

KEEPING TRACK

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while the children put DND tracks together

Snow storm doesn't deter 2018 ASMR Open House visitors



Above (L to R): A young visitor watches as a toy train circles an oval track in a display reminiscent of a 1950s store window at Christmas that Jim Gibson built to showcase vintage Lionel trains and equipment donated to ASMR by Ray Maddox III in memory of his father and brother. Brio trains provided by ASMR member Cecil Walston were a big hit in the atrium again this year. ASMR member Luke Scott (R) presides over three loops of G-gauge trains he had running simultaneously in the atrium, including a big Thomas the Tank engine with googly eyes. This group of visitors appears to be completely mesmerized by an HO-scale version of Thomas the Tank (just out of the photo) being run for them by ASMR president Scott Fritz (R). Photos by Jim Gibson

The arrival of a snow storm on Saturday morning (Dec. 8) threatened to put a damper on ASMR's 2018 Open House, but fortunately many of the Abilene area's intrepid model train enthusiasts weren't prevented from attending by Mother Nature's wintery weather. Like the snow, visitors drifted in throughout the day, and many even came from nearby towns in the Big Country. Two especially popular attractions this year were the "Treasure Hunt" lists of scenic items visitors could try and find on the club's HO-scale layout, and a video cam on an HO-scale flat car that rode around in a train sending live views to a monitor set up for visitors to watch. One lady who was with a little boy went around ahead of the camera car and would pop up and wave at him from various places on the layout while he was watching for her on the monitor. He got so excited and enjoyed this little game so much he had everybody around him laughing and enjoying it with him. It was a real show stopper! Sunday's attendance was respectable, although improved weather didn't provide the kind of boost one might have expected. Overall, though, Open House 2018 has to be chalked up as a success based simply on how much ASMR members and visitors alike all seemed to enjoy themselves during both days of the event.

The Word From the Prez

Happy New Year, ASMR!

Open House this year started off with a wonderful layer of snow, which was a real surprise. Although we thought the wintery weather might keep visitors away, we still ended up with a great turnout in spite of Mother Nature's unexpected "event." For the second year, the Brio train set provided by Cecil Walston was a very popular attraction with the younger children who came. I saw many families spend over an hour out in the atrium

Looking back over 2018, we accomplished a lot, and things remain on an even keel despite news earlier in the year that temporarily made it look like our tenant status in our new location might be adversely affected by a change in landlords. Looking forward to 2019, I anticipate and expect to see us continue completing more scenery on the club layout and making it more operations friendly. During the year, we saw new members join us, and had some older ones leave, mostly due to moves. I hope to see more of the former, less of the latter, and an overall increase in membership. And last but not least,

I want to wish everyone a very Happy New Year!
Your President, Scott Fritz

KRBNRR Ops Session Report

The December KRBNRR Ops Session took place on the 15th. We had four operators, including Michael Wehmeyer, Cecil Walston, Chris Bisset, and his nephew William. We were able to run six train orders with no mistakes!

Chris ran the Luke City local, which is one of the more difficult operations on the roster. In fact, it's the one that Lonny Thompson (a U.P. engineer in real life) likes to run because of its extra-challenging switching maneuvers. Chris did an excellent job with it. Traffic moved smoothly throughout the session, and static electric shocks were available to all on a random basis at no extra charge! All in all we had a great time, and I look forward to seeing you at the next session on Jan. 19 at 1:30 pm.

ASMR Meeting Highlights

Here are the key items from the Dec. 1 business meeting opened at 10 a.m. by Pres. Scott Fritz. Treas. Ken England reported a club assets balance of \$5,720.80. Ken R. said that 80 of the fundraiser calendars have been sold so far, which is only just over half of the number ordered this year to sell.

Jim G. reported on the Nov. 30 Cultural Affairs Council's "Christmas in the Garden" event. He and other ASMR members operated the Storybook Express train and handed out mini posters for the club's Open House. Ken R. reported on his home layout Open House, which he said was not very well attended this year for unknown reasons. Members discussed the various displays that will be featured at the club's Open House on Dec. 8/9.

Ken E. said seven members are behind on dues for a total of \$325, and one member was dropped for being eight months in arrears. The status of efforts to acquire the Burlington Depot was mentioned, but Cecil W. who has been working on this was absent, so no news was available about it. The meeting closed at 10:25. Next meeting will be Jan. 5, 2019. **JG**

The Editor Speaks

Storybook Express a huge hit at "Christmas in the Garden" event

Thanks to mild temperatures on Nov. 30,

even a dust storm that blew in at opening time didn't prevent the 80-plus families who showed up for the Cultural Affairs Council's "Christmas in the Garden" event from having an enjoyable evening. And a big part of the fun was the Storybook Express, which took trainloads of families on round trips on North 6th in front of the Civic Center every ten minutes from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.



Above: The Storybook Express takes on another load of passengers during the "Christmas in the Garden" event. It ran filled to capacity every ten minutes for two and a half hours. Photo by Ken Riediger

I drove the train just about the whole time, while Scott Fritz, Cecil Walston and Luke Scott made sure passengers got on board and off safely. They also handed out wallet-sized poster cards with all the information about the ASMR Open House to try and generate visitors for our upcoming event. We also got plugs from a young man with a bullhorn who rode in the tender and gave a running commentary on live storybook scenes with actors set up for riders to see as we passed by along the North 6th train route. Ken Riediger showed up toward the end of the event and took photos, and also provided safety escort support as I drove the train back to its storage facility at South 7th and Oak Streets. If you would like to see a professional video of the event, just go to Youtube, do a search for "Christmas in the Garden in the Storybook Capital of America," and enjoy.

I hate to close on a sad note, but must report that long time ASMR member Mike Herald died on Dec. 28. Failing health had prevented him from participating in club activities for a long time, so newer members didn't have the good fortune of knowing him and sharing his passion for model trains. Those of us who did will miss Mike and his fellowship. **JG**