

BAGRS Board Meeting – 18 October 2009

10:05 AM meeting called to order

Board members present:

- Don Watters, Russ Miller, Dennis Mack, Ray Turner, Frank Lucas, Johannes Hoech, Richard Murray, Mike Paterson, Nancy Norris and guest

Topics:

- Secretary's Report: Minutes:
 - Johannes read the August 2009 minutes, which were approved
- Treasurer's Report (Chip Gierhart was not here, Don reported in his stead):
 - Financial Condition
 - No substantial change
 - Trailer down payment has been made
 - 2009 Budget vs. Actual
 - We are on track with membership and expenses
 - Conservatory of Flowers
 - We're planning to support the Conservatory setup; all's on track and Jack and the Conservatory folks are pleased
 - The work crew for the effort looks good:
 - Bill Allen and Terry Hurley (sp?) will build buildings
 - Kermit Paul is building a cable car
 - Jack may personally organize construction crew
 - Everything has to be done between Nov 7 and 16th
 - We will need to train their staff on operating the layout
 - There most likely won't be special parking for volunteers
 - We will have a separate children's display at the conservatory; Ray passed out a general floor plan
 - Keep it simple, just a standard loop raised off the floor

- Use LGB track since it's very rigid and can be bent to shape
 - Chip acquired three Thomas Tank Engine type trains
 - Give it a European flavor; add tunnels and bridges, etc.
 - Use an acrylic screen to keep fingers off this 4ft deep layout
 - The total budget is about \$2,200; \$500 more for DCC
 - Chip spent \$600 on the Thomas engines on eBay
 - The group felt that installing DCC was overkill and not worth the cost
 - The biggest concern would be the reliability of the Tank engines, there being a risk of wearing out the gears which we could minimize by adding a momentum switch
 - The current plan is for a simple "Figure 8" layout without any switches
 - About half of the track will be set up on trestles
 - There will be a cable car off to the side
 - A car will run back and forth on the Golden Gate Bridge
 - The layout will be about 2 ft off the ground
 - Ray made a motion, Johannes seconded it, that we spent approx. \$2K to finance the layout without the DCC
 - Motion was approved
- Action Items:
 - Add an announcement in the T&T to popularize the children's layout concept at the conservatory (**Ray**)
 - **Nancy** and **Johannes** talk to Chip to find out how to get plugged into commensurate marketing efforts
 - **Russ** will work with Chip to do a poster design for the conservatory events
 - Scheduling Coordinator's Report (Ray Turner):

- We discussed having the Mega Weekends more localized to specific districts
 - The market research data suggests that people don't want to drive as far to open houses
 - There were no complaints from the Mega Weekend, and there was a feeling that we shouldn't open too many open houses so we don't dilute the potential visitors to a given layout
 - There was extensive discussion then of whether or not we should encourage many displays to be open vs. keep the no. of displays more limited
- Action Items:
 - Set up a Superintendents' meeting to make a policy decision on whether or not we want to encourage a lot of open houses or stay more focused to drive more traffic to a fewer set of open houses (**Ray**)
- Market Segmentation Report (Johannes Hoech):
 - Objectives/Approach
 - Johannes outlined the approach to this project based on his October 16 email to the board
 - A request for Committee Members was discussed
 - Action Items:
 - Put a note in the newsletter (**Johannes** to work with Jennifer Miller)
 - Send an email to the board asking for interested board members (Ray and Don expressed interest), as well as for suggested additional participants (**Johannes**)
- Public Outreach (Nancy Norris):
 - Trailer Progress:
 - The trailer vendor is promising to commence construction within two or three weeks; start date pending shipping from the manufacturing location to Martinez
 - Action Items: No action items
- Membership Report (Frank Lucas):

- Frank changed the cutoff date
- We're now 289 members with a few lapsed and former members returned
- He got some folks interested in trains when he offered a nighttime showing
- The question was raised that we talk about more than G-Scale gauge, e.g. can we work on 0-Gauge layouts
 - The group felt that scale is not an issue, we're about "garden railroading" irrespective of scale
- The good news is we're growing back up to 300, i.e. we are reversing the decline in membership
- We talked about how to maintain a tight relationship with the Shortline to enable both sides to benefit from cross-marketing synergies
- Action Items: No action items
- Baggage Car (Dennis Mack):
 - We're driving down out inventory
 - We have a good vendor that helps; they carry all the interim inventory
 - Action Items:
 - Maybe increase quality of art work (**Dennis**)
 - Figure out how to add a T-Shirt sales pitch to a new member application (**Dennis** to work with Chip on how to do that)
- Live Steamer Report (Richard Murray):
 - Had their last meet at Ardenwood with great attendance from members and visitors
 - LS was at Just Trains and got a new member, everyone is doing a great job pitching for members
 - LS wants to thank Jennifer Miller about publishing all their pictures
 - Action Items: No action items
- Vice President's Report (Russ Miller):
 - 2010 Annual Meeting:

- Was written up in the September newsletter
- Newsletter:
 - A lot fewer people ended up downloading the Sept newsletter than other newsletters before
 - In the December newsletter there will be the main announcement for the Conservatory layout
- 2011 Regional Meet:
 - Us being in July won't compete with the June national date as well as the early July NMRA convention in Sacramento (which will involve BAGRS members, and they're interested in working with us)
- Action Items:
 - We need to get better at submitting newsletter content to Jennifer Miller on a more timely basis (i.e. by the 15th of the month) to avoid delays (**ALL**)

Next Board Meeting:

- On December **TBD** at **TBD location** at 10am 'til 12 noon.

Adjourned at 11:45 AM.