

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Jared Burleson documents Abilene railroad history



On Saturday, January 12, at about 8:05 a.m., Union Pacific locomotive 4141, an EMD SD70ACe with a distinctive Air Force 1 theme paint scheme honoring President George H. W. Bush, came barreling through Abilene as one of a four unit consist pulling a westbound, 100-car, mixed freight train. Alerted in advance that the loco was scheduled to pass through Abilene that morning, ASMR member Jared Burleson set up his camera near the Pioneer St. grade crossing. He and his grandmother, Gail Krien-Clearwater, who was visiting from New York, were waiting in a pickup truck to keep warm when they suddenly heard the crossing gate signal bell start dinging to announce the fast approaching train. Jared only had seconds to jump out of the truck and get going with his camera in time to catch the lead locomotives, including 4141, which he estimated passed by at about 60 mph. But, thanks to his quick action, we have the photo above of a memorable moment in Abilene railroad history. Loco 4141 was on a system-wide tour before being retired and placed on display at the Bush Presidential Library in College Station. This is the same engine that pulled President Bush's funeral train on Dec. 6, 2018, from Spring, near Houston, to College Station. The president reportedly even got to take control of 4141's throttle on at least one occasion after it was commissioned in his honor in 2005.

Photo by Jared Burleson

Word From the Prez

It's little things that amazed me at the Plano Train Show

January 19 brought in some pretty cold temperatures, but this didn't stop several of our members, including me, from making the trip to Plano for the Dallas Area Train Show sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs. We had several members who car pooled together for the trip, leaving the club at 7:00 a.m.

I always find it exciting to see all the different layouts that the Dallas area clubs set up. One of my favorites is the *T-Trak* layouts. It is amazing and surprising just how much scenery can be put in such small modules. Individual modules

are just over 12 X 14 inches, and it is incredible how much scenery each model railroader can get onto such a small area. And speaking of modules, I am looking forward to February and the chance to run some of my trains on our club layout modules.

Your President, Scott Fritz

Nine ASMR members motor to January Plano train show

Two three person car pools and three individuals made up the ASMR contingent that attended the Jan. 19 Plano train show. Jared Burleson and Robert Wiley rode with Scott Fritz, and Chris Bisset and Luke Scott traveled with Ken England. Cecil Walston, Wayne Smith, and Stephen Griffith and his family, went in three other vehicles.

After attending the train show, there was the usual pilgrimage to Discount Model Trains in Addison before the gang returned to Abilene.



Above: You don't normally expect to see this kind of European scenery, featuring what appears to be Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe, on a train layout in west Texas. Nevertheless, here it is in N-scale on the North Texas T-Trak pike that was on display at Plano.

Photo by Scott Fritz

KRBNRR Ops Session Report

The January Ops Session on the KRBN was held on the 12th due to the Plano Train show being held on the 19th, our normal weekend. We had four operators show up, including Cecil Walston, Michael Wehmeyer, Chris Bisset and Robert Wiley. We were able to run all but three trains to finish out the 24-hour "day" on the railroad. I finished the last three trains so we could start a fresh "new day" with plenty of trains for the February session.

When we are in full operations mode, each "engineer" should call the "dispatcher" (me) for permission to leave their current location and get orders to their next stop for work or wherever the dispatcher wants them stop or hold their train. This requires some role playing, but with the "dispatcher" and "engineers" all being in the same room, sometimes people forget their role, that is they are supposed to be running a train and the dispatcher is not in the cab with them. It can be funny when this happens, as it did with Michael at this session. When he got his train ready he walked over to me and asked, "What do you want me to do?" I shrugged my shoulders and said, "I don't know!" After the third or fourth time he asked, I patiently reminded him that he needed to call the "dispatcher" for permission to move his train. Later in the session he was told to hold at West Kannapolis for a train and he slowly crept through Lidbit, Carlaton and into Addison just before the other train arrived there. Luckily the other train came around the corner on single track so it had to

stop, avoiding a head-on crash. Michael looked at me as if to say, "Why is there another train on my track?" Again, I had to gently remind him that he hadn't received permission to leave West Kannapolis. His response was an embarrassed "OOPS!" Ah, the joys of running a railroad. Hope you can be here for the next session on Feb 16 at 1:30 p.m. See you then!

KR

The Editor Speaks

Bush funeral train both memorable and moving

Watching the Dec. 6 news coverage of the George H. W. Bush presidential funeral train as it rolled along through the piney woods and small towns of east Texas, I was reminded of the days when train travel was still popular, and the passing by of a train was a big deal.

As engine 4141 pulled the train taking Bush '41 on his last ride to College Station to be laid to rest at his Presidential Library, people all along the way stood by the tracks to wave, salute, take photos, or just pay silent tribute as they wiped away tears. Many brought their children to witness the historic event, the likes of which hasn't happened since President Eisenhower's funeral train in 1969. And regardless of your political leanings, you had to feel a little pang when you spotted former president Bush's flag-draped coffin behind the special plexi-glass viewing panels in the baggage car bearing his remains as it passed by.

JG

ASMR Meeting Highlights

Pres. Scott Fritz opened the Jan. 5 ASMR business meeting at 10:00 a.m. Sixteen members attended. Sec'y. Cody Hilliard read minutes of the Dec. 1 meeting, and Treas. Ken England reported a club assets balance of \$6,140.80. Both were approved.

Pres. Fritz reported on the annual ASMR (Dec. 8/9) Open House and thanked everyone who helped make it a success. Ken R. invited everyone to his monthly home layout Ops Session on Jan. 12.

Pres. Fritz asked if any of the members were interested in carpooling to the Plano Train Show on January 19. Several members expressed an interest and plans were made to meet at 7 a.m. at the club building. Members then spent some time discussing possibilities for a new building.

Kent Stark reported that Paul Schuck passed away recently. Members thought that we should send a sympathy card. Scott F. volunteered to purchase one and have it available at the next meeting for members to sign. The meeting closed at 10:24. Next meeting will be Feb. 2.

CH