

# Trails, Rails, & Tales



September-October 2022

Volume 8 • Number 5

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

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

As most of you know, I am the proud owner of the Arkansas Valley Interurban (AVI) depot in Halstead. I've been working on restoring it bit by bit, but there is plenty more to be done. On August 17th I had an open house during Halstead's Old Settlers Days that included operating layouts, just as I have for the past several years. This year was special, though. It was the depot's 100th anniversary. Thanks to everyone who helped out.

–Phil

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Greetings fellow model railroaders. I hate to be labeled a liar, but you decide. I told you all early in the year that I was going to the NMRA National Convention held in St. Louis. As the convention came closer, I changed my mind and reported to you all that I wasn't going to attend for various reasons. One reason was that I had not received a response to the form I sent in to help at the convention. On August 4th 2022 9:35 PM, three days before the start of the convention, I received an Email with my schedule as a volunteer for the event. Three minutes later I received another email with an apology from the gentleman in charge of volunteers stating that he had just realized he had failed to respond to the volunteer form I had sent in a couple months prior. They really, really needed me!

I brought this matter to my wife and basically her response was, "Tough, let them eat cake." Well, after about a few hours of whining, groveling and coming up with several hundred reasons why I should go, I received her blessing. By this time the hotel was sold out (I

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Submissions for publication are  
strongly encouraged.

Logo Design by Alan Aagaard

wouldn't have stayed there anyway, \$\$\$\$), but I did manage to find a reasonable AIRB&B which was only 11 minutes from the convention site. WOW! I'm really going to go to St. Louis. All I need to do now is pack, grab some cash to spend at the National Train Show, gas up and head out. One of the expenses I didn't think about was the \$30 a day for parking my car in the hotel parking

lot. Boy did that cut into my train show budget! I think I'll stop here and save the rest of my adventure for one of our upcoming meetings. The convention and the train show were both great and I will share with you all some of the stories, pictures and videos I took at this year's convention. That is not a lie!

–Dean

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

This issue of Trails, Rails, and Tales is coming out a little early because I am heading to the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Tacoma, Washington. I guess it's convention season.

Thanks to everyone who submitted material for publication. I really appreciate it.

Speaking of submitting things, Lloyd Hurst forwarded a link to an article about a really good deed done by a Union Pacific train crew here in Wichita. I was a little shy about republishing the article without permission, but this electronic newsletter lets me include a link to the article.

[https://www.up.com/aboutup/community/inside\\_track/wichita-crew-railfan-it-220811.htm?agfc=InsideTrack&agfm=JangoMail&agfs=social](https://www.up.com/aboutup/community/inside_track/wichita-crew-railfan-it-220811.htm?agfc=InsideTrack&agfm=JangoMail&agfs=social)

Back home at the old San Juan Southern narrow gauge, the mine and mill are still the albatross around my neck. I did get the rock face fitted in around the mine tunnel, but when I colored it all, it looked too dark. I tried to fix it, but it is still too dark. I seriously don't want to break it all out and start over. I'm going to let it all sit for now and when I get to the surrounding countryside, I'll try to see if I can color it again. I sure wish I wasn't going to be gone for Terry Ross's program on coloring rocks at the September Chisholm Trail Division meeting. I seem to need it!

– Jim



*1) When we left off last issue, the mine and mill looked something like this with a gaping hole where the mine would go. I decided things were close enough, so I glued the mill in place.*



*2) With the mill and its waste piles secured, I filled the end gaps with pieces of foam. These will eventually be covered with waste rock.*





3) Behind the scenes, the pre-cast mine tunnel was glued into place. The tape is only holding it in place while the Gorilla Glue is setting.



4) Still working behind the scenes, I filled the gap between the tunnel and the cliff face with plaster-dipped newspaper strips.



5) Back out front I re-covered the things I was afraid I would drip plaster all over and blended in new rock castings to fill the gap. I'd left the area around the mine tunnel unstained so I could do this, but as it turned out, it wouldn't have mattered.



6) After playing around re-staining everything, it was just too dark for my tastes. I decided to start over with a new base coat of a lighter color of thinned craft paints. Actually, it was two coats, but you get the idea.



7) This is what it looks like now. It's still too dark, but I decided it was time to stop even if it wasn't right. I touched up the sky backdrop where I had splashed it with rock color, removed the protective plastic wrap, and put the diffusers back on the ceiling grid. I still have to finish up the waste rock pile edges and put in ground cover, but I think I'll let it rest a while before I do. After all, I may want to color the rocks one more time. At least I can switch some cars in and out of it now.



# ON30 LOGGING CREW SPEEDER

BY JIM HOGBEN

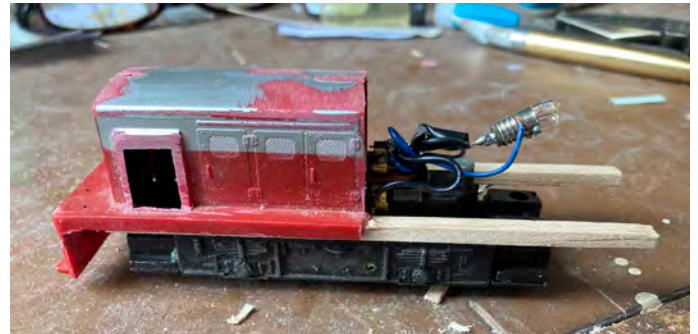
Inspiration can come from many sources. I'm a member of the Facebook logging group. A photo came up of an interesting logging crew speeder. I decided to build it and try for a Merit Award. In the end, it not only won a Merit Award, but took first place in the Turkey Creek Train Show.



*1) This is the photo of the Simpson Timber Company Skagit Mac logging crew speeder that started it all. I made scale drawings from this photo to build my model.*



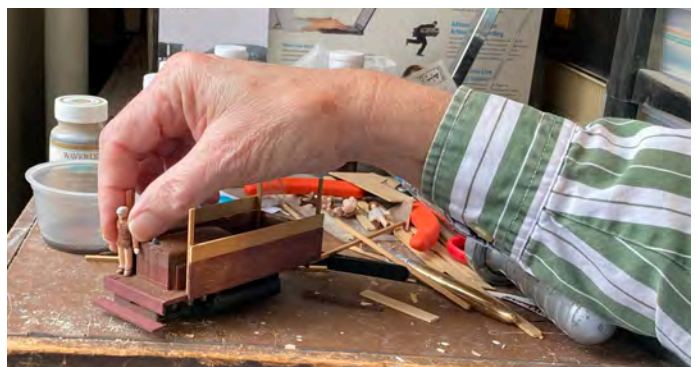
*2) I began with a TYCO 4 wheel loco. I removed the body and cut off everything except the hood and front pilot.*



*3) The body is trimmed and the new frame is beginning.*



*4) The frame is complete and construction is beginning on the sides. I used scale lumber from Hobby Town in Wichita, KS, and scale clapboard siding from my junk box.*



*5) This view shows two different width clapboard siding and the beginning of side framing for the windows.*





6) The rear frame and windows are now glued in.



8) Roof bracing, windows, and siding between the windows are installed.



7) Benches, seat box, and brake and motor controls are now in place.



9) The sheet metal roofing is installed and weathering has begun.

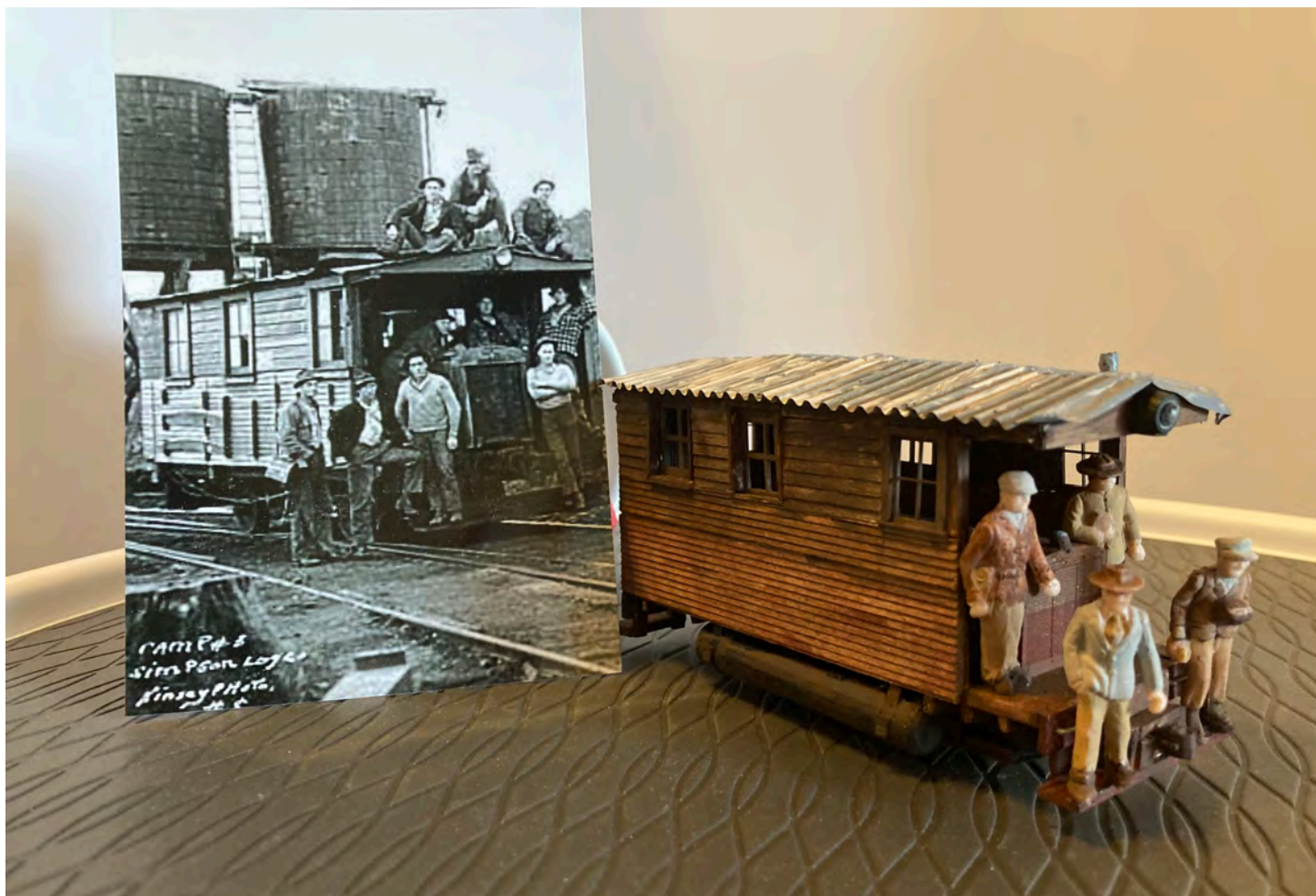




10) Here is the finished metal roof. The exhaust stack is made from a sprue with a hole drilled in it.



This rear view shows the weathered siding and the wooden pilot.



The front view shows the original photo and the hand-painted crew matched with the crew in the photo.



# HON3 MOUNTAIN MODULES

BY JOHN KRAFT

I had an opportunity to attend the Train Show in Cheyenne, Wyoming and visit with the folks from the “Near Sighted Narrow Gaugers” group, a friendly group of guys that model Colorado narrow gauge using a variation of FreeMo standards.

They have built a considerable number of modules that model well known portions of the

Colorado narrow gauge lines. Most are well scenicked and many had several clever ideas.

They have published their HOn3 module standards, which give a good overview of their club, goals and module standards. Just follow this link.

[https://www.nsnghon3.org/hon3\\_free-mo](https://www.nsnghon3.org/hon3_free-mo)









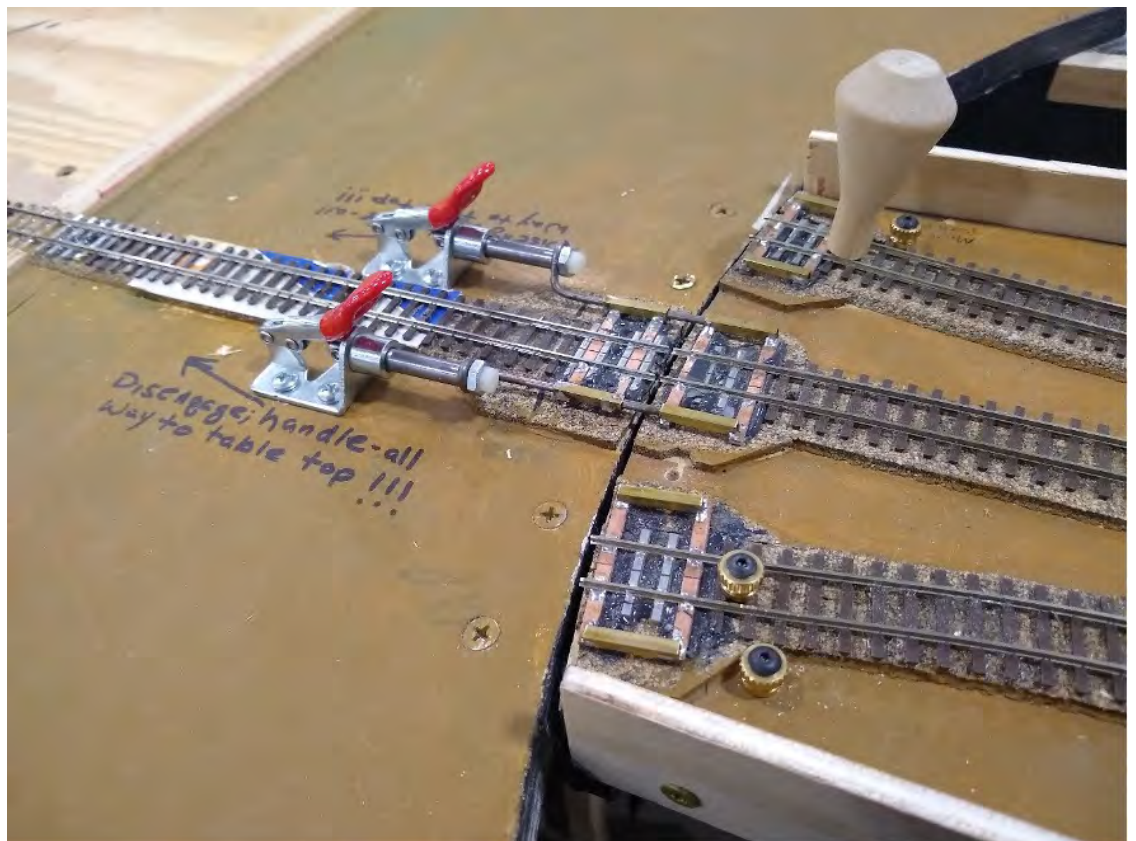


*(Left) They mentioned that they were all at that point in life where they don't care to be on their hands and knees adjusting the feet on the support legs. Instead, they put the adjusters just under the module top so they are easy to reach.*



*(Above) They had a well thought out means to turn entire trains using a 180 degree turntable.*

*(Right) This latching mechanism aligned the giant turntable with the approach tracks perfectly. The outer tracks must not get much use judging from the handle and the other devices in the way.*





## SUMMER FUN

BY BOB NEILL



*Bob's N scale model railroad is undergoing improvements.*

It has been one heck of a summer with Covid and the heat and club member Don Owens's death. Lawn mowing seems to take four to six hours and too much gas. Some kids still say, "It is boring."

I have been continuing to enjoy showing trains in G scale to people at Botanica. But several days were declared too warm. This summer, my afternoon has been extended until 8:00 at night. If you enjoy talking about modeling trains, it is a lot of fun.

The modular layout group in Chisholm Trail is making headway. There are several straight modules assembled, waiting for track then scenery. We are still discussing details about power (DC/DCC) and corners. In my spare time, I need to start doing something.

I finally made room in my garage for the N gauge layout that was stored in Halstead. The two halves are now back together and the layout has grown six inches. For N scale that is eighty feet added to the four sections of mainline and yard



track. A lot of scenery needs to be repaired from the move, and some wiring. I still need to figure out the housing and factories. There is also something to do about a ferry dock at the waterfront. As mother would say, "Busy hands are happy hands."

My attempt to make a list of the Mainline Modeler magazine articles so I can find information is progressing slowly. After copying the table of contents, I need to review the magazine to make sure the article is worthwhile. I am currently up to 1997. Maybe by December, I will be finished with my first pass. Seriously, if anyone needs information for a project, I am glad to share.

Oh yes, National Model Railroad Month is coming in November. I need to get my switching module ready to take to libraries. Last year the Hesston and Newton Libraries allowed me to entertain with my switching module. I assume Phil will be setting up a display in Halstead and may need help. I will. Anyone that is available can be kept busy talking to people about trains. Then when the modular group is ready to show their layout, help will be needed.

All of this may seem like a lot of work, but how do people get won over if they do not see?

—Bob



*Bob's HO scale switching layout on display last year.*



# SEDGWICK COUNTY ZOO'S "ELECTRIC TRAIN"

BY JIM MARLETT

After a 40 year career at Sedgwick County Zoo and with my interest in trains, I just had to write this article.

I guess it would have been hard to ignore the publicity about the Zoo's new Martha Buford Safari Express, so I won't go into the things that news releases have said. Rather, I thought an article from a modeler and rail fan's perspective might be more interesting to the readers of this newsletter.

Right off the bat I am going to violate that perspective because I have to say that Martha Buford was a long time supporter and great friend of the Zoo, served on its board, and left money in her estate to create the Zoo's train ride. It is fitting for it to be named for her.

In putting together this article, I spoke with the Zoo's President & CEO Scott Newland, Facilities Operations Director Jeff Landers, and Rides Operations Supervisor Riley Schwartz. I won't try

to indicate who said what since they were all pretty much in lock step with each other.

The battery powered version of Chance Rides' CP Huntington locomotive is relatively new to the park railroad scene. Sedgwick County Zoo was by no means the first institution to operate one, but compared to the gasoline version, it is relatively new technology.

The locomotives are powered by on-board banks of 96 volt lithium batteries. They are charged overnight when the trains are parked in the Maintenance Workshop by means of plug-in charging cords and during the day are topped off by between-the-rails charging plates at the two depots. When the train stops at each of the two stations, a charging shoe is lowered onto the plate. Each engine's computer controls the recharging process and only turns on the charging plate once the shoe is firmly in place. The computer will not let the batteries overcharge and it won't allow charging from the plates if the batteries are



*1) I first saw the Zoo's Martha Buford Safari Express when it was on display for a while this Spring.*



*2) The train is waiting at the main depot – a C.P. Huntington electric locomotive and four cars.*



already above 50% capacity. I was told that each trip takes about 6% of the battery charge and it takes three to four hours of operation for the batteries to reach that threshold of less than 50% charged.

As I mentioned, the between-the-rails charging plates are activated by lowering a charging shoe onto them from the locomotive. This only happens when the throttle is in neutral and the train is stopped. I was told that the pressure of the shoe on the plate is enough that the front trucks of the locomotive actually lift slightly from the rails. So how do they know when the shoe is aligned with the plate? The computer tells the engineer when the locomotive is in the right spot. In addition to charging the batteries, dropping the shoe activates the compressor to pump up the air for the brakes. When the trains are parked in the train maintenance workshop overnight and plugged into the charger, the computer balances the charge in the lithium batteries and allows a full recharge.

Interface with the main computer is through a computer tablet in the locomotive cab. The tablet is also used to log a check list of maintenance procedures including grease points and other such things. The zoo has five of these tablets and every ride in the zoo has one. They communicate remotely with zoo staff responsible for ensuring that proper maintenance and safety procedures are followed. Jeff Landers can look at his computer screen in his office to be sure maintenance was performed that morning.

Another function of the computer is to operate the battery cooling system. If you have ever had a laptop in your lap when it is working hard, you know those batteries can generate heat. This can be used to advantage in the winter when heat keeps the batteries working right, but in the summer, heat can be an issue. In the winter, the

self-generated heat in the batteries works to help the charging shoes actually allow better charging, but when parked overnight in freezing cold weather there was some concern about being able to charge them properly. That is one of the reasons for having a heated maintenance shop.

The Safari Express spends most of its time traveling behind the scenes at the Zoo. Signs are posted describing what the train is passing and a recorded message further explains things. The messages were recorded by staff working in whatever area is being passed. The recordings are triggered to play when those all important tablets in the locomotive cabs reach certain GPS coordinates. Each car in the train has speakers, but my experience is that the rear of the train has more ambient noise from the wheels on the rails and it was easier to hear in the front.

Speaking of sound, because electric locomotives don't make much noise, there needs to be some way to let people know there is a moving train around. To do this, the locomotives have sound systems with a chuffing noise. The whistle and bell are part of it as well. Although the quality of the chuff is much better than any DCC system I have ever heard (there is no substitute for big speakers), it doesn't coordinate with piston action or speed. It is activated when the charging shoe is lifted and it starts chuffing whether or not the train is moving.

Because there are two trains, some means of traffic management is needed and it is the simplest thing you can imagine. When one train leaves the station, the engineer radios the other train and it then leaves the station. Theoretically, the two should never meet until they snuggle down in the shop at night.

The maintenance shop is really nice and should be the envy of Chance train operators everywhere. Rather than build only the minimum required, the





3) *This whistle post is for the grade crossing at the Gorilla Station. I noticed that the sign displays the standard grade crossing signal of two longs, a short, and another long, although you have to read from the bottom up.*

Zoo built what was really needed for good, efficient operation and maintenance. Just as on a real railroad, there is a pit for inspection and maintenance. It is entered from the side so the train doesn't have to be moved every time someone needs to enter or leave the pit. Another zoo reported that as a real problem. A crane will allow lifting cars for maintenance or for switching out the trucks. There is plenty of room for tool storage, including in the roomy pit, so there should be no need to wander around looking for the right wrench. There is even air conditioned office space for the Rides Operations Supervisor.

During my time with Jeff and Riley, and by reading the manual that came with the train, I picked up a number of statistics.

Length of the ride is 1.3 miles

Rail is 20lb. per yard, the heaviest that Chance suggests.

Maximum grade for the C.P. Huntington pulling a six car train is 3%, but the Zoo's line has much less grade and currently uses four car trains.

Minimum allowable radius is 50ft. I doubt the Zoo has many (if any) that tight.



4) *Since the train goes through the seldom seen back areas of the Zoo, signs help visitors understand where they are. A recorded message from the people who actually work in each area helps explain things even more.*

Empty weight of the Electric C.P. Huntington locomotive is 6,100lb.

Empty weight of each coach is 2,700 lb.

Maximum speed for the C.P. Huntington is 12mph, but it can be adjusted to be less. The Zoo has it set to allow no more than 5mph.

I thought it was interesting that the manual had a page devoted to standard whistle signals. I wonder how many train rides use them?

Besides the 96V battery array that powers the motors, there is a 12V battery that powers almost everything else on the train.

When the train leaves the main station, the cars are never completely full. They have to have some empty seats for people boarding the train at the Gorilla Station.

Ridership this summer has varied from about 900/day to about 500/day with an average of about 750/day.

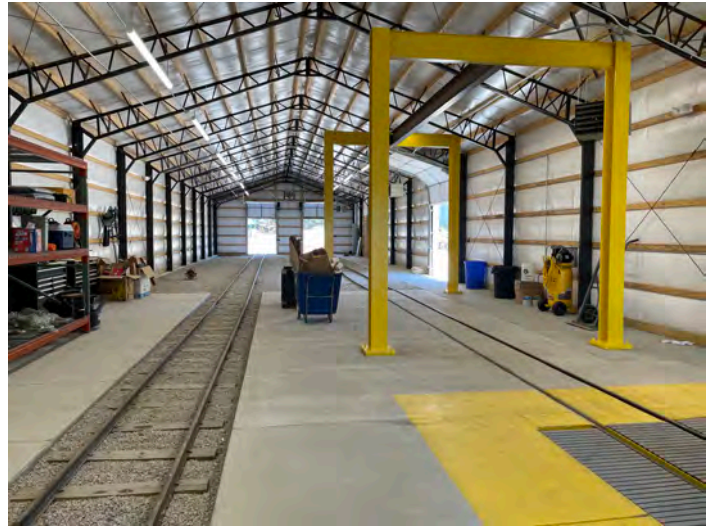
I hope you have enjoyed this sneak peek behind the scenes of The Martha Buford Safari Express. I encourage you all to take a ride on your next visit to the Zoo.

—Jim





5) Even the train's Maintenance Workshop is labeled for riders.



6) The 30' x 130' shop will hold two whole trains with room for another car on each train.



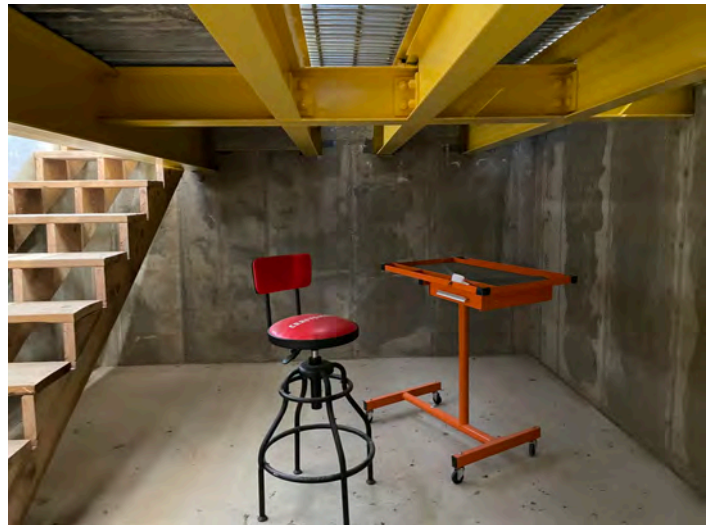
7) The view through the crane structure shows the pit in rear. Chain hoists had not been installed yet.



8) Jeff Landers holds one of the removable fiberglass grates that cover the service pit.

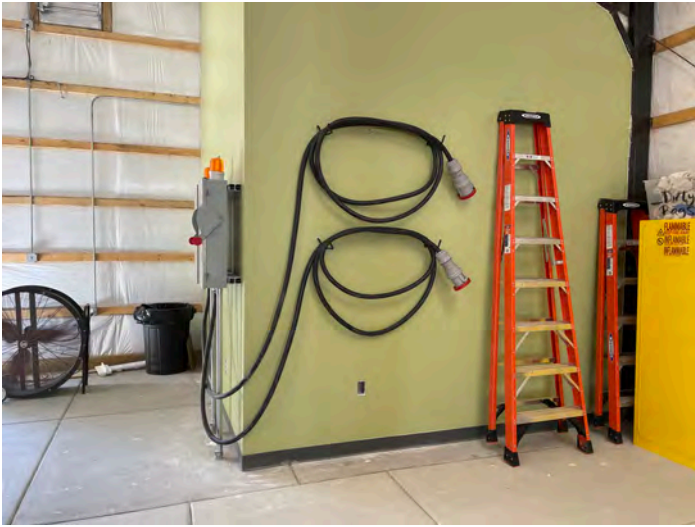


9) These stairs provide access to the service pit.



10) The service pit has plenty of room.

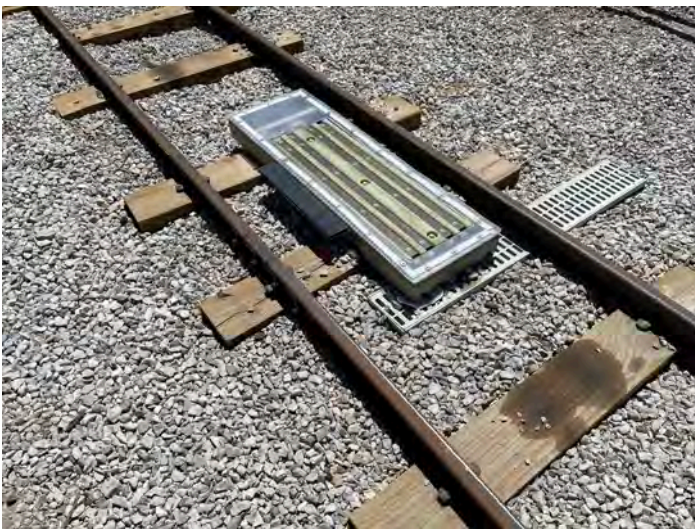




11) The power cables for overnight charging.



12) The charging cable plugs in here.



13) This is one of the between-the-rails charging plates for between run top-offs.



14) The charging shoe drops down on the plate to activate it. The black cylinder is the front motor.



15) This is the front truck's flange lubricator and a brake cylinder.



16) I'm told the train is very simple to operate. I guess it is compared to a real steam locomotive.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

At the August Chisholm Trail Division meeting, Dean Lippincott introduced us to a series on YouTube called Boomer Diorama: The Immersive Model Railroad. This Canadian modeler has built an exquisite shelf model railroad and he is very good about sharing his techniques and philosophy. I'm sure I'm not the only one who went home and searched the web for this series. If

you haven't already found it, I decided to make it easier for you by posting a link to its YouTube home page.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BoomerDioramasTheImmersiveModelRailroad>

September's Division meeting will feature Terry Ross with a clinic on how he colors rocks.

## PICTURES FROM THE NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT

Editor's note: Dean sent me images from the NMRA National Convention in St. Louis as the convention was been going on. Here are some of them.

The first group is of Pete Smith's Sn3 Loon Lake Railway and Navigation Company as seen on the layout tour.



*Subscribers to the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette probably remember Pete Smith's articles on the brewery and the small ice house that uses two refrigerator car bodies for ice storage.*







The next group of photos show the HOn3 Mudhens modular group. Mudhens are what the Denver and Rio Grande Western's K-27s were called. This group originated in the St. Louis area, but now there are groups in at least five states, all following the same modular standards.



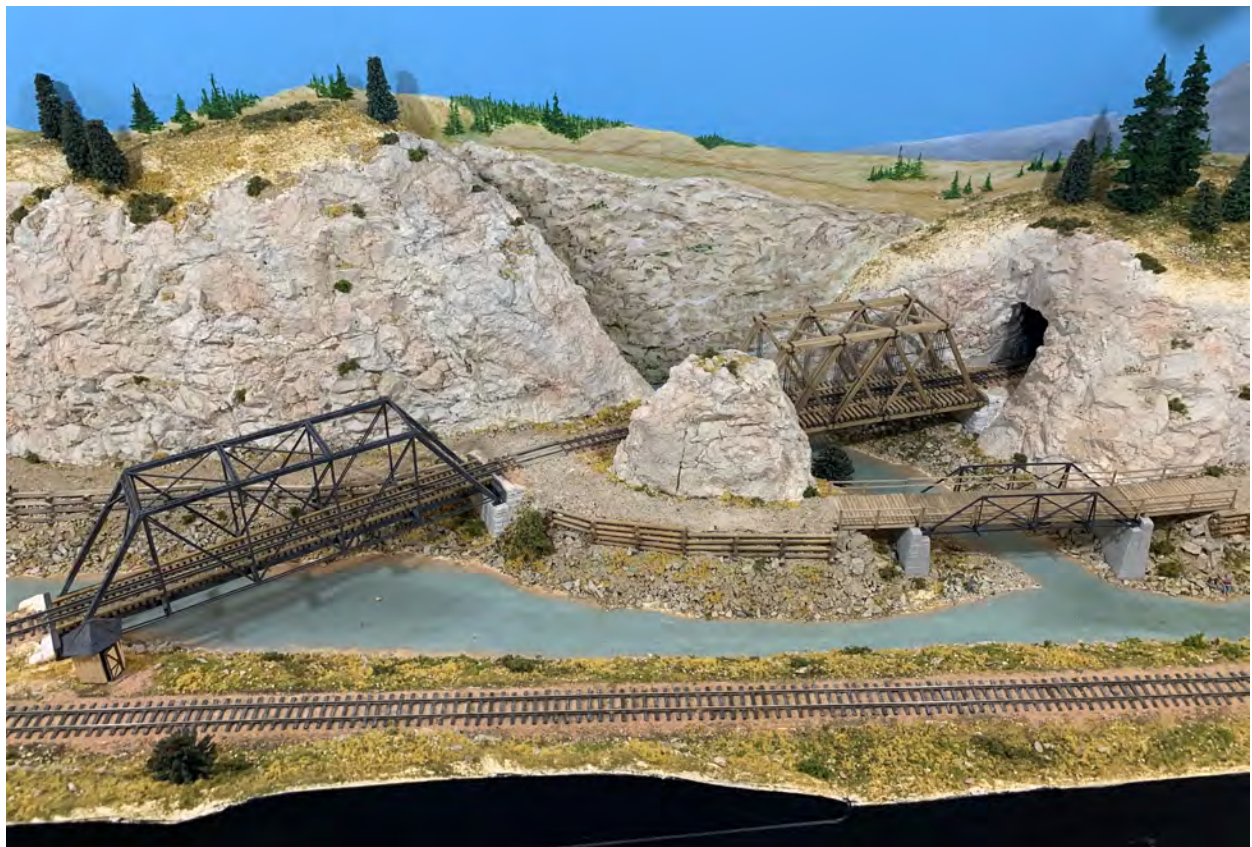




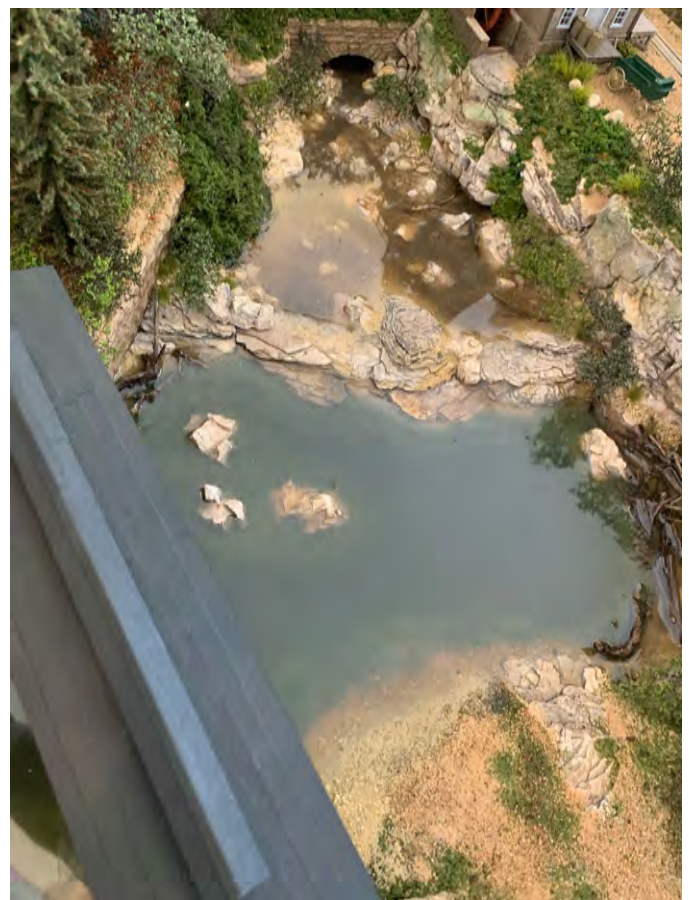
*When the subject of narrow gauge comes up, thoughts generally turn to Colorado, but there were narrow gauge railroads all over the country. The Mudhens do not restrict their modules to any particular region, so there are modules representing a number of eastern lines such as the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina.*













# 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](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**

#### **SEPTEMBER 2022**

**September 1-4 – National Narrow Gauge**  
**Convention.** Hotel Murano, Tacoma, WA.  
<https://www.seattlenngc.com/>

#### **OCTOBER 2020**

**October 1-2 – Wichita Toy Train Club Show.**  
Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George  
Washington Blvd, Wichita, KS. Saturday  
from 9AM-5PM. Sunday from 11AM-3PM.  
[http://www.wichitatoytrainmuseum.org/club-  
shows-1.html](http://www.wichitatoytrainmuseum.org/club-shows-1.html)

**October 8 – Greater Tulsa Area Train Show.**  
Bixby Community Center, 211 N Cabaniss  
Ave, Bixby, OK. Sponsored by the Toy Train  
Operating Society Sooner Division. [http://](http://www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/division-events.html)  
[www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/division-events.html](http://www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/division-events.html)

#### **NOVEMBER 2022**

**November 5-6 – OKC Train Show.** Oklahoma  
State Fairgrounds, 3212 Wichita Walk,  
Oklahoma City, OK. [https://](https://www.okctrainshow.com/)  
[www.okctrainshow.com/](https://www.okctrainshow.com/)

#### **DECEMBER 2022**

**December 3-4 – Great Train Show.** Overland  
Park Convention Center, Overland Park, KS.  
<https://www.trainshow.com/>

#### **JANUARY 2023**

**January 8-9 – Model Train Convention and**  
**Expo Fundraiser.** McPherson Community  
Building, 122 E. Marlin St, McPherson, KS  
Saturday 9AM-6PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM.  
[https://www.facebook.com/events/mcpherson-  
community-building/model-train-convention-  
and-expo-fundraiser/1544232989256957/](https://www.facebook.com/events/mcpherson-community-building/model-train-convention-and-expo-fundraiser/1544232989256957/)

#### **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-4PM

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

Jim Marlett  
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