

Trails, Rails, & Tales



November-December
2024

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

The Best Train Show in Wichita is coming in February. We have been encouraging folks to enter something in the contest whether you expect to win a prize or not. So please think about entering something in one or more of the categories. It helps the show. Judging is by popular vote among the show attendees, but NMRA judging will be available also. Here is a list of categories: Steam Locomotives, Diesel Locomotives, Passenger Cars, Freight Cars, Cabooses, Non-revenue Cars, Tongue-in-Cheek (humor), Structures, Dioramas, Modules, Photos-Prototypes, Photos-Models, Youth, and Favorite Train.

– Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

It is a very busy time to be a model railroader and to be rail fanning. I hope you have been able to take advantage. I want to share a few of the activities I was able to enjoy, starting with the Scale Trains presentation August 29 in Augusta, Kansas. It was a very informative meeting. They described in detail how Scale Trains was started and many of the challenges they encountered, as well as why they manufacture their trains in China. At the October 1 Chisholm Trail Division monthly meeting we were blessed with a presentation from Bronna Leach. She is an artist and art therapist from El Dorado, Kansas. She specializes in mini dioramas. She wowed us with her skills and knowledge. I am including several pictures from her presentation farther into the newsletter. Then of course I must mention Union Pacific's Big Boy 4014. My family made an early

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are strongly encouraged.

morning trip to Salina KS on October 19th to wake up 4014 and watch it head to Russell. It was interesting to watch the support staff bring her to life and get her moving. The staff and crew are always patient and willing to answer questions, and my grandchildren had a lot of questions for them. We drove ahead to Brookville to watch the engine go by under full steam only to have a signal stop it a quarter of a mile down the track before it reached us. Such is rail fanning. There are pictures from that trip, once again, farther into

the newsletter. I encourage you to watch Jay Leno's You Tube Video "Big Boy Locomotive-World's Largest and Most Powerful Steam Train." The same crew was on 4014 leaving Salina that Jay rode with.

Please join us for the next Chisholm trail Division meeting November 5 at Olivet Baptist Church, 3440 W 13th St. N. The meeting starts at 7 pm.

– Charlie

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

November is National Model Railroad Month. I hope everyone gets a chance to promote our hobby. I think the modular layout has done wonders in that direction and has certainly been noticed by more than a few folks. Bob Neill has been setting up his switching layout in various locations each November. I'm sure he will be looking for help again this year.

In this issue is an article by Bob on his dad's and uncle's model railroading and his own beginnings. If you weren't able to chase the

Union Pacific "Big Boy," Charlie Monckton and Gary Webb provided some photos of their adventures. There's also a report on the National Narrow Gauge Convention, which is my favorite convention.

Down in my basement, things have been pretty quiet. I'm continuing to build the Campbell kit of the "Durango" coaling tower. Or is it Chama? I'm finding out it is neither. Rather, it is a close approximation at best. Oh well. My railroad is freelance. Who cares?

– Jim



CONGRATULATIONS TO TERRY ROSS



Terry was the recipient of this year's Larry R. Long Memorial Award. This award is given by the Mid-Continent Region of NMRA in recognition of dedicated service as the Region's "Division Volunteer of the Year." I'm sure we all recognize Terry's work with the modular group and as chief organizer of the third Thursday lunches. Here Terry receives the award from Mid-Continent Region president Larry Diehl.

Can You Drive A Train?

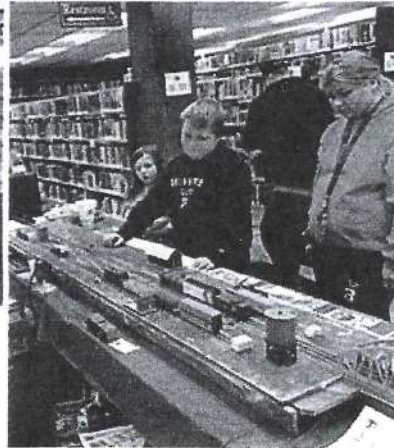
November is National Model RR Month!

Come see our display & test your operating skills:

Hesston Library: NOV. 4-8, 2024

Newton Library: NOV. 27, 2024

Moundridge Library: NOV. 18-22, 2024



*We will be switching cars like a real
train – for all age kids, even gray hair.*

Every year, Bob Neill takes his switching layout to various libraries not too distant from his home and every year he can use some help showing it off. If you would like to help, let Bob know at grandone49@yahoo.com.

BIG BOY IN KANSAS

PHOTOS BY GARY WEBB

Did you catch “Big Boy” on its way through Kansas? Gary Webb and Charlie Monckton did and they shared a few pictures with us less fortunate.



BIG BOY IN KANSAS

PHOTOS BY CHARLIE MONCKTON



MODULAR NEWS

BY TERRY ROSS

What a great time we all had at the last Bel Aire Recreation Center weekend. We were open to the public on Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. We had about 300 visitors coming in from Saturday morning soccer and flag football, and some came over because they had seen us there before and came back for more fun. We spoke to several individuals interested in model railroading and several artists that love the medium we are using for our "artistic work." We always give them cards

with our NMRA meeting information. You never know when you are talking to a future NMRA member.

Sunday was a fun day for us and any family members or other friends who just dropped by to run trains, talk about trains, and future plans for their model railroad. We ran all day and had several guests run their trains. Ken's son and his family dropped by early and stayed about an hour



as Ken's son is a Model Train buff as well. He's a regular guest at our events. They were a group of five when they came, but they only left with four. Ryan (I'm guessing to be about 10) informed his Mom that he was staying with Grandpa the rest of the day, even if it was going to be another 6 or 7 hours. As you can see in the pictures attached, he was running Grandpa's trains most of the day. He was also a lot of help to Grandpa when we packed up Sunday evening. Several other family members came by and had some fun with us as well. As always, we had several NMRA guests come by and run. It's always great to see you guys come to visit the layout. We enjoy the conversation, the suggestions, and expertise you offer on certain challenges.

That about sums up our Bel Aire weekend of fun. If you missed Bel Aire, you had another chance as our next show was right around the corner, right here in Wichita. Here's where it was:

The Wichita Toy Train Show at the Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita KS. The Show Dates were Saturday, October 26th, 9 AM to 5 PM, and Saturday, October 27th, 10 AM to 3 PM. Hope you all got to see it there.

-Terry



ROCKY MOUNTAIN & NORTH EASTERN RR

BY BOB NEILL



A passenger train in the yard of the resurrected Rocky Mountain and North Eastern Railroad originally built by Bob's father and uncle. Read on for more of this fascinating model railroad family history.

After finishing their duties during WW 2 and returning home, something caused my father and uncle to create their own model railroad world. Their duties in the Army Air Corps caused them to be flying in unfriendly skies. My uncle was a radar operator in B-29s over the Pacific, and my dad was crew chief in B-17s over Europe.

The railroad they created became the Rocky Mountain and North Eastern. They even had special decals with the railroad name. Its name is based on their initials, RM, Rocky Mountain, (Robert Mayew), and NE, North Eastern, (Neill, Earl). Since railroad names relate to where they are operating, I can only compare to St Louis & San Francisco RR that never reached San Francisco. What part of the rocky mountains, and where in the north east would their railroad have operated in, I have no idea.

I do not recall much of the details about the layout, because we moved from Delaware to the St. Louis area, St Charles, MO, before I started elementary school at the age of five. I do remember there being a small section that was scened and a lot of track running around the basement. I also remember being allowed to place my two special cars on a section of track on the layout when it was not occupied. I probably had a stool to stand on, track was at eye level.

While living in St Charles, besides starting elementary school (in a one room school house) in 1951, President Eisenhower started the interstate highway system that ran over our house. This meant another move a little further west with another basement, but this time the railroad was only started with a corner section. Too many other things were happening.

I grew up with a steamer trunk full of locomotives and rolling stock stored under my bed. Many times I was able to open the trunk and see the amazing equipment. There was also the collection of Model Railroader magazines that had wonderful construction articles. During the time before I reached high school, I tried to encourage/challenge rebuilding the railroad. It remained idle, but tempting. I started a few models, but with no place to go, they never were finished.

In the late 1950's, my uncle moved to Texas, and several pieces from the trunk were delivered to his growing family. My interests were distracted to aircraft and other things in high school. After graduating from college, moving to Seattle, being drafted, getting married, moving to Los Angeles, then Texas, I was eventually



entrusted with the trunk about 1986. In the mean time, about 1973, the Mississippi River did its annual thing of overflowing its banks and covered Mom and Dad's home, the train trunk, the magazines, the car, and other things.

At that time I was living in north Texas and my challenge was to find a way to repair and then display those treasures. I have been able to rebuild most of the rolling stock and locomotives. Besides the weathering provided by the Mississippi River, the major effort was replacing the Roundhouse style couplers with Kadee style. Upon finding several people living nearby interested in forming a club to run model trains, even on a modular layout, I became interested in adding to the equipment collection and rebuilding the magazine collection as well as the scenery.



Since I have moved several times, my version of the RM&NE has suffered several changes, and today, I lack space to resurrect the RR. At least with modular layouts, the railroad can still be run. The collection is still growing, but I cannot seem to be able to finish anything. What kind of mountains does the RM&NE pass through? What kind of bridges does it pass over or does it use a ferry system? I do remember the paddle wheel auto ferry, the “Golden Eagle,” that crossed the Mississippi a few miles north of St Louis where the river was about a mile wide.

With all the fun of trying to continue (renew) the railroad, I keep finding little problems. Problems that include making rolling stock that looks like a railroad. Besides box cars, what type of revenue cars should be included,



and how should they be numbered and identified? What shape should the logo take and where can decals be found?

Other problems include the question of adding locomotives to the roster. Surely there is a numbering system for locomotives based on different types. The older steam engines could use two digit numbers, while the newer steam use three digit, based on five or ten number spacing. Diesels would be a different question. And what should be done with maintenance of way cars, like track cleaners?

But despite all the little problems, the fact remains – model railroading is fun! Especially when you are carrying on the family tradition.

–Bob

THE 44TH NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION

BY JIM MARLETT

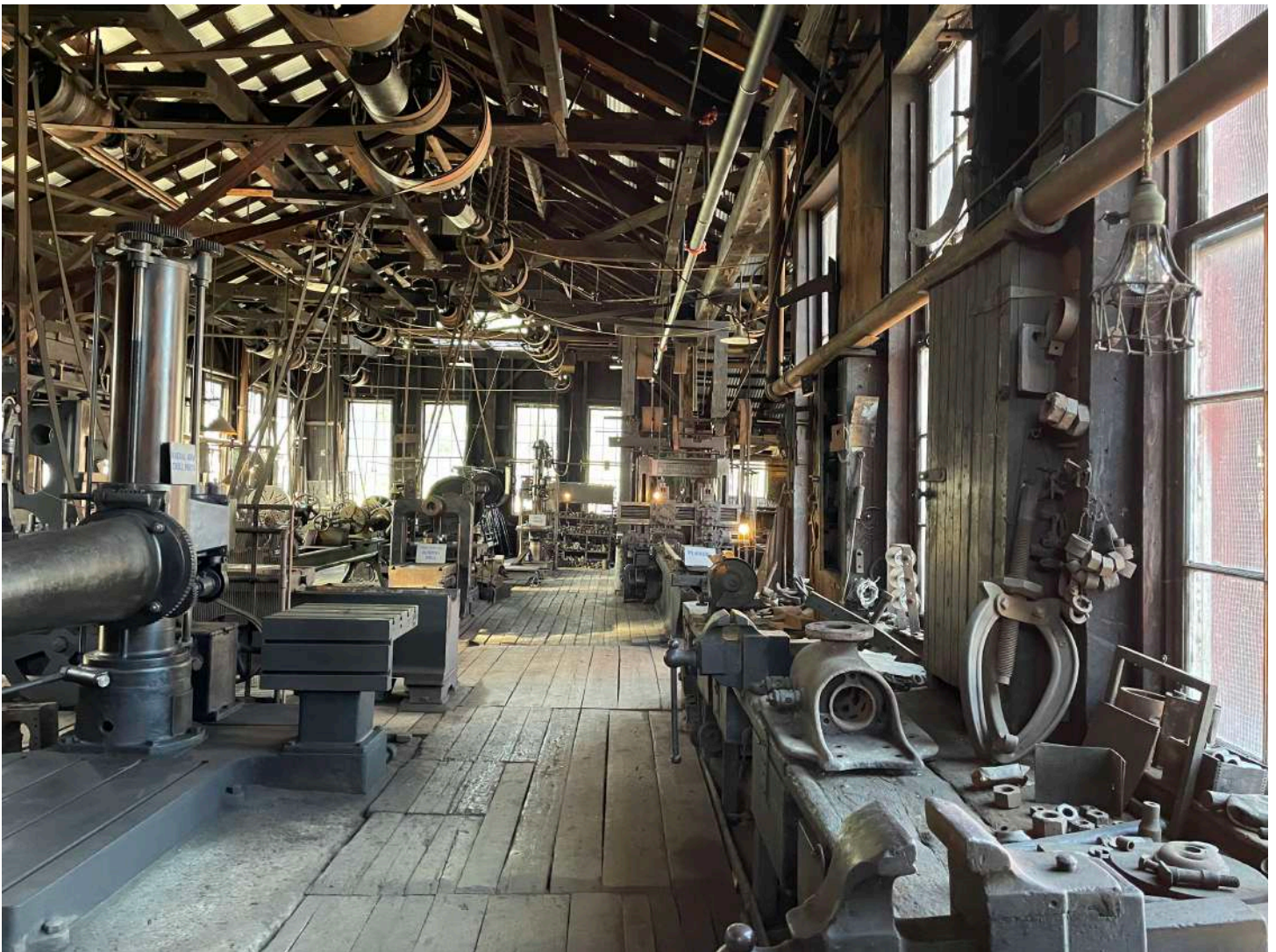
You are probably tired of hearing about National Narrow Gauge Conventions, but I keep going and keep reporting on them. This year it was in Pittsburgh, PA. Following a two day drive out, we took the pre-convention tour of the East Broadtop, one of the most famous eastern narrow gauge railroads and one that has recently been reopened as a tourist line. We're lucky to have this one preserved so much as it ceased operations in the 1950s.

The convention was filled with the usual clinics, contest room, modular layouts, vendor's

hall, and my fave, self guided layout tours. The schedule this year was a shocking divergence from previous years, done to avoid Pittsburgh's rush hour traffic. This upset me at first, but in the end, I was very grateful. What a city to navigate!

Next year's convention will be in St. Louis and Mid-Continent Region of NMRA is trying to piggyback the regional convention on it. If that happens, maybe you will get a chance to experience some of what I find so exciting about the National Narrow Gauge Conventions.

—Jim



The East Broadtop tour featured their vast belt driven machine shop. This is but a fraction of it. The machine shop is just as it was left at abandonment and amazingly, the equipment still works.



It was disappointing, but the only working steam locomotive developed an overheating wheel bearing that couldn't be fixed in time for the convention. The result was that it couldn't pull a train, but it did make short shunts around the yard. This locomotive was rebuilt in their own shops and several others are restoration. We did get to ride behind an EBT narrow gauge diesel.

Besides the one large vendor's hall this year, they also had some vendors in separate rooms all by themselves. I really enjoyed the quiet and apparently so did the vendors as some asked for a repeat next year. Those Kadee spikers in the foreground were mighty tempting.



The regular vendor's hall was nothing to sneeze at. If you couldn't find something to spend your money on, you weren't really trying. This photo shows only a part of it.



There were plenty of modular layouts on display, from very small to large.

This East Broad Top HOn3 modular railroad used signs to show the prototype locations of what the particular module represented.



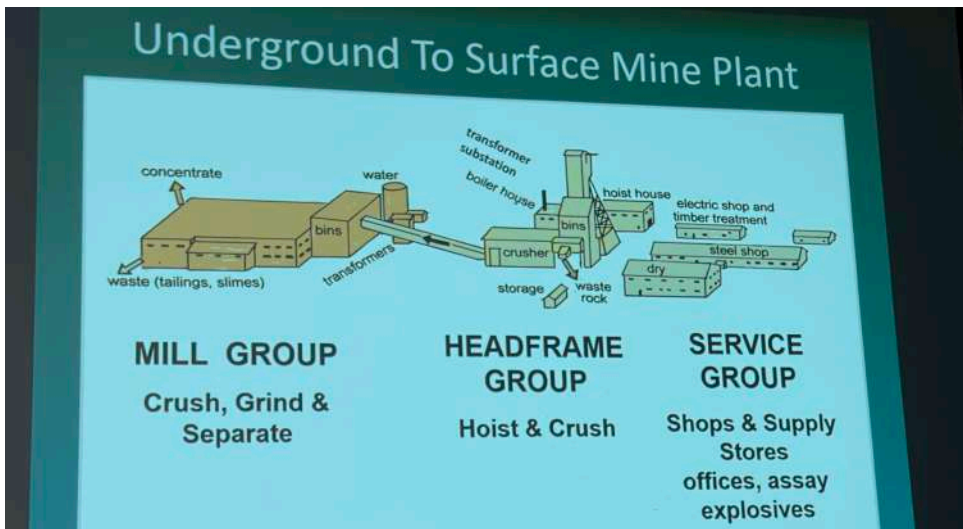
As usual, I picked up lots of clever tricks with the modular layouts. This one used 1/4" phone jacks to throw switch machines, which the operators kept on a lanyard around their neck. The jacks were wired with a dead short. To throw the switch, all they had to do was plug the jack into the correct socket. When the switch was thrown, they pulled it back out. This kept curious visitors from throwing switches unexpectedly.





The contest room had plenty of highly detailed models in about every scale you could think of. Winners are chosen by popular vote, but instead of having a lot of only slightly interested people whose real goal was trying to entertain their kids, as often happens at train shows, the voting is done by fellow modelers. In narrow gauge those tend to be nit-picky rivet counters, so the winners tend to be truly excellent models.

A model that really impressed me was this early steam locomotive. it was on rollers so you could see that all the monkey motion valve gear on top actually worked! Compare its size to the batteries below. This builder has truly mad skills.



The clinics were top notch. One that particularly caught my interest was about how real mines worked through the years.



Dutch modeler Martin Welberg gave two clinics and a workshop on scenery techniques. I attended his clinics on static grass and finishing scenery. His techniques with static grass are amazing. One thing he does is apply the adhesive in splotches and specks with a splayed out round brush so the finished product is in clumps, like grass really grows.

I try not to miss any opportunity to hear Model Railroader Magazine's Tony Koester speak. He attends most National Narrow Gauge Conventions, even though he doesn't model narrow gauge. His photoshopped slide of a Nickel Plate Berkshire on narrow gauge track illustrates the narrow gauge beginnings of many standard gauge railroads, including the mighty Nickel Plate.



Layout tours are my favorite part of any convention. Despite its name, a National Narrow Gauge Convention always features standard gauge layouts as well as narrow gauge. Good ideas can come from any scale or gauge. Bob Prehoda's HO gauge Huntingdon Valley Northern was featured on Trainmaster's TV, but that didn't show his staging yards. The tour did. Patty's mask is because we caught Covid at last year's convention and we were doing all we could to avoid it this year.



The D.A.R.E. Model Railroad Club occupies the second and third floors of an abandoned school house that is now part of a municipal park. There are multiple layouts in various scales and in various stages of completion. Construction and upgrading is ongoing and is performed by students under adult supervision.

Ken Hannawalt's Turtle Creek Railroad is an HO freelance layout featuring heavy industrial switching in 800 square feet. The main line is over 120 feet long and there are three long branch lines. With 19 industrial spurs for switching 900 cars, I have to say, I've never seen so many boxes for car cards and waybills.



I really got a kick out of Alberto Almarza's On30 representation of his native Chile. He modeled some areas we had visited in November of 2023. He also used a sort of bas relief form of painting on the lower part of his background. The details were truly remarkable. Alberto is an associate professor of music at Carnegie Mellon University. Model railroaders truly are everywhere.



The Shade Gap is Brian Budget's freelance connection between the East Broadtop and the Tuscarora Valley Railroads in HO_n3. Here is a TVRR passenger train crossing a country road.

It took a while to get to the McKeesport Model Railroad Club, but it was well worth it. It occupies a former union hall of about 2,200 sq ft and features narrow gauge, standard gauge, mountainous countryside, and detailed city scenes. The steel mill on the right side of this picture was really something. The club was about to celebrate its 75th anniversary.



Vagel Keller's Blacklog & Shade Gap Eastern is a protofreelanced extension of the East Broadtop narrow gauge with some standard gauge Pennsylvania RR. It is set in south-central Pennsylvania in the fall two years before WWII. Maps on the fascia provided "you are here" information. Iron ore, coal and coke to feed a small blast furnace and the steel produced along with lumber provide most of the traffic.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The October Division Program – In one of the most interesting programs of the year, miniatures artist Bronna Leach showed us how to build models from a whole different perspective using unfamiliar materials and techniques.





Charlie Monckton sent some photos of Bronna's work. Everyone, like Dennis Buth here, was eager to see these models up close.



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. 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

NOVEMBER 2024

November 2-3 – Mid-Continent Prototype Modelers Meet. Benton Lions Community Center, Benton, KS, OK. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM <https://bentonrpm.com/>

November 2-3 – Oklahoma City Train Show. The Pavilion at Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, 3212 Wichita Walk, Oklahoma City, OK. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM www.okctrainshow.com

November 17 – Mid America Train & Toy Show. KCI Expo Center, 11728 Ambassador /Dr, Kansas City, MO. Saturday 9AM-2PM. <http://www.midamericatrainandtoyshow.com/>

JANUARY 2025

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 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>

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

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