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# The WHISTLE POST

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

## Virtual Events Continue for the Fall The GSD will be online October 24

As with most group events, the GSD will continue to meet virtually for the Fall Event to be held the morning of October 24. We will again be using FreeConferenceCall.com as our host. Details on using this service can be found on Page 3.

There will be two presentations for this event. Richard Wehr will be coming to us live from Arizona, where he is currently living. Richard has been in model railroading since 1960 with a strong interest in structures, particularly wood building and period structures. His presentation is entitled **The Ghosts of Gasoline Alley**, where he will examine architectural periods and styles of gas stations and pumps, research tools, and resources for modelers.

When model railroaders hear the acronym "JMRI", most think of DecoderPro from programming their DCC decoders. However, did you know that JMRI also contains a module called Operations Pro that generates switch lists? Chuck has been using operations software to generate switch lists since the year 2000. A few years ago, he needed to upgrade his current software or try another program. Since that fateful day, Chuck has been a happy user of JMRI Operations Pro. In this clinic, **JMRI Operations Pro: Adventures in Computerized Switchlists**, Chuck's goal is to motivate you to try JMRI Operations Pro for yourself, whether your layout is DC or DCC!



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



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## Where is Everybody?

Zounds! The last GSD event only attracted 24 participants. The GSD has enjoyed more participation at in-person events in the past. Seeing such a low number of participants was a big surprise!

Maybe everyone else is exhausted from attending so many on-line model railroading events. There have been so many NMRAX, RPM, Club, OpSIG, and other events that the novelty of attending on-line video conference calls may have worn off. Or, maybe everyone else values the in-person events for the socialization and do not get the same satisfaction on-line. Or, maybe they just are not tech-savvy. Or, maybe it is just summer and everyone wants to be outside. Or, or, or...

I really hope it is the last reason. I really would like to see everyone at our next virtual meet on October 24. We work hard to create an event that is fun and an opportunity to learn something new. What really makes it all worthwhile is when there is lots of participation by our members.

When we are isolated during the pandemic, it is so much fun to talk to and see other model railroaders during events like ours. A big part of this hobby is socialization. And, boy, do I miss seeing everyone. It is fun to share what everyone is working on. I know I get inspired by seeing everyone's great projects. We will just have to continue sharing them virtually for the near future.

As for my projects, I have been keeping myself busy working on cars for the Achievement Program. I just completed the third car to be evaluated and am inching closer towards earning this certificate. I am very excited about that!

I will show my finished project during the upcoming meet if you show us yours! Send photos and a description of what you are working on to [nmra\\_chuck@yahoo.com](mailto:nmra_chuck@yahoo.com) and we will highlight them during the virtual meet. I know everyone has something to share!

So, let's share our projects and enjoy the two exciting clinics at the next event on October 24. You can find more information about the meet inside this issue.

See you there!



## Virtual Meetings and Events

I've got to say just about everyone I've spoken to or emailed with has been doing very well with online meetings. Because I've been working at home I usually take part in several a day, and I'm sure many of you still working are doing the same.

It makes me wonder how our current situation would have been handled 10, or even 5 years ago. Computers and networks have increased greatly in speed over just the last few years. Although conference calls have been around since the beginning of the phone network (how many are old enough to remember Bell Telephone party lines?), voice alone is not good enough to conduct business or hold a model railroading event. Our current situation is making the most of modern technology.

As Chuck mentions on the other side of this page, most organizations have moved online, and for the most part it is being done very successfully. I've attended several historical society and RPM type modeling events, as well as a few hours of the NMRAX events this summer. Just like a live clinic, though, preparation is required. At least online there is the option to pre-record the presentation. Fortunately for members, the NMRA has recorded most of the live presentations given at the NMRAX events, which are available at [NMRA.org](http://NMRA.org).

The next major NMRA event will be NERx, transforming the Northeastern Region 2020 traditional convention into a virtual event. The annual convention that we are used to has been moved to 2021. This was a relatively recent change, so if you haven't heard of it yet go to <http://millcity2020.org> for more information.

Did I mention the NMRA online events are free, and you don't need to be a member? Yes they are, so if you know someone who is not a member and may be interested, pass along the link. Donations to help defer costs are strictly voluntary.

Meeting virtually is all well and good due to the conditions we are facing, allowing us to stay in touch and maintain a semblance of continuity in our hobby, but it has been a long wait for life to get back to normal. So much so I've already re-started my operating sessions, as have a few others I know. Those at risk or who would be a risk to others close to them excuse themselves, which I completely understand.

I'm looking forward to seeing fellow modelers soon online and in person!

# The Timetable *Upcoming Events*

**Northeastern Region 2020 Convention "Mill City 2020"** Westford, MA has been transformed into the **NERx Virtual Convention**, see below

**MidEastern Region 2020 Convention "Carolina Special"** CANCELLED

**GSD Fall Event** Saturday October 24. Details in this issue.

**NERx Virtual NER Convention** will be held December 1-4, 6:30PM-10:30 PM  
<http://millcity2020.org> Clinics and Contests!

**Northeastern Region 2021 Convention "Mill City 2021"** Westford, MA  
October 8-11, 2021 [www.millcity21.org](http://www.millcity21.org)

**NJ Division November Meet** November 7, Online <https://www.njdivnmra.org/page1/index.html>

**Amherst Railway Society Big E Show** West Springfield, MA still scheduled to be held on January 30 and 31, 2021

**GSD Winter Event** TBD



Until it is safe to hold an in-person event, the GSD will be using FreeConferenceCall.com (FCC) to hold virtual meets. The GSD has assembled documentation on using FCC and can be found, here: <https://tinyurl.com/GSD-FreeConferenceCall>

The documentation includes sections on how FCC works with a smartphone/tablet, personal computer, or with a web browser. There is even a chapter on conference call etiquette.

When you are joining a virtual GSD meet using FCC, enter "gsdtrains" when prompted for the meeting ID. Or, you can use the following link to join the meeting:

<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/gsdtrains>

Test sessions are available on October 22 and 23 from 7:30PM-9:00 PM as described in the Constant Contact emails.

(continued from Page 1)

Below: Gas stations with character, prototype and model



**A little about Richard Wehr:** Richard has been a member of the Scottsdale Model Railroad Historical Society since 1999 and model railroading since 1960. His modeling interest revolves around building structures to populate layouts. He's particularly interested in wood buildings such as covered bridges, barns, and period houses. Thanks to his interest in period structures, he has amassed a sizable library of reference books on gas stations and period buildings such as barns, covered bridges, and diners. In addition to building gas station models, he has constructed two large sugar beet processing complexes on two different layouts. His articles have appeared in many model magazines, including *Narrow Gauge* and *Short Line Gazette* and *Railroad Model Craftsman*. WP



# AP Corner

## By Chuck Diljak

Members have been busy during the pandemic! Three members have earned five certificates in the Achievement Program, recently. Let me highlight their achievements!

Jim Homoki earned his certificate for Chief Dispatcher. Participating in or hosting operating sessions is one of Jim's favorite aspects of the hobby. He is a tremendous resource for anyone interested in learning more about operations. It takes a lot of dedication to participate and document the time invested in operating sessions. But, if you enjoy operations as much as Jim does, it is well worth the effort!

The NMRA is an organization held together by volunteers. Because of this, many members that are active in the Achievement Program earn the Association Volunteer certificate and it is no surprise that it is the certificate earned the most within the GSD. While it may be a cliché, it is true that the more you put into the organization, the more you get out of the organization. Paul Harbord is no stranger to volunteering since he is very active in many organizations. Paul received his earlier this year for the work he did and continues to do for the Garden State Division, volunteering at his club's open houses, his work on the GSD board, and work at our events.

Bob Dennis and I evaluated Alexis Nawotka's layout for the Scenery, Civil, and Electrical certificates. The evaluation was done in person by Bob and virtually by me. They are three of the certificates that can be earned virtually.

As added pressure, the evaluations needed to be done soon because his layout was being dismantled as Alexis prepares to move to the Philadelphia area. Mission accomplished!

Others continue to work towards their own certificates in various categories. If you have questions regarding the Achievement Program, please contact me at [nmar\\_chuck@yahoo.com](mailto:nmar_chuck@yahoo.com). WP

**Left: Paul Harbord showing his Association Volunteer certificate.**

**Right: It took two people to hold Alexis Nawotka's three AP certificates. Bob Dennis (left) and Alexis hold the Electrical, Civil, and Scenery certificates.**



**Above: Jim Homoki's Newark Terminal layout is in the background as he holds his Chief Dispatcher certificate.**

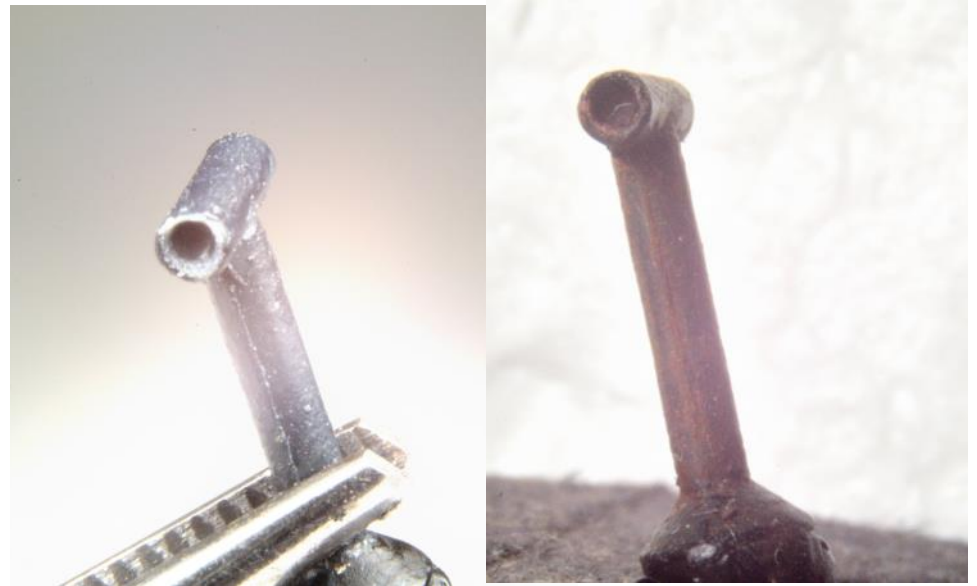


# TOOLS AND TIPS: DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF — UNLESS YOU WANT TO

BY JIM WALSH

It may be fall now but those hot muggy days of summer are not far behind us. Days when sweating was all you could do when you stepped outside. With that in mind, let me address a popular expression that we all hear from time to time: “Don’t sweat the small stuff”. Naturally, in this hobby for most of the scales everything is “small stuff “ but I am talking about things that most people wouldn’t notice but we know is there. One project that I was working on during our social restrictions is a pump house that I kitbashed from an Atlas trackside shanty. The structure was already built but I cut it down removing the window and reducing its size. When I was replacing the smoke jack, I noticed that it was a solid plastic piece and I wanted it to look like the pipe. I decided to drill out the center without damaging the walls. Therefore, I used a smaller drill and a pair of reamers to create the desired look. This was a minor detail but I wanted to make the modification to make it better.

**Below: This is the kitbashed model that started out as an Atlas trackside shanty. Here it includes the details mentioned in this article, as well as a few others. (All photos by Jim Walsh except where noted)**



**Above: Here are some extreme closeups of the smoke jack after the modifications (above left) and after installation on the structure (above right).**

**Below: To hollow out the solid smoke jack part and make it look more like a pipe required a drill in a pin vise and a pair of reamers. The wide-angle reamer helped make the pipe wall without breaking the part.**



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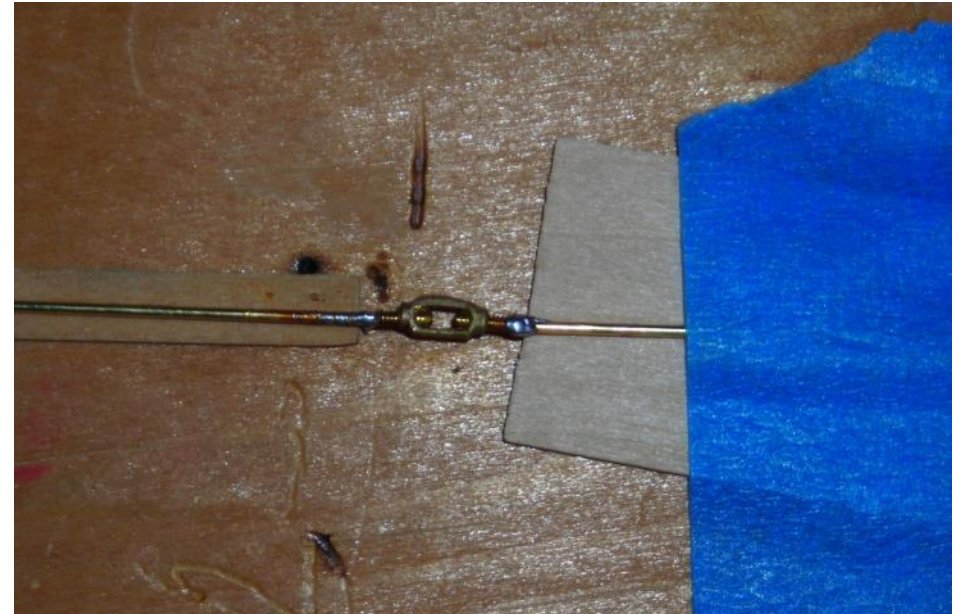
Another detail on the same structure project is the chipped edge of the plastic part used for the building slab to create the broken edge often seen on concrete. I used a utility knife to chip away the plastic and after painting, I added small specks to resemble the exposed aggregate from the chipped edges. I made those specks by applying appropriate colors with the point of a pin.

**Below: This extreme close-up photo shows the chipped edges of the concrete slab with the exposed aggregate.**



I added that extra detail on the model because I wanted to include it but sometimes there may be other reasons. When entering a model contest every extra bit of detail can add to your point total. Mark Moritz had a very high scoring O scale model at the NMRA National convention in Orlando in 2017. It took Second Place overall in the Rolling Stock category. I asked him about any special detail work included with that model. Mark described realistic turnbuckles that he made from brass castings. Starting with each turnbuckle casting, he tapped it for 00-90 threads, then he screwed a 00-90 screw into the turnbuckle, removed the head and soldered the 00-90 shank of the screw to the tension rod for the car. His extra effort was rewarded in the model's score. Those extra details and extra efforts for a scratch built model benefit from good documentation of the model construction.

Whether it is a contest model or another structure or car on your layout, adding those extra fine details can be very rewarding. They may even be noticed by others if the models are near the edge of the layout. **WP**



**Above: This photo shows the O scale turnbuckle detail after the soldering process with the tension rods connected to screw shanks threaded into the modified turnbuckle casting. (Photo by Mark Moritz)**

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## ***NER* COUPLER**

**You may have heard the NER Coupler has a new Editor, Christopher Carfaro. He would like to hear from any members interested in writing or photographing for the magazine.**

**As with the WhistlePost, contributions count toward your Achievement Award point total for Author.**

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

**Chris can be reached at [editor@nernmra.org](mailto:editor@nernmra.org)**



# MODEL RAILROADING AROUND THE GSD

## BY GSD MEMBERS

*We continue to feature the activities of a few GSD members in this issue. Many virtual events have popped up, so maybe we're not so isolated anymore. In any case, some are making the best use of extra time that is not spent travelling or attending in-person events.*

Fred Dellaiacono has never been one to stop working on his railroad, even when it appears to be complete. His latest venture was to expand his waterfront by two feet, adding a ferry pier station and a ferry boat. The water surface was made with the toilet paper approach he presented at our spring meet.



The station and pier bridge are scratch built. The station is made from wood, and the roof uses Campbell's shingles. The bridge base and ramps are made from dimension lumber and the towers from Micro Engineering girders.

The car ferry is a Seaport Model Works resin kit. The hull and bulwarks are resin, the deck house and pilot house are etched brass. Rattle can and brush painted. It is rather unique in that cars are only loaded from the bow. There is a prototype for this vessel and further research revealed that they are not as uncommon as one might think especially in Europe.<sup>WP</sup>



**Above and Left: Views of an expanded waterfront scene on Fred Dellaiacono's layout.**

**Below: Kai Ebinger has been busy working on urban structures.**



*(continued on the following page)*

## NEXT DIVISION EVENT

THE FALL EVENT WILL BE  
HELD VIRTUALLY!

TIME:  
9:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

DATE:  
OCTOBER 24, 2020

LOCATION:  
ONLINE USING  
FREECONFERENCECALL.COM.  
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COST:  
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YOUR OWN COFFEE AND  
DONUTS!)

WEBSITE FOR MEETS:  
SEE PAGE 3  
[HTTP://WWW.NERGS.D.COM/](http://www.nergsd.com/)

AGENDA:  
INTRODUCTION  
TWO CLINICS  
JUST (BRING 'N) BRAG

(continued from the previous page)

Right: A city  
scene taking  
shape on Kai  
Ebinger's layout.



## 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://tmrci.org>

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

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

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

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

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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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## ~~just~~ ~~Bring 'n~~ Brag



In the good old days when we met in person at GSD events, we always had a "Bring 'n Brag" segment. This segment is where members would informally talk about a model they brought to the event. For our virtual meets, since there is no need to bring anything, the segment will be called "Just Brag."

Send photos and descriptions, as well as your name, of the projects you worked on during this time of

restricted meetings. You can send them to [nmra\\_chuck@yahoo.com](mailto:nmra_chuck@yahoo.com).

During the next virtual event, your photos will be included in the "Just Brag" segment of the program. If you are in attendance during the event and would like to talk about the project, we will instruct you how to do so. Otherwise, one of the hosts will use the description you provided to talk about your model railroad project.

You have bragging rights!

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NMRA Virtual Conventions continue under the nmra-x banner. Find the date and time of the next group of presentations on the NMRA Facebook page or the NMRA home page.



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The GSD now has a Twitter account and a Facebook page  
Follow the GSD at  
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