



The WHISTLE POST

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



Joint GSD/NJD Event in Hillsborough, NJ
Saturday, May 13



THE CAB by President Mark Moritz

Op Sessions

Of all the activities associated with the hobby, none is perhaps as enjoyable as simply running our model trains. While building cars, installing decoders in locomotives, building buildings, structures, and scenery are all enjoyable and provide lots of satisfaction, moving trains around a layout can be considered the epitome of modeling. In this case, the layout itself becomes the model when we operate it according to the principles of the prototype.

To run an op(eration) session, the track work has to be very reliable, and the electronics completely functional. Movement of trains has to flow smoothly, since there is a greater goal to the session than just moving trains in circles. Trains may move according to a timetable, or in a specific order. Cars need to be spotted in specific places, and others picked up and taken to destinations. Derailments and interruptions in train movements slow down the process and are ultimately annoying. The layout thus has to be finely tuned to be reliable. This is where it pays off to refine the layout to run perfectly.

Also, those individuals who operate need to know their jobs, or have instruction in how to begin to do them. Pairing up a new operator with an experienced one who already is familiar with the layout usually solves this problem. These pairings as well as the interactions between operators facilitate meeting new people and the social interactions that occur make an op session very enjoyable.

We often hear that ours is a social hobby; attending op sessions enhances the social experience.

Best of all, for those who do not have a layout of their own, attending op sessions gives them opportunities to run trains on someone else's layout. In fact, you can fully participate in the hobby without owning a layout (or owning one that is unfinished), rolling stock, engines, or any equipment.

It has been suggested that the Division sponsor op sessions in our territory the way some other Divisions do. Examples include Island Ops on Long Island at the end of April, the Ops til You Drop weekend in Central New York, and others. A number of our members have regular op sessions to which they invite folks who have an interest. So far, we have not proceeded to organize such an event. Perhaps if there is sufficient interest, we can do so in the future.

If you have the opportunity to attend an op session, consider doing so. It may not be for everyone, but it can substantially increase the enjoyment of the hobby.**WP**



THE CABOOSE by Editor Jim Homoki

To Facebook or Not

At the beginning of this year I finally relented and started a Facebook (FB) page for my layout. I wanted to do something to put the layout "out there" on social media, but wasn't sure what it should be. Many friends were already on FB, but others also preferred something else. A few avoided FB altogether, several used one of the many options available to host a blog, and a few even had their own website. Keeping a website up to date and learning how to manage it definitely seemed like too much work, so that was easy to eliminate.

With FB decided as the venue to use, primarily for convenience, the next question was if it should be public for viewing or be made private, where one has to request permission in order to see the posts. Public definitely increases the exposure, but if someone is really interested in seeing what you are doing it is very simple to request permission to join. For better or worse, I went with private. Note here that you can easily go from public to private, but not private to public without losing the posts.

So far so good, with no trolls posting anything inappropriate. I try to add something at least once a week to maintain interest. I also intend to keep it focused on the layout and modeling. You will not be reading about any vacations or movie reviews or how the salad was I had for lunch.

One of the things I hope to get out this is input and feedback on something I'm not sure of without having to send out a bunch of emails to friends for a response. Presumably, those who joined will have some amount of common interest and could be in a position to assist. There are an uncountable number of groups on FB for specific railroads and modeling which can sometimes help, but more often than not the comments quickly diverge down another track. FB allows one to comment on anything, and many take advantage of that!

So, if you are on FB and should be interested in seeing what is going on with my layout and modeling of Penn Central, CNJ, and the Newark Terminal in the early 1970s era, do a search for my name and a few of those words, or use this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/858748438658051/> **WP**



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Upcoming Events

GSD Spring Event held jointly with the NJ Division, May 13, Hillsborough Township Municipal Building, 9 AM - 12 PM Clinics in the morning with layout open houses in the afternoon.

Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders Fundy Rail Fest 2023 St. John, New Brunswick, May 26-28 <https://www.fundyrailfest2023.ca/>

Pacific Southwest Region Convention Grand Canyon Special 2023 June 7-11, 2023 Flagstaff, AZ, See flyer on Page 13

NERPM Meet June 16-18, Springfield, MA. Host hotel is the La Quinta Inn & Suites. <https://nerpm.org/>

GSD Summer Event Saturday July 22, Morris County Library, 30 East Hanover Avenue, Whippany, NJ. Clinics and layout open houses.

New Jersey Division Special Summer Meet Saturday August 5, 9 AM-12 PM Switlik Park Recreation Building, 5 Fisher Place, Hamilton, NJ 08620 . Program TBD.

NMRA 2023 National Convention 2023 Texas Express in Grapevine, TX (Dallas/Fort Worth area) August 20-26 www.2023texasexpress.com

GSD Fall Event Saturday September 23, Esposito Community Center at St. Christopher—St. Mary Margaret Church, 126 Midland Avenue, Staten Island, NY

NER 2023 Convention Cannonball Express, Uniondale, NY, Columbus Day Weekend October 5-8. Hosted by the Sunrise Trail Division. <https://ner-conventions.org/cannonball-express/>

MER 2023 Convention Round the Curve to Altoona Altoona, PA, October 19-22, Altoona Grand Hotel <https://mer2023.org/index.html>

GSD Winter Event February 2024, A Make 'n Take format is being considered. Details TBD

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 was taken on the club layout of the Pacific Southern Railway, located in Rocky Hill, NJ. This is a view of the Wilson City station tracks and canopies. The Pacific Southern will be open the afternoon of the meet. (Photo by Jim Albanowski)

GSD website

www.nergsd.com

Visit the GSD Facebook Page:

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



Joint GSD/NJD Event in Hillsborough on May 13

This year it is again the GSD's turn to host the annual joint event with the New Jersey Division. The venue will be in the multi purpose room at the Hillsborough Township Municipal Building. We were last at this location in 2019 where plenty of meeting space and parking is available. The doors open at 8:30 with activities running from 9:00 to 12:00 Noon. Two clinics with four home layouts in the afternoon are featured. Sales tables are also available.

Joe Valentine will present a clinic he has titled **"Where Am I? A Sign of the Times"**. Joe noticed that on some model railroads the locations are often identified by small signs on the model buildings or labeled on the fascia. On his layout, Joe wanted his signs to be more visible and he achieved that in a big way. In this clinic Joe will explain how he created the signs that he uses to identify locations on his layout.... at least how he did it with a little help from his friends!

The New Jersey Division's **Ralph DeBlasi** will present a clinic as the contribution of our neighbors to the south to the joint meet program. Ralph is an excellent innovative modeler who has presented clinics to the NJ Division in the past.

In this clinic, **How to Build a Fine Scale Miniatures Kit – Without the Kit, Part 1**, Ralph will demonstrate his techniques using a line of products from railroad kits to do just that. In support, he will bring some structure kits for members to examine how he accomplished his goals. With the price of some kits on the market, members should find his techniques valuable in accomplishing their modeling goals with an economic benefit.

In addition to the usual refreshments, display tables, and Bring and Brag segment, the GSD will conduct the annual business meeting and elections.

Above Right: There should be no doubt for anyone that this location on Joe Valentine's layout is Scranton. Joe will present a clinic on how and why he built signs like these to identify locations on his layout. Those familiar with the DL&W will recognize the Lackawanna style of the sign.



Right: Ralph DeBlasi is pictured alongside his Lehigh Valley layout. Ralph will be presenting a clinic on building craftsman style kits without the actual kit, which will provide a variety of techniques and ideas for structure modeling.

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Four layouts will be open in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. They provide a wide variety of concepts and construction that can be seen firsthand.

The Pacific Southern Railway in Rocky Hill should be known to most modelers in this area. The club is now in it's 60th year! This huge HO layout features a sophisticated dispatching and signaling system, and has the capacity to run 100 car trains. Train control is by NCE. More information can be found at <http://www.pacificsouthern.org/> and on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RockyHillTrains/>.



Above: A multi-level scene in the Harper's Ferry area of the Pacific Southern layout. (Jim Albanowski photo)

Returning for his second GSD open house is Bill Chapin with his prototype-based HO scale New Haven Railroad Western Division, circa Autumn of 1952. It is a three deck layout with the most extensive part of it being the lower deck. The lower deck is set in western Massachusetts and represents the northern part of the New Haven Railroad's Berkshire Line. The middle deck has the Maybrook, NY, staging yard and the upper deck has Plainville, CT on the Highland Line, which morphs into Hartford/Boston staging.

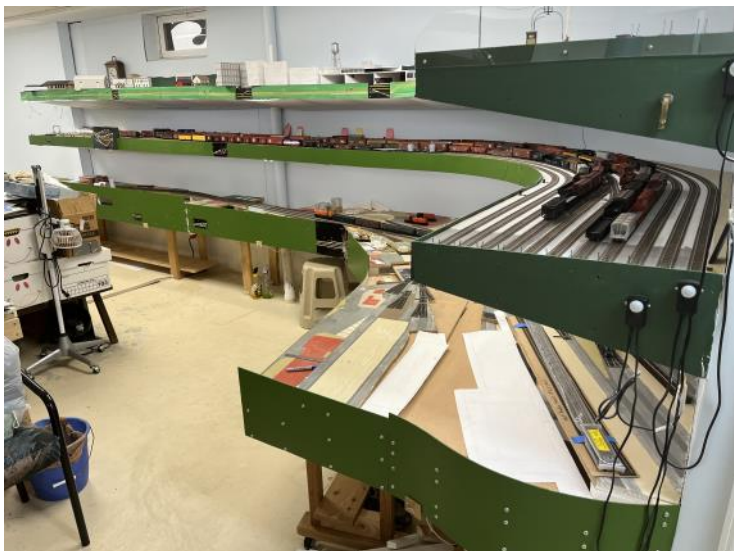
A soon to be completed section will represent Great Barrington, MA to Pittsfield, MA via Rising Junction, Housatonic, Stockbridge, Lee and Lenox; and from Rising Junction to State Line, MA via West Stockbridge. Bill anticipates that he will soon be able to start operating with a group of 4-6 people.



Above: This view shows the lower level expansion currently under construction on Bill Chapin's New Haven Railroad Western Division. As can be seen here, Bill uses printed templates to assist in laying out his track and structures. (Bill Chapin photo)

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Left: This view shows all three decks on Bill Chapin's New Haven Railroad Western Division layout. Work extending the track-age is progressing at the far left. Eventually, the three decks will be connected by a helix (or two)! (Bill Chapin photo)

Richard Newmiller, MMR, will open his PRR Dresher Division layout for the GSD for the first time. If you have attended GSD events over the last few years you have seen some of Rich's excellent presentations. His free-lanced prototype HO layout is set in the mid-1960s as a walk-in design occupying a 12 ft. x 22 ft. section of the basement. The dual track mainline leaves Greenwich Yard, climbs into the mountains and interchanges with the saw mill and logging businesses. Operations are enhanced with 3 staging tracks, team tracks, passing sidings, multiple crossovers, and 28 switching sidings. The NCE-DCC layout has multiple scratch built, exceptional quality structures, three of which earned the Best-in-Show award in judged NMRA contests. Scenery is 95% complete, and all motive power is sound equipped.

Your Whistle Post editor Jim Homoki will have his Newark Terminal-Penn Central-CNJ early 1970s era layout open for the first time since a double deck expansion was added. The expansion greatly increased operating opportunities, providing for a TT&TO format on the CNJ mainline. Scenery is well under way as he also tries to finish work on the original section. A phone system connects the towers and yards with the dispatcher, and fast clocks are used at 2:1. All locomotives are sound equipped with control by Digitrax.[WP](#)

Right: A local freight with a leased N&W F7 leading a CNJ RS3 holds the siding for a B&O pool train at Redhouse Station on Jim Homoki's proto-freelanced layout. (Jim Homoki photo)



Above: Diamond Glass is one several highly detailed structures that can be found on Richard Newmiller's PRR Dresher Division layout. (Richard Newmiller photo)



Volunteerism and the Association Volunteer Certificate

AP Corner By Mark Moritz

When we get down to the basics, the NMRA is, at its heart, a volunteer organization. It depends for its function on the many Divisions and their activities, and at all levels, on volunteerism. It is the volunteers that plan the meetings, whether Division meets, Regional Conventions, or National Conventions, who do the outreach to communities, who lend their time to the many aspects of the organization. Without volunteers, the NMRA could not exist.

When we work alone, we can enjoy the hobby, but belonging and participating in NMRA activities, especially at the Division level, enhances the experience. Beyond that, active participation in the volunteerism that is needed to run the organization, increases the enjoyment even more.

As a way of recognizing the work that volunteers do in maintaining the functions of the NMRA at every level, there is an achievement certificate - the Association Volunteer certificate - which is awarded to anyone who demonstrates at least 60 hours of service to the NMRA in any of the many categories of volunteerism.

I will list here the volunteer functions that are counted, but there are so many, I could miss one: Serving as a National Department head, National committee chair, Regional committee chair, national committee member or Division Officer, serving as a Division committee member or board member, editing an NMRA publication, serving as a Newsletter Editor, serving as a judge at an NMRA National, Regional or Divisional contest, opening one's home or club layout for layout tours or operating sessions in conjunction with NMRA sponsored events, participating in modular layout operations in conjunction with NMRA Division, Region, or National events, and presenting a live clinic.

This is an abbreviated list. The point is that there are so many ways to earn 60 points for volunteering in the NMRA, that no matter how you choose to become involved, you can earn points toward the certificate.

Perhaps the easiest way to accumulate points is to serve on the Division board. You get 1/2 point per month served. We are always looking for folks who are interested in volunteering for the board, and if you are interested, please contact me or another board member..WP

NMRA At-Risk Persons Policy Update

The NMRA recently revised the organization At-Risk policy, which applies to all NMRA sanctioned activities at all levels of the organization.

From the National website: *"At-risk persons are anyone under the age of majority or persons who have legal guardians. Age of majority means the age of legally becoming an adult, which is 18 in the United States.*

Others who are "at-risk" are persons who have legal guardians because they have been judged or deemed incapable of handling their own matters. An example might be a mentally challenged individual who enjoys our hobby."

There is much more to this policy that members should be aware of. The full policy, forms, and a very helpful FAQ section can be found at:

<https://www.nmra.org/nmra-risk-persons-policy> WP

CLUB CAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A WINTER EVENT—WITHOUT MUCH WINTER WEATHER

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

For our winter event on February 25th we returned to the library in Oakland, NJ. For this meet we had two fine clinics that presented a good combination of research and modeling. A slight dusting of snow fell while we had our meeting but the afternoon weather was fine for getting out to see some of the local model railroads in the area. The Garden State Railway Club in North Haledon was open so that we could see the latest progress on their new HO layout and the New York Society of Model Engineers in Carlstadt was demonstrating a locomotive with a SoundTraxx Blunami decoder. We also had the opportunity to visit Fred Dellaiacomo's layout and see his most recent changes. It was good to see his layout again. Getting together at these division events is one of the benefits of membership in the NMRA, the community of model railroaders. It certainly was a great day of model railroading.[WP](#)

Right: Rich Newmiller presented his clinic on scratch building a lumberyard. Many of his techniques and methods would help in constructing any model building.



Below: Angela Sutton updates the audience on her layout project presenting historical information and the prototype details that influenced the layout design as well as the construction and modeling.



Below: A scene on Fred Dellaiacomo's layout.

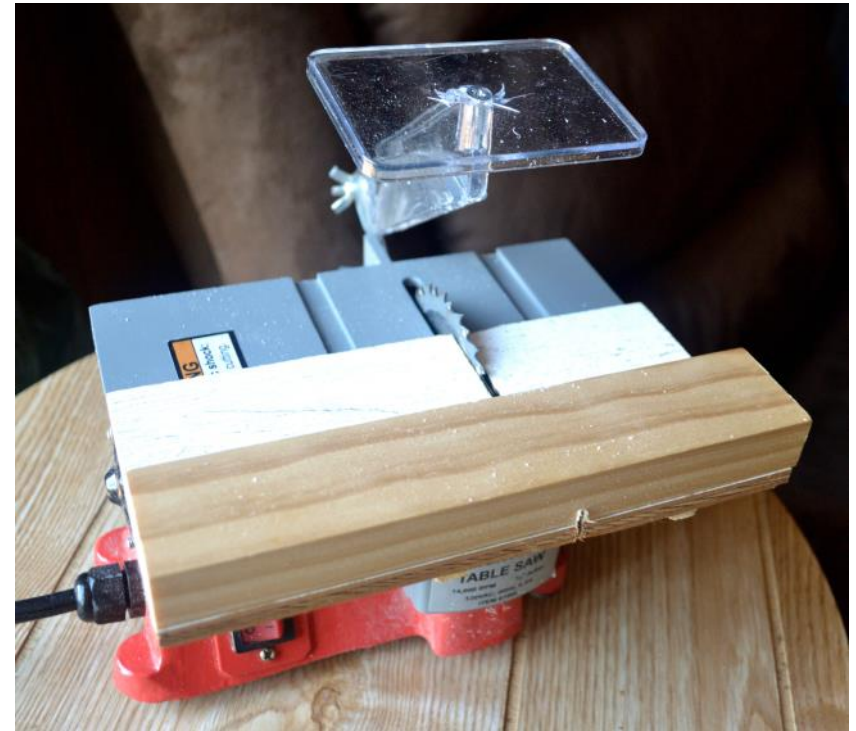


TOOLS AND TIPS: Fixed Tools

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

For this column I am not going to address tool repairs but I will be discussing the notion of tools that are mounted or fixed in place. It may be a commercially available mounted tool or a tool that has been adapted to a stationary position. In either case, it changes the way that a task is performed often making it easier to control the process. One important consideration is safety – always use and wear proper protection and be sure that the tool is secure for the operation.

One common tool that we use in model building is a hobby knife but we may not always hold it straight and true when we are making cuts. For the task of cutting small wood or styrene strips, I introduce the first mounted tool – THE CHOPPER by NorthWest Short Line. Unlike many mounted tools, it is not powered but it simplifies cutting by fixing the blade perpendicular to the cut and also includes guides for doing miter cuts. The cuts are better and the same cut can be repeated several times. A similar tool from Micro-Mark is called Chop-It. When the material is too thick to work with THE CHOPPER, I use a mini table saw combined with a crosscut sled that I custom made for the table saw. Although the table saw's miter gauge can be used to make the cuts, the crosscut sled provides better control and consistent repeat cuts.



Above: This mini table saw is great for pieces that are too thick for THE CHOPPER. This custom built cross cut sled provides better control for making the cuts. The sled slides in both grooves on the table surface.

Left: THE CHOPPER is a great tool for cutting wood and styrene strips. It has guides to make straight or mitered cuts. Also, by using the guide, you can repeat the cut to make the same part many times.

Of course, many of us are familiar with the drill press for drilling holes but recently I discovered that some people use it with a milling bit to machine light materials. It is important to limit the strength and hardness of the material being machined since it may affect the bearings and normal operation of the drill press. For even better control and results, you can use an X-Y table with the drill press. I have a Dremel rotary tool mounted into a stand that can function as a drill press.

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However, recently I used the device as a static stand so that I could use the mounted Dremel to remove some material to accommodate a new motor in an N scale trolley. I mounted a diamond cutting bit to remove the unwanted material. Although the Dremel can be used by hand to carve out the material, mounting it in a stand enabled more control of the operation. In the past, I have done similar work by mounting a corded electric drill in a vise or fixing it in place with clamps. The particular old drill that I used was a Black and Decker model that had flat sides that made it easier to secure. Then I could attach cutters, bits or even sanding attachments and the work would be easier to control.

Sanding operations can go much quicker with a bench top disk/belt sander. If that is not available some people use sanding disks or similar attachments in a drill press or a fixed electric drill. Another technique is to make a portable belt sander into a bench top tool by mounting it into a bench vise. Once again consider safety in any such customized use of a portable power tool.

The next time that you plan to do some work with a portable power tool, consider fixing the tool in place and manipulating the work piece. It may be a better way to get the job done.WP



Left: A bench top disk/belt sander makes quick work of smoothing surfaces and excess material removal. It creates a lot of dust but the work time saved and the accuracy achieved make it worth the clean up time.

Right: The photo on the left shows a drill secured in a vise to use as a fixed or mounted tool. The photo on the right shows that same drill with its flat sides that make it easy to mount the drill using a vise or clamps.



Above: The photo on the left shows the mounted Dremel rotary tool that was used to remove material from a model. The photo on the right shows a package of the type of bit used in the Dremel



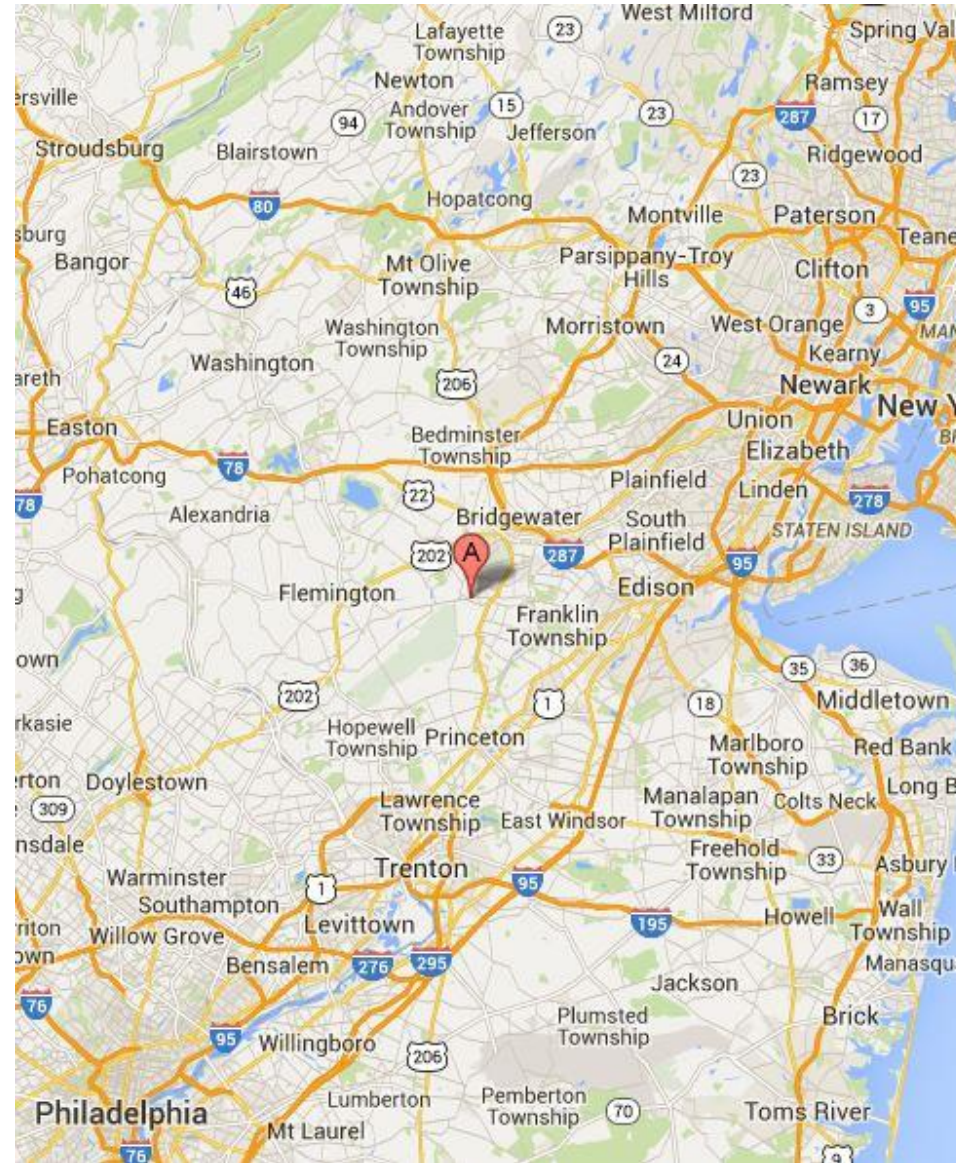
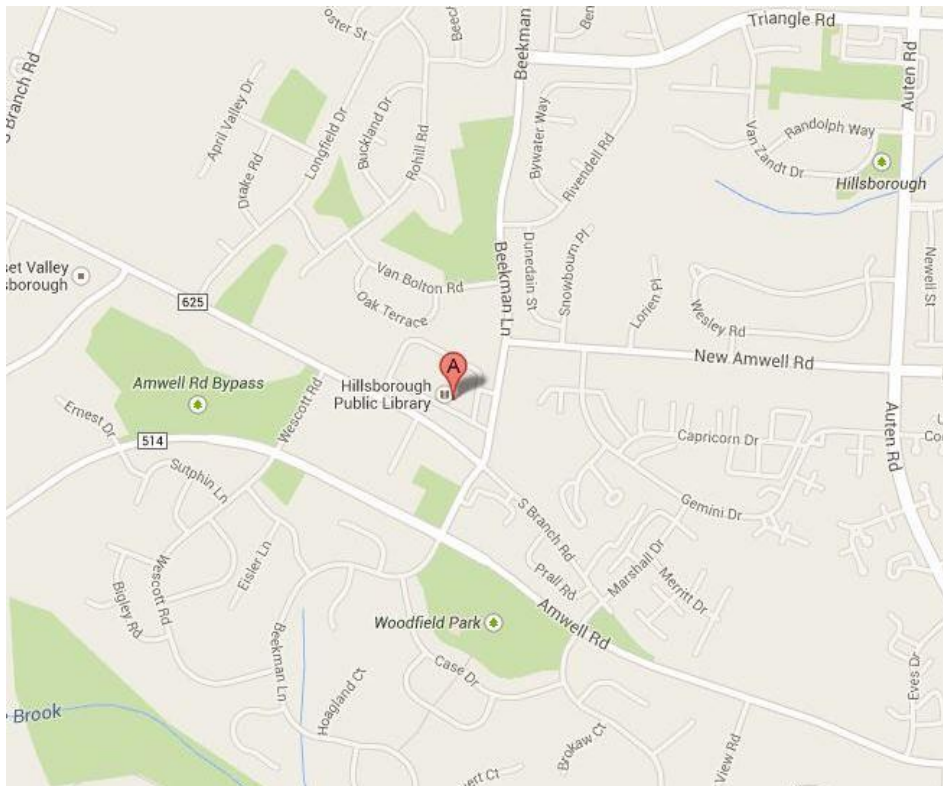
MAP FOR THE SPRING EVENT

HILLSBOROUGH TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
379 SOUTH BRANCH ROAD
HILLSBOROUGH, NJ 08844

SATURDAY, MAY 13
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30
EVENT STARTS AT 9:00

Directions:

- From Route 206 North or South, take Amwell Road (CR 514) west.
- Turn right on Beekman Lane at traffic signal
- Turn left on South Branch Road at traffic signal.
- The Hillsborough Municipal Building is on the corner. The library and Police are located in the same building. Turn right into the driveway and drive to the back of the building. There is an entrance adjacent to the meeting room. Look for the yellow GSD signs.



NEXT DIVISION EVENT

HILLSBOROUGH TOWNSHIP
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
HILLSBOROUGH, NJ

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

DATE:
SATURDAY, MAY 13

LOCATION:
379 SOUTH BRANCH ROAD
HILLSBOROUGH, NJ
SEE THE MAP ON PAGE 11

COST:
\$5 DONATION WHICH
INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS,
NJD MEMBERS ENTER USING
THE NJD REGISTRATION

WEBSITE FOR MEETS:
SEE PAGE 3
[HTTPS://WWW.NERGS.COM/](https://www.nergsd.com/)

AGENDA:
INTRODUCTION
TWO CLINICS
BRING 'N' BRAG
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
LAYOUT OPEN HOUSES

National Model Railroad Association Pacific Southwest Region Convention Arizona Division / Flagstaff, Arizona June 7 – 11, 2023



For More Information or to Register, Visit our Website at:
www.psrconvention.org

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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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FUNDY RAIL FEST 



MFMIR CONVENTION
Saint John, NB
May 26-28 2023

- INDUSTRY TOURS
- WORKSHOPS & CLINICS
- OPERATING SESSIONS
- LAYOUT TOURS
- PUBLIC SHOW
- MODEL AND PHOTO CONTEST
- SOCIAL EVENTS AND AWARDS BANQUET





<https://www.fundyrailfest2023.ca/>

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