

Keeping Track

Official newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Brownwood RR Collector Dies

If you never met Martin “Buster” Lehnis III, who died in mid-February, you missed out on knowing one of the most colorful characters in our part of Texas. Lehnis, who had been retired for many years after a 50-year career with the Santa Fe RR, lived near Early. It was easy to spot his house as you drove by on Hwy 84/183, because in the front yard was a Depot, a Santa Fe caboose, an observation car, and a huge array of railroadiana ranging from old crossing signals, signs and equipment, to a miniature live steam train “layout”. The neatest thing about all this was that Martin and his wife, Frances, who preceded him in death, warmly welcomed drop-ins. The only requirement was that visitors sign their guest book. But even with all the fascinating stuff there was to see at their place, Lehnis was the real star of the show as he filled the air with pipe smoke and told intriguing, real-life stories about what railroading was like back in the days when steam engines ruled the rails. The good news is that Lehnis donated his extensive collection to the City of Brownwood, and it will be housed in an 18,800 square foot facility called the “Martin and Frances Lehnis Railroad Museum.” This, in turn will be part of a larger facility, the “Great State of Texas Historical Transportation Complex”. The bad news is that Mr. Lehnis himself won’t be around any more, except in spirit, to welcome visitors. *JG*



These photos of Martin Lehnis, railroadiana collector extraordinaire, were taken at his home east of Early, Texas, during a visit I made several years ago. Among his many treasures was a collection of HO-scale brass replicas of all the steam locomotives he had seen during 50 years of service with the Santa Fe RR. *JG*

Cheap Railroading Thrills Available In the Metroplex

For about the same price as a combo meal at your favorite fast food eatery, you can ride the light rail system all over the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area. There are 45 miles of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (“[DART](#)”) tracks with dozens of stops on the red and blue lines in Dallas, and 35 miles of track on the Trinity Railway Express (“[TRE](#)”) between Dallas and Fort Worth. With a \$4.50 “Premium” ticket, you can ride all these, all day, get off and on wherever you want, and also take a side trip around Big D’s historic McKinney Ave. area on an “M-line” antique streetcar. If this sounds like fun to you, let’s pick a day, get a group together, and do it!

Damiano Gives Thoughts on ASMR

I, for one, would like to commend Jim Gibson for his willingness to give this newsletter another try. But, I strongly believe that it will take contributions from all of us to make it a success. With regular input from as many members as possible it will truly become a club newsletter, and keep Jim from trying to come up with all the content month after month. None of us in the same position would want to be stuck with that responsibility! Consequently, I solicit your thoughts, comments, information, stories, interests, likes and dislikes, etc. and ask that you submit them to Jim for inclusion in OUR newsletter. I would also like to add that while I feel positive about the new direction our club seems to be taking, it cannot continue moving forward all by itself. It will take effort from all of us, in one way or another, for ASMR to endure, be successful, and grow. I believe that Don Balch has some very good ideas and goals that can be accomplished, but only with everyone's help and commitment. I nominated Don for president because of his success in the business world. His expertise can be a big factor in allowing our club to thrive, but again, he can't do it alone, and he shouldn't be expected to. In my three-plus years as a member, I can honestly say that I have enjoyed getting to know all ASMR members, past and present. Each one of you has taught me something, be it a little or a lot, train related or not, and for that I say, "Thank you". I hope to continue this camaraderie and friendship, and add to it with many new members to come. My wish is that I am able to return the favor, at least in some small way. Here's to many more years of model railroading fellowship in a growing, active club.

David Damiano

Model RR Meets & Shows

April 9-10 – San Antonio, Great American Train Show

April 16 – New Braunfels, Model RR Jamboree

May 29 – Fort Worth, Lone Star Train Fair

June 1-5 – Fort Worth, NMRA Convention

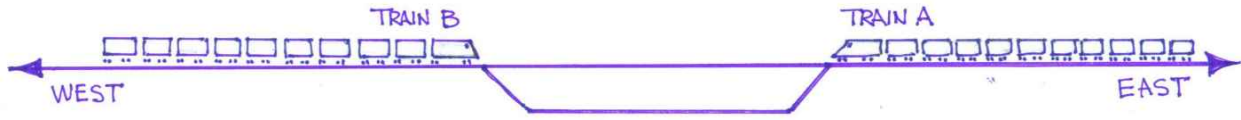
May 21 – New Braunfels, TCA Meet

Q&A from the prez

What does the president of your model railroad club need to do? Does he need to inspire you to build a bigger club membership? Should he appoint committees for various jobs and club activities? Should he come up with money-making projects like raffles, competitions, bake sales, club cars, etc.? Should he plan special events? Should he have a back yard party or some other social event? How about maintaining our layout? Should he be investigating other alternatives for our club's location? Or, should he just mind the "herd" and try to keep peace, and not be too aggressive with club members? What would YOU do if you were trying to make decisions on these issues? Well, this is my attempt to discover what ASMR members want your president to do – which is another way to say, "What direction(s) do you want ASMR to take in the future? Without your comments and answers to the kind of questions I started off with, chances are our club will drift aimlessly, or even worse, it could simply take on a flavor to my liking instead of reflecting the members' preferences. If you want and expect certain things out of ASMR, you must be a part of the decision-making process! I have a telephone and an email address. I understand plain English. I need your input, I want your input, and I hope to hear from each of you regularly. Thanks,

Don B.

Keeping Track Puzzler



The Situation: East bound train "B" and West bound train "A" wish to proceed, but neither train is short enough to take the siding and allow the other to pass. What can they do to allow them to continue on their way to their respective destinations? For solution, see the club bulletin board.