

The Editor Speaks –
THE ROUTE OF THE EAGLES

I love trains.

I mean, I always have. My mother used to say that, as a child, I could say “choo choo” before I could say “Mama.” I love watching trains, hearing trains off in the distance, reading about trains, and playing with model trains. And I especially love riding on them.

Trains have always been a big part of my life. I got my first train set, made by Marx Toys, for Christmas when I was all of three or four. My family and I used to spend a lot of time at my maternal grandparents’ home in Grayburg, between Houston and Beaumont. It was on the Missouri Pacific (MoPac) mainline between Houston and New Orleans.

In Grayburg, there was a long passing siding and also a small rail yard where pulpwood logs would be off-loaded from trucks onto flatcars for transit to the paper mills of East Texas. There was also a small passenger station and a freight dock. The depot was a two-tone beige and brown structure, with the typical bay window that jutted out to give a clear view of the tracks in both directions. And of course, on both sides of the station, a large black and wide sign that said “Grayburg,” and the red and white Missouri Pacific “buzzsaw” logo.



When I was in the second grade, my mom took my dad, my brother Buzzy and me at the train station in Beaumont, and we rode the train the 25 miles or so to Grayburg. This was around 1963. (Yes, I know, I’m old.) This picture shows the same train which we rode, No. 3, “The Orleanean,” as it crosses the SP / T&NO at Tower 74 in Beaumont.



(Photo from TXRRHistory.com)

I remember the green tufted chenille upholstery on the seats, and the cheap black rubber floor mats over linoleum on the floor. I remember feeling really high up off the ground as I watched the train cars in the yard go by at eye level. And I remember the conductor hurrying us off the train when we got to Grayburg. He put his little stepstool on the ground, we stepped off, he waved to the engineer, and they were moving again. We stood there beside the moving train as it pulled out, then we crossed the tracks and walked the short distance to my grandmother’s house, where mom was waiting for us.

The station there was torn down in the late 60s, but I still remember it, inside and out. I remember being fascinated by a baggage cart with a spring-loaded brake mechanism that would release when you pulled down the handle. Inside the building, there were MoPac calendars hanging on the wall, with a couple of pews around the sides.

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Thinking about Grayburg always makes me smile. I’m sure you have some favorite memories from your childhood that do that for you. But I remember hours of watching trains and playing with my brothers, and sitting on the platform with my dad, counting cars as the trains rolled by. Climbing all over the railcars (in hindsight, probably not safe), putting pennies on the track for the train to flatten, and waving to the train crews as they went by. Sweet times.

People have often asked me why I love trains so much. I guess partly it’s the sight of a powerful locomotive laboring to pull a long string of cars, the sounds of horns and steel on steel and brakes squealing, the smells of creosote and hot steel on a Texas summer day. Partly it’s the romance of travel, of passing countryside, of new places and new sights. A lot of it is the cherished memories of those days. I love it all.

The MoPac is long gone now – it was merged into the Union Pacific Railroad in 1982 – but it’s remembered through the Missouri Pacific Historical Society, of which I am a member. The Texas & Pacific Railway, as well as the Abilene & Southern, were also part of the MP system.

All part of the “Route of the Eagles.”

Dusty

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

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Editor: Dusty Garison

A Smoothly Successful Soldering Seminar!



(Right) Cody gives some practical help to club member Reed Leggett.

Meanwhile, ASMR Vice President Kent Stark is looking for more members to lead seminars and clinics for the club — how about YOU? Share your knowledge with our group! Jonathan Scherr will be leading the next presentation, on the history of the Abilene & Southern’s 2-8-2 locomotive, #20, which is now set for immediately following the March business meeting. Don’t miss it!



ASMR Secretary Cody Hilliard recently led a soldering clinic for members following the club’s January business meeting. Those attending appreciated Cody’s expertise and his knowledgeable guidance on a difficult but necessary modeling skill. *(Photos by Amanda Leggett.)*

The Word from The Prez

Ramblings from Your Prez

It was great to see the participation in our first clinic of the year, “Soldering,” by Cody Hilliard. He did a great job of explaining the various types of soldering equipment and why each is useful, along with helping a number of our members of all ages feel comfortable with this important technique for model railroading. I look forward to the upcoming clinics and railroad-related presentations that are scheduled during the year. They will be listed elsewhere in this newsletter as they come up.

The Plano Train Show in January was to its normal standards. If you have never attended, or haven’t in a while, think about adding it to your calendar for the Fall Show. I enjoyed not only looking for new additions to my oversized collection but the wide range of module layouts. I don’t remember seeing a Z-scale layout. But there were Z-scale items for sale, and I believe every other scale from G-scale down was represented! Not only are the trains fun to look at operating, but seeing how other clubs solve challenges with setting up and moving their layouts in a quick and easy way is always interesting also. And yes, I did find some new treasures to add to my collection. :-)



I discovered earlier this week that our newsletter editor, Dusty, also has a blog about various topics, sometimes including rail-related history in the Big Country. The one that I saw was dealing with the Abilene Trolley System. It is a very interesting history, especially for Abilene, and one that he or possibly Corrender could give a presentation on? The one point I enjoyed, is learning that the Trolley Car Barn still exists. If arrangements could be made, a five-minute field trip from the club would be fun to take, to understand more of Abilene’s rail history.

See you at the Club meeting this Saturday,

**Your Prez,
Dan**



**ASMR Meeting Minutes
January 2025**

A meeting of the ASMR was opened at approximately 10:00 am, January 4, 2025, by President Dan Schueler. The following members were present or arrived after the meeting had started: Ken Riediger, Fred Rogge, Scott Strickler, Cody Hilliard, Amanda Leggett, Reed Leggett, Kent Stark, Jonathan Scherr, Terry Andrew, Jim Gibson, David Hills, Dan Schueler, Dusty Garison.

Minutes

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

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ken Riediger reported that the balance of the account as of January 1 was \$563.65, with total club assets equaling \$7815.98. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Jim Gibson and seconded by Cody Hilliard, with all members in agreement.

Treasurer Riediger also presented the annual report. We had \$6832.90 in income and \$6463.89 in expenses for the year 2024. A motion to approve the report was made by Cody Hilliard and seconded by Jim Gibson, with all members in agreement.

Old Business

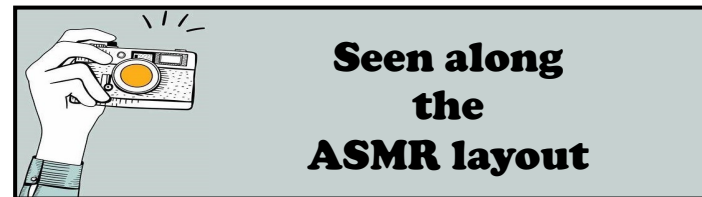
- Dan started the meeting to let everyone know that we had two members past due for a total of \$160.00.
- Dan talked about a possible dues increase and that if any members had any suggestion to please contact an officer. The officers would be meeting to discuss this.
- Dan reported that Ken's operating session would be on January 18.
- Ken still has model railroad items for sale.
- Ken asked if anybody is interested in going to the Plano Train Show.
- Dan also reported that we have the calendars, and we have 15 copies left.
- The sign issue was tabled.
- Dan reported that we had 45 days to fill out the paperwork for Abilene Gives.
- Cody mentioned that he was trying to source some Cat-5 cable for the security system.
- Dan reminded everyone that we needed to do some maintenance on the "Ride-on Train."
- Dan mentioned that Cody would be doing a clinic on soldering after the meeting.

New Business

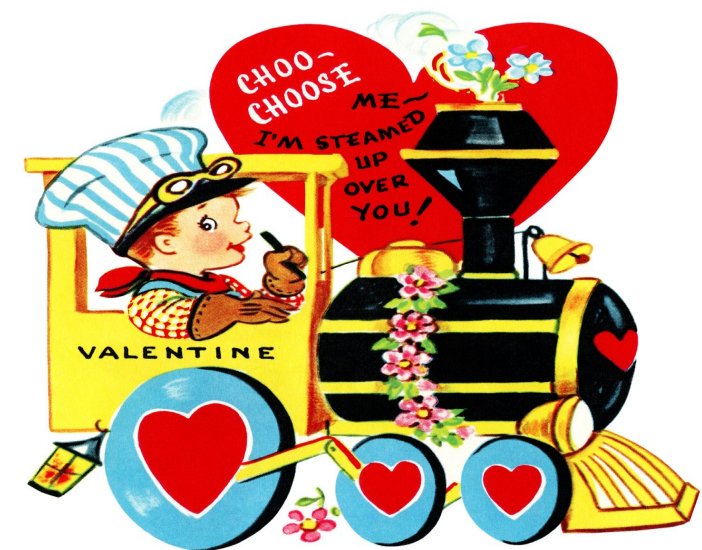
- Ken reported that Ken had found some file cabinets that we could use for storage lockers. He recommended that we charge \$1 for small or \$1.50 for large units per month. Terry made a motion to accept Ken's recommendation, with Kent seconding it, and all members in agreement.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 10:25 am by Vice President Kent Stark.

Respectfully submitted,
Cody Hilliard, Secretary



Are you a fan of the TV program, "Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives"? If you know the show, that red Camaro convertible may look strangely familiar! It looks like the video crew is shooting another episode of "Triple D."



KRBN RR January OP Session

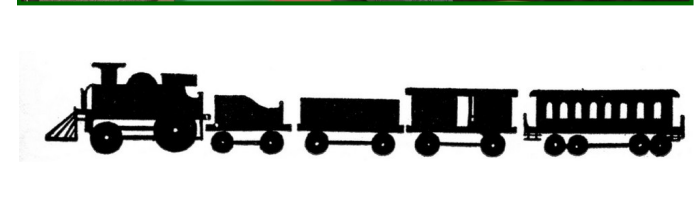
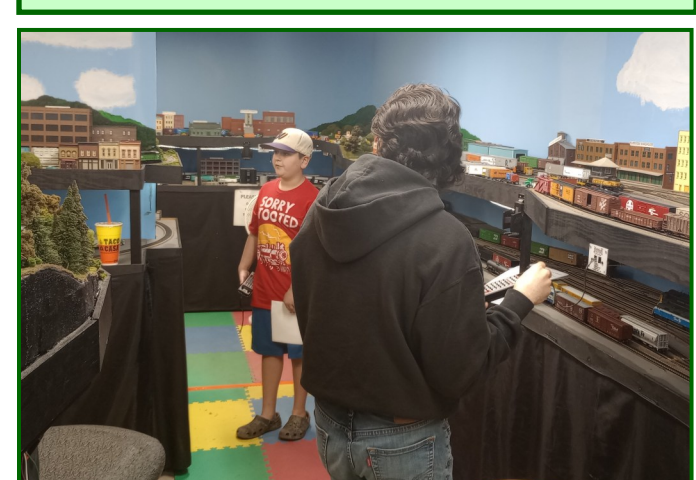
The Kannapolis River & Buffalo Northern railroad operated on Saturday Jan. 19th with five operators. The five operators were able to operate seven trains with only one error which was caught during the session. The operators were Dusty, Lonnie, Reed, Jonathan and Richard DeVissor. Reed got to operate the slow-going special train with the Schnabel car load. It derailed only one time but was quickly rerailed and on with its trip. Reed had been looking forward to operating this train and did a good job with it. He is becoming quite the engineer!

Holding in sidings was kept to a minimum during the session and traffic kept relatively fluid. A good time was had by all! Hope to see you at the next session on Feb. 15th at 1:30 pm. **KR**



(Above) Dusty and Lonnie discuss switching strategies (and maybe a few other things) during the op session.

(Below) Reed watches his train going by as Jonathan (with his back to the camera) looks on. **(Photos by Ken Riediger)**



Steve Goen and the Wichita Valley Railway

Noted Texas rail historian and photographer Steve Allen Goen will present a program at the Museum of the West Texas Museum in Stamford on Saturday, February 8, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm. Steve's topic will be "The History of the Wichita Valley Railway."

As you may know, the WV Ry. was the route which connected Abilene and Wichita Falls, and it was eventually controlled by the famous railroad builder, Morgan Jones, who also owned the Abilene & Southern the Abilene & Northern, and many other roads. It later became part of the FW&D / Burlington Route.

This will be a fascinating program — don't miss it!

(Below – Steve Goen at the 2024 Abilene Railfest.)

