

# The **SCOOP**

**February 2012**

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The newsletter for the Knoxville Area Model Railroad Club, Inc.  
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## **KAMRI February Club Calendar:**

- **Feb 5 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday):** Regular club gathering.
- **Feb 18 (Saturday):** CMOR International Festival - 10am till 4pm.
- **Feb 19 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday):** club open house followed by the regular business meeting starting about 4:15.

## **Conductor's Comments -Bruce McElhoe, President**

During our January club meeting we covered a great number of items that the club Board and Officers will be addressing over the upcoming year. Probably one of the most important topics was the subject of improving communications. This one item really was inclusive of a number of areas that were raised and discussed. Note the following topics discussed with follow up information:

- All were e-mailed detailed instructions on how to program our web site forum to send you an automated notification when there is a new posting. For example, by subscribing to the 'news and announcements' forum you would receive an e-mail when the Scoop is posted. This will help with ensuring all will be aware of timely information.
- Another item discussed were interpretations of our club Bylaws. All those attending the meeting were in agreement that the Board should review our current Bylaws and consider possible updates that would provide more clarity on some sections. Areas that members suggested updating were election protocols, motion submittals, and non-election related voting.
- Due to periodic security issues, we are also looking at club access key possession and determine what criteria should be met before any member is issued a key.

I want to thank all of you that were in attendance at our January meeting as it did run long. We did have a very good open discussion of ideas for improving our club. Your Board and Officers will be working these issues and provide you with updates as necessary.

## **CMOR International Festival**

The Children's Museum will host their annual International Festival on Saturday, February 18, 2012 from 10 to 4. We will need to have our club open and all division trains running for visitors. As always we need volunteers to come in and help. Please let your division coordinator of your intent and

schedule. This is a fun event with a wide variety of foods, crafts, and non-stop entertainment. For more information check our club web site for the full festival schedule.

**Security Note:** Last one out is responsible for ensuring all is shut off, unplugged, pulled shut, closed down, curtains closed, and locked tight...

### **HO Division – Alex Cameron**

Here are the dates for February, 2012. The first Sunday is February 5, and we will have our regular operating session that day. Operation starts at 1:30. The third Sunday, February 19 will be a run session, since it is still the regular open house for CMOR. We will start about 1:00. There will be Saturday work sessions on February 11 and 25. Thursday work sessions will be on February 2, 9, 16, and 23 starting at 9:30. Nothing special for February 29.

The first Sunday in January was also New Year's Day, and we had an operating session with four dedicated operators, who obviously would rather play with trains than watch football. Or maybe they watched football when they got home. It was a quiet, successful session.

We have a very good turnout of HO division members for the third Sunday open house and club business meeting. We saw some members who we had not seen in a long time. We also had quite a few museum visitors.

Work session attendance has been better again in January. We have had our usual maintenance items. We tried to determine why a Pullman keeps derailing at one particular place, and fixed some track and the car, but not sure if the problem is solved or not.

We have several track replacement projects on the list, and started on one of those in January. We are replacing two of the turnouts in the lead to the mine tipple. The old ones were power routing ones and the replacements are Fasttrack ones. We hope that will cure the shorting that occurs when long strings of hoppers are pushed up that grade.

Still haven't tried the paint spray booth.

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

Remember to bring locomotives and controllers for the first Sunday operating session, and for the third Sunday run session.

### **N/Z-Scale Activities – Larry Burkholder, N Coordinator –**

Its operations time in N-scale land. Cars are chosen, waybills are prepared, trains are designated, and a couple trial runs have been made. The intent is to have two Yardmasters and four Engineers operating at one time. We hope to

have begun on January's fifth Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join us on non-open house Sundays for operating sessions starting about 1:30 or 2 pm. We also welcome any constructive criticism about our procedures after you've run.

We decided to put the new interchange yard module on hold until we see how much it is needed. There are four stub sidings at the east end of the main yard that have been designated for interchanges to North, South, East, and West destinations. One of the shortcomings noted in preparing the layout for operations was the need for a crossover in the East End Industrial Area by McElhoe Milling to allow a run-around track. That was nicely installed by Jim Grossen and ballasted by Loren Kneeland.

To be able to operate you should have at least one DCC equipped diesel engine and a DigTrax UT4-R throttle. Give your diesel's ID information to Loren and he will make up an engine card to use when you take out a train. If you don't have an engine or throttle you can temporarily borrow one from another member, but it is expected that you obtain these for yourself as soon as you can if you are serious about operating with us. Of course, other non-N scale members are welcome to join us for operations and not have to provide an N scale locomotive. We're using diesels because we are operating on a "turn", or out-and-back basis and have no facilities to turn an engine at the end of a run. It would look silly to be backing a steam engine for the equivalent of dozens of miles back to the yard.

Speaking of N Scale Division expectations - we have club shirts for sale (long and short sleeves) and it is expected that everyone who can afford one buy one. We have public events all the time and we should be putting our best club image forward at these. The wearing of a club shirt is desired. We also have club hats, but those are optional since we operate indoors.

I am happy to report that as of this writing 70% of the N scale group has paid their 2012 dues. I encourage the five remaining members to get their dues in asap. That goes for the whole club, of course. The sooner we get our dues paid and know how much money we have the sooner distributions can be made to the divisions. By this time we are all short of money.

Being Superintendent of the NMRA Smoky Mountain Division I'd like to put in a plug for our up-coming 2012 SER Convention in Gatlinburg June 1 -3. We will be presenting about 28 clinics, have a prototype tour of the Dollywood engine handling facilities, a banquet, a company store, and distinguished MR guests, Allen McClelland and Lou Sassi giving two clinics each. There are a number of non-rail spouse/children events planned also, so bring the family along. Full registration is \$65 for MR's and \$35 for non-rail. A one-day registration without the banquet is \$20. You don't have to be a NMRA member to attend, but there is a \$10 extra charge for non-NMRA attendees. For that same \$10 you could join NMRA for six months thru their Rail Pass program, which I encourage anyone interested to do. Contact me if you want more information or go to [www.ser-nmra.org](http://www.ser-nmra.org).

## **Large Scale Rails - Lance McCold**

The division's Lionel Type V transformer finally made it out of the shop and on to the layout. The O-gauge layout team is working on figuring out blocking and experimenting with sound deadening materials for roadbed.

The S-scale group has begun cutting track and ties for the #5 switches they will build for the S-scale switching layout. Construction will get into full swing in February.

On January 25th, the LS Division met at Squeekville to see the new animations Brian had added. We also enjoyed some good soup and cornbread prepared by his better half.

The division has also started experimenting with meeting at different times so that members who can't come Wednesday nights will be able to participate. The first non-Wednesday meeting was Saturday the 28th.

## **KAMRI Web Site - Bruce McElhoe, Site Moderator - hmcelhoe@aol.com**

I encourage all members to be registered on our web site. Although you can read all that is posted as well as download attachments such as the Scoop, you cannot receive posting notices via your e-mail account unless you are registered and have subscribed to one or all of the forums on our site. If you were registered but don't recall your password, send an e-mail to our site administrator (Billy) using the e-mail address on our web site. I don't have authorization for registration privileges but if you want I will forward your issues with site access.

## **Just for Fun:**

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line.

Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way that they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years.

This was all arranged by "Richard", who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the east. It was a huge crate of pocket watches No one ever came to claim them.

So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit.

That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches.

Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods.

Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago -- and it's still there.

IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station.

It all started with a telegraph operator:

Richard Sears and his partner Alvah Roebuck!

Sears - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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