropriately-named Bam Bam Mixed Martial Arts Academy are training in unison, the overhead begins to reverberate and the dust begins to fall.

Dust is not weathering! It detracts from the appearance of the structures, locomotives and cars on any layout. But it's easy to address. All you need are a few soft brushes of different types. Your brushes should be used only for dusting. Never use a brush that has had paint on it to dust, as sooner or later you will wind up with old paint migrating from the brush's ferrule or heel onto the surface you are cleaning.

We will be laying in a stock of dusting brushes for use on the BC&G so we can tackle the dust issue in the new year. It will make a difference, as these photos illustrate. And it's a project that everyone can lend a hand with!

**Top:** Inexpensive brushes and applicators suitable for dusting can be purchased at art or craft supply stores.

**Second:** Be careful of fragile details while cleaning cars and structures. Different brush shapes will let you work around details.

**Bottom two:** Bayou City & Gulf heavyweight coaches before and after a serious dusting.





# NMRA Clinic Series sheds light on LEDs

The Texas Gulf Division of the Lone Star Region, National Model Railroad Association will finish out its 2017 Clinic Series with an illuminating session on light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

The clinic, presented by Jeff Hamilton and Mark Couvillion, will take place at the Bayland Community Center at 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, on Saturday, Dec. 9. The two-hour clinic starts at 10 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend; you do not have to be an NMRA member to participate. (NMRA membership information will be available!)

Jeff will present background information on LED applications, sources for LEDs and supporting equipment for fixed applications. Mark will

address applications for locomotives and rolling stock equipped with DCC decoders.

A copy of the complete electronic presentation along with URL links to referenced sources will be available to anyone who brings a USB flash drive to the clinic.

The Division's Clinic Series will continue in 2018. If you have a topic you would like to see presented, email Ray Byer at [raybyer@yahoo.com](mailto:raybyer@yahoo.com).

Clinics are also presented at the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's annual Greater Houston Train Show. The 2018 show will take place Saturday, Feb. 17. Additional information can be found at [www.sanjacmodeltrains.org](http://www.sanjacmodeltrains.org).



*LEDs light the way on the Bayou City & Gulf. Learn about model railroading applications for LEDs at the Dec. 9 Texas Gulf Division NMRA clinic at Bayland Park.*

## And now for something completely different...

This massive HO scale helix has little to do with scale model railroading, but it is mesmerizing the first time you see it.

To see for yourself, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hPuNFjRTZA&feature=youtu.be>





# A visit to Milwaukee's Trainfest

by Tom Marsh

I've been hearing about Milwaukee's Trainfest for many years but never had the opportunity to attend until this year. I'm glad I did.

The show has been produced annually since 1972 by the Wisconsin Southeastern Division of the NMRA's Midwestern Division. Trainfest has grown over the years, and now is billed as "America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show." The 2017 show, held Nov. 11-12, lived up to its billing with 59 operating layouts and/or organizations participating in operating layouts. Kids of all ages were invited to run trains on 30 of the layouts.

In addition, 66 model railroad manufacturers, 40 vendors and 12 historical societies were in attendance. Miniature train rides, museum and tourist railroad displays, safety displays by CN and Operation Lifesaver, clinics and a first-ever photo contest rounded out the two-day show.

About the only thing lacking were the individual collector/dealers seen at many shows; the vendors at Trainfest were, for the most part, retail hobby shops and vendors who work train shows nationwide as a full-time occupation. And as with many shows these days, only a few railroadiana dealers were in attendance.

These are minor points. Trainfest is a big show with something for just about anyone interested in model railroading and railroad history. If you find yourself in the Milwaukee area in November, I encourage you to attend. Just remember to take a warm jacket!

Trainfest 2018 will take place Nov. 10-11 at the Wisconsin State Fair Park.



*Above: Trainfest offers a big-venue mix of layouts, manufacturers and vendors.*



*Above and below: CN's Little Obie Safety Train was a hit with the kids.*



*Above: Soo Line was the featured railroad at Trainfest 2017 and the railroad was well represented on layouts and in historical displays.*



## Trainfest 2017: *Layouts*

N scale was well-represented at Trainfest, with superb modeling sharing the spotlight with some out-of-the-box and in-the-suitcase thinking.



**Above:** A group known as Modutrak showed what can be done with N scale. This is a scratchbuilt model of Milwaukee Road's 1901 Sturtevant, Wis., station. The Modutrak layout is well-detailed, with consistent scenery across all of the modules, scratchbuilt bridges and stations, and detailed and weathered locomotives and rolling stock. Capturing railroading in the 1950s/1960s Midwest, this is top-notch modeling.

**Right:** Nicely-detailed locomotives and rolling stock are spotted around the Modutrak layout, adding additional character to the scene.



**Below:** Most scenes on the Modutrak layout are based on real locations. No backdrops are used as the modules are designed to be viewed from both sides. This allows for maximum flexibility when setting up the layout.







**Above:** Scenes on the modular layout of the Capital City "N" Gineers. One corner features a large circus scene. The 4-ft. module at right is made up of four identical scenes set in spring, summer, winter and fall.



**Left:** The large scale layouts included this really large set.

**Two below:** Creativity on display. "Juke Box Saturday Night" features an operating layout circling a drive-in eatery, while a celebration of small town America is packed and ready to go in a sturdy suitcase.



**Right:** Some of the winners of the 2017 Kato Model Railroading Contest and their module. The contest is sponsored by Kato and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. More than 140 schools across Japan participated. The winning team of 10 girls from the Kyoritsu Girls' Senior High School received an all-expenses paid trip to the U.S. and the opportunity to display their module in a T-Trak layout at Trainfest. The tracks run through a tunnel under the village scene.





# Trainfest 2017: N scale manufacturers

N scale continues to grow, with new manufacturers and new models coming on the scene. Here are some of the upcoming and recent releases highlighted at Trainfest 2017.

*N-scale cabooses were in the Trainfest spotlight at the Bluford Shops and Trainworx booths.*

**Top:** Bluford announced a new model of the International Car Co. bay window caboose, which saw service on many railroads beginning in the 1950s. Initially five versions in 12 roadnames will be produced, including the unique “half bay window” cars ordered by New York Central that saw service through the Penn Central and Conrail eras. More roadnames will be produced in the future. The cars will have metal wheels, wire grab irons, window glazing and “plenty of weight.”

**Second from top:** Bluford also showed new paint schemes for its short body and transfer caboose models, including two variations each for Rock Island and MP/TP. The cars will be available in spring 2018.



**Above:** Trainworx released details and artist renderings for a new, highly-detailed D&RGW cupola caboose, which is expected in summer 2018. The model represents the 1940 as-built appearance of the car, and features 59 individual pieces, etched metal details, caboose trucks with metal wheels and electrical pickup and body-mounted magnetic knuckle couplers.

**Below:** Atlas is shipping a new run of its venerable cupola caboose, including two featuring ATSF “Axy Dent” safety slogans.





Atlas showed pre-production samples of several new models, including two all-new locomotive models and five “shorty” passenger cars.

**Right:** Pre-production samples of the new Atlas SD60E and GP39-2. The all-new SD60E model is based on units coming out of Norfolk Southern’s EMD SD60 rebuilding program, which began in 2010 and features an NS-specific new cab design.

The GP39-2 was built by EMD from 1974 to 1984. Among the original owners were Santa Fe, BN, D&H, MKT and Reading.



**Right:** The new passenger cars from Atlas are based on Chicago & Northwestern and Central of New Jersey prototype 60-ft. cars. Unlike some older model passenger cars, these “shorty” passenger cars are the correct scale length. On the C&NW, the 60-ft. coaches primarily worked in commuter service. The baggage and RPO cars could be found in trains running on longer routes.

**Below:** Bachmann had painted shells for its forthcoming GE Dash 8-40CW locomotive on hand. The DCC locomotives will be shipping in the first half of 2018.





**Top:** A new company called Jacksonville Terminal Company Model Trains debuted its first product at Trainfest. JTC's first model is a 40-ft. "rib" style corrugated canvas/open top container in five paint schemes; two shown at right.

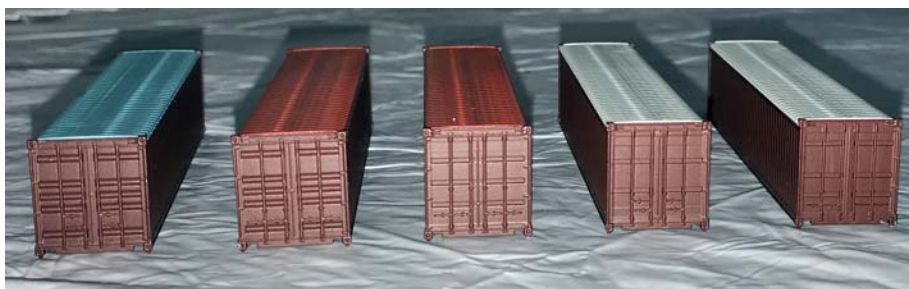
**Middle two:** Coming in the first quarter of 2018 are 40-ft. wave style corrugated canvas/open top containers, 40-ft. high cube containers and 20-ft. standard height containers. All of the new container models feature a magnetic connecting system for stacking. In addition, the models have molded on IBC pins for stacking with other manufacturer's models, multiple door styles (five are shown in the photo) and multiple canvas shapes to represent canvas covered loads in open top containers.

JTC plans "a complete system of models and accessories that interconnect." The company says any prototype container is a possible model candidate, and suggestions for future models are welcome. More information can be found online at [www.jtcmodeltrains.com](http://www.jtcmodeltrains.com).



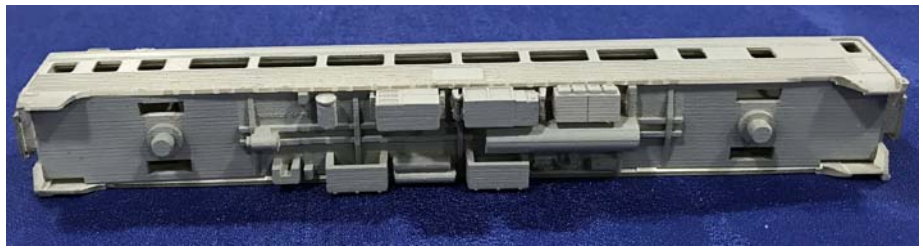
**Above:** Fox Valley Models is shipping a new run of seven-post box cars. Based on cars built by the Soo Line's Fond du Lac shops, the current run comes in two Soo Line paint schemes and two Wisconsin Central paint schemes. The version here represents a group of cars that were originally equipped with partial fiberglass roofs to allow light into the interior.

**Right:** Broadway Limited had samples of its new N scale cryogenic tank cars on display, while Walthers showed painted examples of the next run of its EMD SW1200.





**Right:** *Wheels of Time* was surveying Trainfest attendees on their interest in models of SP's 1937 PS chair cars. This rapid prototype sample model showed a high level of detail.



*Wheels of Time* also showed a proposed model of a Railway Express Agency delivery van (below) and examples of its PC&F 50-ft exterior post boxcars (right). The boxcars are shipping to dealers soon.



**Right:** *Lunde Studios* is offering its "Quick-Flats" kits in N scale.

**Below:** *Rapido Trains* showed a rapid prototype version of its upcoming UA TurboTrain, along with samples of New Haven 8600 series PS coaches.



**Left:** A pleasant surprise was the sale of this special run Micro-Trains N-scale Soo Line boxcar. Very few all-scale events offer special run cars in our favorite scale these days. The Trainfest crew did two versions of the car for this year's show, which had Soo Line as its featured railroad. The wrapper reads in part: "The 40-ft single sliding-door boxcar is a car built/assembled at the Soo Line's Fond du Lac shops in 1951. During that 1951 production the Soo transitioned from using its dollar sign herald to this 4-ft billboard lettering. This scheme was the first to be done without black ends, and had the 'Built in Fon du Lac' and 'Nailable Steel Floor' logos."



## Trainfest 2017: *In search of the Chargers*

The trip to Trainfest was made via Chicago, with a major goal being to get a decent photo of one of Amtrak's new Siemens Charger locomotives. This turned out to be easier said than done.

**Top two:** Things started well enough after arrival in Chicago on the Wednesday before the show. The sky was clear and blue, and Blue Island, Ill. beckoned, with the expectation of commuter and freight action.

Chargers could wait until Friday. Today, Metra commuter trains provided action at the former Rock Island station. Rock Island came to Blue Island in 1852, and this station, still in service, was built in 1868.



**Bottom two:** The usually-busy nearby junction was dead, with only one local CSX movement passing through. The shadows were getting longer and after grabbing a shot of a Metra train on the nearby overhead crossover, it was time to move on.





**Top:** On a chilly, windy Thursday, the hunt for the new Chargers began. The Siemens Chargers power a number of state-supported trains that operate out of Chicago Union Station. The Roosevelt Rd. overpass and nearby Southgate Market parking garages between Union Station and the Amtrak and Metra yards were the next destination. Chargers were in the Amtrak yard, but never seemed to move to an ideal location for photographs. No. 4613 is in the background in this shot; a 26-year-old GE P32-8 is working a string of cars in the foreground. This photo was taken from the Southgate Market Garage.



**Right:** A break from the wind to seek out a late lunch also presented an opportunity to check out the Ogilvie Transportation Center, formerly the site of C&NW's Chicago station. Metra trains were readying for the evening rush hour.



**Right:** Back to the hunt at Union Station, and one last shot at photographing a Charger presents itself, albeit in failing light in a crowded yard. Note the large lighted radiator area near the rear of the locomotive.



**Bottom:** Daylight is in short supply in Chicago at this time of year, and darkness falls near the height of the rush hour. The diehard railfan keeps trying anyway. Of note: The letterboard on the car in the foreground reads "BNSF Railway."





Since Milwaukee was the ultimate destination for the day, on Friday the plan was to move the Charger hunt to the former Milwaukee Road mainline between Chicago and the Brew City, route of Amtrak's Hiawatha Service trains. The weather forecast indicated deteriorating conditions in the area. The forecast was correct.

**Top:** Glenview, Ill. is the Hiawatha's first stop after leaving Chicago, and here Charger No. 4618 is leading a Hiawatha Service train into the station. While the wind had died down, the temperature was dropping rapidly. The white specs visible in front of the dark background of the locomotive's nose are snow.



**Middle:** Time for a break. A Hiawatha flies past the Hiawatha Bar & Grill in Sturtevant. The Hiawatha offers hot food (including a traditional Wisconsin Friday Fish Fry), cold beer and a trackside setting. If the wheel of fortune lands on your chair number when a train passes, your next beer is on the house!



**Bottom:** Sturtevant is the second of three Hiawatha stops between Chicago and Milwaukee. A scouting stop at the station found the inset green scene, which was completely changed by train time when No. 4618 arrived with an afternoon Hiawatha Service train. This was the last Charger bagged in the hunt. Catching the same locomotive on different trains on any given day is likely due to the one hour, seven minute schedule over the 86 miles between Chicago and Milwaukee. This is an average speed of about 77 mph. Compare the new depot with the old one modeled on page 6.





# LCL

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

**40th Anniversary logo selected:** Members attending the November meeting selected a logo marking the N'crowd's 40th anniversary. Nine logo variations were presented; the logo shown here received the most votes.

We'll be taking orders for 40th anniversary shirts at the December and January meetings in advance of the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour show and the Greater Houston Area Train Show, both of which will take place in February. We'll also be calling for volunteers to man our tables at the shows and let people know the N'Crowd is active and ready for another 40 years.

**Elections held:** N'Crowd elections were held at the November membership meeting. The slate of candidates as presented in the last newsletter were elected to the positions indicated below.

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

Also serving on the board are Joe Kingsberry (through 2018) and Allan Melton (through 2019). Joe will also serve as Layout Master during 2017, and I will continue as your editor.

**Thanks to our volunteers:** Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to man the layout room during the busy holiday season. As part of our arrangement with

Papa Ben's Train Place, we need at least two people to run trains and greet visitors on Saturdays and Sundays while the store is open during the holiday season. After Dec. 31, we'll go back to our usual Saturday schedule with trains running from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

After the holidays, members are also welcome to run trains on Sundays during normal store hours. If you run trains on a Sunday, you should be prepared to greet visitors to the layout room. Bring your own trains or run club equipment.

## Looking for an easy day trip?

The Tomball Depot Museum is open every weekend, and in addition to the permanent displays and model railroads, the Gulf Coast Chapter - NRHS 34th Annual Railroad Photography contest entries are on display through Dec. 17. This year's contest attracted 84 color and black and white entries. Visit the museum and vote for your favorite photo to win the People's Choice Award! The museum is at 201 S. Elm St. in historic Old Town Tomball.

Hang out a while on the museum deck and you are likely to see a BNSF train or two. The depot sits adjacent to the former Burlington-Rock Island mainline between Houston and Dallas. Bring your camera and enter your best shot in next year's NRHS photo contest; you don't have to be an NRHS member to enter.

**Next Orderboard deadline:** Jan. 10, 2018.

*The Tomball Depot Museum sits adjacent to the BNSF's ex-B-RI mainline about 35 miles north of downtown Houston.*





**HOUSTON N'CROWD 2017/2018 TIME TABLE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE****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 San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Fall Layout Tour

**December 10 *NOTE DATE CHANGE!***

N'Crowd Operating Session

**December 9**

NMRA LSR Division 8 Clinic Series: Model Railroading and LEDs; see [www.texasgulfddivision.org](http://www.texasgulfddivision.org) for info.

**December 16**

Annual N'Crowd Holiday Bash and Combat Gift Exchange, hosted by Samuel and Charlene Townsel. See the flyer that accompanies this newsletter for details.

**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 17**

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 *CANCELLED***

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.

**March 17-18**

Cotton Belt Train Show, Harvey Convention Center, Tyler

**April 1**

N'Crowd Operating Session

**April 18**

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

**May 16**

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

**June 3**

N'Crowd Operating Session

**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)**

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