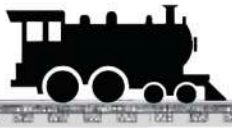
Trails, Rails, & Tales



NMRA

November–December 2026
Volume 12 • Number 6

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

From the Director's Desk
by Rick Coble

Greetings all. Again the seasons are changing and seem to be slipping by rather quickly. This time of the year is getting really busy with train shows and planning for them and our modular groups are really getting busy with more display set ups and the maintenance issues and repairs that come along with the activities. I hope everyone is enjoying the busy season of model railroading activities. I know it's a lot of railroading activities during this season for me and seems to be the time of year my favorite memories are made with friends in the hobby. Make some great memories and have fun doing it.

–Rick

From the Superintendent's Desk
by Charlie Monckton

The hot weather was an excuse to stay inside and work on the layout. The fall weather means it is time to get out and rail fan. I hope you can take advantage and spend some time along the rails.

At the recent Bel Aire Fall Festival I was encouraged by all the young people interested in our hobby. It is always fun to see the excitement on the young children's faces when they walk into the room and see the trains running. Once again this year we had several adults express an interest in the model train hobby. Several friends we had not seen for a while also stoped to visit and say hello.

Although it seems way too soon, it is time to begin to plan and discuss our annual holiday dinner. The dinner will be on our usual meeting date of December 1, 2026. As always it will be at Olivet Baptist Church, 3440 W. 13th St, Wichita, Kansas. The meal will begin at 6 pm. If you plan to attend please Email me at monckton_66061@Yahoo.com with the number in your party and if you will be beginning a salad, vegetable, or a dessert. You can also register for the meal at nmrachisholmtraildivision.org.

– Charlie

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From the Editor's Desk

by Jim Marlett

It seems like a recurring theme, but my, how time slips away. I can't believe I'm putting together the last Trails, Rails, & Tails for 2026. I'd like for life to slow down a little bit for 2027, but who am I kidding. My impression of time is that we compare it to the time we have already spent on earth. When you are one year old, another year is twice your lifetime. When you turn 80, that next year is only 1/80th of your lifetime. Those 1/80ths slip by pretty quickly. Time out for medical issues is nearly certain to mess with your schedule and as an old guy, I get more and more of those. Add to that the reality that it takes me longer to do anything now, and that 1/80th of a lifetime gets eaten up pretty darned fast. All that being said, though, I'm still here and I'm pretty happy about that.

In this issue Terry Ross tells us about the modular group's activities. Bob Neill has a new question. I always find these thought provoking. And I have a short report on the 47th National Narrow Gauge Convention (NNGC) held in the Minneapolis/St.Paul area. I always enjoy the NNGC and hope I can keep attending for a long, long time. I should be able to give a more fleshed out report at a future Chisholm Trail Division meeting. I hope I don't have an article laying fallow somewhere in my files, but that is about all there is this time around.

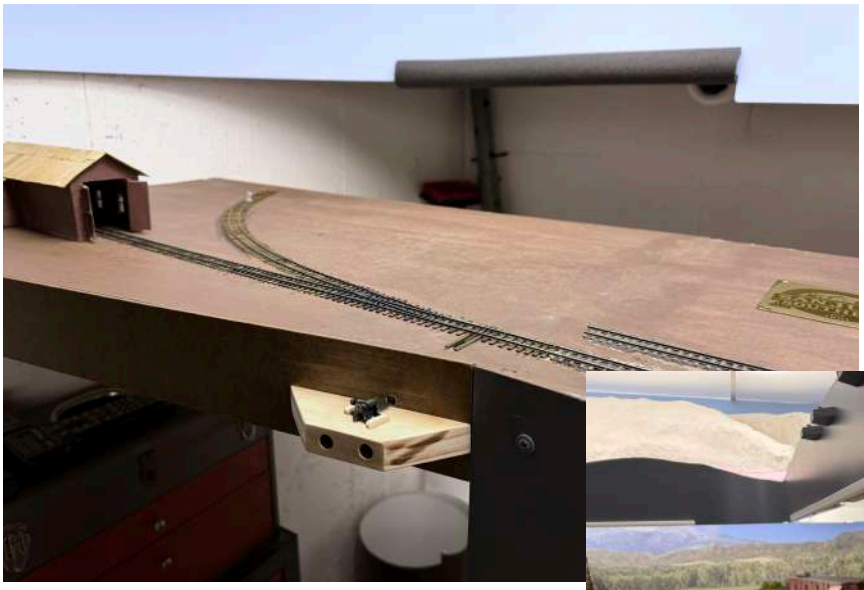
Closer to home, I did some more work on my own San Juan Southern HOn3 layout. In the last issue, I said the track was all down except the staging yards and the tracks leading up to the one on the Fremont end. After far too much measuring, stewing around, and adding reinforcements to the plywood over a duck under, both the leads to staging are in now. There were a couple of issues with that last bit of track. One was that the adjoining town was laid out with profile ties. If you aren't familiar with these, they are ties that are not as thick as full sized ties. They have some advantages, such a reduced tendency to split when driving the spike. However, the ones I have are wider than true actual ties. That wasn't a problem until I got to the switch going to the last spur. I accidentally built it using mis-manufactured copper plated PC board ties that were narrower than correct HOn3 ties. It looked plumb goofy to me, so I rebuilt the switch using some standard gauge PC board ties I'd been shipped by mistake a couple of years ago and they matched the width of the wooden profile ties fairly well. However, they wouldn't fit in my HOn3 Fast Track assembly jig. I wound up building that switch the old fashioned way without the benefit of a jig. I just soldered the rails to PC board ties in the places the jig would have been used instead of spiking all the components in place. It was a harder build. The other thing about the profile ties is that their thin nature made the PC board ties thicker than the profile ties. I was able to fix that pretty easily. Since the soldered ties could hang in the air if needed, I just took a belt sander to the bottoms of the PC board ties until I could get the turnout rails to rest on the wooden ties.

The other issue was that the plywood and Homasote sandwich that the track was laid on had warped in the years since it was installed. I figured Baltic birch plywood would keep its flatness, but apparently not. I fixed it with a length of 1 1/8 inch square tubing with thick side walls that I got from my youngest son a number of years ago. There was still a light hump where this section joined the rest of the town, but I fixed that with wood filler, sandpaper, and elbow grease.

My next major accomplishment was to dig all my rolling stock out of their boxes and make sure the computer inventory, car cards, and actual cars all matched. I also wanted to make sure duplicate numbers and cars with broken parts were weeded out. All of that took a long darned time.

So here I sit, trying to get ready for a multi-train free-for-all to make sure everything works like it should. If not too much is discovered, I think I will be ready to try operations without the staging yards. But at my level of organization, staging may be in before that happens. I hope not. I'm anxious to get started.

– Jim



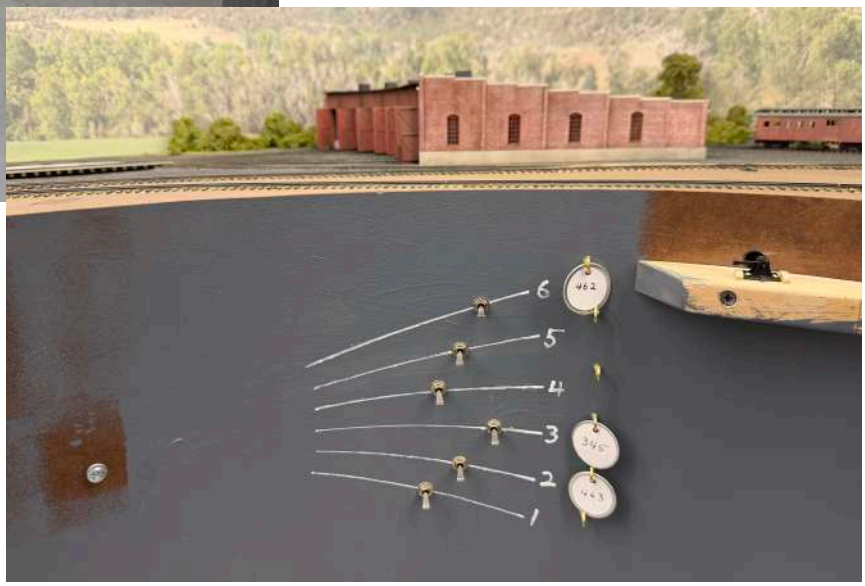
Track is down on the lead to the staging yard on the north east corner of the railroad. The curved track goes to staging. The spur may go to an engine house, bulk oil distributor, a coal dealer or maybe something else. At this stage it doesn't matter much. This is the area that required a lot of flattening.



Unboxing all my rolling stock treasures actually surprised me with just how many I had. I may have to build staging just to unclog the classification yard.



This is the car card check. Luckily, I found very few discrepancies, but I did find a few. I'm not a big fan of propping car cards agains the cars, but I couldn't figure out how else to do it.



In all my fooling around, I realized that locomotive numbers were really hard to read when they were inside the roundhouse. I installed some cup hooks to hold labels and will use those to indicate which locomotive is where. I hope it works when operations begin.

Bob Has Questions

by Bob Neill

It took a while for me to respond to the request for presenting something at our upcoming February train show. The real reason I was delayed is that I have a mental problem. What are we selling?

Are we selling NMRA , model building, playing with trains, or railroading on a smaller scale? People SEEM to have moved away from being interested in building models and more are interested in having something that runs. I find the challenge of an operation session quite interesting. Of course that means having the right equipment (locomotives and rolling stock) and a layout that has decent scenery (not museum quality). Then there is the problem of being on time. (I recognize this is my personal problem.)

As I look back, when NMRA started there were very few kits available and most everything was hand built. NMRA got things organized and standardized making it possible to have models compatible with others. I find the challenge of "building better models" quite interesting, but I am having trouble understanding what is desired by judges. When is "good enough" ever good enough? Since I have entered for judging only once, I know there are many things wrong with the models, but there was no hint about what needed fixing. Again a personal issue.

When I have had the chance to run model trains in front of people, I enjoy mentioning that, with model railroading, whatever catches your interest fits in. It can be creating your miniature world, it could mean having something out of date in your world. You can study history and make your models more accurate, even to the month. You could try running your model as a real railroad, or you could enjoy running a train in a circle.

So, what are we selling?

–Bob



Bob and his "Time Saver" selling model railroading and NMRA at the 2020 Wichita Train Show.

The National Narrow Gauge Convention

By Jim Marlett

I look forward to the National Narrow Gauge Convention (NNGC) every year. It is a true highlight that any narrow gauger would love.

There are a number of things about it that are different from other conventions. For one, it is not put together by any organization. It is the work of whatever committee bids to host it in a given year. That committee makes its bid several years in advance, so we have a pretty good idea what is coming. For instance, next year it will be in Hickory, NC; in 2028 it will be in Colorado (notice the absence of a town); in 2029 it will be in Nashville, TN; and in 2030 (the 50th) it will be in Kansas City, MO (or KS). This year, 2026, it was in Bloomington, MN, which a suburb of Minneapolis.

How big is this convention? I've been to NNGCs where attendance exceeded 1,000 people. This year was smaller at 532. There were 47 vendors and 50 clinics, most of which were given twice filling 85 presentation times.

One of the things I really like about NNGC is the format. I've written about this before. The mornings and evenings are dedicated to hotel activities such as clinics, the contest room, modular layouts, and the vendors' hall. As mentioned earlier, most of the clinics are given twice, each on a different day and/or time. That greatly increases the odds of attending the ones you want to hear. Breaks between clinics are half-an-hour so you can take it all in if you want and if you can manage your time well. Or you could, heaven forbid, skip a clinic or two to devote the time to other things.

The afternoons are dedicated to self-driving layout tours. Beyond any doubt, these are my favorite part of any model railroad convention. There are no busses to catch so you can visit them at your own pace. Most layouts are not open every day, which means you have to do some planning. There have always been more available than I could possibly attend. This year there were at least 29 layouts according to their followup report. I counted 34 listed. I'm not sure what the discrepancy was. And no, they weren't all narrow gauge layouts. There were more standard gauge layouts than narrow gauge layouts. That isn't unusual. To the best of my knowledge, operating sessions have not always been a regular part of the NNGCs, but they have become more popular and there were six this time around.

What follows are photos of various layouts I visited. As I said, I couldn't visit all of them, but here is an abbreviated tour of the ones I did visit. If I give this as a program at a Chisholm Trail Division meeting, I'll flesh it out quite a bit more.

– Jim





There's hardly a narrow gauge enthusiast anywhere who doesn't know about the Rio Grande Southern's Ophir Loop. This is Dennis Ferguson's amazing version in On3. Bridge 45A is not compressed and it feels like nothing else is either.

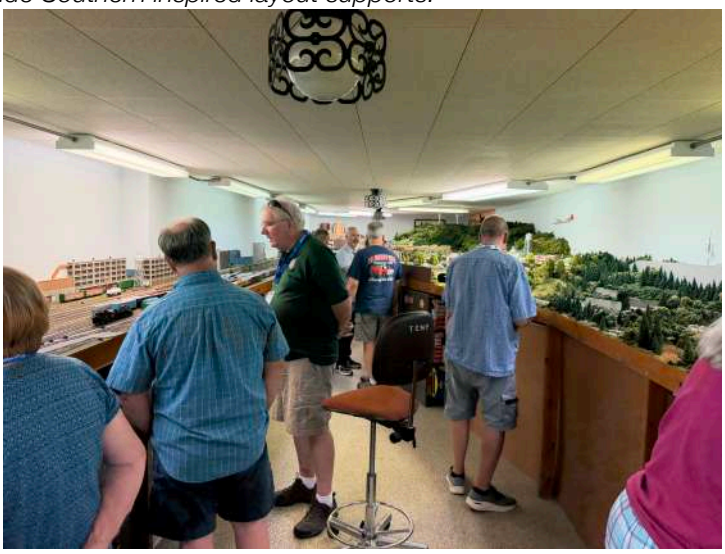




The HOn3 D&RGW Iron River & Divide by Greg & Donna Heinz was a "Builder Series" (unfinished) influenced by the Rainbow Route in Southwestern Colorado. I liked his Rio Grande Southern inspired layout supports.



Dan Dossa's HO standard gauge Minnesota Commercial is a small, very detailed switching railroad.



Kirk Juergens's HO standard gauge Central Minnesota & Southern filled a 12x40 room. The scenery was excellent!



Gerry Leone's HO standard gauge Bona Vista Railroad is world famous through videos and magazine articles.



Jeff Kraker built the Manns Creek Railway in On3. This is a model built to visualize his complicated "mushroom" design.



Operation is king on Dave Hamilton's HO CB&Q River Division. Most industries had their own card box.



Massive is the only way to describe Scott McLeod's 89'x36' HOn3 D&RGW/RGS layout. It is still under construction.



Dick Jorgensen models the Rio Grande Southern and the Colorado and Southern in HOn3 and HOn30.



This is John Niemeyer's Denver & Rio Grande Southern (HOn3) and Gilpin, James Peak & Middle Park Railway (HOn30).

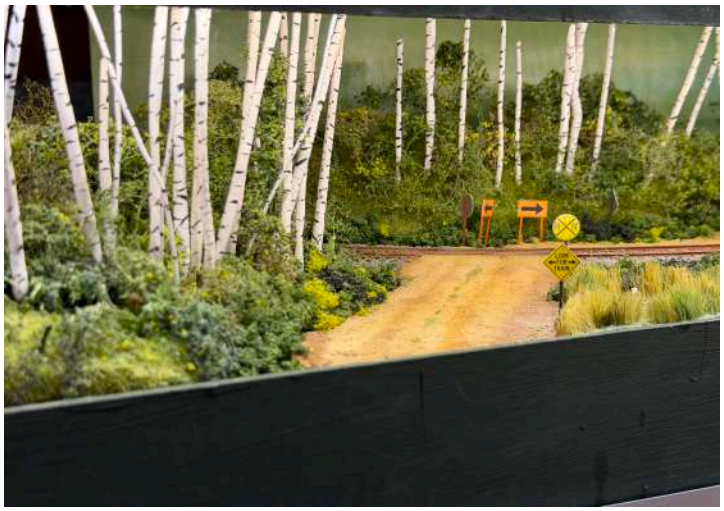


Can't pick a gauge? Neil Maldeis built an 18'x15' HOn3 layout on the left and a 12'x42' HO layout on the right.

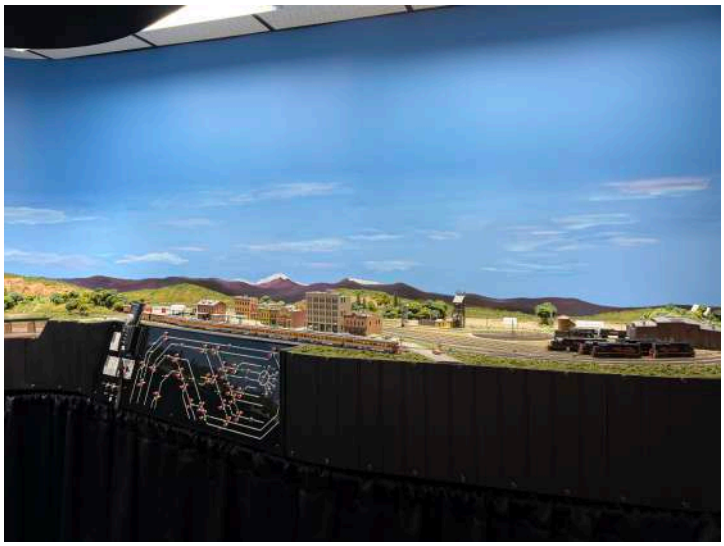


Three decks can squeeze more railroad into a given space. This is Doug Iverson's HO Maryland & Pennsylvania.





The HO standard gauge Splitrock Mining Company hauls iron ore from the mines to a Great Lakes ore dock (note the Edmund Fitzgerald). This railroad also has some really nice scenery. I'm always impressed with a well done grade crossing.



Jay Bickford picked N scale to model the D&RGW's Royal Gorge Route. The backdrops are most impressive!



Steve Lein's On3 Dolly Varden Mine Railroad featured some pretty impressive cribbing. The logs were notched with a jig.



Wrapping up the convention were the traditional closing remarks by Charlie Getz, former NMRA president and long time columnist for the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette. This was to be his last time delivering the closing remarks and he capped it off by showing an HOn3 box car built by world renowned model railroader John Allen. Allen's Devil's Gulch & Helengon narrow gauge connected with his more famous Gorre & Daphetid Railroad. It is a survivor of the fire that destroyed Allen's layout soon after his death.

Modular Group Report

By Terry Ross



Sunday at Olivet Baptist Church setup.

The Modular Group jumped right back into the fire after our last show at the Covenant Presbyterian Church last month. On Friday, Sept. 18th we started setting up the layout at the Olivet Baptist Church, the home of the Chisholm Trail Division, thanks to Lloyd Hurst. We set up the layout in the Gym. We had most everything set up and were running trains by Friday shortly after noon. We set up a 20' x 36' layout with the " U Section" in the center. There were 25 modules and 8 modular members. We were ready for Saturday and Sunday. Saturday was mostly a friends and family day as we had all invited our families and a nice sized group of friends. We all showed up on Saturday to do some final work on the modules, and just have a full day to ourselves to run trains. We tried out some new purchases, and then participated in an operations session. The layout is becoming a very nice operations layout as we ran 4 or 5 trains at a time per session. We set up with 4 crews and anyone that wanted to run an extra or scheduled passenger train or doodle bug could jump right in. Everyone was on the layout at this time and we all had a great time. Sunday was a different story. If you have ever picked up kids from an elementary school, you know what it's like when the dismissal bell rings. After Sunday Services were over, the stampede was on, and the noise level went from quiet to a dull roar instantly. But with that roar, you get excitement, and a 1000 smiles on all the kids faces. We have seen a few little ones being taken out of the room over dad's shoulder screaming, "I don't want to go yet!!!" It was a great time for everyone and we always enjoy coming back to the church. Thanks to Lloyd for inviting us to come in and enjoy ourselves so much.

Then on Oct. 16, we set up in the Bel Aire Recreation Center for their "Fall Festival." Here we set up a 20' x 40' rectangular layout. I was out of town on vacation, but I do know that the guys set up on Friday, and ran trains for the "Fall Festival" on Saturday and Sunday. The Festival Coordinator told the guys to expect a crowd of nearly 3000 adults and children. I got back to Wichita on Saturday and dropped by to see how things were going. We were very busy with a room full of people most of the time. All of the guys brought Trick or Treat candy to hand out to the kids. I overheard

several of the operators were coming down with upset stomachs from too much sugar. The moto for the weekend was, "1 piece of candy per child, and two for me" times 3000. Thanks to Adam for getting us this show every year, as we really enjoy the people at the Recreation Center and it is a great venue for our layout.

The next weekend on Friday, Oct. 23 we set-up at the Wichita Toy Train Club Show at the Textron Aviation Employees Club. These back to back set-ups are hard on everyone but we made it through. The show was open Saturday the 24th and Sunday the 25th. We were only missing one member at this show and our layout was 44' long by 20' wide with a 22' by 8' wide " U " in the middle. That's 180' of double track main line to operate on. I heard several people come through the door and just say "WOW". It was pretty impressive if I do say so myself. We had really good traffic, and we think we might have recruited a couple of new members for our Chisholm Trail Division (CTD). We handed out CTD business cards with our meeting information on them. Several people were very interested and didn't know we had a club like this in Wichita.

We are ready to take a break from the action, so our next scheduled show will be at our NMRA / Best Train Show in February. Hope to see you all there.

As always, we would like to invite everyone to come out, bring a friend, your favorite train or rolling stock to run, and most of all just join us in the "Fun of Model Railroading". See you at the next show!

Hope to see you soon!

–Terry



Looks like the logging truck lost a chain in a very tight spot. Hope he put some cones out. (Olivet Baptist)



Gary Webb and Bill Phillips work out some switching maneuvers at the Saturday Olivet Baptist Church setup.



The Trinity River Express must have made the trip from Dallas/Fort Worth for some Kansas event. (Olivet Baptist)



A yellow war bonnet with the blue stripe on the nose was one of several paint schemes the Santa Fe tried after their last passenger train ran. (Olivet Baptist)



Must be some patient passengers on this Heisler powered passenger train. Heisler's go slow. (Olivet Baptist)



A Kansas & Oklahoma work train crosses the river on this module. (Olivet Baptist)



"That one's going faster!" It's hard to predict what catches a young guy's attention, but that's what he actually said to someone just off camera view. (Bel Aire)



Charlie Monckton enjoying a couple of kids enjoying the layout. This is the bridge module pictured above. (Bel Aire)



It was a roomy setup at the Wichita Toy Train Club show.



Our placement just inside the only door to the layout room couldn't have been better. (Toy Train Club Show)



Remember when the inside modules were bare? Having scenery really adds to the layout. (Toy Train Club Show)



This end module is still a work in progress. It should be pretty nice when finished. (Toy Train Club Show)



Gargoyle Oil, one of the layout's first modules, is becoming a scrap metal operation. (Toy Train Club Show)



This version of the popular Rico Depot has an interior complete with waiting passengers. (Toy Train Club Show)

In Memoriam
Ray Brady

It seems that I failed to note the passing of Ray Brady in a previous newsletter. He was a great friend of Chisholm Trail Division. It seems to me that Charlie sent a notice to the members, but I thought it appropriate to mention something here even if it was a bit late and probably redundant.

Ray was a member of NMRA's Kansas Central Division, but he regularly attended our meetings and special events. He was a former director of the Kansas Central Division and edited their newsletter. He was editor of the Caboose Kibitzer for several years and I thought he did an outstanding job. He even published an article I wrote. A number of our Division members visited his very large N scale layout and operated on it. I was not among that group and I regret it.

Ray experienced health issues and eventually moved to La Grande, Oregon to be closer to his family. He said there were no other model railroaders reasonably near him, so I continued to send him our newsletter as I sometimes do with folks I think might want to stay in touch.

I am copying his obituary rather than trying to retype much of the same information. Forgive me if you have read this before.

"Raymond "Ray" Glen Brady, 82, of La Grande, passed away on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at Grande Ronde Hospital. A memorial service will be held later this year in Kansas.

"Ray was born on December 26, 1943 in Wichita, Kansas to Ralph and Irene (Nelson) Brady. He resided in Wichita, KS; Simsbury, CT; Steuben, ME; Brookville, KS and La Grande, OR.

"He attended South High School, Wichita, KS; Wichita State University earning a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute earning a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering Science. He married his high school sweetheart, Janis Jo Shumate, in 1963.



"Ray was employed with Boeing and Pratt & Whitney. In his younger years, he earned the Eagle Scout award. He enjoyed genealogy, model railroading, travel, and home improvement projects. He was a member of the Methodist Church and served in many church leadership roles. He was also an avid member of the National Model Railroad Association, building layouts and holding several regional offices.

"Ray is survived by his daughters, Susan Brady of La Grande, OR and Kathryn Brady of Audubon, NJ; and two grandchildren, Emma Cain and Greta Rizzio. He was preceded in death by his wife, Janis Brady, and parents, Ralph and Irene Brady."

I miss Ray. I'm sure many of you do as well.

–Jim

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. Hutchinson Public Library, 901 N Main St, Hutchinson, KS. http://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org

Wichita Area Model Railroaders Luncheon. The second Thursday of every month at 11:30AM. Spear's Restaurant and Pie Shop, 4323 W Maple, Wichita, KS. For more information contact Lionel Smith (316) 775-8890

Third Thursday Model Railroaders's Lunch. The third Thursday of every month at a location and time to be announced. If you are not receiving notices and would like to be included, contact Terry Ross (316) 258-4029.

Scheduled Events

November 2026

November 14–15 – Mid-Continent Prototype Modelers Meet. Benton Lions Community Center, Benton KS. Saturday 8AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM https://bentonrpm.com/

November 14–15 – OKC Train Show. Bennett Event Center, Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, 3101 Gorden Cooper Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM https://www.okctrainshow.com/

November 21 – Joplin Model Train Show & Swap Meet. Joplin History & Mineral Museum, Schifferdecker Park, 504 S Schifferdecker Ave, Joplin, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM. http://www.tristatemodelrailroaders.com/

November 22 – Mid-American Train & Toy Show. KCI Expo Center, 11728 Ambassador /Dr, Kansas City, MO. Saturday 9AM-2PM. https://www.facebook.com/groups/1754828858094430/

December 2026

December 5 – Greater Tulsa Area Holiday Train Show. Rhema Ninowski Recreation Center, 1367 East 71st South / West Kenosha, Broken Arrow, OK. Saturday 9AM-3PM. https://heartlandtoytrain.org/

December 11-12 – Lawrence Model Railroad Club Holiday Train Show. Building 21, Douglas County Fairgrounds, Lawrence, KS. Saturday 10AM-5PM. Sunday 10AM-4PM. https://lawrencemodelrailroadclub.org/2026-holiday-train-show/

December 19-20 – Festival of Trains. Century II Exhibition Hall, 225 W Douglas Ave, Wichita, KS. Friday 4PM-8PM, Saturday 9AM-3PM. https://www.festoftrains.com/

February 2027

February 6-7 – The Wichita Train Show & Swap Meet. Textron Aviation Employee Club (formerly Cessna Activity Center), 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM https://www.nmrachisholmtraildivision.org/best-train-show.html

March 2027

March 20 – 12th Annual Arkansas City Train Show. Agri-Business Building, 712 W Washington, Arkansas City, KS. Saturday 9AM-4PM. https://www.wichitatoytrainmuseum.org/home-page.html

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

Jim Marlett