

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

2006 Almost Gone Already, But December Will Be a Busy Month

Where does the time go? Another month has past and another year is nearly over. As most already know we had our annual open house on Nov. 11th, and had a much better turnout than last year. Thanks to everyone who helped make it a success.

Right around the corner is the Christmas Lane Exhibit which we as a club voted to participate in. We will be showing our new modular layout. This will take a greater participation than the open house did as it will run from Dec. 5th through the 23rd. The layout will be set up as a 16' x 16' configuration. We will need someone there each evening from 6 p.m. till 10 p.m. to turn the DCC system on and off, make sure the trains keep running smoothly, and fix any derailments or uncouplings. I want to thank you ahead of time for your help. We will be there 19 days. We have about 18 active members so if each one took one night or two we could cover the time nicely. Please don't leave it up to one or two people to keep this going. This is a really good visibility show for the club. I know some have other obligations and that's fine -- all we are asking is one or two nights per member over the three week period.

We gained new prospects for the club from our public events during 2006. So what will the new year hold? I hope our membership will continue to increase. We may even get a new building. I believe we will see further improvement on the permanent layout *and* on the modular layout. Maybe we can set up for one or two more shows next year. I believe we will have some sort of air conditioning next summer. Lots of hopes and dreams for next year...

Let me know what programs you would like to see, and also if you would be willing to present a program for the club yourself. And, thanks for a great year!!

Your Prez, Ken Riediger

Nov. 4 Meeting Notes

Pres. Ken Riediger opened the meeting at 10:07. Oct. 7 meeting minutes were read and approved, along with the treasurer's report. Riediger announced that all four of the new UT4 throttles are available for use. Instructions for them are in the boxes, and he is working on additional instructions sheets. He said that he and Cody Hilliard got a lot done during the

Oct. 28 work day, and that Chris Thomas, who is too busy to work on his modules, is bringing them in so other members can use them for the Christmas Lane display layout. The next work day is set for Nov. 25. Riediger reminded members that the club's open house will be Nov. 11 from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. It was announced in the Nov. 4 *Reporter-News*, and will be announced again the day of the event. Last minute preparations will be made on Tuesday night, Nov. 7. Christmas Lane at the State School is set to start Dec. 5 and run through the 23rd, and is open every night from 6 p.m. till 10 p.m. Volunteers are needed to monitor the layout and should sign up for whatever nights they can be there, said Riediger. Jim Gibson said that he has been working on a possible new location at the Habitat for Humanity facility, and will have more information soon. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

November ASMR Open House Draws Respectable Attendance

Despite getting off to a somewhat traumatic start (see "Editor Speaks" column), this year's Nov. 11 Open House brought in a wide spectrum of visitors. It seemed like more young mothers brought their children than in previous years, and there were also several grandparents with their grandkids in tow. Most visitors seemed to be from the local area, but one gentleman I talked with came all the way from Desdemona, which is over near Stephenville. He was a very knowledgeable S-gauge modeler, but he seemed to enjoy our HO-scale layout, judging by his comments. One thing that helped generate a crowd was the newspaper printing the correct date for our event this year, although they still managed to publish the wrong date for Ken R's open house. Oh, well! If you weren't on hand for the open house, you missed a good time. There is nothing to compare with the excitement of young visitors when they see model trains running, and this year they could also hear realistic "whistles and bells", thanks to some members' new sound equipped locomotives!

The Editor Speaks

Always Remember, "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished!"

You may have noticed the big splotches of dark stain on the skirting on both sides of the opening to

the “horse shoe” part of the layout, and the floor inside the doorway, and wondered what happened. If you haven’t already heard the story, here’s what happened. Tuesday night before the open house, Ken Riediger and I installed some of the paneling donated by Ken England on the island part of the layout that didn’t have any skirting. It had a few scratches, and on the morning of the open house I brought in some dark walnut oil stain with the idea of rubbing a little of it on the scratches to minimize them. When I tried to open the bottle of oil stain, the lid wouldn’t come off, so Ken R. volunteered to try and remove it. With both of us standing face to face in front of the door, he applied maximum squeezing and twisting force to the plastic bottle. Unfortunately, it was old and more brittle than either of us realized, and it crushed in his hand! Dark oil stain virtually exploded in all directions, splattering on our hands and clothes, the layout skirting and the floor. Here we were with less than 30 minutes till “showtime”, standing in the middle of one of the messiest messes I’ve seen in a long time. We quickly mopped up what we could with paper towels, went home and got cleaned up, and returned in time to participate in open house activities. The ironic thing to me is that none of the stain got rubbed on the paneling scratches as I intended, but it still looked far better than the first thing you see when you enter the train room now -- namely the big, ugly stains on the skirting on the front of the layout! This mishap confirmed once again my belief that “No good deed goes unpunished.” But, I also believe: “All’s well that ends well,” and the main thing is that the show did go on. And, the stained skirting didn’t seem to diminish the enjoyment our open house visitors derived from watching our trains running around the layout.

JG

A Happy Footnote to Last Month’s “Editor Speaks”

In last month’s “Editor Speaks” column, I discussed some of the negative implications of Union Pacific RR’s move to legally enforce a 2002 company policy requiring model train equipment manufacturers to pay licensing fees for any locomotives or rolling stock bearing the UP logo, or the logos of any railroads UP has absorbed over the years, including Mopac and T&P. I’m happy to report that according to a recent news item on the *Classic Toy Trains* web site, this problem has been resolved in a good way. According to *CTT*, Mike Wolf, owner of Mike’s Train House (MTH), came to an amicable agreement with UP that permits MTH and other model train manufacturers to use all UP-owned logos without having to pay any licensing fees. The only stipulation seems to be that coordination with railroad officials is still required on products bearing UP logos to ensure that quality standards are met. Thank goodness common sense finally prevailed in what had become a contentious and counterproductive situation for UP itself, model train manufacturers, and model railroad hobbyists, as well. Mike Wolf deserves special credit for generously ensuring that the deal he made with UP extends to all model train companies, not just MTH.

JG

Model RR Meets & Shows

Dec 2 & 3 – 30th Annual Train Show, Oklahoma City, OK.

Dec 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, 23 – Santa’s Holiday Depot Event, Texas Trans. Museum, San Antonio.

Dec 5 - 23 – ASMR train layout display at Abilene State School’s annual Christmas Lane event.

Jan 6 & 7 – Waco Railroad Wintertime Train Show, Waco.

Jan 13 & 14 – 22nd Annual Dallas Area Train Show, Plano.