

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

May 5 Business Meeting Sets a High Water Mark

The May business meeting was, without a doubt, one of the best and most gratifying I've presided over since being elected president of ASMR. Even though it was one of the shortest, if not THE shortest business meetings that I can remember, it was productive in that we dealt with several items of old and new business. On top of that, it was the best attended business meeting I can recall in all the time I've been a member of ASMR, with only three out of our 20 or so members not present. And, we had a special guest all the way from Ireland! He and several of the members really seemed to get along famously, and he promised to send the club a copy of a historic railroad map he has, after he gets back home. As if all that wasn't enough, when the meeting was officially closed, nearly everybody hung around longer than normal talking and running trains. The absolute *icing on the cake* was when another visitor, Bill Hart, signed up as a new member. It's hard to imagine how you could cram any more than all those positive factors into one meeting, and it makes me believe that we really are on the right track.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

The May 5 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:00 a.m. sharp. Dan Brady's treasurer's report and Cody Hilliard's minutes of the Apr. 7 meeting were both read and approved. Pres. Riediger told members that the teaching aid layout for the Abilene State School was complete except for painting and light scenicing, and everybody agreed to take care of that situation the following Saturday. The operating session at Jim Norwood's on May 19 was discussed and a show of hands was taken to see how many planned to attend. All agreed to meet at the ReMax office for a 7 a.m. car pool departure. Pres. Riediger gave a brief recap on the April 14 Abilene Founders Day event, noting that the cold weather most of the day may have held down attendance, but the turnout for the train displays in the depot was a success in that two new members

signed up during the show. Mike Ziegenhagen announced that he has already placed photos of the event in the club's photo book. Members voted unanimously in favor of a motion by Charles Chinn to make Danny McQuilkin, a visitor to the club from Derry, N. Ireland, an honorary member. The meeting closed at 10:15 a.m.

Newest ASMR Member Joins at May 5 Meeting

Bill Hart is another example of why doing public shows pays off for ASMR. He found out about the club when he and his wife Sabrina visited our layout display at the State School's annual Christmas Lights event last December. He was interested in linking up with ASMR, but a temporary duty assignment to California set to begin in January and last four months stood in the way. Bill promised to check in when he got back, and true to his word, he did -- and promptly joined the club as well! Bill is a native of Denver, Colorado, has been in the Air Force eight years, and works as a C-130 electronic systems repair specialist. Prior to being assigned to Dyess, he was stationed in England, where he belonged to a small group of British "00-gauge" model railroaders and became the "club electrician". He is interested in both H0 and N scale trains, and says he is looking forward to operating sessions on ASMR's club layout. If you haven't met Bill yet, be sure and extend your personal welcome ASAP.

Eight Members Enjoy 'Railfun' in Metroplex

Traveling in carpool vehicles driven by Ken England and Dan Brady, Steve England, Cody Hilliard, Chris Thomas, Donny Cone, Bill Hart and Jim Gibson headed for the Metroplex bright and early on Saturday, May 19. Also along was prospective member Keith Savage. Since the group was a little ahead of schedule when they hit the Metroplex, they took a brief detour at Saginaw to watch some real rail operations at the Santa Fe switch yard there. After half an hour or so of seeing how real freight cars are moved around, it was on to Jim Norwood's home layout in North Richland Hills. With introductions out of the way and pleasantries exchanged, the ASMR operators

paired off. Jim produced a selection of computer generated operating orders, dealt one out to each team, and the challenges and fun got underway. A couple of hours later the group broke long enough for lunch and then picked up where everybody had left off. By around 3:30 p.m. all the teams had finished their assigned "runs", and with profuse thanks to Jim for his generous hospitality, it was off to Discount Hobbies in Addison for an hour or so of serious model train shopping. While Dan's carload headed straight back to Abilene, Ken and his group detoured through Garland to pick up a "Big Boy" locomotive some custom work had been done on for him. All in all it was a memorable day, packed with a veritable "trainload" of railroad-related fun and fellowship.

The Editor Speaks

Seeing "Real Railroaders" Work Is a Real Eye-Opener

As already mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the group that went to Jim Norwood's for an operating session on May 19, stopped off in Saginaw to watch a bit of 1:1-scale switching at the huge Santa Fe freight yard there. We parked by the yard tower, which was between the highway and the "ladder track" that parallels it at that point, and were treated to an up close and personal show of how the real railroaders get it done. Two MU'd yard diesels were busy detaching cars (mostly two-bay closed hoppers and box cars) from various long strings of rolling stock on the yard's 20 or so tracks, moving them over and adding them to trains they were building up on the three or four sidings

nearest to our vantage point in the tower area. The way they did it was interesting, and rough! As each car was shoved to within a dozen or so car-lengths of its destination, the switchman would grab the coupler release bar, raise it and walk along holding it up for a short distance as a little speed built up. Then the engines would stop abruptly and let the uncoupled car's momentum carry it the rest of the way down the track for an ear-shattering collision with its mates. No finesse here to be sure! At one point the switchman, a young guy, caught some flack because he forgot to set the breaks on a car to release properly. The car stopped rolling prematurely as soon as it was cut loose, and had to be hooked up again and "re-launched" by the switchers. This was definitely an interesting and instructive prelude to our operating session, especially the parts of it that took place in any of Jim Norwood's several large freight yards. I couldn't help thinking how ironic it is that we try to be so precise, smooth and careful with our model railroad operational switching maneuvers (believing we are doing things more prototypically that way), when the real life situation appears to be pretty much a "Slam, bam, thank you ma'am!" kind of rough process of getting the job done. Either way, it's *all trains* and *all good* as far as I'm concerned!

JG

Model RR Meets & Events

Jun. 6 - 10 – Lone Star Region Hill Country Special, Round Rock, TX.

Sep 15 -

16 – Centra Mod 25th Annual Model Train Show, Temple, TX