

Trails, Rails, & Tales



September-October 2021

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

I hope all is well with you. All I have this time is that we had an open house at the AVI depot on Sat. the 14th. All the layouts were running, including HO, O/27, N and G scale. We had a good turnout.

Don't forget about the February Train Show coming up.

Our new Home is coming along nicely. I hope we can move in before Oct.

Thank You.

–Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Greetings to all.

This past couple of months, I have been busy with the racetrack diorama for the Kansas State Fair. I have documented Part 1 of the process and submitted, hopefully, in time for this newsletter. Seemed at the time, when I accepted the challenge it would be a simple little project but no. It turned into an albatross. Although, it is about 100 percent complete.

Some of us have been having a pretty good time at our monthly luncheon. Thanks to Terry and Larry for making the arrangements and a big thanks to Charles and Terry for opening their homes and sharing their layouts.

Our Feb.2022 train show is quickly approaching. It will be here before we know it. Please, let's be focused on that. We will need a lot of help in all areas. Set up, NMRA table, ticket taking, contest room is taken care of, clinics, etc.

Everyone please take care and we'll see you all in a couple of weeks.

–Dean

TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

Despite my optimism in the last issue, the Delta variant has tempered our return to normalcy. I hope everyone is staying safe and if you haven't already done so, please get the vaccine. Seriously. As I write this, my unvaccinated neighbor is in the hospital with Covid-19. Still, life is better than it has been and we are moving slowly forward.

My apologies for any typos, oversights, and boo-boos that might have crept into this edition of TR&T. My usual preparation time was cut a little short and it's my own fault. I started on a layout revision that I really, really wanted to finish before leaving town for the National Narrow Gauge Convention and timing of the convention meant I had to send out the newsletter a little earlier than usual. The time I left myself was less than I would have liked. I hate it when my hobby gets in the way of my hobby.

But I made it and there is a newsletter! Inside this edition, Randy Stucky reports on seeing Union Pacific's Big Boy in Topeka, Bob Neill reminds us that November is National Model Railroad Month and the potential it brings to share our hobby, and Dean Stucky begins his race track diorama.

So what was the project that kept me from the newsletter? I decided to rearrange the San Juan

Southern's track at the town of Fremont. When Fremont was first built, it was at the end of a branch line with no thoughts of continuing beyond. Now it is on the main line and has become the point at which helpers are added to get the trains over the 4% ruling grade. Those two functions have quite different needs.

As an end of the line station, Fremont only needed to allow the engine to turn and run around the train. I used the turntable and its tracks for both these functions. As a through station, it needs a real passing siding that doesn't involve dragging a train over the turntable. I stewed over the solution quite literally for years. When I finally decided what should be done, I sat on it for more years. Then a few weeks ago, I decided I just needed to do it. I didn't think about how that might impact the time I had for the newsletter.

Changing hand laid track is much harder than changing flex track and ready-made switches, but it can be done. If you follow the Chisholm Trail Division's Facebook page, you have already seen pictures of that process. However, I know not everyone is on Facebook, so here it is again in an abbreviated form.

– Jim



When I started my revision, Fremont looked like this. There was a short run-around for switching, which can be seen in the back, but to actually get around a whole 12 car train, the locomotive had to cross over the turntable, which made sense when the loco had to be turned anyhow. I decided to lengthen the run-around into a full fledged siding by moving the switch to the main line next to where the paper template is resting. That also meant changing the switch for the siding since it would now have to be right hand rather than left hand.



The first step was pulling up the spikes and rail as needed. I have some old, mangled rail nippers I use for spike removal.



I soaked the ballast and ties with a mix of alcohol and water to soften the white glue holding it all together. It still goobered up the Homasote.



I patched the surface with Elmer's Wood Filler for indoor use, then sanded it flat. I find that I can spike through it as easily as I can the Homasote.



When everything was flat and smooth enough, I laid ties where the new track would go. Here is where a switch was removed.



This is the finished product, begging for some scenery. Compare the track layout to the first photo. I discovered I could add another spur so I did. I also decided that since I had to change the switch controls, I may as well put on the long-awaited fascia. I've tested it all now and I'm pleased to report that everything works! Since calculations don't always match reality, I was worried that two trains of 12 cars plus a caboose and a locomotive couldn't pass each other. They could, but just barely. Now to paint the fascia, add some mountains and build a town. That may be a while.

A NOVEMBER TRADITION

BY BOB NEILL

Tradition - As in "Fiddler On The Roof," we do things per tradition!

Since November has been designated as Model Railroad Month, the past three years we have been displaying model trains at the area libraries. Two years I helped Phil Aylward with his display at Halstead Library and last year I was able to set up my switching module at the Hesston Library, until the virus cut us short. The question, as usual, is what will we do this year.

The first library show I helped with had Phil's decorated figure eight where he runs enough freight cars so you watch if the engine and caboose will hit. As well there was static display of the different scales used in model railroading. The display of books containing RR history and modeling techniques did not seem to attract much attention. I'm sure I missed something.

It is a joy watching young people be amazed with watching trains run. It is extremely joyful watching people learn how to run a model train and swap cars without using the 0-5-0 switcher, and the use of a run around track. Some people, young and older, seem to want to spend all day switching cars. I usually begin by explaining that my switching module has only three uncoupling magnets, and some people have suggested I add a dozen more magnets. A copy of an article about the "Time Saver" by John Allen as well as a copy of an article about including the time saver in a regular layout. It is always fun after switching a



boxcar from the local freight train with one on a siding, to ask them to swap the tank cars (the oil tank car for the flatcar with a military tank) on a leading siding.

My switching module has been stretched and has a few simple buildings for decoration, but is intended for hands on running. It has been around since the mid 1980's to go to county fairs or any other show and always wants something fixed/improved (I always carry spare parts, engines, cars). I keep hearing that other people have switching modules, some well dressed, but they need to find a place to be put on show. At a train show or November display, having a back-up or alternate operator/instructor is a big help. Perhaps the Chisholm Trail could have a contest meeting to see which is better, judging by those who run the trains.

The Hesston Library says they are looking forward to having the switching layout again this year. If anyone has spare time and would like to come play, here is your opportunity!

-Bob

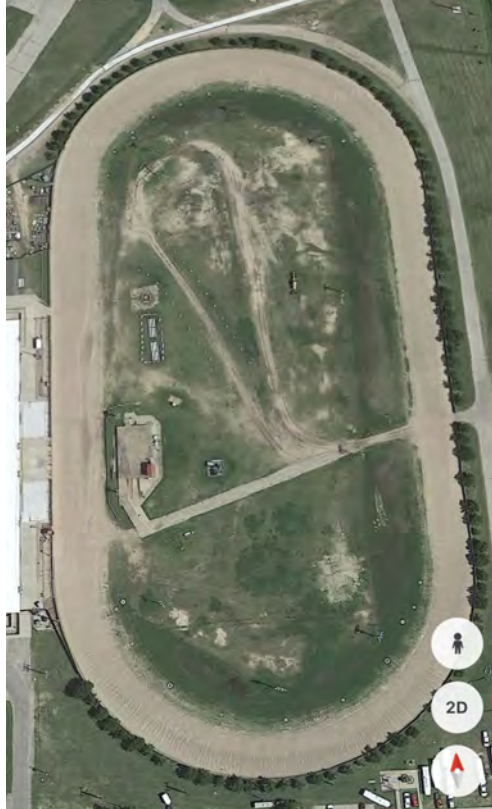


KANSAS STATE FAIRGROUND RACETRACK DIORAMA, PART 1

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

As many of you know, I was asked about six months ago to build a diorama of the racetrack at the Kansas State Fair (KSF). I accepted the challenge. But the question is, how is this related to model railroading? The steps that I took to make this build are very much the steps one would take in designing a model railroad diorama or maybe even a complete model railroad layout. Roughly the steps are 1) Conception, 2) What do I want to achieve and will it fit within the space allotted. 3) Pick a Scale. Step 2 will usually dictate the Scale I use in order to achieve all I want. 4) Does the scale I picked have all the product readily available to meet my goal? If not, what adjustments (sacrifices) will I need to make?

They allotted me an area of 6'x3' for the diorama which would sit on a table of that size. They also suggested that it could be of a size that Hot Wheels cars could be set on the racetrack. My



Google Earth view of the racetrack in Hutchinson.

first thought was Hot Wheels cars were about the appropriate size for S gauge trains and there was no way that was going to fit in the allotted space and look realistic.

Well, it was time to go to Google Earth and hover over the race track in Hutchinson. I took measurements using the Google Earth measuring tool and found the KSF racetrack to be 1174'x 525'. In HO gauge, the space needed for the track would have to be about 14'x 6.25'. That's certainly not going to fit. How about N gauge? 1174'x525' divided by 160 would require an area of 7.5'x 3.5'. Wow! We have a problem. Let's try Z gauge. Bingo! That would take an area of about 5.5'x 2.5' which would easily fit into the space given. I thought I had it solved until I started looking for race cars and other vehicles. Hmm, pretty much non-existent and even if they were available, it would take a magnifying glass to see them.

I felt this to be a no win situation until I talked to my friend Warren Hardy. Warren has been the announcer for the Grand Nationals race at the KSF for as long as I can remember and retired manager for 81 speedway located north of Wichita. He suggested I try using the dimensions of the 81 Speedway as it is a half mile track vs KSF ¾ mile track. Heck the width of the actual track surface is the same for both racetracks at 75' and really, would anybody notice the difference? So back to Google Earth I went. I measured up 81 Speedway and guess what? Building it in N scale barely fit into my 3"x 6" allotted space. Hallelujah! Now it's time to proceed to my CAD program and draw it up. After locating the track, the old performance stage where the announcer's tower is located, the weigh station and a water station within the infield, I was ready to transfer it all to my 3' x 6' pallet.

Stay tuned for Part 2. "The Build"

-Dean



The pallet is made of 1/2" cabinet grade plywood with 1"x 3" support frame. I painted both the top and the underside with Kilz white primer to seal the wood.



This is my rendition of the racetrack. It isn't yet completed at this stage.

You can see in this picture where I have started to transfer the CAD drawing to the pallet.

BIG BOY IN TOPEKA

BY RANDY STUCKY

On Monday, August 9, a friend of mine, Bob Tieszen, and I drove to Topeka to see the “Big Boy.” We got there over an hour before it was due at the Great Overland Station. The crowd was small then, but as is typical of steam engines going through, the crowd swelled. We were able to park up close, but as time passed by, parking wasn’t so easy.

The engine arrived about 15 minutes late. The crowd swarmed to the engine even though they

kept asking for us to stay back 8ft from the engine.

We didn’t stay the entire time the engine was there as we wanted to beat the stampede after the engine departed.

Oh yes, it was quite warm (hot actually) for our 2 1/2 hour drive home.

–Randy



WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

In these days following the Covid vaccine, two rather informal groups with a lot of overlap have started meeting for lunch again. One is the Wichita Area Model Railroaders (WAMRRs), whose existence sort of kick started the Chisholm Trail Division's resurgence. They meet on the second Thursday of the month. The other group, which has no name, came out of the Division

itself. They eat together on the third Thursday of the month. Neither of these is an official part of NMRA, but there is a lot of overlap. The WAMRRs typically have a topic for discussion and sharing each month. The third Thursday group mostly just eat and chat, and have been known to visit someone's layout after lunch, although this is not a given.



After-pie glazed eyes from Larry Gulick, Charles Monckton, and Dan Hagenbuch as Lionel Smith leads the WAMRRs lunch.



The WAMRRs luncheon topic was decals. Dan Hagenbuch and Bill Phillips are checking out some examples shared by Bob Neill.



The third Thursday group visited Charles Monckton's garage for a look at his beautiful "rail fan" style layout.



After another third Thursday lunch, Shirley Ann and Jim Hogben are checking out some details on Terry Ross's layout.

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

AUGUST 2021

August 8 – Mid America Train & Toy Show. KCI Expo Center, 11728 Ambassador Dr, Kansas City, MO. <http://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/>

SEPTEMBER 2021

September 1-4 – National Narrow Gauge Convention. Events at both the Hickory Metro Convention Center and the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hickory, NC. <https://41nngc.com/>

September 25-26 – Wichita Toy Train Club Train Show. Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd, Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM to 5PM. Sunday 10AM to 3PM. <http://www.wichitatomytrainmuseum.org/club-shows-1.html>

OCTOBER 2021

October 2-3 and October 9-10 – Kansas Railfest 2021. Great Plains Transportation Museum, Wichita, KS. Steam train rides will be offered. Proceeds go toward restoration of ATSF locomotive #93. <http://www.gptm.us/copy-of-events>

October 6-10 – NMRA Tulsa Union Convention. This takes the place of the annual Mid-Continent Region Convention. It is a collaboration between Lone star Region, Mid-Continent Region & Indian Nations Division of NMRA. Embassy Suites by Hilton Tulsa I-44, 3332 South 79th East Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145. <http://www.2021tulsaunion.com/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (CONTINUED)

INCLUDES NON-NMRA EVENTS

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

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

Jim Marlett

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