

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 14, Issue 3

May 1, 2018

Editor: Jim Gibson



Taking a ride on the Comanche & Indian Gap Railroad

This impressive 1/8th scale (7.5" track gauge) outdoor railroad was built in the late 1970's by the late Roy Pickard and his sons on their 150 acre ranch near Priddy, TX. The 7,500 feet of point-to-point mainline track meanders nearly three (real) miles through cuts and fills in low hills, navigates wooded areas, and crosses creeks on trestles. It's designed to operate like a real railroad with CTC, passing sidings, and freight and passenger trains all running on orders. Track repair and upkeep are done by volunteers, and operators come from all over America to run their trains, especially during the annual spring and fall meets. Since Pickard's death, Danny Click from Brownwood has become the "ramrod" for the C&IG's demanding upkeep and is event coordinator. He has rightly observed, "Most folks don't work as hard as we play."

This spring's meet was held from Apr. 23 – 29, and three ASMR members attended. Two are pictured in the upper left behind a beautiful replica of a T&P "muley" caboose: Pres. Scott Fritz (L) and Chris Bisset (R), who is both a C&IG volunteer worker and large scale train operator. Cecil Walston (not pictured) was the third ASMR attendee. According to Chris, there were 90 or more participants during the week-long event. The photos above provide just a small sample of the wide variety among the 25 to 30 trains that were running at various times.

Photos courtesy of Scott Fritz

The Word From The Prez

Riding 1/8th scale trains in Comanche was a real thrill

April was a fun month for me in this great hobby of model railroading. I was blessed with the chance to spend a weekend enjoying the Comanche and Indian Gap outdoor model railroad. Scale-wise this operation is a big step up from what we do in the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders. It's built to 1/8th scale and has model trains that are big enough for people to actually ride on!

I drove over to Comanche on Friday, and after lunch was given the opportunity to ride out on a train with a couple of other guys to pick up cars that were scattered around the layout. We ended up bringing five freight cars back to the yard. I also rode a couple of other trains around the layout Friday evening and Saturday. It was great seeing Chris Bisset and Cecil Walston there, too.

I have to give a big "Thank You" to our hosts, Danny Click and his family, who were recent visitors to our ASMR layout.

Your President, Scott Fritz

KRBN Ops Session Report

The April 21 KRBNRR operating session on my home layout was held with six operators in attendance. They included Jared Burleson, Dusty and Travis Garison, Cecil Walston, Alex Wold, and Tom Rutherford. Tom has been absent from operating and the club for a while due to health reasons, so it was especially nice to see him back at the throttle.

Each operator ran just one train order this time. After the next session I will do a total reset of the RailOP program because that will be the end of the “24 hour day”. Then I will have to go through the layout and reconcile where all the cars are, and update the program. The layout seems to be operating better overall, but we always seem to find at least one minor “Murphy” type glitch during every session. I will keep tinkering with it as time permits. Hope to see you at the next session on May 19 at 1:30. **KR**

ASMR Meeting Highlights

Pres. Scott Fritz opened the Apr. 7 business meeting at 10:03 a.m. Jim Gibson gave the Mar. 3 secretary’s report in Cody Hilliard’s absence, and Treas. Ken England reported an asset balance of \$5,009.28. Ken E. said the Cultural Affairs Committee’s April 21 event involving the “street train” is still supposedly on schedule. Pres. Fritz commented on back room clean-up progress and thanked Chris Bisset for his work on it. The calendar fund raising project was discussed and committee members agreed to meet and select photos.

Ken R. said his next Ops Session will be Apr. 21, and told members he is working on getting problems with the DCS 240 equipment fixed. The ASMR Facebook page and web page were discussed, and Scott F. agreed to work on getting both of them sorted out and updated with at least the current basic club information.

Members voted to replace three Ranger area modules that are not in the best shape. Ken E. asked members if they had seen any boxes containing buildings from Jim Norwood’s layout that were purchased for the club in January? Scott F. proposed getting rid of the rolling office chairs and purchasing 12 folding chairs, and members approved. Chris Bisset talked about a miniature live steam meet in Comanche from Apr. 23 – 29, and passed out attendance

applications. The meeting closed at 10:31. Next meeting will be May 5.

The Editor Speaks

Time has flown in our new home, but layout progress has slowed

It’s kind of hard to believe, but this time a year ago ASMR had just made arrangements to lease space at 598 Westwood and we were starting to prepare it to accommodate our club’s train layout. The year has really flown by, and a lot has happened, including the big move and getting an even larger layout than we had up and running in time for our Open House last December.

Initially, there was lots of excitement and enthusiasm among ASMR members for working on the layout and getting things ready between the time of the move and the Open House. But it seems to me that some of our original fervor has faded in recent months. The result is we have a huge layout we can run trains on, but it has many unfinished areas without any signs of activity. This includes basics like unpainted backdrops and uninstalled fascia boards. Many areas have no scenery at all, and could benefit from at least the bare plywood being covered with green, brown, or camouflage-colored paint until detailed scenery is installed.

I suspect some of you may be interested in tackling a project, but are reluctant to do it because you don’t feel like you have enough knowledge or skill. If that’s the case with you, please don’t let it keep you from getting involved. Talk to me or one of the other members who has been around awhile about what you might be interested in trying your hand at, and I’ll bet we can get you started and help you to succeed. Nobody was born knowing how to do all the things there are to do in building a layout, but anybody with reasonable intelligence and manual dexterity can learn and succeed with a little help from their friends.

One of the big advantages of a club layout is that the efforts of numerous members can be combined to accomplish more than any of the individuals could do on their own in the same amount of time. But that miracle won’t happen with the ASMR layout unless we all seriously pitch in to whatever extent our time and talents permit. Give some serious thought to taking full advantage of your membership in ASMR by getting involved. I can tell you from personal experience that you will be glad you did. **JG**