

# The **SCOOP**

**April 2010**

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The newsletter for the Knoxville Area Model Railroad Club, Inc.  
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## **Conductor's Comments - Larry Burkholder, President**

Spring has sprung. Our regular meetings in April are Sunday the 4th and Sunday the 18th. Both start at 1 pm and go until everyone is tired and goes home, usually about 5 pm. There will be a short business meeting on the 4th starting at 4:15 pm.

The morning of Friday, April 23rd, the museum will host their annual "Celebration of the Young Child" event. As usual we have been asked to run the Garden Railroad. About 250 small children in supervised groups will tour the area, spending about ten minutes each. One or two people are needed to help set up the trains and watch that little fingers don't go astray. Let me know if you are available.

Our home, the Children's Museum, is in desperate financial shape. It's not close to shutting down, but immediate cost trimming and fund raising are absolute necessities. Our club has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the museum and I think both parties feel that it is a win-win situation. However, I am worried that in this time of financial need some museum staff and Board members may begin looking at the expenses of supporting our area as something that needs to be reduced. I do not know how much it costs the museum for utilities in the train area, but I know it cannot be a large amount. I think it is in our best interest if the club figures out a way to help offset these expenses. I don't think a dues increase is appropriate, because many of our members hardly come to the museum. Perhaps we can think of a couple fund raising events. Maybe those of us who use the club regularly and are able could pledge something monthly towards the expenses or make a substantial one-time donation. Remember, many clubs have to pay rather large monthly rents for facilities much poorer than we have. Give it some thought and I will attempt to quantify the monthly expense numbers before our April business meeting.

## **HO Division - Alex Cameron**

Here are the dates for April, 2010. Regular club Sunday meeting is on the first Sunday, April 4. The third Sunday, April 18, will be an operating session, starting about 1:30. Saturday work sessions will be on April 10 and April 24, starting about 9:30. Thursday work sessions will be on April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 starting at 9:30. The attendance on Thursdays has improved and the attendance on the work Saturdays has decreased.

We had great attendance again for the March operating session, with enough people to run nearly all of the trains, most with 2 man crews. I hope that everyone who attended had a good time. It was one of the smoothest operating sessions that we have had. I have a beginning operating scheme for the narrow gauge and ran that for the first time. I need a better way to uncouple narrow gauge cars because the skewer that we use for the standard gauge doesn't work as well. We have added more head end cars to the passenger operation and so that is now a little more complicated.

The work on the narrow gauge track on the mountain proceeds in fits and starts. The engine terminal work creeps along. The problems with the lift bridge and the approach track to it have still not been resolved. (Yes, I know. Exactly the same words as last month.) The location detector board for the mountain is up and working. All of the detectors on the display panels are working. The only ones that don't work are the narrow gauge ones, and we haven't build the display panel for those as of yet.

General maintenance still consumes a lot of the available track gang time. There were several problems with the narrow gauge wiring that have been corrected.

I noticed that operation (slow speed operations with many direction reversals) is much more likely to reveal track/car/locomotive problems than just running a train at a constant speed. This was observed as I tried to operate the narrow gauge. There are a number of problems with track and cars that need to be addressed. Some of those are turnout related, and I plan to build a FastTracks NG turnout to see if it is better than the commercial turnouts that we have been using.

Curt and I are still operating on Tuesday AM, and frequently have been having others join us.

### **N/Z-Scale Activities - Bruce McElhoe, N Coordinator**

At our last gathering we successfully hauled off a p-up load of no longer needed stuff. Our spring housekeeping adventure provided us an opportunity to do a bit of organizing. Now if I could just remember where that widget was put! We also modified some existing shelving that allows more under the yard storage. It may not look much different on the surface but pull the drapes back and you'll find more space and less junk.

The new portable show layout is coming along. Most of the track and switches have been installed. Wiring is yet to come but Phil hooked up some temporary power leads and ran an engine around a bit. The next major item will be to install all of the electrical connections to both the switches and the track. After all the wiring is installed the layout will be relocated to the museum for 'decorating'. Hopefully this will be in a couple of weeks. At which time those that want to pitch in need to step forward. We do have some of the building kits in house that need assembling. We also need a few hundred trees.

Yours truly snuck in on a Saturday and installed our recently acquired Kato Unitrack scissors crossing. This unit is now located on the geezer gate connecting the #2 and #3 mains. Greg Wroblickly and I had a great time playing chicken running trains in opposite directions on the same track. We did manage to have one corn field meeting (near the main yard). One thing it did require is we had to pay attention to our trains as well as the location of the other. This required planning passes on sidings as well as scissor crossing right of way issues. It was loads of fun!

April gatherings will start focusing on required rolling stock needed for operations. This will require removing many unneeded rolling stock (especially in the yard) to allow switching operations. We also need to establish standards for the remaining rolling stock that will assure optimal operations. No dragging trip pins, sagging couplers, or square wheels.

### **Z-Scale:**

Stay tuned. The Z report will be added upon receipt.

### **Large Scale Rails - Brad Tutt**

Warmer weather is finally here and is eating into our model railroading time.

On Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> a CMOR Garden Layout work session was a great success with 6 members attending. A special thanks to Mark Fuhrman, Tom Knight, Jim Schall, Peter Acly, John Bridgforth and Brad Tutt for their support of the Children's Museum.

Mark brought his landscaping tripod and major leveling of track was performed on all loops. Tom Knight purchased a 1x6x12 Trex board and placed under a straight section as a test for long-term roadbed support. The boys drove 2" stakes under the board to ensure level over time as a test section to minimize future maintenance.

We also removed several inches of hard-packed dirt in front of the gate fence to ease opening that is washing out from under the layout over time. Additional attention will be required to stabilize the washout.

Ken and Mark have both tried to repair the waterfall underground pump without any success. It looks like a new pump will be required and funds will be requested from the KAMR General Fund to continue support of CMOR. This will require about \$150 for the pump but now is the best time, considering the wooden tunnel is falling apart and needs replaced also. The pump replacement is a MAJOR project since the entire center of the layout and most of the large rocks must be removed. We feel the best option will be to use PVC for support of a new tunnel for long-term success. His will provide years of stability for the waterfall.

Since the garden layout is outside and the dirt is always moving, maintenance is a must for reliable operations. Thanks to all who help support the KAMR rent

and utility bills. The hours we spend with the Christmas operations and our maintenance of the Lloyd layout and Garden layouts, help with painting, ceiling tile replacement, Gala support and other CMOR events is what pays our bills. Please watch for future KAMR (no just Large Scale Division) work sessions in the garden and support your club.

**KAMRI Web Site – Bruce McElhoe**, Web Site Moderator -  
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There are a number of fun things happening this month. Note the following train items coming up:

- The Great Train Expo in Nashville, TN on April 10 and 11.
- **The Great Train Expo in Knoxville, TN on April 17 and 18.**
- The Little River Railroad Museum in Townsend is having their annual spring meeting and open house on April 17th.
- The Mid-South Live Steamers are having their spring fling at the end of the month starting April 28 through May 1 in Columbia, TN.

Be sure to check the website calendar for additional information and links. As always please remember that our web site forum is to communicate ideas, share information, sell, buy, trade, and any other events train related.

Don't forget! Our web site address is: [www.knoxmodelrailroaders.com](http://www.knoxmodelrailroaders.com).