

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Dusty Garison

Next Clinic: Customizing Rail Cars with Graffiti



Rail car graffiti – is it destructive vandalism or beautiful urban art? Regardless of your opinion about graffiti, it is a fact of life in today's railroading.

ASMR member and expert model builder **Scott Strickler** will present a clinic on applying graffiti to our rail cars and buildings. We appreciate Scott sharing his expertise with the club and putting on this "how-to" program. Even if you aren't into modern railroading, you're bound to pick up an idea or two that you can use on your layout.

Don't miss this clinic Saturday morning, September 6, immediately following the club business meeting.

Ramblings from your Prez

Celebrating Railroad History

A dream that many people in the Abilene area have dreamed of, attempted, and continue to work towards, is a local permanent home representing the history of railroads and how the railroad was instrumental in the founding of Abilene and the surrounding Big Country.

On a recent trip to visit family, my wife and I planned a stop on the way at Boone, Iowa. It's a small town (12,400 pop.) about 45 minutes north of Des Moines, for a day of railroading. The town was on the Chicago Northwestern RR, now UP. We were drawn by their Rail Explorers, 2-and 4-seat pedal-assist Rail Cars on a 12.5-mile round trip. Yes, we peddled by corn and soybeans, but also over a 160' high bridge and over the Des Moines River. It was a great time and not as hard to pedal as you might think! This was over track abandoned by the CNW. The line still is connected to the UP mainline in town. This allows them to move their numerous rail cars and engines out for service and visiting equipment as needed.

We knew there were trains that ran on the line, also but to our surprise, they have at least four

diesel and one steam locomotives, along with a range of heavyweight and lightweight passenger cars including two dining cars, not to mention four different cabooses! We decided to take another ride on the afternoon train with a ride in the caboose. It was a Rock Island wide vision. This time we had a great view from the high seats in the caboose and actually traveled an additional 1.5 miles each way. Between the two rides and after, we walked through the museum. It's a 9000 sq. ft. facility they built with a fully functional depot office building that was donated and installed as the museum was being built. Over the years they've created a very complete overview of all components of railroading, from a Suburban Hi-Railer to conductor brass buttons.

For more information visit these websites: www.bsvrr.com; www.railexplorers.net; and nrhs.com/chapters/iowa.

After seeing what this small town has been able to build over four decades, I have no doubt that a city like Abilene will be able to achieve their goals in creating a tourist draw while highlighting the railroad history of the region.

**Your Prez,
Dan**

(Related pictures, pg. 4)

ASMR Meeting Minutes August 2025

A meeting of the ASMR was opened at approximately 10:00, August 2, 2025, by President Dan Schueler. The following members were present or arrived after the meeting had started: Ken Riediger, Scott Strickler, Dusty Garison, Cody Hilliard, Dan Schueler, Jon Prestridge, Terry Andrew, David Hills, Amanda Leggett, Reed Leggett, Jerry Wagamon, Cecil Walston, Jim Gibson.

Minutes

The minutes of the July 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 August 1 was \$706.57, with total club assets equaling \$9447.36. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Jim Gibson and seconded by Jon Prestridge, with all members in agreement.

Old Business

- Dan started the meeting by asking if there were any updates on the layout. Ken mentioned that he cut in a switch near oil station.
- Ken reported that we had six members past due, for a total of \$375.00.
- Ken and Jerry have some trains for sale.
- Ken's operating session would be on August 16.
- Ken reported that the calendars had been ordered, and they cost \$434.
- Dan then moved on to the security camera system. Cody mentioned that he was planning on installing the fifth camera after the meeting.
- Ken did not have anything to report on the signs.
- Since Kent was absent the clinic update was tabled.
- Dan discussed more updates on Railfest.
- Dan and Ken reported that the bathroom is still off-limits to the club. The club discussed different ideas on getting the bathroom back and how to maintain them if we do.
- The issue of Facebook came up and Jon had some recommendations, and He would look into it.

New Business

- Ken reminded everyone that the election of new officers was coming up and we need to have nomination at the next business meeting.
- Ken also reminded everyone that we had upcoming Open Houses.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 10:57 by President Dan Schueler.

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

KRBN RR August OP Session by Ken Riediger

The August operating session on the KRBN RR was held on August 16. We had five operators – included two rookies! – and four railfans. Our crew this round was Cecil, Lonnie, Jonathan, and James and Samuel Hanks from Inadale, Texas. Our railfans were Dusty and Nate Hanks, with Amanda and Jamie Leggett being seen later.

Each rookie was paired with an experienced crew member and they did very well. In checking over each of the work orders performed there were no errors found. This made our customers happy which in turn made our management very happy. One of our railfans was seen taking pictures so you may see a photo or two show up somewhere (*Editor's note – see below!*). Hopefully our new crew members will be back around and we will get to see more of them. They were very pleasant to work with. We are always welcoming new crew members as there is plenty of traffic that needs to move.

Our Challenger UP 3985 got fired up and our young engineer "Reed" got to run him in the yard to let it stretch its legs out. Hope to see you at the next session on September 20 at 1:30 pm.

Below – Dispatcher Ken and Operator Reed discuss a switching move on the interchange track at Angela Springs.





Abilene Railroad Festival
September 12 & 13, 2025
(All events, vendors and participants are tentative and subject to change.)
 by Corrender Taylor

Friday, September 12 –

6:00 PM – Reception at Frontier Texas!

(Food & refreshments furnished by H-E-B)

6:30 PM – Presentation by Marita Richards –

The Harvey Girls: The Women Who Tamed the West

(Closing address to follow)

Saturday, September 13 –

(All presentations at Frontier Texas!)

10:00 AM – Gerald Hook

Rails to Desdemona: Wichita Falls, Ranger & Fort Worth Railway

11:00 AM – Dusty Garrison

Street Railways of the Big Country

12:00 Noon – Lunch

1:00 PM – Wichita Valley Chapter of NRHS – TBD

2:00 PM – Dennis Hogan

Midland's Other Railroad: Midland & Northwestern Railway

3:00 PM – Steve Allen Goen

The Cisco & Northeastern Railway

4:00 PM – OPEN SLOT AVAILABLE

5:00 PM – OPEN SLOT AVAILABLE

Participating Venues:

Frontier Texas!

The Grace Museum

NCCIL

Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau

Elk's Arts Center

Abilene Public Library

Interactive Booths and Exhibitors:

Baird, TX T&P Depot Museum

Lehnis Railroad Museum

Railway Museum of San Angelo

Museum of the West Texas Frontier

Buffalo Gap Historic Village

Swenson House Abilene

Seven And One Book Store

Wichita Valley Chapter of NRHS

Daughters of the American Revolution

Hispanic Business Council

Frontier Women's Group

Model Railroads:

Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Live Entertainment:

AISD Revolution - Early Fiddle Music

Donna Ingham - Tale Teller and Author

Activities:

Surveyor Challenge

Master Mechanic Scavenger Hunt

Cookie Decorating

Choo Choo Express Train Ride

Food Trucks/Vendors:

Pretty Little Cactus

Sherrod's BBQ

Rollin Wood Fired Pizza

Urban Street Food

El Texican

Afternoon Delights

Show Cones

Grain Theory

Railroad Destination Raffle Packages

Buffalo Gap, Texas Package

Included in this package:

Two-night stay in a Caboose/Boxcar Air BnB

Two passes to Buffalo Gap Historic Village

\$50 Gift card to Copa At The Gap wine bar.

Baird, Texas Package:

Included in this package:

Private tour of the Baird, Texas, T&P Rwy. Depot Museum

Brownwood, Texas Package:

Included in this package:

Private tour of the Martin & Frances Lehnis Railroad Museum

Slaton, Texas Package:

Included in this package:

One-night stay at the Slaton Harvey House

Private tour of the Slaton Model Railroad Club

\$25 "Bakery Bucks" credit to the Slaton Bakery



The Editor Speaks –

ON TRACK FOR FAMILY FUN

The second annual Abilene Railroad Festival is coming up September 12 & 13, in Downtown Abilene. It promises to be a great time of family-friendly fun and festivities.

The festival is the brainchild of our fellow ASMR member Corrender Taylor, with the Abilene Preservation League, and is intended to highlight Abilene's railroad history and the role of trains in helping to settle this part of the state, as well as providing some fun activities for families to enjoy. "The story of Abilene begins with the arrival of the railroads," Corrender said. "Our goal for the festival is to remember that history, but at the same time, to have a little fun while we do it. We're very grateful for the wonderful outpouring of support from across the area."

A special weekend dedicated to trains and Abilene's railroad heritage first began in 1991, under the leadership of then-mayor Gary McCaleb, and it lasted several years until various factors combined and led to its demise. Under the leadership of Corrender and the Abilene Preservation League, however, it was restarted in 2024 to great success. This year's festival will bring in vendors, museum displays, businesses, and exhibitions from towns and cities within a 150-mile radius (Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, San Angelo, Austin, et al), and events spread out across various downtown Abilene venues, including the Grace Museum, Frontier Texas, the NCCIL, the Elks Art Center, the Abilene Public Library, and the Abilene Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

The festivities will open with a public reception (sponsored by H-E-B) on September 12 at 6:00 pm at Frontier Texas, featuring railroad historian Marita Richards, who will present "The Harvey Girls: The Women Who Tamed the West." Food for the reception will be catered by Circa 1880 (while supplies last), and KAO will provide a cash bar.

There will be special presentations at Frontier Texas throughout the day on Saturday, September 13, relating to Texas railroad history. Gerald Hook will speak on "Rails to Desdemona: Wichita Falls, Ranger & Fort Worth Railway." I'm also scheduled to speak that morning, with a program on "Street Railways of the Big Country." (By the way, did you know that Haskell once had its own streetcar service?)

Other scheduled Saturday programs include Dennis Hogan, "Midland's Other Railroad – Midland & Northwestern;" and Steve Allen Goen, "Along the Cisco & Northeastern Railway." The Wichita Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will also make a presentation, and there will be booths and exhibits from Stamford's *Museum of the West Texas Frontier*, the *T&P Depot Museum* in Baird, Brownwood's *Lehnis Railroad Museum*, and the *Railroad Museum of San Angelo*, along with many others.

Our club will have a large display area in the Elks Art Center, showcasing scale models and toy trains in three different sizes. The Grace Museum's wonderful "Full Steam Ahead" exhibit, showcasing historical artifacts of the Texas & Pacific Railway, will also be open. The National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature will offer arts & crafts

projects for kids, and professional storyteller Donna Ingham will entertain at the downtown Public Library. Other activities will include cookie decorating at the Elks Center, live music from fiddle group Revolution, a trackless train, numerous food trucks, a scavenger hunt, and shopping. See inside for the complete schedule. To purchase tickets for the festival or a raffle ticket for fantastic prizes/getaways, visit abilenepreservation.org/abilenerailroadfestival.

I hope to see you there. All aboard for family fun!

Dusty

Ramblings from Your Prez (continued from page 1)



Above – Part of the exhibit area at the Boone and Scenic Valley RR Museum.

Below – Riding on one of pedal-assist cars belonging to Rail Explorers.

