



The WHISTLE POST

The Official Publication of the Garden State Division of the NMRA Northeastern Region



In this issue: Make 'n' Take on Feb 26; A member moves but stays in touch; AP Corner; Tools and Tips



Something for Everybody

As I write this, I am preparing to go to the Amherst Society train show in West Springfield, MA. There was no show last year due to COVID, but it is resuming this year. Ever since I saw my first one about ten or more years ago, I have always been impressed by the sheer size of it: multiple large buildings full of model railroading equipment, including layouts. Almost every aspect of the hobby is represented. There is someone, somewhere showing or selling whatever you might be looking for. Manufacturers give clinics on their products. It is always exciting to roam the aisles and see what is going on.

The diversity of items and services for sale and on display at the show mirror the diversity of the hobby. Anyone who has been involved in the hobby for even a short time knows how vast it is. Whether your interest is in building models, artwork, electronics, computing, operating, prototype or other topics, this hobby has it for you.

At our meets of the Garden State Division, we strive to present to our membership as many of these aspects as we can. We have had a wealth of clinics over the years which cover these areas, and we try to choose them to be of interest to the membership. We also provide an outlet for another very important aspect of the hobby: socializing. Being active in the Division inevitably leads to making new friends and becoming part of the model railroading community. There is no need to be alone building a layout in your basement, or only reading magazines, when there are so many opportunities to interact at the division level and more. I encourage those of you reading this to attend as many Division activities as you can.

The Springfield Show is an opportunity to meet other model railroaders from outside our division as well. Just roaming the aisles and speaking to people in the booths enlarges your perspective of the hobby. Traveling with friends or other Division members is fun, and there are opportunities to dine out, as well as meet people from other divisions and regions, as it is one of the largest such shows in the United States.

The news now is that the Omicron variant COVID surge is passing, and the spike in cases will be over in about two weeks. Just in time to come to the GSD's winter meet in Park Ridge, where we will have a make-and-take event. Please try to join us. **WP**



A Look Back at 1956

Last year I acquired a large number of *Model Railroader* and *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazines, and have slowly been looking through them. For this column I'd like to make some comparisons between the twelve issues of *MR* from 1956 and where we are today. That's 65 years ago, if you do the math! Be warned, brass hats and model rails, the opinions below are my own.

It turns out 1956 was the year of the big hubbub over the "NMRA standard" coupler, which never became a standard. This was also known as the horn-hook or X2F coupler. Kadee couplers were on the scene but photos show they were not as refined as they are today. Mantua and Baker couplers were commonly used.

Track plans were nearly all of the convoluted type, or more politely, spaghetti bowl. That is, looping around, with turnbacks and wyes, and as much track packed into the space available as was possible.

Very few layout (pikes, they were called) included a real railroad name, or even sounded like a real railroad. All kinds of silly names and puns were common. Probably not the best way to add authenticity to your railroad.

The scratchbuilders were very creative. Only a fraction of the parts and materials we take for granted today were available, so various techniques of working with paper, matboard, and metal were required.

Scenery was clearly the weak point of layouts back then. Lichen, dyed sawdust, and asbestos mixed with plaster were standard. Virtually nothing was available commercially. Rubber rock molds were being used, but with few exceptions even the best layout photos would be considered a rough covering today.

Tru-Scale roadbed was popular, as your track options were very limited. I have a piece of this milled roadbed and tie material, and it is hideous.

The specifics of locomotives didn't matter. For example, plans were provided of a 2500 HP Pennsy transfer diesel built by Lima-Hamilton, and they didn't even include the model number or the PRR road numbers.

Some items hold as true today as they did then: when painting a backdrop, fade the sky from blue at the top to nearly white at the bottom, and using real glass for glazing, which is what I do on certain projects. An early method of representing a coal load was presented, using glue and paint to color gravel. There must have been dozens of coal load articles published since then.

We really have it good today! **WP**

Upcoming Events

GSD Winter Event Saturday, February 26, 2022, snow date March 5, Park Ridge, NJ
Make and Take kit building featuring an ITLA kit, Layout Open Houses

New York Society of Model Engineers Spring 2022 Exhibition 341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt, NJ, Three weekends Sat and Sun March 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 1-5 PM

<https://www.modelengineers.org/>

Jersey Central Chapter NRHS Train Show Mother Seton High School, Clark, NJ
GSP Exit 135, 9 AM-3:30 PM, the GSD will be there at a table!

Valley Forge RPM Meet see notice below www.rpmvalleyforge.com

Hindsight 20/20 An online day of prototype clinics held via Zoom approximately every two months. <http://speedwitchmedia.com/>

NERx An Online Event, Evenings March 21-24, 2022 <http://www.nerx.org/>

New Jersey Division March Meet TBA

NYSME/METCA Spring 2022 Joint Train Show and Swap Meet St. Joseph's School, 120 Hoboken Road, East Rutherford, NJ April 6, 9 AM-2 PM modelengineers.org/

GSD/NJD Joint Spring Event May, to be hosted by the NJD

NMRA 2022 National Convention Gateway 2022 St. Louis, MO August 7-13, 2022

MER 2022 Convention Carolina Special, Charlotte, NC www.CarolinaSouthern.org

NER 2022 Convention To be held in Windsor, CT September 15-18
<https://ner-conventions.org/index.php/connecticut-yankee>

Railroad Prototype Modelers- Valley Forge

March 24-27, 2022

Desmond Malvern Conference Center
Malvern PA

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club

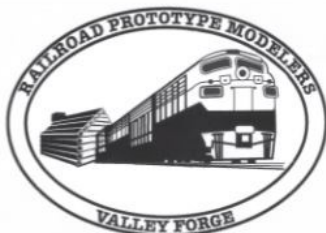
Friday Operating Sessions

Clinics

Model Displays

Vendor Rooms

Sunday Home Layout Tour



For information and updates
rpmvalleyforge.com

In this Issue

THE CAB AND THE CABOOSE 2

UPCOMING EVENTS 3

FEBRUARY EVENT IN PARK RIDGE 4

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN 5

STARTING OVER 7

AP CORNER 8

TOOLS AND TIPS 9

MAP TO THE MEET 12

CLUBS AND BOARD MEMBERS 13

WP INFO 14

On the Cover

Our cover photo shows a busy yard and terminal scene on the New York Society of Model Engineers layout. NYSME will be one of two club layouts open the afternoon of February 26, following the morning activities.

Photo by Jim Walsh.

GSD website

www.nergsd.com



A new edition of NERx will be held from March 21-24, 2022.

<http://www.nerx.org/>

Previous virtual events held by the NER can be found on the

[NMRA's YouTube channel.](#)

Just look for "NERx" in the video titles.

NER COUPLER

If you are not getting notifications of new issues of the NER Coupler, sign up on the NER website <https://nrmra.org/> Full color print editions as well as a PDF edition are available.

A Make 'n' Take Meet Returns to Park Ridge On February 26

Did you enjoy a make 'n' take clinic at the recent Mill City 21 Convention? If not, do you want to give it a try? If so, how about round two. It's a great hands-on experience and simply fun. The GSD is planning a make 'n' take clinic at the upcoming Winter Meet on February 26 in Park Ridge, NJ. Bob Dennis will host the clinic using an ITLA kit that showcases many design features and 3D engraved weathered masonry. It is easily painted with rattle can spray paints and water-based acrylics. It measures 3 x 3 x 4 in. and can also be built as a background flat if desired.

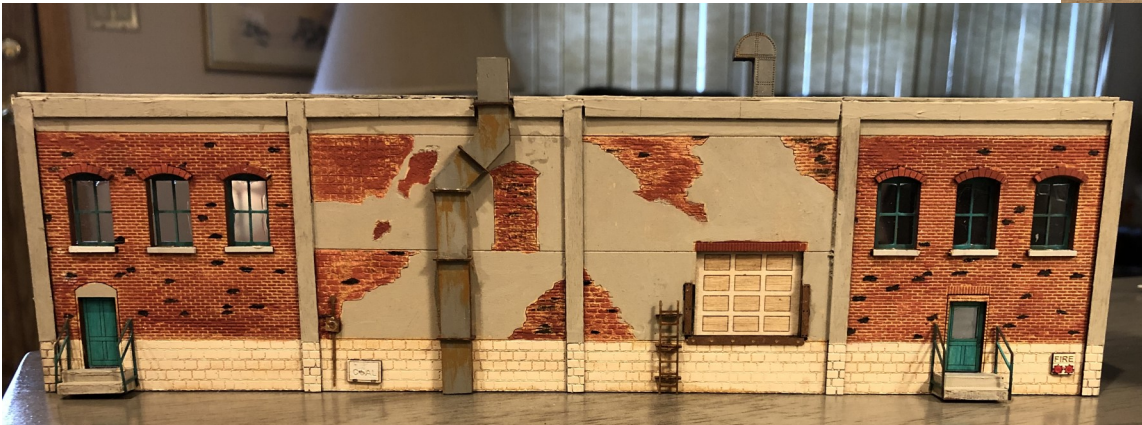
The kit to be used is ITLA Scale Models Intro Brick Building Kit. The retail cost is \$39.99 but participants will be able to purchase it for \$25.00. The manufacturer's website is <https://itlascalemodels.com/>.

This is a wood kit that we will prep for construction. If you prefer to paint before detaching from the carriers (for some parts I would recommend that), you'll need to bring the paint and brushes as they will not be provided. What you should bring are files, and an X-Acto knife and some sand paper. I would recommend canopy glue or Aileen's Tacky Glue

We were last at the Fulton Friendship Lodge two years ago. It is located at 147 Kinderkamack Road in Park Ridge.

In the afternoon, the layouts of the New York Society of Model Engineers and Garden State Model Railway Club will be open to members.

Note that in case of inclement weather, March 5 will be the alternate date for this meet.**WP**



Above and Left: A Make 'n' Take clinic of the ITLA kit shown here will be the subject of the February meet. These sample models were built by Bob Dennis, who will be leading the clinic.

FINALLY BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

The Pandemic certainly changed what we had been accustomed to for many years. During the Pandemic, we got together in any way but face-to-face and while virtual meetings enabled us to share with the group, it was never the same as our “normal” meetings. They say that you never appreciate what you had until you lose it and that applies to our in-person meetings. It was a great return and long overdue. Individuals or small groups got to have those conversations, collaborations and updates that were a great part of getting back together. We had two great clinics, some recognition, announcements and a real Bring and Brag session. Following the meeting we had an in-person layout tour that was a BIG change from the virtual and regular layout tours. We were able to tour the very large and inspirational Northlandz layout. It has spectacular views and impressive bridges. From some of the high observation positions you can get a bird's eye view of the layout. It was a great day and good to be back together again. WP

Below: The lower level parts of Northlandz may look like a normal layout but as you climb higher things start to look different.



Above: Roger Oliver was recognized for his contributions to the NER with an NER President's Award from Bob Dennis. Recognitions like this are another great part of in-person events.

Below: It had been too many months since our last in-person meet and this group was glad to be there. You were only on line if you were waiting for your turn to get coffee.



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Above Photos: Only with a facility as large as Northlandz can you get views like these from one of the higher observation locations. There are many very large and impressive bridges.

STARTING OVER

by Scott Dunlap

Anyone who has ever moved before, and that includes just about everybody, knows that moving is a long, drawn-out, often expensive, and always stressful process. And if it's been a while since the last relocation and one has forgotten just how bad it can be, he will be reminded soon enough once the process starts again. One might be moving for the best of reasons, just married, a bigger house, a great new job, a better climate, a lower cost of living, whatever, none of that changes the fact that the moving itself will be anything but fun.

And for a model railroader, there could be other downsides as well. For example, if one has a layout then there's a good chance that it will have to be dismantled and end up in a dumpster. Years of work gone.

As some of you know, I have relocated to the Atlanta area. Leaving New Jersey was not easy. I lived in Randolph for thirty-two years, half of my life. But, the lower housing costs, lower taxes, and better weather proved too much to resist. Plus, the fact that my father lives here and I have friends from when I first lived here back in the 70s and 80s was also a factor.

My apartment in Randolph was so small I that didn't have room for a layout of my own but I was a member of The Model Railroad Club in Union. Over the years, thanks in part to the club and the NMRA, I was able to connect with many other model railroaders in the area. Those connections led to opportunities to work on and operate many layouts. The list of names and layouts would be too numerous to include here, and I would probably forget someone if I tried. (I will, however, mention that the editor of the *Whistle Post* would be one of those on the list.) When I left New Jersey, the club and all of those connections were left behind. It was time to start over.

Luckily for me, the Piedmont Division of the NMRA has a good number of model railroaders and the division has lots of activities, including monthly meets. Back in October and November they had their annual Piedmont Pilgrimage, five weekends of model railroad open houses featuring over thirty layouts and garden railways.

The club scene, however, is limited, especially when compared to the Garden State Division. There's an old O scale club located downtown, but it's a bit of a drive and besides, I'm an HO guy. There is an HO club in north Georgia, but it's 90 minutes away, way too far for me.

On the other hand, there are several operating groups located throughout the metro Atlanta area. Many are listed on the Piedmont Division's website. So one of my first orders of business after getting settled here was to reach out to six of them to see if I could join one or more.

By the way, for those who may not know, operating groups are collections of model railroaders, usually from the same general area, who get together and take turns working on and operating each other's layouts. Some groups may require that participating members have a layout, while others may not. And to keep things manageable, there may be limits to the group size.

After sending e-mails to the group coordinators I received responses from only three of them and two, including the one that's closest to home, informed me that they were not accepting any new members at this time. Another did invite me to come by and I've attended a number of their work sessions and their annual Christmas dinner. None of these guys are close by, one is forty-one miles away, but I'm going to keep attending their sessions when I can.

A friend of mine who I went to high school with in South Jersey and now lives down here is part of another group not listed on the Piedmont Division's website. He was able to get me invited to one of their op sessions, my first in the Atlanta area since moving back here. Another one of my friends is also a member, so I expect that as things continue to loosen up post-Covid I will be able to attend more of their sessions too.

In November I attended my first Piedmont Division monthly meet. That was a good move on my part. Since I was a first-timer I had to get up in front of everyone to introduce myself. After that, a number of the members who I didn't already know made a point of coming up to introduce themselves to me, and a few were former New Jersey residents.

After initially not receiving a response from the group known as the Joint Railway Association of Georgia (JRAG), I was able to connect with the coordinator and now have been invited to participate in a couple of sessions with them. JRAG is one of the best operating groups in the Atlanta area and perhaps the oldest. They've been around since 1981.

More recently I was contacted by a member of one of the op groups that had turned me down proposing that he and I, along with a mutual friend, start a new group of our own. We had a meeting in early December and plan to start working together sometime in the new year.

So despite a lack of responses to some of my initial e-mails, or outright rejections, things are looking up. It may be a while before my model railroad activities can match what I enjoyed in New Jersey, but I'm optimistic. And now I have room for a layout of my own too. I just need to figure out what I want to build.

Many of the model railroad opportunities that I have been able to take advantage of both here and in New Jersey would not have been available if I was not a member of the NMRA. If you are planning to relocate from the Garden State Division be sure to check out the local NMRA's region and division websites to see what they have to offer.[WP](#)

Discovering the Achievement Program

AP Corner By Mark Moritz

For most of my life, I participated in the model railroading hobby in Isolation. Beginning in my teenage years, I read Model Railroader, built kits, and was content. With a hiatus for higher education, child rearing, and professional commitments, I eventually returned to the hobby when my boys were young. They never really developed an interest in it (no video gaming in it), but I restarted my involvement.

This time though, I joined the NMRA to see what the community of model railroaders was like, and how the hobby looked to mature adults. I was not disappointed. But I wanted to improve my modeling, and I was curious how my skills measured up to those of others. I brought in some of my models and entered them for judging in the Achievement Program. Bruce DeYoung was the Program chair at that time and was very encouraging. My models earned merit awards scoring high enough in the judging.

Soon, I was going to the regional convention, where I looked forward to learning even more about the hobby, and I brought those models for judging in the Model Contest. They did quite well, and I was awarded several certificates of achievement.

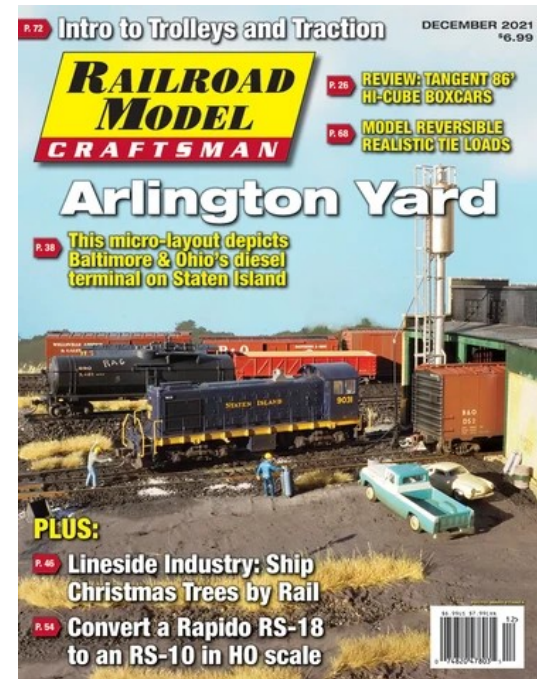
Now I was hooked. I went on to build and enter more models in the NER and MER contests. I even went to the National meeting in 2017 and my model placed second. I am now moving on to judging.

The GSD Achievement Program is an excellent vehicle for improving and earning recognition for your labors in building a model railroad layout. In reality, although the various certificates include several that reflect layout-building, you can do the program without actually building a complete layout, just parts of one that meet the certificate requirements. For instance, for the Golden Spike Award, you only need to scenic 8 square feet or so of a layout in HO. For the Civil Engineering Certificate, you need only 50 total feet of trackage built.

The Achievement Program provides feedback from peers as to how well you are building your models and your layout. No longer am I modeling in isolation. I get intelligent feedback on my work that I submit. If I am doing something correctly, there are people to tell me that I am, if not, I get advice on how I can improve. It's what I needed since first getting involved in the hobby many years ago. For those of you just getting involved in the hobby, as well as those who have been in it a long time, it's a great way to learn and grow as a model railroader.

So get involved and find out just how good you are and how you can improve. It's fun and rewarding. WP

Right: Congratulations to GSD member Marc Pitanza for this great cover photo and accompanying article in the December 2021 *Railroad Model Craftsman*. In the same issue, member Tom Piccirillo also has an article, *Introduction to Trolleys and Traction*.



Notice of Elections

In accordance with the Bylaws, all Officer positions and three Director positions are up for election in 2022. Officer positions are one year terms, while Director are two year terms. To run for an Officer position, the member must be in good standing and have served two years (one term) as a Director. Any member in good standing may run for a Director position.

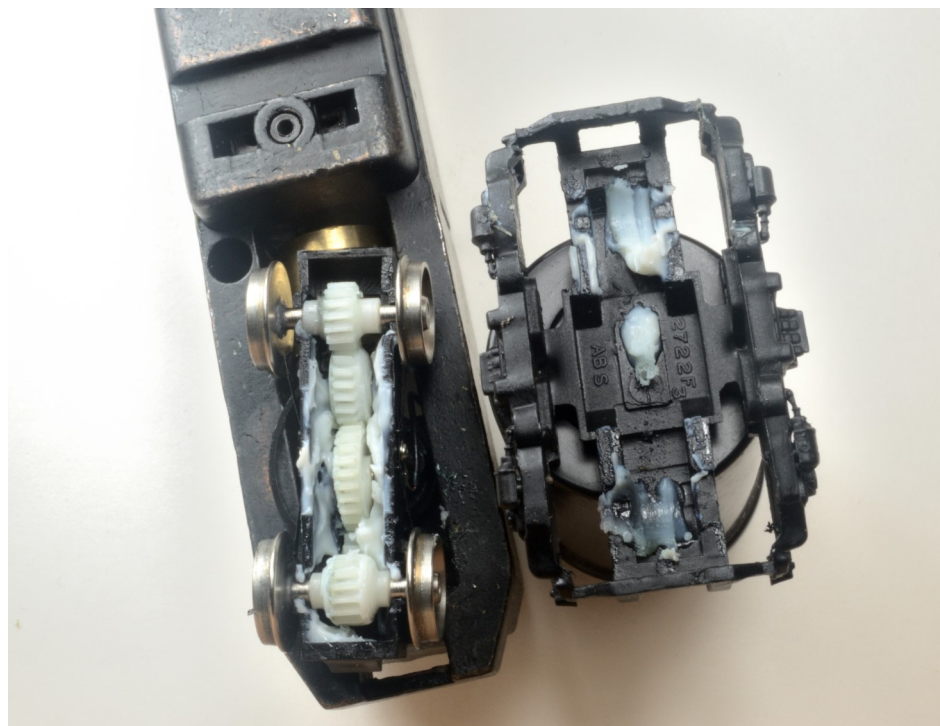
Becoming a member of the GSD Board is an opportunity to make a difference within the NMRA. It is an opportunity to present new ideas and implement them, creating a stronger organization for the membership.

Interested members should send their name, address, and phone number to Nominations Chairman [Ciro Compagno](mailto:CiroCompagno@richmondharbor@gmail.com) at richmondharbor@gmail.com. The deadline for this election cycle is April 1. Officers and Directors will be installed at the Spring Event to be held in May.

TOOLS AND TIPS: NEW LIFE FOR OLDER EQUIPMENT

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

Each year I assemble a loop of Bachmann E-Z Track on a platform under my Christmas tree to run an HO train. It's a bit of a tradition because for me the Christmas tree isn't completely decorated until a train is running beneath it. In the fall, I received a Bachmann Southern Pacific F7 and a week later, I picked up a Southern Pacific caboose at a train show. I decided to run these under the tree for Christmas. They were older equipment as evidenced by them having the old horn hook style couplers. The diesel ran but had a characteristic thumping as it traversed the test track. I suspected cracked axle gears so I removed the bottom cover to inspect the gears but could barely see them through the thick layer of grease filling in between all the gears. It was like a lifetime supply of grease had been applied in a single maintenance session. It far exceeded the recommendation to sparingly apply a small amount of grease. When I cleaned out the grease I found that 2 of the 4 axles had



Above: When I removed the bottom of the diesel power trucks, I was disturbed by the amount of grease. This lubrication should follow the rule of "Less is More" but for this case, more is a big mess. It all had to be removed and replaced with much less. Sometimes the grease hardens and becomes difficult to remove.

cracked gears. Fortunately, Bachmann's website has a parts section and I was able to order 2 geared drive wheels to make the repair. My parts box contained a pair of Bachmann E-Z Mate knuckle couplers that easily replaced the old horn hook couplers on the locomotive. Then I turned my attention to installing new couplers on the caboose.

The old AHM caboose had the couplers mounted on the trucks so I decided to remove them and install Kadee No. 5 couplers on the body of the caboose. I've liked these couplers since I installed my first pair of MKD 5&10 couplers on an Athearn Blue Box freight car. Now they just call them No. 5 and I must agree with their packaging slogan of "OI' Reliable". I also like the whisker version with built in centering springs and designated as No. 148. For most closed freight cars like boxcars and reefers, I would drill through the floor and tap for the screw but on a caboose there are open platforms above the coupler locations. I can't drill a hole through the platform, so I needed to determine another technique. I read the instruction sheets carefully and concluded that I could put a rod or tube through the top cover since it has a short cylinder extension to hold the coupler. Since I could not find a proper sized tube, I used an 0.080" styrene rod. With the rod, I decided to use the smallest screw diameter that would secure the draft gear box. I used 0-80 by 1/8 inch screws and that length did not project through the top cover. I bonded the rod to the top cover part and drilled and tapped the rod before trimming the rod flush to the part. Then the top cover was glued to the caboose body. After the glue was cured, the parts were assembled as required and the screw secured it all in place. The final step was checking the coupler and trip pin against the coupler height gauge. Photos of these steps are on the following pages.

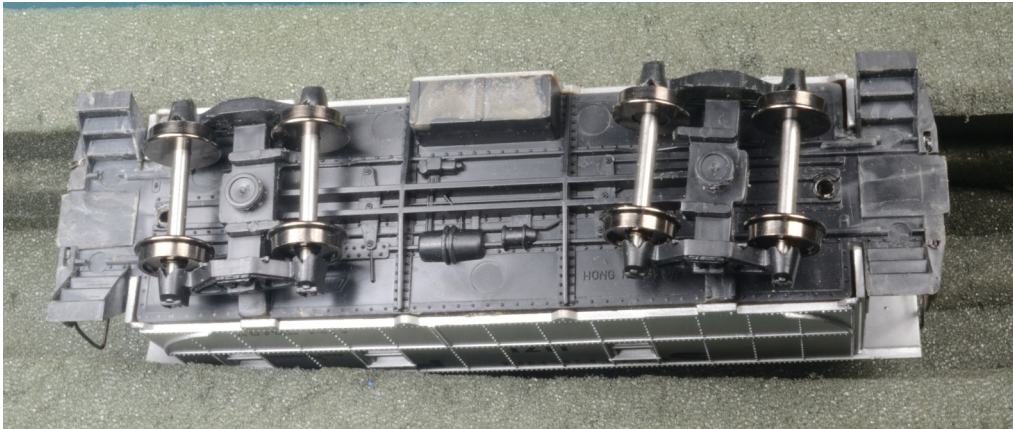


Above: I first used Kadee MKD5&10 couplers, now they are No. 5 couplers. I installed No. 5 couplers with the draft gear parts in the package. You can also install a 148 "whisker" version that needs #232 draft gear.

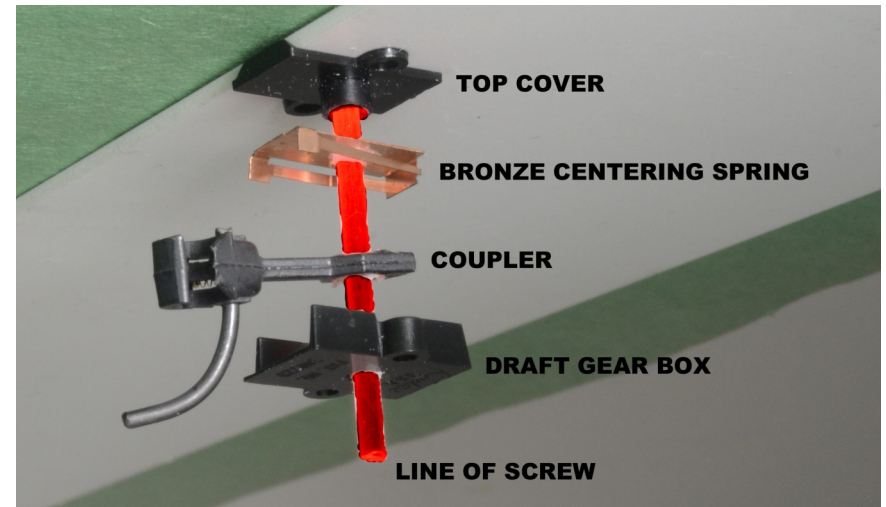
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I also found some good ideas and tips for Kadee couplers just by reading the instructions. I did not need to read them before since installation was simple for most freight cars with body mounted coupler pockets. I recommend reading the instructions so you can have your couplers operating really well. **WP**



Above: Here is the underside of the caboose with the couplers and coupler boxes removed. The flat part on each end is where the Kadee No. 5 couplers will be installed with the Kadee draft gear.



Above Here are the parts that are assembled for the installation of the Kadee No. 5 coupler. The top cover on some instruction sheets is called the lid on others. The bright red line shows the path of the screw that will secure the assembly. For a Kadee No. 148 coupler, the bronze centering spring is not required.



Left: This pair of photos show the draft gear box and sizing for an appropriate screw. On the left, the center hole is for the screw and on the right, since the screw covers the hole it will secure the draft gear box.

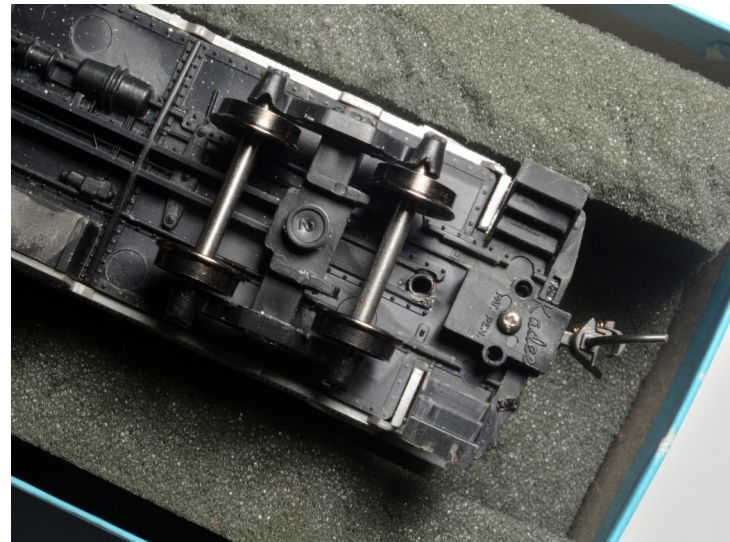
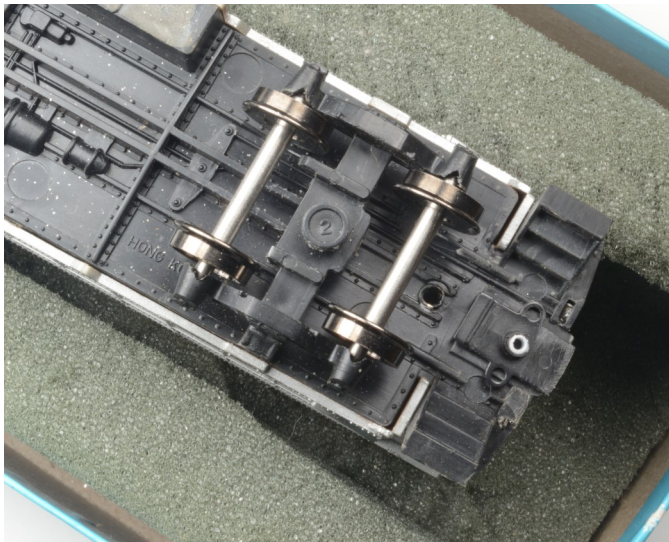
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Right: This is the top cover (or lid) that will be attached to the caboose with glue. However, first the piece of styrene rod will be attached to the part and drilled and tapped to accept the screw. Then the styrene rod will be cut off and sanded flush with the top cover before that part is glued to the caboose.



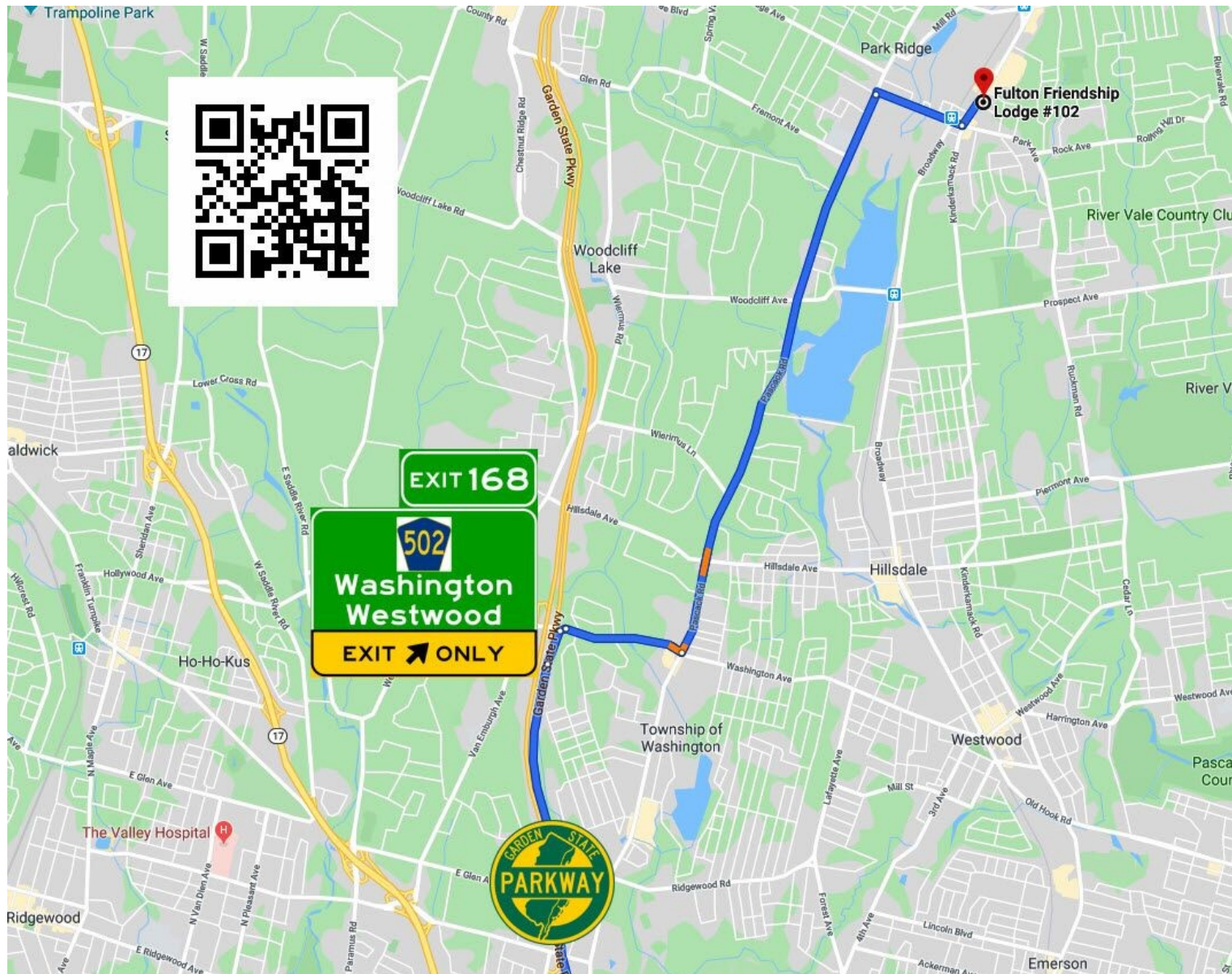
Below: The photo on the left shows the installed top cover after it has been bonded to the caboose. Notice that the white styrene rod has been drilled out and tapped to accept the cover screw. The photo on the right shows the final assembly with the coupler parts secured in place with the screw.



MAP FOR THE WINTER EVENT

FULTON FRIENDSHIP LODGE
147 KINDERKAMACK ROAD
PARK RIDGE, NJ

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30
EVENT STARTS AT 9:00



NEXT DIVISION EVENT

WE WILL BE MEETING IN
PERSON AGAIN FOR THE
WINTER MEET!

TIME:
9:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 AM

DATE:
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26,
2023

LOCATION:
FULTON FRIENDSHIP LODGE
147 KINDERKAMACK ROAD
PARK RIDGE, NJ
SEE THE MAP ON PAGE 12

COST:
\$5 DONATION WHICH
INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS

WEBSITE FOR MEETS:
SEE PAGE 3

AGENDA:
INTRODUCTION
MAKE AND TAKE CLINIC
BRING 'N BRAG
DOOR PRIZES
LAYOUT OPEN HOUSES

An NMRA partnership with Northlandz is coming!

You may have heard that there is a new owner of Northlandz, located on Route 202 South in Flemington. Promising changes are in the works! NMRA Marketing Consultant Christina Zambri has been discussing a partnership with Northlandz that should prove very beneficial to both parties, with great opportunities for the GSD.

<https://northlandz.com/>



CLUB CAR

Garden State Model Railway Club
575 High Mountain Road, North Haledon, NJ 07508 www.gsmrrclub.org

The Model Railroad Club
295 Jefferson Avenue, Union, NJ 07083 <http://tmrci.org>

New York Society of Model Engineers
341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt, NJ 07072 www.modelengineers.org

Pacific Southern Railway Club
26 Washington Street, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553 www.pacificsouthern.org

Ramapo Valley Railroad Club, Allendale Community for Senior Living,
85 Harrenton Road, Allendale, NJ www.ramapovalleyrailroad.com

Bound Brook Presbyterian Railroad Club (BBPRR), Bound Brook Cemetery Office Building
500 Mountain Avenue, Bound Brook, NJ 08805 billandmartha3@verizon.net

Staten Island Society of Model Railroaders, Train Club Room, 3rd Floor, Staff House, Seaview
Hospital, 460 Brielle Avenue, Staten Island, NY <http://sismrinc.tripod.com/index.html>

AT THE THROTTLE

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Deadlines for submissions to the Whistle Post are four weeks prior to the next Division event, as announced in the prior Whistle Post.

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March 21-24

For more information, visit
NERx.org

NMRA Virtual Convention presentations can be found on the NMRA Facebook page or the NMRA home page.



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