

KEEPING TRACK

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ASMR Celebrates 25 Years of Promoting Abilene's Railroad Heritage



Left: Jim Gibson and former Abilene Mayor Gary McCaleb check out the canyon area of the layout. ASMR started in response to a call from Mayor McCaleb in 1991 for local model railroaders to build a train display for the first Abilene Railroad Festival. Jim is the only charter member of the original group still in the club. Middle: Brad Hicks (blue sweater) and his wife Erin watch as their sons enjoy pushing the red button to make Thomas go. Ken England is tending a punch dispenser in the background. Right: Gene Danielski looks on as Ken England explains how the helix works to Abilene Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Doug Peters. Left Photo by Ken Riediger. Right photos by Jim Gibson.

On April 9, ASMR members held a special, out of cycle, Open House to celebrate the club's 25th Anniversary. Cold, rainy weather may have "dampened" attendance a bit, but not the spirits of club members or the steady stream of visitors who came by throughout the day-long event and enjoyed seeing ASMR's giant HO-scale layout and operating model trains. Special guests included former Abilene Mayor (Dr.) Gary McCaleb, who was instrumental in ASMR's founding; and Abilene CofC President/CEO Doug Peters, who expressed a strong interest in having the club be part of a downtown cultural renaissance district he has in the planning stages. All in all, everybody seemed to have a good time giving recognition to ASMR's major milestone of a quarter of a century of promoting Abilene's proud railroad heritage among the citizens of West Texas.

JG

The Word From The Prez

With Proud 25-Year Track Record, ASMR Has a Bright Future Ahead

Well, we celebrated our 25th anniversary on April 9, and it is hard to believe this organization has been around for 25 years already. A lot of positive things have happened during all those years. I believe there are even more good things to come for ASMR in the decades that lie ahead. I am hoping that since we obtained 501c3 non-profit status, it will help open more doors for ASMR to grow and reach more people, educate more of the public about our Abilene area railroad heritage, and bring attention to the importance of railroading in general to our way of life in West Texas. Each one of us can play a part in making that happen.

What this will look like and exactly how it will happen are open questions at present. Perhaps

it will involve partnering with another entity like the Grace museum, or the City of Abilene, or some private individual, enterprise, or foundation. It may be a combination of two or more of these. Ideally, the end result could look like the Lehnis Railroad Museum in Brownwood, or variations of that facility which have been done in other Texas cities and towns. We all need to keep working toward the goal of a bigger and better ASMR situated in a permanent, first class home of its own.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Highlights

President Ken Riediger opened the Apr. 2 meeting at 10:03. Sec'y Cody Hilliard's Mar. 5 minutes, and Treas. Ken England's report showing a total asset balance of \$7,102.78 were both approved.

Ken R. announced that Paul Schuck resigned because he is moving. Cody H. said he has

done repairs on the layout and ordered a new booster and circuit breakers. Ken E. said six members are late on dues for a total of around \$300. There was a brief discussion on doing a 2017 calendar fundraiser. Ken R. said his next home layout Ops Session will be Apr. 23.

Dusty G. discussed the May 14 Frisco train museum trip. He needs a firm head count by May 7. ASMR's Apr. 9, 25th Anniversary Open House details were discussed. Ken E. will get a cake, Dusty G. will bring cookies. VIP reception will be at 9:30 a.m.

Members discussed the next "Easter Egg Hunt," and Jim G. said he will set one up during June. Jim also said he has updated ASMR's brochure for the special Apr. 9 Open House. Members agreed to do a layout display on May 7 for Hobbytown's First Anniversary celebration. Ken E. said he has a trip to operate on Jim Norwood's home layout set up for Apr. 16.

Scott Fritz agreed to update the ASMR website and got materials to do it from Cody H. Jim G. said he received a call from Larry Gill at the Dodge-Jones Foundation with some ideas on possible new locations for ASMR, plus an intro to new Chamber of Commerce president Doug Peters. The meeting closed at 10:50. Next meeting will be May 7.

KRBN April Ops Session Report



Above: *Dusty Garrison (L) and Alex Wold (R), two of the three operators at Ken Riediger's home layout Ops Session on April 16, are shown hard at work picking up and setting out cars in accordance with their computerized train orders.*

Photo by Jim Gibson

Three operators participated in the April 16 KRBN Ops Session, along with two observers. The operators were Dusty Garrison, Alex Wold, and Jeff Cowen. Ken E. and Jim G. came by to "hang out," and Jim also took photos for the

newsletter. The change in scheduling that resulted from the club trip to Jim Norwood's being cancelled, and me moving my Ops Session up a week in its place may have had an effect on attendance.

At any rate, we got a late start and ended up only running four trains. On the up side, with the small crowd, there was very little interference between operators, or waiting for other trains to clear. We only had two operator errors resulting in cars which had to have their locations corrected. Hope to see you at the next Ops Session on May 21 at 1:30.

KR

The Editor Speaks

Interacting with Visitors at Public Events Can Be Extremely Rewarding



Above: *Ken Riediger gives a young visitor a chance to blow the whistle on a locomotive by pushing the right button on a DCC controller, while his mother looks on.*

Photo by Jim Gibson

I never cease to be amazed at how much fun it is to share our wonderful hobby of model railroading with visitors of all ages to our club during open house events and other public displays. Nearly everybody relates to trains in some way, especially here in Abilene, where the Union Pacific Railroad tracks run right through the middle of town! And, a great many people have had fun with toy or model trains, even if it was just setting up a loop of track under the Christmas tree once a year and running an engine and some cars round and round on it.

I've found that if I approach visitors and just point out something on the layout, it's usually enough to open a lively conversation where they will ask questions and share personal train-related experiences they've had. I've met some really interesting people this way, and for me it's a huge benefit of belonging to ASMR.

JG