

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Jim Gibson

The Word From the Prez

Life Goes On, and So Does ASMR

Life goes on. Yes, life goes on, and it is interesting to see how things keep changing. I was at an auction the other day for the estate of one of our former members, and was amazed to see all the items he had collected. I came across items that I had built, others I had repainted, and still others that I had renumbered. I also saw many items that Clyde had purchased from another one of our members.

As time has marched on, we have seen our membership grow and shrink as new model railroaders come on board and older members go to the railroad yard in the sky. During that same time, others have moved away, and some simply lost interest in the hobby, although that is hard for me to imagine. For all those reasons and more, things keep changing but life goes on.

Speaking of changes, one major one is about to take place at ASMR. The change I am speaking of is the enlarging and rebuilding of the club's large HO-scale layout. Cody has worked long and hard on a track plan, and several of our members are very excited about this project and ready to get moving on the building process.

Meanwhile, others are wanting to build more modules and make improvements on existing modules for our portable display layout. It certainly is exciting to see what changes life brings for ASMR, as life goes on.

Your President, Ken Riediger

ASMR Meeting Highlights

Sec'y. Cody Hilliard called the April 3 business meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Sixteen members were present or arrived after the meeting started. Hilliard read the minutes for the March 6 meeting and they were approved. Treas. Ken England Reported an account balance of \$2,582.25, and total club assets of \$4,241.75.

Cody started the meeting by saying that Pres. Ken Riediger was absent because his step daughter was in labor. He invited everyone to Ken R's operating session on April 24.

Ken England had no update on the proposed Train Show. Regarding availability of the space next door to use while the layout is being rebuilt,

Ken said he hadn't heard anything new but would look into it. He then reported that he had talked with a Mall of Abilene representative and that they might let the club set up the portable layout for display in a vacant shop space until they could rent it out. He is waiting on a callback from the manager.

Cody did a presentation on the detailed plans he has prepared for the new club layout. Members seemed pleased with the design and a discussion ensued on ideas and changes that might be incorporated into it.

Lyn Thomson asked if the club would like him to install decoders in some of the donated locomotives. Members voted to buy five decoders and have Lyn install them. The meeting was closed by Cody at 11:15 am, and the next meeting is scheduled for May 1.

Ken R's April Ops Session Report

The April 24 Op session for Ken Riediger's KRBN (home layout) railroad was once again well attended. Seven people showed up, one for his first session. Among this month's operators, Cody Hilliard, Jim Gibson, Joe Stewart and Lonnie Thompson were old hands. Ken England showed up but didn't run this time, and Jerry Wagamon was a first time operator.

Everybody did a good job of following their computer-generated train orders, with only a few errors along the way. Joe tried his hand at the yardmaster job and found out there is more work than it appears. Eight different trains ran during the 2 1/2 hour session. Ken said that he felt like things are smoothing out in the operations, even though a few minor problems did crop up with the Rail Op program. All in all, Ken rated it a very good session and said he is looking forward to the next one in May.

Editor's Note: One thing that added a lot to Ken's Ops Session this month was toward the end when Lonnie Thomson, who is a real-life locomotive engineer for UP, shared some "war stories" with us about how things go when you are operating the 1:1 scale trains. When things go wrong with a real train, they go wrong in a big way, and Lonny has been involved in some pretty spectacular "scrapes", which he thankfully didn't cause and didn't get hurt in. It's really

fascinating from a model railroader's perspective to hear about life in the world of full-scale railroading.

JG

The Editor Speaks

Estate Sale Offers Chances For Good Buys & Reflection

On April 24, I attended an auction for the estate of former ASMR member Clyde Gayoso, who died in August, 2009. Clyde was a super nice guy, and I liked him a lot. Normally, I steer clear of estate sales of any kind because it puts me too much in touch with my mortality to see a person's lifetime collection of "stuff" set out for strangers to paw over and purchase. It's even worse if you knew the person whose property is being sold off. And, at my age it's kind of easy to see that sort of event not all that far down the road. At any rate, I broke my personal rule about estate sales not simply because Clyde's trains were up for auction, but because there was one particular item I wanted, but have not been able to find anyplace -- namely a Walthers Wind Turbines kit. I wanted the turbines so I can make a West Texas wind farm diorama for our club's modular display layout.

Not having been to an auction in many years, I had forgotten how intense they can get, especially if there is something you want and other bidders happen to be after it, too. Fortunately, there wasn't much competition for the box of stuff that the Walthers kit was in, and I was able to win it. I have to admit that my anxiety level was pretty high by the time bidding finally started on that box. It was just about the last of the train items to be auctioned, and Clyde had a whole bunch of model train stuff, as well as quite a few die cast vehicles that were sold ahead of it. On top of that, the actual bidding on train items didn't even begin until after dozens of lots (groupings) of tools and other garage and household items were auctioned off, bit by bit for more than two hours.

I guess the thing that really hits home with an event like Clyde's estate auction, as well as any

other situation where a model railroader's stuff is being sold by a widow or other member(s) of the family, is that it's obvious nobody in that family had any interest in the hobby their loved one was interested in and spent lots of time and money on. That's kind of sad to me, but it's all too often the case, simply because people, including our kids, tend to have different hobbies and interests than we do.

One thing that made me feel a little better about the auction of Clyde's trains was a nice comment made by his son Jimmy to some of us from the club. At one point he told us he was glad to see that his dad's trains had gone to good homes and people who would enjoy and appreciate them like his dad did. I guess if nobody in your family is interested in taking up where you left off with your trains after you're gone, then that's just about the next best thing that can happen.

JG

Club Library Items Should Be Returned

During a preview the afternoon before Clyde Gayoso's recent estate auction, Ken Riediger ran across several videos that Clyde had borrowed from the club but evidently never got the chance to return after his health started failing badly. When Ken diplomatically brought this situation to the attention of Clyde's son, he graciously told Ken to take the videos and return them to the ASMR Library.

There's a lesson to be learned from this. Tapes, books or other items borrowed from the Club Library should be returned promptly. If YOU have anything checked out, and you are finished with it, now is a good time to check it back in so other members may have the opportunity of using it for their research or entertainment.

JG

Model RR Meets & Events

May 20 – 23 – Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, Texas.

June 02 – 06 – Lone Star Region 2010 Alamo Rails, San Antonio, Texas.

I am always on the lookout for news items and photos for this newsletter. If you have something to share with other ASMR members, please give me a call at 795-0140, or email me at jimandemma@sbcglobal.net. You can draft something up, or just provide me the facts and I'll do all the writing for you. Thanks, Jim Gibson