



The

# Main Line

August 2020



National Model Railroad Association

Mid-Continent Region

The Monthly publication of the **Western Kansas Division**



On the cover:

Work has resumed on the Western Kansas Rails (WKR) N-scale layout. It was noted while painting the 3-D printed grade crossing + traffic lights gantry and planning their position that the grade crossing was inaccurate. I consulted my friend (Chris) who was a signal maintainer and got some guidelines and work commenced on redoing the grade crossing.

Inside:

- More on the guidelines for grade crossings...
- Update on the basement progress...
- BNSF action in Colorado...
- YouTube page update...

# Editor's Musings

## Problems Are Opportunities In Disguise

I don't know about you, but I have had just about all of 2020 I can stand with crisis after crisis and so much virus confusion that has affected everyone. This has completely wrecked the NMRA schedule and my modeling plans with shows and meetings cancelled through the year.

Because your original plans fail to work out, look for new opportunities. One opportunity for me personally is it has given me time to continue un-packing from the move to Dodge City, meeting new neighbors, get situated with my Wife's care and therapy schedules, deal with mowing 4-acres of land, and finishing the basement. Another opportunity, I made contact with a group of nurses who will take care of Kathy if and when my show and meeting schedule resumes.

The best opportunity was pushing myself to learn more about internet communications as the "lock down" denied any in-person contact, I have since purchased and installed a camera for my desktop and installed both Skype and Zoom. In the past week I have attended two NMRA "meetings" visiting with modelers across the Country and a couple of modelers from Europe. Currently I am viewing the NMRA X National Convention on YouTube which is an attempt to partially replace the cancelled National Convention in St. Louis, and there are many interesting clinics.

I believe this will have a positive impact on the Western Kansas Division as we are so spread out, we can host regular meetings by the internet instead of traveling long distances. When it comes to our present condition, a wise friend once told me "It is what it is.", so let's make the best of it by looking for new opportunities.



Be sure to check-out the Facebook page for the **Western Kansas Division**:

<https://www.facebook.com/Western-Kansas-Division-592835177514577>



You can register for free and receive Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine each month in your e-mail box  
Just click on the link below:

<https://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/magazine>



See Dave & Deb at the store in Deshler, or check-out their website by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/>

**FreeMo Event...We have found our new weekend: August 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2020**

We are sponsoring a Free-Mo play weekend in Deshler at the Thayer County Fairgrounds. We have both a HO scale layout and a N scale layout for the weekend.



# The Real Deal



Todd Skaggs Photo

Division Member Todd Skaggs took some vacation time in Colorado earlier in the year, and wrote, “Here are some photos I took at Larkspur and Palmer Lake, CO a few weeks ago. The pedestrian bridge (in the picture taken earlier) is the bridge I was standing on when I took the photos at Palmer Lake. I hope everyone is staying safe these days.

Todd”



Todd Skaggs Photo



# The Real Deal



Todd Skaggs Photo

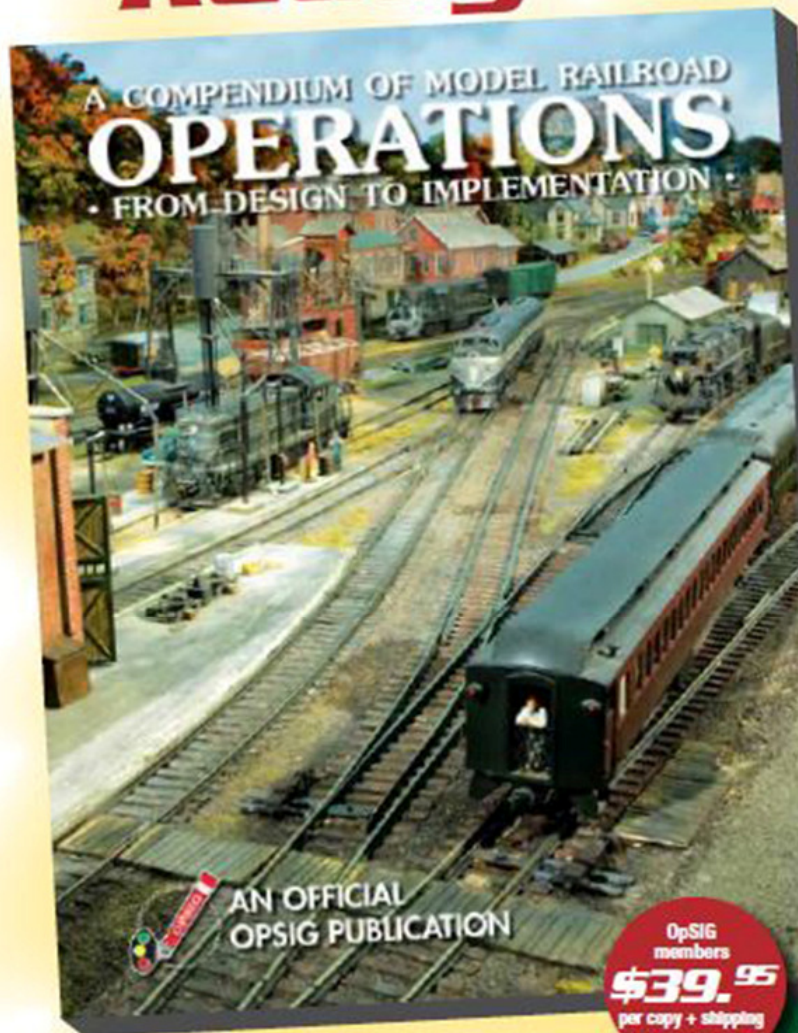
Back in June of 2019, The BNSF local crew were switching cars on the West end of the yard in Garden City, KS. by “kicking” the cars into the yard as the crew had thrown the proper switches.



Robert Simmons Photo



Dispatcher to OpSIG Publication No. 2, you're ...  
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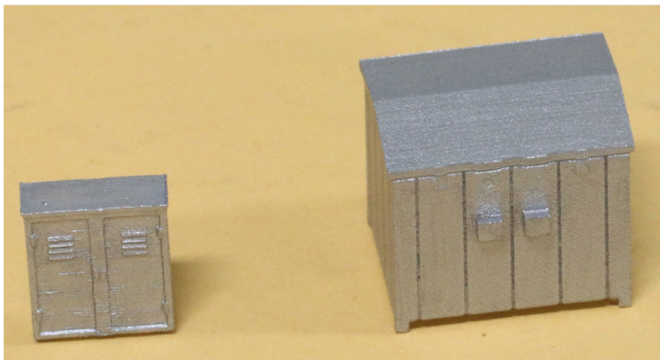
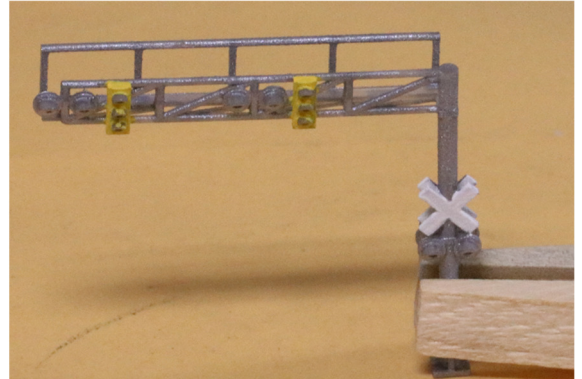
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# WKR Update

Back in April, during the “lockdown” I decided to start adding grade crossing fixtures as the WKR had none. I headed to my favorite source for N-scale hard-to-find items, <http://www.shapeways.com>, and found just what I needed. I ordered two-lane and four-lane crossing arms, then found this combination railroad crossing and traffic light gantry perfect for the City four-lane highway (Pic 1).

(Pic 1) The 3-D printed items are printed in a nearly clear “translucent” plastic, which is hard to photograph, so this is the second Set of signals in the paint shop. As a base coat, I used Model Masters “aluminum” on the entire structure. Next, I paint the cross bucks “white” with craft paint. The next step is to paint the traffic lights a bright yellow. “Flat Black” is then added to the railroad signal lights and the glare hoods of the traffic lights. The final step is to paint the light lenses with red.



(Pic 2) Shapeways also has a good selection of railroad equipment boxes which also add to the scene.

The enlightenment came when I chose to call my Friend, Chris, in St. Louis, Mo. as he had recently been a signal maintainer for a local railroad, and after much discussion and several questions I realized I had made some glaring errors on the scene.



(Pic 3) This photo shows the drone’s view of the intersection and the matching crossing on the left side was the same.

Some lessons learned:

1. The broad stop markings are always perpendicular to the road, NOT parallel to the tracks as I have them.
2. Imagine the crossing as a rectangle, with the signals in opposite corners. The equipment box is almost always in one of the empty corners, as they want the cable runs to be equal length.
3. There will be some sort of access road for the signal maintainer to reach the crossing and park.

# WKR Update



(Pic 4) Armed with the correct information, I started work on the left crossing by removing a few vehicles and the incorrect road markings. Removing the vehicles was not hard but required patching the new potholes in the road surface with a light scrape of spackling. Once dry, the area received a light coat of the original road color, “Gull Grey” followed by new weathering and sealed with “Dullcoat”.

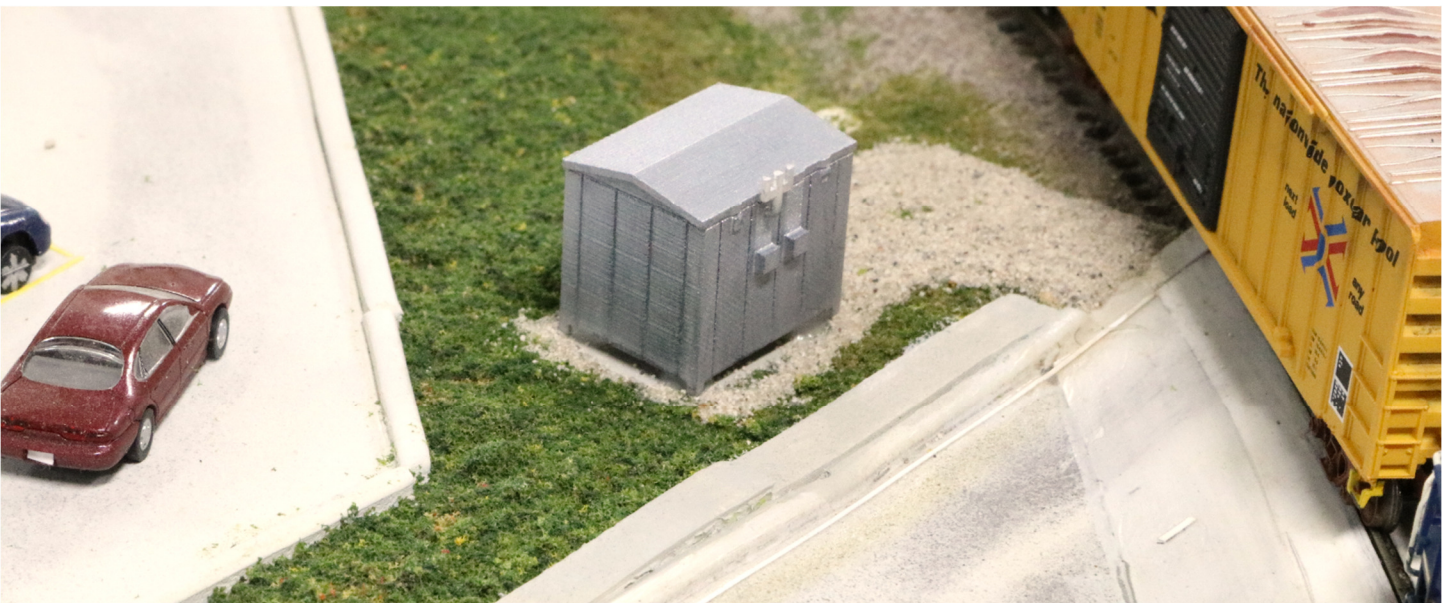
Having gone this far, why not go all the way, so new sidewalk was added so there could also be a crosswalk for pedestrians. Once the new paving was complete, new road marking and crosswalk were added. One thing about using chart tape for road markings, the adhesive won’t hold for long, so once the tape was down I go over it with a very light scrape of “Tacky Glue” which dries clear, holds the tape down but is also removeable.

Once the crossing gantries and equipment box were painted, I realized they would never stand up for long without additional support, so I found some 0.032 brass rod and drilled the same size hole in the base of the gantry stand, then super glued the rod into the gantry. A similar technique was used for the equipment box including a simulated concrete pad.

After placing the crossing equipment, I was able to go back and reinstall a few of the vehicles that had been removed, plus a gravel access road and parking spot were added next to the equipment box



# WKR Update





# WKR Update





**I would do  
anything  
for  
LOVE...**



**Please  
stop  
buying  
trains!**



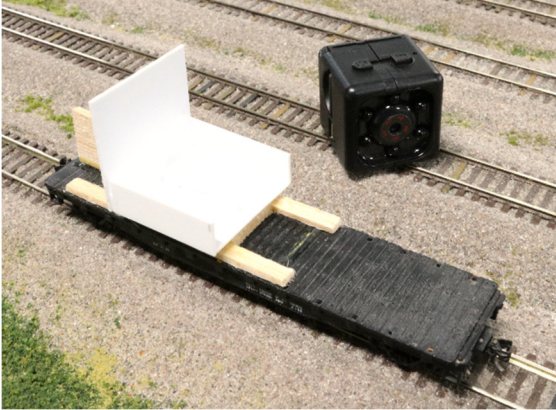
**...BUT I  
WON'T DO  
THAT!!**



# YouTube Update

Be sure to visit and subscribe to the **Western Kansas Division's** YouTube channel, search for Robert Simmons, or click below and bookmark:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9EPv8cQ04rRGAYts-734jw?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9EPv8cQ04rRGAYts-734jw?view_as=subscriber)



There is something new on the Western Kansas Division's YouTube page, namely a series of short videos detailing the operating sessions on the WKR N-scale layout, but with a twist.

Recently I purchased a Bell & Howell TAC Camera (black cube) as I wished to see if it can be used to video from the train perspective, and it can. It records the video internally and must be downloaded to view.

I first just mounted it to an old flat car but found on playback the view was too low. I wanted a view from cab height and experimented with different means to achieve this, culminating in the cradle in the photo above. Mounting the camera at the front of the flat car made any car in front blurred and positioning it near the rear the focal length was about where the front coupler is.



(Above) the camera mounted on the flat car in its usual position in front of the lead locomotive, but it can be moved around. Operation is simple, you power it up, set to video, place in the cradle and take off. I do use editing software "Cyberlink Media Suite" to download and edit the videos.

Here is one video to check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmW9r7Lm1EM>





# Home Layout Update

It seemed to take a long time, but the home construction, including the basement, is now complete.



Starting from the entry door, looking left you can see the start of the entertainment center, part of the “Crew Lounge”



At the entry door the other side of the room has the reading corner (I have yet to find all of my book collection).



(Above) the new train room is nearly empty prior to construction



# Home Layout Update



(Left) The basement entry door with the hallway to the back area.



(Right) Down the hall the Dispatcher's Nook is being developed for operating sessions.



(Left) The downstairs restroom is complete with tub/shower, stool, and sink.

(Right) The office is cleaned, organized, and ready to go.

Cleaning and decorating continue as time permits, still a long way to go before construction starts on the new home layout.







Be sure to visit and like the [Face Book](#)  
page of the [Mid-Continent Region](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1851848998468077>



# Date Book

Most events through July are cancelled due to Covid-19, please check with the host Club before traveling

## August 2020

|  |  |   |                  |
|--|--|---|------------------|
| 16 <sup>th</sup><br>Sat                          | <b>Mid America Train &amp; Toy Show</b><br>KCI Expo Center | <a href="http://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/">http://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/</a> | Kansas City, Mo. |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup><br>Sat & Sun | <b>Free-Mo Play Weekend</b><br>Spring Creek Model Trains   | <a href="https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/">https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/</a>     | Deshler, NE.     |

## September 2020

|  |  |   |             |
|--|--|---|-------------|
| 26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup><br>Sat & Sun | <b>26<sup>th</sup> Annual Wichita Model Train Show</b><br>Cessna Activity Center | <a href="http://www.wichitatomytrainmuseum.org/">http://www.wichitatomytrainmuseum.org/</a> | Wichita, KS |
|--|--|---|-------------|

## Thousands of negatives still need



## your positive support.

So do the thousands of plans, photos, and slides from our Kalmbach Memorial Library that we're working to digitize so that members can access them from their own computer. The good news is that the scanning is well underway. The better news is that our image library is even larger than we thought!

Which is why we still need your help. The more funds we receive, the more images we can make available.

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**Make a contribution that will make a difference for decades.**  
Visit [www.nmra.org/diamondclub](http://www.nmra.org/diamondclub) or call HQ at 423-892-2846 to contribute.







On the back cover:

A different set of crossing gates recently installed on the WKR layout. These are also 3-D printed, painted, and detailed. This scene was upgraded with the proper road markings, stop sign for the crossroad in back, crossing gates, and electrical box.

## The **Main Line**

Publisher & Editor: Robert A. Simmons

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