

Florida Garden Railway Society, Inc., (FGRS) Board of Directors Meeting

6 October 2007, at the home of Frank Schlee, Port Charlotte, FL

Members Present: Stan Kotas, President, & Director, Tampa Bay Division	Frank Kimmel, Director, Central
Frank Schlee, Director, Southwest Division	Les Smout, Treasurer
George Sheldon, Secretary	Bruce Boyle, Membership
Pete Smith, Newsletter Editor	Kerry Keehn, Librarian
Keith Wolfe, Web Master	

The meeting was called to order at 12:57 p.m. by Stan Kotas.

Stan Kotas thanked Frank Schlee for hosting the meeting and providing lunch for the members. He also thanked Frank Kimmel for bringing ribs to add to the lunch. Stan welcomed treasurer Pete Smith to his first FGRS Board meeting.

Secretary's report: The minutes from the Board meeting held on 2 June 2007 were published in the July 2007 FGRS Newsletter. All members indicated that they had read the minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made & seconded. The minutes were approved by the Board.

Treasurer's report: Les Smout distributed copies of the balance sheet, as of September 30, and the profit & loss statement covering January through September. Dues are broken down from Jan 1-Sep 30 and Sep 1- Dec 31. . Les reminded the Board that dues paid after September 30, cover the member's dues for the following year. It is projected that there will be a \$350 deficit by the end of December. Statements have been reconciled through the end of September.

Les reported that we lose money on name tags, one at a time, and the cost varies each time depending on number of tags ordered and postage. The club has subsidized name tag purchases by \$50 so far this year. Frank Kimmel suggested that we look into purchasing a used engraving machine so we could make our own name tags, as well as make small signs for members' layouts. Frank will explore such a purchase. Kerry Keehn suggested we switch from the current style name tags to laminated versions that are inserted in pouches attached to neck lanyards. Kerry will look into cost of lanyard/laminate name tags. The Board discussed interim measures to cut out the subsidy. After several proposals involving scaling the price of name tags, the board seconded and approved Les Smout's proposal to raise the price of name tags to \$8 each, effective immediately. The costs of buying & shipping name tags will be tracked continuously so the price can be adjusted accordingly.

The matter of paying each division its share of dues collected was discussed in light of projected deficits. After consideration of various options, the decision of the board was for the treasurer to pay the divisions today as prescribed in the by-laws. The FGRS had a balance of \$2,761.48 as of September 30, 2007. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made & seconded. The Board approved and accepted the report.

Librarian report: Kerry Keehn reported that little, if any, new materials had been added to the state library since the last meeting. He also reported that he will not be a candidate for the 2008 board.

Membership report: Bruce Boyle distributed new rosters updated as of 5 October. There were 202 members total, of which 86 were in Central, 83 in Tampa Bay and 33 in Southwest. Stan Kotas praised efforts to renew old memberships and to recruit new members. However, in 2006 there were 217 paid members, of which 112 were in Central, 65 in Tampa Bay and 40 in Southwest. Tampa Bay, which had only 51 members in 2005, now has 83 members. Central is down 23 members since 2006 and Southwest is down seven. The overall downward trend is a concern. The FGRS had 320 members seven years ago, with 183 in Central and 100 in Tampa Bay. Possible reasons and solutions were discussed. Stan/Keith Wolfe reported the Sundance Central was successful and stimulated interest in the hobby. Keith is putting together a DVD of FGRS train meets and activities to show and/or sell which, hopefully will help. Frank Schlee cautioned that providing too much information about individuals could result in strangers knocking on members' doors to see their layouts. Keith Wolfe suggested 24" x 36" posters could be purchased for \$39 each. Frank Kimmel recommended that we should consider purchasing them for advertising. Stan urged the board to come to the next meeting with more ideas on how to bolster interest and reverse the decline in membership.

Bruce requested that payments for all membership renewals be accompanied by a completed membership application form, and payments be made by check. This will ensure accurate information is included on rosters, and newsletters are mailed to the correct addresses. In the past, there have been complaints about the accuracy of addresses, phone numbers, etc. Also, some cash payments have been accepted in the course of conversations or other distractions and the payer's identity forgotten. Some checks have also been submitted with no printed name, but with an unreadable signature. Pete Smith will begin including an application in each newsletter for the rest of the year. Les Smout motioned to accept the recommendation as FGRS policy and Frank Schlee seconded it. The motion was approved.

Newsletter Editor's report: Pete Smith reported that two of the missing old newsletters had been received and turned over to Kerry Keehn for the state library. Also the, "original" first edition (published by Pete Smith) was given to Kerry for the library. Stan reiterated the importance of meeting deadlines for submissions, understanding that reports on meets and other events occurring late in the month will have to be carried in the following month's issue. The 22 November deadline will be extended to the 26th so ballots (due on the 25th) can be counted and results published in the December issue.

Pete reported that he was able to get a better printing deal at Staples than at Office Depot. Discussions on limiting the size of future newsletters resulted in the decision to hold it to two sheets of paper (8 pages) and to limit each division to 1 ½ pages. If a division does not submit enough material for 1 ½ pages, Pete can adjust accordingly and allow expansion or addition of other articles. Bob Pero will be asked to submit an executive summary for the printed newsletter if his article is too long. The full text will be made available on the FGRS website. Membership applications will be included in the November and December issues and routinely will be included on the back cover of the newsletter. Bruce Boyle will coordinate with Pete on a condensed application form. A motion to raise dues was discussed, but the decision was to hold off further consideration until the 2008 board meets in January.

The inclusion of a short notice in the newsletter by "FGRS members in the business" as in the past will be continued, but normally will only be carried in the website version. Pete will include words like, "check website for listing of businesses of FGRS members." Ads by non-vendor members wishing to advertise sale of train items, collections, etc., will normally be carried in the website, with only a note about it in the newsletter. Articles for the newsletter should also be sent to Keith. Articles sent to newsletter@fgrs.org will automatically be sent to Keith Wolfe, Pete Smith and George Sheldon. Frank Kimmel asked who has the right to submit articles for publication. Question was not answered directly, but limitations in size of the publication dictates that division director's articles, traditional sections like the inside front cover, schedule board, notes by various board members, and Bob Pero's articles will take up all available space. Pete will have discretion after that.

Webmaster report: Keith Wolfe will coordinate with Pete Smith to make sure the same information is covered or referred to in both media. After some discussion, the board decided to continue password access to the website information. The password is changed annually in February.

Keith is collecting videos and photos to be used to make a one-hour video synopsis of layouts of the 3 divisions to be made available to members. Keith reported he would possibly include about 5 minutes on who we are, how often we meet and what we do. He explained that the Sundance Central video included 20 minutes of photos and 2 minutes of video of trains running. They cost \$3 each to make and 5-6 hours to produce. They sold 78 in Portland, Maine, at \$10 each. The proposal is to make a DVD for each FGRS membership. We should expect a minimum requirement of 100 copies to have them copied commercially. Frank Schlee asked Keith to shoot the Southwest Division tour in November.

Division reports

Central Division: Frank Kimmel reported that the Plant City display is on for this year again. He asked Plant City to provide for more of our people this year rather than more up-front money. This means more rooms and meals, which is easier for them to provide. People who participate will have to help with set up, running and tear down in Plant City (29, 30 Nov and 1 Dec) to be eligible for the free room & board.

Frank talked about his meet scheduled for 13 October. Highlights will be a seminar and demonstration of a Massoth multi-train system by Klaus Stork, and attendance of one or two Cub Scout troops.

Central Division is currently working on a redesign of the display at Arnold Palmer Children's hospital in Orlando. Stan asked if this type layout could be done at other hospitals. Frank said yes and suggested John Rowland, who designed the Arnold Palmer and Epcot displays, would probably be happy to offer his advice. Other events for Central include Ken Young's train show on 2,3 November.

The Great Train Expo will take place at the Tampa State Fairgrounds in early 2008. Frank explained that Central had a slow year, but had money in the bank and a supply of raffle prizes in the barn. Stan suggested trying to get more people involved. The National

Garden Railway Convention is in Chandler (Phoenix), Arizona in April, 2008. Frank figured about \$2700 to cover travel, \$129/night for room for 5 days, banquet, and a show car.

Southwest Division: Frank Schlee gave a short recent history of events. Convention exploration included talking to people with experience about what it takes. Eighteen months lead time is needed and 8-12 people to lead it. A convention is also expensive: A \$2-5000 outlay would be needed to secure/guarantee hotel rooms and space for vendors and clinics. With fewer people there would have to be more involvement of those left.

Possible upcoming events include a display at Charlotte State Mall, and consideration of joining the Sarasota Train Club with a show to increase interest. Frank suggested that Southwest decline in membership was partly due to age and health, and they have not gone out to recruit new members. Stan praised what they have done and for the planned tour. Frank talked about the successful bus trip that took members to Homestead, and possible bus trip to the Harriss's December meet in St Augustine. Frank uses All Star Charter @ \$600 for 10 hours. The busses hold up to 40 passengers.

Tampa Bay Division: Stan confirmed that monthly meets were scheduled through 2009 and 3 months into 2010. He reported that the Perry , Georgia, show will be on 15, 16 February 2008. Check Yahoo maps. Travel Lodge rate is \$32/night.

Old business: None discussed other than those issues included in above reports

New Business: Balloting and the election process were discussed. Central Division will soon develop a rules-of-procedure document. Stan suggested possibly teaming with Sunshine Region (in western part of Florida) for a show in the spring of 2009. It will likely involve all scales, train rides, programs, etc. For the 20th anniversary of the FGRS, Bruce Boyle will chair a committee to come up with ideas for an appropriate event for the occasion.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for 19 January 2008 at a location yet to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15p.m.

George Sheldon, Secretary