

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

Cleanup Day Made a Big Dent in ASMR's Junkpile

First off, I want to thank all the members who came out to help clean up our storeroom on Feb. 13. It is amazing how fast junk can collect, and how much had piled up in our back room. We hauled more than a pick-up load of refuse to the dumpster. We still have some more left to clean up and get rid of, and we need to finish organizing the usable items which are left.

One thing that continually puzzles me is the number of people in the Abilene area who are interested in model railroading but are unknown to us, and also, those who never knew ASMR existed. Fortunately, I can already see where having Hobbytown come to Abilene has started to help correct this situation. I can't thank Mike Perkins and his hobby shop helpers enough for sending these kind of people (and potential members) our way. We have a very good group of members in ASMR now, but there is always room for more. The larger our group gets the more things we can afford to do. I can't speak for everybody, but as for me, I keep enjoying model railroading more every day! I love being able to teach and share real railroading and our miniaturized version of it with others. Model railroading is FUN, so let's continue to do everything we can to make it even *more* fun and share it with others.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

Pres. Ken Riediger opened the Feb. 6 business meeting at 10:00 a.m. Sec'y. Cody Hilliard's Jan. 2 meeting minutes and Treas. Ken England's report showing a club assets balance of \$7,087.20 were both approved.

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Four Members Take Part in "Easter Egg" Ops Session



Above Front: Jeff Cowen (left) waits while Scott Fritz (center) switches his train and Alex Wold (right) looks on. Back, L to R: Ken England switches at the Burlington Station and Kole Trumble holds until he can pass through. Photo by Jim Gibson

For the first time in several years, trains did more than just run in circles on the ASMR layout. Jim Gibson set things up for an "Easter Egg Hunt" operating session, and on Feb. 27 four members took on the challenge. Each of the "hunters" was given six car cards containing waybills telling where each car was on the layout, and the location it had to be "shipped" to. Once an operator rounded up all six cars with his locomotive and had them checked for accuracy by the judge (Jim G.), he had to turn around and deliver each one to its receiver. Except for a couple of minor errors, everyone did well with both pick-ups and deliveries.

The layout itself didn't cause any significant electrical or mechanical stumbling blocks, and offered plenty of sidings to provide for both easy and difficult switching maneuvers, even though only part of the upper level was used. One "real world" type hurdle that caused delays and minor frustrations was other trains which weren't part of the "game" randomly passing through, and these had to be worked around.

First to finish was Ken England, followed by Jeff Cowen (with a little help from Ken R.), Alex Wold and Scott Fritz. This session compared favorably with similar ones several years ago on the old layout, and bodes well for more to come in the future.

JG

Ken Riediger Ops Session Report

The Feb. 20 Ops Session on my home layout included five operators: Cecil Walston, Cody Hilliard, Scott Fritz, Dusty Garison, and Kole Trumble. Each was able to complete one set of train order assignments. This was Kole's first attempt at operations, but he caught on pretty well right from the start. Overall, operators for this session made a lot less errors than the ones did during the previous session, and that tends to keep things moving along much more smoothly. We also had two visitors: Kole's grandfather, Tony Dicus, and Jim Gibson, who came to take pictures of the action for the newsletter.



Above: Ken Riediger gives first-time operator Kole Trumble some tips during his (Ken's) February home layout Ops Session.

Photo by Jim Gibson

I continue to work on making improvements to the layout. The lower level lighting is now in place, and I changed the positions of the Loconet receivers, which I feel has made a positive difference in throttle control efficiency. Hope to see you at the next session on Mar. 19, at 1:30. **KR**

...NOTES (continued from page one)

Layout coordinator Jim Gibson mentioned progress on the top of the helix turntable installation and some changes in his own area. Pres. Riediger acknowledged that seven members are behind on dues, with only two being seriously so. He also noted that all the club calendars have been sold, and Jim G. suggested getting an earlier start if we plan to do one for 2017. Ken R. said his next home layout Ops Session will be Feb. 20. He pointed out that with 501c3 status people who donate items or money to the club can now claim a tax deduction for their gift. Jim G. said he sent a

letter to Larry Gill at the Dodge-Jones Foundation to let him know we had obtained 501c3 status, which Gill suggested we do.

Nothing was reported on the proposed railroad museum trip to Frisco due to Dusty G. being absent. Ken R. reminded members of the cleanup day on Feb 13, and the Open House on Apr. 9. He noted that six members went to the Plano train show on Jan. 16, and also that Dusty G. and Jim G. will be doing a display at the Abilene Library for the month of July. Ken E. said three dozen new club caps are in and available for members at \$10 each.

Jim Gibson volunteered to set up an "Easter Egg" operating session for Feb. 27 on the club layout, and several members expressed an interest in participating. Ken R. said he had a "Wild Sound" decoder and would do a "show and tell" for members. The meeting closed at 10:36. Next meeting will be Mar. 5..

The Editor Speaks

It's Amazing Where a Model Train Display Can Turn Up

I was pleasantly surprised as I departed the Abilene Kiwanis Club's annual Chili Supper on Feb. 27, to see two former ASMR members with an operating toy train display. It featured a vintage S-gauge American Flyer train loudly chuffing around like crazy. Kiwanians Rich Dunlap and Gene Linder had set up an inverted figure eight track layout with a crossover on 16 of AC Gilbert's "post war" era modular track panels. The engine just missing the caboose every time in the crossover loop, and the bobbing giraffes, were obvious crowd pleasers for both youngsters and adults alike. **JG**



Above: Rich Dunlap (in red) handles the throttle, while Gene Linder (in blue) interacts with two young visitors to their toy train display at this year's annual Kiwanis Club Chili Supper. Photo by Jim Gibson