

The SCOOP

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The Newsletter for the Knoxville Area Model Railroad Club, Inc.

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Conductor's Comments - Larry Burkholder, President

February at KAMR will be highlighted by the Children's Museum's International Festival on Saturday, the 3rd. The festival runs from 10 am to 4 pm and we are expected to have our club and garden trains running for visitors the whole day. Please try to come and support the operation. Club doors will be open for members by 9 am to allow time for set up and de-bugging. The International Fest is the best event the museum has each year and is very well attended. Besides entertainment from various lands, foods from many cultures will also be available. A good time is always had by all.

Because we will be spending all day Saturday at the club, and it will be Super Bowl Sunday, we are forgoing our regular 1st Sunday meeting on the 4th. This will also give those interested an opportunity to attend the "World's Greatest Hobby" show in Atlanta on Sunday. It's a really big show supported heavily by manufacturers that only visits five cities a year.

We will have the regular museum open house Sunday on the 18th from 1:30 to 4:30.

Everyone continues to be interested in having clinics, so we will try to have one arranged for March and once each quarter after that. If not the 1st Sunday instead of our business meeting, it might be after the open house Sunday around 5 pm. In our on-line poll the next two clinic topics were of equal interest and were "ballasting track" and "operating session set-up".

Although I am sure he will mention it in his column, N Scale Coordinator, Bruce McElhoe, has brought the wee people's layout into the modern world with a new sound-equipped diesel engine. Although it is difficult to hear over all the big sounds coming out of the HO room, it adds a further touch of realism to our hobby. Inspired, I recently installed a sound decoder in my new N-scale Bachmann N&W "J" at home. Terrific! It will be hard to run anything silent after this.

Once again honors go out to our author-in-residence, Phil Brooks, whose Clinch River layout is featured in Kalmbach's latest *2007 Model Railroad Planning* yearbook, great work, Phil!!

To those of you whom this applies - DUES, DUES, DUES! Anyone not paid up by March 1st will be dropped from membership. If you have a temporary problem let me know. It's still only \$25.

HO Division - Alex Cameron

Our next major event is the International Festival at the Children's Museum on February 3 (Saturday), from 10 AM until 4 PM. We will need to have people available to run trains and to talk to visitors and to tell them about our hobby..

Come when you can, bring a train to run, and enjoy the festival. There will be people there by 9:30 to get the layout powered up

Our January schedule worked fairly well, and I propose to continue the same schedule for February. Since the International festival is on the Saturday before our regular first Sunday meeting, I am going to assume that we will not have a Sunday meeting. The next Sunday will be the third Sunday, which is February 18. We will work each Thursday, and on the even Saturdays. If I am reading the calendar correctly, this will mean: International Fest Feb 3. Regular Sunday: Feb 18. Thursdays: Feb 1,8,15,22. Saturdays: Feb 10, 24. Cliff should be back from his cruise by then and may send out e-mails.

We have had the core people showing up fairly regularly, and have made steady progress. We are still finding occasional problems on the main line and have been fixing those as we identify them. We have run quite a few diesels and small steam over the line, but I had reports of problems with large steam, so we are now trying to find and fix the problems that those long rigid wheel bases are having.

The upper (mine) loop is still operating with a shoofly into the east west end of the yard. Our major track laying emphasis has been on the staging yard. All the track has been laid there, switch machines are installed, and a diode matrix installed to control the turnouts (I modified the one that Lew had built for the old staging yard). There are still a few bugs there to work out, but the staging yard is effectively operational. Track has also been laid to what I am calling Upper Seaside and Lower Seaside. These are industrial areas in the curve connecting the Lumberton and Harbor modules.

Richard Atwood has done some work on checking all of the rolling stock for correct wheels, weights and coupler height. He has done a few cars, but many more need to be checked.

Again, although we can run on the main line, and have the possibility of having an operating session on the third Sunday, no decision has been made about that. With the staging yard operation, I will work on getting an operating session planned, and we will just have to wait and see how far I get with that. However, the third Sunday is a run day, so come and run trains.

N-Scale Activities - Bruce McElhoe, N Coordinator -
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Each gathering moves us a bit closer to completing many a varied layout project. One of two track power trunk lines was installed that jumps track power from one of the yard corner modules all the way around to the geezer gate. This is to help with current losses through all of the module connectors. This will also allow the block control using the rotary controls at the yard corner module. This will be an aid for operations when using analog power (DC). Another 60 or so feet of 14-gauge extension wire and the second jumper can be installed. At that time an electrical gap will be installed on the John Deere module end of the geezer gate that will effectively allow full block control of the entire layout. This will divide the entire layout into four separate electrically independent blocks.

At the last gathering, yours truly added some finishing touches to that dam construction project. The marvel of adaptation and construction is officially open now that the name has been posted in the dam parking lot. Through no use of a poll or other effort to gather opinions, this facility is now known as "Clogderup Dam" under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Repossession. As always facilities such as this have inherent dangers. Therefore, the outfall has been appropriately posted with a sign that reads:



The Bagelton Street and Highway Commission is still hard at work with new road installations and safety fencing around the train station and carnival. As always, capital projects such as road construction seems to cause continuous and long term disruptions to local commerce. On the bright side Larry has established a location for the used car dealership just outside the army base gate. ☺

We are hoping that dairy prices will stabilize now that the recently installed milking barn has Holsteins waiting in line. Bob took a little break from the army to add some sprucing to the farm modules by adding some new ground foam and bushes along the backdrop. Discussions were held about how to add a distant electrical tower on the backdrop to compliment the freestanding towers on the module. Nothing decided as of yet but we did pick our professional modeler and author Phil for ideas.



During a recent test of my new PCM E7 engine birthday present I found that even at full throttle the engine would only run at a scale speed of 30-35 mph. All of the sound effects worked but limited speed. At our last gathering I experimented with our power supply. The unit is usually set at an output of 18 volts. I measured the track voltage in the yard and found that at full throttle I only read about 12 volts. This is a pretty significant power loss. As an experiment I changed the power supply setting to 23 volts! I again tested the track at full throttle and read around 16 volts. It seemed pretty good so I placed the engine on the track and now had good speed response. For the open house I left the setting at 23 volts but told anyone that was going to run trains not to use full throttle due to the higher voltage. We experienced no issues with our trains during the entire day. I did notice that the throttles would be a bit warmer even when running a single engine. I will assume this is due to the added wattage being dissipated as heat at the higher setting. At the end of the day I reset the power supply to the original 18 volts. My plan at this time is to install heavier gauge wire up from the power supply and on through the various circuits where ever practical. This should improve our power distribution on the layout.

I will close for now by encouraging all of us to continue utilizing our web site at www.knoxmodelrailroaders.com. Sharing anything about trains (and food) is good!

Large Scale Rails - Jim Schall

The large scale guys continue to play with trains and we have two new members that have joined us in our play. Frank and Bradley come to us with an old (mid fifties) Flyer set that Brad has liberated from his father, so they are in the process of revitalizing the Flyer loop along the wall and they even have their wives in to help scenic the table top layout. It's really going to make the scale guys look bad, we have been at it nearly three years and still don't have one corner completed (and we only have three corners!! There is a lot to be said for ignorance and brash behavior.

Activities Calendar

In an effort to get more of us to use our web site the calendar has been moved to knoxmodelrailroaders.com. This should get more of us to the site and hopefully to participate in the exchange of ideas and info that is found there.

Feb 17, 18, & 19 - Southeast Large Scale Train Show - Perry, GA

Feb 23 & 24 - W. NC Model Railroaders Show - Haywood County. Fair Ground - Exit 24 I-40 near Ashville, NC (a good show with over 100 tables and usually a lot of N scale for sale)

March 10 & 11 - Piedmont Division of SER - Cobb County. Civic Ctr. - Marietta, GA
(a good show with over 200 tables. A number of our members have attended before.)

May 18, 19, & 20 - SER Annual Convention w/show - Cartersville, GA
(nice event with a reasonable show and dozens of home layout tours)