
CASG IS CHICAGO AREA'S MAJOR S SCALE GROUP

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The Chicagoland Association of S Gaugers (CASG), one of the largest S gauge clubs in the world, began 34 years ago-- in 1969-- when members gathered at the Illinois Institute of Technology on Chicago's south side to talk about S scale model trains. The first meeting was held in October of 1969 .

There, club members would meet in a room to talk and also visit the model railroad layout sponsored by the IIT Model Railroaders. At the second meeting, John Enhorning of Enhorning Industries of Ludington, Michigan offered members a preview of new S products they were going to make. Member Bob Pichler brought in several examples of products on the S market, Don Heimburger showed several models made by Wayne Riggle of Regal Kits, and Gene Glendinning brought a six-foot test track with code 100 rail, a station and some rolling stock.

At the third meeting of the club, *The Last Run of the Shay*, a 17-minute color production from St. Regis Paper Co. was shown by member Don Heimburger, who worked in the Public Relations Department of the Illinois Central Railroad.

At the March, 1970 meeting, Ed Jung brought his Tomalco Sn3 brass 2-8-0 for inspection; the meeting was planned as strictly a social meeting. In the March newsletter, a call went out for nominations for the four club officer positions. Annual dues were set at \$1, and a club directory was printed.

In April, club discussion was focused on finding a central location for members to meet and discussing a new GP-9 kit from Port Able Lines, new GP-40 body shells from Enhorning and being able to receive some

Enhorning decal catalog sheets for members.

In October of 1970 the CASG celebrated its first anniversary with new S projects on display and an excellent slide show presentation of heavy coal-hauling freight trains from the Piedmont area. It had been one year before that the first notice of the club's formation was sent to more than 150 S gaugers in the Chicagoland area. Club president was Gene Glendinning, Bob Pichler was vice president, Alan Zielinski was treasurer and Rick Bieler was secretary.

A Nimco car building session was planned for the November 1970 meeting. Six wood box cars were ordered at \$2.50 each and work tables were provided, but members needed to bring along necessary tools to work on the kits.

Club notices of the meeting schedule ran for the first time in *Railroad Model Craftsman* and *Modeler Railroader* in 1971. Nominations for the recipient of the Bernie Thomas Memorial Award were being accepted, with only members of the NASG being able to vote, according to the club's newsletter entitled *The Switchlist*, edited by Gene Glendinning.

The July, 1971 meeting of the club was hosted by Hans Krause of Niles, Illinois, which began a long-term relationship with the Krause's. Hans loved to have the CASG come to his house and layout. Hans' layout featured long stretches of track and Hans allowed members to bring their equipment to run on the hi-rail pike. Carolyn Krause always had plenty of refreshments for the members.

In December, CASG members were given their first-ever membership cards. Member Jim Annetti supervised the printing.

In May of 1972 the club was invited to view Dave Garrigues' American Flyer collection. Dave's AF collection was extensive; Dave collects variations of engines and rolling stock. Dave had a track board that allowed trains for N, TT, OO 2- and 3-rail, S, O and Standard gauge to run on it.

New officers for 1972 were Jim Annetti, president; Joe McGarrigle, vice president; Joe Mazanek, secretary; Alan Zielinski, treasurer; and Joe Stamm was elected photographer and activity chairman.

The second CASG picnic was held Sunday, August 27, 1972 at Lake Geneva, The ship *Polaris* was rented, and the group took a boat ride along the shore of Lake Geneva. Afterwards, the club traveled to Union Illinois and rode the streetcars and passenger cars of the Illinois Railway Museum. The actual picnic was held later in the day at the Lake County picnic grounds on Rt. 173.

In February 1973 Joe Jiranek took over the CASG Switchlist newsletter. "I guess you fellows are really in for it," he wrote in the first issue. "I have been requested by the powers that be to attempt to prepare and send out the newsletter of the CASG." Joe always did an excellent job, expanding the newsletter to as many as 10 to 16 pages each issue. Joe included drawings, membership rosters, many tidbits from other rail publications, and club minutes.

By June of 1973, it marked the 3rd year that the club was meeting almost exclusively at the home of Hans Krause. A cake was prepared with candles by Carolyn Krause just for the occasion.

At the June meeting member Leonard Normand brought in several S scale diesel locomotives he had built in Illinois Central colors. Marty Cohen and Joe Toliquin brought in many AF items to sell. Joe Jiranek brought in a Marx Army train set which he was going to convert to S scale.

Ben Wilbur was nominated and elected as chairman of the NASG National Convention to be held in Chicago in 1975. Don Heimbürger was elected vice-chairman, and various meetings were initiated to organize for the event. In 1973 the CASG had 55 paid members.

A new meeting location was announced for the May, 1974 meeting-- the Lincoln Federal Savings & Loan Assn. Building on West Cermak Road in Berwyn. The change was necessary as there was more room for members and more members were showing up at Hans' house. As of May, 1974, the club had more than 75 paid members.

For the 1975 convention, the club designed and built an 8 x 16-foot modular layout that was to be easily assembled and disassembled. The CASG also designed and sold a club patch for \$2.

The 1975 NASG Convention, sponsored by the CASG, was held over the

Fourth of July weekend (4-5-6) at the Holiday Inn in Elk Grove Village. Registration was \$17.50---with banquet included. A daily admission charge of \$5 was levied. The club had a 75-room minimum for the Holiday Inn. All the clinics, banquet speaker, layout tours (Parade of Pikes), raiette program and overall program was considered excellent.

Joe Jiranek, newsletter editor, said, "To those of our members who were not able to be in attendance (at the NASG Convention), may I express our deepest sympathy."

The club had not only sponsored a national S convention, it was reported a profit of \$1,000 was made.

The March, 1977 meeting saw 50 members and visitors in attendance and nine raiettes.

The second Fall S Fest was held the weekend of Nov. 18, 1977, and many members were in attendance. The show was held at the Holiday Inn in Elk Grove Village.

With the January 1994 meeting, the club started meeting at Walther Lutheran High School in Melrose Park, with the starting time at 7 p.m. The club was host of the 1994 Fall S Fest at the Holiday Plaza in Matteson, Illinois with an excess of 9,800 square feet of space available plus another 3,000 square feet of lobby display area.

The March, 1994 meeting was proceeded by a slide presentation by Bruce Moffat covering the Chicago and suburban public transportation systems, then and now.

Today, the club meets once a month. Agenda usually is informal discussions, a business meeting, then more informal activities.

Back in the early days of S, few modelers were in S scale, and the fellowship of S modelers was crucial to keeping the hobby alive and helping with the continued promotion of S scale.

Forefront of S Activity

In fact, the CASG was only one of a handful of active S scale clubs in operation in the early years--late 60s and early 1970s--when S scale was beginning to advance, however slowly.. It was and is in the forefront of S club activity.

The club was one of the first in the U.S. to actively meet to promote the S scale hobby, and today ranks as one of the largest S clubs. Norm Schreiner, a long-time hobbyist and S scale modeler, is President. He can be reached at 708-681-1389.

The club welcomes new members of any interest including scale, hi-rail, S narrow gauge, armchair modelers, collectors or operators. It is an informal group that appreciates the gifts and talents each member brings to the club.

The CASG is devoted to promoting and displaying 3/16" to the foot scale model railroad trains, which are 1:64 in proportion. S scale is one of the five most popular scales (in size order from largest to smallest: G, O, S, HO and N) and is mid-size between them all, affording the most ideal characteristics for modeling.

New members are invited to attend CASG meetings, and dues are \$15 a year, although visitors are welcome to a meeting complimentary to decide if they'd like to join. The club is incorporated, has a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Officer-At-Large, and Three Board Members and can appoint special committees and individuals for projects as the membership wills.

Club Meeting Schedule

The CASG meets at 7 p.m. every third Friday of the month at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Melrose Park, Illinois (on Lake Street) a western suburb about 10 miles from Chicago's downtown Loop. The website is

www.trainweb.org/casg/ on which club events and a newsletter appear every month.

A CASG club ad with meeting and contact information appears every issue in the S Clubs Column of the national S scale magazine, S Gaugian. Will Holt is secretary at 630-969-1982.

CASG members own and operate their own personal train layouts; the CASG has no permanent train display, although several members have joined to form sub- groups who do own and operate S or Sn3 layouts on special occasions.

The club is the originator of the famous Fall S Fest held every year in October or November either in Chicago, Milwaukee, Rockford or St. Louis. Club member Peter Jugle, now deceased, along with his brother, Andy Jugle, were the major force behind developing the popular event.

The Fall S Fest attracts modelers from dozens of states and even Canada, and is the largest S scale event in the world. In 2002, the Tinley Park, Illinois Convention Center was the site of the show, with nearly 23,000 square feet of convention space, enough for dealers, manufacturers, displays and operating layouts.

There were 24 manufacturer booths, operating displays, 265 dealer tables, a large modular layout, banquet, prizes, clinics, movies, auction, hospitality room, train races, model contest, tours of home layouts and much more. Contact Joe Taylor, 8303 North Keeler Ave., Skokie, Illinois 60076 or call Will Holt at 630-969-1982 for more information. There is a minimal charge for registration.

The club has been active in promoting Fall S Fest cars which are popular and collectable. Many have been offered through the years, and members and non-members often compete at the S Fest auctions to acquire rare cars with special numbers or paint schemes.

The CASG continues to develop and promote S scale in many ways. "S scale modeling is fun, and the CASG offers members fellowship and a relaxing hobby," says President Norm Schriener. "I invite new members to join our organization, and I look forward to the future progress of S as one of the

leading model train scales."