

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

## **The Word From the Prez**

### **Winter Is a Great Time For Doing Indoor Train Projects**

Well, 2010 is off and running. It may be cold but we have picked up some new members. This is a good time to stay inside and get some modeling done, 'cause there's no grass to cut and it's too cold outside and do anything else most days. What projects have you been working on? If you are like me, you have projects needing to get started, others waiting for you to get back to them, and still others waiting for you to finish them. What is holding us up? Using myself as an example, *time* is the biggest factor. Working full-time and then some, too many irons in the fire, family demands, your home or car needing attention, etc.; all kinds of things consume time and keep us from getting to our projects.

I may simply have too many projects! Sometimes I am waiting on research for a project before I start or continue on it. This could be a locomotive, car or structure I need a measurement or photo or a detail for. I may need info on what it looked like for the time I'm modeling. I just added two buildings to my layout. I purchased the first one off Ebay, and the second one I put together using DPM parts. With details I added, it makes a nice background building. Now I'm working on a large grain elevator so my trains will have one more reason to be there working. I hope you are enjoying your time indoors this winter as much as I am.

***Your President, Ken Riediger***

## **ASMR Meeting Notes**

The January 9 business meeting was opened at 10:12 a.m. by President Ken Riediger. Seven members were present or arrived after the meeting started.

Minutes of the Dec. 5 meeting were read by Sec'y. Cody Hilliard and approved. Treas. Ken England reported total club assets as of Dec. 1 were \$3600.96, and his report was approved. Ken R. started the meeting by inviting everyone to an operating session on his layout on Jan. 23, at 1:30 p.m. Ken E. announced that the Plano train show will be Jan. 16, and suggested that those interested in going meet at RE/MAX at 7a.m.

Jim Gibson was not present, so his update on the city presentation was tabled until next meeting. Ken E. had no update on the proposed train show, but he reported that several members were late on membership dues.

Cody said he has made a big update on the club website and asked members to check it out and let him

know what they think. He also asked members to send him pictures they have of club activities so he can post them on the website.

Ken R. reported that Richard Sykes generously donated a new Digitrax command station and duplex throttle to the club.

Members discussed some of the electrical problems that are happening on the layout. Cody and Ken R. believe that the new command station could solve several of these problems. Cody said he would try to find time soon to install the new system and troubleshoot some of the other problems.

Ken R. reported that Chris Cummings donated several HO-scale locos and cars to the club. Kayla Leach from the public Library asked if our club would set up a layout for a one day event on June 22. Since the setup was only for a couple hours, members decided to only bring the Thomas Train layout instead of the big modular display layout.

Ken E. brought up the fact that the club layout has several empty spots that need to be adopted. Members discussed the locations and what might be done with them, but nobody volunteered right away to take over an area. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10:52 a.m. by Pres. Riediger. Next meeting is set for February 6.

## **Boy Scout RR Merit Badge Class Participants Very Enthusiastic**



*Above: Ken Riediger explains different kinds of railroad cars to four Boy Scouts attending the railroading merit badge class on the ACU campus.*

*Photo by Jim Gibson*

***Note: Story follows on next page.***

### **Scout Merit Badge Class article, continued**

Sometimes students seem interested in what they are being taught, and sometimes they don't. This year's quartet of young scouts attending the railroading merit badge class team taught by Ken Riediger and Jim Gibson were easily the most animated and eager participants of any the ASMR duo have worked with in several years of presenting this program, according to Gibson. It's part of the annual Texas Trails Council scouting organization's "Merit Badge College" event held in January (this year on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at ACU). "For Ken and me, teaching the class has been fun and a great way to help promote the hobby," said Gibson, "and it has even brought some new members into ASMR."

### **Report on Ken R's Latest Ops Session**



L to R Above: Ken Riediger looks on while Keith Savage and Cody Hilliard operate trains on Ken's home layout. Photo by Jim Gibson

The January operating session on the KRBNRR was held Jan. 23. We had four former operators and one new one, and three guests also dropped by. The trains all ran well, but there are still problems with the software, or maybe I should say problems from me not knowing how to use it. I will continue to work with it and improve the sessions. Operators are still getting used to where locations, sidings, etc. are on the layout, but this should improve with time and experience. I am working on a timetable for each operator to carry which I believe will help. It will also help new or guest operators to figure out where things are more easily. Things may have been a little slow, but we still had fun. Till next time...

**KR**

## **ASMR Quartet Attends Annual Plano Train Show**

Traveling in Ken England's SUV, Ken, Jim Frankenfeld, Jeffrey Cowen and Lyn Thomson left RE/MAX at 7:15 a.m. on Jan. 16, headed for the annual Plano Train Show. Arriving at the show at 10:30 a.m., they shopped around and picked up some "bargains", and admired several layouts which were on display. Ken said that he also "talked with some of the vendors about

a possible Abilene Train Show". After that, the group went to Discount Model Trains for additional serious train shopping, and bought more stuff. They arrived back at RE/MAX at about 8:00 p.m.

### **The Editor Speaks**

## **A Tale of Two Train Clubs**

I am always on the lookout for information on how other train clubs have become successful, especially with regard to obtaining permanent homes for their layouts. Recently two very impressive stories came to my attention. The first one was from former member Rich Dunlap, who recently made a trip to Colorado, where he visited the "Greeley Freight Station Museum" (GFSM). According to a Dec. 2008 article in *Model Railroader*, the museum consists of a 9,500 square foot building that houses over a thousand artifacts, including a restored 1919 C&S caboose, and an outstanding 5,500 square-foot HO-scale railroad. The museum, which opened on Memorial Day, 2009, is the brainchild of a retired newspaper owner and publisher from Greeley, David Trussell, who (according to one source) funded most or all of the facility himself. It is run as a 501(c)(3) a non-profit corporation, and is even "flush" enough to allow other non-profits in Greeley to help out on certain days and keep the money they collect from admissions for their own organizations! This is what I would call the "Sugar Daddy" approach to funding and running a model train club, and it's what I would like to do if I ever became independently wealthy.

I read the second success story in the March, 2010 issue of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine. It's about the Gadsden-Pacific Division Toy Train Operating Museum in Tucson, Arizona, also a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. The article left me impressed, but somewhat mystified. This operation is obviously a success because they have their own 6,000 square foot building on their own lot, and inside is a complex, fully-developed 28 X 69.5-foot, O-gauge (3-rail) layout, plus layouts of other scales and various model train displays. But, the article doesn't explain how this group financed their property and large building to start with. And, at only two Sundays a month plus a few special days a year, they don't seem to be open enough to be self-sustaining from admissions. So, I don't see how they got where they are. One obvious similarity between this success story and the first is that both organizations are 501(c)(3) non-profit train museums, but from there the similarities diverge. I'm going to do more research on the Gadsden-Pacific and see if there are lessons that ASMR might profit from.

**JG**

Note: Several model railroaders who joined (or rejoined) ASMR in recent months may not have been recognized appropriately. Just in case, here they are: Fred Rogge, Richard Sykes, Lyn Thomson, Ben Diamond and David Diamond. "Welcome Aboard!"