

News Release

Central Arkansas Model Railroad Club (CAMRC)

TO: Our Friends in the Media

FM: Mike H. Mottler, President, CAMRC

Phone: 501-327-8747

e-mail: mottlerm@conwaycorp.net

Date of Release: 4-18-2014

Date of Event: 6-14-2014

Club Website: www.artrains.org

Tip to news photographers and videographers: Toy trains in action are great visuals!

Train Club Will Celebrate Father's Day with a Tribute to Generations of Scouts

(Conway) Sharing family time and enjoying intergenerational fun with model trains at a Train Open House event in Conway scheduled on the day before Father's Day may be better than receiving a necktie!

The Central Arkansas Model Railroad Club (CAMRC) will offer a memory-making event that will celebrate generations of families involved in all the programs of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Dads and granddads who were former scouts and today's scouts are invited to attend and enjoy hands-on fun with vintage and modern era electric trains.

This salute to the scouting program will include current Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorer Scouts as well as "alumni scouts" of dads and grandfathers. The free event will be held on Saturday, June 14, the day before Father's Day, from 9 to 3 at the McGee Center in west Conway. Donations will be gratefully accepted to help keep the trains running.

Scouts who appear in uniform and participate in a 10-point model railroad quiz will be eligible to receive a collectible Lionel® BSA Train Set provided by the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA). The quiz will be based on items in view on the train layouts – like a scavenger hunt for clues leading to the answers. All 100% correct quizzes will be gathered and the winning entry will be drawn by an Eagle Scout who will present the train set that day to the scout and his parents.

Local Scoutmaster Johnny Davidson will coordinate participation in this activity to all scouts from age 7 to 21 throughout the Quapaw Council in the central AR area. "I'm also a train hobbyist," Scoutmaster Davidson said, "and I plan to offer a training course to scouts interested in earning the BSA Merit Badge in Railroading during the upcoming BSA summer camp."

During the event, scouts and their families may also enroll in a modular railroad building project directed by CAMRC and nationally coordinated by the LCCA. Through active involvement with the project, scouts can meet one of the requirements for the BSA Merit Badge in Railroading.

“We hope at least 12 dad/lad teams of scouts will volunteer to build four corners and eight straight sections with guidance from CAMRC members, some of whom are also LCCA members and former scouts,” said Mike Mottler of Conway, President of the club.

Trains will be running on several layouts, and visitors can operate the trains with hand-held controllers. Classic operating accessories such as a log dump car, log loader, and sawmill will be ready for action, even a model Nuclear Power Station that accepts mock “nuclear fuel” and discharges “spent fuel” that glows in the dark.

Dad and granddads may bring their vintage pre-1970 Lionel, Marx, and American Flyer trains to the event. CAMRC members will provide free appraisals of current market value based on price guides widely accepted as standards for the hobby. Some vintage trains are valuable collectibles depending on rarity and condition. In addition, free assessments of older Lionel trains in need of repair will be provided by Frank Douglas, a certified Lionel repair technician. “Parts are available for most vintage Lionel trains, and they can be restored to like-new operating condition,” Douglas said.

The club’s recently refurbished O-gauge modular layout will be shown with several new Lionel trains scheduled for operation. New modules include a military missile base that launches mock missiles, an industrial district, and a downtown area with an operating Diner, Gas Station, and Fire Station. Using a wireless controller, youngsters can be a “whistleblower” for a train and sound the horn, ring the bell, and make the trains “talk” with digitized conversations between an imagined onboard engineer and a remote dispatcher.

Most young children know and love the railroad-based stories about Thomas and his Friends. Two HO-scale model train layouts based on the story characters Thomas, Percy, James, Emily, and Gordon will be available to kids. A new layout designed and built by Melvin Hightower of Greenbrier will include an operating model of Tidmouth Sheds, the roundhouse and accompanying turntable which is the “home” of Thomas and his friends who work on the Isle of Sodor. Youngsters who demonstrate proficiency as a locomotive operator will receive a Junior Engineer certificate as a memento of the occasion.

Another activity at this event will be the Thomas Toy Train Rug Race Contest. O-gauge Thomas trains made by Lionel will be available to contestants who participate as a family team in one of three age-related and skill-related categories. Contestants will run the trains along the rails of layouts placed on the floor in a race against the clock. Prizes will be presented to winners and runners-up of the preliminary round, and they will be qualified to enter the championship round that afternoon. The winner of the championship round will receive a Lionel train set.

Every CAMRC Train Open House event offers free hobby-related door prizes that are well suited for kids and families interested in the hobby. CAMRC Publicist Tom Dettmann of Conway said, “We invite train hobbyists and wannabees to visit, ‘talk trains,’ and join the club to enhance their enjoyment of what we consider the world’s greatest hobby.” For more information about CAMRC activities, visit its website at www.artrains.org.

--- # # # ---

Standard Descriptor of CAMRC

The Central Arkansas Model Railroad Club was formed in the early 1990s and has maintained a supportive presence for the model train hobby in Conway through a dedicated group of train hobbyists. The club fosters public awareness of railroad history, railroad safety, and model railroading in its many forms. Community projects sponsored by the club in the past include:

- * Presenting an HO layout for public enjoyment at Montebanq Place in downtown Conway
- * Assisting in design and installation of the HO-scale layout at the Faulkner County Museum
- * Operating an O-gauge modular layout during the Conway Festival of Light, 2006-08
- * Refurbishing the 24-inch gauge “park train” on the grounds of the Conway Human Development Center for operation as an accessible recreational resource for the residents
- * Sponsoring Train Open House events at the McGee Center
- * Serving as operating engineers during the annual Christmas holiday event “All Aboard: Lionels at Laman Library” in North Little Rock, AR.