

The Editor Speaks –

HERITAGE LOCOMOTIVES

One of the fascinating trends among Class 1 railroads in recent years has been their decision to recognize their history with “Heritage Locomotives.” If you are a railfan and train-watcher, trying to spot these unusually painted units can provide a fun experience.

“Uncle Pete” was the first major railroad to paint their locomotives in these commemorative schemes, beginning in 2005 and 2006, recognizing six of the lines which they had acquired: the Missouri Pacific, the Southern Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande, Western Pacific, the Katy (MKT), and the Chicago and North Western. Norfolk Southern began honoring their past in 2012, when they repainted 20 units for their 30th anniversary. Amtrak, CPKC, and Canadian National have all done the same to one degree or another. BNSF got into the act with their orange “Heritage” paint scheme – a throwback to Great Northern – as well as some units painted in 2020, with the logos of the major BNSF predecessor lines for the 25th anniversary of the BN-ATSF merger.



Here are two of UP's Heritage units which I photographed in Abilene – above is their tribute to the Missouri Pacific, commemorative unit #1982, just east of town, and below is #1996, their nod to Southern Pacific's Daylight paint scheme, photographed as it crossed the Butternut – Hickory/Orange overpass.



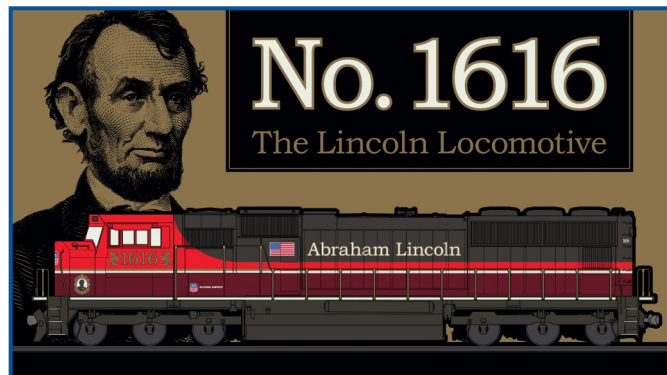
It's not just their predecessor roads that UP honors, either. They have produced units recognizing the Boy Scouts of America, breast cancer awareness, the Olympics, and more. One of their most striking paint schemes was unit #4141, honoring the 41st President, George H.W. Bush. This beautiful locomotive was painted to look like Air Force One. You may recall from the news that when Bush 41 died in 2018, his body was taken to College Station for burial, with 4141 leading the consist. Since then, UP has deactivated that unit and donated it to be on permanent display at his Presidential Library at Texas A&M.



UP 4141, a tribute to President George H.W. Bush, as it passed through Abilene in 2007. Longtime ASMR member Ken England, now deceased, took this picture.

In honor of President's Day this year, UP announced that it was painting a second Presidential unit – #1616, in honor of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. This seems especially fitting, considering that it was President Lincoln who signed the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, creating the Union Pacific Railroad and leading to the completion of the world's first transcontinental railway in 1869.

The unit's colors will also be a tribute to one of the locomotives of that original Golden Spike ceremony at Promontory Point, Utah – UP steam engine #119.



UP employees are expected to finish painting #1616 later this spring, and it will be used in publicity and educational excursions before being put into regular service. I'm looking forward to trying to spot it when it is!

Dusty

KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 21, Issue 1

March 2025

Editor: Dusty Garrison

The Abilene & Southern Railway

The Abilene and Southern Railway ran from Abilene through Winters and on down to Ballinger. The depot on Locust Street still stands, as does a small portion of the line in operation as Southern Switching.

ASMR member Jonathan Scherr will present **Scenes Along the Abilene and Southern**, immediately after the March business meeting. Don't miss it!



The Word from The Prez

Ramblings from Your Prez

As we're finally seeing some spring weather, we all start thinking about outdoor tasks, events and trips instead of our indoor projects. If you're a garden railroader, that can be a good thing but for those that aren't, we find that some of our model railroad projects may be pushed to the backburner for a couple months. No doubt there are many one-day and weekend locations and events for us railroad enthusiasts in our part of the world. A number of them, as we've discussed, would be great club group trips.

One of the most recent, where five of our club members attended, was the NRHS-Wichita Valley Lines presentation in Stamford last month. For those wanting to know more about local railroads and their impact, this was a great opportunity and a great introduction to the updated museum in Stamford. For a closer trip, remember that the T&P RR Exhibit at The Grace is still open through late summer.

Along that same line as we look to the summer and on to the fall, the CALF event, with ASMR members running the CALF children's train, is June 12th - 13th this year, with the train running from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm



both days. We've had a good team but are always open to members that would like to be involved with this annual event. There will be no Parade on Thursday evening.

Also, as a heads-up, the Second Annual Abilene Rail Festival will be September 12th afternoon - evening, and all day on Saturday the 13th this year. I've talked to and seen emails to Corrender from All Points Modular Club. They are in the Metroplex and are interested in bringing their layout to the festival this year. I've seen their layout at the Plano Show, and it is very nice. Even though the festival will not be on Sunday this year it's great to see interest from new attendees.

**Your Prez,
Dan**

ABILENE SOCIETY
MODEL RAILROADERS

ASMR Meeting Minutes February 2025

A meeting of the ASMR was opened at approximately 10:00 am, February 1, 2025, by President Dan Schueler. The following members were present or arrived after the meeting had started: Ken Riediger, Jon Prestridge, Scott Strickler, Cody Hilliard, Christopher Stephens, Zachery Stephens, Kent Stark, Terry Andrew, Dusty Garison, Jim Gibson, David Hills, and Dan Schueler.

Minutes

The minutes of the January 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 February 1 was \$939.93 with total club assets equaling \$8203.92. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Jim Gibson and seconded by Cody Hilliard with all members in agreement.

Old Business

- Dan started the meeting by mentioning that we had two new members join. Christopher and Zachery Stephens, as well as Daniel and Adrian Mowery, were introduced.
- Dan then moved on to past dues. We had two members past due for a total of \$200.00.
- Dan asked for any updates on the renovation of the layout. He also stated that Cody was working on some plans that we could use to keep track of who had adopted what areas of the layout.
- Ken's operating session would be on February 15.
- Ken brought some trains that are on sale.
- Dan also reported that we have the calendars and we have 11 copies left.
- The sign issue was tabled.
- Terry reported that he was starting on the signals for the helix.
- Dan reported that we had a few days to fill out the paperwork for Abilene Gives.
- Cody reported that he acquired some Cat-5 cable and would start installing it after the meeting.
- Dan reminded everyone that we needed to do some maintenance on the Ride-On Train. Recommended March.
- Kent reported that Jonathan would be giving his clinic after the next business meeting. It would be about the Abilene & Southern.
- Dan reported that several members were working on sending letters to old members to try to get them back.

New Business

- Jim mentioned that he was seeing several track issues that needed to be looked at.
- Dan invited everyone to a program in Stamford about the Wichita Valley RR which would be on Saturday, Feb. 8, led by Steve Goen of Wichita Falls.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Cody Hilliard, Secretary

Seen at the KRBN RR Op Session



Ken's operating session on his KRBN RR featured a good group, with seven operators and two railfans on hand, and they handled a LOT of trains! For more on the session, see Ken's article on page 3.

Photos by Ken Riediger



KRBN RR February OP Session

Well, another month has flown by and the activity on the KRBN RR is no exception. We held our session on the 15th. Nine people showed up – seven operators and two railfans. For one of our operators, this was his rookie run. He started out not knowing or understanding what an OP session is and how it works, to doing a good job and having fun. Jon finished his first branch line run, and I thought he was going to “hog out” again, but he made it in to the yard before running out of time.

Our operators were Jon, Jonathan, Richard, Billy, Cecil, Izaak, Aaron and Zachery Stephens. Our two railfans were Dusty and Christopher Stephens. Our crews were able to get seven trains completed. Lonnie came in on Monday after the session and was able to get two more trains completed and did some yard work. We now have 11 more trains to run in the next session to complete a “day” on the KRBN RR.

We used radios for communication between the crews and the dispatcher. It has been getting harder for the dispatcher to hear everyone calling him from different parts of the room. (His getting hard-of-hearing isn't helping either!) What?? One day I hope to be able to do the dispatching from my office in the house.

Hope to see you at the next session on March 15th at 1:30 pm. See you then.

(Article and photos by Ken Riediger)



Abilene's Very Own Streetcar

Did you know that Abilene once had its very own trolley system? Beginning in 1908, the line started near Hardin-Simmons University (then called Simmons College, south to the downtown area, and across the T&P line on Pine Street. It then continued south on Chestnut until it reached South 7th Street, where it turned west and went to Rose Park, which in those days was known as “Fair Park.” Originally, the line ended at the old Municipal Auditorium there, which is about where Safety City is now located.

In the 1920s, city fathers extended the line south down Grand Street to South 14th Street as an enticement to convince McMurry to relocate their campus here. Increased maintenance costs and other factors led to the line being shut down in 1931.

The tracks have long-since been removed or paved over. The most visible reminder of Abilene's streetcars still remaining today is the big metal barn between North 10th and North 11th Streets, just west of Grape.



The old trolley barn of the “Abilene Traction Company”

ASMR member Dusty Garison will present a program on the Abilene streetcar system immediately following the club's business meeting on Saturday, April 5. Hope you can be there to discover more about this almost forgotten page of Abilene history!