

**Florida Garden Railway Society, Inc., (FGRS)
Board of Directors Meeting
19 January 2008, at the home of Stan Kotas, Brandon, Florida**

Members Present:

Stan Kotas, President, & Director, Tampa Bay Division
Don Pirson, Acting Director, Central Division,
and Central Division Member-at-Large
Frank Schlee, Director, Southwest Division
George Sheldon, Secretary
Bruce Boyle, Membership Director
Vic Gilbert, Librarian
Pete Smith, Newsletter Editor
Keith Wolfe, Web Master
Neil Bradshaw, Tampa Bay Division Member-at-Large
Paul Wagner, Southwest Division Member-at-Large

The meeting was called to order by Stan Kotas at 12:38p.m.

Stan Kotas welcomed old and new board members. He announced the resignation of Central Division Director, Frank Kimmel, effective 31 January 2008. Stan wanted his thanks extended to Frank for his services to the division and to the FGRS, noting that Frank will be missed and wishing him well in the future. Stan recognized Don Pirson as acting director. The rules of procedures presented by Central Division were referred back to the division to bring election procedures more in line with Roberts Rules of Order.

Secretary's report: The minutes from the Board meeting held on 6 October 2007 were published on the FGRS website. Motion to approve the minutes was made & seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously by the Board.

Treasurer's report: Stan Kotas gave the treasurer's report in the absence of Les Smout. Copies of statement of assets (Profit & Loss - January through December 2007), and statement of activities (Balance Sheet- as of December 31, 2007) , were distributed to members. There was a short discussion about the cost of our directors and officers liability insurance. Vic Gilbert suggested we check to see what we would save by cutting the limits of coverage in half. The decision was to wait and see what the renewal cost is in May. Stan praised the board's efforts to economize, which resulted in cost-avoidance, but not loss. The reports show a deficit of \$460.51, a contrast to the deficit of \$350 projected in October. The FGRS had a balance of \$3,863.60 in checking/savings as of December 31, 2007. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made & seconded. The Board unanimously approved and accepted the report.

Membership report: Bruce Boyle distributed updated rosters. There were 107 paid memberships as of 18 January 2008, of which 48 were from Central, five were from Southwest and 54 from Tampa Bay Division. There are three life memberships included in the figures. Stan referred to a survey by Large Scale Central, which indicated that several other garden railway clubs are showing a decline in membership. Stan encouraged more interaction with visitors at train shows and other events we participate in to help make people want to join the FGRS. Bruce requested that annual membership renewal checks be accompanied by a completed

membership application form. This will ensure accurate information is included on rosters, and newsletters are mailed to the correct addresses.

Librarian report: Vic Gilbert reported he was anticipating conversion of certain tapes to DVD for longer life for the video and the fact that DVD is replacing VHS tape. Vic noted that the library has no 'how-to' videos and will get with Bob Pero to see what subject matter might be appropriate for our train shows and/or for sale. The idea of a 'Quick Tip' corner was well received

Division reports

Central Division: Don Pirson stood in for Frank Kimmel. Central Division recently completed expansion of Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children train layout project. Members have begun to volunteer to man the train layout at the Epcot Flower & Garden Show from March until June. Sponsors of the layout are LGBOA and probably Union Pacific Railroad.

Southwest Division: Frank Schlee announced that effective January 2008 he is now president, as well as director, of Southwest Division, replacing Rich Segal. Frank reported that they had a good show at the Manatee Civic Center with a 40 X 30 foot layout. He plans to go back to Manatee, which falls on the same dates as the Perry, GA, show. From now on, Southwest Division meets will be held on Saturdays so as not to conflict with Tampa Bay meets normally held on Sundays. Southwest meets are booked through end of May. Frank reported that there were seven or eight members already signed/signing up for Epcot duty. Southwest Division will close out the first half year on 24 May with the annual spring picnic at Bud & Joyce Steinhoff's. Southwest Division officers for 2008 are: Frank Schlee- president and director; Paul Wagner- VP and FGRS Board member-at-large, Bobbi Wasserman- treasurer, Kathy Caldwell - secretary and Bob Caldwell- membership chairman (transferred over from Bry Parsons). Because of Dean Crewsdon's (previous treasurer) serious illness, there will be a one month delay in having the Annual Financial Report available to the FGRS Board.

Tampa Bay Division: Stan reported a full schedule of meets through the spring. The Great Train Expo will be on February 2 and 3. The Great Train Expo will also be at the Orlando Fairgrounds in July and Central will participate. Plans are afoot to provide display(s) at special events at the Museum of Science and Industry, which will be an opportunity to "be in peoples' face" to aggressively promote the hobby. Talks are ongoing with All Children's Hospital to provide a 'G' scale model railway in their new building scheduled for completion in 2010. Stan would like the club to be known for its expertise and experience in building layouts for almost any hospital that asks. Central Division's Vic Gilbert and Disney employee, John Rowland, who is experienced in design and construction of a variety of Disney displays, including model railways, are willing to consult at least.

Newsletter Editor's report: Pete Smith gave the master of December and January's newsletter to Vic Gilbert for the library. Pete requested additional newsletter material for February from Central. He also warned that some submissions were only minutes from being too late for inclusion.

The board discussed cost limitations and resulting page limits. Other ways of making more room for division announcements, etc., were heard. Stan requested that divisions make sure all members know about the cost problem. Stan also suggested we try to find ways for the FGRS state organization to make more money to offset the cost of newsletters and insurance without raising dues.

Webmaster report: Keith Wolfe reported that the issues with AOL have been resolved and we are on a new server. A password is still required to access the newsletter. The newsletter is now a PDF file. Keith was asked to publish a description of the web improvements and give a copy to Pete Smith. Vic Gilbert asked for a DVD for the library on how to navigate the website.

Old business: Financial statements are due from each division to Les Smout by the end of January.

New Business: Pete Smith stated that a single page printed and folded newsletter costs approximately \$38 /month (Based on 200 copies). It was suggested that we look into purchasing our own laser printer to help reduce cost of newsletters. Still looking for other short term ways to cut costs, a unanimous decision was made for Stan to draft a letter and ballot with options for all members to declare whether they will accept the newsletter via the website or continue to receive hard copies. It will be a separate mailing and include a due date for returning the ballots.

Bruce Boyle made a motion to suspend the requirement for the state to refund \$3.00 of member dues to divisions until further notice. This will help offset most of the projected insurance costs. The motion was seconded, and approval was unanimous.

Regarding the DVDs featuring 'who we are' in FGRS, Keith will mail or hand-deliver copies to paid members in March or have them available for the divisions to distribute. Keith was asked to check on adding a description of how to navigate the FGRS website to the DVDs.

The Sunshine Convention 2010 is on hold until the NMRA approves.

Bruce Boyle & Keith Wolfe are looking into an FGRS event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the FGRS.

Regarding the Epcot-LGBoA-Union Pacific display, see the website for the LGB/UP promotion pages. The latest details available indicate that only 2 people per day are desired; our hours will be 11:00 until 5:00; each person will get 1 lunch coupon per day for the employee cafeteria for a maximum of 2 tickets/day (even if 6 people show up); there will be no free tickets to the park(s); backstage parking; there will be an area hotel suite as accommodation for those 'coming from a distance.' Volunteers are expected to be well dressed and well groomed, (polo or button down shirts and facial hair are OK,). FGRS name tags are required. Only 2 people per shift (4 or 6 can go, but only one hotel suite and only 2 meals will be provided). UP has not signed the contract yet. Points of contact for Central Division are Vic or Betty Gilbert. Robert Carr, a Disney Epcot employee, will be handling the schedule of volunteers.

Keith asked Vic for a list of items in the library so he can publish it at the website.

Frank Schlee suggested a 'merchandise for sale' page when & if we get FGRS items for sale. Stan Kotas described Tuscon's GRS, which is a single-town club with 190 members, \$30 membership dues, and a first year initiation fee of \$15. They are a 501C organization, they get sponsors , sell tours of their layouts at \$6.00 per head, and their membership application asks yes or no for hard copy of the newsletter. They have cash assets in excess of \$10,000.

To correct the newsletter numbering system, the next newsletter will be Vol 18, No. 2.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for May 2008 at a Central Division location yet to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30p.m.

George Sheldon, Secretary