

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 5, Issue 8

October 1, 2009

Editor: Jim Gibson

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

### **ASMR Activities Still Stacking Up As 2009 Goes Into Home Stretch**

Well, as you read this, three-fourths of the year is gone, but that doesn't mean there isn't a lot still ahead of us. For starters, our October meeting will include the election of a new set of officers. This may be my last Prez Notes, depending on how the members vote in the upcoming election. Besides the election we have National Model railroad month coming up in November. I will have my personal Open House and the Club will need to decide on a date for the annual ASMR Open House, and start getting the layout ready for visitors. We have not received an official invitation to the State School's Christmas Lane event, yet, but if we do, and we decide to participate again this year, then operating trains every night on the portable display layout will occupy most of December. Of course, with the holidays coming up, we will all be busy with the usual personal and family activities, as well.

Fortunately, ASMR continues to grow. We have regained a former member and signed up some new ones over the last couple of months, including one this past week. In fact, let me introduce and welcome aboard our newest member, **Richard Sykes**. We hope you will enjoy sharing the hobby with us in ASMR as you participate in club events and activities.

I want to close with a special thanks to the current set of officers for their hard work and time spent in support of ASMR during the past 12 months. Good luck to the new officers and I look forward to more fun times with everybody in ASMR.  
*Your Prez, Ken Riediger*

## **ASMR Meeting Notes**

Pres. Ken Riediger opened the Sept. 5 meeting at 10:10 a.m. Nine members were present or arrived after the meeting had started. The Aug. 1 minutes were read by Sec'y. Cody Hilliard, and approved. Treas. Ken England's report indicated a total club asset balance of \$3709.30 as of Sept. 1, and it was approved.

Ken R. started the meeting by commenting that the Aug. 22 operating session at Jim

Norwood's went very well, and expressed special satisfaction about being able to practice dispatching. He then invited everyone to his next home layout operating session on Sept. 26, at 1:30 p.m. He said that he now has the dispatcher's panel up and running. Jim Gibson was not present, so the status of a presentation to try and secure a new location was tabled until next meeting. Ken England had nothing to report on the proposed Abilene Model Train Show idea, so it was also tabled until next meeting.

Ken R. asked the members about scheduling a work session to get ready for the club's Open House in November. The idea was discussed, but no date was set. Ken R. reported that Ben Stone had donated a number of HO scale train items to the club. He reminded everyone about the election of new officers next month and asked them to be thinking about who they would like to have in the four positions.

Ken R. then brought up Christmas Lane, asking members how they felt about declining to participate if the State School decides against putting the club in the center room location this year. Those present seemed to favor opting out if that situation arises. Ken R. asked the club if he could exchange a covered hopper of his with one like it the club owns. He has two identical, same number hoppers and would like to switch one out so he won't have to renumber it. The swap was approved.

For the benefit of anybody who didn't already know, Ken R. announced that Clyde Gayoso passed away on August 1. He reported that the family asked that the 4x8 layout Clyde bought from the club awhile back be given to the youngster in Merkel that Clyde bought it for.

Jeffrey Cowen asked if the club would be interested in selling the N-scale Trinity Railway Express passenger cars it has in storage, but nobody at the meeting knew where they came from or who owned them. Ken R. asked the members to try and find answers to those questions so a proper decision can be made.

Jim Frankenfeld asked if anybody planned to carpool to the Temple train show on September 19. Some members expressed interest, but nothing was decided. There being no other

business the meeting was closed at 10:35 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3.

### ***September KR&BNRR Ops Update***

The latest Op session on my layout was the best yet. First, more people showed up than ever before -- eight besides me. Second, the Rail-op program worked better and I was able to use my dispatcher's panel. Third, we were able to keep more people busy than in the previous sessions. This gives me great hope that the sessions will keep getting better and better. That said, there is still quit a bit of room for improvement. We had some people who had little to do. Two or three people had to hold for space in the yard. But as our resident, actual UP engineer said, "That's real life!" There are things I can program in Rail-op to keep more people busy longer and get some of the congestion out of the yard. But, the positive feedback from this session made me feel good, and I look forward to next time. ***Till then, Ken***

### **The Editor Speaks**

#### **Temporary HO Layout Provides Frustration, Fun and a Question**

I recently got a "wild hair" and decided to put together a small, temporary HO scale test track in the 14 X 24-foot building that houses my O gauge home layout. I have a number of "vintage" locomotives that aren't equipped with DCC, and I wanted to run them using a



*Here is an example of really "laid back" model railroading, as I run some vintage HO locos on the temporary test track I set up underneath my O gauge layout. Photo by Emma Gibson*

conventional HO power pack. So, I took some inch-thick plywood sheets I had and laid them across a pair of 2 X 4s that I placed on plastic milk carton cases. Then I dug out some brass sectional track that I had stored away, cleaned it up, and made an oval of track with two bridges in the middle that span a gap between the plywood sheets. This temporary "lash-up" is located underneath one side of my O-gauge layout, tucked between the back wall and a stack of boxes stored in the middle.

I thought running an engine on an oval of track without any switches or other obstacles would be easy. Wrong! I got an unpleasant surprise when put the first loco on the rails and cranked up the power. The little 4-4-0 steamer balked and stuttered and stalled before getting a quarter of the way around. A second one gave the same poor performance. Checking things more closely, the track I thought was clean wasn't, and the loco wheels I had cleaned were still dirty, as well. So, I shined everything up and tried once more, this time making a couple of laps before the balking started again. Wiping some more with track cleaner helped a little -- some engines ran better, but others still jerked and stalled, even after I cleaned all the wheels again! As a last resort, I borrowed some Wahl Clipper Oil from Ken Riediger and wiped it on the track with a cleaning pad, which surprisingly came up filthy ONCE AGAIN, as I rubbed. But the Clipper Oil finally did the trick. At last, every engine, which includes a combination of steam and diesel Rivarossi, Atlas, and assorted brass locos dating back to the 1960s, glided around the oval just like they should! Sweet! Fun!

The little scenario I've just described started me thinking. I wonder how many potential model railroaders have been lost to the hobby because they gave up in frustration after trying and failing repeatedly to get a new HO train set to run properly, because they couldn't overcome the kind of annoying problems that plagued my simple little oval of sectional track? Hmmm. **JG**

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

Oct. 3 & 4 – 21<sup>st</sup> Annual AMRE Train Show & Swap Meet, Live Oak, TX

Oct. 10 & 11 – Lockheed-Martin Recreation Assn. Annual RR Show, Fort Worth, TX

Oct. 23 & 24 – Railfan Weekend, Temple, TX