

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 1, Issue 7

September 1, 2005

Editor: Jim Gibson

## The Word From the Prez

### **It's Time to Start Thinking Ahead**

Only a short two months away now, the month of November will be an important one for the club. Here are a couple of reasons: First, we will have to make a decision if we, as a club, want to become involved in one way or another in National Model Railroad Month. Second, November will bring about the election of new club officers. Obviously, both are important in their own right, and we need to start thinking seriously about what our responses to both will be. We need to be considering potential ways we might get favorable exposure for ASMR and our hobby with the public, and in our local news media. And, we need to be thinking about the direction the club will take over the next year and in future years, and who among us might be the most effective in leading us in the direction we want to go. For both of these reasons, I am asking for increased member participation and involvement in club activities, and hoping to see many more of you at our upcoming meetings.

On a sad note, and on behalf of ASMR members, I would like to express sincere condolences to Charles Chinn, and the Chinn family, over the recent death of Charles's mother.

*David Damiano*

### **Club Layout Yard Update #5**

Work on the new and improved switch yard seems to have hit a "stoppage" since the last update. Maybe the hot summer months were just too much for our intrepid track crew?? Hopefully, by the next newsletter, there will be significant progress to report.

### **ASMR Meeting Notes**

There will be a business meeting on Sept. 10. Immediately following it, Ken Riediger is scheduled

to give Part II of his slide presentation on Diesel Locomotive Identification.

## The Editor Speaks

### ***There's Always a Need To Promote Our Hobby***

November will be Model Railroad month nationwide, and while that may seem like a long time from now, the way this year has gone by so far, it will be here before we know it. Piggy-backing on Pres. Damiano's comments, I would like to re-emphasize an issue he addressed in his column this month. If we are going to do anything special to try and generate favorable publicity for ASMR, and our hobby in general, and I think this is an opportunity we absolutely shouldn't miss out on, now is the time to start putting something together. I urge each of you in the club to think about ways we might make our club and what we do more visible to the public, and come prepared to discuss this topic at the September 10 meeting. In my opinion, the main emphasis should be on showing people how much fun model railroading can be, and how that enjoyment can be enhanced by belonging to a club like ASMR.

On another matter, I have heard nothing but positive comments about how interesting and informative Ken Riediger's slide presentation on locomotive identification was after last month's meeting. At the September 10 meeting, Ken will be following up with Part II on how to recognize diesel locomotives. I wholeheartedly encourage each of you to be there – and bring along a friend who is interested in trains. JG

### **Model RR Meets & Events**

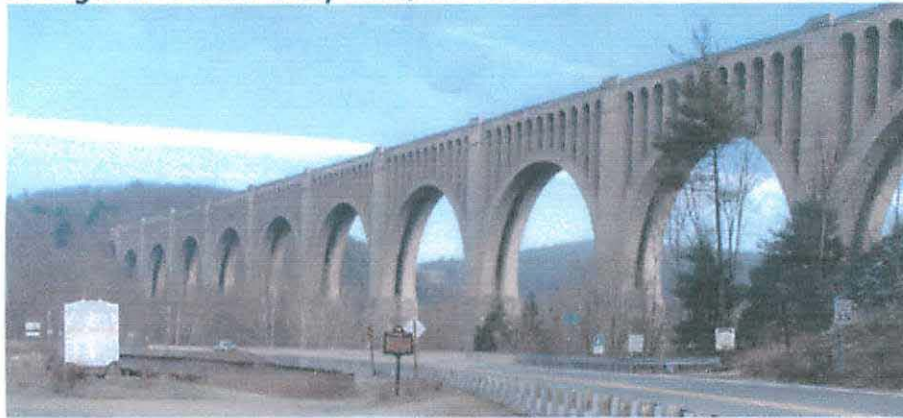
Oct 1-2 – Live Oak Model Engineers Train Show  
Oct 1-2 – Southwest O-Scale Meet, Oklahoma City  
Oct 8-9 – Fort Worth Lockheed/Martin RR Show

### **David Damiano Shares Visits to Historic Eastern RR Bridges**

Recently, I had the opportunity to return to the place of my birth in beautiful upstate New York. (Yes, I'm a "Damn Yankee", and proud of it!) A great bonus of my trip was my hometown's close proximity to Pennsylvania, and the many visible reminders of the "Keystone" state's rich railroading history. During my visit, I was able to travel to the town of (*story continued on back of this page*)



Lanesboro, PA, home of the Starrucca Viaduct. This viaduct is a beautiful stone railroad bridge spanning the Starrucca Creek, which like many things today, is not as vast as it once was. Unlike the creek, the 18 stone arches of the viaduct look nearly as pristine today as they did when it was completed back in 1848. It stands as a monumental testimony to the quality of craftsmanship of that era. The Starrucca Viaduct was built by the Erie Railroad, and is the oldest and one of the longest railroad bridges in Pennsylvania. It rises 110 feet above the level of the creek, and each of its 18 arches has a 50 foot span. It's reputed to be one of the most expensive bridges built in the world at that time, costing \$320,000 (Imagine that amount of money in 1848!). over 800 workers labored for a year to complete the bridge, at wages of a dollar a day each, and their handiwork is still in use today.



Above: Two views of the Starrucca Viaduct, a stone railroad bridge built in 1858.  
Left: A view of the Tunkhannock Viaduct, a concrete arch railroad bridge built between 1912 and 1915. Both bridges are still in use today.  
Photos courtesy of David Damiano.

During a visit home previous to this year's, I had the opportunity to visit another stunning historic railroad bridge, the Tunkhannock Viaduct, aka the Nicholson Viaduct, in Nicholson, PA. This double track bridge was constructed by some 500 workers for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad between 1912 and 1915. It is the largest concrete railroad bridge in the U.S., was the largest in the world at the time it was built, and contains more concrete than any other bridge ever constructed. It is 240 feet high, 2,375 feet long, and consists of 10 two-ribbed arches that span 180 feet each. Some of the piers supporting the arches were sunk 138 feet below ground level. The viaduct contains 1,140 tons of reinforced steel, 167,000 cubic yards of concrete, and 185,000 barrels of cement. Like the Starrucca Viaduct, it is also still in use today.