

# Trails, Rails, & Tales



January-February 2025

Volume 11 • Number 1

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

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

Hoping you had a Happy Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever holiday you might celebrate and wishing you a good New Year.

Our Train Show is right around the corner. If you are able to help, thank you.

Don't forget the Reason for the Season for your particular faith.

Thank You.

– Phil

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY CHARLIE MONCKTON

*Editor's note: Unfortunately, as this newsletter is being put together, Charlie is in the hospital with pneumonia and unable to write his column. I'm sure we all wish him a speedy recovery.*

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

I hope the holidays were marvelous for everyone and that the new year will bring lots of model railroad enjoyment. Although I've said this before, surely I will have rails laid from one end of my proposed railroad all the way to the other this year. Perhaps there will finally be a golden spike ceremony in 2025!

### TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

is published bi-monthly.

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

#### DIRECTOR

Philip Aylward  
[aylward1@cox.net](mailto:aylward1@cox.net)

#### SUPERINTENDENT

Charles Monckton  
[monckton\\_66061@yahoo.com](mailto:monckton_66061@yahoo.com)

#### ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Dean Lippincott  
[DLippP5a@gmail.com](mailto:DLippP5a@gmail.com)

#### PAYMASTER/ TREASURER

Gene Bowers  
[gene9366@icloud.com](mailto:gene9366@icloud.com)

#### CLERK/SECRETARY

Randy Stucky  
[ritastucky3@gmail.com](mailto:ritastucky3@gmail.com)

#### SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATORS

Len Wigton:  
[wigton777@yahoo.com](mailto:wigton777@yahoo.com)  
Ann Wigton:  
[annie767@hotmail.com](mailto:annie767@hotmail.com)

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jim Marlett  
[jmarlett@cox.net](mailto:jmarlett@cox.net)

Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged.

Speaking of golden spikes, in this issue you will see a couple of our members have earned their NMRA Golden Spike Awards. We all should be striving for that, myself included, and working toward NMRA's highest honor, the Master Model Railroader. As far as I know, there has never been an MMR presented to a Chisholm Trail Division Member.

This edition also features Bob Neill's version of John Allen's "Time Saver" layout that he takes to the Model Railroad Month displays that he does. He has given you a few puzzles to work out on it.

Since I suspected everyone was busy with the holidays, I thought I would be brave and try something I've been thinking about – namely an article generated by artificial intelligence. I've read through all their whereases and wherefores and I don't think I've broken any laws or violated any policies. I don't know that the article is an advance over human generated articles, but it is an interesting experiment.

Here at the Marlett household, slow progress is being made on the San Juan Southern's coaling station/tower. It sure has a lot of fiddly little parts! Work has also started on the ash pit thanks to an old piece of brass code 100 track provided by Gary Webb. This is the third of the structures that have to be in place or at least finished to the point that they can be easily popped in place before I move the last three sections out of the shop and into the basement. I keep calling my current projects the last three sections, but that isn't strictly true. I will still need to lay rails from the current end of track to these new sections and attach a classification yard to one of them. And there will be staging yards, but those should be comparatively easy. I'll turn

79 years old on New Year's Day. I hope I can get this thing at least running before I turn 80. I can sincerely tell you that when I started the San Juan Southern in my twenties in an apartment in Colorado Springs, I would never have believed that I would still be trying to get it finished in my late 70's.

– Jim



*The coaling tower as it sits now. One bucket needs to be painted, then the dump mechanism, the lift cable system, the loft house at the top, the coal pits, the chute on the front side, and a whole bunch of ladders and platforms.*



## CHARLIE MONCKTON & DEAN LIPPINCOTT EARN GOLDEN SPIKE AWARDS



The Golden Spike Award is considered by many to be the first step in the NMRA Achievement Recognition Program. Those in the modular layout group can earn it with work on their modules. Congratulations to Charlie & Dean!



## JIM MARLETT PRESENTED WITH LA ROE AWARD



It is a little embarrassing to announce that I, your editor, was presented with the John D. LaRoe Memorial Award this year. I am very appreciative of this honor, though I can think of others who might have been just as deserving if not more so. It's probably best if I just quote from the plaque, "In Recognition of Longtime Membership, Outstanding and Dedicated Service of the Chisholm Trail Division."

# CAN YOU DRIVE A TRAIN?

BY BOB NEILL

My portable display layout is loosely based on the Time Saver, but stretched longer to play with trains. The structures are simple kits, that have taken a beating. I threw it together from scrap wood and left over track in the mid 1980's for a county fair. It has been modified several times and still survived; even had the bridges added for more track space.

The photos show that you have a short train with a switch engine, a flat car with a narrow gauge tank engine, a Heinz 57 pickle car, a blue box car, and a caboose. There are Kadee couplers and three (3) magnets hidden under the track. The magnets are indicated by the orange paint on the ties. (Some people have suggested I install a dozen more magnets.) The magnets are near the turnouts, one by the large bridge, one by the switch tower, and one by the loading dock. The toggle switch gives you the choice of direction or off.

With your train approaching the city from the large bridge side, can you replace the red box car, parked near the coal bins, with the blue box car in your train and leave the blue box car where the red box car was parked? Can you do it in less than ten moves?

If that is too easy, can you replace the box car in your train with the white box car that is parked on the other side of the loading dock? Yes, the workers will need the flat car/gondola back at the dock to finish their days work, with the box car from your train parked where the white box car was. Can that be done in 15 or less moves?

For more interest can you replace the flat car with the tank engine with the flat car with the military tanks, in less than 25 moves?

Oh yes, I almost forgot. When a train goes down the mainline the railroad does not want anything behind the caboose or in front of the engine.

– Bob



*The layout "on stage" in the library with the large bridge that extends the main line.*

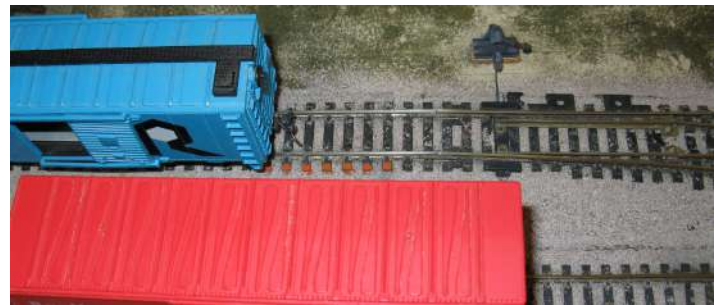




*The smaller bridge that extends the mainline on the other end of the layout.*



*The manual ground throws for the switches and the simple forward, reverse, and center off switch for the throttle.*



*One of the under-track uncoupling magnets marked with orange paint on one end of the ties.*



*The layout from the front with literature promoting the hobby.*

# AN EXPERIMENT WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

BY OPENAI'S CHATGPT AND JIM MARLETT

*I have been curious about whether one of the free artificial intelligence programs could write an article that was at all useable. I decided to give it a whirl in this edition of Trails, Rails, & Tales and try not to break any laws or rules in the process. I put "Midland Valley Railroad in Wichita, KS" into ChatGPT's "try it first" section, clicked the arrow, and held on while it compiled the article. I moved the results to a Microsoft Word document, did a little bit of tweaking and the article is what you see below. I hope you enjoy what it had to say with very little input from me, and I hope we aren't lying too much.*

## The Midland Valley Railroad in Wichita, Kansas

The Midland Valley Railroad was a significant railway in Kansas, with historical ties to Wichita, but it was not initially based solely in the city itself. Here's an overview:

### Historical Background:

The Midland Valley Railroad (MV) was originally chartered in the late 19th century. (Editor's note: it was incorporated in 1903. I'm not sure what the difference is between chartering and incorporating, but I didn't change the article on this point.) It was created to connect the oil-rich regions of eastern Oklahoma with the larger transportation hubs of Kansas. The railroad played a crucial role in linking important cities in Kansas, Oklahoma, and beyond, facilitating both the movement of goods and the burgeoning oil industry at the time.

The Midland Valley Railroad was initially part of a larger system of regional and national railroad networks. It went through various ownerships and mergers over time, eventually becoming part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad by the mid-20th century, and later, part of Union Pacific after a series of mergers in the 1980s.

### Wichita, Kansas:

In Wichita, the Midland Valley Railroad was part of the broader railway landscape that helped the city grow as a regional transportation hub. While Wichita was more famously served by larger railroads like the Atchison, Topeka and

Santa Fe Railway and the Rock Island, the Midland Valley Railroad was still a key player in linking Wichita to eastern parts of the country and to the oil-producing regions in Oklahoma.

Wichita itself has a long history tied to railroads due to its strategic location at the intersection of rail lines, which helped foster its industrial growth, especially in the early 20th century. Railroads in Wichita supported industries like agriculture, oil, and manufacturing.

### Key Facts:

- **Dates of Operation:** The Midland Valley Railroad was operational from its founding in the late 19th century (Editor's note: reached Tulsa in 1904, Wichita in 1911) until it was absorbed by Missouri Pacific in the mid-20th century.
- **Route:** It connected Kansas and Oklahoma, with significant ties to Wichita and areas further south.
- **Merger and Successors:** The Midland Valley eventually became part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which itself merged into the Union Pacific in the 1980s.

While the Midland Valley Railroad no longer exists as an independent entity, its legacy lives on in the broader development of rail infrastructure in the region, especially through its integration into the modern Union Pacific network.

– ChatGPT and Jim



# MODULAR NEWS

## BY TERRY ROSS

The last outing for the Chisholm Trail Modular Group was the Wichita Toy Train Show back on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. We had a really good show, with 12 members present to run trains. We were able to set up a 36' x 20' rectangular layout with a "U" shaped center. We have grown in size so much that we were not able to set up all of the member's modulares that were available. We have reserved enough space for the entire 44' x 20' w/"U" shape in the center for the McPherson Show January

11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and hope to have the same layout for the NMRA/Wichita Train show Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. Please come out and see the layout. We have some new modules, and some newly scened modules for you to see. We have recently installed a behind the scenes, 20' staging track that is 3 tracks wide, and a run-thru yard. We will use it to put trains on and off the tracks so we can have continuously running trains for the Public to see. We really enjoy getting to





visit with a lot of prospective modelers and some experienced modelers every time we set up the layout. As always, we have fun watching little kids and teenagers enjoy the layout and get to run the trains. Again, we would like to see everyone come out, bring a friend, your favorite train or rolling stock to run, and most of all just join in the “Fun of Model Railroading.” See you at the next show!!

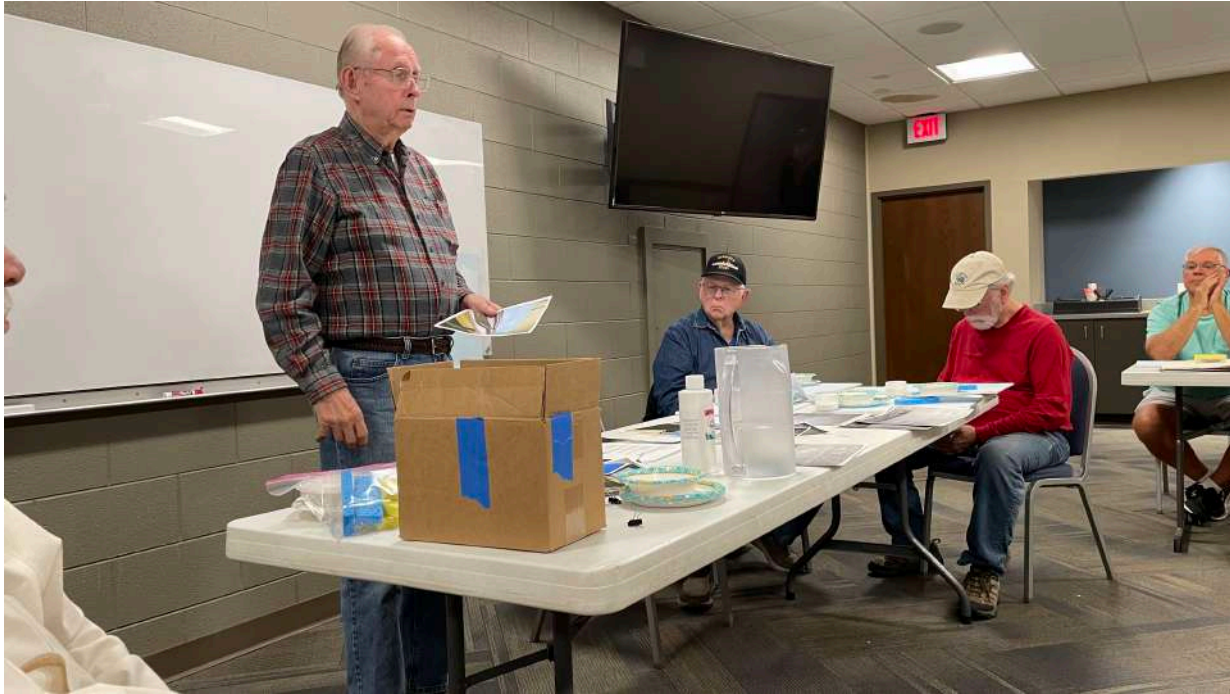
– Terry





## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

In November, Gene Bowers presented a clinic on cloud making. We got to keep the paint and other supplies as well as our clouds painted on 1/4" wallboard.





December was our annual holiday covered dish dinner and white elephant gift exchange.



*Above: Charlie Monckton presiding over a bunch of overstuffed model railroaders and their guests.*



*Left: Who knew Santa Claus was a model railroader? Well, I guess most of the Division members knew. Dan Hagenbuch is unwrapping his gift.*

*Below: The gift pile before it was winnowed down to nothing. Some people got just the right gift and others got a white elephant for next year, but I think we all had a great time.*



# 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://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org>

**Wichita Area Model Railroaders Luncheon.** Every second Thursday at 11:30AM. Spear's Restaurant and Pie Shop, 4323 W Maple, Wichita, KS

**Third Thursday Model Railroaders's Lunch.** Every third Thursday 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**

#### **JANUARY 2025**

**January 4-5 – Great Train Show.** KCI Expo Center, 11730 NW Ambassador Dr, Kansas City, MO. Saturday 9AM-6PM, Sunday 10AM-5PM. <https://www.greattrainshow.com/>

**January 11-12 – Model Train Show Convention & Expo.** McPherson Community Building, 122 E Marlin St, McPherson, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM. <https://allevents.in/mcpherson/4th-annual-mcpherson-model-train-convention-and-expo/200026863551426>

#### **FEBRUARY 2025**

**February 1-2 – 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>

**February 2 – Mid-American Train & Toy Show.** KCI Expo Center, 11730 NW Ambassador Dr, Kansas City, MO. Saturday 9AM-2PM. <https://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/>

**February 14-15 – Heartland Toy Train Show.** Payne County Expo Center, 4518 Expo Circle East, Stillwater, OK. Friday “Early Bird” 5PM-7PM, Saturday 9AM-3PM. <https://www.ttos-soonerdiv.org/events.html>

**February 15-16 – Lincoln Area Railway Historical Society 2025 Train Show.** Sandhills Global Event Center, 4100 N 84th St, Lincoln, NE. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://larhs.org/annual-show/>

#### **MARCH 2025**

**March 1-2 – Lawrence Model Railroad Club 23rd Annual Train Show & Swap Meet.** Crown Toyota, 3400 S Iowa St, Lawrence, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 9AM-3PM <http://www.lawrencemodelrailroadclub.org/TrainShow.html>



**March 22-23 – Nebraska-Iowa Railroaders  
2025 Train & Toy Show.** Papillion Landing  
Field House, 1022 W. Lincoln St., Papillion, NE.  
Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM.  
<https://nebraskaiowarailroaders.com/>

## **JULY 2025**

**July 14-19 – 90th NMRA National  
Convention, Station No VI.** Sheraton Hotel,  
21111 Haggerty Rd, Novi, MI. [https://  
nmra2025.com/](https://nmra2025.com/)

## **SEPTEMBER 2025**

**September 3-6 – 45th National Narrow Gauge  
Convention.** Gateway Convention Center, 1  
Gateway Dr, Collinsville, IL. [https://  
www.45thnngc.com/](https://www.45thnngc.com/)

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

Jim Marlett  
[jmarlett@cox.net](mailto:jmarlett@cox.net)