

The Editor Speaks –

TRAINING FOR FUN

When someone finds out that I'm a model railroad hobbyist, most of the time, it brings a sort of tolerant half-smile. That changes at Christmas. Tell someone you're into model trains at this time of year, and their eyes will invariably light up, and they'll say, "Oh, that's so cool!" And you'll hear a great story about a parent or an uncle or some other loved one, a long-gone Lionel or other train set, and some wonderful memories. Even people who have no interest in trains the rest of the year become nostalgic and even wistful thinking about trains around a Christmas tree.

That's just one of the reasons why I am happy to be a member of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders. Our club was formed back in the early 1990s to "promote model railroading and preserve Abilene's railroad history."

Club members are happy to share their layout and passion for the hobby, and they invite everyone to come and see the trains, especially during our Open House. Besides the main club layout, they will also have smaller displays of model trains in other scales, as well as a large collection of wooden Brio trains that the little ones can play with. (Why should the grownups have all the fun?)

One reason that model railroading remains a popular hobby is that it incorporates many different interests in one. It can involve carpentry, architecture, engineering, electrical skills, computer programming, history, research, and many other sub-interests. You can express your artistic flair with scenery for all types of terrain and landscapes; you can recreate a memory from the past or come up with an original expression of things the way you think they ought to be. You can create something out of pure whimsy – the Hogwarts Express visiting a train station on the planet Vulcan – or produce museum-quality reproductions that are accurate right down to the number of rivets.

Some guys enjoy operating their model as a real railroad, complete with timetables and switching lists, making up trains, moving them over the road, picking up and dropping off cars along the way, and doing it all on a set schedule. Other guys just enjoy watching their train tick off the miles as it goes by, enjoying the smooth-running operation of the engines and cars. Some enjoy reproducing modern railroading, with its double-stack container trains and high-horsepower modern diesels, while others prefer the "old timey" tea kettle steam engines and short trains. It just depends on what you like.

One of the most revolutionary developments has been something called "Digital Command Control," or

DCC. In the old days, when you turned on the power to a particular stretch of track, every engine on it moved at the same time. DCC has changed all that. Now, it's possible to install a little computer circuit on the engine and give each engine a unique code number. With DCC on board, your controller sends out a coded signal that is read and understood ONLY by your engine – and yes, there are apps that will allow to use your smartphone to control your train. You can run multiple trains on the same stretch of train, each independent of the others, and even install miniature speakers on the trains, enabling engines to operate with authentic sound effects. All this allows for a level of realism previously unimaginable.

One thing people always want to know: isn't it expensive? Well, it can be (especially when you're just getting started), but it doesn't have to be. As with any hobby – fishing, quilting, golfing – how much you spend is up to you.

If you're interested in model trains, let me invite you to talk with any of our members and find out more about this fascinating hobby. All aboard!

Dusty



KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Dusty Garison

Club Honors Jim Gibson with Life Membership Award

Longtime ASMR member Jim Gibson was honored by the club at their regular meeting on November 2, 2024. Members made him only the second recipient of the "Life Membership Award," in recognition of his years of service as a Charter Member, Club President, and Editor of this newsletter.

The members decided to extend this honor to Jim at their October 2024 meeting, after learning of his plans to move to Kerrville to be closer to family there and after the passing of his wife, Emma.

In making the presentation, president Dan Schueler saluted Jim for his skill and expertise in HO, S, and O scales, and his commitment to the club's motto of "Promoting Model Railroading and Preserving Abilene's Railroad Heritage." Congratulations, Jim, on this well-deserved honor! We wish you the best in all your future plans. (See page 3 for more.)



The Word from The Prez End of Year Thoughts

As we approach our Annual Open House and the end of the year, I reflect back on 2024 for the ASMR. What strikes me most is the loss this year of decades of knowledge and experience in our club, as well as the local community and model railroading. Members who have had to limit their activity with the club or have passed this year have given us pause as we continue to move ASMR into the future. Those members Jim Frankenfield – health, Gene Danielski – died 7/24, Wayne Smith – died 8/24, Richard DeVisser – health, enriched our club and lives more than we realize.

With this in mind I think of all the experience that all our club members have and that many times we don't ask the expert in the room. As most know this coming year we are bringing back clinics on all things model railroading with some "Railroad Prototype Clinics" also. Kent Stark will be coordinating these, so if you have a topic, you'd like to present information on or have clinics you'd like to see put on, let him know and we will get it scheduled. There are also several people outside our club in the model and prototype railroad community who have already volunteered to give presentations.

Who says model railroading can't help improving safety on prototype railroads? Gary Allen Montelongo is an 8th grader at Lorenzo De Zavala Middle School,

La Joya, Texas. Recently he became a finalist in the Society for Science's annual scholarship competition. When 38 cars of a Norfolk Southern train derailed in Palestine, Ohio, in 2023, he was doing an internship at UT Rio Grande Valley on Railroad Safety. The class's interest in what caused the accident prompted him to look into the reactions of trucks and specifically springs in the trucks as they age. He set up a test using three ages of springs, programed an Arduino to measure vibration and response to the springs along with unbalanced loads, all while using model trains to simulate real life scenarios. His results showed that as springs in trucks age, they recover much slower to unbalanced loads and uneven track. This information is now beginning to be used by railroads in their loading and maintenance of freight cars. He plans to become a mechanical engineer and work for NASA or SpaceX.

Wishing you all a great Holiday Season with Family and Friends,

**Your Prez,
Dan**

ABILENE SOCIETY



MODEL RAILROADERS



From the KRBN RR Open House, November 23-24 –

(Above) Stewart Sutton and his mom, Kimberly Burns, smile for the camera as they enjoy watching a passenger train go by, with Engineer Reed Leggett (right) controlling it. Dispatcher Ken Riediger is handling power switches at the rear.

(Below) Jane Williams (left) and her granddaughter Randa Shabutwa were among the many visitors to the layout during the Open House weekend.

See Ken's article on page 3 for more.



**Welcome, Visitors & Guests,
to the 2024 Abilene Society
of Model Railroaders
Open House.**

We're glad you're here!

ASMR Meeting Minutes November 2024

A meeting of the ASMR was opened at approximately 10:00 am, November 2, 2024, by President Dan Schueler. The following members were present or arrived after the meeting had started: Dan Schueler, Ken Riediger, Fred Rogge, Cody Hilliard, Scott Strickler, Charlie Chinn, Kent Stark, Jonathan Scherr, Terry Andrew, Dusty Garison, Jim Gibson, David Hills.

Minutes

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

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ken Riediger reported that the balance of the account as of October 1 was \$661.32, with total club assets equaling \$7890.82. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Jim Gibson and seconded by Fred Rogge with all members in agreement.

Old Business

- Dan started the meeting reminding everyone of the Open House and discussing items that we need to get done.
- Dan then moved on to past dues. We had two people on list for a total of \$200.00.
- Dan reported that Ken's open house would be November 23 and 24.
- Ken still has CT Kelly and Ken England items for sale.
- Dan also reported that we have the calendars, and we have sold 78 copies and counting.
- Terry mentioned that he was having a supply issue getting working parts for the signal system.
- The signs were tabled until the next meeting.
- Cody mentioned that he had not heard anything from Chris on the camera system, but he would reach out again.
- Dan also talked about needing to do preventative maintenance on the Ride on Train.

New Business

- Dan let everyone know about the Lubbock Train show, which would be November 26–30.
- The club discussed the possibility of increasing dues or increasing membership.
- Jim Gibson was presented with the Life Membership Award by the club.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 10:35 by President Dan Schueler.

Respectfully submitted,
Cody Hilliard, Secretary



Life Membership Award

presented to

Jim Gibson

*In grateful recognition of more than thirty year's service as
ASMR Charter Member, Club President, and Editor of the Newsletter*



*This key is presented in appreciation of Jim's years of sharing his expertise and experience
in S. HO, and O scale model railroading, and his long and faithful service in
"Promoting Model Railroading and Preserving Abilene's Railroad Heritage."*

Dan Schueler, President

November 2, 2024

Cody Hilliard, Secretary

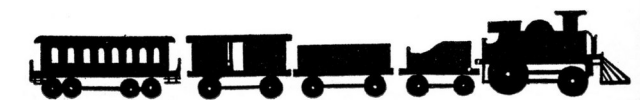


KRBN RR Open House for 2024

After not having an Open House last year it was nice to have one again this year. First, I want to thank those that came out to help. Without your help I would not have been able to do it. Being I did not have one last year, it took a lot more to get the layout cleaned up and ready for the show. Several changes were made over the last couple of years. The new lights are the biggest ones. Also new buildings have been added and even a new animation.

The visitors that came were a good showing, with approximately a hundred guests over the two days. Lots of "oohhhs" and "aahhhs" from first-time visitors. The scavenger hunt was very popular again this time. Seeing the enjoyment that the visitors had makes it all worthwhile. We will do it again next year and it should not take as long to get ready. **KR**

Editor's Note – See related pictures on page 2.



There are still a few club calendars remaining for 2025 but they're going fast! They make GREAT stocking stuffers and gifts for family and friends.

Better get 'em while you can!