



THE FIRST STATE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, INC. NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2016

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of The First State Model Railroad Club, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 7:30 P.M. at Jarrell Station at 1282 McKee Road, in Dover, DE.

Chesapeake Division to Host Arduino Microprocessor Clinic

On Saturday, February 27, 2016, Kurt Thompson (former Chesapeake Division Superintendent) will be hosting a 3 to 4-hour hands-on clinic on Arduino programming and model railroading applications. The clinic will cover the basics of programming an Arduino microprocessor and connecting it to a couple of rapid prototyping circuits.

When you leave the clinic, you will have programmed a couple of sketches (Arduino speak for program) and have tested them. We'll talk about various input and output devices and how to interface them with the Arduino. Some of these will include 5V relays to operate Tortoise switch machines and other devices. You will also leave with your own Arduino Uno.

You won't go away able to program an entire model railroad, but we'll discuss various options and ideas. As Kurt said in his previous presentation, Arduinos are here to be the little men of the railroad handling simple and repetitive tasks (like manning your towers).

Before you come to the clinic, you'll want to go to the Arduino website and download the latest Arduino IDE (1.6.5 is the one I have downloaded). The website is www.arduino.cc. You will need to bring along your laptop to the clinic as well. Also bring along your ideas, questions, and thoughts, and we'll look over various projects.

The cost for the clinic is \$10.00/person to cover the cost of the Arduino Uno and the prototyping board and gizmos. We are accepting participation fees through the end of January. Early sign up is appreciated. Since we have the large conference room, we can host up to about 40 members. Please sign up early so we can get the necessary number of Arduinos ordered and delivered.

The clinic will be held at the Severna Park branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library. The doors open at 9 AM and we'll get started about 9:30 once everyone is set up and powered up. The library does have Wi-Fi if we need to download anything from the website or the Internet.

We have the room until 4:45 PM so around 12 or so we'll break for lunch and head over to one of the local restaurants for lunch. In the past, several of us enjoyed Squisto's for pasta and salads.

Please contact Kurt Thompson (kurtrain@verizon.net) or Tom Casey (pastsuper.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com) to register.

Henry Kramer

Keep Alive Circuit for LED Lights

Recently, I noticed that many members (including myself) run cars that have lights in them. Due to power interruptions caused by dirty track the lights in these cars sporadically flash on and off. I recently came across a circuit that will fix this problem. Basically, you will need to add a resistor, a diode as well as a capacitor.

Note: If the capacitor is a polarized electrolytic capacitor (probably it is), it will have a small "+" sign on the can, identifying one of the two leads. If it is not polarized (for example, a ceramic disk capacitor), it probably does not have a large enough capacitance value to help you. Also, the voltage rating of the capacitor is important, and it should be marked (in tiny letters) on the capacitor.

If you are running on DC power, the diode will protect your capacitor when the track voltage is reversed (and the LED will not operate in that case). If you are running DC and you want the light to operate even when the car is running in reverse, a more elaborate circuit will be needed.

If you are running DCC, the diode will turn the AC DCC voltage waveform into positive-only pulses, which will properly charge the capacitor (regardless of train direction). Finally, although I have not tried it, by replacing the resistor and LED with a standard light bulb this circuit should still work and give you a consistent supply of power. To compensate for the increase in power draw, you also may have to increase the size of the diode to get it to work properly.

Henry Kramer Henry.fsmrrc@gmail.com

Our Updated Website

After many months of research I have finally updated the club's website. The new official club website's address is now: www.fsmrrc.org. The old address of www.fsmrrc.com has been pointed to this new address and will continue to work. I would like to thank John Murphy for his guidance in making this change possible.

When you review the updated website you will see that I used the same basic format that Ed Mace developed for the old website. Using this format I have been able to add several new features. Among the new features is an archive of our club's newsletters and a listing of "interesting links". The "interesting links" page has web addresses for other clubs, associations, publications and shops that our membership may find of use.

I am asking all members to review our website and provide feedback on what I can do to improve it. Several members have already sent me suggestions (for example: adding a "members only" page) and with your help we can improve the website and make it useful to all.

Henry Kramer Henry.fsmrrc@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 9-10, 2015 – Delmarva Model Railroad Club's 30th Annual Holiday Open House. 103-E State Street, Delmar, DE. Saturday: 11am – 4pm. Sunday: Noon – 4pm. Free parking and admission. Layouts in Z Scale, N Scale modular, N Scale, HO Scale, S Scale, O Gauge, Standard Gauge, and G Scale. White Elephant table, Refreshments, and Train Videos.

January 16, 2016 – The Brick Train Show. Brick Elks Lodge #2151, 2491 Hooper Avenue, Brick NJ. 9am – 4pm. Admission: \$ 6.00, children under 10, Free. Children and adult door prizes, operating layouts, fine refreshments served from show opening until close, test track to operate that new purchase, train doctor. **ALSO open March 6.**

January 23-24, 2016 – Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show. York Expo Center - Utz Arena, 334 Carlisle Ave, York, PA. 10am-4pm. Free parking. Admission: \$9.00, kids 11 and under are admitted free and do NOT need a ticket.

January 30-31, 2016 – Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show. The Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, MA. Saturday: 9am – 5pm, Sunday: 10am – 5pm. Admission: Adults: \$14.00 per day, Children 15 and under: FREE Accompanied by an adult. Eastern States parking: \$5.00 per day.

February 6-7, 2016 – Great Scale Model Train Show. Maryland State Fair 2200 York Rd., Timonium, MD. Saturday: 9am-5pm, Sunday: 10am – 4pm. Admission: Saturday: \$9.00, good for both days, Sunday: \$8.00, kids under 15, FREE when accompanied by a paid adult.

February 7, 2016 – The Toms River Train & Toy Show. Elks Lodge 1875, 600 Washington Street, Toms River, NJ. 9am – 2pm. Admission: \$5.00, children Under 10 FREE.

February 20-21, 2016 – Greenberg’s Great Train & Toy Show. Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison Street, Wilmington, DE. 10am-4pm. Free Parking. Admission: \$7.00, kids 11 and under are admitted free and do NOT need a ticket.

February 27-28, 2016 – Allentown Train Meet Spring Thaw™ Show. Allentown Fairgrounds, Agricultural Hall (Agri-Plex), 302 North 17th Street, Allentown, PA. Admission: \$8.00, kids 12 and under are FREE!

March 6, 2016 – Jersey Central Chapter of the NRHS (JCRHS) Train Show at Mother Seton High School. Valley Road at the Clark traffic circle, Exit 135 on the Garden State Parkway, Clark, NJ. Admission: \$5.00 for adults, kids under 12 FREE, family maximum \$10.00. Operating train layouts including one that the kids can actually run, railroad movies, a collection of model circus train equipment. Door prizes every hour with the Grand Prize an HO scale model train set. Parking is FREE.

March 12-13, 2016 – Greenberg’s Great Train & Toy Show. New Jersey Expo Center, 97 Sunfield Avenue, Edison, NJ. 10am-4pm. Free parking. Admission: \$9.00, kids 11 and under are admitted free and do NOT need a ticket.

March 25-26, 2016 – East Coast Large Scale Train Show. York Expo Center - Utz Arena, 334 Carlisle Ave, York, PA. Friday: 9am – 6pm, Saturday: 9am – 4pm. Admission: Two-day Adult ticket: \$18.00, children under 12 FREE, One-day Adult Ticket: \$10.00, children under 12 FREE. **NEWSFLASH:** Due to popular requests, we are adding O GAUGE TRAINS to the Large Scale List. We are letting O Gauge dealers buy space at this open-to-the-public show.

Do you have something you would like to share with the members of FSMRRC? If so, please submit them to stockslager@gmail.com by the end of each month.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!