

Trails, Rails, & Tales



July-August 2022
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The Official Newsletter of the Chisholm Trail Division of the **NMRA**

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

It looks like we have the bank info fixed. Put this on your calendar: August 13th at the AVI depot in Halstead, KS, 10am to 5pm for a 100 year celebration for the depot. Stop by and have a cookie or run a train on one of the layouts.

—Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Greetings fellow model railroaders. Well, we are entering those dog days of summer, or so it seems to me. Many think not much gets done on the railroad during this time of year because of distractions like yard work, cleaning the pool, washing and polishing the truck, etc. LOL! We also get distracted with vacations, pool parties, weekend barbecues. LOL again. I sit here thinking that none of this describes my life anymore, but I digress. As I am getting older those dog days of summer tend to keep me indoors where it's cool and out of the heat. It's even cooler in the basement.

My point is, don't let summer slow you down. Take advantage of those long hot days and stay indoors. Bask in the beauty of your basement, surrounded by all of the lovely projects that need your attention and keep the railroad moving forward.

OK! I have to go now. The lawn needs mowed.

—Dean

TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

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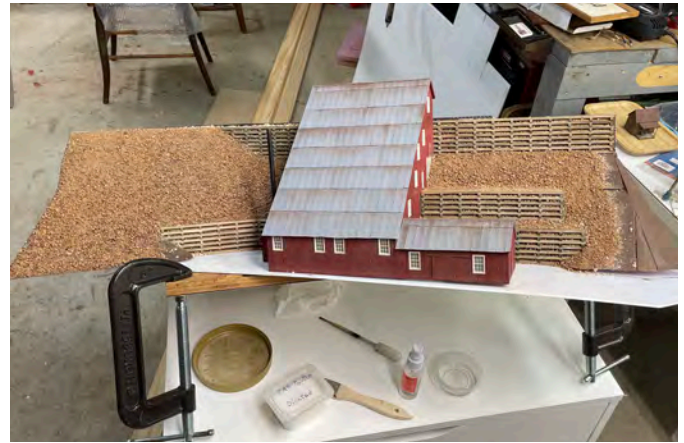
Logo Design by Alan Aagaard

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

In this month's Trails, Rails, and Tales, Jay Schmucker shares some things he has learned about paint and John Kraft tells us about the Augusta Model Railroad Club's T-Track modules. There are also reports on the Hutchinson train show, the Kansas City Narrow Gauge meet, and a bittersweet visit to the SP layout of Don Owens. Many thanks to members who contributed to the newsletter and helped with the events.

Here on the old San Juan Southern narrow gauge the mine and mill continues to be a work in progress. I mentioned in last issue that I had a technique I wanted to try and I'm happy to report that it was mostly successful. Waste rock from mines is often a very prominent part of the scene and in my case the mill is surrounded by it. I figured gluing it on to my foam slopes would be something of a pain since I exaggerated the slope. I wanted to try tipping the whole scene back so the plaster crumbs that represent the rock would have a better chance of staying put while I dribbled on the diluted matte media. I used a piece of plywood propped up on C-clamps to provide a solid base, then rested the mine and mill scene on it. The tipped angle helped keep the loose rock behind the cribbing as well. I'm glad I tried it.



Here's how it looked with some waste rock glued on. Not too bad, although it will need some finessing once it is on the layout.



Next I figured I needed a mine tunnel in a rock face. I cast the tunnel over crumpled aluminum foil held in place by a foam plug. Once this hardened, I cast a rock cliff in a latex mold with the tunnel placed in the wet plaster. Notice the spring clamp holding the angled tunnel in place. In the end, I didn't like what I had done and broke most of it away. Regardless, here is what I did and maybe you can improve on the technique.



When I put the scene and the tunnel in place, that rock face looked just awful. It had to go so I broke most of it off. I also tried to build a styrofoam mountainside, but it was awful too. I decided to go back to my old tried and true chicken wire and plaster technique.



I protected as much of the scene as I could with plastic wrap and tape and started slopping on the plaster. My first attempt was still too flat, so I took out a hammer and made some adjustments. Then I removed the mine and mill and started casting the rock cliff. I'm glad I removed it because I made an even worse mess with the rock casting process. I'm still not finished with the rock faces, so I'll save that until next issue. By then I should have the whole thing finished. At least I hope I will. It has become the project that just won't end.

Now switching gears, Patty and I went to Kansas City for our 53rd anniversary (and for the narrow gauge meet I mentioned earlier – wink, wink). We included visits to some sites of interest to model railroaders. We took in the displays at Union Station, watched trains at the station's bridge over the tracks, and dropped in on the garden railway at the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Garden, this time with the plants actually growing. Some pictures are below.

– Jim



WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOOD PAINTS GONE?

BY JAY SCHMUCKER

For those of us who have been in the hobby for decades (yes, I'm older now) we had the pleasure of using Floquil and POLLY Scale paint. For many years I painted model after model either by brushing or by airbrushing with these paints. Then around 2013 the end of an era arrived. These two fine paints came to an end. You can still find suppliers and vendors with inventory but the selection is starting to thin out. So, where does this take us for now.

For myself I have tried several different options and have settled on Tru-Color paint when I need to use an airbrush. The first thing I learned was that airbrushing in the basement is not recommended (AT ALL). You will need a good ventilation system otherwise you can end up in divorce court. The fumes go right into the central air system and will upset the HPIC who is upstairs. The second thing I learned is that Tru-Color paint runs lightening fast if not applied carefully.

Well, OK, that pretty much addressed my airbrushing issues. So now on to what to use for a brush paint. After a number of unsuccessful attempts at trying different products, I finally found one that I really like. While shopping in Hobby Lobby months ago I came across a new product called Model Color acrylic paint made by Vallejo. This paint was designed for brush-on application. They also sell a blend specially designed for airbrushing which I have not tried. Hobby Lobby does not carry the full line and I later found out that Hobby Town USA in Wichita, Kansas sells this complete line of paint in both brush-on and an airbrushing mixture.

Yippee! Me is most happy now!

In recent months I have pre-painted and then assembled several Walthers building kits using the brush-on mix with great results. (Yes, that is my opinion and it could be biased....lol). So, let's look at some of my results.



This factory kit was molded in light gray. The red brick was brushed-on using Model Color paint.



The overall view of the brewery shows various Tru-Color brush-on colors used. Only the green windows were not painted and left in their original molded color.



This closeup picture shows Tru-Color coverage over detail on model.



On this S gauge American Flyer tank car I airbrushed the gray color using Tru-Color air brush paint.



Shown above are a bottle of brush-on Model Color paint and a bottle of Tru-Color air brush paint.

As always, have fun with your hobby and don't be afraid to try a new process or try different materials. If things turns out really bad, place the

item as far back as possible on the layout or plant a big tree in front of it. Most of all just have fun and enjoy the hobby.

T-TRAK AND THE AUGUSTA MODEL RR CLUB

BY JOHN KRAFT



T-Trak modules of the Augusta Model Railroad Club set up for their first show.

I am a NMRA member and a member of the Augusta Model Railroad Club (AMRRC) located in Augusta, Kansas. The Club enjoys an HO scale layout set in the present time period and running DCC. Our club has been in operation for decades and is rather mature from a scenery, trackage, wiring and buildings standpoint.

New club members have no easy way to master many model RR skills on the existing club layout, so we began looking for a means to enhance their skills. One solution proved to be the use of portable modules to be set up at train shows and also used for club clinics dealing with scenery, track laying, wiring, lighting and operation.

We liked the fact that portable modular and sectional railroads allow for a model railroad to be disassembled and moved. The difference being sectional railroads can only be assembled in one way while modular railroads are able to be configured in multiple ways.

We originally looked at large modules, but the sizes prevented easy movement in compact vehicles, rather long set up times and storage issues when not at shows. Large Modules often require legs and leveling at shows due to uneven floors

Our club was looking for a simpler solution. It turns out many folks had these same issues which resulted in the creation of a new standard known as T-Trak.

T-Trak is a system of small modules that make up a portable model train layout. Modules are easy to build, store, and transport. Layouts are set up and run on standard banquet tables (30" x 96"). There are standards for all scales, however N scale is by far the most common.

T-Trak modules for the AMRRC allow us to have an inviting presence at Train Shows and attract attention to our club. Our club layout is HO scale however and the members were not

willing to change scales for use at train shows so we adopted the HO scale T-Trak standards.

These small modules have many advantages:

- Easy size to try different techniques
- Ideal for folks living in small dwellings
- Great for contests and shelf display
- Fun to try all kinds of scenery techniques
- Easy to take to shows
- Easily moved by automobile
- Excellent tool for use in clinics

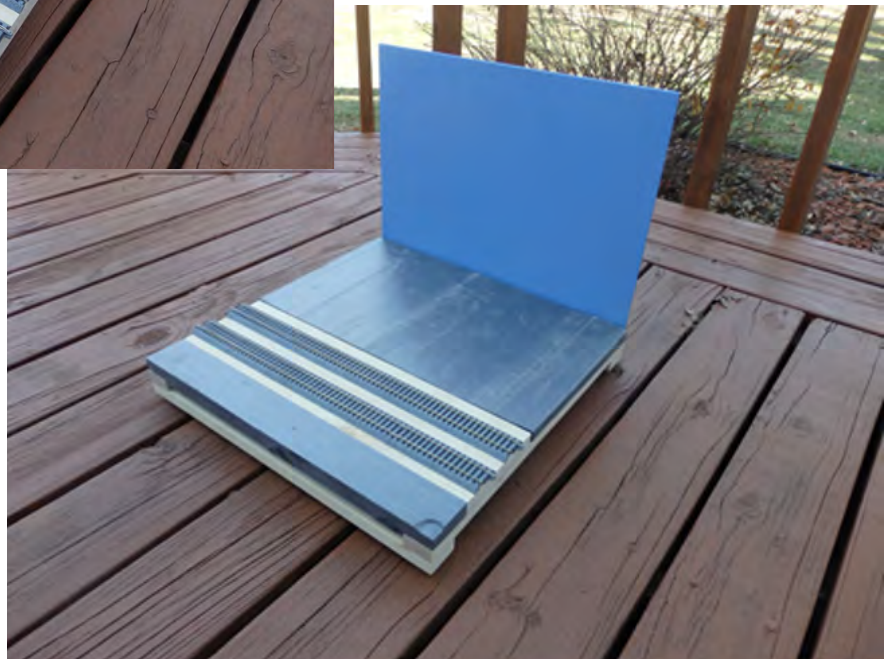
HO Scale standards are available as digital PDF's. Standards for all scales can be found at this link.

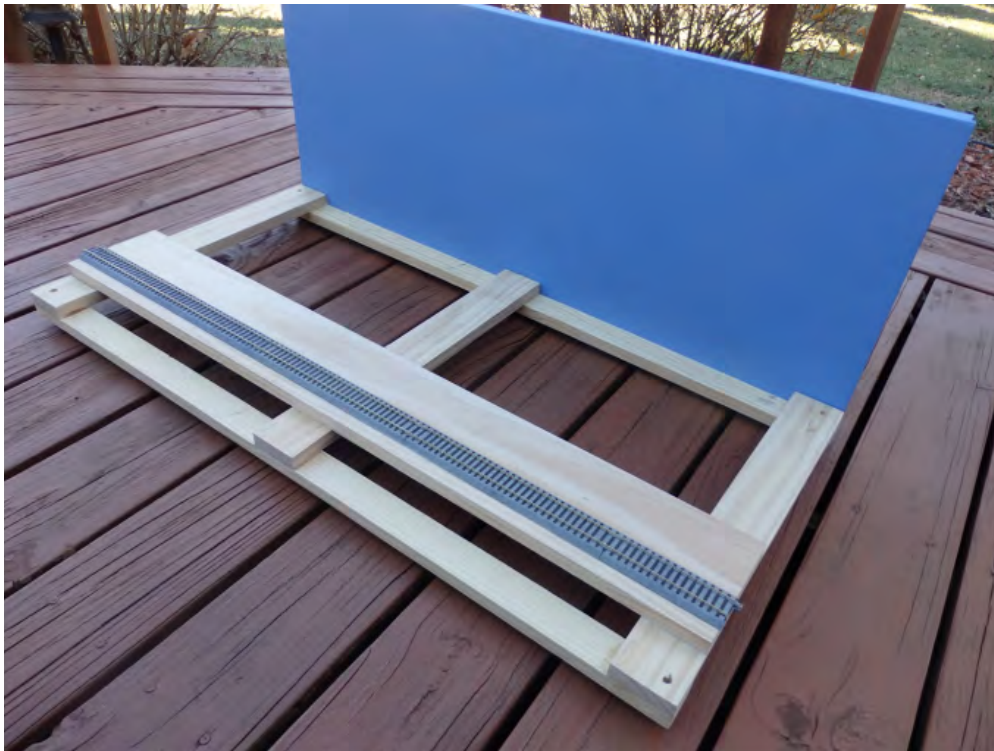
https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/t-trak_documentation-september_19_2019_final.pdf

HO scale modules have been available as kits from several suppliers and are often laser cut from high quality plywood and shipped to the user as a flat pack ready to bond together to make a module. Supply Chain issues seem to have made these kits much harder to find.



The HO scale traditional version of T-Track – single length with four leveling feet shown before and after a foam top has been applied.





Another HO scale traditional version – this one is double length with four leveling feet

There are also modules that can be built using dimensional lumber with foam tops. This construction technique has been embraced by our club as it offers several advantages, including the ability to change out scenery by replacing the foam panel. Scenery on T-Trak plywood modules is often more or less permanent, however the use of foam panels on these modules allows the scenery on a given module to be changed out easily. This allows experimenting with little cost.

Use of easily available standard sized pine boards and foam sheets allows modules to be easily mass produced. Adjustable feet are available from Amazon. Skyboards are luan plywood.

KATO track is used at all module connection points and projects slightly over the edge of the module to connect to the next. KATO track is not required on the module itself. You can transition to other rail choices between the KATO connection points. This includes other brands of track or hand laid rail if you want to try that. Most common use is KATO track throughout, however.

The minimal standards in T-TRAK permit the flexibility to build modules of all shapes and sizes; however, there are some basic modules that are common building blocks for most layout.

Modules have standard widths and depths usually defined in metric measurements as KATO track comes in metric measurements. Variations in width are standardized.

Modules are typically sized in singles, doubles, triples and quad widths. Doubles are particularly popular.

Wiring is well defined in the T-trak standards, but both DC and DCC are used. The club desire comes into place here with modules wired accordingly. Some make one set of tracks DC and the other DCC so all equipment can be run

KATO offers a number of means to connect wiring to track

YouTube Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpdDogUM8Io>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNsef4ok5DQ>

THIRD THURSDAY LUNCH GROUP AT DON OWENS'S LAYOUT

Chisholm Trail Division member Charles Monckton arranged for the Third Thursday Lunch Group to visit the late Don Owens's Southern Pacific layout before it is dismantled. Trains were run and items were sold thanks to the train show experience of Terry Ross and several others. They ensured that Anita Owens received fair prices. Don will be missed, but parts of his layout will live on with other Chisholm Trail members.



Dennis Booth is watching Phil Aylward tend to a freight train on the main while an SP passenger train shows its Daylight colors at the station.



The engine terminal shows a few of Don's locomotives.



Parts of the lumber yard in the foreground, the engine house in the back corner, and some of the railroad art made it to a new homes.



Phil continues to run trains as Chisholm Trail Division members Dennis Booth, Gene Bowers, Steen Mortenson, Larry Gulick, and Harry Bauer peruse Don's collection.

CENTER OF THE NATION MODEL RAILROAD EXPO

Chisholm Trail Division had presence at this show held at the Kansas State Fair Grounds in Hutchinson. Our booth was staffed primarily by Randy Stucky, Bob Neil, and Dean Lippincott with relief from other members as they had the

opportunity. As usual, the objective is to expose people to NMRA and hopefully pique their interest in becoming members. Of course there were the usual sales tables along with the crowd pleasing portable and modular layouts.



THE KANSAS CITY NARROW GAUGE ANNUAL MEET

The Kansas City Narrow Gaugers (KCNG) normally meet monthly, but once a year they have a day long annual meeting with clinics and layout tours that draws slim gauge fans from all over. Several of us from the Wichita area have attended these in the past, but like almost everything else, Covid-19 put the annual meetings on hold for a couple of years. Well, this year it was back!

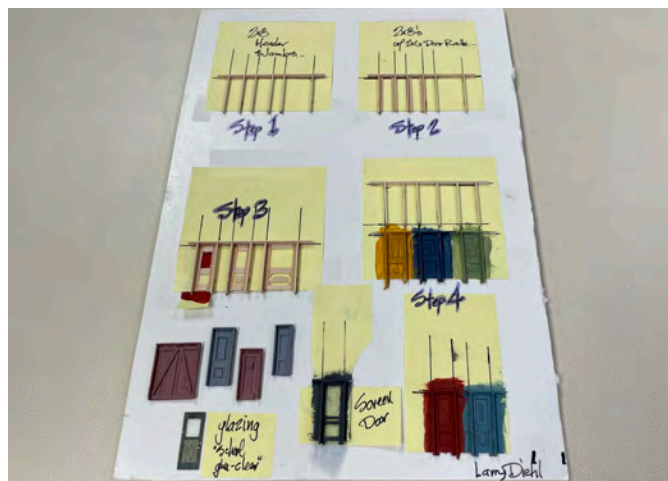


Coffee and doughnuts started the morning. Steve McKee, seated in the light blue shirt, and Larry Diehl, in the yellow shirt behind Steve, have both given been participants in our train show.



Len Eberwein showed some scratch building tips and techniques with examples in this refinery.

The morning clinics included scratch building hints from some of the best. After lunch was a show-and-tell session where folks talked about the things they brought for all to see. The formal meeting adjourned in the early afternoon and we proceeded to the three layouts that were on tour. One layout was S scale standard gauge, one was HO_N3, and one was On3.



Larry Diehl always has interesting clinics with novel ideas. One of his subjects was how to scratch build custom sized doors on Post-it Notes.



Miles Hale explaining his show-and-tell Sn3 battery powered locomotive.



This little battery-powered dead-rail mining tram was a marvel to behold. It folded down into the suitcase when it was closed and came back up when it was opened.



This show-and-tell depot was damaged in storage, so the little carpenters are in the process of repairing it.



Mike Fryten's S scale standard gauge layout is built for operations. The roomy aisles were great!



Ray Brown (rear) is explaining some facets of his HOn3 layout to Tom McKensie.



Ray Brown did an excellent job of placing these aspens in a clump like they actually grow.



Gary Davidson's basement-filling On3 layout will be very impressive when the scenery is all done.

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/](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/](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://](http://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org)
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

JULY 2022

July 16 – Model Train Show & Swap Meet

Joplin History & Mineral Museum,
Schifferdecker Park, 504 S. Schifferdecker
Ave, Joplin, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM. [http://](http://www.tristatamodelrailroaders.com/NewSite/)
www.tristatamodelrailroaders.com/NewSite/

AUGUST 2022

August 6 – Turkey Creek Division Train Show.

Lenexa Community Center, 13420 Oak Street,
Lenexa, KS. Saturday 8AM-3PM. Layout
Tours 3:30PM-8:30PM [http://tc-nmra.org/
TrainShow.html](http://tc-nmra.org/TrainShow.html)

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](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://](https://www.nationaltrainshow.org/2022/ntsstlouis.html)
[www.nationaltrainshow.org/2022/
ntsstlouis.html](https://www.nationaltrainshow.org/2022/ntsstlouis.html)

August 13 – 100th Anniversary of the Halstead

AVI Depot. The AVI depot, E 2nd & Spruce,
Halstead, KS, 10am to 5pm.

SEPTEMBER 2022

September 1-4 – National Narrow Gauge

Convention. Hotel Murano, Tacoma, WA.
<https://www.seattlenngc.com/>

FEBRUARY 2023

February 4-5 – The Best Train Show in

Wichita, KS. Cessna Activity Center, 2744
George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS.
Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 11AM-4P

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

Jim Marlett
jmarlett@cox.net