



DISPATCH

VOLUME TWO NUMBER 2 *NASG INC NEWSLETTER* AUGUST 1979

RAILCON '79

Due to distance and the inability to take time off from work, your editor was unable to attend Railcon '79. And, due to the fact that no one who did has sent me any information on the convention I am unable to pass on to you a report of what transpired. I hope that for the October issue of the 'Dispatch' that some one will send along some information that can be published for those members, who like me, were unable to attend.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PEN

Is it National Association of S Scalers?

We periodically receive criticism that NASG is pro-this or anti-that. Sometimes the claims seem justified, even if they aren't true. The charge that we are anti-tinplate, anti-hirail has been lodged against NASG for many years. All through his presidency, the best known hirail modeler in the gauge, Ed Schumacher, was blasted as being pro-scale. With a scale modeler as the current president and a Board of Trustees stacked with scalers, the chorus hasn't let up in the last two years. Some of our recent actions have been "pro-scale" and there is no reason to deny it.

Does that mean that we are anti-anything? Some people interete it that way. We don't feel that way. The scale promotions are focused on serious scale modelers. The charge that we are ashamed of tinplate is an immature reaction to the way scale is being pushed. A serious scale model builder couldn't care less if the entire American Flyer Line is returned to the market. He has no use for it. So there is no return in pushing tinplate onto such market. We should push hirail to people who want to operate but don't care too much about details. And we should push tinplate to people who like toy trains. Each market exists and each one can be exploited. Mark-

eting will probably be more effective if it is focused onto each group.

Now with Fundimensions entering the S toy train market, there is certainly reason to promote both tinplate and hirail. If we don't grab this opportunity, the tiny AF line of 1979 may not be succeeded by any line in 1980. With no products available, there would then be little reason to push tinplate or hirail onto outsiders.

It is obvious that the current scale promotional items will not help to sell any new American Flyer. All of the things done for scale lately can be done for hirail or tinplate, or both. (They are not the same.) But the people who worked hard to create the scale promotions are all scalers. They know what they are promoting, and enjoy scale enough to give their time to it. They cannot and will not do it for tinplate or hirail.

We have a hirail committee, headed by Sig Fleischmann, that is working on standards, promotions, etc. If you want to see more activity in hirail, write to Sig and get involved.

If you want NASG to get into tinplate promotions, let us know and we'll form a tinplate committee staffed by tinplaters. Do we need to point out that we'll need tinplate volunteers to chair and serve on such a committee?

A Super Supporter

Quite a number of people have found ways to show their support of S and NASG over the years. It has been their extra effort which has kept the faith alive and led to our organizations current health.

Our latest and newest boost comes from one of the very first S gauge manufacturers, who has returned to the marketplace this year with much needed motive power and a verve that is also needed and most welcome. Check out American Scale Model Corporation's ad in the S Gaugian. They are

giving a five dollar discount to NASG members and will collect and forward to us membership fees for other folks. That makes NASG membership painless and even advantageous.

If you had any doubt about his faith in 3/16-inch scale when he announced his intention to return to manufacturing, Roy Clapp has effectively erased those doubts. We salute him and wish him good luck!

Here we go again. . .

The news from the manufacturing front has a big ugly blot on it. We've heard from several sources that Hill Country Train Shop of New Braunfels, Texas has not only gone out of business, but that the many deposits on brass engines have disappeared with the owner and his family. We wish that we could say that it is a surprise but it was not. The prices for custombuilt brass were about one-fourth of what anyone could possibly manufacture and sell engines for.

Rather than recite the litany of frauds and failures that have plagued our gauge, it is more constructive to ask a question: what can be done to prevent this from happening again? Also, can NASG play a role in it's prevention?

If you have any ideas, send them to the NASG Dispatch editor.

Dick

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S CLUB NEWS

A meeting of the Bristol S Gauge Railroaders was held Sunday, June 24 at the home of Wil Gelineau.

A notice was sent to several non-members who have already expressed interest in the club and it's members either for one time visit or with intent to accept an invitation to apply for membership. Attendance at two club meetings is generally regarded as showing genuine interest in becoming a member.

An interesting program was arranged, and some good operation on the Oxford Central, a scale S gauge railroad with plenty of interesting track-work. A great deal of time was taken up with meeting and getting acquainted with the above-mentioned guests, all are serious S gaugers - with a mix of scale and hi rail adherents.

Tom Coughlan, Secty.

The Inland Terminal Model Railroad Club in Lawndale, California (south of

Los Angeles) held its annual Secret Project Meeting and Social in Santa Barbara this year at Rex Fleming's home and enjoyed his massive O-Gauge layout that is well underway.

Secret Projects included among others a scratch built Jersey Central 1000 Box Cab diesel with photo engraved-linotype lead-shell, two scratch built narrow gauge locos (one brass and one with cast plastic boiler, etc.), a partially built S-Looco Berkshire, a Kemtron ON3 Shay, a string of converted and modified AF flat cars, all of which were topped by the Railette contributions of a superb Needle Point four car train set and individual wall plaques for each member and our hosts, Rex Fleming and Carl Pascoloff.

Inland Terminal Model Railroad Club owns its own building and operates on a 1,000 feet of Code 100 track. Meetings are on Thursday evenings with operation on the second Thursday of each month.

Visitors are welcome and railroaders interested in becoming members of the club are invited to investigate our "S"mall group of "S"-Gaugers.

For specific directions and/or more details, call Gale Irwin at 213-326-7040.

The Inland Empire group (Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho) IESGAPN, are busy finalizing plans for IESGAPN '79 An All S Gauge Get Together to be held Aug 31 through Sep 3 in Spokane, Washington.

Regular meetings are held at 2:00 PM on the third Sunday of each month at the members homes. For specific information call Ernie Horr at (509) 325-0392.

*Club secretaries - it would be highly appreciated if you could furnish me with your club news and activities. Also those clubs having a news letter, I would appreciate very much receiving a copy. Thank you (ED)

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NEWS FROM THE SURVEY SQUAD

Steve Butler

You've done it again, friends! Congratulations on your thunderous response to Survey #2! While over 25% of our membership sent in survey #1 concerning purchases this time, I received 116 survey responses. That's almost 50% of our paid up membership I understand. Looks like, although many have not made S Gauge purchases lately, almost everyone has an opinion, and the opinion survey has been, it seems to me an

enthusiastic success?

Thanks again to all who enclosed notes and letters along with their surveys. I'll try to answer those who asked specific questions, as time permits. In the meantime let me comment on your opinions.

Overall, we seem to be a positive group, since most respondents answered "YES" to most of the questions. We are also responding positively to our leaders' ideas about promotion of S Gauge, since most people think we should allow non-members of NASG to attend national conventions, although we think they should be required to pay an extra fee. Some added that the fee should be one year's dues (\$5.00), thus adding to the membership base. Other expanded activities and promotions were given the nod, as well. Even 10% said they'd be willing to work on the movie project, a difficult one to co-ordinate, which has met with mixed success so far. Some suggested a slide show as an alternative, though.

The only negative opinions were concerning an expanded "bureaucracy" and a constitutional change. Fifty-six percent said no to more regional vice-presidents, and 49% would rather keep the status quo concerning staggered terms for President and Executive V.P.

So, that's the overview, and the complete results are printed below. The next survey is planned for Fall. In the meantime keep S moving.

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Should non-members of NASG be allowed to attend NASG national conventions?	87%	8%	5%
2. If non-members are allowed, should they pay a non-members fee?	74	26	0
3. Should NASG attempt to locate it's national convention so it visits each major area of the country? (A "No" implies you prefer having conventions in the Northeast and Great Lakes area)	70	20	10
4. Should NASG sponsor regional conventions?	64	28	8
5. Should our national			

Question (cont)	Yes	No	Don't Know
conventions have special (non-rail oriented programs for spouses?	87%	3%	10%
6. Should NASG continue to expand its promotion of S Gauge to non S Gaugers	95	5	0
7. Should NASG continue to attempt to produce a promotional movie featuring S layouts and equipment?	67.5	17.5	15
8. Would you like to work on such a movie production?	10	64	26
9. Should the S Newsletter accept paid advertising?	75	20	5
10. Should NASG have more regional Vice Presidents?	21	56	23
11. Should the NASG constitution specify concurrent not staggered terms for Pres. and Exec. Vice Pres.	23	49	28
12. Should officers and trustees receive partial reimbursement for NASG travel expenses?	55	35	10

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THE MAIL SACK

Please speak for S gauge, not S scale. Don't kill Fundimensions "S" goose before it leaves the ground. They are in the toy business, just be thankful for S size. Sig's wrong about DC motors, they are not for the toy market. Let's get a diesel and a Pa.0060 then change to DC, if you want to. I don't. I use a Lionel ZW to power my AF engines. I've ordered the 3 cars.

James A Dwyer Jr.

Thanks for the nice write-up in the NASG newsletter. It makes all the work worth while knowing it is appreciated.

I'd like to ask that you send out the brochures to each member with the next mailing for a couple of reasons: (1) Many folks may not attend a convention or join a club and thus may never have a chance to see them any other way. (2) I really want people to feel that NASG is doing something for them and I don't mind reminding them that this is one tangible benefit of belonging to NASG. Like you say, the copy doesn't do jus-

tice to the brochure itself. I didn't think the printer would get done so soon or I would have told you.

I'm glad you can use more for the Spokane area and the Spokane convention. Thus, I'm sending you some more for that purpose. The rest of them are being sent to Ken Zieska, NASG Promotions chairman, for future distribution. Please correct your announcement that I should be contacted regarding obtaining brochures. Ken Zieska should be contacted instead of me.

Ed Loizeaux

Well, what do you know another S gauge rip off. I am reering to the Texas Special who did the disappearing act along with S gauge deposits on his \$1000 locomotives that he promised to produce for less than \$300.

This is an old story with S gauge repeated over and over. It is not helping our reputation and is hindering our growth. I think it is time steps are taken to prevent this. I propose that any new manufacturer entering the S gauge market should be investigated and given a seal of approval by NASG. At least three reputable references should be supplied by the new manufacturer. He should also be personally contacted by three reputable S gaugers before that seal of approval is given by NASG. This would by no means be a gaurantee but rather a recommendation. This may seem like drastic measures but with about five rip offs in the past five or six years and all for large sums of money its time something was done.

Jess Bennett

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SOME THOUGHTS ON FUNDIMENSIONS

Dick Cataldi

The day that many of you have dreamed of for more than a decade is now at hand. The American Flyer Line is back. Ever since A. C. Gilbert closed its doors and slinked off into oblivion, there have been rumors, schemes, promises, and...nothing. Now Fundimensions is reintroducing the American Flyer name; this time on S Gauge equipment instead of the sham they produced a couple of years ago with American Flyer HO of all things.

We have no quarrel with Fundimensions. In fact, since we've been preaching to the S manufacturers for years to act like businesses, we can only approve of Fundimensions' insistence that they must make a normal profit on S Gauge or they won't stay. And you better believe that a subsidiary of profit-sensitive General Foods Corporation will not subsidize S Gaugers.

There is only one thing that motivates General Foods and its subsidiaries. That is SALES. You want more American Flyer toy trains? Then buy the cars available from your Lionel dealers in the coming weeks. There is absolutely no other way to get the attention of Fundimensions. (NASG Proverb Number 1: "One sale worth 10,000 letters,"

When you buy the American Flyer S compliment your dealer for stocking American Flyer and tell him that you want some more variety in 1980. The message will get back to Fundimensions.

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I would like to compliment Heimburger House Publishing Co. on their new book "Building and Operating Model Railroads.

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