

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

Two Open Houses Will Make November Fly Past in a Hurry

Well, we are in the 4th quarter of the year and it always seems to be the busiest one of all. With November being National Model Railroad Month, we will celebrate it with *two* Open Houses. The first one will be at the club on the 14th; then I will have my home layout open on the 21st and 22nd. Time is flying by – where does it all go? It seems like we just got done with last year's open houses and now it is time for this year's. Along with both, of course, are the cleaning and the preparation needed to get everything in good shape for visitors.

I guess the club must be happy with our officers from last year, seeing as how we were voted in again for the coming term. I hope that means we are doing a good job, and not just that there is no one else who wants the jobs or is willing to serve. *I choose to believe it is the former.* At any rate, I am looking forward to our open house events and meeting with the public. It is always enjoyable, even with all the work involved in getting ready. And always remember, "Model Railroading is Fun."

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

The Oct. 3 meeting was opened at 10:10 by President Ken Riediger, with nine members in attendance. Cody Hilliard's minutes for the Sept. 5 meeting were read and approved. Showing a total asset balance of \$3,708.77, Ken England's treasurer's report was read and approved. Pres. Riediger issued an open invitation to his next home layout operating session on Oct. 17 at 1:30 p.m. With Jim Gibson absent, the proposed presentation to the city was tabled until next meeting. Ken England had nothing to report on the proposed train show idea so it was also tabled until next meeting. Ken R. opened a discussion on the model train items donated by Ben Stone, and Jim Frankenfeld said he was interested in the convention cars. Mike Ziegenhagen moved that the club donate the cars to Jim for all his efforts support of club projects, and members approved.

Ken R. reported that nobody has heard anything from the State School about club participation in Christmas Lane this year. He said he would contact them and try to find out where they stand on having our layout on display. Ken R. asked if anybody knew who owns the N-scale TRE cars that are in storage, because Jeff Cowen has expressed an interest in buying them. Mel Herwick said that he thought they belong to Dusty Garison.

Election of new officers was opened, and Mel moved that the club keep the current officers. His motion was passed unanimously.

Some members brought up the issue of unclaimed personal equipment scattered around the club. Jim F. recommended sending the owners certified letters requesting that they either reclaim their equipment or donate it to the club. Members agreed and asked the secretary to send letters to Tyler Sumerix and Bernie Scherr concerning this issue. Jim F. moved that the club room door lock be re-keyed since some keys have not been turned in by departed or inactive members, and members approved.

Ken R. asked when the club should have Open House this year, and Nov. 14 was approved. Ken E. brought up the issue of unclaimed "real estate" on the layout that needs to be adopted and kept up. John and Brenda Turner said they would like to take over the Scherr's unfinished mountain area. The meeting was closed at 10:55 a.m. Next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 7.

ASMR Elects 2010 Officers

Club officers for the next term were elected at the Oct. 3 business meeting. By unanimous vote, the present slate of officers was selected to serve for another year. This means that Ken Riediger, who has been at the helm for several years now, remains as president. Jim Frankenfeld will again be Vice President, Cody Hilliard continues as Secretary, and Ken England returns as Treasurer. Under this capable group the club has thrived and increased in membership. ASMR members are extremely fortunate to have model railroading associates of this caliber who are willing to serve in leadership roles, especially for successive terms in

office. Congratulations and thanks are in order for all four of our newly elected officers.

Ken Riediger's Home Layout Offers Realistic Ops Challenges

Special Report by Jim Gibson

This month, the operating session at Ken Riediger's large and complex home layout really got into high gear. Ken has worked most of the bugs out of his Rail Ops dispatching program, and multiple switching assignments are now included in the train orders it cranks out for operators. Several club members and others showed up at Ken's train shed for the Oct. 17 session, and everybody was kept busy for a couple of hours. I had been vocal at previous sessions in pressing for the inclusion of switching assignments, but this time I learned that you should be careful what you ask for. I found myself in a quandary several times as I struggled to figure out how in the world I could complete the pick-ups and set-outs the computer had given me to do. They *were* do-able, but they sure weren't easy! When I asked another operator, Lonny Thompson, who is a real-life UP engineer, how running trains on Ken's layout compared with the real thing, he said that the HO-scale version is pretty realistic. Then he added that fortunately it's a whole lot easier to correct a model train mistake than it is when you make the same kind of screw-up with a full-size train. To that I can only add from a personal standpoint, "Thank goodness!" **JG**

The Editor Speaks

A Shabby Looking Layout Won't Impress Our Visitors

Our annual ASMR Open House is coming up on Nov. 14, and it's our way of participating at the local level in National Model Railroad Month. We should always want to "put our best foot forward" whenever we invite the public into our club so we can share our enjoyment of model railroading with our fellow citizens in Abilene and the surrounding "Big Country" area. But, looking at our club's HO-scale layout with a critical eye, I have to say that

some areas of it are in dire need of serious rehab. Parts of the layout are nearly 20 years old, and they are starting to show their age. In all honesty, my own modules fall into that category, and some of the deterioration has been made worse by periodic roof leaks. But some of the newer areas are nearly as shabby or neglected, and in some cases still have uncompleted scenery, long after it should have been finished. The track ballast needs to be redone in several places where it has come unglued, or where it was not installed properly and completely in the first place. And, there are still annoying electrical problems that need to be fixed. Ken Riediger recently did some track work to level out sections on the main line that were uneven, and Cody Hilliard has worked on some of the electrical glitches. But a lot remains to be done to get the layout into first-class shape, both operationally and appearance-wise, for a public showing. Like the real railroads in some respects, we have neglected our "infrastructure" much longer than we should have. The result is a club layout that's not as visually appealing as it could be, and doesn't run as well as it should, either. We've talked about most of these issues at business meetings, but very little has happened in the way of corrective action. And now time is quickly running out for us to make a good impression at our Open House if we don't undertake drastic measures to "get our house in order". We can still pull the rabbit out of the hat in time for Open House, and even though it will probably require a few extra evenings of club work crews doing what needs to be done, we should expend the effort. We can no longer afford to rest on our laurels when those "laurels" have been neglected to the point where they are not as attractive and impressive as they should be for a positive public appearance. **JG**

Model RR Meets & Events

Nov 07 - 08 – Model RR Competition and Show, New Braunfels, TX

Nov 14 -15 – 25th Annual Train Show, Fort Worth, TX

Nov 14 – ASMR Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nov 21 – Ken Riediger's Home Layout Open House

November is National Model Railroad Month.

Be a Part of ASMR's Open House on Nov. 14. Have Fun and Share The Model Railroading Experience With Others in Our Community.

