

# Trails, Rails, & Tales



November-December, 2019

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

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

It's that time when we look to being inside out of the weather. Hope you can do some modeling. Don't forget about the elections coming up and vote.

Thank You

–Phil

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY ROB NEISES

As we wrap up the year, it's time to start thinking about the holidays. That also means it's election time. Hopefully we will have many great candidates for the different offices. In the December meeting there will be a paper ballot and those that do not fill it out at the meeting will have one emailed to you.

Also with the holidays means it's time for the December holiday meal. Remember bring yourself, bring your family, bring a friend...come enjoy the holiday times and a great meal which will again be provided by Phil's nephew. So we'll have another great BBQ holiday meal.

Finally I'd like to thank you all for the last three years, your help and support during the shows, the convention, the planning and everything. I wouldn't have been able to do it with out all the help of all you volunteers and members and of course the convention committee. In case I don't get to speak to you again, I want to thank you all for the past 3 years, and I'm sure whoever becomes our next superintendent will do an excellent job also.

Happy Thanksgiving Merry Christmas and a Happy New year, to all of you, have a happy holiday season!

–Rob

### TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

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It is sent to members of the  
Chisholm Trail Division of  
NMRA

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#### WEBMASTER

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When I write anything, I always struggle with how personal to make it. My wife tells me, whether writing or speaking, more often than not I err on the side of too much information. I figure anyone bothering to read anything I have written must be a friend, so why not. Be forewarned – here I go again.

Most of you already know I'm dealing with a little cancer. I've had surgery and am now undergoing radiation treatment to try to kill off the bits that the surgery didn't get. It has been an intrusion in my life and has interfered some with my model railroading, but it has done something I wasn't expecting. My brush with mortality has given me a kick in the pants and reminded me that I really don't have forever to build my dream railroad. I really do need to get the darned thing done or at least as done as model railroads get.

It occurs to me that we are all mortal and our time actually is limited. If we want to get our things done, then we need to get to it. It is often said that the journey is more important than the destination. That may be true, but reaching a few destinations sure wouldn't hurt. I hope I have turned over a new leaf long term and that I continue working on the railroad at what is an accelerated pace for me. Time will tell.

That being said, the question is, what have I actually accomplished since the last issue of Trails, Rails, & Tales? Well, I've installed sub-roadbed and much of the roadbed from the town of Fremont, over Elva Pass, and on to the town of Mt. Elva. The names of my towns are all very personal ones. Fremont was my father-in-law's middle name and it has such a Colorado sound that I simply couldn't pass it up. I was struggling with what to call my pass and my wife suggested Elva. It was her mother's first name, although she went by her middle name. Only immediate family and various government entities knew her first name. I certainly didn't. Well that sounded pretty good to me as well. Like the Otto Mears's Silverton Railroad, which climbed over Red Mountain Pass then dropped a little into the town of Red Mountain, my town of Mt. Elva is close to, but not on Elva Pass. I suppose I should also mention that there actually is a Mt. Elva in Australia, but I think the two can coexist. There is, after all, Birmingham, England and Birmingham, Alabama.



Part of my new work was just that – new work from the ground up. However, I was also able to use quite a bit of finished roadbed salvaged from my previous layout. It had rails attached, so that part went pretty quickly. It only took a few fillers and some splices. The work now is to top the new unfinished sub-roadbed with Homasote, lay ties, spike down the rail, and get it wired. Then the railroad will actually go from one town to the next!

–Jim

# TRAIN DISPLAY IN HALSTEAD

BY RANDY STUCKY

During the annual Halstead, KS “Old Settler’s” festival, Phil Aylward, Randy Stucky and others ran trains at the Ark Valley Interurban depot. It was open from 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM on August 10. People stopped by and enjoyed the layouts and asked questions. Here are a few pictures of some of the layouts on display.



HO scale layout with an AT&SF 4-8-4 pulling the train. This is the layout that was once at Engine House Hobbies.



This layout is under construction, but the trains ran. It gave visitors a chance to see some construction techniques.



A Lionel O27 freight train set up on the floor as so many of our first trains were.



Denver & Rio Grande Western passenger train and freight train running at the same time.

# NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION

BY JIM MARLETT

Before I retired, I could never go to the National Narrow Gauge Conventions (NNGC) since it was held during an impossibly busy time at the zoo where I worked. Now that I am retired, I hope to never miss one. This year's convention, the 39th, was in Sacramento, CA.

The format is one I very much like. Clinics are held in the mornings and evenings with the afternoons set aside for layout tours. Display railroads, vendors, and contest rooms are closed during the afternoons, so everyone is free to participate in the layout tours. There is enough time between clinics that I have never had any problem seeing modular layouts on display and visiting vendors while still attending every clinic session. And speaking of vendors, there are lots of them. This year they were spread over three ballrooms. To see more, I think you would have to go the NMRA National Train Show or at least some of the biggest train shows.

Both the morning and evening clinics are an hour long except for a few that are two sessions long. There is a half hour break between each session. This year was typical as there were five clinics being conducted at the same time. Luckily, each clinic is given twice, so you have more than one chance to work out your conflicts. I counted 54 different clinics and remember that each is given twice. But even with each being given twice, there is still no way to see them all.

An exception to the free afternoon tradition was Rich Hunter's Timber Tunnel Portal Make N' Take Clinic, which was held in the afternoon for three hours. Since this required pre-registration and a fee, I presume those who went to that clinic knew they would be missing some layout tour time.

Layout tours include many excellent layouts and aren't restricted to narrow gauge or even short line standard gauge. There were 33 layouts on tour during the convention that were within reasonable traveling distance from Sacramento and another 12 before the convention that were located in the San Francisco Bay area. Needless to say, I didn't see them all.

Layouts weren't the only thing available for visits. Before, during, and after the convention, there were museums, operating railroads, and facilities available for attendees. I was limited in time, so I was only able to visit the California State Railroad Museum and I have to say, it was fantastic! I have been to railroad museums that don't engage the non-railroader or are

too simplistic for the die-hard rail fan, but this one covered all the bases. Even my wife liked it. There was plenty of narrow gauge displayed, but most of it was standard gauge. I think my favorites were Lucius Bebe and Charles Clegg's private car and a cab forward locomotive displayed indoors. Oh, and the original C.P. Huntington locomotive that was the inspiration for Chance Manufacturing's small train-ride version seen in parks throughout America.

The National Narrow Gauge Convention contest room always has some of the best of the best. All awards are by popular vote, but the voters are overwhelmingly modelers and often very high quality modelers. Scale doesn't matter and there were sizes from Nn3 all the way up beyond Fn3 (garden railway size). Besides the usual contest categories, there are awards for animation (these can be pretty amazing) and a "square footer" where the diorama can't exceed a one foot square footprint. These are some of my favorites. But whatever your interests, there is plenty of opportunity for inspiration and good ideas.

There is no final banquet at National Narrow Gauge Conventions, which saves a lot of hassle for the planning committee. There is a closing awards ceremony and business meeting (with a cash bar, of course). A real surprise was our own Chisholm Trail member Steen Mortensen being awarded a plaque and an HOn3 car for his exceptional volunteer service. I should mention that no other such awards were given out and I have not seen them given out at any other NNGC convention. It was a really special moment and well deserved recognition.

If you are curious about the National Narrow Gauge Convention, there are a number of videos on line and I'm sure there are a vast number web albums covering it. Here are a couple of links to get you started.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t19jGbw2Yx8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ku365lfplHw>

Next year's NNGC will be the 40th. To commemorate the event, it's being held where the first one was held back in 1981 – St. Louis, MO. This is close enough for us Kansans to attend with a minimum of trouble. If you have never been to a National Narrow Gauge Convention, I highly recommend it, even if you aren't a narrow gauger. The things you can learn make it well worth the time.

–Jim





Steen Mortensen, volunteer extraordinaire, with his plaque and HOn3 car.



Interior of one of authors Lucious Beebe & Charles Clegg's private car "Gold Coast" at the California State Railroad Museum.



Modular railroads were in their own room this year with a few vendors thrown in for good measure.



I really liked the Moose Creek Logging Company On30 modular layout. I thought the ballast looked particularly good, so I asked one of the members what it was. He told me it was dirt from the yard of one of their members.



Modular layouts of foreign prototypes aren't common here, but this year there were two. This is the HO Meter Gauge club effort depicting Switzerland. Another was in N scale by AsiaNRail. Both groups are from the San Francisco Bay area.

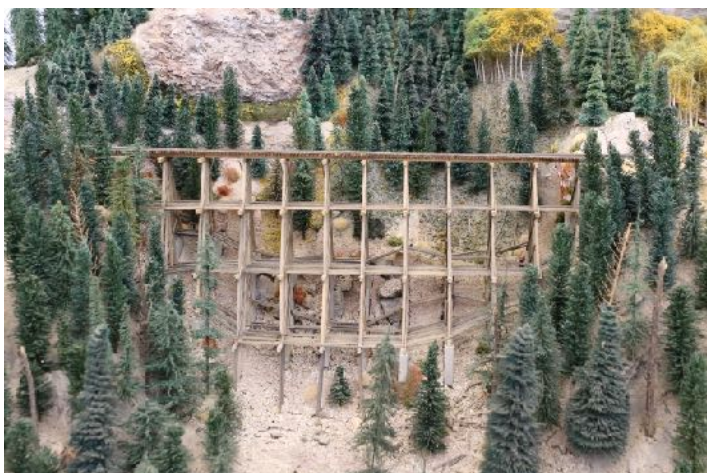


The contest room had a good number of entries in quite a variety of scales. For instance, these train entries went from garden railway sizes down to Nn3. The large scale Nacional de Mexico train represented a road name not often seen in contests in the U.S.A.



On the opposite end of the spectrum, Nn3 is not a common scale, but there are a number of narrow gaugers modeling it. How anyone can create the detail they do in such a small size is beyond me. The hand lens was a valuable tool for picking out the finer points in this train.





One railroad I was dying to see was Jeff Reynolds's "Mears Madness." It's his representation of the Rio Grande Southern. It is one of the few layouts with the RGS bridge 43a, my favorite. Jeff's version is shorter and not as tall as the prototype, but it's there. This is not the first version of Mears Madness and this one is being built from parts of the old one in a new stand-alone building. After all, basements are rare in California and solutions must be found.



Main two foot gauge was represented in a big way by Ron King's On2 Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes. The layout is huge for an individual's layout and not just by California standards. It would be big anywhere. It's a double decker filling a 24'x100' space. Although it only had about 5% of its scenery done, the benchwork was complete and some of the finest carpentry I have seen for benchwork. With 95% of the track laid, it is operational.



We rode behind Rio Grande Southern #41 at the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers Railroad Museum. All of the equipment we saw that day was narrow gauge and there was quite a bit off it. The organization has been around since 1965 and has over 6,300 ft. of main line with many sidings and several yards.



Steve Redeker's Hetch Hetchy Railroad is truly unique. It is the only model railroad I have ever heard of that is done entirely in black and white! Steve, shown explaining a few details to my wife Patty, said he could only find black and white pictures of the prototype railroad, so why not build his version in black and white, too.



The Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society has a narrow gauge layout that mixes various narrow gauge sites, such as Ridgway, CO; Orbisonia, PA; Owenyo, CA; and the Bear River Bridge of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge.



One of many features of the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society's standard gauge layout is the reproduction of the Sacramento shops area, including the huge roundhouse and the locomotive works. Obviously, it's a work in progress.

## PAM MACPHAIL RECEIVES LAROE AWARD

PHOTO BY DEAN LIPPINCOTT



The John D. LaRoe Memorial Award is rarely presented. Pam's long and enthusiastic service to the organization and the hobby is undeniably worthy of the honor.



Chisholm Trail Division

*Hereby Awards*

**THE 2019  
JOHN D. LAROE  
MEMORIAL AWARD**  
to

**PAM MACPHAIL**

**In Recognition of  
Outstanding and Dedicated Service  
to the Mid-Continent Region,  
the NMRA, and the  
Hobby of Model Railroading  
2019**



## 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. Meeting from 7:00-9:00.  
Olivet Baptist Church, 3440 W. 13th St.,  
Wichita, KS (13th & High) <http://ctd-mcor-nmra.tripod.com/ctd-mcor-nmra.html>

**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.** 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, 4323W. Maple, Wichita, KS

### NOVEMBER 2019

**November 1-30 – National Model Railroad Month.** Phil Aylward will have a display in the Halstead Library.

### DECEMBER 2019

**December 1 – Mid-America Train & Toy Show.**  
Kansas City Expo Center, 11730 NW Ambassador Dr., Kansas City, MO.  
9AM-2PM. An Early Bird admission is available at 7AM. <http://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/>

**December 7-8 – OKC Train Show.** Pavilion on the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, 3212 Wichita Walk, Oklahoma City, OK. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://www.oklahomarailwaymuseum.org/events/okc-train-show/>

### FEBRUARY 2020

**February 1-2 – The Wichita Train Show & Swap Meet.** Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS. Saturday from 9AM-5PM. Sunday from 11AM-4PM. Sponsored in part by Chisholm Trail Division NMRA. <https://besttrainshow.com/>

**February 15 – Winter Train Show.** Payne County Expo Center, 4518 Expo Cr. E., Stillwater, OK. 9AM-3PM. <https://www.ttos-sooner.org/event/winter-train-show/>

### JULY 2020

**July 12-18 – NMRA National Convention.** The Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark, 1 S. Broadway, St. Louis, MO. <http://www.gateway2020.org/>

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

Jim Marlett

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