

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

## ***The Word From the Prez***

### **Riediger Sets Positive Agenda**

First off, I want to say that I am humbled and honored that you have selected me to be president of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders. I hope every member will feel like they can talk to me about any subject at any time. It is my goal for this club to grow and draw closer and stronger.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who came out Tuesday, Nov. 8, to help clean up the layout and its surroundings. I also want to thank each one who helped out with the open house. Although a publicity mix-up probably helped to cause a small turnout, those that showed up seemed to really enjoyed what they saw. I believe good will come of the event in the long run.

During the coming year I want to return to some of the things we have done in the past that have proved popular with the members. I also want to try some new things, and I want each member to be involved in helping the club grow. Each one of us has knowledge to share, and if there is some subject you are interested in, or curious about, please let me know. On the other hand, if you are willing to share your expertise on some subject, please let me know. Either of these can lead to some informative and interesting seminars.

I know most of us would like to have a new and larger place to call home, but I believe we should not make that our primary focus. I don't believe we should abandon that idea, either, but in my opinion we should make ASMR's primary focus educating the public about railroading and our hobby, and have fun doing it. Ultimately, having fun is what model railroading or any hobby is all about, and we should never lose sight of that objective.

*Your President, Ken Riediger*

### **Club Layout Yard Update #8**

As of this issue of the newsletter, another siding has been added to the new yard by our intrepid track gang. After trying it out by picking up a number of club cars from various sidings around the layout and "parking" them in it, your editor can report that the yard has plenty of capacity as it is now, and is fun to use. The new crossover switches into the yard are especially slick, once you figure out how to "read" which way they are set.

## **ASMR Meeting Notes**

There will be a business meeting on Dec. 3. At last month's meeting new officers for 2005-06 were elected. Doing double duty as both President and Treasurer will be Ken Riediger. Cody Hilliard is the new Vice President, and Mike Ziegenhagen is Secretary. Congratulations and thanks to these members who have generously consented to serve the club in various executive capacities.

## **Club's Demo Layout Featured at State School's "Christmas Lane"**

Once again, ASMR's portable 8 X 12-foot modular layout will be a featured indoor attraction at the Abilene State School's indoor/outdoor Christmas display, which will run every evening from Dec. 6 through Dec. 24. Along with a collection of former department store animated figures, the layout will be shown in the "Shirley's Cinema" building, which is situated near the end of the outdoor light display route. This year the layout will be "populated" with "Department 56" and other ceramic buildings and scenic elements from the collection of Hal Griffin, in addition to the 0-Gauge trains provided by Jim Gibson. ASMR tri-folds will be on hand for interested visitors to take. Members are encouraged to sign up for some of the evenings and spend time "babysitting" the layout and visiting with folks who come through the indoor display. This event provides an excellent opportunity for ASMR to enjoy a huge public exposure.

## **The Editor Speaks**

### ***What Do Kids Want Most For Christmas This Year?***

I heard a news report on TV the other day concerning what toys kids will be looking for under the Christmas tree this year, and it started me thinking. According to the survey the news story was based on, a hot item for girls is going to be Barbie Dolls, a toy which originated back in the 1950s. In those days, "electric trains" like Lionel, American Flyer and Marx, were what nearly every boy wanted for Christmas. But boys' preferences for 2005 don't echo the "retro" tastes of girls, according to the survey. It claims that the toys most sought-after by young males are action-oriented video games. No thoughts were offered as to why one 50 year old toy is still popular, while

another isn't, but I would submit that at least part of the reason could be advertising. Barbies still get quite a bit of "hype" in magazine, newspaper and TV ads for girls' toys, but trains get virtually no mention in popular media ads for boys' toys. Back in the '50s, both boys and dads were aggressively targeted in national magazine and newspaper ads, and department store window displays, and they were popular and sought after toys. Great toy train catalogues are still available in hobby shops and by mail, but trains just aren't being marketed in today's national media like the hugely popular video games are. If Barbie Dolls can still be a hit after half a century, I don't see why toy trains, with all the "bells and whistles" miniaturized electronics can provide

in them, couldn't be just as popular with a fair share of advertising. JG

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

Dec. 2-19 – San Antonio Transportation Museum's, "Santa's Holiday Depot".

Dec. 6-24 – ASMR layout for Abilene State School's 2005 "Christmas Lane" extravaganza

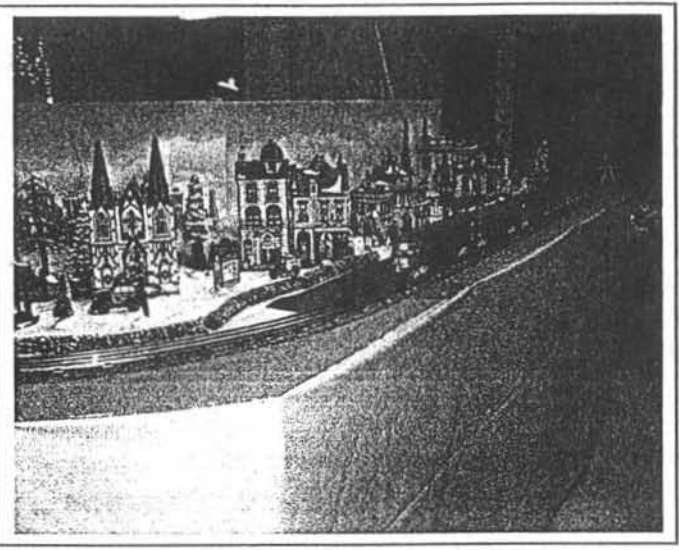
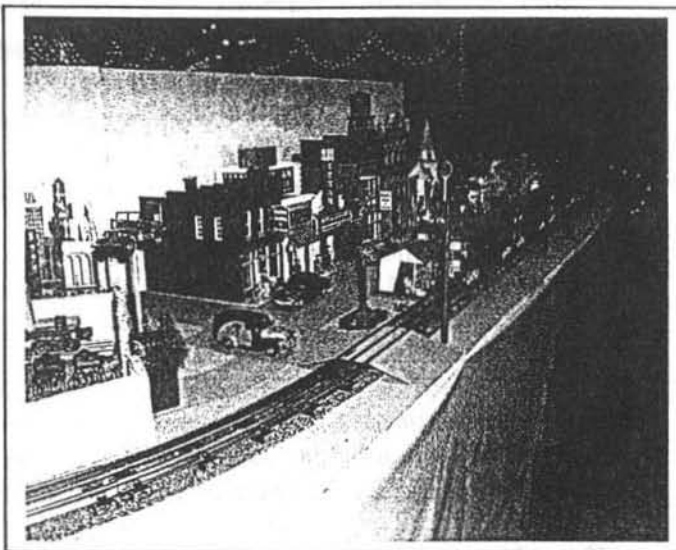
Dec. 10-11 – Houston GAT

Jan. 7 – "Wintertime Train Show", Waco

Jan. 7 – World's Greatest Hobby on Tour, Houston

Jan. 13-14 – 21<sup>st</sup> Dallas Area Train Show, Plano

Jan. 28 – 30<sup>th</sup> Annual San Antonio Model RR Assn. Jamboree



Left above: View of the townscape on last year's ASMR toy train layout for the indoor part of the Abilene State School's "Christmas Lane" display, with structures, scenery and trains provided by Jim Gibson. Right above: View of this year's ASMR toy train layout for the State School's "Christmas Lane" display, featuring "Dep't 56" type ceramic buildings provided by Hal Griffin from the Abilene Cactus Lion's Club.