

# Trails, Rails, & Tales



# NMRA

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The Official Newsletter of the Chisholm Trail Division of the NMRA

## From the Director's Desk

by Rick Coble

This time of the year is sure a busy one. With the temperatures outside this year constantly in the range of the surface of the sun, it's been really hard to get much of my modeling projects done out in the garage. Thank goodness for AC and basements. That really has allowed me to do the time consuming task of weathering and detailing rolling stock. As usual, this season will soon pass. Hopefully all of you are finding ways to be active in the hobby during the seasons and continue to get the most enjoyment out of this summer.

–Rick

## From the Superintendent's Desk

by Charlie Monckton

The only good thing I can think of to say about the recent 100 degree weather is it is a great excuse to stay inside and work on your train layout. Although I do not need an excuse to work on my layout, any day is a good day to work on it. On a recent August day I received a call asking me if I wanted to join in on a ride to the Spring Creek Model Train store in Deshler, Nebraska. Although it was going to be 105 degrees that day, I quickly said yes. I went planning not to spend one penny on anything railroad and just look. That plan worked well until I stepped into the door of the shop. On our way back we took a side trip a few miles Northeast to the train viewing stand at Belvidere, Nebraska. It is on the Union Pacific Marysville Subdivision between Gibbon, Nebraska and Marysville, Kansas. We only stayed about an hour and were treated to three trains passing by on the Double Main. We also were able to watch three grain cars being spotted by a John Deere tractor on the siding at the grain elevator. It was a great way to spend a 105 degree August day. For some reason I did not even notice the temperature. As always I hope you have had lots of great train experiences this summer.

– Charlie

### Trails, Rails, & Tails

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## From the Editor's Desk

by Jim Marlett

This summer has been a busy one for me, but timed so I could get the newsletter out on my self-imposed deadline. It has finally caught up with me. This month I have some conflicts that simply won't allow me the time to work on it later this month. I guess I could put it out really late, but I have vowed not to do that if at all possible.

Despite the busy summer, Patty and I finally had enough time between "must do" things to work in what might be called a vacation. My brother points out that retired people don't take vacations, they take trips. So be it.

This trip was out west to visit a friend who lives in Reno, NV, but we took in four railroad museums along the way. You can read about them in this newsletter.

Also this month, Randy Stucky sent an update on the Moundridge Depot Museum's "Dridge and Flint Hills" layout.

I had the chance to visit Phil Zamzow's in-progress model railroad a few months ago and finally have space to include a short article about it. Phil is not an NMRA member, but many of us know him through the Wichita Area Model Railroaders luncheons and the Third Thursday Lunch Group.

Back in my basement, the good old San Juan Southern narrow gauge has reached a significant milestone – the track is all down except for the staging yards and some late breaking thoughts on the track connecting to one of those staging yards. Fortunately, those changes won't involve having to tear out any existing track. It's sure easier to make changes when the rails are still nothing but lines on paper!

However, a recent change was not so easy. I decided to rearrange the track in the town of Blakely, which I had put down only a few months ago. The decision to tear out and re-lay hand laid track it is not an easy one. It is not like pulling up flex track and a few commercially built switches and moving them around. Despite the agony of making those changes and the time it consumes, I got it all done just before I started working on this newsletter. Despite the pain, it should make operations in that area much, much better. I hope the pictures will give you an idea of what I changed and what I went through to change it. Did I mention it was a pain?

– Jim



*You probably can't see what I was about to change, but this is one of the few "before" pictures I have. I took it as I was arranging switch templates and rulers to see if my vague notion of track realignment had any merit or if I was just pipe dreaming and the changes couldn't or shouldn't be made. Once satisfied I was on the right path, I went to work ripping out the old track. The buildings, by the way, are just stand ins to see if there was room for buildings yet to be built. I've also started making paper cutouts to help arrange buildings. You can see one such cutout behind the refrigerator cars. Guess what that will be.*



1) The first step in track removal is to pull up the rails and spikes that I so carefully put in only months before. Then I soaked the area with a water and alcohol mix.



2) Because the mix doesn't seem to completely dissolve the glue, a little cutting is necessary. I started by using my pocket knife.



3) I found that using my thumbnail worked pretty well for removal after initial cuts were made.



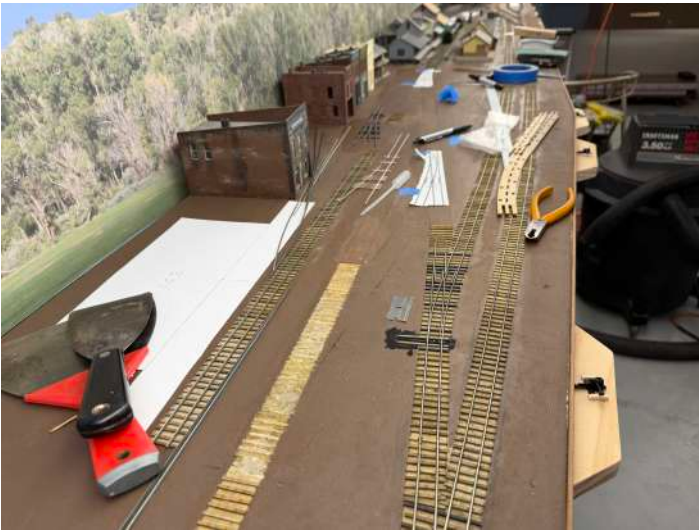
4) What worked best of all was a single edge razor blade. No thumbnail was needed with this technique.



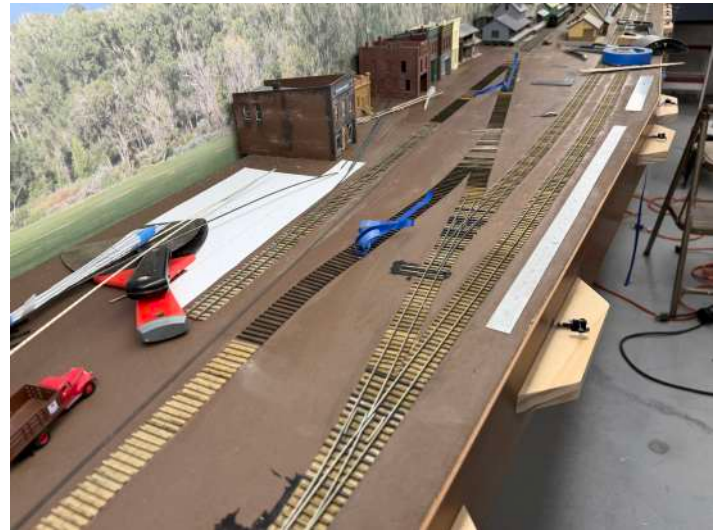
5) A good deal of filling with wood putty and sanding was needed to make it smooth and level again.



6) I decided to paint all my handiwork so I could draw in the new plan and not be too confused by old stuff.



7) Then out came the templates and straight edges again. As accurately as I could, I drew in the tie ends.. I hadn't painted all the revised roadbed in this shot.



8) Once I was satisfied that everything was pretty likely to work, I glued down new ties. I expect I will re-stain the lighter original ties.



9) New rails were spiked down after what seemed like an eternity of prep work. Spiking rails wasn't too quick either.



10) The two new turnout locations no longer lined up with the remote ground throws so I had to move them.



11) Then it was under the benchwork to modify and relocate the turnout throw rods and wire everything up.



12) Finally, I was able to perform the ultimate test of running trains through the new track. It all worked!

# How I Spent My Summer Vacation

By Jim Marlett

Spring and summer have been so busy for Patty and me that it was really hard to get away, but we finally did it!

I know folks are used to us traipsing off to some foreign land, but this time we stayed closer to home. Our reason for going was to visit a friend who had moved to Reno, NV, but you can bet we worked in a lot of other stuff, too.

By a happy accident, our departure timed beautifully with UP's Big Boy in Salina. It was a great start!

We had never seen sequoia trees, so we headed for Calaveras Big Trees State Park in California. We could have seen the abandoned grade of a logging road there had we not taken a wrong turn on a trail. Maybe next time.

We did manage to visit four railroad museums – The Nevada Northern Railway National Historical Landmark, The California State Railroad Museum, The Nevada County Narrow Gauge Museum (which is in California), and The Nevada State Railroad Museum. All of these were different and very much worth our time. Circumstances with our friend prevented us from visiting the Virginia and Truckee Railroad tourist railroad and Hollywood favorite. Again, maybe next time.

I hope to present a program on our trip at a future Chisholm Trail Division meeting, but to pique your curiosity a bit, here are a few photos from each of the places we visited.

– Jim



*Our first stop was Salina, KS, where Big Boy put on quite a show. We missed it coming in due to an eye doctor's appointment and waiting for a subsequent prescription, but coming in is rarely as spectacular as going out. The night before departure, I scouted a position away from the station where I thought the action would be good and not have as many people in the way. It turned out I was right on both counts. Even though it left slowly with hardly a chuff, engineer Ed Dickens left the cylinder cocks open for a long time so there was plenty of steam. The folks on the Division's Facebook Page have already seen this picture, but I know not everyone is on Facebook. Besides, I just plain like it.*



*Ely, NV, is the home of the Nevada Northern, a rustic standard gauge line. We arrived at dusk and were pleasantly surprised to find the whole railroad yard was open and walking around was apparently encouraged. However, the buildings were locked until the museum hours were reached. The museum proper is in the depot.*

*Kennecott copper was the main business of the Nevada Northern and much of the rolling stock and the steeple cab locomotive on display were lettered as such.*



*We came back the next morning when the museum was open and a number of buildings open for touring. There would be steam powered train rides later in the day, but that morning was for those who paid for their "Steam Engineer for a Day" program.*



Our next railroad museum was the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum in Nevada City, CA. I didn't expect much so I was pleasantly surprised. It was small, but very tidy with really nice displays. Train rides were only on certain days and we missed them. However, we did get a wonderful guided tour of the facility.

Our guide insisted that I climb into the cab, put my hand on the throttle, and look down the track so he could take a picture with my cell phone. I think he was a little surprised that I knew which lever actually was the throttle. Patty got the same treatment. This locomotive is #5, the "Tahoe," a true NCNG locomotive restored to steam. It was owned for a time by Universal Studios and has appeared in over 100 movies and television series.



As well as outside displays, there were very nice inside displays as well. These featured the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad as well as the Kidder family who ran the road for much of its life. In fact, Sarah Kidder, after the death of her husband, was elected president by the board of directors, becoming the first woman railroad president in the world and a very successful one at that.



Next was The California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. It is not just an excellent railroad museum, it is an excellent museum of any sort. If you are ever near Sacramento, this is simply a must see museum. The photo is of the only remaining Southern Pacific cab forward locomotive and it rivals Big Boy in impressiveness.

I'd been to the museum before, but I hadn't seen the recently added Magic of Scale Model Railroading exhibit. That was my main interest this time around. I was amazed! A few snapshots cannot do it justice. In the picture on the right are famous model railroads or portions thereof. The clouds on the backdrop actually move.



There is hardly a model railroader of a certain age who doesn't know the name of John Allen, the "Wizard of Monterey." These two control panels were among the things salvaged from his Gorre and Daphetid model railroad after a devastating fire destroyed it shortly after his death. Ignore my reflection in the glass. It left when I did. This model railroading display is much, much larger than I had imagined and a few pictures can't possibly do it justice. I could easily have stayed there all day.



*The last museum we visited was the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City, NV. Again, I was impressed with the quality and quantity of the displays. We were greeted by the friendliest and most helpful ticket sales person I have ever experienced. Possibly he was simply glad to see visitors since I suspect that this jewel is seriously underutilized.*

*This museum specialized in the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, a Hollywood favorite. This may account for the amount of preserved material available. The V&T still lives giving rides in Virginia City, NV, but we weren't able to visit that end of the railroad.*



*I became obsessed with the only operating McKeen motor car in the world. I didn't get a decent photo of the outside of it, but luckily, we were allowed to go inside and I got this shot looking towards the rear of the car. It captures its unusual porthole windows rather nicely. There is a story behind those and its ship's prow front end that have nothing to do with ships, but you can look it up on line or wait for my program at a future Chisholm Trail Division meeting.*

# Modular Group Report

By Terry Ross



The Modular Group took the month of July off and rested up after a very busy May and June. When Thursday August 13th came around, we were ready to go again. We started setting up at the Covenant Presbyterian Church on Thursday as they let us into their spacious room for two days to get set up. It was really nice as we were able to have two seven hour days instead of one 14 hour day. 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. This was 25 Modules and eight 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 had people here from Oklahoma to Michigan. We are really getting some reach out of our NMRA Modular group. I had four groups of friends from my neighborhood, which was nice. I was finally able to show them what I am working on when I spend all that time in my garage. Doris walks at the church with a large group of ladies, and they were all thrilled to find out what she was talking about when she said "he's never around because he is constantly running his trains on their Modular Layout." Despite all the confusion, the ladies were

very impressed and hung around quite a while. Their biggest comments were "I can't believe what they moved in here on Thursday morning turned into this awesome display of trains." Many of the walkers brought their families on Saturday as well. On Sunday morning after the church services we were really busy for about an hour and half to two hours. Then we finished off the day running trains and talking trains. Javen visited with a train to run, but spent most of his time selling some engines and freight cars he is clearing out of his collection. It was like bringing cake and ice cream to a Weight-Watchers meeting. Everything stopped to see what he brought and half of it was gone immediately. Lloyd brought a sleek passenger train to run and ran quite a while. Ken has some of his classic steam engines out, which always get lots of attention running through the layout. Speaking of steam engines, we had a great model of the "Big Boy" 4014 train that just went from Wyoming to the East Coast and back. It included the Big Boy, water tankers, the 1776 diesel, most of the passenger cars, and some covered hoppers to finish it off. It looked great! Thanks Adam! The rest of us just had plain ol' diesels except for Ron who broke out his new "Plymouth" switcher. It was really cool to

watch. It was so small, that when you looked down the long straights all you could see was a headlight. Even up close, the headlight was bright and the 2 - axle engine was tiny.

Our next set-up will be at the Olivet Baptist Church. Set up is on Friday Sept. 18th, and we will be running trains on Saturday and Sunday Sept. 19th and 20th. Saturday will be open to the public, but mostly friends and family from 9 AM to 5 PM. This is a good day to visit as we have lots of time to run and plan out an operation session. Sunday we will begin running after the Sunday services, about 11:15 to 11:30, and will run till 4.

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



# The Dridge and Flint Hills Railroad Company Update

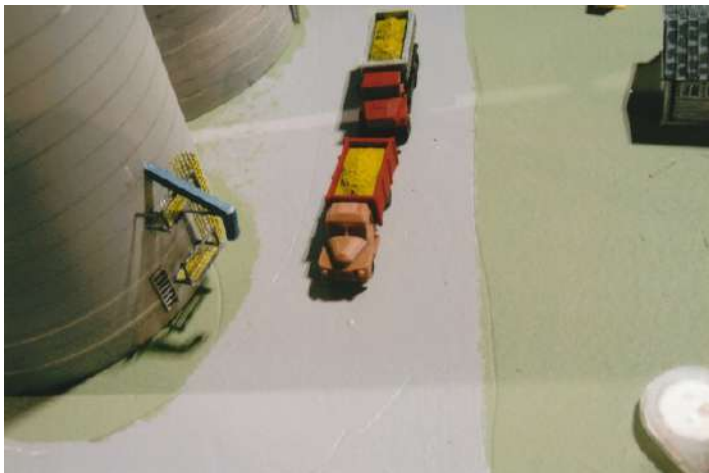
By Randy Stucky



*The Mid-Kansas Co-op Elevator in Moundridge.*



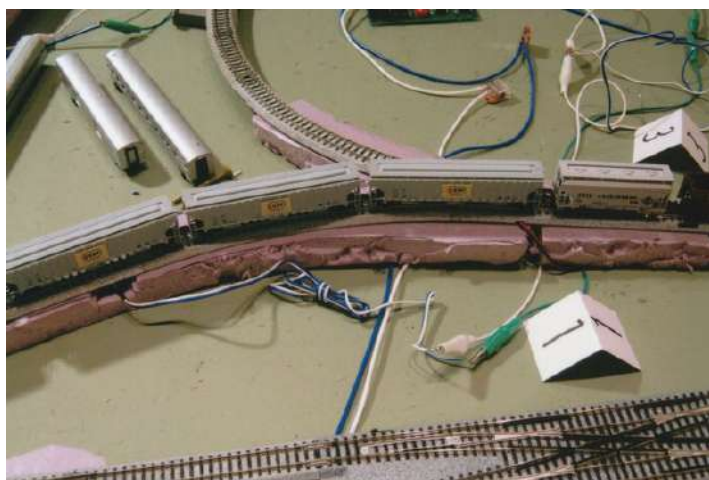
*Part of the Mid-Kansas Co-op.*



*Trucks are arriving with the harvest.*

Work continues on the "Dridge and Flint Hills" layout in Moundridge. Bugs are leaving, walls are being secured, and buildings are being added.

Wiring is still visible, but is working. The museum is open from 9-12 Tuesday mornings. Work is done at that time. If you're interested in visiting the layout, let me know and I'll set things up. Here are some pictures of our progress.



*A string of covered hoppers.*



*The home of Thornton Cole in Moundridge. The house itself is on the east side of the museum. Mr. Cole was one of the founding fathers of Moundridge and this is the first house to be built in what would eventually become the town.*

# A Visit to Phil Zamzow's Layout

By Jim Marlett

Although Phil is not a member of NMRA, he is known to many of us from the WAMRRs Luncheons, the Third Thursday Lunches, and from entering modeling contests at the Wichita Train Show and Swap Meet. I'd often wondered what Phil's layout looked like, and a few months ago I got the chance to visit it. I have to say, he has taken a path less followed. His pike is set in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas in the early 1900's before WWI.



*Shay power is not something everyone chooses for their layout, but if lumber is an important commodity, then shays are right at home.*



*It's a mockup now, but I'll be interested to see this building in its finished form.*



*Paper cutouts make the mountains in the background.*



*Another project in progress, I hope this crane makes its way to a contest room.*



*This background building in shallow relief caught my eye.*



*Phil makes his own operating harp switch stands. They sit on top of a small slide switch, which is moved by the switch stand to route power to the frogs. The building mockup in the upper right corner has an cutaway side facing the aisle.*



*This removable section allows access to the room when trains aren't running.*



*A little bit of scenery is making its appearance. If this future waterfall is any example, it will be pretty nice.*



*Where the removable section latches to the layout, these two brass tubes serve a dual function. They are spring loaded so they pop up to keep trains from rolling off the end of the track when the removable piece is out. When it's in, they form the contacts for power. There is a similar arrangement for both ends.*

# 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. 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

### September 2026

**September 2-5 – National Narrow Gauge Convention.** Double Tree – Bloomington, 7800 Normandale Blvd, Bloomington, MN (Minneapolis/St. Paul area). <https://2026nngc.com/>

**September 11-12 – Ozarks Model Railroad Association Annual Train Show & Swap Meet.** Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, E-Plex East Hall, 3001 North Grant Ave, Springfield, MO. <https://omraspringfield.org/train-show/>

**September 17-19 – First Annual Brass Convention.** Missouri Model Railroad Museum, 312 W Pacific Ave, Independence, MO. <https://showmerails.org/2026-train-shows/2026-brass-train-show/>

**September 19-20 – Spring Creek Model Trains– HO Scale Free-MO Weekend.** Thayer County Event Center, 1302 4th St, Deshler, NE. Saturday 10AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM. <https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/show-schedule/>

**September 26 – Kansas Railfest.** Great Plains Transportation Museum, 700 E Douglas, Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM-4PM. <http://www.ksrailfest.org/>

### October 2026

**October 24-25 – Wichita Toy Train Club 32nd Annual Train Show.** Textron Aviation Employee Club (Cessna Activity Center), 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM. <http://www.wichitatoytrainmuseum.org/club-shows-1.html>

### November 2026

**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/>

### February 2027

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

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

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