

Trails, Rails, & Tales



July-August 2023

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

Important Notice

Since the first Tuesday falls on the 4th of July,
this month's meeting will be on July 11th.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY CHARLIE MONCKTON

Recently a group of us rode to Matfield Green's Pioneer Bluffs Center for Flint Hills Ranching and Heritage to look at the space the modular group will be setting up in to celebrate the "Day of The Cowboy" on July 22nd and the arrival of the railroad 100 years ago. We went through Eldorado and up along the Emporia Sub of the BNSF in hopes of catching a train or two. We were not disappointed and were rewarded with a glimpse of the newly laid double track and a couple of salutes from friendly engineers. The venue for the day is absolutely marvelous. While determining width and length of the Modular Layout, we were interrupted several times by BNSF trains going by on the bluff across from us. No train should go by without being watched.

Here's a partial schedule of what is happening that day:

1. As planned, the model train will be on exhibit to the public from 11 am to 7 pm.
2. The public is encouraged to bring a picnic lunch or supper and enjoy some extra time at Pioneer Bluffs, hiking the nature trail and exploring.
3. At 5:30 pm they will start serving homemade ice cream to the public.
4. At 6:00 pm there will be cowboy music by Jeff Davidson – weather permitting, the music will be outdoors on the east side of the barn (if its raining, music will be upstairs in the loft).
5. At 7:00 pm there will be music by Annie Wilson, same location as Jeff.

TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

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NMRA

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strongly encouraged.

Logo Design by Alan Aagaard

This is an absolutely fantastic family destination. Plan to bring the whole family and friends to join us for the day. Grab your favorite Santa Fe engines and cars and sign up for some run time on the modular layout.

And don't forget, you can find our web site at <http://www.nmrachisholmtraildivision.org/>. Check the site often as it is being continually updated.

– Charlie

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

We almost had a publishing tragedy this month. My main computer died and I discovered my automatic backup drive had somehow been switched off a year ago! I can't believe I didn't notice the backup drive was off. Fortunately, I was able to get nearly everything on my old computer recovered so the newsletter didn't have to be started over from scratch as I feared. I could use the previous editions as templates just like always.

In this month's issue features a report on the goings on of the modular group of the Chisholm Trail Division. There is an update on my railroad and I whipped up a report on this year's Kansas City Narrow Gaugers' Annual Meeting. But that's about all there is unless I lost something in the computer crash and forgot I had it. Rather than hearing from me so much, I'd like to publish more articles about what you are doing. Please feel free to send me things for the newsletter. If you feel like you don't have writing skills, that's no problem. I am happy to fix it up. I only wish someone could fix up mine.

Back in my basement, the turntable and roundhouse of the good ol' San Juan Southern (Colorado in my basement) are still under construction and some progress has been made despite my busy summer. As the folks on the Division's Facebook page know, it now has its "concrete" pit, the ring rail is in place and the table has rails on it. I had a little kerfuffle when I cut the bridge rails short and had to replace them, but I got through it.

I've started taking the first baby steps on the roundhouse. One phase of that is research into the building. I'm using a Monster Modelworks Durango roundhouse wall kit, but I've uncovered a discrepancy that has significant impact on the project. Unfortunately, it doesn't follow the dimensions of the actual building, at least as well as anyone knows. The slope of the roof is too steep and that results in the roof in the back being too low to accommodate the engines I want to put in it. I discovered the architectural plans used to build the original building have been lost, so everything we have today is based on measurements of remaining walls and doors. Matters are complicated by the fact that the building burned a few years ago and even though there are some remaining walls, much of it has disappeared. I could find two sets of modern day plans and although they don't necessarily match each other, they do show that my kit's rear end is somewhere between three and three-and-a-half feet too low while the front end is about nine to eighteen inches too low.

I have a plan, though. I am going to put a concrete foundation and stem wall under the brick walls so all my locomotives can clear the roof. The length of the walls is pretty close to the length of the original roundhouse. It looks like it will just barely fit a K27, which will accommodate most of my locomotives. However, I may have to do what the Rio Grande did and build an extension on the back of a few stalls to

fit a K28, K36, or K37. I am not using any of those locomotives right now, but I feel like I should plan for the future. Lengthening it would also give my 1/87th people some work room. We'll see. Regardless, I have started working on the gazillion laser cut windows. Man, are they delicate! But I want to be sure they fit the holes in the walls before I start working on the walls.

The pictures won't cover everything I did, but they should bring you up to date on the turntable and roundhouse project.

– Jim



Above: This is the forming tool I built to get the contours of the turntable pit into the wet plaster. It rotates around a 1/4" brass tube fitted to the center bearings.



Left: Here is the wet plaster ready to be slopped into place and formed into the first attempt at contouring the pit.

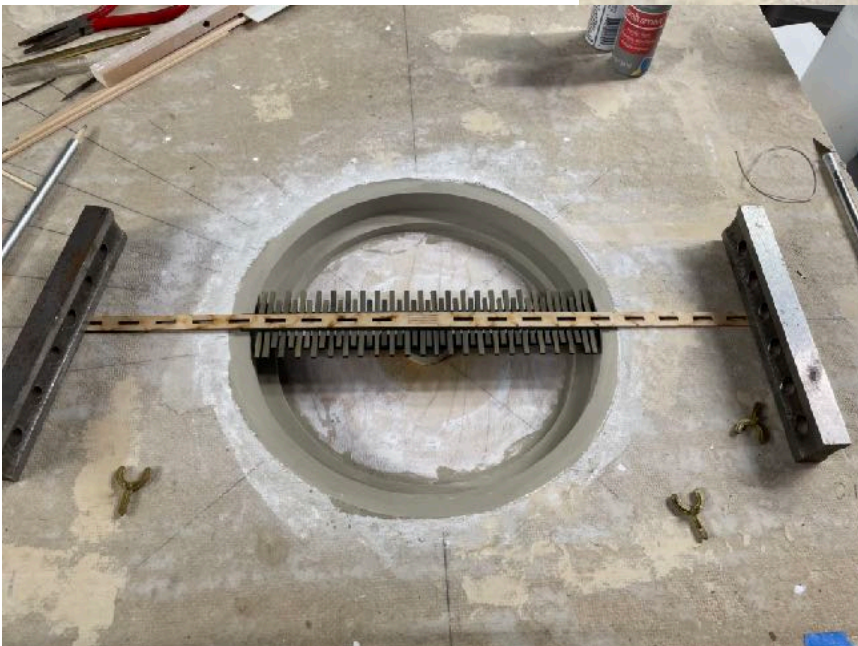
Right: Clearly it would take more than one attempt to form the pit. It's hard to see the smaller imperfections, but the upper level hardly received any plaster at all. No problem. I expected this to take several pours to get it right.



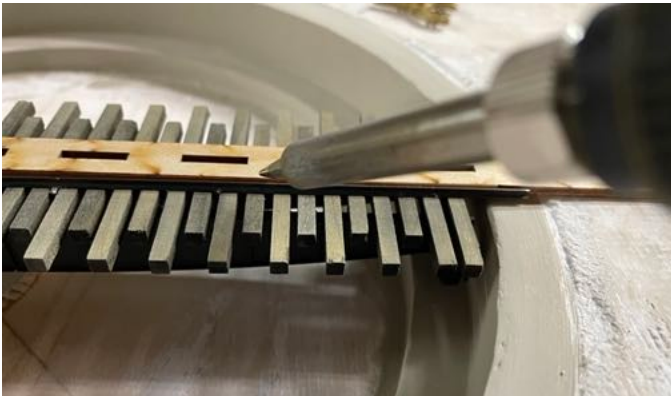


Left: After several go-arounds with my forming tool, there were still some smaller voids that needed filling. I used a brush to apply wet plaster to the areas still in need of filling.

Right: Before and after using my tool to smooth out the final lumps and bumps, a little hand work was required to get an acceptable final contour. I used the forming tool first to check my work and then made a few final passes with it to make things as perfect as I could.



Left: I painted the finished pit a color I thought would look like aged, weathered concrete. I later changed my mind and repainted it. The bridge was slipped in place and using centering lines I had drawn on before cutting the pit hole, I used Fast Tracks straight Sweep Sticks to locate where the rails should go. This step needed to be quite accurate for the turntable to line up properly on both ends regardless of which way it is turned.



I soldered feeder wires to the rails, then coated the bottoms with contact cement. I allowed the contact cement to dry, placed the rails against the Sweep Sticks and tacked them in place with a soldering iron. Heat reactivates the cement.



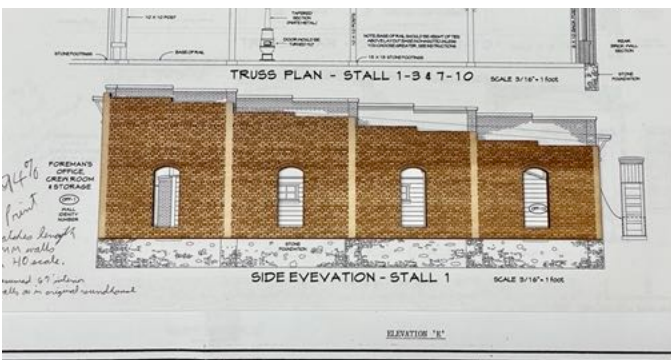
I laid out ties for the ring rail and used ACC gel cement to glue them to the pit ledge. Recent photos I made in Durango showed the real ties are far from perfect, so I just eyeballed their position. The straightedge helped my eyeballs.



I made a track gauge, for lack of a better term, that rotates around the center bearing like my scraper did. I used it to install the ring rail using the same contact cement and heat technique as I did for the bridge rails. Notice I have also formed and glued timbers to the top lip of the pit.



I'm leaving out a bunch of info here, but let's just say I started laying down ties and let it go at that. If I ever do a clinic on this project, I'll put in the details, including another home-made tool I used to get the ties placed correctly on the centerline. I've realized that is one thing I just can't eyeball.



Moving on to the roundhouse, I discovered the wall kit I bought was not a good match for drawings of the building. This introduced a number of issues I'm still trying to resolve.



While I'm working out the roundhouse issues, I decided to paint and assemble the windows to make sure they fit before I glue the inner and outer walls together. And that's where I am today.

MODULAR GROUP UPDATE

BY TERRY ROSS

We had a great 3 days running trains at the Hutchinson Train Show. The track plan was running smoothly all weekend. Several members (I know of one in particular) acquired some new equipment and enjoyed running it on the layout. We had 2 trains on both tracks at times, and several members running switching tasks in their yards while mainline trains sped past. Rick and Adam (our personal DCC/JMRI gurus) have provided us with all the throttle choices we could want. One of the days we had guys running with Tethered NCE Throttles, WIFI NCE throttles, and their own personal I-Phones.

Rick was able to look up decoder information for some people buying engines at the show, and he feels we may have some new member interest from those folks. He was handing out NMRA meeting information and brochures while checking their equipment. We also had a prospective new member come in on both

Saturday and Sunday and run some of his trains. He is very interested in joining our group and I spoke with him on exactly how to join in on the fun. We were all kept busy running trains and talking with viewers about trains, scenery, and our DCC power system and JMRI capabilities.

We also provided some "kids running trains" time. I had a couple of 10-14 year olds that didn't want to leave the show. Both the kids and the parents enjoyed the activity. With the wireless throttles this makes kids running a lot easier.

The guys had a number of compliments on how well the scenery is coming along and how good it looks. Lots of pictures were being taken by viewers and I have attached a couple we took ourselves. We also mentioned to everyone how much fun and satisfaction we get from the hobby of model railroading with friends.

–Terry



Charlie Monckton's industrial yard with its photo backdrop is front and center in this overview of the Center of the Nation Model Railroad Expo at the Kansas State Fairgrounds.



This is Terry Ross's coal mine and industrial yard. Three out of four of the layout's corner modules have mountain scenes with tunnels that nicely frame the individual scenes.

Terry Ross's coal mining module seen from the opposite end.



Dean Lippincott's refinery was on one end of the assembled layout. The clouds are really nicely done.

A closer look at the refinery. Notice the rain storm on the background. Dean says he has a lot more to do before he can call this scene finished.





The engine facility on Dean's refinery module includes an engine house and a tank for fueling the engines.

Storage tanks, a tank car loading platform, and a small yard complete Dean's scene for now.



THE KANSAS CITY NARROW GAUGERS' ANNUAL MEET

BY JIM MARLETT



It's clearly a project still under construction, but the Salida roundhouse and accompanying facilities is a huge undertaking. And it's all scratch built on Ray Brown's HO3 Denver and Rio Grande Western.

"I'm goin' to Kansas City. Kansas City here I come," says the song. It also says, "They got some crazy little women there," but I was there to see some little narrow gauge trains.

Pending pandemics, the Kansas City Narrow Gaugers put on their single day Annual Meet every year as the title implies, and I like to go when I can. It draws folks from far and wide and fills the day with clinics, show-and-tell projects, and layout visits. And the evening before the official start of the Annual Meet, those who can, including me, gather at Jack Stack's Barbecue for some good conversation and excellent food.

This year instead of just a few clinics of longer duration, the time was broken into a greater number of mini-clinics of about 15 minutes duration each. I really liked this. It matched my short attention span perfectly. Some of the presenters were Miles Hale showing some home made layout construction aids, Martin Wade on using JMRI's Panel Pro to make control panels, and Larry Patch on creating realistic and

interesting models out of old Plasticville structures. There were more, but those stuck in my head for some reason.

The show-and-tell session is always interesting. A couple of them were Larry Diehl showing his large scale versions of modified HO kit structures and Larry Alfred showing that "square footer" contest models have now shrunk to "business card" models.

Finishing the afternoon were tours to three outstanding layouts – two narrow gauge, which I had seen before, but progress had been made since my previous visits, and one new standard gauge layout that was huge and, even though it wasn't finished, an amazing amount had been accomplished in a very short period of time.

Many of the same folks involved in the Narrow Gauge Meet are also involved in this July's NMRA Mid-Continent Region Convention, so I suspect it will be a doozy. I hope some of you will consider attending that one.

–Jim



Larry Patch's clinic on making Plasticville structures look good was an eye opener. This is a before and after comparison of an outhouse.



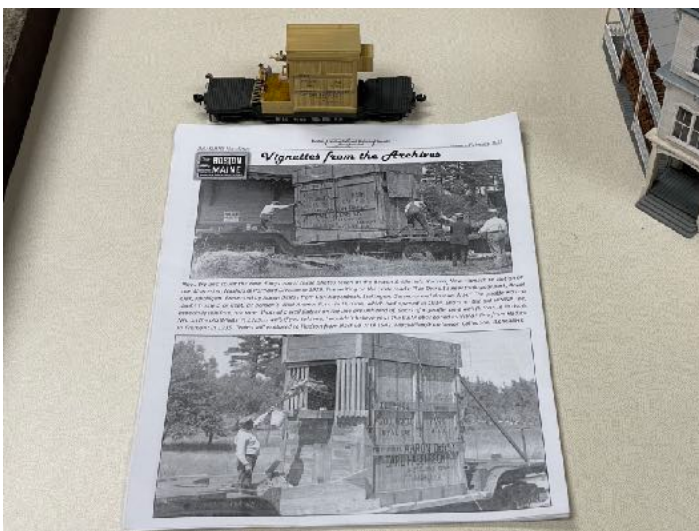
Another of Larry Patch's transformations from Plasticville. What you start with really isn't as important as what you do with it.



One of Larry Diehl's show-and-tell large scale buildings was based on the HO building in the center.



A large cheese box was the inspiration for this show-and-tell display railroad. All the "people" are mice and the train does run.



A fascinating show-and-tell for this old retired zoo guy was this depressed center flatcar transporting a giraffe. It was based on a prototype seen as shown in the pictures.



Larry Alfred claimed that this O scale business card size scene was dual gauge. He says the two other rails are just outside the frame. The switch on the base changed the signal from red to green.



Scenery is coming along nicely on Ray Brown's large HO scale layout.



Ray's aspen groves look more dense than they are because he has more tree trunks than there are trees.



Shelly Levy can't work much on his HO scale layout these days, but friends and family are carrying on.



The cabin painted on the background of Shelly Levy's layout actually has lighted windows.



This is one of the aisles of Dale Phetteplace's new HO standard gauge layout. It is a big layout!



This coal loading conveyor interested me because I am planning to use one to feed coal to locomotives.

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

JULY 2023

July 8-9 – Spring Creek Biennial Train Show. Thayer County Event Center, Deshler, NE. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM <https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/show-schedule/>

July 15 – Model Train Show and Swap Meet. Joplin History & Mineral Museum, Schifferdecker Park, 504 S. Schifferdecker Ave, Joplin, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM.

July 22 – National Day of the Cowboy and 100th Anniversary of the Railroad Coming to Matfield Green. CTD modular layout on display from 11AM-7PM, Pioneer Bluffs, 695 Kansas Highway 177, Matfield Green, KS <https://pioneerbluffs.org/event/national-day-of-the-cowboy/>

July 27-29 – Mid-Continent Region NMRA Annual Convention, “Kansas City Flyer.” Holiday Inn & Suites, 8787 Reeder St., Overland Park, KS. <https://2023mcorconvention.com/>

July 29 – TTOS Summer Train Show. Payne County Fairgrounds Expo Center, 4518 Expo Cir. E, Stillwater, OK. Saturday 9AM-3PM, <https://www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/division-events.html>

AUGUST 2023

August 20-26 – NMRA International Convention “Texas Express.” Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Grapevine, TX (Dallas/Fort Worth). <https://www.2023texasexpress.com/>

August 30-September 2 – National Narrow Gauge Convention. Crown Plaza Denver Airport, 15500 E 40th Ave, Denver, CO. <https://www.43nngcdenver.com/>

FEBRUARY 2024

February 3-4 – The Best Train Show in Wichita, KS. Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 11AM-4PM <https://www.nmrachisholmtraildivision.org/best-train-show.html>