

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

The Word From the Prez

Good Luck to New Club Officers -- Let's Keep Dreaming & Growing

First, I want to thank everyone for the support you have given me as one of your officers -- first as Treasurer, then as both President & Treasurer, and finally as just President. I have been especially pleased to see how the club has grown in membership. Again, I thank you for allowing me to lead your club. By the time you read this we may have just had the elections for new officers, or we may be about to elect them, depending on if you have the newsletter read before or after our October business meeting. From feedback I have received things have been moving along smoothly for the last year thanks to each member's cooperation and involvement.

I know some members, including me, are disappointed that we don't have more space for our layouts. Some day, I would like to see us be able to have N-scale and O-gauge layouts like the club once did, along with more space for HO, and even an area for our meetings and a work space. I know I'm a dreamer, but successful people usually don't get to where they are without first dreaming or imagining new goals.

I wish the best of luck to our new officers and may the club keep growing and keep reaching out to the community with fun and education about railroads large and small.

Your President, Ken Riediger

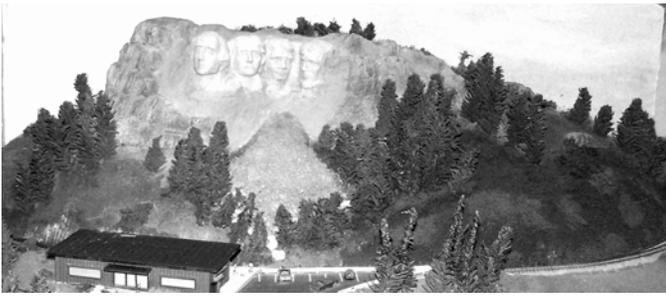
ASMR Meeting Notes

The September 1 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:04 a.m. Cody Hilliard's minutes of the August 4 meeting were read and approved. Treas. Dan Brady's was not present with his monthly treasurer's report. The State School Christmas Lane exhibit was discussed, including the need to not wait until the last minute to start getting modules ready. The idea of a Thomas the Tank addition to the club's display was brought up, and members voted to authorize Ken R. to find a Thomas set on the internet and purchase it. Ken R. mentioned that someone from the State School had left a note on the club's door requesting a donation of "HO accessories", presumably for the layout we already

made and donated. The need to start putting on the new paneling was discussed, and members agreed to make an assessment on Tuesday night, Sept. 4, to see how we're going to do it and what else we need to buy. Dusty G. commented that we need to fix up our layout room better and especially eliminate clutter. Ken R. mentioned election of officers in October and suggested that anybody wanting to serve contact him and let him know. The train show in Temple is the weekend of Sept. 15, and there was a discussion about those interested in going carpooling to it. Ken E. said that Fal Falconi called him and gave him some railroad memorabilia for the club from the old Burlington depot. Dusty G. volunteered to inventory and catalogue it. The need for sending a thank you letter to Falconi was mentioned and noted by Cody. Ken E. said he found the club's Tax ID number, and it is now on file for use in purchasing items tax free for the club. Dusty G. announced that he will be out of town on the club's Open House date in November. Jim Gibson mentioned that an article he submitted to *Classic Toy Trains* magazine was published in the September issue, and left a copy of it for members to read. The meeting closed at 10:45 a.m. The next business meeting is scheduled for October 6.

Trio of ASMR Members Attend Centra Mod's Temple RR Show

On Sept. 15, Ken Riediger, Ken England and Dusty Garison car-pooled to Temple in Ken E's vehicle to attend the annual Centra-Mod train show. According to Dusty at least eight modular layouts were on display, and every major size was represented except S-scale. There was even a large Z-scale layout, and Dusty said one HO layout had a tiny video-cam in a railroad car that allowed visitors to see the view from the moving train on a TV screen. Ken R. said he saw a *Thomas* train set up low like we plan to do with a button for kids to push to make it run. In addition to plenty of layouts and vendors, the well-attended event also included train videos to watch and clinics. All three ASMR attendees agreed that the combination of a quality show and traveling to Temple and back with fellow ASMR members made for a good time overall. *Note: See layout photos from the Centra-Mod show on the next page.*



Here are two scenes from the Austin N-trak Club setup at the Temple show that you don't often see on a model train layout.

Above: A replica of Mount Rushmore with original plaster faces of the presidents. **Below:** An air museum with a number of vintage flying machines on display. Photos by Ken England



Paneling Project Underway -- Big Improvement For Layout

After getting together with several members on Sept. 4 and deciding what was needed to start the paneling project, Cody Hilliard purchased a number of 1X4 boards and split them on his table saw with the blade set at a 45-degree angle. The following Saturday, Ken England and Jim Gibson started cutting the paneling to size and installing some of the removable sections using the split 1X4s in an ingenious way that Cody came up with. After three work sessions, enough of the paneling is installed in the "horseshoe" area of the layout to show that it is going to make a huge improvement in overall layout appearance. The paneling also provides a more secure backing for DCC plugs, and the many removable sections will make hidden storage space beneath the layout readily accessible. It's a time-consuming project because of all the hand-fitting on corners, but the goal is to get the job done in time for the Club's Open House on November 10.

The Editor Speaks

Creating Rocky Scenery -- An Easy, Magical Process

Making scenery is one of the most interesting and entertaining aspects of the model railroad hobby, in my opinion. Recently, I've been redoing part of the scenery on a display layout corner module that I "adopted". I'm making space for a Walther's Route 66 motel and its animated electro-

luminescent sign. Part of the problem with the hill I made last year to elevate a church and graveyard scene was that it took up too much room. So, I started over with smaller pieces of blue insulation foam and plaster rock castings, and the result already looks like it will be a big improvement on my previous effort. My favorite part of the project happens after the rock castings are attached to the foam with adhesive, and stucco has been troweled on to cover the ground and blend all the terrain elements together. It's at that point I apply colored washes to the castings and watch them magically turn into extremely realistic rock formations. I learned the technique several years ago from a "how-to" scenery manual published by Woodland Scenics. It's simple, requires no artistic talents, and is virtually fool-proof. All you need is a sponge applicator, a water spray bottle, and some water-based acrylic washes (dyes). Originally, I used the dyes put out by Woodland Scenics, but this time I mixed up my own and they worked fine. I used black, burnt umber and yellow ochre; daubing them on randomly with the sponge applicator after spraying the rock castings lightly with water that has a drop or two of liquid soap in it. The thin washes of color flow down and around on the castings in natural patterns, leaving light and dark areas, streaks, and highlights that look completely natural. It's a magical sort of transformation that takes place right before your eyes. It reminds me of an animated intro sequence I've seen in Disney movies where a big brush moves across the screen leaving a trail of paint that runs down in drips that transform into recognizable shapes of people and objects related to the subject of the film. The first time I saw the Woodland Scenics rock technique was a demonstration at a train show. I was skeptical that I could get the same results at home, but I was so impressed I went ahead and bought a Woodland Scenics kit to try out. Wow, was I pleasantly surprised to find out that what looked too easy and foolproof to be real actually lived up to everything the demonstrator had claimed -- and then some! If you haven't had the fun of making rock scenery this way, you don't know what you're missing. I encourage you to give it a try on your layout, or even just a diorama, and experience for yourself what I'm talking about. JG

Model RR Meets & Events

Nov 10 – ASMR Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nov 10 - 11 – North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs 23rd Annual Train Show, Fort Worth, TX.

Dec 6 - 24 -- ASMR layout display at Abilene State School "Christmas Lane" event.