

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 1, Issue 11

January 1, 2006

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The Word From the Prez

NEW YEAR OFFERS ASMR MANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES

It is amazing that 2006 is upon us already. With a new year comes changes. Some opportunities may have been lost, but new ones are coming about. This is true for life in general, and for us as a model railroad club. We have lost some members and we have passed up occasions for enjoying and sharing the hobby. With this new year, however, we have the possibility of gaining new members, and the opportunity to share our wonderful hobby with our community and friends. For example, Abilene is celebrating its 125th anniversary during 2006, and the *Reporter-News* has asked us to help share some of the railroad history of Abilene in written form, in pictures and with our models.

We all hope 2006 may bless us with a larger and better location, especially better heating and cooling. Abilene has numerous empty locations and we have numerous modelers in town and surrounding areas that may be interested in returning to the club. Others don't even know we exist. We need to keep ourselves visually in front of the public. We need to think about setting up some kind of model railroad display that can tie in with, and help celebrate the 125th anniversary. Most of all, we need to show the public how much fun model railroading is. Many of you may remember when *Model Railroader* magazine had on its cover the slogan "Model Railroading Is Fun". Lets make 2006 the year that we make model railroading fun for Abilene and the Big Country, as well as ourselves. I want to work with you to make that happen.

Your President, Ken Riediger

Club Layout Yard Update #9

No changes to report for this update, but it's worth a reminder that the yard is about 70 percent finished and is very usable for switching and other operations activities. There's no reason why, as long as the weather is pleasant, we shouldn't be using and enjoying the new yard as it is.

ASMR Meeting Notes

There will be a business meeting on January 7, but it will not start until 11 a.m., due to the president's participation in the Boy Scout Railroading merit badge class that morning.

Club's Layout at State School "Christmas Lane" is a Big Hit

Once again, ASMR's portable 8 X 12-foot modular 0-gauge layout was a star attraction at the Abilene State School's indoor/outdoor Christmas display. It ran every evening from Dec. 6 through Dec. 24, and was located in "Shirley's Cinema". Many of the large number of visitors expressed great pleasure at seeing the layout as they came through. Pressing the "red button" to make the train go was very popular with children and adults alike. Special thanks to Jim Gibson, Ken Riediger, Cody Hilliard, Steve England and Mel Herwick, who manned the display on various nights, and Mike Ziegenhagen and former member Rich Dunlap, who helped Gibson with set-up and tear-down of the display. Also, thanks to Hal Griffin, whose ceramic Christmas buildings and scenery made a winning combo with Gibson's 0-gauge trains.



A billboard advertisement for "Christmas Lane" drive-thru holiday displays. The top of the billboard has a black banner with the text "DRIVE-THRU HOLIDAY DISPLAYS" in white. Below this, the words "Christmas Lane" are written in a large, stylized, cursive font. To the left of the text is a black and white photograph of a steam locomotive. A small white box with black text "Model Railroad & Village Exhibit" is overlaid on the bottom left of the locomotive photo. To the right of the locomotive, the word "FREE" is written inside a white circle. Below "Christmas Lane", the dates "DEC 6-24" are printed in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the billboard, a black banner contains the text "ABILENE STATE SCHOOL • 2501 MAPLE" in white.

Above is a copy of the billboard which appeared around Abilene in several locations during the Christmas Season. It features a vintage Lionel 6-8-6 steam turbine locomotive.

ASMR Team to Teach Scouts Railroad Merit Badge Course

Ken Riediger and Jim Gibson have volunteered to teach Saturday sessions on January 7 & 21, aimed at qualifying a group of Boy Scouts for their

"Railroading" merit badge. Topics include real railroad history, passenger and freight operations and safety, and model railroading activities and skills. Classes will each run from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

The Editor Speaks

Model Railroad Outreach Can be Valuable and Fun

One of the activities that has great potential for promoting the hobby of model railroading in our community is public displays of our trains. We have had limited success on our own with open houses, but when we can "piggyback" on an established and well-publicized event like the Abilene State School's annual "Christmas Lane", our chances for gaining exposure to a much larger audience go up dramatically. Either kind of project requires time and effort from club members, but the "bang for the buck" factor has proven to be far greater when we were part of major community events like Railfest, Christmas Lights, Artwalk, Celebrate Abilene, etc. And, as any of the ASMR members who manned the State School train layout display this year will attest, there's a lot of personal reward when people see what your club has put together and express their admiration and appreciation to you. Model railroading can be a lot of fun for an individual, but enjoyment of the hobby is definitely increased many times over when it is shared with others. There's nothing to compare with the contagious excitement of little kids who are seeing model trains for the first time, or adults who fondly recall and share childhood memories of their own trains when they see yours in action. If you don't take the opportunity to participate in this kind of club activity when it takes place, you are missing out on a whole other way to enjoy the hobby. JG

Model RR Meets & Events

Jan. 7 – "Wintertime Train Show", Waco
Jan. 7 – World's Greatest Hobby on Tour, Houston
Jan. 13-14 – 21st Dallas Area Train Show, Plano
Jan. 28 – 30th Annual San Antonio Model RR
Assn. Jamboree

Pres. Riediger Hears From New Honorary Member "Down Under"

After receiving his ASMR Honorary Membership package, which included info on the club, layout photos, and a personal letter from Pres. Ken

Riediger, Mike Dunn wrote Ken an e-mail. Ken thought it was worth sharing with everybody in ASMR, so here it is:

Dear Ken:

Many thanks for your letter of December 3. I feel very privileged to be made an Honorary Member of the Abilene Model Railroaders Society. Your layout looks magnificent in the photographs and truly inspirational. I will certainly enjoy reading your newsletters; it is always interesting to learn what modelers are doing in other countries. At our last house in the UK, I was lucky enough to have a 14ft x 7 ft railway room and had been constructing a Great Western Railway layout for about four years. This was set in the 1950s/1960s, so still very much in the steam era; and with "modelers license" ignored the fact that the GWR (as a company) disappeared with nationalization of the railways in 1948 and became the Western Region of British Railways! This was progressing quite well with most trackwork and wiring completed, together with some scenery and buildings. Far from finished, but then is a layout ever finished!

Relocation to Australia meant packing the whole lot into crates for shipment. At the moment it remains in crates while I prepare a new railway room at the rear of the large shed/workshop we have here. It will be GWR again, but with some improvements etc., and hopefully learning from previous mistakes! For the moment I am scratch-building some railway buildings to keep my hand in, and going to swap meets and shows. The big question now is whether to go for DCC?

Anyway, I will keep you up to date with my progress, and many thanks again to you and your society for the Honorary Membership. With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Kind regards,

Mike Dunn