

THE WHISTLE POST

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



Number 93

Fall 2004

FALL MEET AT THE MODEL RAILROAD

Again held at the MODEL RAILROAD CLUB in Union we had a great time, one of our biggest turn-outs ever and this time we tried a few new things. First off we provided a light lunch of coffee, tea, soda and water. Cold cuts, rolls and salads plus we added a new concept from the 'Coast' division in California, a 'round table'.

A place where anyone can discuss anything they want about the hobby. New products, new models, problems they are having, and anything that they may need help or suggestions on. It's a great way to share ideas and get answers for your problems.

We also had a 'mystery' prize auc-

tion. All funds generated went to the GSD. A mystery collection of used HO 'stuff' was packed into a box and auctioned off with the starting bid of \$.25 cents. The auction generated a surprising amount of \$15.50 for the division. Thanks to all who joined in the bidding.

The white elephant table did well but we noticed a slight decrease in the items up for sale. Come on guys, get that old stuff out and turn your trash into someone's treasurer. After our business meeting in January we will have a small white elephant table. Be sure to make use of it.

Some interesting clinics took

place as well. A strange way to build a crossing- UP style. Sadly the second clinician had to cancel out. But the operating session at the club was terrific. Took up to three hours and we all learned a lot. Be sure to check out the pictures on page 4

ROLLING MEET WAS A SUCCESS.

Thanks to Mr. Ralph Heiss, on August 29th, the members of the GSD were treated to a fine tour of the old Morris Canal and a number of great Railroad stops in Northern NJ.

For a nominal fee of \$4.00 used to cover the printing of the handouts, everyone had a good time. Afterwards we asked if anyone had suggestions and comments and everyone seemed to praise Mr. Heiss efforts.

I don't know what kind of childhood Mr. Heiss had but he knew things that the railroad forgot. He

found us railroad bridges, old Bridge abutments, paths, roadbed, picnic benches, photo ops, good stores and even a long forgotten signal bridge that is buried in what is now a forest of weeds and trees.

We were entertained by Ralph's vast knowledge of the area and the facts he shared with us.

Of course it wasn't perfect, oh the weather could not have been better, the roads were clear, the photo ops great and no one got lost but we did forget to bring the cooler of water so

we had to stop and buy our own. That will not happen again. We also missed the train out of Philipsburg, but we really didn't plan on catching it anyway, if we had all the more merrier but alas we did not. Maybe next time. Hopefully Ralph will grace us again next summer with another interesting tour of his vast knowledge.

To those who joined us, we're glad you did and to those who did not, try again next time.

See pictures on page 6

AT THE THROTTLE

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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

Our website

www.trainweb.org/nergds

Clubs around the Division

THE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, Inc.

Route 22 Union, NJ
<http://www.tmrcc.com>
MEMBERSHIPS OPEN

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

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>

STATEN ISLAND SOCIETY of MODEL RAILROADERS

HO Modular Club, Round Robin meets once a month.

Contact Willie Butler
Dad831@yahoo.com
<http://members.tripod.com/~MSKRR/SISMR.htm>
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

Check out CLUB NOTICES on page 6

Railroad Quiz

In another divisions newsletter there was a question of why back in the days of steam the mills rolled off rail in 39 foot lengths?

The answer of course was that so it would fit in 40 foot gondolas.

Now here's our version;

WHY THEN WAS USED RAIL SOLD IN 36 FOOT LENGTHS?

Answer elsewhere in this issue.

Support our local Hobby Shops

Big Little Hobby Shop

206 West Main St.
Somerville, NJ 08876

The Model Railroad Shop

290 Vail Ave.
Piscataway NJ 08854

Model Railroad Post Office

26 Industrial Road (off Airport Road)
West Milford, NJ 07480

And **Micro Mart**. Makers of fine tools and supplies.

Members Column

Part four of a seven part series
SCENERY, MY WAY
BY Norman Frowley

Part Four

Finally we get to the heart of the scenery making process. But even at this point I kept thinking about how the scenery was going to look as the track went into place. Scenery making is sort of an organic process. My thoughts changed as I went along, and I think that's fine. It's a creative experience and you should never allow your initial thoughts to be decisive if a better thought comes to you later on.

"FIRST AID" HARD SHELL

A hard shell is the way one creates the contours of one's scenery. In areas where the terrain will be dead flat or nearly so your best bet is to simply install plywood (at least 1/2 to 3/4 inch) or some other material to support your scenery that's sturdy, and won't readily warp when it becomes damp. Thick Styrofoam will work. In the planning process this is the type of thing you should be thinking about. Where will I install the hard shell and where will I use some durable flat material as a base.

Some people form the entire shell using Styrofoam and some material to cover it like plaster or paper mache. Others use screening material covered with newspaper or gauze dipped in a plaster solution. Once again there are many ways to accomplish the same thing in model railroading. I chose the cardboard strip, lattice method. I got a number of ordinary cardboard packing boxes from the supermarket and cut them into one to two inch-wide strips. I then stapled or hot glued the strips to the bench work. My particular layout entails mountains or cliff faces around the entire perimeter of the scenery component, thereby creating the illusion that the railroad runs within the confines of a valley. Hence the name, Jessica Valley Railroad. (My cleverness just overwhelms me). To create the surrounding mountains I used pieces of Masonite board cut to the silhouette of the hills I desired and attached the boards to the bench work leaving room between these boards and the background, which is affixed to the wall. In this way the impression is created that there is something beyond the hills, or between the hills one sees and the horizon.

To construct the mountains I attached one end of

a strip to the top of the masonite board, contoured the strip to create the shape of the mountain or cliff and attached the other end to the wood of the bench work using either hot glue or staples, depending upon accessibility. I then took strips and in a basically horizontal direction interwove them with the vertical strips. I attached these horizontal strips to the nearest surface and to the vertical strips, again using a stapler or hot glue gun.

Now comes the "first aid" part of the process. Instead of using gauze or newspaper dipped in a diluted solution of plaster or Hydrocal, I purchased a quantity of First Aid Specialist Bandage from Johnson & Johnson. It's the type doctors use to create good old-fashioned plaster casts for fractured bones. The material comes in rolls of various widths, but I chose the four-inch width, which is easiest to work with. You simply cut off a piece, dip it in warm water and lay it across the latticework of cardboard strips in a crisscross fashion. This ensures greater adhesion of the first aid strips to one another and greater strength overall. One can mold the bandage with one's fingers, but your ability to change the contours at this point is limited by the shape of the underlying basket weave of cardboard, so make sure you like the basic shape before proceeding to the Specialist bandage stage. Much of my mountain work consisted of virtually vertical rock faces because of limitations of space. This required that the faces be sloped ever so slightly and be essentially flat to accept the rock molds, the use of which I will subsequently explain. The entire process with the bandage is a bit messy, so cover the floor and anything else you don't want to ruin with splashes of plaster.

When the plaster bandage shell dries, the surface should be stark white and rigid, almost rock hard, but don't be fooled into thinking this is sufficient. Unless you lay on 6 or 8 layers of cloth bandage the shell at this point is relatively fragile. To make the shell stand up to the rigors of use I coated the bandage with a material called Structolite. You can purchase this at any building supply outlet. It's a kind of cement which when dry has a grittiness that facilitates attachment of scenery materials. You simply mix the dry material with water to a buttery consistency and trowel it on. It dries hard as cement, but there is a period of time in which you can work the material to some extent. It takes several days to dry completely in a basement environment.

MOUNTAINS, MOUNTAINS EVERYWHERE

Continued on page 4

Scenery my way, continued from page 3

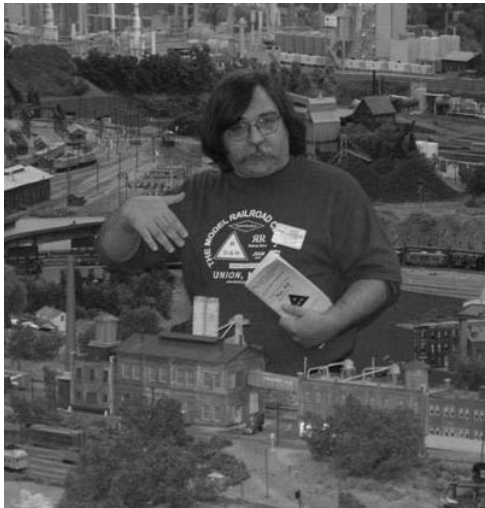
To create rock faces I used commercially available rock mold of various sizes and shapes. You can make your own molds, of course, but I'm not that ambitious. One needs only several molds to produce a variety of looks over a substantial area. Just set the rock castings at various intervals, turning some upside down here and there and never repeating the same sequence twice in the same vicinity. If you do this the observer will find it hard to tell whether the same rock casting was used more than once.

I used lightweight Hydrocal in my molds, let them set and applied the castings when dry. You can apply the castings different ways, but I found this way to be the easiest. You can use regular Hydrocal, if you wish, but the overall weight of the material may result in your layout creating a subbasement in your home (only kidding). You can also use plain old Plaster of Paris, but I found the light weight Hydrocal dries a bit quicker than

plaster and produces fewer air bubbles and thus fewer imperfections as it sets. I applied the castings like tiles, using Structolite as the adhesive. You butter the backs of the castings with the cement and press them into place, trimming away the excess Structolite. Make sure you have the proper tools available or the Structolite will start to harden before you know it, and life under those circumstances can become miserable very quickly. How close together you place the rock molds is dependent on how much vegetation you want on the rock face wall. I, for the most part, placed the larger rock molds abutting one another. In some spots I left a small gap filled with Structolite, which I later covered with some form of "live" growth. Don't worry if the molds crack ever so slightly here or there since the additional minor cracks just add an element of realism.

In the next article, I'll tell you how I made my hills come to life, so to speak.

Some Pictures from our fall Meet



Everyone who attended could have participated in the clubs operating session, held just for us! Drive a train or operate a tower—Confusing yes, fun, you bet!



(Above) Future members enjoying the session, (Below) Members try their hands at the controls

All Photos by Don Jennings



(Top Left) The Model RR Clubs VP gives instruction on how not to crash trains on the layout (just kidding)
(Bottom Left) Just some of the engine on the layout,



(Above middle and left middle) Large industries are common place on the clubs layout.

WOODEN KITS RETURN, MORE REVIEWS

As I continue to add buildings to my layout, I'm trying new kits, or mediums I haven't used in a while or never did before. As I do, I do a review on it. The last issue was my review of **Bar-Mills kit**- 'Saulena's Tavern'.

This review is for the **Railway Design Associates Kit**- 'Roadside Tavern'. I picked it up on eBay for what looked like a good price. I felt I did ok. I later found out that this "Manufacturer" was the fourth owner of this company. Read on to find out why so many owners.

The kit is a plastic structure and has a 5"x 3" footprint. All the side wall parts are very thick and sanding or filing will be needed after you cut off the extra large casting spurs. You get four side sections and two end sections. Two side sections must be cemented together using a "pilaster" to create the front and another two to create the back. You add these so called "pilasters" to the ends as well, and then you 'butt' up the corners to create the basic building. There is no direction on how to finish off or cover these "Butted" ends. They looked so bad, something had to be done. I tried cutting the stone shapes following the pilaster. It looks -ok. The instructions are printed on someone's ink jet printer and are very poorly done. A good part of the kit is not even covered by the directions. More importantly what the cover shows and what the kit you get in the kit are two different things.

None of the supplied window

castings fit. The doors are too long but can be filed to fit; the windows are too short but will work. They would look better if you used filler on them. And the side windows are way too big and you must sand and sand to get them to fit and at that point are very weak so use caution. The other option is opening up the window openings on the casting itself, again a lot of work is required here as well.

One you have created the basic building, there is little to tell you how to make the freeze. What is in the picture in the instructions is not what you end up with. The roof is very basic, cut sections of Evergreen or similar styrene's are supplied but the directions are very lacking here. Do want you will because you're not going to proper fit anyway. There is some suggestions on finishing, but no original thought is supplied. Finish, as you like. They supply you with a ton of unknown castings and parts that are not mentioned in the directions. All the castings have spurs and are poorly cast. You have to pick the stack you want. To me, they all seem too thick and bulky

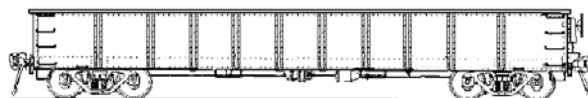
There is a details sheet, which could serve some purpose. The supplied signs are printed by a inkjet printer and by the looks of them, on a ink saving setting. I tossed them out. In short, save your money and avoid these kits. This kit was not worth \$1.00. It is a horrible kit one of the worse I have ever dealt with..

Late breaking news; I threw the kit out. It looked terrible. Painting, sanding, cutting and covering did not help. After careful thought, the walls appear to be O or S scale with HO windows, a good reason why nothing fit. If you're into the larger scales I guess you could use the sides, but they would seem expensive if that's all you bought the kit for.

In short, save your money. Don't buy any of these kits. Or "be warned".

Now for some good news, The **Laser-Art** kits from **Branch-line** are very nice indeed. This kit was a pleasure; you remember pleasure- that's what the hobby is all about. Good directions, well fitting parts and everything you need is supplied. And the best news? The finished product looks just like the picture on the box. They use a method not unlike Bar-Mills with the sticky, peel off backing but again, it works very well. The windows come out great looking. If you are afraid of trying something new and or spending the money until you are sure, try one of these. It will set your mind at rest. I made the basic #624 Drayton house in HO scale. They have a wide assortment. I highly recommend them.

In my next review I'm building and reviewing a 'craftsman' type kit. Back to the good old days of cutting and fitting each part. Remember those days?



Club Notices

The Model Railroad Club

will be having their light and sound show on November 26 to 28th. Show times are Friday 7 - 10 PM, Saturday 12 to 9 PM, and Sunday 12 to 6 PM.

Donation at door Adults \$6.00, 5.00 seniors and \$3.00 children 12 and under.

Discounts for groups available, see their website for details

www.tmrcl.com

or call 908-964-9724 Saturdays between 12 & 5 PM.

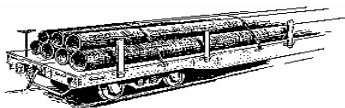
The club is located on Jefferson Ave off US 22 in Union NJ (behind the Home Depot)

New York Society of Model

Engineers' Annual Holiday Open House. At the Society, 341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt, (1/2 mile from Giants Stadium) Three Weekends. Nov. 26,27,28, Dec.3,4,5 and Dec. 10,11,12 Fri. 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Sat and Sun 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Contact: Andrew Brusgard for additional information

ajb1102@comcast.net



The Long Range Plan

As many of you already know, as of January 1st, 2005 the NMRA's long range plan will be in effect. Basically that means we can no longer charge dues to join the division.

In order to recoup our costs, we may have to raise the subscription to the newsletter, charge more for events or something else. I'm sure this will be the main topic of discussion at our annual business meeting in January. Any suggestions will be heard and discussed. Elsewhere in this issue you will find our new proposed by-laws on page 7. Please review these. We are required by the National to make these changes because of the long range plan.

SUMMER ROLLING MEET PICTURES



(above) Denville Station

(Below) Phillipsburg on the old Pennsy main



(above) An old bridge abutment at Changewater

(Below) Signal bridge at Phillipsburg



(above) The gang at Port Murray



OUR NEW TAX STATUS

CONGRATULATIONS GARDEN STATE DIVISION!!!! WE'RE NOW TAX EXEMPT

I am pleased to announce that we have been granted (501)(3)(C Ed.) tax exempt status by the IRS. Donations to the Division will therefore be deductible on donors' tax returns with the following provisos. Any contribution of \$250 or more will be deductible only if the donor has received from the Division contemporaneous written substantiation of the donation. (*i.e. A receipt, Ed*) That is to say, the donor must receive substantiation from us no later than the date on which the donor files his or her tax return for the year in which the donation is made.

You must also receive from the Division written disclosure if you make a payment to the Division in excess of \$75 partly as a contribution and partly

for goods or services provided by the Division.

If you serve as an officer or committee member and you travel to regional or national functions to promote the interests and educational goals of the Division, you may be able to deduct, for example, the reasonable expenses of travel, lodging and meals. Of course you should first consult your attorney or accountant before taking any deduction. But by all means take advantage of our tax exempt status, if you're able to. Happy model railroading!

Norman Frowley
Secretary, GSD

A LITTLE

In a terrible accident at a railroad crossing, a train smashed into a car and pushed it nearly four hundred yards down the track. Though no one was killed, the driver of the car took the train company to court.

At the trial, the engineer insisted that he had given the driver ample warning by waving his lantern back and forth for nearly a minute.

He even stood and convincingly demonstrated how he'd done it. The court believed his story, and the suit was dismissed.

"Congratulations," the lawyer said to the engineer when it was over. "You did superbly under cross-examination."

"Thanks," he said, "but he sure had me worried."

"How's that?" the lawyer asked. "I was afraid he was going to ask if the damned lantern was lit!"

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE GSD's CONSTITUTION

Article 2 entitled "Membership and Dues" Sections 1 through 3 shall be amended to read as follows:

Section 1	Any current member of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) who resides in the counties of Bergen, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union or Warren in the State of New Jersey, or Richmond County (Staten Island) in the State of New York, shall be a member of the Garden State Division.
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Section 2	Voting privileges shall be extended to all members of the Garden State Division.
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Sections 3	All members of the Garden State Division are required to be members of the NMRA.
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(The above is required by the National to bring us in line with the newly implemented "Long Range Plan")

Around the Division or so.....

Elevated railway in Manhattan to become park

NEW YORK — An abandoned elevated railroad that snakes through the heart of Manhattan will become a park with \$27.5 million in new city funds, according to a story in USA Today. The 1.5-mile High Line, completed in 1935, once carried freight to warehouses on Manhattan's west side. Last used in 1980, it is now overrun with grass, shrubs and wildflowers growing between and over the rails and ties. The line runs for 22 blocks from West 34th Street to Gansevoort Street in the city's meatpacking district, offering views of the Hudson River and unique glimpses of the cityscape from its third-story vantage point.

The High Line was the southernmost leg of New York Central's West Side Freight Line, which ran along the western edge of Manhattan island adjacent to the Hudson River. Amtrak now owns and operates the line between the northern tip of Manhattan and Penn Station for its Empire Corridor trains. The elevated, unused High Line south of 34th Street was inherited by CSX after the Conrail acquisition.

The funding, announced Wednesday by city officials, is largely due to 5 years of effort by a local group, Friends of the High Line. The group raised money for a design competition and an economic feasibility study, attracted celebrity supporters, including actor Edward Norton and designer Diane von Furstenberg. The group lobbied city government, winning over Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, a college roommate of the group's co-founder Robert Hammond.

Miller said he didn't know the High Line existed until Hammond took him there. "I fell in love with this space and said, 'We've got to save this,'" Miller said.

The city had already promised \$15.75 million toward design and construction

of a multiuse public space on the rail line. The total cost will be \$60 million to \$100 million, Miller said, with most of the money coming from state, federal and private sources. New York's congressional delegation is seeking \$5 million in federal transportation funds. Construction for the first part of the High Line Park, on its southern end, will begin in November 2005 and is expected to be completed the following spring.

(oh just what we need, an elevated playground— and what's going to happen when the 85 year supports need work? Have a "keep our park in the air fund?" Ed)

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW - Friday, October 1, 2004

The cost of saving a cross-state Amtrak train set to be eliminated on Nov. 1 is too steep for PennDOT.

PennDOT said Thursday it cannot afford the \$2.5 million annual subsidy Amtrak sought to keep the daily Three Rivers train running.

"We, too, are in a tough financial position, and we don't have money in the budget," said PennDOT spokesman Rich Kirkpatrick. "We can't justify spending what Amtrak wanted us to spend."

Amtrak will merge two of the three passenger trains serving Pittsburgh, cutting one cross-state run that has a growing ridership. PennDOT told Amtrak in early September that it wanted to keep the train and began discussing options.

Amtrak will merge its Pittsburgh-to-Philadelphia-to-New York Pennsylvanian train with the Chicago-to-Pittsburgh-to-Philadelphia-to-New York Three Rivers train. Then, only one train will serve the Chi-

cago-Pittsburgh-Philadelphia-New York route.

In March, the route will be shortened to a Pittsburgh-Philadelphia-New York run.

"Amtrak is going forward with the plan outlined earlier," said spokeswoman Marcie Golgoski. "If they come up with an alternate plan, we're willing to listen."

The failed talks disappointed passenger groups, including the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers.

"We'd hoped that somehow PennDOT could find the money," said Mark Spada, a Mt. Lebanon resident who is the group's president.

PennDOT intends to continue talking with Amtrak about possible changes to improve the remaining service, Kirkpatrick said.

A third train that serves Pittsburgh, the Capital Limited, is not affected. It runs between Chicago and Washington, D.C., and stops in Pittsburgh.

Amtrak's cuts are driven by its decision to no longer ship for the U.S. Postal Service. About 65 jobs in Pennsylvania will be lost.

Ridership on the Pennsylvanian has grown about 10 percent, from 13,191 passengers in June 2003 to 14,528 in June 2004. Three Rivers ridership has increased 5.1 percent, from 13,375 passengers in June 2003 to 14,055 in June 2004.

Anyone having any photos or stories from around our area or anywhere else for that matter, send them to us so we can share them with the membership. I print what I get. Of course local info will get preference.

NOT JUST A HOBBY, BUT A WAY OF LIFE!

Quiz Answer. The ends of the rail take the most abuse. Railroads selling used rail would cut off 18 inches from each end to give the buyer a clean edge to work with. $18 + 18 = 36$ " therefore 3 feet minus 39 equals 36 feet.

Garden State Division "Business" Meeting
"Ramapo Model RR Club" Ho-Ho-Kus NJ*
January 24th, 2005
FREE

**Our annual business meeting, officers report,
elections, our upcoming regional hosting of a NER convention,
the long range plan and other future plans.
Coffee and doughnuts will be served and
a small white elephant table will be open afterwards.**

It's your division, tell us how you want it run.

(Off Highway 17)

Application to join or renew your membership in the Garden State Division

An active part of the Northeast Region of the NMRA

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

NMRA # _____ NER # _____
(Required) (Optional)

Scale _____ Email _____

\$10.00 Per year membership (not applicable if living in GSD territory after January 1st, 2004)
\$5.00 Whistle Stop Subscription, \$10.00 for the entire year on CD

Amount Enclosed _____

Please make your check out to the GARDEN STATE DIVISION
Mail to: Roger Oliver, 61 Franklin Road Denville, NJ 07834-1558

The Whistle Post
Tom Wortmann
68 Carmel Ave.
Staten Island NY 10314

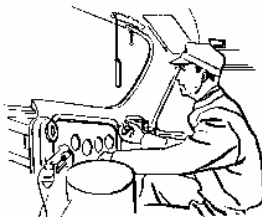
<http://www.trainweb.org/nergds>
Email: gsdtrains@yahoo.com



**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

Check out the date on your
mailing label, if your expired
please renew. Not only do we
need your dues, we need your
membership!



Know of an railroad or model
railroad event coming up?
Let us know so we can share it
with the entire division.
Email gsdtrains@yahoo.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 11th & 12th 2004
**WORLD'S GREATEST
HOBBY**

Edison Convention Center
Stop by the GSD's Booth

Check out Club Notices on page 6

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
EVERYONE
And a HAPPY NEW YEAR

January 24th, 2005
**'Annual Membership
Meeting'**
Ramapo Model RR Club
Ho-Ho-Kus NJ
12 Noon
'Free'

May 13 - 15, 2005
NER Spring Convention
Nashua, NH

May 2005
'GSD Spring Meet'
Location yet unknown

July 2005
NMRA National Convention
Cincinnati, Ohio

October 7 - 9, 2005
NER Fall Convention
Stamford Ct.

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Join the fun, share with others and grow with the hobby.
Become a active member of the GSD.