

## Kansas City Area 2009

October 9-11, 2009

### **Friday, October 9, 2009**

This fall, the Iowa State Railroad Club decided to make another trip to Kansas City. While it seems we have been in a pattern of alternating between the Twin Cities and KC, none of the members who went to Kansas City this year had been before on a club trip. Along for the ride were club members Ted Hotvet, Patrick Johnson, Brian Bauer, and I (Cliff Cessna).

Ted had the name of a guy in the KC area (Stephen Priest) that was known to have an excellent HO Scale layout in his basement and contacted him on Thursday to see if it would be possible to see it. He obliged and said to call him Friday once we were in town to arrange a time to see the layout on Saturday. Upon arrival at the Red Roof Inn near Worlds of Fun, we called and arranged to meet him at his place of work at 10AM the next morning.

After the trip down, we decided to relax a bit and watch the Minnesota Twins lose to the Yankees on TV before exploring the nearby yards and Kansas City Union Station to watch the westbound Amtrak Southwest Chief depart for Los Angeles. Even after Amtrak departed, Union Station still had some activity surrounding a wedding reception in one of the restaurants, so we hung around to have a look at the magnificently restored building. Around 11:45 or so, we decided it was time to head back to the hotel and get some shut-eye for the next day. It was at this point that we experienced a Railroad Club first.

Transportation Services again gave us a nice, silver 2007 Chevy Impala to use for the weekend. Nary a scratch nor a dent could be found on the thing. We climbed in the car and I got ready to pull out of the narrow parking spot which I backed into. The parking spot was at the end of the row and thus, up against a curb. Right on top of this curb were some (stupidly placed) large landscaping stones. As I pulled out of the stall, another car was approaching from my left, so I tried to hurry my way out of the spot and turned just a little bit too soon. At about the exact same instant that the tire hit the curb, the landscaping stone hit the bottom of the rear passenger side door. The sound of stone on metal is not pretty. I tried straightening out and continuing to go forward because I felt going backward would only make things worse. The scraping continued until the stone tapped the rear tire and we finally cleared it. Judging by the sound, we thought it was amazing the door didn't come off. However, upon inspection once we were out of the way of the oncoming car, the incident resulted only in a slight indentation and a scrape 4 inches tall, all down the bottom of the door. The next day we went back and took pictures of the stones (but somehow we never thought to take a picture of the car):

### **Saturday, October 10, 2009**

We grabbed breakfast at the nearby Waffle House, we met Mr. Priest at his place of business – a publishing company for model railroad magazines and also a graphic designer for many of the major model train manufacturers. The office is full of model

trains they had a hand in designing as well as thousands and thousands of pictures, slides, drawings, and the like in boxes all over the place. They also have a 90 TB storage system to store all the scanned in slides and pictures so that whenever Athearn calls in and wants locomotive X in the Y paint scheme of railroad Z, they can go get it.

Before we left Fran and Miles Hale stopped in to pick up a package that had been dropped off for them. We were then invited to the basement of the building where they construct model railroad layouts for “big wigs of Fortune 500 companies who just want a party layout to show off at their cocktail parties.” The cost of such a layout? About \$350/sq. foot. The layout they were working on was going for \$125,000, but due to further modifications that would be necessary, the price would be going even higher. Next we went to Mr. Priest’s house where we saw and ran trains on his two-tiered, dog-bone type HO Scale layout, modeled after the Santa Fe in the late 70’s. The entire railroad is signaled and can be CTC’ed for when multiple trains are running (the dogbone layout requires trains to meet at some point). After an hour or two of running, Mr. Priest invited us to lunch at Stone Canyon Pizza in Parkville, MO. After getting our fill of pizza, he said he would lead us down to Doc’s Caboose hobby shop in the West Bottoms area of Kansas City (an area that used to be bustling with the hum of factories, freight houses, and stockyards).

We all browsed but did not buy at the hobby shop. Mr. Priest then took us on a real whirlwind (but thorough) of a tour of the West Bottoms area and nearby hot spots such as Santa Fe Junction. He then had to go to an appointment and passed us off to his friend Jason, who works for BNSF. Jason took us to Argentine Yard and drove us all around, including up to the hump of the classification yard. Throughout both tours, we tried our best to get some pictures. Jason took us back to Doc’s Caboose, where we had left the Impala. We decided to go take pictures of the curb from the night before and also to go inside Union Station again while it was still daylight and we could get some decent pictures.

### **Sunday, October 11, 2009**

We slept in a bit this morning and finally got rolling around 10. We drove down to Santa Fe Junction to sit and watch trains for a while before grabbing a quick lunch at Wendy’s and heading back to Ames just after noon. The return to Ames was uneventful, but the trip, overall, was enjoyed by everyone. A good mix of models, full-size trains, historical sites, and some rather “exciting” tours made this trip one to remember.