



# *The* WHISTLE POST

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



The next Event will be held in Park Ridge on Saturday, February 24



## **THE CAB** *by President Mark Moritz*

### **Craftsman Kits**

Anyone who builds a layout eventually needs to place structures and rolling stock on the layout. While railroad car models can be obtained ready-to-roll, and a great many are available, structures are less available in ready-to-use form. Many kits for both rolling stock and structures are available in kit form; when looking for an unusual prototype one must kit bash or scratch build. However, if the modeler likes building cars or structures, the other alternative is the craftsman kit.

Craftsman kits can be thought of being like scratch building, but instead of making your own plans and acquiring the raw materials yourself, these things come prepackaged in a kit. The components may or may not be pre-cut to size. Many modern wood kits have laser-cut parts, which makes their assembly easier. These kits appeal to a modeler who has more time to devote to their construction, enjoys building, and wants the satisfaction of having a car or structure which is not owned by many other modelers.

These kits, when built, can be found on the layouts of serious modelers, who, with the considerations mentioned above, have developed the skill set to put them together, and have the patience needed to ensure that each step in assembly and painting is followed exactly.

The basic tools of cutting, sizing, trimming, painting, etc. are needed, along with the knowledge of how to use them. Thus, a spray booth or suitable outside area to paint models is needed; an airbrush, skill with decals or dry transfer lettering, drills, knives, saws, etc. are usually needed.

Craftsman kits can be made of wood, plastic, resin or other materials. The tools required vary with the type of kit being built. Wood kits usually are made of basswood, which has a very fine grain and is soft enough to work without difficulty. Plastic kits take patience and fine technique, as small parts are delicate and easily broken. Resin kits can be more durable, but often have warpage which needs straightening by heating in an oven before assembly. Brass kits are less common, and require soldering or gluing, often with jigs to ensure straight and square assembly.



## **THE CABOOSE** *by Editor Jim Homoki*

### **Train Shows/Social Events**

Attending the huge Amherst Society train show in West Springfield, MA, the last weekend of January was a fun time again, and my most enjoyable one in years. Not because I found great deals, or saw new releases, or was able to look at hundreds of products up close, but because of the social aspect of the event. Along with meeting people at the show, some whom I see only once a year, I was also able to catch up with others I don't see often, and met several new people I hope to see again. It all made for a great weekend. Dinners at local restaurants and evenings in the hotel lounge with other attendees and a few beverages was enough to make the trip worthwhile. BTW, Saturday set a single day record attendance of over 16,000 people! The hobby may be changing, but it certainly isn't dying.

The Jersey Central Chapter NRHS train show in Clark, perhaps better known as the Mother Seton show, is another show that is also a social event. This is one of the best railroaders shows you'll find, though there are plenty of models available as well. The GSD will have a membership table there, so stop in and say Hello. As shown on the Timetable on the following page, this show will take place on March 3rd.

There are many other shows around, but those are my two favorites. RPM meets are similarly social events with a focus on prototype modeling. The next one in our area is March 22-24 in Valley Forge, then the NE RPM returns May 31-June 1 in West Springfield. I hope to see you there!.**WP**

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The level of satisfaction and enjoyment from building a craftsman kit is far above that of a simple kit for the modeler with experience, or a modeler acquiring experience. It is the logical step to take before attempting scratch building, and allows for obtaining new tools and equipment as a modeler advances his/her skills. Anyone who is a serious model railroader who enjoys building should definitely assemble one or more craftsman kits.**WP**

## Upcoming Events

**GSD Winter Event** February 24, 2024, snow date March 2. Fulton Friendship Lodge, Park Ridge, NJ. This will be a Make 'n Take format with layout open houses.

**JCRHS Train Show** Mother Seton High School, Sunday March 3

<https://jcrhs.org/rrshow.html>

**NYSME Open House** March 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 16 & 17, 2024 - Sat & Sun 1PM to 5PM

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

**Greenberg's Great Toy and Train Show** March 9-10, New Jersey Expo Center, 97 Sunfield Avenue, Edison

**NJ Division Meet** March 24, Switlik Park Rec Building, 5 Fisher Place, Hamilton, NJ

**NERx** March 18-21, 2024 See information below

**Valley Forge RPM Meet** March 22-24, Malvern, PA, see flyer on Page 13

**TCA METCA Division and NYSME Train Meet** April 6, St. Joseph's School, 120

Hoboken Road, East Rutherford, NJ <https://www.modelengineers.org/swap-meet/>

**Island Ops 2024** On Long Island April 26-28, [www.islandops.org](http://www.islandops.org)

**GSD Spring Event** A joint meet with the NJ Division, May 4, Camp Evans/InfoAge Museum, 2201 Marconi Road, Wall, NJ

**NERPM (Northeast/New England RPM Meet)** Friday May 31-Saturday June 1, Springfield, MA Layout open houses on Sunday

**NJ Division Meet** August 3, Switlik Park Rec Building, 5 Fisher Place, Hamilton, NJ

**NMRA 2024 National Convention Surfliner 2024**, August 4-11, Long Beach, CA

<https://www.surfliner2024.org/>

**GSD Summer Event** The Sterling Hill Mine Museum is being considered

**NER 2024 Convention Lakeshores '24** September 19-22, Rochester, NY

**MER 2024 Convention Piedmont Junction** September 26-29, 2024

<https://piedmontjunction.cpd13.org/>

**MER 2025 Convention** Sponsored by the New Jersey Division

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

[NMRA's YouTube channel.](#)

Just look for "NERx" in the video titles.

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## On the Cover

Our cover photo is from the Garden State Model Railroad Club in North Haledon, which will be open the afternoon of February 24 after the morning activities.

(Photo by Ciro Compagno)

**GSD website**

[www.nergsd.com](http://www.nergsd.com)

**Visit the GSD Facebook Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/nmragds/>



**March 18-21**

**6:30-10:30 PM Eastern**

**For more information, visit**

**NERx.org**

## A Park Ridge Make 'N Take February 24

The next GSD event will be held on Saturday, February 24, at the Fulton Friendship Lodge, 147 Kinderkamack Road, Park Ridge, NJ. The starting time is 9 AM with doors open at 8:30.

There will be a "Make 'N Take" of the **Mine Mount Models Utopia Cafe** in the morning, with Ron Klaiss of Mine Mount Models. In the afternoon there will be layout tours of the New York Society of Model Engineers Club in Carlstadt, and the Garden State Model Railroad Club in North Haledon,

Utopia Cafe is the 17th kit from Mine Mount Models. It is an HO scale structure that can be utilized for a small town restaurant or other shops. The cafe occupies an area of 4" x 2". The full scene shown in the picture is 4" x 7". This can easily be expanded to complete a larger scene. The kit includes 3D printed details and signs to complete the scene for different time periods.

There will be 25 kits available at the meet, at a cost of \$30 each, which represents a 25% discount over their retail price (subsidized by the GSD). Those who attend for the build should plan on purchasing one, and bring tools and paints. Suggested are a #11 blade, file, ruler, sandpaper, tweezers, glue, paints, rubber bands, tape, clamps and brushes.

As usual, there will be time for a Bring 'N Brag segment to present recent modeling projects, and door prizes.

Both layouts have been open for GSD events in the past, but there are always changes and improvements being made. Directions will be provided in the morning.

If there should be poor weather the day of the event, the alternate date is March 2. WP



Left: The built up Utopia Café model, as shown on the Mine Mount Models website. Owner Ron Klaiss will assist with the hands on construction of this model. See all the structures, details, and how-to tips available from Mine Mount at: <https://minemountmodels.com>

# ***The NMRA Achievement Program***

## ***AP Corner By Tom Wortmann***

Hello, my name is Tom Wortmann, and I am your newly appointed GSD Achievement program chairman.

A little about me. I have been an NMRA member for over 50 years and currently hold seven AP certificates, six regional awards and one National award and a few manufacturer certificates.

I have judged on the Division, Region, and National levels. I have seen good, great and outstanding work in this hobby. Each has its own rewards and limitations.

Most of my AP certificates were judged on my layout. I did not build them for the sole purpose of an award. I build them because I wanted them or needed them on my layout. Why you build something or do something is completely up to you. There is no need in this hobby to justify yourself. I once heard the idiom, "We all pick out our own poison". And this is very true. Just have fun. That's what matters here.

Now if you want to work towards being a MMR, great. You will need seven AP certificates in certain categories. Everything you need to know, and much more, is on the NMRA website.

My role is to encourage participation in the achievement program and to facilitate your progress in attaining achievement certificates. Judging can take place at your home, at meets, or at Regional or National events. Certain judging, such as for trackwork (Civil Certificate) may have to be done on your layout.

Judging is done by a team, not by an individual, so the final result is a consensus of the judges.

Some hints: In many cases I don't know what parts of the item being judged you built. Show me and prove it to me in your paperwork. Pictures of the prototype are very important. But I don't want five-pound stack of paper. I'll go into more in future columns.

READ the requirements. FILL out the proper forms. Have a friend look over the requirements and the paperwork. When you're ready, or have any questions, send me an email.

If you have the will, you have the skill. **WP**

Tom Wortmann  
miskyrails@gmail.com  
718-494-0388

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### **CLUB CAR**

Garden State Model Railway Club  
575 High Mountain Road, North Haledon, NJ 07508 [www.gsmrrclub.org](http://www.gsmrrclub.org)

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

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>

Sussex County Railroad Club informal meetings and modular model railroads  
[www.sccrc.com](http://www.sccrc.com)

Pacific Southern Railway Club  
26 Washington Street, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553 [www.pacificsouthern.org](http://www.pacificsouthern.org)  
Show information at [www.rockyhilltrains.org](http://www.rockyhilltrains.org)

Ramapo Valley Railroad Club, Allendale Community for Senior Living,  
85 Harrenton Road, Allendale, NJ [www.ramapovalleyrailroad.com](http://www.ramapovalleyrailroad.com)

New York Society of Model Engineers  
341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt, NJ 07072 [www.modelengineers.org](http://www.modelengineers.org)

NJ Hi-Railers Train Club Paterson NJ <https://www.njhirailers.com/>

Morris Plains Model Railroad Club Morris Plains, NJ  
<https://www.facebook.com/MorrisPlainsModelRailroadClub>

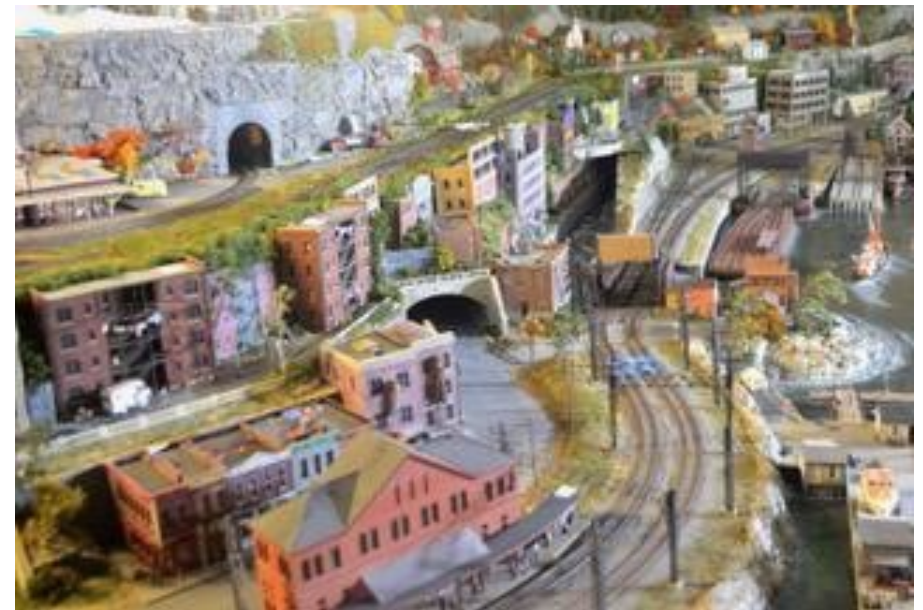
# ***THE FALL EVENT — ON STATEN ISLAND***

**ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH**

The heavy rain didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the brave souls that made their way to Staten Island for our fall event. We had two good clinic presentations that featured Staten Island railroading as prototype and models. After lunch we were privileged to receive a guided tour of a facility with displays being prepared for a museum exhibit in Saint George near the Staten Island ferry terminal. It is called Miniature World and it will be the reconstruction of displays from Gulliver's Gate that was previously located at Times Square. We started in a model shop that would impress any modeler with all of the best tools such as laser printer, several 3D printers, and large spray booth. Besides that equipment, the room was filled with amazing models that were being constructed. Then we went to another space where many models were being assembled into displays for the future exhibit. They represented places from all over the world and the HO scale models were perfectly built and finely detailed. The accompanying photographs capture some of the images from the tour.[WP](#)



**This Page: Photos of different scenes from around the world that are in storage and will be incorporated into the new Miniature World display on Staten Island.**



# MODELING THE “OLD ONES”

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY BRUCE DE YOUNG, MMR

I don't know about you, but in the past, my modeling activities really dropped off in the summer. Not so for the past 3 years. The difference? I decided to make my summer modeling focus on something 'different' from what I had been working on all winter and spring. For instance, last summer I started buying and repairing old Tyco and Matua steam engines. That lead me to build both an MDC and Mantua steam engine from kits that I had on the shelf. That was an area of the hobby that I never tried before. It kept me interested (and at the modeling bench) all summer.

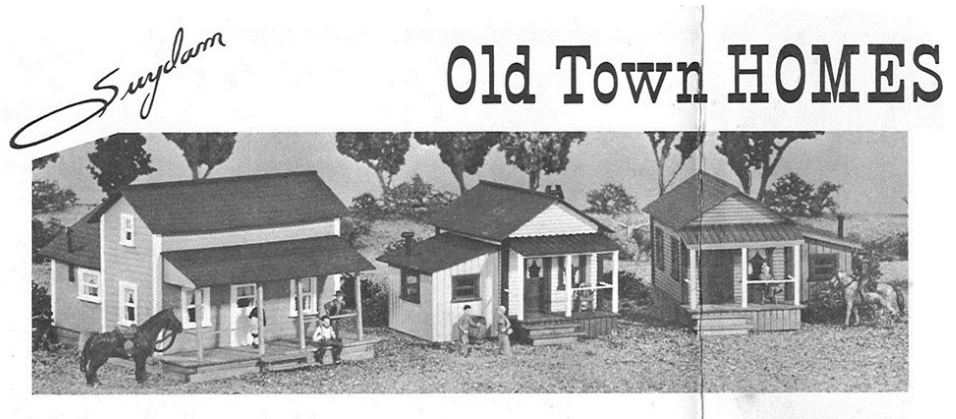
This summer I started thinking of the structure kits that modelers in the past had to work with. I couldn't help but wonder how those old models would compare to the laser cut offerings we have today. Oh, I have been building Campbell kits for years, and they date back to the 1960's. We know that their models compare very favorably to today's offerings once built. Building them? Sometimes a challenge.

In fact, one of the models that I made this summer was the Campbell Covered Bridge. A Howe truss bridge covered in. I think that it came out well.



But how about other old kit manufacturers – those that didn't have the long run that Campbell had?

I had just built a small laser cut house by Laser Arts, and I still needed a few more similar sized houses for the scene that I was working on. An on-line search found this kit by Suydam called “3 Old Town Homes”.



The question in my mind was “how will the finished models compare with the Laser Arts model?” But with 3 houses for about \$30 including shipping and tax, I figured I could take the risk. Here was a kit that was designed in July, 1962 – that's over 60 years ago and qualifies as “an old one”. Now Suydam is not an unknown manufacturer, but most of their kits that I have run across in the past were all-metal kits. Opening the box, I saw that each of the three houses was stamped on different colored cardstock and the windows/door opening were die stamped as well. They suggested that you didn't have to paint the walls, so I didn't. There was some wood for trim, porch railings, and bracing, and plastic windows and doors.

On the next page are the parts for one of the smaller homes laid out on my desk. You can see that the walls are cardstock and embossed with detail. The walls of the small addition are made to look like 'board and batten', and the walls of the main part of the house are to look like “tongue & groove” siding.

**Left: Bruce built the Campbell Covered Bridge this summer, a classic kit from the 1960s.**

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**Above: The kits parts for one of the Suydam Old Town homes are shown. Bruce found an interesting item to be the window glazing. Curtains were printed on clear plastic or acetate material.**



Assembly was pretty straight forward and the instructions were adequate. They had provided cardstock embossed to look like wood shingles for the roofing, but I opted to change that out for laser cut cedar shakes. On the left is the finished house sitting next to a currently available laser cut house. I think that the old timer stands up pretty well in the comparison.

**Left: The old kit on the left stands up well to a much newer laser cut kit.**

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After that, I completed a 66-year-old kit from a lesser-known manufacturer, Model Hobbies out of New Cumberland, PA. This kit contained two structures – primarily made from wood, and I have completed the first. This was an Air Brake Inspectors Shanty made by the Reading RR (from a 36' wooden boxcar) and used in their Rutherford, PA yard. Although Model Hobbies provided some 3M sandpaper for roofing, I switched that out for different 'tar paper' roofing. Otherwise, I built it as designed. Again, the instructions were adequate.

So, I found that searching out "the old ones" can be fun. It can also give you decent looking models that you will no longer see on very many layouts. Why not give it a try?

I have now purchased a 70-year-old Ayres kit of a café/grill. I can't wait to see what I can do with this one. It might require a bit of 'upgrading'.

If you want to see a more detailed presentation of these builds, there are videos on my YouTube channels that do just that.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC03AkmnAWzzVBzi8V9rMhrg> WP



**Above: Bruce was not very old when an Ayres kit he recently purchased was first offered for sale 70 years ago. This past summer he enjoyed constructing several of these old time HO kits.**

**Left: Bruce built this 66 year old Model Hobbies kit of an inspectors shanty, only changing the roofing material.**

# Tools and Tips: Magnet Magic - Reed Switches and Reed Relays

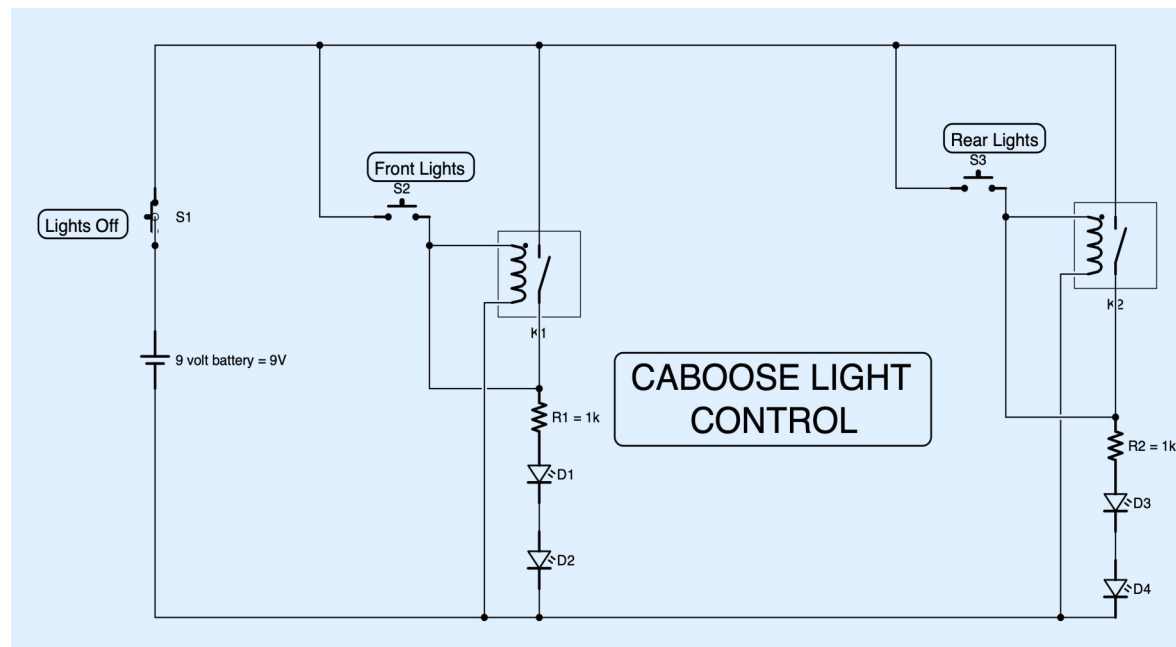
ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

Since I was young boy, I have always been interested in magnets. At first, I was fascinated by the invisible force that would attract and pick up items. Later when I got involved in HO slot cars I became interested in the role of the magnets in DC electric motors. Aurora Thunderjet 500 cars were easy to disassemble and offered a cross sectional view of the motor. The brushes, the armature and the two permanent magnets were easily accessed and it was simple to see how the motor operated. When I got more into model railroading, I discovered Kadee couplers and saw another very interesting use of magnets with the couplers. The fascinating part was working with the delayed uncoupling.

More recently, I was introduced to the reed switch that gets operated by a magnet. It is a glass tube that encloses the contacts that close while exposed to a magnetic field. A few years ago, I purchased some reed switches from a surplus electronics supplier. I planned to experiment with them but I never made any circuits.

I participate in operating sessions at a layout that uses marker lights on the rear of the caboose. The lights are operated by switches on the caboose and powered by an on-board battery. When you start your run, you must switch on the rear lights and you may need to change to the lights at the other end during switching moves. Since the lights are battery powered, they must be turned off at the end of a run. We are often reminded that if we do not turn the lights off, the battery will die. If you forget to turn off the lights before parking it on the lower-level staging tracks, it is difficult to remove the car to switch off the lights.

**Below: This is the original circuit design to control the lights. By using reed relays, I eliminated the reed switches S2 and S3. The relays can be activated directly with a magnet.**

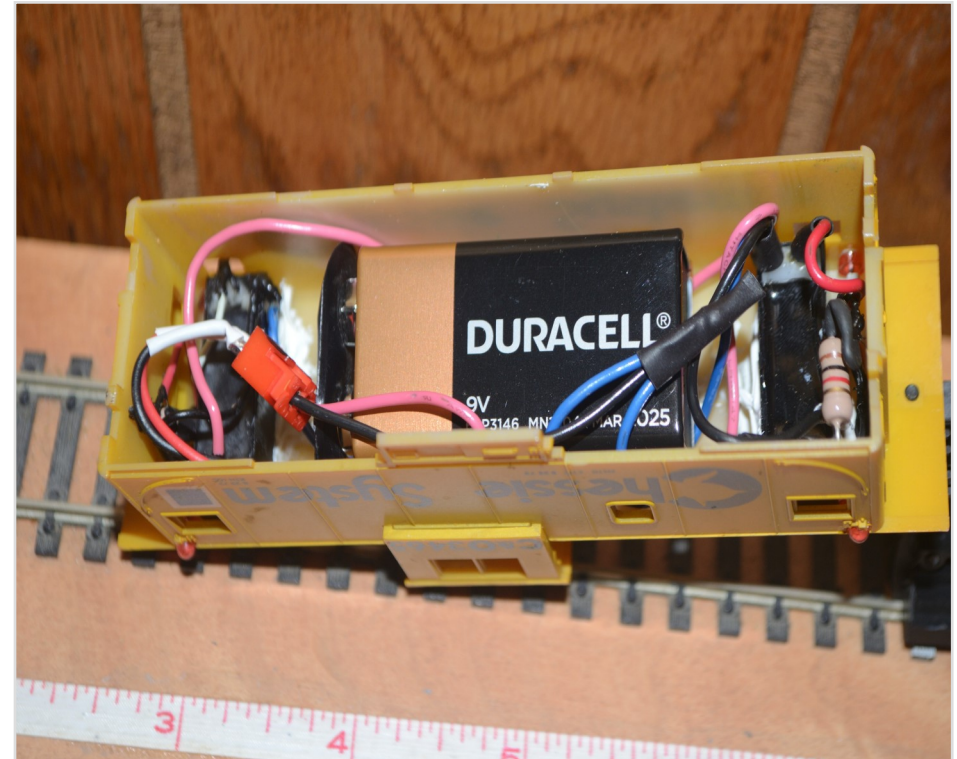


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I was thinking about creating a better way to switch those lights and reed switches came to mind. You would only need a magnet and there is no need to handle the car. To use a regular reed switch, the magnet needs to stay in position to keep the lights on but that is not practical. What I needed was a latching reed switch that would turn on or off based on the orientation of the magnet. I knew they existed but at that time I did not find any available at a reasonable cost. I thought about the problem for awhile and then one day I had an idea to use relays along with the reed switches. I would start the relay with the reed switch and then have the relay latch on by wiring the contact output to power the relay. This will work with a single pole single throw relay because everything is using the same voltage. With that concept in mind, I designed the circuit using the iCircuit software on a Mac. Besides providing a way to create a drawing of the circuit, iCircuit runs a simulation of the circuit to see it run.

After designing the circuit, I decided to try the concept with items that I had around my house. I had an old caboose that I never used, some 3 mm red LEDs, resistors, a 9 volt battery with connector, the reed switches and I even had some relays from a surplus electronics purchase (I think I paid \$1.50 for 10 relays). The only thing that I did not have on hand was the S1, the reed switch to shutdown the whole circuit. This was a different reed switch because it is normally closed until it is exposed to the magnet. Fortunately I was able to order some from eBay. While I waited for those switches I experimented with the circuit on a bread board. As it turned out, the relays I had were reed relays that use an electromagnet and a reed switch inside an assembly. When the relay is powered, it energizes a built in electromagnet that closes the internal reed switch. I ran some experiments and discovered that I could start the relay by directly applying an external magnet. Now I could eliminate the 2 reed switches that started the relays since I could directly start them with a magnet. I also confirmed that the right strength magnet could start the relay through the plastic body of the caboose. When the other reed switches arrived I already had a revised simpler design and I was ready to try it. It was a tight fit but all the components fit in. It worked well with the magnet. By holding the magnet near one end of the caboose, the lights illuminated on that end and it was the same on the other end. Holding the magnet near the roof of the cupola turns off all the lights.



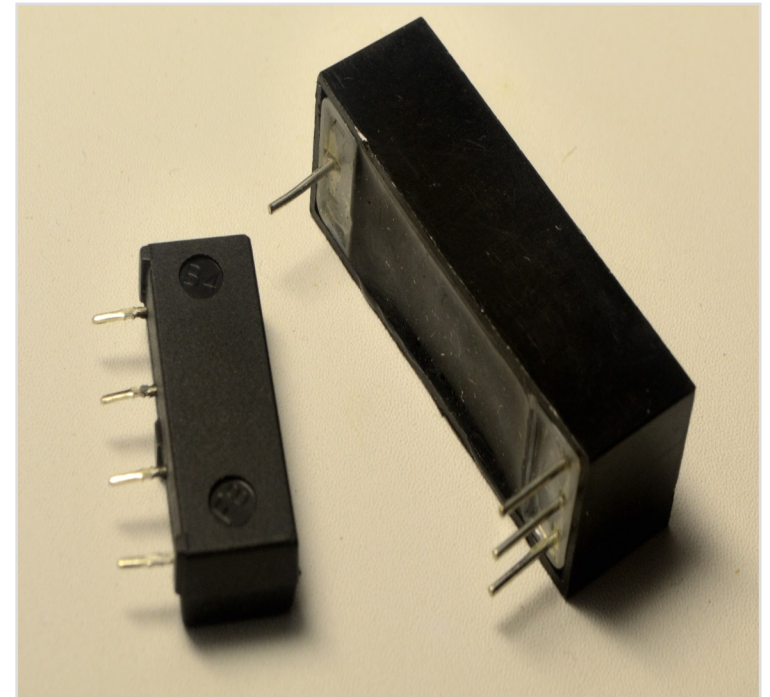
**Above: The components for the circuit including the LEDs just fit into the selected caboose. The black object on each end is the reed relay to control the lights on that end. The reed switch to turn off the circuit is mounted to the cupola roof and blocked by the 9 volt battery in the photo.**

I made a short video showing the magnet controlling the marker lights on the caboose. See it on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/0OFsspSw34A>

After building this caboose project, I discovered some reed relays that are about half the size of the ones that I used in the build. They would make the installation easier to fit in the caboose or allow the circuit to fit in a smaller caboose. I also found out that Circuitron has a latching reed switch and it is item RS-2. **WP**

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Above: Here are two reed relays. The one on the right is the one used for this project and I recently found some that are about half the size and shown on the left in the photo.



Above Left: By using a dowel with magnets attached, the marker lights can be turned on and off without touching the caboose.

Left: After I built my caboose with the magnetically activated marker lights using the reed relays, I discovered that Circuitron makes a Latching Reed Switch, RS-2.



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

**NER CONVENTION**  
**September 19-22, 2024**  
**Rochester, NY**

**LAKESHORES '24**  
 NMRA Northeastern Region Annual Convention

[conventions.nernmra.org](https://conventions.nernmra.org)

## Railroad Prototype Modelers- Valley Forge

March 22-24, 2024

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club



Thursday & Friday Operating Sessions

Many Clinics

Model Displays

Vendor Rooms

Sunday Home Layout Tours



For information and updates  
[rpmvalleyforge.com](http://rpmvalleyforge.com)

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Ops Sessions

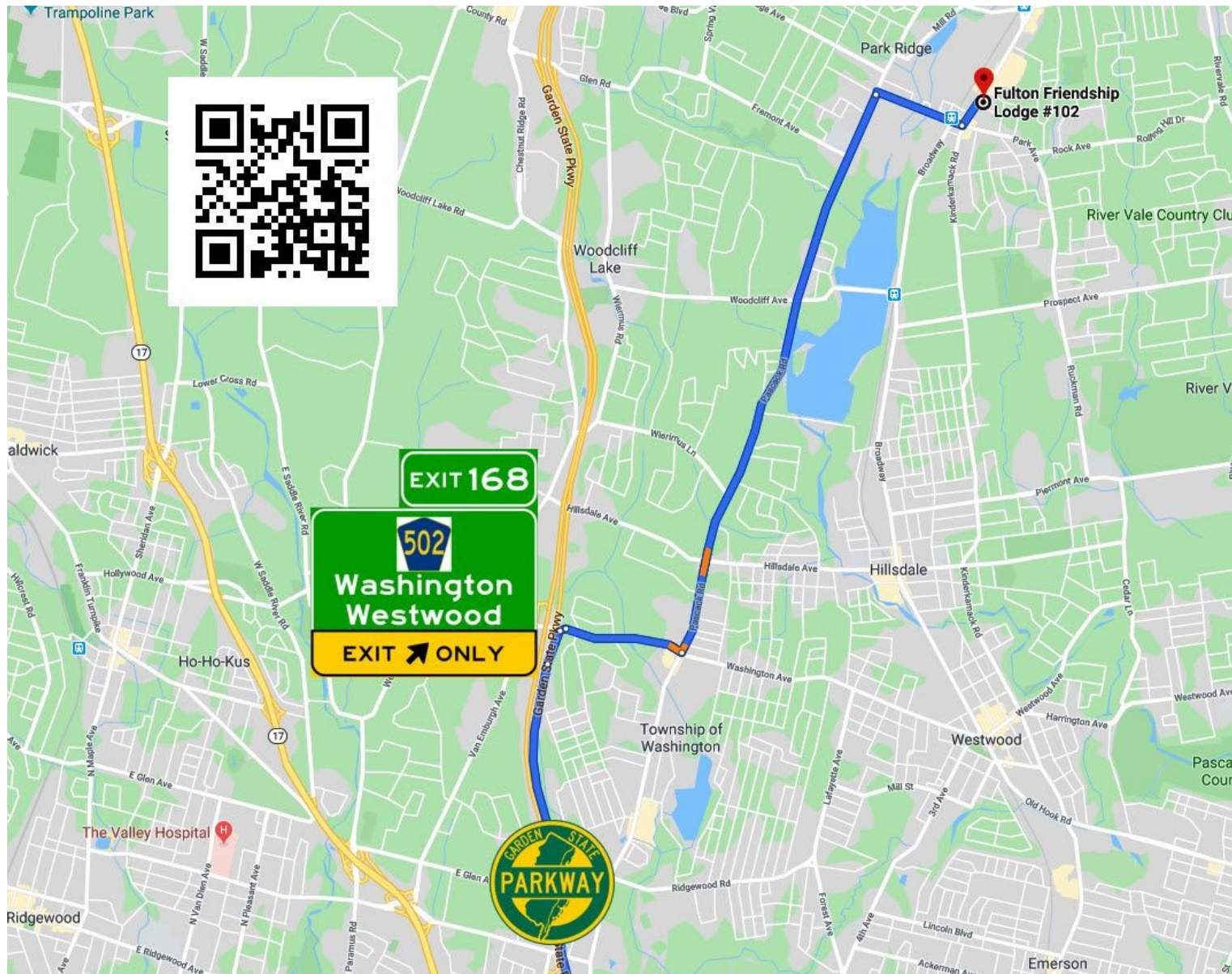
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# MAP FOR THE WINTER EVENT

FULTON FRIENDSHIP LODGE  
147 KINDERKAMACK ROAD  
PARK RIDGE, NJ

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24  
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30  
EVENT STARTS AT 9:00



## NEXT DIVISION EVENT

FULTON FRIENDSHIP LODGE

**TIME:**

**9:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON  
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 AM**

**DATE:**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

**LOCATION:**

**147 KINDERKAMACK ROAD  
PARK RIDGE, NJ 07656  
SEE THE MAP ON PAGE 14**

**COST:**

**\$5 EVENT FEE  
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

**WEBSITE FOR MEETS:**

**SEE PAGE 3**

**[HTTPS://WWW.NERGSD.COM/](https://www.nergsd.com/)**

**AGENDA:**

**INTRODUCTION  
MAKE 'N TAKE FORMAT  
BRING 'N' BRAG  
DOOR PRIZES  
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN  
AFTERNOON LAYOUT TOURS**

## Notice of Elections

In accordance with the Bylaws, all Officer positions and three Director positions are up for election in 2024. 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.

Mark Moritz is "retiring" as President but will continue to serve on the Board as Immediate Past President.

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** at [richmondharbor@gmail.com](mailto:richmondharbor@gmail.com). The deadline for this election cycle is April 1. Officers and Directors will be voted on and installed at the Spring Event to be held in May.

## AT THE THROTTLE

**President**  
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**Jim Homoki**

**Treasurer**  
**Bob Dennis**

**Secretary and Clinic Chairman**  
**Jim Walsh**

**Director, Public Relations, and  
Membership Chair**  
**Andrew Brusgard**  
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**Director**  
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**Director and  
NER Southern Director**  
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**Director**  
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**Director**  
**Scott Gothe**

**Director**  
**Ed Bush**

**Director**  
**David Start**

**Director**  
**Bill Frankenfeld**

**Any of the above officials may  
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[gsdtrains@yahoo.com](mailto:gsdtrains@yahoo.com)**



## ABOUT THE WHISTLE POST

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### Division Photographer

Jim Walsh

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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## NMRA Partnership Program

The companies listed below give discounts to NMRA members when orders are placed using a special discount code. Newly added companies are in **bold red**. Check them out! You can find descriptions of these companies and their products, links to their websites, and the discount codes on our Partnership Page at [nmra.org/partnerships](http://nmra.org/partnerships). Remember you need to be logged into our site as a member to see the codes! Go to [nmra.org/user/register](http://nmra.org/user/register) to register your name on the website.

Bespoke Rail  
CatzPaw Innovations  
CB Train Junction  
Clever Models  
Custom Model Railroads CMR  
Coastmans Scenic Products  
Composite Designs  
Conowingo Models  
Daylight Sales  
Deepwoods Software  
Deluxe Materials  
**Diorama Hobbies**  
Dwarvin Enterprises  
East Coast Circuits  
Enterprise&National Car Rentals  
Evan Designs  
Feight Studios  
Fusion Scale Graphics  
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