

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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The Word From the Prez

ASMR Celebrates Silver Anniversary With Pride

ASMR has been around for 25 years!! Can you believe it? A whole quarter of a century! While we still have one charter member, and several others who have belonged to ASMR almost from the first year it was formed, many of us have not been a part of the group the whole time. I think this is a good opportunity to thank those who worked to get this club started, and kept it going through some tough times. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

Our nonprofit organization has reached out and shared Abilene's Railroad history with thousands of people over the years. We have promoted railroad safety, taught scout merit badge classes, and exposed many visitors to the joys of model railroading. I see our club continuing to carry out this mission and tradition, and expanding our outreach to even more "Big Country" citizens.

It has been, and continues to be, an exciting time to be a part of ASMR. Based on what I view as an accelerated rate of achievement and growth in recent years, I fully expect the next 25 years to be even better than the first 25 have been. I am looking forward optimistically to a bright future for ASMR, and I hope you are, too.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Notes

Pres. Ken Riediger opened the Mar. 5 business meeting at 10:04 a.m. Sec'y. Cody Hilliard read his Feb. 6 meeting minutes and Treas. Ken England reported a club assets balance of \$7,010.21. Members approved both.

Ken R. announced a new member, Tony McKinney. Discussion of layout progress included Jim G. saying he is working to finish the mountain background scenery in the canyon area. Also talked about is the need for a mainline switch for easier access to Mel's upper level industrial area sidings. The helix turntable is also coming along thanks largely to Ken E. and Scott F.

Ken E. reported seven members late on dues and two warning letters needing to be sent. Ken R. said his next Ops Session will be Mar. 19. Dusty G. reported on his agenda for a May 14 trip to the train museum in Frisco. It will include a private tour of the railcars on display at noon and cost will be \$7.00 per member.

Ken R. said the storeroom cleanup went well, but more work is needed to finish the job. The special 25th Anniversary Open House will be Apr. 9, and a committee was formed to make the arrangements. Dusty G. and Jim G. will be putting together a train theme display for the Abilene Public Library during the month of July. Ken E. reminded members that new ASMR ball caps are available for \$10 each. *(continued on back page)*



Photo by Jim Gibson



Photo by Ken England

ASMR members are shown at work getting ready for 25th Anniversary Open House in a last-ditch effort to have unfinished areas of the layout looking as good as possible for the April 9 special event. Left: Scott Fritz and Ken England install a work track near the turntable area on top of the helix. The lead track from the main line is in, as are the tracks inside the roundhouse and several outside radial parking tracks. Right: Jim Gibson shaves "a little more off the top" of one of the foam profile mountain bases behind the mining area. When finished they will blend with the green background area to the right.

(Notes: continued from front page)

Jim G. said the club's "Easter Egg Hunt" ops session on Feb 27 went well and members agreed that future sessions should be held quarterly. Ken E. said he has arranged a trip to operate on Jim Norwood's layout for April 16. He asked that the ASMR trifold brochure be updated to show the club's new 501c3 status. Jim G. mentioned the outdated club website, and Scott Fritz volunteered to tackle updating it. Jim G. volunteered to help. Ken E. said he bought ten radios to use during operations and other club functions, and got them on sale at Academy for \$99. Tony Dicus volunteered to talk to some real estate contacts he has about our need to secure a better "home" for the club, now that we have 501c3 status as a bargaining chip. The meeting closed at 11:08 a.m. Next meeting will be Apr. 2.

KRBNRR March Ops Session

The March 19 edition of my KRBNRR home layout Ops Session included four "engineers." Running a total of six trains during the session were "old hands" Dusty Garison and Scott Fritz, plus Jeff Cowen and Michael Wehmeyer. All the trains ran very well, and we only had one error made by an operator who shall remain unnamed.

I also had a supplemental session the preceding Wednesday for Lonnie Thompson. He asked for it because he ended up being scheduled to work on the "real railroad" on Saturday, which meant he couldn't be here during my regular operating meet as planned. Lonnie ran the "Luke City local," which probably involves the most difficult train orders and operating area on the railroad. He worked for three full hours and finally had to tie up his train and quit due to "hours of service" limits kicking in. You know it is a challenging train when a real veteran UPRR engineer like Lonnie ends up scratching his head as he tries to figure out some of his switching moves. But that kind of challenge also makes it fun. I hope to see you during the next session on April 16 at 1:30. **KR**

The Editor Speaks

Being an ASMR Member Should be Enjoyable for All

I recently read an article in a back issue of a train magazine that focused on ways to make new members welcome, and it started me thinking. As a 25-year member of ASMR, I've never had any problem finding things to keep me interested in the club. Whether it has been running trains, working on the layout, participating in club events or special projects, editing a newsletter, or just visiting with

other members, I have never found myself bored. In fact, as a guy with *several* hobbies, and a wife and family, I have to watch out that ASMR-related activities don't take up *too much* of my time. That's why this article caught my attention.

The writer complained that he once joined a train club, and was in it for eight months without any of the members bothering to make him feel welcome or help him get involved in some way. In a case like that, I'm surprised he lasted eight months! He didn't explain how, but he eventually did get involved and remained a member. His point was that it shouldn't have been that way, and he offered some suggestions for a club to more quickly and effectively bring new members into the fold and prevent losing them – something worth considering.

Some of the ideas were good ones, and I will bring them up for consideration at a future business meeting. But, in the meanwhile, I want to suggest a couple of things all of us as ASMR members might consider. Because I never had any problem finding things to do as an ASMR member, I'll be the first to admit that I am somewhat negligent when it comes to paying attention to the needs of other members, new or old, to get involved. Maybe some of you who have been around ASMR awhile and have already found your "niche" in the club are like that, as well. At any rate, I'm going to make more of an effort to be aware of any member, new or old, who doesn't seem to be getting the enjoyment they should be for their dues, and see what I can do to change that. This could start with simply getting to know another member better and finding out what their experiences and interests are. I suggest this as a practice any or all of us might try. I know it works because I have done it before and it has been personally rewarding for me, as well as the member I became better acquainted with.

The other part of this equation involves a "proactive" approach on the part of a new member, or any member who wants more out of their membership. Our club "culture" is pretty laid back in many ways, and you should feel free to approach another member, introduce yourself if you don't know them, and ask questions -- especially when you see them doing something you are interested in. Some people are not as "sociable" as others, but most will warm up pretty quick if you show an interest in what they are doing, or give them a chance to help you understand something better.

The bottom line is that model railroading is a great hobby, and we have a great club with all kinds of opportunities to all share and enjoy it together. There should be no reason why any member, new or old, is not involved in some way and having fun every time we get together. **JG**