

Trails, Rails, & Tales



January-February 2022

Volume 8 • Number 1

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

I've been busy working on the train show coming this February. We have moved into our new house and are now getting the old house ready to sell and that is taking a lot of work.

Last issue I reported that I had heard nothing from Mid-Continent Region about the 2022 regional convention. Now I know this is because there will be no Mid-Continent Regional Convention since our region is hosting the NMRA National Convention in St. Louis.

–Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Greetings to my model railroad friends.

I want to thank you all for keeping me as your Superintendent. In my three years as your Superintendent, I always thought that if we could just get past the COVID we could accomplish great things. 2022 was to be the year but no! We now have to deal with the variants. I'm not giving up! We are moving forward and planning for a great year. We will also be following Local, State and Federal Guidelines as directed. We will continue to offer up our ZOOM broadcast of our meetings. All of you out there who wish to stay away, we completely understand, but please do join with us in our meetings with ZOOM. Your invitation from me explains how to do so. Just click the link and join in the program and you are in, although you have to wait until I let you in so be patient.

I believe that every member in our group has a talent they can share with the rest of us. Please be thinking of what you might be able to offer. Showing off some of your best structures or railcars. Maybe it's a slide presentation, video or a clinic on your best skill toward building your layout. To be a strong organization, we need to have everyone's participation. Please think about this and let me know what you are thinking. You will have all of the help you need.

TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

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NMRA

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strongly encouraged.

Logo Design by Alan Aagaard

Speaking of helping out, Feb. 5th and 6th is our biggest (and only) money maker of the year – The Wichita Train Show and Swap Meet. If you can help setup, tear down, take tickets, work in the contest room, work the NMRA booth or anything

else you can think of, please please call or email me and let's talk.

dean.lippincott@gmail.com or 620-200-3562.

See you all Tuesday!!!!

–Dean

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

Happy New Year! I think 2022 will be an interesting year. We've learned that we don't have a clue about what Covid-19 will do and we're still struggling to return to normalcy. It looks to me like 2022 will be a watershed year on that issue as we learn to live with the virus.

Regardless, we still have our trains and now is the season many of us make some headway on our layouts. If you do, I'd sure like for you to share it through this newsletter.

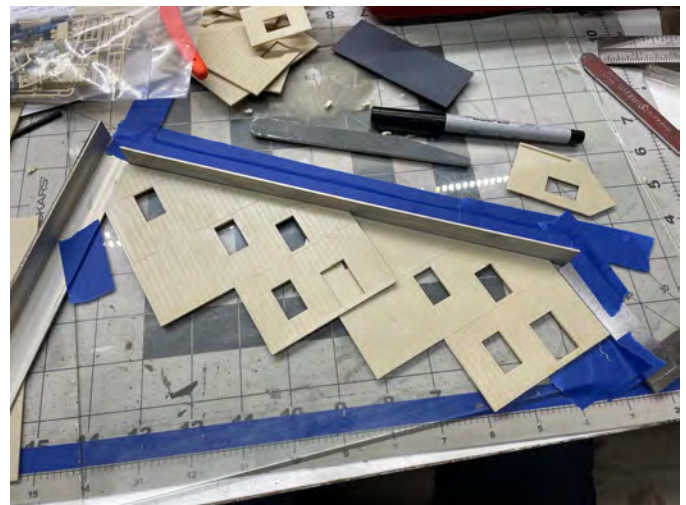
Here at my house I was going great guns on putting in a scenery base until I got to a location that really needed an ore processing mill built before I could rough in the land contours. To be honest, it had been many, many years since I had

tried to build a structure except for the little cabin I built in one of Pam MacPhail's workshops. I decided to follow through on an idea I had a couple of years ago, namely combining two Grant Line East Terrible Mine and Mill kits into one much larger mill that would be more appropriate for the early 1940s, the time period I am modeling. As originally manufactured, it represents a ten stamp mill built in the 1890s or thereabouts. I already had the kits. All I needed was to get off my duff and start building. I also needed a little hope that I could remember how to build a styrene kit. I'll show you what I have so far.

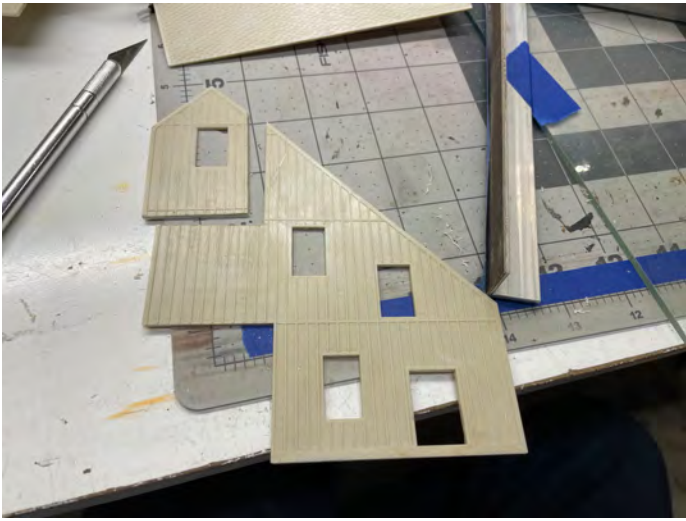
– Jim



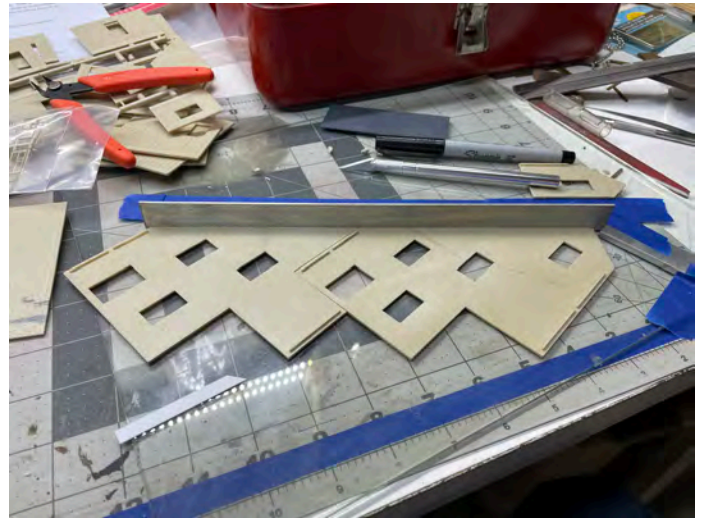
Grant Line (now San Juan Details) leaves the modeler any number of options for building the East Terrible Mine & Mill, but thinks it ought to come out looking something like this. My mill will be quite a departure.



The first issue in putting the two kits together is dealing with the peaked roof on the lower kit. I overlapped the walls enough to get a straight roof line and to avoid cutting into any windows or doors. I had to make walls for both sides.



I marked the part I would cut out of the lower wall section and went to town with an Exacto knife. I thought about building some sort of small structure from the scrap wall pieces, but I wound up cutting a spacer from one of them, so I probably won't. I'm still not throwing them away.



I lined up the wall sections against the piece of aluminum angle used as a straight edge. With only a little filing and fitting, they came together pretty nicely. One thing I haven't really figured out how to deal with is the door that used to be on the bottom of the upper section that is now about 25' in the air.



I used MEK substitute purchased from a hardware store rather than commercial solvent cement to glue the two sections together. The back side of the joint was reinforced with strips of styrene, again glued on with MEK substitute. I don't intend for anyone to see the insides of the mill so I gave myself permission to make any kind of mess I wanted as long as it didn't show from the outside.



Because I wanted the mill to be wider as well as taller, I glued the end walls together using the same technique as the side walls except this time there was no cutting. While the glue was wet, I weighted the pieces to keep them from bowing. I was only successful with one. The other ended up having a horizontal reinforcing/straightening strip glued across its back side (not shown).



My mill will have its own railroad siding, so I needed a loading shed. I decided to splice two of the outbuildings together to make this addition to the mill. Whenever I joined two sections like this I needed to make a batten from .010"x.020" styrene strips as seen in the lower wall. That was a bit challenging to glue on straight!



Where my loading shed was to be attached to the main building, there was a window hole that needed to be filled. This picture is part way through the process. I was about at the limit of my skills, but with a piece of styrene, some putty, and a few batten strips, I managed to do reasonably credible job of it.



I wanted a smokestack on my mill and the kit made no provision for one. I decided to put the lean-to on the "wrong" side as an extension for a boiler. To fit it against one window and to hide another, I had to overlap it onto the "concrete" foundation I had made. That's where the cut off portion of the mill came in handy as a filler. It's the tan strip on the corner closest to the camera. The lean-to door is now on the wrong side, but it won't be seen.



I skipped over a whole bunch of things, but this is how the mill looks sitting in place as we go to press. The roofs fabricated from 0.060" styrene sheet still need to be covered with corrugated metal and it needs a heap of weathering. The loading shed and smoke stack extension haven't been glued in place yet and it still needs a mountain to sit on. And what am I going to do with the door that opens out into space? I guess there's still plenty to do.

NEWTON LIBRARY DISPLAY

BY BOB NEILL

What was the title of one of Shakespear's plays? "Much to do About—Something?"

After the Newton Library showing of my switching module from 9:00AM until 8:00PM, I think I am catching up with myself. I have the task of taking my daughter to doctors' appointments at least once a week in Wichita, then there is work to be done on the house (the plumber died in a car accident), the Harvey Co. Museum layout, Phil is moving and, oh yes, there is a train show coming!

The library shows were a lot of fun! The two weeks at the Hesston Library in November that led to the week at the Newton Library in December. The days were mostly quiet, but when mothers would bring little ones, some seemed to get excited. A high point was a 2 or 3 year old that, when he flipped the power switch, he started jumping up and down and clapping his hands. Then he ran to one end to watch the train come towards him. An amazing thing is that he never let the train hit any of the stops, as many have done, but stopped the train and changed direction. A natural born engineer.

One family with five or six kids came in and when working a switching problem got into verbal combat! The librarians were happy when it became quiet (after they left). Interesting point, when I saw them later they asked what time the train show would open.

After school got out at about 3:00 I got busy. Sad part is that while I am running the switching module, I tend to concentrate on the way the train is being run and I do not see much of what is going on around the module. Several times, I would look up and see others watching the young person facing the challenge.

My switching module was thrown together in stretched form in the mid 1980's from scrap and cheap, simple structures. It has endured several moves and modifications. It is not pretty. One lesson to be learned is if someone wants to run a hands on module, expect hands on, and do not take the priceless equipment.

One of the things I need to learn is how to "sell" NMRA. I was too busy to say much, but gave away a lot of fliers about the show, the Hutchinson club, and the Wichita Toy Train Club. At both libraries I met several people interested in forming a local club. One man even brought in a locomotive that needed to be made to run (I am still working on it).

During the daytime there was a lot of quiet time. Time to catch up on reading (it is a library) and I managed to get an HO scale army deuce and a half truck half built to go along with the paper tanks on flat cars. One of the switching challenges is to swap the oil tank car with the military tank car. I think some have a card order system for switching, but I just offer three separate challenges depending on how talented they are and how busy things are.

—Bob







SOME DISPLAY LAYOUTS

BY JIM MARLETT

Around the holidays, many of us start waxing nostalgic about the seasonal model train displays that appeared in the department stores of our youth. There are still model railroad displays here and there, but these days they aren't seasonal. Botanica's garden railway and the Wichita Toy Train Museum's layouts come to mind. I visited two others in December and thought I would share them with you.

We took our two grandsons for an afternoon at Exploration Place and I paid much more attention to the Kansas in Miniature display than I had in previous visits. What a treasure it is! For seasoned modelers, the trains aren't that exciting, except maybe for that warm fuzzy



nostalgic feeling of three rail O gauge, but the buildings and town scenes are fantastic. They represent quite a number of notable buildings throughout Kansas and they have a handout to help you identify them. I was especially taken with Wichita's Frank Lloyd Wright designed home seen in the picture below.



The other display I visited was the garden railroad in the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Garden. My wife Patty and I took a weekend getaway to the Kansas City area and since the arboretum is a birding hot spot, Patty made sure we took it in. Even though it was definitely not prime season for visiting a botanical garden, we could tell that this was quite the place. The Train Garden was a great bonus. I suspect this is the only botanical garden anywhere housing a full sized caboose. The garden railroad is actually three separate railroads. One is near the caboose and features tracks crossing under the public path in clear acrylic-topped tunnels. Another is a representation of downtown Overland Park. The third and largest section is a mountainous region with tracks from ground level to high overhead bridges. Of course we were there in the off season so none of the trains were running. We'll have to go back when things are green and in bloom and maybe the trains will be in motion.

For more information about both of these displays, do a search with your favorite web browser. You'll even find some videos.

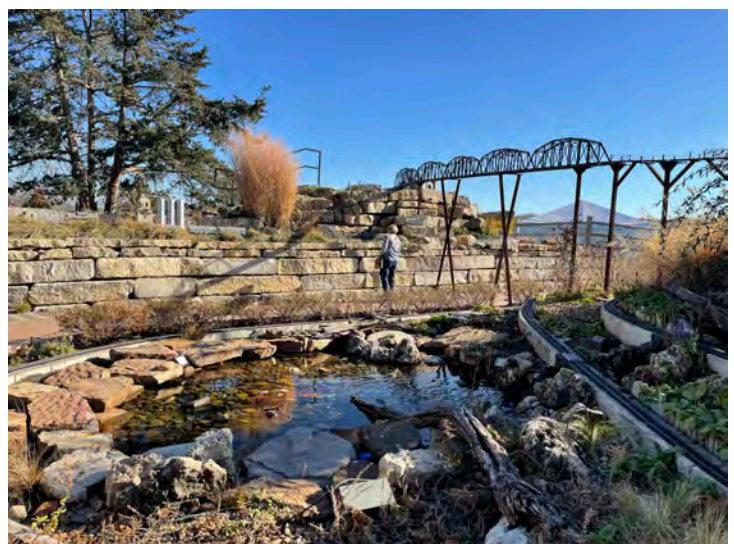
– Jim



Patty is standing on one of the plexiglass-topped tunnels through the sidewalk.



A caboose in a botanical garden? You bet, and you can walk through it if you're there at the right time.



KANSAS STATE FAIRGROUND RACETRACK DIORAMA

PART 2 – “THE BUILD” BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

As I said in Part 1, I used my CAD program to draw up the racetrack. Once completed, I transferred the drawing to scale onto the plywood 6'x 3' pallet. I then decided that the first thing to build would be the 5' retaining wall that encompasses most of the racetrack. The wall supports are made of 1'x 2' concrete posts that are buried in the ground every ten feet around the track. The narrow one foot side goes against the wall. I do not know how deep they are buried. Between each set of posts is an approximately 5'x 8' slab of reinforced concrete that is held to the posts with four big corner brackets. Each wall section has a pair of rebar hoops imbedded in the top to be used for lifting the section up and out of the wall if necessary. It is built this way so that if a race car should run into the wall and bust a hole in it, it could be easily replaced in a hurry. The retaining wall I built will actually be a scale 10' tall because the ground on the outside of the wall is built up against the wall as is the track on the inside of the wall. The track is 75' scale wide with an approx. 9 degree bank.

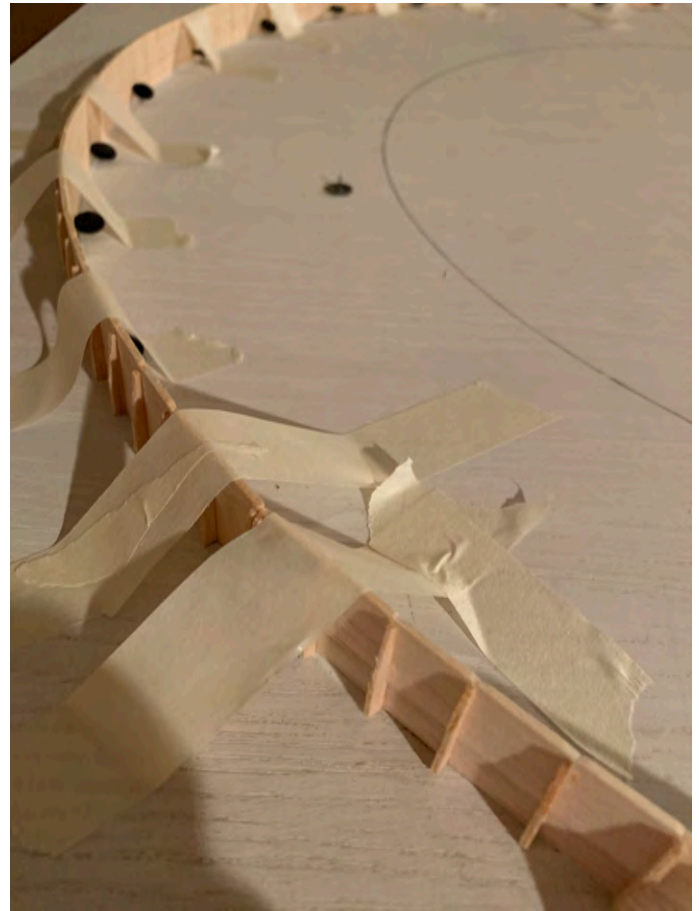
My plan was to build the wall from styrene but after looking far and wide, I could not find what I needed. It was either out of stock or on backorder. I finally gave up on the styrene and resorted to balsa wood from Hobby Lobby. It actually worked pretty well because of easy cutting and the texture was better than the smooth styrene. Even though I made the wall from 36" strips of balsa wood rather than

many 8' scale lengths, I did cut out about 325 posts. That took a while. I glued the posts to the outside of the strip of balsa wood the approximate spacing and scribed a line on the wall directly opposite of the posts. This was to resemble a break where the panels came together on the inside of the wall. Lastly, I applied several coats of concrete colored paint. As you look at the picture, keep in mind that I built the wall twice as high because the racetrack will be banked up against the wall at about 9 degrees. Hopefully it appears to be about the 5' original height.

My next step was to start building the super-elevated, 9 degree, sloping track. I knew that the track would hide about 50 percent of the inside of the wall. The only way I could imagine accomplishing this task would be to apply several layers of plain old sheetrock joint compound. If I tried to put the joint compound in one fell swoop it would have yielded a disastrous mess. I'm sure it would have dried unevenly causing wide fissures in the racetrack. Well, we can't have that so I applied four thin layers with a few days between applications in order for adequate drying time. The final fifth application was a light smoothing out of the track and a final sanding.

Next newsletter, Part 3 “Dirt for the Track and Structures”

– Dean



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

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 & Swap Meet. 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>

APRIL 2022

April 30-May 1 – Herington Railroad Days. Herington Community Building, 810 S. Broadway, Herington, KS. Saturday 10AM-Sunday 3PM. <https://www.facebook.com/HeringtonRailroadDays>

AUGUST 2022

August 7-13 – Gateway 2022, The NMRA National Convention. Marriott Grand, 800 Washington Ave, Saint Louis, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM. https://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event_id=13724

August 12-14 – National Train Show. The Gateway Convention Center, 1 Gateway Drive, Collinsville, IL (St Louis area). <https://www.nationaltrainshow.org/2022/ntsstlouis.html>

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

Jim Marlett

jmarlett@cox.net