

Trails, Rails, & Tales



November-December 2021

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The Official Newsletter of the *Chisholm Trail Division* of the **NMRA**

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

Not a lot to report. I have not heard from MCoR about the convention for this year.

We do have an opportunity to build a layout for the historical museum in Newton. If you would like to help talk to Bob Neill or me about it. We have a 10' X 16' area to work in. We are in the planning stage now.

Looks like a December close date on the new house.

Thank You.

–Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Greetings fellow model railroaders.

Well it's that time of year again – the change of summer to winter. Leaves are changing to beautiful colors, ready to fall, and the air is getting cooler. Happy raking! We are also thinking about starting that long awaited model railroad, continuing forward on the one already started or remodeling that section over there that just isn't quite right.

It's also election season for Local, State, and the Chisholm Trail Division NMRA. By now you should have received your election ballot. I am encouraged that there is a least one new name listed on the ballot. Please, do your part and make your selections or add your name and ask for support. Next, copy and email, mail or bring your ballot to the November meeting. Paper ballots will also be available at the meeting to fill out and turn in.

The Christmas season is upon us and plans for our annual party are being made. The main course has been ordered so we will need to know what side dishes you can bring. We will have a signup sheet available as to what you can bring to the dinner. We certainly don't

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Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged.

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want six dishes of green beans! Also be thinking of that model kit you will never build, the rail car that's just doesn't fit the era of your railroad or other white elephant gift you can bring to the

party for our annual gift exchange game. That's about it for now. Hope to see you all at the November meeting.

–Dean

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

This issue kicks off with reports on two conventions – the National Narrow Gauge Convention (NNGC) and the Tulsa Union Convention, which took the place of the usual Mid-Continent Region Convention. Finally, Bob Neill wrote about the opportunity to get involved in a project for the Harvey County Historical Museum.

I've been hoping that we can get our Division's programs planned far enough in advance that we can announce them in Trails, Rails, & Tails. We'll see how that goes, but I do know what November's program will be. It will be me reporting on the NNGC with many more photos than I can put in the newsletter. It's also a chance for you to embarrass me with questions I can't answer.

Here at home progress continues on the San Juan Southern, the HOn3 layout in my basement. I decided that I need to get some plaster on the upper deck that is above the yet-to-be-built main yard. I want to avoid slopping plaster on tracks. Getting the hard shell on will be good enough, I think. To that end, I have installed some fascia and support for the hardshell. This included removing one tunnel so I could build another farther down as part of a walk out system. I don't want too much hidden track. I've been sharing my progress on the Division's Facebook page as time allows. I know not everyone is on Facebook, so here it is again. I'll let the pictures do the talking, or writing in this case.

– Jim



The new landscape made the tunnel I built years ago obsolete. I removed the old plywood fascia and cut the plaster free from the rest of the scenery and the roadbed. You can see the outside of the rock tunnel lining in this view.



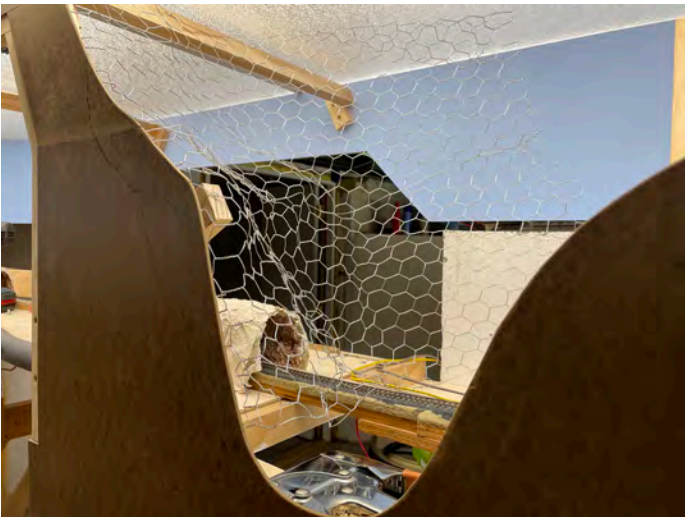
It didn't take much effort to pull the "mountain" from the railroad. I thought it might be worth saving the tunnel liner to see if it could be used in the new tunnel, so I sawed it free from the mountain. Everything else went to the trash.



I built a frame to support the new mountain and to hold a removable fascia panel that will be held in place by cabinet door magnets. I cut the old tunnel liner in half and put the ends about where I thought they should be for the new tunnel. I'll build a removable liner between them to provide access for track cleaning.



The new fascia for the upper level is in place and trimmed. The main yard will be built directly under this and is what prompted me to get the messy upper plaster work done first. I can easily move the stuff stored there now (it's all on casters), but the thought of cleaning plaster drips and spills from the lower scene is extremely unappealing.



Chicken wire was stapled in place and formed more or less like I wanted it. It will be pushed and pulled into shape until it's ready to cover with wet newspaper. The newspaper makes it easier to see the contours and reduces plaster drip-through from the next layer, which is made of newspaper strips dipped in a hard-setting industrial plaster. This "hardshell" should be protective enough to start work on the lower level.



As of now, the chicken wire goes the length of one wall and around the far corner. That corner is where my logging branch goes off into the unseen distance. Working that little bit of visual trickery into the picture has been an interesting challenge. The surprise for me has been that this whole project is turning out to look quite different from what I had envisioned. I think that will be OK though – just different.

THE TULSA UNION CONVENTION

BY DON OWENS

The NMRA Convention held in Tulsa hosted by the Indian Nations Division was a gathering of two regions: Mid Continent Region and Lone Star Region. Almost seventy were in attendance for operating sessions, clinics, and layout tours.

I arrived on Wednesday evening to register since I was scheduled for an operating session at 8:30 am on Thursday. The session was held at Dale Baker's Port of Catoosa Railroad.



This HO layout is a representation of modern day operations at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa. It is a single level layout with plenty of switching activities among the various companies located in the port.

The three of us appointed for this assignment arrived at Dale's house on time and were escorted upstairs to the layout. We spent a very busy three hours completing all of the assigned car placements. Most helpful was a handbook complete with Rules of Operations for speed, derails, lights, horn, and blue flags.

For me this operating session was the highlight of my three days at the convention.

Six other layouts were visited with each of them displaying outstanding modeling with plenty of action, great scenery and detail. When not driving all around Tulsa and the surrounding area looking for the next layout and asking numerous questions of my GPS, there were some twenty clinics from which to choose. The ones that captured my attention were: Ken Ehlers - Prototype Track Planning, Mark Juett's - Getting Started in JMRI, Don Winn's - Kit Bashing, Lind Wichershamn's - Building Detailed Structures, and Jeff Palmer's - Static Grass.



This was a well organized convention with good clinics and great layouts. For me, I am anxious to head to St. Louis next summer for the National NMRA gathering.

-Don

THE NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION

BY JIM MARLETT

First I want to say I really enjoyed the convention despite what it may sound like in the opening paragraphs.

Last year's in-person National Narrow Gauge Convention (NNGC) was cancelled due to Covid-19 concerns. This year we actually had a live, in-person convention, but it certainly was not without impact from Covid-19. The most notable effect was attendance. It was significantly down from previous years. I'm sure most of this was due to reluctance to expose oneself to a potentially fatal disease despite safety precautions that were announced. But there were other factors such as the closed border between Canada and the United States.

The fact that it was held in Hickory, North Carolina was another issue. Despite being close to some amazing prototype narrow gauge activity, Hickory is not a well known destination and having hosted a previous convention, some folks remembered encountering certain difficulties the first time around. For instance, the vendor hall and modular railroads were quite a distance from the convention hotel. Despite having a shuttle between them, it was difficult to time the shuttle with your needs. I drove several times, walked once, and bummed a return ride once. Frankly, I just didn't go as often as I might have.

Also at issue was the extreme distance between layout tour destinations. Many were two hours or more from the hotel which got to be a real factor. Three layouts were cancelled at the last minute, at least one of which was due to "family health issues." Those things can't be helped, but the result was that I could only visit one or two layouts a day. In most years I have been able to make four or five a day easily.

Despite these annoyances, I had plenty of fun and if Hickory hosted another NNGC, I would go, but with more realistic expectations.

The first thing my wife Patty and I did was take a pre-convention bus tour of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina's abandoned roadbed. The ET&WNC (the "Tweetsie") was a famous Eastern narrow gauge railroad. Much of the line has been obscured by modern development, but the land it traveled through is still beautiful. One particularly scenic portion of the railroad through the Doe River Gorge has been preserved by a church camp. We stopped for lunch at the church camp and were treated to a ride into that gorgeous gorge. Our bus tour ended at Johnson City, TN where we visited the George L. Carter Railroad Museum at East Tennessee State University. Among other things, it houses a large HO standard gauge layout and a large ET&WNC HOn3 layout. I was so glad the tour included this. It was so far away from everything else, we couldn't have seen it during the regular layout tours.

Another prototype activity was a visit to the Tweetsie Railroad amusement park where a genuine ET&WNC ten wheeler and a former White Pass & Yukon mikado are still active. None of the roadbed is original, but the ride was nice and we had plenty of photo run-bys.

The convention's clinics were all top notch and dealt with a wide range of subjects from prototype railroads to modeling techniques. Many of the techniques would apply to standard gauge modelers as well as narrow gaugers.

There were a number of modular layouts, many of which I had never seen before. And the contest room had the usual extremely high quality entries I have come to expect.

I could go on and on, but I think I'll just share a few photos and let them do the talking. If you want to see and hear much more about the convention, come to the November Chisholm Trail Division meeting where it will be the subject of the program.

– Jim



A genuine ET&WNC locomotive on a trestle in the Tweetsie Railroad amusement park. The original ET&WNC adopted Southern Railway green paint with red trim in the 1930s.



The contest room was full of exceptional models such this Railway Post Office car in 1:20.3 scale. It was only one piece of an amazing scratch built D&RGW "San Juan" passenger train.



A short portion of the ET&WNC grade through the Doe River Gorge was first saved as a tourist railroad and then by a church camp.



An HO scale version of the ET&WNC is in the George L. Carter Railroad Museum.



Cumbres Pass on Bill Hayward's D&RGW HO and HO scale layout.



There were some really nice modular layouts. Notice the dual gauge track in this one.



The number of vendors was way down this year and you can blame Covid-19 for that. They said they did well, though.



Clinics were numerous and high quality as usual. Each was given twice at different times to make it easier to see what you wanted.



John Short's large Rio Grande Southern layout represents the line all the way from Durango to Ridgeway. Here is Durango.



There were enough standard gauge layouts on the tour that a person could have skipped going to any narrow gauge layouts and still have had more layouts than there was time to visit. Jack Parker's standard gauge Piedmont & Western filled two buildings connected with box tunnels. Anyone who dismisses a National Narrow Gauge Convention as irrelevant to them is missing some quality action.

HARVEY COUNTY MUSEUM OPPORTUNITY

BY BOB NEILL

Here is an opportunity that is hard to let slip away. The Harvey County Historical Museum received an HO collection and is needing someone to put it together. Since they are in Newton on Main Street, it should be a great place to have a club!

Phil Aylward and I met with Catherine Graves, the director of the Harvey Co. Museum in Newton, to get more of a foundation of what is needed and expected to have model trains running in the museum.

She seemed impressed with the few pictures I showed of the layouts and modules I have worked on. The pictures did not impress me, as they were only work in progress. (With practice work gets better, right?)

Since budget is a problem, it is desired that the existing collection of models be used. There will be two more sheets of plywood available bringing layout size to 8ft x 16ft. It is currently two 4ft x 8ft plywood sheets supported by two tables. Considering its age, it is DC power and mostly brass track. A quick glance at the rolling stock and structures has shown that they have suffered from handling.

One of the things established was the goal of having a display up and running by August of 2022. As the old saying goes, "This is a target environment." With an opportunity like this, how can we go wrong?

My desire is to gather a group of people and improve interest in model railroading, and hopefully form a club. At the moment I am trying to beat the bushes to find people (local) interested, able, willing to run trains. Then all I will need to do is play with models.

–Bob

(Editor's note: Anyone interested in helping with this project or who knows someone that might be, contact Bob Neill or Phil Aylward. You can email me at jmarlett@cox.net and I will forward it to Bob and Phil)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

INCLUDES NON-NMRA EVENTS

RECURRING EVENTS

Chisholm Trail Division of NMRA Monthly Meeting. Every first Tuesday of the month. Gather at 6:45PM. Olivet Baptist Church, 3440 W. 13th St., Wichita, KS (13th & High) http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Chisholm_Trail_Division/

Kansas Central Division of NMRA. Every second Saturday of even numbered months at 1:00PM. Locations vary. Contact information is here: http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Kansas_Central_Division/

Kansas Central Model Railroaders Business Meeting. (Not the same as Kansas Central Division of NMRA) Every second Saturday from 11:00AM-Noon. 16 East 3rd Ave, Hutchinson, KS <http://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org>

Wichita Area Model Railroaders Luncheon. Every second Thursday at 11:30AM. Spears Restaurant and Pie Shop, 4323 W. Maple, Wichita, KS

SCHEDULED EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2021

November 13-14 – Model Train Show. Chapel Hills Mall, 1710 Briargate Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO. Saturday 10AM-5PM. Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://www.tecoshow.org/>

November 20-21 – Dodge City Model Train Show. Western State Bank Expo Center, 11333 US Hwy 283, Dodge City, KS. Saturday 10AM-6PM. Sunday 11AM-4PM.

November 28 – Mid America Train & Toy Show. KCI Expo Center, 11728 Ambassador Dr, Kansas City, MO. Saturday 9AM-5PM. <https://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/>

DECEMBER 2021

December 4-5 – OKC Train Show. The Pavilion at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, 3212 Wichita Walk, Oklahoma City, OK Saturday 9AM to 5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://www.oklahomarailwaymuseum.org/events/okc-train-show/>

JANUARY 2022

January 8-9 – Model Train Convention & Expo. McPherson Community Building, 122 E. Marlin St, McPherson, KS. Saturday 9AM-6PM. Sunday 10AM-3PM. <https://www.mcphersoncountymakerspace.org/trains>

FEBRUARY 2022

February 5-6 – Wichita Train Show. Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd, Wichita, KS. Sponsored In part by Chisholm Trail Division NMRA. Saturday 9AM-5PM. Sunday 11AM-4PM

February 19 – Winter Train Show. Payne County Expo Center, 4518 Expo Circle East, Stillwater, OK. Saturday 9AM-3PM. <http://www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/division-events.html>

Please send me information about any events or meetings you think should be included on this calendar.

Jim Marlett

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