

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

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

### **2010 Should Be a Good Year For Club and Home Operating Sessions**

Well here it is December, and Santa's sleigh bells will be ringing soon. Were you nice this year so Santa will bring you a good train present, or will your stocking be filled with coal? (By the way, if you do get the coal, you can grind it up to use as realistic loads for your hoppers. HO HO HO!) National Model Railroad month has come and gone. We had the club Open House and I had my personal Open House. Unfortunately, attendance was down this year at least in part because the media did not get the word out as we had hoped they would.

One thing that will be missing this December is our setting up at the state school. They wanted to move us to a smaller space and in a different room, and there was no way the modular layout could be configured to fit it. The good news is I'm sure our wives will appreciate all the time we will NOT be spending at the state school. We will miss it, though, and it will be interesting to see how much public outcry there is about us not being there.

Next year is just around the corner. I hope and pray that it brings each of us health and happiness. I know I am looking forward to many things that I have planned for 2010. On a personal level, I'm eagerly anticipating home layout operating sessions, where I have seen a lot of growth and enthusiasm. I keep wanting to improve the Rail-Op program (or should I say my use of it) and improve my layout. I hope each of you had a good 2009 and will have an even better 2010.

*Your President, Ken Riediger*

## **Nov. ASMR Meeting Notes**

The Nov. 7 meeting was opened at 10:10 a.m. by Pres. Ken Riediger with ten members present. Cody Hilliard's minutes for the October 3 meeting were read and approved. Ken England reported a club assets balance of \$3,714.96, and his treasurer's report was approved. Ken R. said that the club layout will not be displayed at Christmas Lane this year due to a lack of suitable space in

Shirley's Cinema. He said he would contact the mall manager to see if there is any interest in letting us set up the layout there before Christmas. Jim Gibson was not present, so the city presentation was tabled again. Ken England had nothing to report on the train show proposal, so it was also tabled. Ken R. then reminded everyone about the club's Open House on November 14 between 10am and 5pm, and his home layout Open House on November 21 and 22. Ken R. asked if there were any volunteers with a truck that could help deliver Clyde's layout to Mike Taylor in Merkel. Mel said he could help take it. (Note: The layout wouldn't fit in Mel's truck, so the two Kens delivered it in Ken E.'s pickup after the meeting.) Cody reported that he sent certified letters to Bernie Scherr and Tyler Summerix, and both letters were returned to sender. Ken E. moved that the items left at the club for a prolonged period by them be considered donated to the club, and members approved. (Note: In a strange turn of events, Tyler showed up out of the blue after the meeting to claim his items, and all that could be found were handed over to him.) There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10:39 a.m. by Pres. Riediger. The next meeting will be Dec. 5.

## **A Modest Number of Visitors Attended ASMR's Open House**



*A father and his two children from across the street were some of the visitors who stopped by to enjoy ASMR's 2009 Open House. Member Charles Chinn is shown telling them about the layout.*

Photo by Jim Gibson

On Saturday, Nov. 14, ASMR held its annual Open House in support of National Model Railroad

Month. Attendance during the hours preceding and following lunch was fairly brisk. But “traffic” was pretty slow during the other hours of the day, especially the afternoon. Part of the problem may have been the fact that the *Reporter-News* ran our Open House announcement on Wednesday, but not on Friday or Saturday (the actual day of the event) like they did for a number of other local events scheduled for the weekend. When I called the newspaper and asked why the announcement I submitted according to their publication rules ran on Wednesday, but not Friday or Saturday, the answer seemed to boil down to the standard excuse of space limitations, i.e., they run as many event notices as they can on any given day each week, and that’s it. So it goes... **JG**

## Ken Riediger Pleased With Home Layout Open House



*Ken Riediger chats with a father and son who had some interesting questions about his trains during his home layout Open House.*  
Photo by Jim Gibson

This was the eighth year I have had an open house on the *Kannapolis River & Buffalo Northern RR*. I appreciate Cody Hilliard’s help, because without him I would not be able to do it alone. Saturday’s run was a bit slow, although we did have a reporter and photographer show up from the *Reporter-News*. They put together a very nice article in Sunday’s paper, and the attendance dramatically improved over Saturday’s. For the most part the trains ran very well, with only a minor glitch or two. We did have about five wrecks over the two days – unfortunately one of them while the photographer and reporter were here. Luckily there was no major damage done. With Sunday’s crowd it turned out to be a good Open House, and I look forward to doing next years already. **KR**

## The Editor Speaks

### No ASMR Model Trains At Xmas Lane This Year

For the first time in five years, there will be no ASMR model train display at the State School’s Christmas Lane event this December. (By the way, all the State Schools have been renamed since last year and Abilene’s is now called “Abilene State Supported Living Center”.) Anyway, Ken Riediger and I went to the State School early in November to check out the proposed location for ASMR’s display layout because there seemed to be some issues over where we would be placed, and it was starting to sound like we might be getting an even worse location than we had last year. Sure enough, they intended to put us in the smaller room where movies are shown in “Shirley’s Cinema”, instead of the main room, and there wasn’t enough space for the most compact configuration of the portable layout, even with one side of it against a wall. Seeing the direction things were headed and not feeling very welcome or encouraged by the tone of the discussion, I was about to suggest to the lady who ramrods the Christmas Lane event that perhaps we should just skip this year. But when she beat me to the punch and suggested it first, both Ken and I readily agreed that was the best way to go, under the circumstances. Personally I can’t help but feel that the Christmas Lane coordinators are remiss in not recognizing and appreciating what a popular attraction ASMR’s model trains have been, or how much volunteer time and effort was expended by ASMR members at this event throughout each December for the past five years. Unlike the rest of the exhibits and displays, which are set up and left unmanned for the duration of Christmas Lane, we had to be on hand every single night to operate the trains and keep everything “on track” on the display layout. I always felt our participation in Christmas Lane was a mutually beneficial arrangement for ASMR and the State School because we provided a popular attraction and in return got some excellent public exposure. Apparently, that’s not the way the State School folks felt any more, and it’s kind of a sad development (and loss) for both organizations and the Abilene community as well, in my opinion. **JG**

## Model RR Meets & Events

Jan. 16 & 17, 2010 – Annual Dallas Area Train Show, Plano, TX.

