

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

The Word From the Prez

ASMR Starts Year Off With Scout Class and New Members

Well, 2009 has taken off about as fast as 2008 ended. Jim Gibson and I taught the Boy Scout Model RR badge class again this year. It is good seeing young guys interested in trains.

Speaking of interest, we have picked up some more new members. As of deadline, I am not sure if it's two or three. So, 2009 is getting underway very well. Let's all have fun and enjoy what this year has in store for ASMR.

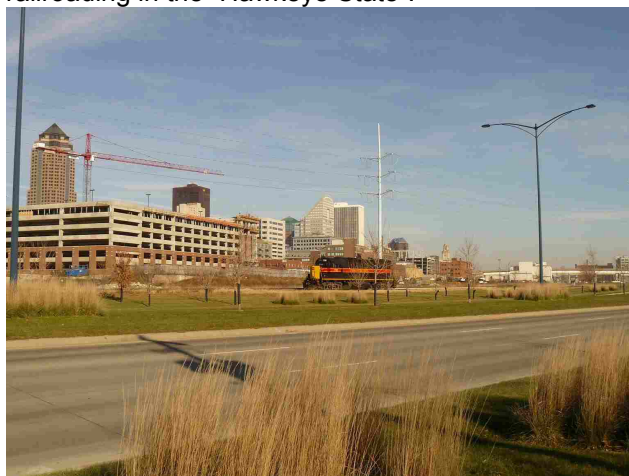
Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

The January 10 business meeting was called to order by pres. Ken Riediger at 10:45 a.m. Minutes for the Dec.6, 2008 meeting were read and approved. Treas. Ken England reported that the total club asset balance is \$3,836.02. Pres. Riediger discussed the Christmas Lane event, noting that there were many questions and complaints about the club's layout being stuck in a back corner of Shirley's Cinema. He showed members a card the State School sent, and commented that some of the Christmas Lane visitors seemed interested in linking up with the club. Sale of the donated Pennsy train items on ebay was discussed again, and a couple of options were left on the table for action at the next meeting. An attempt will be made to hold an operating session on Jan. 24. Ken R. brought up the idea of a club trip to the Plano Train Show on Jan 17, leaving at 7 a.m. Members interested in car-pooling can contact him. Members long overdue on dues were discussed, and those present decided to drop Steve England, Tyler Sumerix, Bill Hart, and the Newton, Kennedy and Sherr families. The status of Dusty Garison and Donny Cone were left open pending additional research. Mary Wiley said she is moving along with getting the club's library set up on the computer. Jim Frankenfeld said he will keep the club website updated, and Cody H. said he'll provide Jim with the password to do it. Cody said there is a train-related E-magazine starting up on the internet today. Ken R. closed the meeting at approx. 11:30. Next meeting will be Feb. 7.

ASMR Member Nick Kenneally Reports on Holiday Railfan Trip

Iowa Native Nick Kenneally was home over the Thanksgiving holidays and did some railfanning with his dad, Joe. Included below are some of the photos Nick took, along with his personal reflections on railroading in the "Hawkeye State".



Above: Here's a new Iowa Interstate RR (IAIS) locomotive cruising along with the Des Moines skyline behind it. This shot was taken about a quarter-mile east of the Rock Island Depot.

Photo by Nick Kenneally



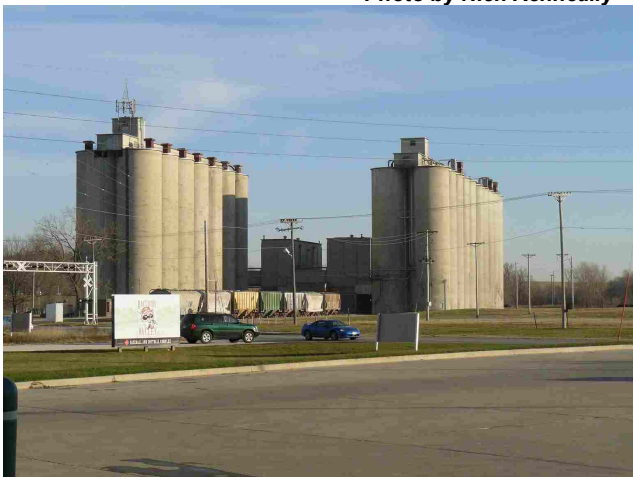
Above: Here is a close-up of IAIS loco #708, a less than three-month old ES44AC. While we watched, it stopped, disconnected from the main consist, picked up a GP, then reconnected and pressed on – probably headed west to Council Bluffs. What a treat to see this brand spanking new locomotive! I read that the IAIS bought 12 of these, and they're painted sharp and looking awesome. As my dad commented, "They're reminiscent of the old Rock Island paint scheme in the red and yellow, especially in the nose".

Photo by Nick Kenneally



Above: The old Rock Island depot in Des Moines is now used for office space. Across the arch, where the mail used to be sorted, is a bar. Back in the day, my dad's uncle would sort mail there and toss it on the Rock Island "Rockets" as they came through. The light pole to the left was for night operations in a yard there that's not used anymore. At one time there were two main lines, several side spurs and a passenger boarding track. Now all that's left is one of the two mains, which is used by the IAIS.

Photo by Nick Kenneally



Above: These big silos used to be Hawkeye Cement. They no longer make cement here anymore, but they do still store it here. The silos are about five minutes west of my parents' house, and just off the approach end of the Des Moines Intl. Airport. For the most part, the UP and IAIS use their switching units to take hoppers over and drop them off on the north side of Park Ave. Then, a front-end loader will chain up with them and drag them across the street to a loading and unloading area. *Photo by Nick Kenneally*

The Editor Speaks

"Time Saver" Layout Offers Fun in a Very Limited Space

I have an O-gauge layout that takes up just about all the space I have for model railroading at home, but I would like to be able to run my HO trains once in awhile when I'm not at the club. While thinking about this situation, I came

across an article in one of my train magazines that mentioned the "Time Saver" layout concept originated many years ago by the legendary John Allen. I had seen examples of such layouts at train shows, including a G-scale design where the engine and cars were large enough to make for unusually realistic switching. A Time Saver layout normally consists of a mainline track with several switches and sidings, including one or more "run arounds", mounted on a board averaging 2 X 6 feet. Scenery, if any is usually minimal. The layout is used for switching problems which are made tricky because the sidings only hold limited numbers of cars, forcing you to do a lot of "jockeying" to get cars where you want them. The concept is kind of like those puzzles where you have numbered interlocking tiles in a frame, and you slide them around in various ways to try and get the numbers in order. I even have a puzzle like that where the tiles have raised surfaces, and when you arrange them correctly, it makes a frog. In the case of the Time Saver, some cars are spotted in sidings, and they have to go to other places, while some cars on the main or elsewhere need to go where those cars, or others were. The goal is to get them all relocated according to your "train orders" with the least number of moves, and/or the shortest amount of time. Switching puzzle possibilities are almost unlimited, as are the challenges they present, and the layout can be stored flat, in a very small space, when not in use. I think a Time Saver may be the answer to my desire for some kind of a home HO layout. And it occurred to me that one might also be an interesting, easy to build addition to ASMR's layout options. **JG**

Model RR Meets & Events

Feb. 21 & 22 – World's Greatest Hobby on Tour, San Antonio, TX.

Feb. 28 & Mar. 1 – Great Train Expo, Fort Worth, TX.

Mar. 21 & 22 – Railroad Train Show/Sale, New Braunfels, TX.

Have an Idea for an ASMR Activity or Project You Would Like to See the Club Do, or Something for the Newsletter? Let's Hear About It!