



# DISPATCH

VOLUME TWO NUMBER 3 **NASG INC NEWSLETTER** OCTOBER 1979

## NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

In our continuing effort to make your organization more responsive and effective, Gene Fletcher is taking over the processing of new and renewed memberships. This will free up the treasurer for other responsibilities and should provide more stability in membership processing. The timetable for this change had to be speeded up because Treasurer Bill Oertly (who has handled memberships for over two years) changed jobs and has moved from Maryland to Idaho. He had all of the memberships processed as of September 15. Those of you who have sent in your renewals since then may experience a delay of several weeks in receiving your membership cards until things settle down. Bill and Gene hope to make a complete transition by late October, but these things sometimes take a little longer than that. Your patience will be greatly appreciated.

Gene Fletcher's address is:

93 Pleasant St.  
Richmond Maine 04357

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## RAILCON/79 REPORT Rolly Mercier

Railcon/79 or was it S-Con/79! Every nook and cranny at Ye Olde Princeton was bulging with S gaugers. And, after five days of Princeton "all you can eat cooking" more than a few S gaugers were bulging too! But Railcon/79 was more than excellent food. This year's departure from the traditionally all S gauge convention was a successful adventure into showing off the skills and accomplishments of our S modelers to those less fortunate souls who grope about in other scales. Judging from the fact that 3/16" models took top honors in the contests, we can be assured that S gauge made quite an impact.

From the beginning S gaugers dominated this event. We were first on the scene with registrants and at the end of the first day, more than fifty members had shown up. This was pretty good considering it would be a long convention. By week's

end nearly two hundred S gaugers would have registered. No other single scale had this much representation.

One of the prominent functions at Railcon/79 was the manufacturers' displays. You guessed it, S manufacturers were right out in front. In fact that's right where we were. The first booths inside the huge Gadwyn Gym were all S gauge with an operating layout from the Potomac Valley S Gauge Association. Near it was a line of displays including another operating setup from Seltzer's showing their latest products. Your NASG was well represented in an attractive booth stuffed with promotional literature, plus a couple of officers were on hand at all times to greet members and hand out brochures.

Don Thompson, who did a bang up job of organizing the manufacturers' exhibits, set up a group of displays from various manufacturers including the S Gaugian, Cascade Models, S Scale Loco & Supply, CS Lettering, and, among others, his own Zippidy-Doo-Da Train Stuff stuff. It was a swell lineup, but it didn't stop there, for nestled amongst giants as Alco Models, Model Railroader, and such, were Delaware Valley Supply, Earl Eshelman, J C Models and another operating layout from G&W Models. Yes G&W is making a comeback with switcher trucks and conversion frames for Baldwin locos. In all there were three operating S gauge modular layouts, all of which ran well and attracted large crowds.

Among the activities, it is hard to guess which was the most popular. The model contest was dominated by S gaugers with Sam Powell taking Best In Show, top prize in S, and second prize for a pair of smudge pots he hacked out in a couple of evenings. They were eye poppers. He entered a 2-10-0 converted from a K-5 and a 2-8-0 built up from an S Scale Loco kit. Guess which one took the top award? You're right, it was the AF conversion.

Reg Bilodeau's machine shop display earned him the "Most Popular Model" award.



For those of you who have never seen Reg's work, you will have to imagine a complete to every detail miniature shop with working machinery-miller, saw, lathe etc. The only thing missing is the smell of cutting oil!

There were many fine models entered in the various classes in this contest and all of them were commendable, the amateur modeller is always encouraged to compete with his work and hopefully he will benefit from honest criticism. We saw several such entries and can say that these modelers did well and should keep up the good work.

The clinics were wonderful. Almost every phase of model railroading was covered. The writer was able to sit in on a few of them and thoroughly enjoyed every minute. Some of you may have heard of "Eric Lanal", pen name of Alan Rice. Old Uncle Eric gave a sterling lecture on the early days of model railroading, back in the days of cardboard and chewingum. Sam Powell let us in on making scenic backdrops using colored slides projected on the wall. (He made it look very simple). Geoff Graeber gave a talk on powering the Miller switcher and the perennial clinic-ker, Jan Lorenzen, touted us on soldering especially on his "beginner" models. (I've got one of his RS-1 kits. I've shaken the box a couple of times but nothing happens-must be doing something wrong, eh Jan?)

There were too many clinics to attend, photography, article writing, electrical, computers, etc., etc.. Railcon's program offered so much to the attendee, that even though he could not attend each of them, it was nice to have such a selection.

The biggest item in the program was the fan trips and layout tours. Carloads of conventioners careened about the country side, crowded into cellars and thoroughly enjoyed a selection of fortythree layouts in scales from N to 1-1/2" live steam. One splendid O gauge layout was a reproduction of Frank Ellison's "Delta Lines". Another was the largest N gauge in the world. A few stalwarts bounced across Jersey and NYC to Long Island and Jerry Viemester's S gauge railroad.

Amtrak spotted GG-1 #4935 at Princeton Jct. Conrail let us in to Morrisville

Yard, we rode on steam trains, went to museums, did some sightseeing, and somehow found time to get together for bull sessi

NASG's business meeting was as lively as ever, considering the fact that it was scheduled for early Sunday morning. For the first time, most the NASG brass hats were present to duck the tomatoes, Dick Schlott being the only absentee. One point discussed which was long overdue was NASG placing more emphasis on hi-rail and tinsplate. All too often it seems that the esteemed leadership of NASG ignored this facet of the gauge. Not so, just more work was being put into promoting scale production. Dick Cataldi explained that a hi-rail committee had been working out standards. Some results should be out soon. New officers were introduced and old officers thanked. The revered Bernie Thomas Memorial Award was presented to....(look elsewhere in this newsletter for an article on this.) Josh Seltzer gave an update on the movie project, he needs films! So... all you budding C.B. DeMilles out there can get in the act by sending Josh a few feet of celluloid. You might win an Oscar.

Most conventions end without a fishing touch. Railcon, (or at this point S-Con), was the exception. The cognoscenti of S gauge went to a picnic at Jan Lorenzen's place. A tour of Locomotive Workshop, corn on the cob, soda pop and swimming topped off a great week's activities. The writer was presented with a fine AF caboose decorated with a black and blue necktie in appreciation for his work on the convention

When we left to go home we felt that we certainly had our money's worth. Railcon/79 was a success, even though many people were of the opinion that it wouldn't be. The only possible complaint was the heat of which there was plenty of. No ear ringing howls about the lack of things to do, on the contrary, too many things to do. The ladies were well taken care of. Everyone who attended came away with a feeling of satisfaction. Letters sent to us are very encouraging and we feel that our adventure into a joint convention was a worth while undertaking. To those of you who attended, we thank you for your support, and to those sour grapes who did not, convinced that they would not enjoy the affair, we regret to inform you that we had a hell of a time.



Your convention committee wishes to thank Jeff Wilson, who was our chairman at Railcon, Wayne Shipp, who did the ads and posters, Don Thompson, who coordinated the manufacturer exhibits, Don Riley and John Bortz, who judged S models. See you all in Milwaukee in '80.

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#### BERNIE THOMAS MEMORIAL AWARD

One of the guiding lights of the gauge, as well as this organization, in the early years of our struggle to survive, was a wonderful gentleman named Bernie Thomas. He didn't shrink from responsibilities and leadership (becoming General Director of NASG in 1963) and inspired many others to contribute to our hobby. His untimely death in 1965 shook the gauge to its core, but it was typical of the man that he had just finished almost single handedly hosting the annual convention at Rochester, Pennsylvania.

Bernie Thomas was a living symbol of S gauge promotion. His friends kept that symbol alive with the memorial award in his name given each year to someone who has worked for S gauge. The NASG Board of Trustees has made the annual selection in recent years and takes pride in recognizing a long time S promoter who has worked tirelessly for many years in the cause of S gauge.

This year's recipient has published and edited the S Gaugian magazine for 16 years. He has worked to help the S suppliers by establishing an informational clearing house several years ago and singling out individual suppliers each year for special recognition. He has purchased several S gauge lines that were on the verge of disappearing including the venerable Kinsman and Miller lines. The products of these companies continue to be supplied under the aegis of his "S"cenery Unlimited.

By now you know that the deserving recipient of the 1979 Bernie Thomas Memorial Award is Don Heimburger. DC

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#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Railcon '79 kicked off NASG's full-bore promotion program. The overwhelming success that S enjoyed at Princeton was the best possible way to start something. Hundreds of serious model railroaders and about two dozen manufacturers found out that S is not just a couple of wild and crazy guys who occasionally get some space in the big

magazines. On the contrary, they found out that we have many followers (and leaders), many fine products to choose from, our own national organization, our own magazine, and an excellent comraderie that makes being an S gauger something to brag about.

Whether you like it or not, S gauge is losing much of its provincialism. We are not hiding our light under a rock anymore. Exposure to the rest of the hobby is a two-way street, as outsiders learn more about us, we learn more about them. Every facet of S is found in the other scales. The size that you operate, collect, and model in is really secondary. S just happens to be the best size and we aren't keeping that fact a secret anymore.

A lot of people took part in the promotional effort that culminated in the Railcon success. Special mention goes to our promotions committee chairman, Ken Zieska who brought a new slide show of S products that blew a lot of minds, Don and Robin Thompson of Train Stuff who organized the manufacturer displays, the S chairman for Railcon, Jeff Wilson, and NASG convention chairman, Rollie Mercier.

It takes people to make things happen and individuals working together made Railcon a success for S. If we continue to build on this system of hard work and dedication, S cannot fail to grow and grow.

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#### THE MAIL SACK

The time has come both to set the record straight and to elicit some action from the fiasco which befell Bill Malm's Hill Country Train Shop when the bank foreclosed. To feel that the collapse of a business venture impunes only the reputation of S gauge is false, especially when, in HCTS's case, a great amount of O scale and bank money were lost. It does put a black mark against model railroading in general. However, there is a big difference between the collapse of a business and a "rip off". In Mr. Malm's case, a factory did exist, people were employed making locomotives, and in fact, two O scale engines were produced. The foreclosure auction notice indicated Hill Country left behind in excess of \$100,000 in equipment and materials, hardly a back-room operation. This is not meant as a defense of Mr. Malm; I lost my money, too! What he did was morally and, quite possibly, legally wrong. His greatest fail-



ure, however, was to believe he could make so many different locomotives without touching the reality of just what such a venture costs, and my mistake was believing him.

That is all past and now we must learn from this experience for the future. Here are two pieces of information for anyone who lost money: 1) If you believe the U.S. Mail was used fraudulently, then write W. R. Newsome, Postal Inspector in Charge, Fort Worth, Texas, 76101. Explain your problem and be prepared to send photocopies of material received from HCTS, including cancelled checks and receipts. The postal service is conducting an investigation to determine if Mr. Malm can be indicted for mail fraud, which is a felony. 2) It is my belief that money lost investing in the Hill Country venture might qualify as a tax deduction. I plan to find out, and suggest that others in my predicament check it out.

Finally comes the question - "Can NASG prevent this from happening in the future?" Probably not totally, but certain steps can be taken. Jess Bennett had the right idea in the last Dispatch. NASG could extend some sort of "certification" to new manufacturers, but to be effective, a "Certification Committee" should be made up of businessmen, preferably not all in model railroad manufacturing. Requirements for certification should include: a business street address; references on letterhead stationary, including a credit reference from a bank or lending institution; a visit by a local NASG member to the manufacturer, submitting a objective, factual report; checking with national magazines (MR, RMC, S-G) for previous advertisements; and finally, an inquiry to the local Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau. The emphasis should not be so much on the references (Hill Country's references included "Sustaining Member, NMRA") as on the visit by a member. It was just such a visit and subsequent report (MR, March 1979 p. 14-15) that tipped me off to Hill Country's imminent collapse. As for checking with national magazines, MR keeps a file of names of previous advertisers who were involved in shady dealings, for the purpose of keeping them from readvertising. This, plus a check with the Chamber of Commerce or the BBB, will help determine the manufacturer's standing in the community.

As Mr. Bennett stated before, this

would not guarantee success, but it might go a long way to save us from the "fly - by - night" operators. Perhaps the "Certification Committee" could work hand-in-hand with the committee working with the survey and marketing data. This combined effort would not only give the manufacturer a recommendation to NASG members, but help him adjust his dreams to the realities of model railroading in the 1980's.

James A Kindraka

Although I am sure that Ed Loizeaux worked long and hard to produce the S scale brochure and had to contend with many problems, including apathy, I am appalled at one of the two pictures shown under the heading of S products. There are least two lines of passenger car kits currently available. One of which, I know for sure, can be bought from Walther's. Considering this, the use of a photo of a built-up kit from a defunct manufacturer is a disgrace. The caption saying, "...will soon be available.", adds insult.

Should a potential S scaler realize how often promises, such as this, turn out to be hot air and worthless ads, we may lose him before he learns the value of our more reputable suppliers. do you think this sounds unlikely? In the same issue of the Dispatch that brought me the brochure the NASG President tells me of another (and this one was costly) such disappointment and then claims that he wasn't surprised. In the same issue, Jess Bennett reminds us that, "it's an old story...repeated over and over."

So, I am deeply upset to see that, to represent passenger equipment in the S Scale brochure, Mr. Loizeaux didn't choose the kits of a manufacturer well known in other scale, nor did he choose those from a award winning manufacturer whose kits are equally available. Instead he chose what may turn out to be, just another promise. What a way to entice others into our scale!

Kent L Singer

The August 1977 NASG Newsletter articles on the Hill Country Train Shop in Texas make me wonder if I am a victim of a similar plot.

I sent a check for \$100 to J.R.Ives of 1700 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10457 last March 29th for one of his Red Arrow



powered S-gauge trolley car. This was received here on May 3rd, damaged in shipment by UPS so was returned by them to Mr. Ives.

I received no reply from him regarding this damaged article after writing on May 3rd and again on May 28th so I had our collection agency contact him after not receiving any reply to my third letter of June 8th so after June 20th they did contact him and I received a letter in which he promised to ship a replacement trolley in 8 to 12 weeks. Therefore, I cancelled any attempts to take any legal action against him. However, I have heard nothing more from him since his letter of July 12th (received date) in which he promised replacement.

I like to have faith in people and hope that he plans to make replacement, but if not I think some of you other S-gaugers should know the facts. Also, maybe some of you are personally acquainted with him and can give me assurances that he really does plan to make a replacement. I hope that this is the case since I really wanted this trolley and also I want to do all that I can to further S gauge as I think it's the BEST GAUGE! Otherwise, why would I be in it with all the troubles I have getting materials out here in the mid-Pacific?

Paul Miles

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#### FROM THE TREASURER

The attached financial statement is pretty much self explanatory but a couple of points need to be clarified. The reason the miscellaneous expenses are so high is for two reasons; first off the \$2000 that NASG was loaned by a member for the 2-8-2 project was repaid, secondly since it did not come under any other expense classification the cost of preparing the S pamphlet was put here and it ran some \$1250. As of July NASG had 265 members so we are steadily growing.

About Oct 1st I will be moving to Idaho because of a change in jobs, I am making arrangements to keep the NASG memberships current until I am situated but I expect there will be a lapse of a month or so in my correspondence. If any of you write to me during this period please be patient and I will get an answer to you eventually.

If anyone has any questions concerning the financial report or any other matters concerning the NASG feel free to write me at my old address. One comment I do have

is that if you do not like the way the NASG is operating join one of our committee's and help to shape the NASG policy of the future. I hear a bit of grumbling from members at times but usually when we need help the grumblers are no where to be seen, hence the officers of NASG have to depend on the same sources, this tends to limit our input of ideas badly.

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#### WORD FROM THE SECRETARY

News about the NASG cars. They are low-side gons. Each gon will have a different number. A notice of registration will be sent with each car with the owner's name and date. The earlier the order the lower the number. Cars ordered after Oct 31, will be \$20.00 and any member can order as many (up to three) as he wants. The cutoff date will be moved to Dec. 31, 1979.

Officers are listed on the Board of Trustees sheet enclosed with this issue.

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#### NEWS FROM CHICAGOLAND

Our (CASG and BSG) Fall 'S' Fest is scheduled for Nov 9 through Nov 11, 1979 at the Elk Grove Village Holiday Inn on Rte 83 and Toughy Ave. in Elk Grove Village, Ill We plan to invite all S gauge Manufacturers and will provide space for them to display AND sell their merchandise if they so choose.

Other convention hi-lights will include clinics, trading pits for AF and scale movies, model contest, layout tours, and banquet. (Hopefully the Lionel cars will be available by then. Many people are holding their breath for these cars. Could be good opportunity for S gauge especially if Lionel comes out with equipment adaptable to scale, such as a real GP 20 or later variety of diesel).

Additional information can be had from our convention chairman, Pete Jugle, 15 W 306 Lexington, Elmhurst, Illinois.

At our recent meeting we had information concerning Spokane groups meet available for our members. All agreed it's a super idea to have regional meets especially now with the gas crunch.

One of our members went to national. Art Doty was able to make a report to our club. It appears we have a BSG member as the Vice President of the Central region It was reported also that about 175 out of the 500 were S gaugers! All in all it sounded like a great success and I'm sure S



made a big impression on the NMRA people; Don Heimburger won the Bernie Thomas award. (I believe for the 2nd time) and will be awarded it at the Fall S Fest per the request of NASG as he was unable to attend the National.

Our modular layout is taking shape and we hope to have the ovals comprising the CASG's layout in operation soon- possibly for the S Fest. We plan to make kits available for 2'x4' modules that will be compatible with our ends. These kits will contain 125 rail on Miller track which we have proved will run most AF. Further any switches will be of the type compatible to both scale and tinplate. Power will be DC which is compatible with AF's universal motors.

John J Mann Pres. CASG

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TO CENTRAL DIVISION NASG

For 59 of you folks, I'm your new representative on the NASG Board. So far in going through my roster, I count 20 of you that I've either met or communicated with. That's only 34% and I hope to double that in 12 months and have met all of you by the 1981 convention.

My message now is a simple one. The Princeton Convention convinced me that the S gauge and NASG balls are beginning to roll rapidly. Many things will happen during my NASG term in office and I am imploring you for comments during these times. The same request goes to all people in other divisions - write your V.P. Pro or con let us hear from you. These will be exciting times for S and we who represent are only as good as the information received from constituents.

Jim Kindraka

NASG DISPATCH  
c/o Ernie Horr  
1307 W Dalke  
Spokane WA 99208

#### S CLUBS NEWS BRIEFS

An ongoing project of the PVSOGA is the excavation of member Wayne Shipp's basem for a future railroad. (Subway perhaps.) The work is very prototypical as most railroads were built this way. One or two of members hack away at the brick-like clay and rocks for a while, then another two of them load up a wheelbarrow which a fifth member wheels out into the back yard and dumps into a fill which will be a patio someday. We go through this routine every 3 or 4 months (it takes that long to recover!) and passed the halfway point last May.

In September the club met at Bill Oertly's for a slide show of some of Bill's recent trips by rail across Canada and the western U. S. This was our farewell to Bill as he finished packing after the meeting and moved to Boise Idaho to a new job.

The PVSOGA serves the Washington, D.C. area and has members in the Shenandoah Valley, Western Maryland, and Baltimore. If you live in the area or find yourself transferred to it, the club is looking for you to join in the fun.

Dan Vandermause Secretary PVSOGA

Tom Coughlan, Secretary reports th the Bristol S Gauge Railroaders are holdin regular meetings. Last meeting was at Joe Aubin's.

Paul Riley has been unanimously elected to serve out the term of office of Roland Pelland which ends with the Sep-Oct meeting of 1980.

The IESGAPN crew, having just hosted a 3 day "All S Get Together" are now preparing to participate in the Inland Empire Swap Meet and Railroad show, an all gauge affair.

# National Association S Gaugers, Inc.

FROM: Bill Oertly, Treasurer  
 TO: Board of Trustees and Committee  
 Chairmen

DATE: 8 August 1979  
 SUBJECT: Annual Report for FY 1979

Beginning Balances 1 July 1978		
Checking	\$ 363.95	
Savings	4962.20	
Petty Cash	<u>42.09</u>	
Total Available Balance		\$5368.24

Income during year		
Dues	\$1245.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>165.71</u>	
Total Income		\$1410.71

Total Cash available during year	\$6778.95
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Expenses during the year		
Postage	\$ 540.99	
Supplies	996.49	
Miscellaneous	<u>2888.57</u>	
Total Expended		\$4426.05

Ending Balance	\$2352.90
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Ending Balances 31 August 1979		
Checking	\$ 251.86	
Savings	2095.41	
Petty Cash	<u>5.63</u>	
Current Balance		\$2352.90

To go along with the above financial report the following information helps to clarify it. The misc. expenses include the repayment of the \$2000 that NASG was loaned to use on the Westside 2-8-2 project, also the expenses include the costs of the printing of the pamphlets.

Respectively Submitted

*Bill Oertly*  
 Bill Oertly