

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

Public Outreach Continues to be Fun and Beneficial for ASMR

Thanks to everyone who had a part in our recent Open house for National Model Railroad Month. It was a BIG success. Special thanks to those who helped install paneling and those who helped clean the room and layout up. I would also like to recognize the Abilene Reporter-News for their support. I don't know if it was a record or not, but we had somewhere around 100 visitors come through, and that's just fantastic. Thanks again to all for your help and participation.

We keep getting public exposure and it is paying off -- sometimes only in small dividends but dividends none-the-less. Some of you may not know this but I received a call from the ARN asking if we could set up a small layout in their booth for the Junior League's "Christmas Carousel". On first thought you or I might think, "Well, that is not a place where we would get allot of good exposure for ASMR." But the way we were able to benefit from it was that for our willingness to help ARN with their booth display, they in return put a nice ad in the paper advertising our Open House. By the time you read this we will have participated with them again, this time with a train display during City Sidewalks.

Another opportunity we all have is "Christmas Lane" at the State School. This has been a very beneficial annual event for our club. I want to invite everyone to come out and participate as much as you can during this month-long event. We can use everyone's help -- and you will enjoy it as well. We have been very well received each year, and have been the "main attraction" in Shirley's Cinema. I've even had people tell me they came out just to see the trains! So, please consider coming out at least one evening, and if you can do more, so much the better. THANK YOU.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

The November 3 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:10 a.m.

Minutes for the Oct. 6 meeting were read by Jim Gibson and approved. Treas. Dan Brady read a multiple month recap report, and it was approved. Jim Gibson moved to postpone buying the Thomas the Tank train set because we don't have time to make a layout for it now and there is also a potential space issue at the State School layout display area. His motion was approved. The need to ballast the large yard was discussed and two of ASMR's newest members, Tyler Sumerix and Jeffrey Cowen, volunteered to start doing it if a member will show them how. Ken R. noted that the paneling project is pretty near completion, with one major item left -- installation of Velcro on the corners. Dusty Garison reminded everybody to be sure and reset turnouts to their mainline position after doing any switching. Incoming treasurer Mel Herwick reminded everybody to get caught up on their dues, saying that most members owe for October. Ken R. mentioned that he and Jim Gibson had set up a small HO-scale train display for the *Reporter-News* booth at the "Christmas Carousel" shopping bazaar at the Civic Center. President Riediger closed the meeting at 10:32. The next meeting is scheduled for December 1.

Amateur Track Gang Tackles Abilene Yard Ballasting Job

With some helpful hints from a couple of "old hands", a short deadline, and a "can-do" attitude, Tyler Sumerix and Jeffrey Cowen took on the formidable and long-neglected job of ballasting the huge Abilene Yard area. The amazing thing is that in less than a week they got the ballast laid and pretty much all stuck down just in time for the Open House. Congratulations Tyler and Jeffrey, and thanks to both of you!

Paneling Project Completed -- Just in Time for Open House

This time the headline pretty much says it all, but there are a couple of details worth noting. First of all, the paneling looks really nice. The last thing that had to be done was to install Velcro strips at strategic corner locations and other joints between

the removable sections because for some reason the thin paneling was tending to flare out at the bottom in various places. We also stapled the cloth drape back up across the east side and back side of the layout. It sure is nice to use the DCC plugs now that they are rigidly mounted on the paneling with all the plug spring openings all pointed up. Cody has promised to add a few more in places where they are needed, and we should be in good shape to get back to some operating competitions.

The Editor Speaks

ASMR 2007 Open House Draws Numerous Visitors

Thanks mainly, I believe, to some good publicity in the *Abilene Reporter-News*, this year's Open House on Nov. 10 was a great success. More people showed up this time than I can remember coming to one of our Open Houses in a while, and several even came from out of town. Some of the highlights of this event for me included getting to see the widow of former member John Kline again. She has re-married, and her new husband is a former high school sweetheart that mutual friends reintroduced her to after John died. She's still living in the same house on North 6th, and says John's layout, which was particularly noteworthy for his fantastic wiring job, is still up. Another visitor who got my attention was an O-gauge railroader from Sweetwater named Weston Pyburn. His specialty is building replicas of modern skyscrapers out of picture frame mat board, and judging by the photos of them he brought along, they are real show-stoppers. His college major was art, and he also paints mind-boggling backgrounds for his layout. He told me he bought an old building in Sweetwater with flea market spaces on the first floor, and has installed his layout on an upper floor. I'm anxious to make a run over there soon to visit Pyburn's model train setup. I want to view his multi-story, mat-board skyscrapers in person, and I also want a look at how he makes them. It was gratifying to see that many of our visitors included parents

and grandparents who brought kids and grandkids to see the trains.

It's worth noting that the publicity I mentioned earlier was the result of a little project done by Ken Riediger and me for the marketing manager at the *Abilene Reporter-News*, Nik Shehu. Nik called Ken and asked if our club could set up a train in the newspaper's display booth at the "Christmas Carousel" gift bazaar in the Civic Center the first weekend of Nov. Ken provided the HO train, track and power-pack (I helped him with setup and teardown), and the payback was a generous-sized display ad for our Open House in the *Reporter-News*! Not bad, eh? We also got a nice plug in the paper's "Weekend Events" calendar, which included an accurate version of all the information I submitted. After the trouble we went to installing paneling and cleaning up our layout room to get ready for Open House, it was extremely gratifying to have a good crowd show up. Almost as an afterthought, we stuck our donation bucket on the table with our club brochures, and at the end of the Open House we found just over \$25 in it.

I've said it before, but I'll say once again that if you didn't come and hang out for awhile at our Open House to run trains and visit with some of the interesting people who dropped in, you missed out on a very enjoyable experience. But if you didn't make Open House, all is not lost. There will be plenty of opportunities to meet and greet visitors and run trains at the State School Christmas Lane display which is open every night throughout most of the month of December.

Model RR Meets & Events

Nov. 27 – ASMR O-gauge display layout at the *Reporter-News* during the annual Abilene "City Sidewalks" evening Christmas event downtown.

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

Jan. 19 -20, 2008 – 23rd Annual Dallas Area Train Show, Plano, TX.

ASMR ENGINEERS NEEDED

The ASMR train display for "Christmas Lane" at the Abilene State School runs throughout most of December. That's 19 nights, for a total of 76 hours, the trains have to be operated by club members. Please do your share to help out!