

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 3, Issue 7

September 1, 2007

Editor: Jim Gibson

The Word From the Prez

Plan Ahead to Participate In Upcoming Club Events

A few months ago we had a record attendance for our business meeting, but since then we have had some of our least attended meetings. This has me puzzled. I have some guesses about possible reasons, like people on vacation or uncomfortably hot summertime temperatures in our club's building at times – or, is there perhaps something else going on that's keeping attendance low at recent business meetings on the first Saturday of each month? If you know of a reason, especially if it's something we can fix or improve on, please let me know so we can make appropriate changes.

We have some important club events coming up in the next few months, and we need each member to plan on setting some time aside to work on getting ready for them and also participate in them. For example, the paneling we've purchased needs to be installed before our open house in November, in support of National Model Railroad Month. That may seem like a long time from now, but it will be here before you know it, and we want to put our "best face forward" with a well-groomed club layout. Also, those of us with portable modules need to be getting them ready for the Abilene State School's "Christmas Lane" event in December. And everybody in the club, with or without modules, needs to plan on setting at least one or two evenings aside during December to run the trains on the layout during that three week event. This is an especially great opportunity for new members to have fun as you run trains and interact with numerous Christmas Lane visitors. As we learned from past experience, ASMR's Open House and Christmas Lane offer enjoyable opportunities for promoting both model railroading and our club with the general public, and you don't want to miss out.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

The August 4 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:05 a.m. Cody Hilliard's minutes of the July 9 meeting and Dan Brady's monthly treasurer's report were both read and approved. Ken R. reported that he delivered

the 4X4 training layout the club built and donated to the State School approximately three weeks ago. Members voted unanimously to adopt the new "Family Plan" membership rate that was formally proposed at a special called meeting a week ago (See previous meeting notes for details). Ken E. said he had checked on paneling, and found that McCoy's Lumber has the kind we need for the club layout. He volunteered to use his pickup to get it if someone would go along and help him. (Note: After the meeting, Ken and Chris Thomas went to McCoy's and brought back some paneling.) Ken R. reminded members again about the impending election of new officers this fall, and Jim Gibson suggested that to expedite the process, he might get together with the board and come up with a slate of proposed officers who have been contacted and are willing to serve. Members can vote on these, but the option would also be left open for nominations from the floor, as usual. Dusty Garison reported that he checked with a Mall of Abilene rep, and there are no openings for displays in November or December. They were, however, interested in having a train display in January or February, when there is a good chance a store space will be unoccupied and the club could set up a layout in it for a week or so for the public to enjoy. Members agreed to let Dusty follow up with the Mall rep on the possibilities for doing something there during February. There was no new business and the meeting closed at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 1.

The Editor Speaks

Seeing Your Article in Print Is a Rewarding Experience

At the risk of appearing to shamelessly toot my own horn, I am proud to tell you that an article I wrote, along with photos I took for it, appeared on pages 70 & 71, in the September issue of *Classic Toy Trains* (CTT) magazine. The article describes how I built an army surplus facility for my O-gauge train layout and it provides tips for the reader to make one like it for their own layout. Although I was paid for the article by CTT, the *best* "payment" was seeing my journalistic efforts published in a quality magazine with a wide circulation among model railroaders. If you think you would enjoy the thrill of seeing something in print about your layout,

or even a train related diorama or model you've built, you should be aware that the model railroad magazines (and there are several big ones with wide circulation) are always on the lookout for new material. While a full-fledged article with photos is a pretty ambitious project for most people without a journalistic background, there are smaller submissions you can make that will net you a few bucks and get your work exposed to a big audience of model railroaders. One of the simplest is a high-quality photograph of a model railroad subject with a brief explanation of what it is and the kind of camera you used. Digital cameras make this a lot easier than it used to be with prints or slides. About the only technical requirements are that the photo has to be clear and sharp, taken with at least a 3.3 megapixel camera, and have a file size of at least 400K. Most of the magazines will accept emailed submissions, which makes sending a foto and the text for it a snap. Every magazine includes their specifications and where to send submissions somewhere in their publication. If you have an idea for something you might like to submit and you would like some help or advice, give me a call. I've been at this for awhile, and I'd be happy to share my expertise, such as it is, with you. JG

Update

Texas State Railroad Gets Washed Out & Privatized

There's good news and bad news about the troubled Texas State Railroad. The good news is that it has apparently been saved from becoming a "static display" as a result of the state taking it away from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dep't, and turning it

over to a private corporation, effective September 1, 2007. On that date, American Heritage Railways, Inc., becomes responsible for TSRR's operations and upkeep.

The bad news is that regular runs between Rusk and Palestine were cancelled indefinitely early in July, after heavy rains caused several washouts. The worst spot was a 60-foot long section near Maydelle, where the tracks were left suspended in mid-air! But the good news is that repairs should be completed by early October, and scheduled runs are expected to resume then.

An interesting fact about the Florida-based American Heritage Railways Corp. is that it also operates the famous Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway in Colorado, and the lesser-known Great Smokey Mountains Railroad in Dillsboro, N.C. The company's stated goal is to "preserve and present our country's railroad heritage as an educational and entertaining live experience". Hopefully they will be able to keep the TSRR "on track" operationally and financially once right of way repairs are completed and trains get rolling again. For "Thomas the Tank" train fans, the planned "Day Out With Thomas" events on Oct. 19 - 21 and 26 - 28, are expected to go on as scheduled, including train rides from the Rusk Depot.

Model RR Meets & Events

Sep 15 -16 – Centra Mod 25th Annual Model Train Show, Temple, TX.

Nov 10 – ASMR Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nov 10 - 11 – North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs 23rd Annual Train Show, Fort Worth, TX.

Dec 6 - 24 -- ASMR layout display at Abilene State School "Christmas Lane" event.