

THE WHISTLE POST

The Official Publication of the Garden State Division
Of the Northeast Region of the NMRA

Number 89

Winter 2003

Conventions, conventions and conventions

Where do I start? There have been three conventions since our last newsletter, our spring convention in Rochelle Park, the NER convention outside Boston, the National convention in Toronto and now the possible NER 2005 convention to be hosted by the GSD!

Did you attend any? If not, you sure missed out on some great fun. This is what the NMRA is about, bringing the hobby and fellow hobbyist to you. That's right, no matter what convention, no matter what state (or country) I always meet people who share the same interests, have the same problems and want to visit layouts, prototypes, auctions and attend some great clinics. Sharing the knowledge, the fun and the hobby in general is really nice. How often can you do that? Almost every minute at a convention!

National Conventions are once a year and last an entire week. They are held all over the country and Canada- even in England! An entire week of trains- Can you deal with that? I

And what a time for all.

sure can and at the last convention, SARS scare and all, 1330 of your fellow modelers did too.

Don't just sit back and read the Bulletin, get out there and enjoy so much more of your hobby then you can realize. Not only will you learn something that could save you time and money, not only will you see things you only dreamed of, not only will you tour great parts of our land, but you'll make a friend or two. Thanks to past conventions I look forward to meeting friends at every one I attend and Toronto was no different.

So again, where do I start? How about our local GSD spring convention

that we held at the Knights of Columbus hall in Rochelle Park?

A good turn out for sure considering it was our second. Lots of models in the contest corner, two earning merit awards, We had everything from a freelanced Shay to a Diorama.

The Video corner was going full blast and the White Elephant table was quite packed as well. We had three great clinics, The Leigh Valley Railroad and their harbor operations by Ralph Heiss, Foam Scenery by yours truly and one on DCC by a local club. There were quite a lot of door prizes as well. Everyone left with something, a purchase, a prize, or some

good knowledge. I think a few friends may have been made too.

Check inside for our local GSD convention pictures.

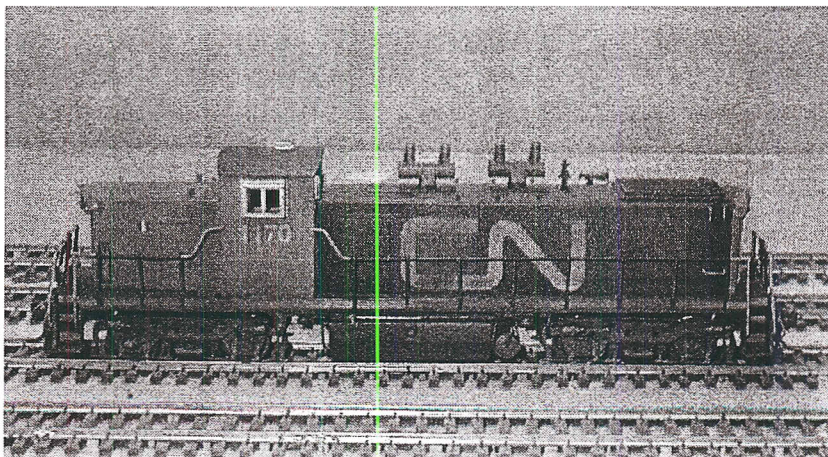
Now I did not attend the Regional meet in Boston but I heard it was a good one. Even featured a ride on the Accela (that's what it was named after. It was at this meeting that the NER BOD voted to return Staten Island to the GSD.

The next NER convention will be held on Long Island.

See the event schedule in the rear of this newsletter..

More convention coverage on page 3

(Right) A model of a one of the kind engine only owned by the Canadian National Railway in HO on display at one of the many clubs open for the convention



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*Notice that some people have
two titles? Yes, we need more
help in running the division.
Please step up and lend a hand*

Clubs around the Division

THE RAMAPO VALLEY RAILROAD CLUB

Meets Tues. & Fri.
620 CLIFF ST. HO-HO-KUS, NJ 07
Dennis Alderman 845-359-0746

GARDEN STATE MODEL Ry. CLUB, Inc.

Meets Tues. & Fri.
575 High Mountain Rd. North Haledon, NJ 07508
www.gsmrrclub.org
"O" SCALE CLUB
Meets Tues. & Fri. at above
Contact; Karl Geffchen 973-857-2825
*SEE BACK PAGE FOR HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE INFO

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY N-TRAK

Meets Fridays GARFIELD, NJ
Harry 2001-460-7290 or Ric 201-939-2134
http://members.aol.com/awOL/ntrak.html
E-mail trackcrew@aol.com

THE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, Inc.

Route 22 Union, NJ
http://www.tmrcc.com

STATEN ISLAND SOCIETY of MODEL RAILROADERS

HO Modular Club, Round Robin meets
once a month.
Contact Willie Butler
Pennsy39@aol.com
http://members.tripod.com/MSKRR/SISMR
MEMBERSHIPS OPEN

NY SOCIETY of MODEL ENGINEERS

HO & O scale club
341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt NJ
201-939-9212
http://community.nj.com/cc/sme
MEMBERSHIPS OPEN

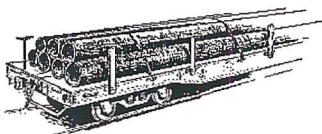
GARDEN STATE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

Meets Tues. & Fri.
607 8th Ave. Asbury Park, NJ 07
inlinebob@aol.com

**Did we
miss a
club?**

**If so
Please
get us the
Informa-
tion
By
Emailing
gsdtrains
@yahoo
.com and
we'll be
glad to
include
it in the
next issue**

**Please
support
the
division
on your
website**



M A P L E - L E A F 2 0 0 3

Want to talk about National Conventions?

Most of you know that there are various levels of conventions here in the NMRA. On the front page we spoke of ours, a division level convention that lasts a day. Next there are regional conventions and then once a year the National convention takes place. The runs an entire week and if you have never attended one it is something you must do at least once in your life. My very first took place in Pittsburgh in 1990 and I loved it. Since then I attended Valley Forge in 1993, Atlanta in 1995 and now the Maple Leaf 2003.

And what a convention it was. 1900 people signed up for it and with all the fears of SARS, 1300 attended. Not bad considering the fears were all unfounded. Now for those who have no idea what takes place during a national, I'll explain a little. Once you sign up you get, clinics, videos, contests, demos, tours (both prototype and model) and a bunch of non-rail related items for your wife or both of you. My wife attended a number of tours, some with me and some without. If I was away on a layout tour, she was busy someplace else. Layout and non-rails tours are by bus since so many to see and there are usually over 100 layouts to open for tours in the area anyway. Now besides tours the convention holds clinics, over 40 different clinics at Toronto There are at least 5 to 10 of them going on all day! Some are hands on, and some are not. There is at least one video room showing tapes all week long. There are SIG rooms, Special Interest Groups that specialize in one aspect of the hobby. I attended the "operation" SIG and learned a few secrets about waybills and such for my railroad. Then a few manufacturers have 'infomercials' where they show off their products.

There are also auctions and a company store to purchase all the NMRA gear you want.

I attended only two model tours and saw some fine layouts. The non rail clinics for the most part got cancelled but a number of women made up for it by other means. My wife already signed us up for the Cincinnati convention in 2005! So I guess she had a good time. By doing so you save a lot of money by getting an early package. If you know you're going to attend, sign up as early as possible.

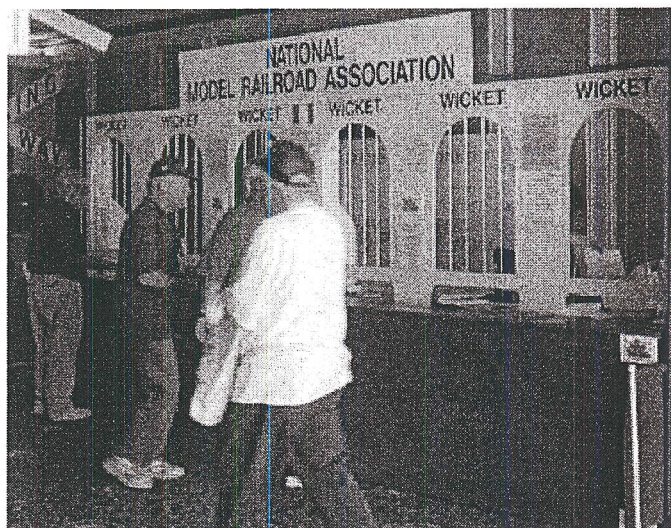
The National Train Show was cancelled as many of you know, but these convention people put on a great show using local dealers and portable layouts. No manufacturers but plenty of things to buy and trains to see. In short too much was made of the SARS thing. On one hand you can't be too safe, on the other you could really over do it. Considering everything, this was a great convention.

More pictures on page 7

And yes, they were already booking for conventions in 2004, 2005 and 2006!



A Snack before your tour was always welcome



No shortage of tickets for tours of any kind until Thursday morning when they sold out the banquet



P R E S I D E N T S — C O L U M N

Well, gentlemen, we have a new president – yours truly. Our previous president and founding father, Tom Matthews, as a result of his relocation to PA, resigned the position and that automatically elevated the vice-president (guess who) into the vacancy. And, I've been playing catch-up ever since.

The winter and spring meetings were great successes. Sadly, I missed the spring meeting. I can only hope that is not the reason it was so good. Attendance and participation are definitely on the increase and hold great promise for future gatherings. I hope to see you all at the NER Fall convention on Long Island.

We staffed a table at the Greenberg show in Edison on August 9th and 10th. With me were Don Jennings, Tom Wortmann and Frank Neufeld. We spoke to a number of prospective members and provided them with applications. Don Jennings signed one visitor up on the spot - **Mark Moritz** of Morristown. Also, we met **Norman Frowley** and his wife. Norman hails from South Orange and has been a member of the National for about 2 years. He will be sending in his paperwork for the Region and the Division.

I am speaking to the National about how we can make a better presentation at the

Greenberg shows. Also, I am looking into getting a tablecloth with National, Regional and Divisional logos/letters in order to create a more presentable image. If any of you have ideas and/or experience in these matters, please let me have your thoughts. Email is easiest (mponton@ptd.net) or call me if you don't have a computer.

During the past several weeks I have had a number of conversations with various members who have more experience in the NMRA and the NER than I do and conventions, in particular. Uniformly, the inputs I received were that we, the GSD membership, lack the experience to organize such an event in the time that we have. In order to host a Regional convention in the Fall of 2004 we should have begun making the necessary arrangements and planning the event 6 to 9 months ago at least. Therefore, I have informed the Region that we will not be able to host the Fall convention next year but will begin planning for a convention and, I am given to believe, they are already planning for those though they are over 1 year off. **If any of you have experience, contacts, etc... in the planning of such events, please, please let me know.** Our likelihood for successfully hosting the convention will be greatly enhanced by your

guidance and involvement.

I would be remiss if I were to fail to mention the NMRA's Long Range Plan. As I understand it, this is a major change for the Association and we will be called upon to vote on it later this year or early next. I am not sufficiently informed on the subject to form an opinion worthy of sharing. However, there is a series of articles appearing in "Scale Rails", our new monthly magazine (replacing the Bulletin), and I encourage each of you to read it and familiarize yourselves with the plan prior to voting.

Well, I guess that's it for my inaugural communication as the new president. Nothing I have ever done prepares me for this position. Rather than being able to "hit the ground running" I am more like a tire on an airplane that is touching down. You know, when it goes from zero to 120 miles per hour in a split second, leaving behind a cloud of smoke and black streak of rubber on the runway. But, I think the mission is worth the effort and I will put forth the effort and hope to receive a lot of help from all of you.

Mel Ponton

GREENER PASTURES, FEWER TRACKS

By Tom Matthews

I've pulled up the spikes and moved the rails to Pennsylvania. That has been my plan for a while now and it looks like it was a good move. While Jane and I will be living in an apartment for a year, we are looking for that big basement with a house on it. With retirement a few years away, it's time to find that perfect home with all the things we've always wanted so we can work our way into retirement comfortably.

The past three years have been fun trying to rerail the Garden State Division. I feel that the GSD is

well on its way to becoming one of the great Divisions in the NMRA. It will take plenty of effort, but I know that the members want it to prosper and will pitch in to make it a reality.

Mel Ponton took the reigns from me in June and is well on the way with some great plans for the future. He'll be needing lots of volunteers to help with the planning and implementation of the Fall 2004 NER Convention. It's been many years since the last convention in the GSD.

The area certainly can support a great convention, with all the great model-

ers and many prototype attractions.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many folks who have made the reactivation of the GSD possible. Roger Oliver has handled the paperwork of bringing our Constitution and Bylaws into the 21st century. He also handles all the Secretarial and Treasury matters superbly. Don Jennings has been a great help many times in organizing activities. He also is tireless in his work with the Boy Scouts through their Merit badge program and working at the Greenberg Shows.

Continued on page 8

A P - C O L U M N

During our Spring MEET, the following members bought in some outstanding models for judging.

The following awards were given out

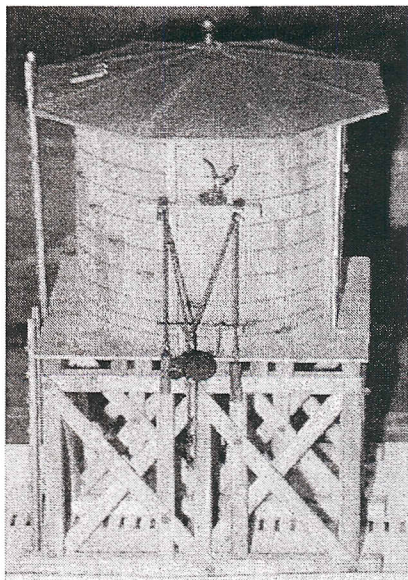
Joseph S. Vecchione

1st place Structures and Merit award (92 pts)

M&W River RR water tank

2nd place " (85 Pts) for a Sierra RR Water Tank

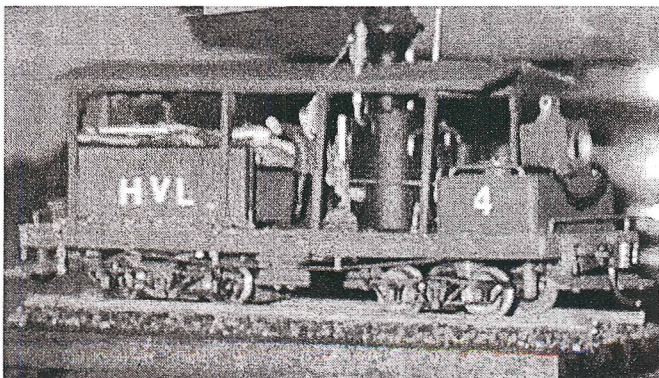
3rd Place " (75 pts) for a freelance billboard



Frank Neufeld

2nd place Motive power

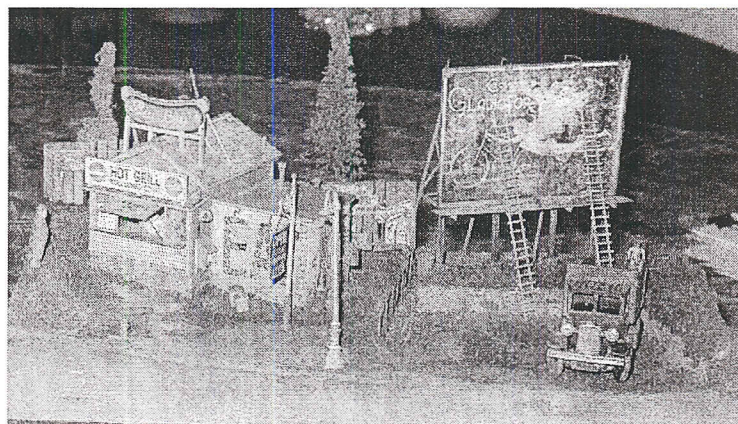
Freelance Vertical Boiler Shay



Richard Bendever

1st place Diorama, **Best of show**, & Merit Award (101 pts)

Break Time Diorama



We realize that it's been a while since GSD members could get their modeled judged and this is causing a large amount of models being entered into the contest area.

Due to amount of judging being done at our meets, we have to limit the entries to one per member. Our judges want to see the convention as well and usually they spend all their time judging.

Also please have all your paper work done before the convention. We use the NER contest forms and NOT the nationals forms for judging. You can get these forms off the Regional website at:

www.trainweb.org/northeasternregion/NERREG03.HTML

Click on CONTEST forms and print them out.

You will need a adobe acrobat reader
You can get a free one at their website
www.adobe.com

All Photos are by Don Jennings

Garden State Division

Fall Meet

Nov 16th, 2003

Bloomsbury Fire House/Banquet Hall
91 Brunswick Ave
Bloomsbury, New Jersey

Contest Table
White Elephant Table
Video Corner
Timesaver Layout
Clinics

Annual Meeting Afterwards

www.trainweb.org/nergds

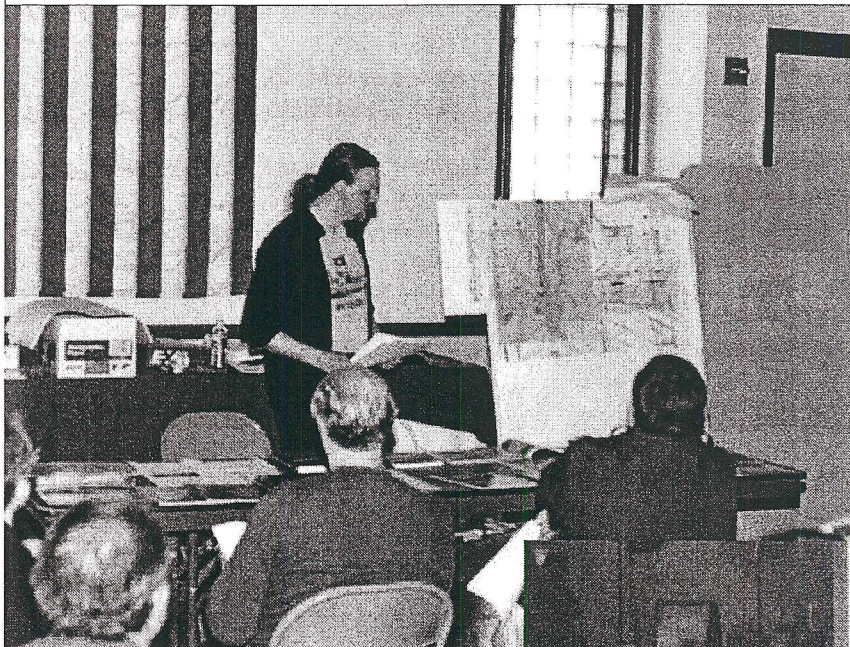
Directions:

**Rte 78 to Exit 7 to Rte 173 west for three tenths of a mile to Brunswick Ave,
turn left and bear left onto Brunswick Ave.**

Fire house on your left. Street parking.

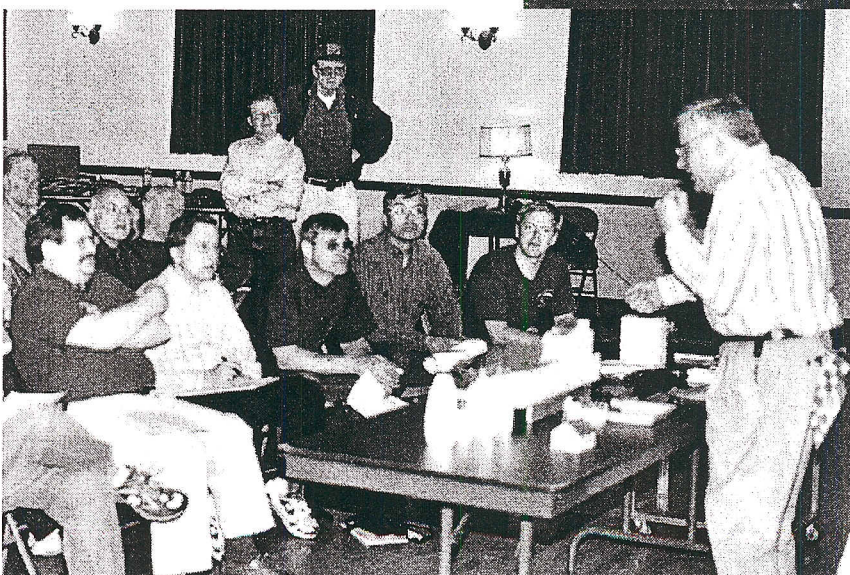
THE - CLINICS

G S P - S P R I N G 2 0 0 3



*Ralph and his Leigh Valley
and Harbor Clinic
(left)*

*A local club discusses DCC
and the application of it on
your railroad. (right)*



*Foam scenery and how easy
and light it is to work with
(left)*

THE - N - S C A L E - C O R N E R

When I was in school I joined the Musicians Union in Calif. They had a newspaper somewhat like the NMRA Bulletin. It had the usual stuff, but also contained a great source of enlightenment and entertainment called The Un-fair List. On this list were names of people and businesses who had cheated members of the union or who had fouled up in one way or another. We weren't supposed to deal with these people, and actually, in spite of some of the laughs the list provided, we were glad to know who they were.

What does this have to do with N-Scale trains? If you are new to the hobby or if you're not, there are ways for you to get burned if you don't know about the equipment you are buying or the experience and/or talent of the repair person you sent your precious locomotive to.

Before offering any suggestions, and at the risk of finally proving that you have a fool writing this column, here are a few ways to get into trouble: (I won't name the bad guys because I don't want my editor to get sued)

There is a big difference between a brand X locomotive, and say a Kato or Atlas product. It's a good idea to find this out early. Save yourself some wasted money. I didn't.

Sending out locos for decoder installation can be the source of big trouble if you get the wrong guy.
Examples:

1. Sent a new E-8 to a guy in the mid-

west who sold DCC equipment. He had a booth at the show in Atlanta. Nice guy. Lots of phone discussion, then no phone discussion, then nobody home at all. Yes, I got the engine back, but threats may have been made (just kidding);

2. Bought a nice Atlas GP-9 from a guy who had a booth at a show in the Northeast. Nice guy, Very efficient. (Does this sound like a broken record?) He offered to install a decoder. The engine came back right as advertised. Always stalled in tunnels. Installer re-checked. Said it must be my track. Engine still found delightful places to stall. I gave up, but some time later discovered Mitch's Precision Trains of Virginia (703) 803-6761. He's a class act, finally fixed the problem, and sent back a loco with beautiful bright white lights and number boards. Guess what? The original light board was the wrong one. Too wide and seemed to be the cause of the stalling problems. How did it get in there in the first place?

3. I won't even go into the pitfalls which can occur when you are trying to get a decoder into an N-Scale steam loco. There are a lot of ways to foul up this kind of project, and a lot of guys out there willing to help you do it. On the bright side, it can almost always be done successfully. In my opinion, Tony's Train Exchange in Essex Junction, Vt. is the place to go for this work. They know what they are doing, and are an established professional operation. To deal with them, you

may have a long wait, but that's what comes from being good.

So is there a way for this sort of info to be available to the customer? I don't think so. We have word of mouth, which is a good way to get info, but this is catch as catch can. The internet has a lot of information, but you may be dealing with anonymous crack-pots, assassination artists, or people with an agenda like being the brother-in-law of the owner of the business being recommended. I'm willing to put my real name on this column. That's a little different than being joetrainnut@coldmail.com. (Gee! I hope that isn't somebody's real address.)

Finally there are the hobby magazines. They provide good information, and are staffed by some fine conscientious people, but for obvious reasons they can't always tell the whole story, nor can they cover all the little items of possible interest like the examples above. Their point of view is that things are fine, and they are. In N-Scale today we have wonderful stuff to work with. With the modern locos of the last couple of years, it's easy to install most decoders right at home. Also there are a number of fine craftsmen out there. We just want to know who they are.

So do we need an unfair List or possibly a fair lists? Well as you can see, I'm in real deep water here, so I'll hop the next freight out of town, and leave you to think about this.

Rich Brown

Greener Pastures...

- Tom Wortmann has taken on the Editor position and we can both thank Rich Brown for writing his N Scale Corner column. Hopefully more of you will write articles and columns in the future, Tom could use more varied mate-

rial. Mel Ponton has been a great help too with the Achievement Program. He could use some additional assistants there too. You don't have to be a MMR to be a judge.

I'll be continuing to give

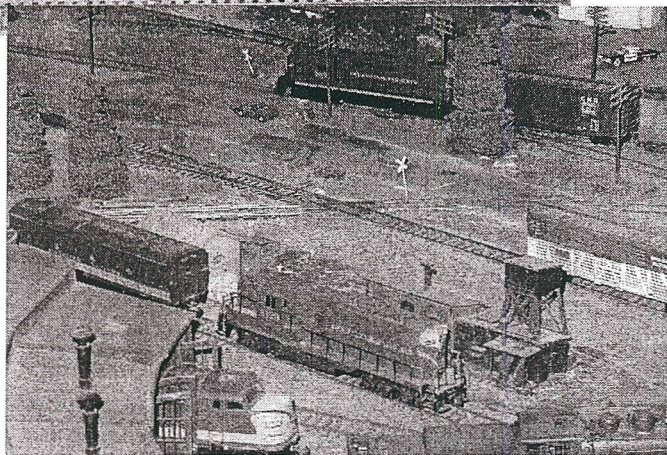
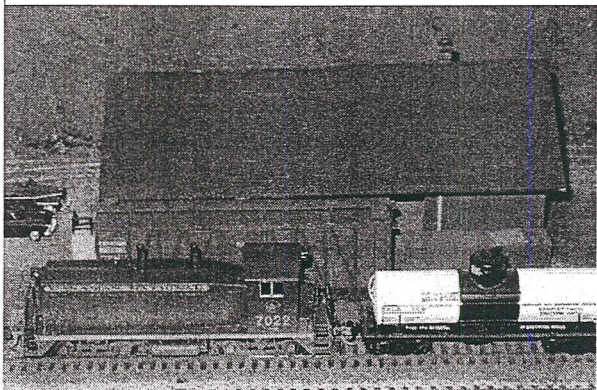
my time to the NMRA here in the MER.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the Fall 2003 NER Convention out on Long Island.

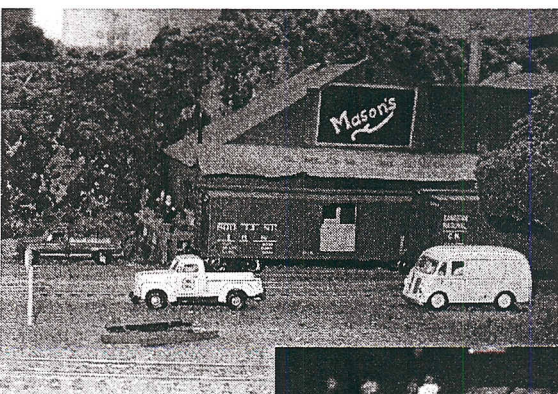
All Aboard,

Tom Matthews

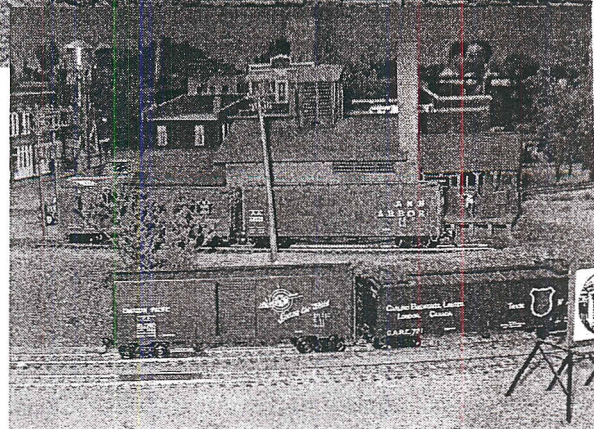
LAYOUT - TOURS MAPLELEAF 2003



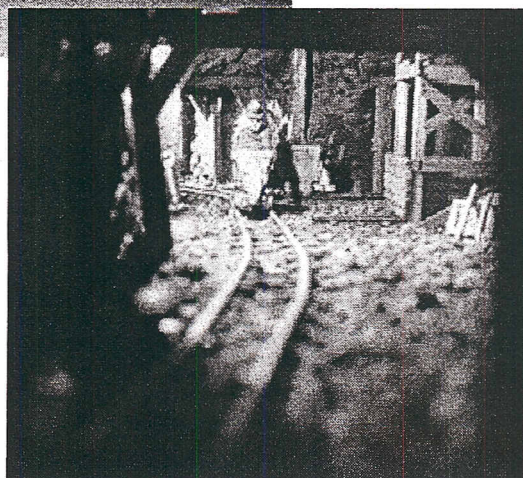
(above) Two thirds of the Rutland and Delaware model RR club



Various home layouts I visited on only TWO model tours.



(right) This is a mine scene you saw looking into a peek hole in the side of a module at the train show.



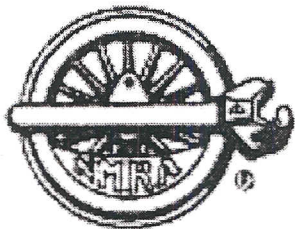
GSD FALL MEET
Nov 16th, 2003 12 noon to 4PM
Bloomsbury Fire/ Banquet Hall
Bloomsbury NJ

The Whistle Post

Tom Wortmann
68 Carmel Ave.
Staten Island NY 10314

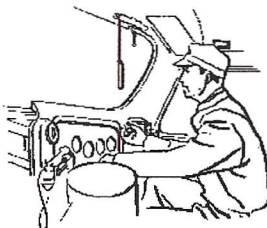
<http://www.trainweb.org/nergsd>

Email: gsdtrains@yahoo.com



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GARDEN STATE DIVISION

The Whistle Post is published quarterly. Contributions, in any format are always welcome.
Please contact the editor, gsdtrains@yahoo.com



UPCOMING EVENTS

CNJ Railroad Festival

September 21th 2003
Liberty State Park Jersey City NJ
Rides, Collectibles, Displays,
layouts & more

NER Fall Convention

October 12th-14th, 2003
Islandia NY
www.trainweb.org/northeastregion

GSD Fall MEET

November 16th, 2003
Bloomsbury Banquet Hall/Fire House
Bloomsbury NJ

Garden State Model Railway Club

Nov 28-30, Dec 5-7 & Dec 12-14
Annual Open House
Fri 7-9 PM. Sat/Sun 1-5 PM
575 High Mountain Rd
North Haledon NJ
Info@GSMRRClub.org
www.GSMRRClub.org

New York Society Of Model Engineers

Holiday Show and Sale Annual Scale Swap Meet
"Best of N, HO and O"
St. Josephs Church School Hall
120 Hoboken Road East Rutherford NJ
Saturday Oct 25th, 2003 10 AM to 2 PM

Annual Show and Open House
341 Hoboken Rd. Carlstadt NJ
Nov 21st, 22nd, 23rd & Nov 28th, 29th and 30th
Dec 5th 6th and 7th
Friday Nights 7 to 10 PM
Sat & Sun 1 PM to 6 PM