

## The Word From the Prez

### **ASMR President Finds New Model Railroad Partner**

Well, I am going to start off with a bit of personal news. I am getting married on May 23rd to Carla Hill. Those that went on the Brownwood trip got to meet her already. If you didn't, but are going on the Ft. Worth TRE/DART trip you can meet her then. One thing that impressed me about Carla was her interest in my hobby. She wants to work with me in building "our" layout. We have not had many women involved in model railroading on the local level, but I have seen some impressive models and layouts done by women in other places, and I look forward to seeing what Carla and I can create.

The club has some great opportunities coming up in the near future. One is the above mentioned trip to DFW to ride DART/TRE on May 17th. This will be a trip you can take the whole family on. I also got a call the other day about an opportunity to set up a public layout display which I will discuss at the May business meeting. We are going to continue providing more opportunities for trips and activities for club members. Until next time,

*Your President, Ken Riediger*

### **Fair Park Train Museum Slated for Move to Frisco**

According to a recent item in the *Dallas Morning News*, all the trains and railroad memorabilia on display in the Fair Park Railroad Museum will be moving to the suburb of Frisco, in the not too distant future. Details on the situation provided on the museum's website explain that the huge assortment of railroad equipment, structures, and memorabilia simply outgrew the space available at the Fair Park location where it's been for over 40 years. Included in the impressive motive power and rolling stock inventory are some three dozen vintage pieces ranging from a Union Pacific "Big Boy" 4-8-8-4 steamer to a GG1 electric loco, plus various other steam and diesel power units and a number of passenger cars, cabooses, structures, and other items. As envisioned, the new museum will be housed at Frisco inside a structure large enough to offer protection for the locomotives and rolling stock, which are currently exhibited outside and subject to continuous attack by the weather. Many of the items in the collection should feel especially at home in Frisco, since they once were part of the St. Louis & San Francisco RR, which bore the nickname "Frisco". Ambitious plans for the new facility are well under way, but an exact date for a move doesn't appear to have been determined yet.

### *Nine ASMR Members Travel to Fort Worth*

Bright and early on April 12, nine ASMR members piled into three vehicles and headed east for a day of railfanning, operating and hobby shopping in the Metroplex. Included in the group were Ken England, Dusty Garison, Jim Gibson, Cody Hilliard, Steve England, Mel Herwick, Keith Savage, and Joseph and Mark Kennedy. First stop was the Santa Fe yard at



*Several ASMR members take in the trains on an extremely bright, sunny morning at the Santa Fe's Saginaw yard on Loop 820 north of Fort Worth. Photo by Jim Gibson*

Saginaw. Although activity was a bit slow, the group did get to see some trains moving and several pieces of the railroad's newest rolling stock. Then it was on to Jim Norwood's for several hours of fun operating on his unbelievably huge and complex HO-scale layout. At about 3:30 p.m. everybody had finished their operating assignments, and it was time to head for Discount Model Trains in Addison. Following an hour or so of intense shopping, the group hit the road for Abilene, weary but "well trained" in more ways than one.

### **New Genset Switcher is Amazing**

Article by Dusty Garison

On our club's recent trip to the Ft. Worth area, we saw a new 3GS-21B locomotive, a "Genset," built by the



*Genset Loco at the Saginaw Yard. Photo by Dusty Garison*

National Railway Equipment Company of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, as part of their "N-Viromotive" line. With a traditional locomotive, a large diesel engine known as a

“prime mover” powers a generator, which feeds electric current to run a series of traction motors. A Genset, on the other hand, uses two or three smaller, low-horsepower diesels which can operate independently of each other. Each of the traction motors is individually controlled and powered, giving it superior pulling capacity compared to a conventional locomotive.

With the throttle in low power setting, only one of the three engines is running; but as additional power is needed, two or all three of the engines come online and begin producing needed power. Once rolling, the need for power drops off, and the extra engines cut off to save fuel. Since the prototype was delivered to UPRR in 2005, NREC has provided Gensets to every major US railroad, including 60 to UP and 48 to BNSF.

## ASMR Meeting Notes

The April 5 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:10 a.m. Minutes of the March 1 meeting were read by Secretary Cody Hilliard and approved. Treasurer Mel Herwick’s report was read and approved with minor changes regarding rent breakout. Pres. Riediger made favorable comments on the Brownwood trip, and reminded members of the upcoming trip to Ft. Worth to operate on Jim Norwood’s layout. Departure will be April 12, at 7 a.m. from the Remax parking lot. The proposed date of May 10 for a trip to the Metroplex to ride the TRE, light rail and trolley was changed to May 17. Ken R. said he can get metal wheels for \$55 to \$60 per hundred for club and personal rolling stock, and members voted to purchase four boxes of wheels (three 33”s and one 36”). Members voted to add new key requirements to the bylaws, including a year’s membership before a new member can be issued a key. Ken E’s standards proposal draft was discussed at length and minor changes were agreed upon, which Ken will make. The meeting closed at 11:09 a.m.

### The Editor Speaks

#### *Operating on Norwood Layout Offers Realistic Challenges*

I was fortunate to have the opportunity of participating, along with eight other ASMR members, in an operating session on Jim Norwood’s fantastic HO-scale layout in Fort Worth on April 12. There are several observations on that experience I want to share with you. First of all, I must say that Jim is a great host and should be commended for so generously sharing his layout with visitors like us. Although he runs a tight ship, he is extremely patient in explaining how things work, and calmly helping and advising those who have problems along the way. My cap is definitely off to Jim Norwood. As soon as Jim presents an introduction to the layout’s “geography”, and discusses basic operating protocol matters, he is ready to pass out train orders that has prepared on his computerized operations program. Although you generally get both switching and mainline running to do, he offers a selection of orders that can

favor an operator’s preference for one or the other, and also vary in length of time and difficulty. One thing I agree wholeheartedly with is Jim’s policy of not using a “fast clock” or putting any time constraints on operators. His sessions are challenging and fun without adding the stress that trying to beat a clock would induce. One thing that really enhances the realism is Jim serving as the dispatcher and keeping track of where all the trains are with a computerized CTC display on his PC. Everybody has a headset, and must report in and get clearance anytime they are ready to proceed from one location to another. Jim’s layout uses *Rail Command*, a control system older than *Digitrax*, but similar in many ways. Each operator has a throttle for their motive power, and all the trains can run independently at one time, so it’s critical that Jim maintains constant control



(L to R) Jim Gibson and Ken England listen as Jim Norwood explains some of the “geography” on his HO-scale layout based on the KCS (Kansas City Southern) Railroad. Photo by Dusty Garison

over where every train is to prevent collisions. This is especially important because the complexity of the layout includes several hidden areas on the main line where operators are running “blind” for significant distances. The hardest part of operating on Norwood’s layout for me is not being familiar with where the towns, industries and sidings are located, or knowing the most expeditious way to get from one place to another. Of course, that’s also a big part of what makes operations on Jim’s layout such an “adventure”. Your abilities are being challenged from so many directions, and there’s so much going on at once, it’s surprisingly easy for time to pass quickly without you even noticing it. My closing thought is for those of you who have reached the point in the hobby where just running trains around the club layout may have grown less than satisfying. Operating sessions, including the “Easter Egg Hunts” that have been popular on the club layout, are a great way to rekindle your enthusiasm, sharpen your switching skills, and add a whole new dimension to your model railroading experience. JG

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

**May 17** – ASMR trip to the Metroplex to ride TRE, DART and the McKinney Ave. Trolley. *Note: this is a change from the original date of May 10.*

**May 25 – 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Lone Star Train Fair, Fort Worth, TX.**