

# KEEPING TRACK

Official Newsletter of the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Volume 5, Issue 2

April 1, 2009

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## ***The Word From the Prez***

### **ASMR Prez Has Slow Start, But Enjoys a Strong Finish**

Have you ever had to write something and when you sat down at the keyboard your mind goes blank? Well that's the way I felt when I sat down to write a column this month. When you have to write something month after month and you are not a "journalistic type", it gets hard to think of good subjects sometimes. I'm starting to get some random thoughts, so let's see what I can come up with this time. One thing I will say for sure is that it has been great to see several new members join ASMR lately, especially in light of losing some of our older members. It has also been neat to see some of those newer members really enjoying themselves at club activities. Because of that factor, our club operating sessions have definitely been more interesting and fun lately. And speaking of activities, I want to remind everyone that we will be making another "field trip" to Fort Worth on Saturday, April 18, for an operating session on Jim Norwood's fantastic home layout. If you have been before, you know how much fun it can be, and if you haven't been, you don't know what you are missing. I've been several times, and I'm really looking forward to doing it again, and then heading over to Discount Model Trains for some serious hobby shopping. Hope to see you there.

*Your President, Ken Riediger*

## **ASMR Meeting Notes**

The March 7 business meeting was called to order by Pres. Ken Riediger at 10:03 a.m. Before regular club business got underway, Tim LaBouf from Trinity Baptist Church, gave a presentation on "Revorama and Imagicon", a fundraising event for the Food Bank of West Central Texas. Before leaving, Tim offered the club the opportunity to participate with a model train display on Saturday, Mar. 28. After that, minutes for the Jan 10, 2009 meeting were read by Sec'y. Cody Hilliard, and approved. Treas. Ken England reported that the total club asset balance was \$3,796.02. Ken R. introduced and welcomed two new members, **Robert Turner** and **Jim Limas**. Members voted to accept Turner's offer of \$100 for the donated Pennsy train set. Ken R. mentioned how much fun everybody had at the last operating session, and members voted to have another one on March 14. Ken E. noted that overdue dues/key return letters need to be sent to four members who are in arrears. Ken R. announced that an ops

session has been set for April 18 at Jim Norwood's layout in Fort Worth. Carpool departure will be at 7 a.m. from ReMax Realty. Members discussed the Food Bank Fundraising event mentioned earlier and voted to participate with the club's portable display layout. Ken R. brought up the need for a power supply booster for the club layout, and members authorized him to purchase one. Ken E. announced that Nick Kenneally will be TDY to Little Rock until approximately April 8. Ken R. closed the meeting at about 10:40. Next meeting will be Apr. 4.

## **March Ops Session Small in Numbers, But Large in Fun**

The March Operating Session was held on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup>, a week earlier than normal, to accommodate the club's participation in the "Revorama and Imagicon" event on Mar. 28, in



**Above, L to R:** "Engineer" John Turner works on his train during the March Ops Session, while his "brakeman" Brenda Turner and referee Ken Riediger watch.  
*Photo by Jim Gibson*

support of the West Central Texas Food Bank. Three members showed up ready to compete, including Jim Gibson and brothers John and Robert Turner. Pres. Ken Riediger set up the rolling stock and waybill cards ahead of time, and served as referee. Brenda Turner, who is also new member, said at first that she just wanted to watch this time, but before very long she was eagerly working with John to try and expedite the pickup and delivery of his assigned railcars. Despite there being only three "engineers" for this session, there were still a few times when two or even all three operators ended up trying to do their switching maneuvers in the same area of the layout at the same time. But a great spirit of cooperation and courtesy kept everybody moving right along with no significant delays or friction from traffic jams. Jim was first to complete his assigned pickups and

deliveries, with Robert coming in second, and John and Brenda third. Several visitors dropped in while the session was in progress, and they all seemed to enjoy watching the action and excitement as the ASMR participants busily scrambled around the layout picking up or setting out their assigned railcars. The event wrapped up at around noon, and by any measure, everybody was a winner when it came to the fun and camaraderie of participating in it.

## Many View ASMR Layouts At “Revorama and Imagicon”

Despite chilly, gusty winds on March 28, a surprising number of visitors braved the elements to attend “Revorama” and “Imagicon 2009”. This outdoor/indoor event, the first of a planned annual benefit for the Food Bank of West Central Texas, was held at Trinity Baptist Church in Abilene. After viewing the outdoor display of vehicles, motorcycles, and bands, visitors came into Trinity’s Church Activity Building for a variety of attractions that included ASMR’s 16 X 16-foot modular HO-scale club layout, and Ken England’s personal 4 X 8-foot portable pike. Starting at 10 a.m., a steady stream of adults and children filed through to view and enjoy the layouts, until the event wrapped up at 3 p.m. On hand at various times to help with set up and tear down, run trains, and interact with visitors, were Ken England, Ken Riediger, Cody Hilliard, Jim Gibson, Jeffrey Cowen, Keith Savage, John Turner, Brenda Turner, Angel Moreno, Bryan Grow, and Walter Graham. Setting up the club’s modular layout for a one-day event was a lot of work, but everyone who participated agreed that the size of the turnout and the fellowship and fun shared by ASMR members made the effort more than worthwhile.

### The Editor Speaks

## Rivals Lionel and MTH Join In “Tinplate” Train Venture

It’s nice to see a piece of good news every so often. So, I was pleasantly surprised recently when I

opened the latest issue of a model train magazine I subscribe to and read about an unusual arrangement which has evolved between two model train companies that have at times had a very contentious rivalry. You may recall that O-gauge train manufacturers Lionel and Mike’s Train House (MTH) not long ago settled a long and at times vicious legal battle over alleged patent infringements. For awhile, things looked bleak for Lionel, after a jury awarded MTH a monetary judgment large enough to potentially sink its venerable rival. Fortunately for O-gauge “toy train” enthusiasts like me and many others, that situation was resolved without Lionel going under. That was good news, but not the good news I referenced at the start of this column. Good as it is, it was topped by the fact that the long-standing rivals have now agreed to join forces in an unprecedented kind of “joint venture” that will result in the production of a revamped series of replica “Pre-war” toy trains. These will be copies of some of the colorful Standard Gauge and O-gauge “tinplate” electric trains made by Lionel and American Flyer during the decades prior to WWII. Under the arrangement, Lionel will allow their historic name to be used on the series of collectable reproductions, which MTH will make and market under the label “Lionel Corporation Tinplate”, instead of “Tinplate Traditions”, which MTH had been using for a similar line of reproductions for many years. For aficionados of tinplate trains, the Lionel/MTH cooperation in this venture should be exciting and encouraging news. For me, it’s just great to see two strong competitors who appear to be more interested in the success of a product than in trying to drive each other out of business over it. And it’s even greater that the companies setting that kind of example just happen to be toy train manufacturers. **JG**

## Model RR Meets & Events

Apr. 18 – ASMR Operating Session at Jim Norwood’s layout in Fort Worth.

Apr. 25 & 26 – Cotton Belt Historical Society Train Show, Tyler, TX

### ***AN IMPORTANT REMINDER***

An operating session is scheduled for Jim Norwood’s home layout in Fort Worth on Saturday, April 18. Carpool vehicles will depart from ReMax at 7 a.m. If time permits, there will be a shopping trip to the Discount Model Train Store in Addison, before returning to Abilene.