

KEEPING TRACK

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The Word From the Prez

New members, new technology, new ventures are all happening

March has been a good month for ASMR. Most noteworthy, we added five new members since the last meeting. As we hoped when we moved, our new location is apparently starting to bring in new members, which I am really glad to see happening.

We have had a couple of annoying little hiccups involved with the process of adding new technology to the layout, but fortunately it's nothing that will keep us from being able to run trains. The new Wi-Fi wireless interface has caused some issues with the regular controllers, so it has been removed until we can consult with Digitrax technical support directly about this issue. The new DCS240 command station has also had some issues since we received it, and again we will discuss those problems directly with Digitrax tech support for solutions.

Over the last month we have made some great progress in cleaning out the back room and preparing it to be used for staging track and a work area instead of bulk (junk) storage. I am looking forward in the next few months to getting the start of a small museum in place to display some of the history of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. I am also excited about our collaborative arrangement with the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council to provide support for operating their newly purchased American Freedom Go Train at several annual public events. **Your President, Scott Fritz**

ASMR gains six members

Nobody seems to know for certain if it is a record or not, but having six members join ASMR in such a short span of time recently is certainly newsworthy in any event. Included in the group is an interesting variety of ages, backgrounds and model railroad interests.

David Senecal is a brand new Air Force 2nd Lieutenant in the Civil Engineers at Dyess AFB. Don't expect to see him at the club for awhile, because he just got sent TDY for several weeks of training at Wright-Patterson AFB. When David is

home, he is building an N-scale layout. **James Cauthen** and his stepson **Brycen Keid** (age 10) are from Clyde. They like "Amtrak and diesels," and are also interested in S scale.



Above: *William (Will) Hill, one of six members who joined ASMR recently, lines up his Union Pacific diesel locomotive to go for a run on the club layout.*

Photo by Jim Gibson

William Hill, who goes by Will, also lives in Clyde, and is 15 years old. He says he likes O and HO-scale, and he definitely enjoys running his HO trains on the ASMR layout, and making his own sound effects while doing it. **Charles Lapole** and his son **Chris** (age 13) are Abileneans, and like both HO and N-scale. They have an N-scale home layout in progress. If Charles seems familiar, it's probably because he is returning to ASMR after being forced to drop out for awhile due to health issues. It's good to have him back, and we want to extend a warm ASMR welcome to *all* the new members. **JG**

KRBNRR Ops Session Report

The latest Ops Session on my Kannapolis River and Buffalo Northern RR home layout took place on March 17, with four operators and one railfan present. We even had one from prison! (Note: Cecil Walston is currently in training to be a TDCJ prison guard. Ed.) The operators included Cecil, Alex Wold, Jared Burluson and Chris Bisset. Our railfan was Scott Fritz. The group completed five train orders during the three hour session.

I don't recall any significant problems with the operations, other than Jared leaving a switch or

two in the wrong position. ☺ Of course, his fellow operators had to give him a hard time about that, all in good humor. Overall, it was a productive and enjoyable session. No further reportable upgrades to the layout were made since the previous get-together. Hope to see you next time on April 21 at 1:30 p.m. **KR**

ASMR Meeting Highlights

V.P. Ken Riediger opened the Feb. 3. ASMR Business Meeting at 10:00 a.m. Cody Hilliard's Feb. 3 secretary's report was approved. Ken England's treasurer's report was not ready because he had been ill. Ken R. mentioned recent new members (See article on this subject elsewhere. Ed.). He also discussed progress on the layout, including trackwork to fix kinks and installation of tracks and switches in lower yard areas. Cody said bus wires are nearly complete all the way around the layout.



Above: Ken Riediger focuses his undivided attention on some track work in the lower level area near the helix. Photo by Jim Gibson

Regarding the calendar fundraiser project, Ken R. said that committee members need to meet and start working on it soon. No information was available on overdue dues. Ken R. said his next home layout Ops Session will be Mar. 17. Ken E. said the first event where ASMR volunteers will be helping to run the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council's new street train will be April 21. Ken R. said he has found a DCS-240 command station, power booster, etc. (the items he was authorized to obtain), and the cost will be \$337. Cecil Walston said he will be gone for the next six weeks because of training requirements for his new job as a TDCJ prison guard. The meeting closed at 10:50 a.m. Next meeting will be April 7. **JG**

The Editor Speaks

Adding off-beat, quirky things makes layout more interesting

I consider myself a pretty serious model railroader, and for the most part I strive for scale realism and detail in my structures and scenes. But there's a mischievous side to me that likes to surprise visitors at times with things they don't expect to see. There are various ways this can be done. Some are subtle, some jump out and grab the viewer.

Probably the most subtle are signs on businesses that are parodies of something or a play on words. For example, I just put a factory building on the club layout, and the sign on it in red letters says "Texas Chainsaw Mfg. Co." I've already got feedback that it's a bit macabre. Maybe, but I think it's pretty tame by today's standards. Ironically, I don't even like, and haven't seen the kind of "slasher" movie the sign parodies. But nearly everybody has heard of it, and the sign is definitely an attention-getter. Incidentally, for some time, I've had a "Texas Chainsaw Mfg. Co." factory building on my home layout, complete with a miniature chain saw sign that I carved up on the roof.

Historic Note: The model railroader who was most famous for using catchy names on his layout back in the 1960's and '70s was John Allen. In fact, the name of his legendary, often publicized layout itself was a phonetic spelling pun or parody, the "Gorre and Daphetid Line" (pronounced Gory and Defeated).

Another way to catch a viewer's attention is with something out of scale or out of context. For example, I have some G-scale (or larger) rats lurking ominously inside the door of a feed store on my O-gauge home layout.



Above: The out of scale and out of context Loch Ness Monster is an attention-getting character on the club layout. Photo by Jim Gibson

You may have noticed the out of scale *and* out of context caricature of a Loch Ness Monster that I placed in the pond in the canyon area of the club layout. So "Nessie" won't be too lonesome, I've been thinking about adding a replica I have of Stonehenge somewhere nearby. Besides being attention-getters, these kind of eye-catchers should be good additions to our treasure hunt list. In any event, my main goal is to try and add more fun to our already great hobby. **JG**