

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

A Few Well-Chosen Words From ASMR's Acting/Interim President

I was saddened when Don Balch informed me that he was resigning as president of ASMR. In my opinion, during his rather brief period in that office, Don provided a degree of leadership and direction unlike any other during the three-plus years I have been a member of ASMR. I don't mean to imply that others who have served as president didn't do a great job, because all of them have my respect for their individual styles and qualities of leadership, and I appreciate all who have served the club in that capacity. It's just that I feel Don's business experience and background set him apart from the others, just as it will set him apart from me as the club's interim president. As time marches on during the few remaining months until the next election of club officers, I will put forth a concerted effort to keep ASMR headed in a positive direction. At the last meeting, in July, we decided to return to monthly meetings in an effort to generate more cohesiveness and timeliness in connection with club activities, and help stimulate the activities that go on between meetings. Looking forward, I expect that with the kind of enthusiasm and initiative members like Ken Riediger and Cody Hilliard are showing in getting the new switching yard going, that much needed project will finally get completed, and we will be able to start using it for operations in the near future. Following the August meeting, and hopefully on a regular basis thereafter, we plan to hold clinics on various topics connected with model railroading. Ken Riediger "bravely" volunteered to do the first clinic, which will cover diesel locomotive identification. During my time as acting president, I look forward to doing everything I can to make ASMR the best model railroad club it can be, and I solicit every member's help in insuring that we have fun, grow, and succeed together.

David Damiano

Video Library for ASMR Members Includes Many Interesting Topics

Thanks to the generosity of Ken Riediger, the ASMR "resource center" now includes about three dozen DVDs that cover a variety of railroad-related subjects. Included in the assortment are topics like scenic railroads, "Big Boy" steam engines, layout construction, making scenery, understanding

decoders, and various railroads like UP, SP, Lakawana and Montana Rail Link in action, to name a few. These can be checked out for home viewing, as can any of the resource materials in the ASMR Library, which also includes an extensive bound collection of Model Railroader magazines and a number of books and other magazines.

ASMR Meeting Notes

There will be a business meeting on August 6. Immediately following it, Ken Riediger is scheduled to give a presentation on Locomotive Identification.

Club Layout Yard Update #4

Work continues on the new and improved switch yard for the club's HO-scale layout. Ken Riediger and Cody Hilliard have built and installed a new module to replace a four-footer that was no longer suitable. Using track generously donated by Clyde Gayoso, they plan to start laying out the yard in the near future.

Former Member Rejoins ASMR

Returning to the fold after an extended absence is former ASMR member Steve England, who rejoined the club July 30. Welcome back, Steve!

The Editor Speaks

If You're Not in a Hurry, Amtrak's a Fun Way to Go

During July, my wife Emma and I took a 10 day trip to Los Angeles, traveling round-trip on Amtrak. This was our third journey to the west coast by train. One of the neatest things about rail travel is the leisurely pace. You meet really interesting people, and there's plenty of time for visiting and striking up friendships. We paid the extra fare for a small "roomette", which is the only way to travel if your trip includes two nights aboard the train. It comfortably seats two during the day, makes into two bunks at night, and the price includes all your meals, which were delicious. Some improvement has been made in mainline track, but it's still rough in many places, especially between Dallas and San Antonio. Although we did get the "green light" occasionally while freight trains took a siding to let us pass, we had our usual share of delays from being sidelined in favor of UP freight traffic. A

couple of times along the way I spotted some unusual older freight cars that must have been prototypes for "Post War" 0-gauge cars I had always thought were "made up" by Lionel. As a train nut who's retired and not in a big rush to get someplace, I sure hope Amtrak doesn't go under,

because for both Emma and me it's been a great way to travel cross-country. JG

Model RR Meets & Events

Aug 20 – New Braunfels Train Show

Oct 1-2 – Live Oak Model Engineers Train Show

Oct 8-9 – Fort Worth Lockheed/Martin RR Show

RAILROADING TRIVIA

Railway construction in the United States reached its peak way back in 1886. That year a total of 12,879 miles of track was laid, a record which was never equaled previously or subsequently. That amount of track, by the way, was enough to span the continent *four times* between New York and San Francisco! The source for this info is a booklet of railroad-related "Q&A's" issued by the Association of American Railroads in 1953.