

# THE EDITOR SPEAKS – TRAINING FOR FUN

I was delighted to attend and participate in the recent Abilene Railroad Festival. Our friend and fellow ASMR member Corrender Taylor, who works for the Abilene Preservation League, was one of the organizers, which by all accounts, was a great success.

By the way, he is also the guest curator for “Full Steam Ahead,” a collection of Texas & Pacific artifacts now on display at the Grace Museum, as well as the railroad exhibit at the Museum of the West Texas Frontier in Stamford.

Trains have been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. In fact, my mom used to tease me that I could say “choo-choo” before I ever learned to say “mama.” My brothers and I used to play with a push-it-along toy train set with snap-together track – kind of 50s version of a Brio kid’s playset but made of plastic.

And of course, every trip to our grandparent’s home in Grayburg included walking down to the tracks to watch for trains on the Missouri Pacific and put a penny on the rails.

I loved everything about trains: the sensory overload of being trackside at a close (but safe) distance as it went thundering past; the noise, speed and power; the smells of creosote and hot steel; the friendly wave of the conductor from the caboose; the hypnotic “click-CLACK-click-CLACK” of the wheels as they crossed the rail joints; the romance of travel and faraway places.

Naturally, my fascination with trains has led me to appreciate railroad-related movies, songs, and more. Some of my favorite train movies include –

- **Union Pacific** (1939). A sprawling epic directed by Cecil B. DeMille. Joel McCrea and Barbara Stanwyck are trying to help the Union Pacific complete America’s first transcontinental railroad, while Brian Donlevy and Robert Preston work to stop it.
- **The Great Locomotive Chase** (1956). A Disney production starring Fess Parker and Jeffrey Hunter, and the true story of a group of Union spies during the Civil War who try to steal a Confederate locomotive.
- **The Train** (1964). Burt Lancaster stars as a locomotive engineer who is actually a member of the French Underground, trying to prevent the Nazis from stealing a trainload of French art treasures.
- **Murder on the Orient Express** (1974). An Agatha Christie novel about a murder on a luxury European train trapped by a mountain snowstorm. Whodunit?

- **Silver Streak** (1976). Gene Wilder is a book editor trying to get from Los Angeles to Chicago, when he meets first Jill Clayburgh, and later, Richard Pryor. Comedy, romance, and mystery follow. The music by Henry Mancini is also gorgeous.

The old steam locomotives had a distinct syncopated rhythm and there were PLENTY of songs that captured that feel. Most of these songs have been recorded by multiple artists, but here are some of my top picks and the versions that I enjoy most –

- **500 Miles** – Peter, Paul and Mary
- **City of New Orleans** – Willie Nelson
- **Hobo’s Meditation** – The Trio
- **Life’s Railway to Heaven** – Johnny Cash and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
- **Smoke Along the Track** – Emmylou Harris

I especially love the lyrics of the Grammy-winning *City of New Orleans*, written by the late Steve Goodman –

*And the sons of Pullman porters  
and the sons of engineers  
Ride their father’s magic carpet made of steel –  
Mothers with their babes asleep  
Are rocking to the gentle beat,  
And the rhythm of the rails is all they feel.*

Lots of railroads earned nicknames that showed a mixture of familiarity and contempt. The East Tennessee and Western North Carolina was called “The Tweetsie” because of its shrill whistle, but it was also known as “Eat Taters and Wear No Clothes.” The Waco, Beaumont, Trinity & Sabine (yes, there really was such a line) had such poor trackwork they were called, “Wobbly, Bobbly, Turnover and Stop.” The Weatherford, Mineral Wells and Northwestern was referred to as “Whiskey, More Whiskey, and No Water.” And the Houston, East and West Texas? That road was “Hell, Either Way Taken.”

It’s hard for us today to imagine what a major impact railroads had on American life. The train station was where everyone met to hear the news of the day. It was where you greeted loved ones coming for a visit, and sometimes, it was the place you remembered saying a final goodbye to someone who went off to war and never came home.

As for me, there is still no sound like a lonesome steam whistle on a rainy night as it echoes through the Piney Woods in my part of East Texas. And in the words of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, “there isn’t a train I wouldn’t take, no matter where it’s going.”

Your Editor for this Issue,

*Dusty*

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 20, Issue 8

October 1, 2024

Issue Editor: Dusty Garrison

## Abilene Railroad Festival — A Great Success!

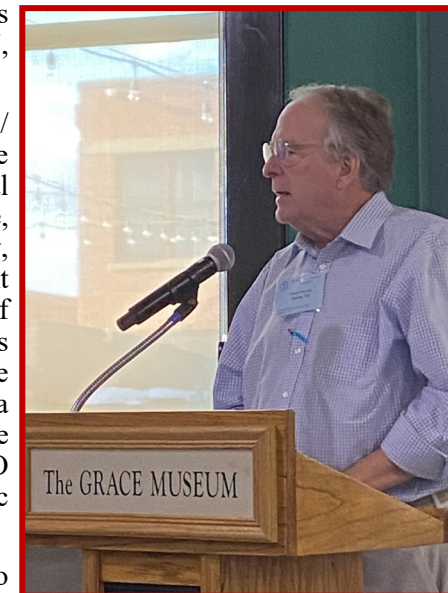


Author Steve Goen (left) and photographer Kenneth Fitzgerald chat before Steve’s presentation on Saturday.

The 2024 Abilene Railroad Festival was held in downtown Abilene, September 5-7, and was a well-attended success!

Beginning at the Abilene Visitor Center / T&P Depot, and including the Grace Museum, the Elks Building, the National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature, Frontier Texas, the Abilene Public Library, Vletas Candies, the Historic Paramount Theatre, the Community Foundation of Abilene, food trucks, and more, there was something for everyone to enjoy. The ASMR contributed to the festivities with a large modular HO display upstairs in the Elks Building, along with N scale and O scale layouts, and other model and historic exhibits.

See inside for more pictures. Thanks to Corrender and his team for putting on such a great event, and here’s to an even better one in 2025!



Tony Privett, of the Slaton Harvey House, presented slides by Bill Wagner about the Flying Scotsman locomotive.

### The Word from The Prez

#### Time Savers: A Blast from the Past, Or Is It the Future?

While working the 2024 Abilene Rail festival, I had a lady approach me saying that some of the pictures in our photo album from the first Abilene Rail Festival in 1991, were pictures of she and her son “working at / running” a “Time Saver” display that they had built. They displayed and operated “The Time Saver” every year the Rail Festival operated in the 1990s. Their display is modeled after John Allen’s version from 1975. She and her brother’s families have been involved in model railroading for years and are still active in the NMRA. After three different conversations they have decided to loan the “Time Saver” to the ASMR for display and use at any upcoming events we may be involved in.

As you can see by the picture, this TS has five switches and five locations for moving cars to and from. There are always several ways to switch cars with the tie-breaker being who moves them the quickest without mishap. Also, there are some fixed rules to keep the playing field level. This TS runs off DC, has manual switches and manual uncoupling. It uses 40’ Cars (normally boxcar, gondola, flat, tanker, and an enclosed hopper car), and a locomotive no longer than an SW1200.

The maximum speed in both directions is preset. Also, no yard lead will hold more than three cars, including the locomotive, while some yard leads will only hold two cars including the locomotive. There are several more nuances to how the TS can be run, but we’ll go over those another time.

As the club continues to add different options for running trains and learning how trains operate in real life, I’m looking forward to the TS being set out on a Saturday, and especially at our upcoming Christmas Open House. It’s a great way to add another dimension to operating yours or the club’s layout.



**Your Prez,  
Dan**



*From top: ASMR President Dan Schueler shows the club exhibits to a group of school children visiting the festival; a fascinated train watcher; children attending the Abilene Public Library's storytime; and below, part of the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature's exhibit on children's books featuring trains. (Some photos from Corrender Taylor; others from the Abilene Reporter-News.)*



## ASMR Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the ASMR was opened at approximately 10:00, August 31, 2024, by President Dan Schueler. The following members were present or arrived after the meeting had started: Dan Schueleler, Ken Riediger, Fred Rogge, David Hills, Jim Gibson, Cody Hilliard, Kent Stark, Jon Prestridge, Jonathan Scherr, Scott Strickler, Charlie Chinn, Terry Andrew, Carlos Chacon, Dragon Chacon.

### Minutes

The minutes of the August meeting were read by Secretary Cody Hilliard. A motion to approve the Secretary's report was made by Jim Gibson and seconded by Ken Riediger, with all members in agreement.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ken Riediger reported that the balance of the account as of September 1 was \$523.94, with total club assets equaling \$7,717.94. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Cody Hilliard and seconded by Jon Prestridge, with all members in agreement.

### Old Business

Dan started the meeting by bringing up past dues. We had four members past due for a total of \$495.00.

Dan brought up the renovation of the layout. It was tabled due to limited time of the meeting.

Dan reported that Ken's operating session would be September 21.

Ken still had CT Kelly and Ken England items for sale and was planning on selling some of it up at the Train Fest.

Dan also reported that we have the calendars from the printer, and we have already sold 35 copies.

Dan reminded everyone about Train Fest which would be at the Elks Lodge on September 5 through 7. He mentioned that we would start moving things over after the meeting.

Terry had nothing to report on the signal system.

We also did not have any updates on Abilene Gives.

Cody reported that he had contacted Chris about the camera system, and he recommended that we replace it. Chris was going to look into acquiring us a new system.

Dan tabled the maintenance on the Ride on Train until next meeting.

**(See MINUTES, page three)**

## KRBNRR Ops Session Report

The September OP Session was held on the 21st with three operators and three railfans present. The three operators were Cecil, Reed and Jonathan. The railfans were Reed's mom, Amanda Leggett, and his grandmother, Debra Pickett, and Billy Barrow. The three operators were able to run five trains and start a sixth before I had to end the session at 4:15.

Reed's three trains were basically run-through trains with very little or no switching (the way he wants it, at least for now). He also made his first error of his young model railroading career – he forgot to switch out cabooses in Kannapolis on his first of two grain trains he ran. His third train was a passenger train. He got to run it being Dusty wasn't with us. Jonathan ran one train and started a second before time ran out. That train will need to be dog-catched. Cecil got to run one train and ended up having two of his train's cars bad-ordered. The only glitches of the session were Cecil's bad-order car derailment, and waiting on other trains to clear an area for the next train to get in to do its work.

Hope to see you at the next session on October 19th at 1:30 pm.

KR



*(Left) Jewellee Kuenstler of the Museum of the West Texas Frontier in Stamford, with part of their exhibit.*

*(Below) Dan Schueler describes part of his display of railroad lanterns and related items*



## ASMR Meeting Minutes (Continued from page 2)

### New Business

Dan sadly brought up that several members had passed away last month: Eugene Danielski and Wayne Smith.

Dan reminded everyone of election of new officers next month. He asked if anyone would like to volunteer to serve, with no members taking him up on that. David made a motion to nominate current officers; this was seconded by Fred, with all members in agreement.

With no further business, the meeting was closed at 10:20 by President Dan Schueler.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Cody Hilliard, Secretary  
Abilene Society of Model Railroaders**

*BELOW: Riding the train at Frontier Texas*

*BOTTOM: Jim Gibson demonstrates the three-track Lionel-type layout for an audience of school children*

