

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

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

### **ASMR Receives Unexpected Donation of Model Train Items**

Can you believe that we are already a month into the new year? Jim Gibson and I got things off to a good start by teaching the requirements for the Boy Scout Model Railroading badge on January 5 and 19. Our group of six scouts was larger, and seemed more alert and interested in the subject matter than some of the other classes we had in the past two years.

ASMR is the lucky recipient of a generous donation of model railroad equipment from a gentleman in Midland. After tearing down a layout he had started to build, he decided he no longer needed several boxes of rolling stock and other materials he had accumulated, and called me to see if our club could use them. He even went to the trouble of bringing the items to Abilene and delivering them to me in person on Jan. 27! The rolling stock will make some nice additions to our club equipment roster.

I was surprised that only one person was actually available on Jan. 26 to make the trip to the Brownwood Railroad Museum, especially after several members had indicated at the last business meeting that they wanted to go. Perhaps we can reschedule the trip for another, more opportune time.

We need to welcome a couple of new members. Their faces should not be new to most of us as they have been frequent visitors for awhile. Anyway, Welcome to father and son Mark and Joseph Kennedy, who joined ASMR on Jan. 26. *Your President, Ken Riediger*

### **ASMR Meeting Notes**

The January 5 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:37 a.m. Minutes for the Dec. 1, 2007 meeting (written by Cody Hilliard, who was absent) were read by Jim Gibson and approved with one minor correction. Treas. Mel Herwick said that Dan Brady told him he is moving to Moore, OK, to seek employment and won't be able to remain a member. Mel is still trying to sort out the club's account balance going back to October, and acceptance of a report was postponed until the

financial records are completely in order. Jim Gibson stressed the need to get this done ASAP, and Mel will secure help to get up to speed. Ken R. thanked those who participated in the State School layout display during Dec., adding that we could have used more volunteers to run trains. He said there don't appear to be any immediate new members forthcoming, like there were after last year's show, but he hopes some future "joiners" will be generated by our three-week long "Christmas Lane" train display. Ken R. mentioned that use of the room next door will cost another \$50 per month and will not come with any obligation as to how long we have to keep it should we decide we can't afford it at some point. That would bring the total rent to \$200 per month. Ken E. said it will be an excellent place for storing all the "junk" we now have in and around the layout, and possibly for an N-scale layout later on. Members voted unanimously to rent the room, with a proposed move-in date of Feb. 1. Dusty Garison said he talked to a Mall of Abilene rep about a model railroad display, and she told him there probably won't be any space available until spring. Dusty will follow up on this project and keep the club posted. Dusty talked about his recent ASMR website updates and said that he is ready to post photos submitted by members on club or railroad related subjects. If you have some, especially photos of club activities, get them to Dusty. Mike Ziegenhagen said there was one Christmas Lane "disaster", namely that some Harley Davidson riders who visited the ASMR display were upset because there were no Harleys on the layout. Mel said he told them to visit the club layout because he has an HD dealer on his module. Ken R. mentioned that the Plano train show will be held on Jan. 19 & 20. He asked how many members were interested in going, with the idea of setting up a car pool. Ken said he and Jim Gibson can't get away until after 10:30 that day because of the Boy Scout railroad merit badge class, but several members indicated they were interested in going. Ken also brought up the idea of club excursion trips this year, and discussed several possibilities, including a trip to see the new Brownwood Railroad Museum. There being no

further business, Ken R. closed the meeting at 11:25. Next meeting will be Feb. 2.

### Additional Room Next Door Is Ready for ASMR Occupancy

The additional space next door to ASMR's current layout room that members voted last month to rent, is already accessible via a new doorway in the east wall, and ready for the club to occupy. Once landlord Bill Smith got the official notice that we wanted to rent the room, he didn't take long to clean it up and open up a doorway in the wall between it and our current layout room. Members will soon build a partition to provide a "hidden" storage area, and leave room for meetings, or maybe an N-scale layout at some point. Pres. Riediger suggested that perhaps this would be an ideal time to time to clean up the layout room and make some overdue improvements and repairs on the layout itself.

### The Editor Speaks

#### **Railfanning Opportunities Can Turn Up in Unexpected Places**

The weekend of Jan. 25, my wife and I made a trip to visit a friend in Boerne, TX, a historic but fast-growing town located 30 miles north of San Antonio on I-10. Like most Texas communities, Boerne once had a railroad running through it, the *San Antonio and Aransas Pass*. But trains stopped serving the town many years ago, just like they stopped serving countless other Texas towns over the years. Fortunately there are some very interesting reminders of Boerne's railroad heritage still around, and I had the good fortune of enjoying some of them during my visit. Boerne had rail service from 1887 until 1971, and the tracks ran straight as an arrow through town. Fortunately, long after the line had been

abandoned, some local fitness-minded folks got together and converted the old right of way into a 1.4 mile paved exercise trail. They put up quarter-mile marker posts, cross-bucks where the trail crosses several streets, rest spots with seats, and several well-researched and illustrated historical information displays. The main display is housed in a sturdy, open-air shelter with a definite railroad depot flavor. I've included a photo of it that also shows the trail. I can't think of a neater, healthier way for a town to preserve its railroad heritage. Boerne also has several railroad depots scattered around town. The town's original depot is now a private home and its freight station is a liquor store. The International & Great Northern's Victorian gingerbread depot at Encinal, TX was moved from there to 518 S. Main Street, next to the Cibolo Creek bridge, where it now houses a women's fashion boutique. A smaller Encinal freight depot was also brought in at the same time. Yet another depot in Boerne is the Texas & New Orleans station from Center Point, which was moved in and set up as part of a complex of old buildings on the south edge of town. I had been to Boerne several times, but I never realized it is such a treasure trove of railroadiana until I read some of the information posted on the exercise trail and started doing a little research on the internet. It's amazing what you can turn up and enjoy if you keep your eyes peeled when you are out and about. JG

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

Feb. 23 & 24 – Junction & East Texas Train Society Train Show, Longview, TX.

Mar. 1 & 2 – Great Train Expo, Fort Worth Convention Center, Fort Worth, TX.

Apr. 26 – 21<sup>st</sup> Annual "Texas RR Jamboree", New Braunfels, TX.



**Far left:** The "Old #9 Greenway" is Boerne's 1.4 mile exercise trail. It was built in 2004 on the old San Antonio & Aransas Pass RR right of way.

**Left:** This International & Great Northern RR Depot was moved to Boerne's Encinal, TX, and is now a boutique on S. Main Street.

Photos by Jim Gibson