

## BOD MEETING MINUTES OF GARDEN STATE DIVISION, NE REGION, NMRA

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**Purpose:** Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting  
**Date/Time:** Saturday, March 30, 2019  
**Place:** Oakland Public Library  
**Attendees:** Chuck Diljak, Steve Ascolese, Jim Homoki, Jim Walsh, Fred Dellaiacono, Mark Moritz, Paul Harbord, Tom Wortmann, Tom Casey and Bob Dennis  
Not in attendance: Ciro Compagno, Jim Fawcett and Andy Brusgard.

Meeting started at 9:40 AM

**No Motions Submitted at the meeting.**

**Reports were presented:**

President's Report – Looking at the membership report, Chuck sees that our membership numbers are stable but for each new member we get, we are losing a member - a lost opportunity. One reason for membership cited by the NMRA is the social aspect. Another reason is the achievement program. For social engagement, the GSD has a Facebook page while the NER has both a Facebook page and a group. Chuck has been thinking of something more personal. In addition to our quarterly division events maybe we engage our membership in smaller local groups by getting together for coffee to get to know each other a little better. If we connect with them, the members will feel appreciated and the new members will feel included. Chuck discussed that he spoke to people he did not know at the last division meet. That is something that we all need to focus on and work at even though it may be difficult while we are running an event. That is why he thought that having a local coffee get together would be good to do once a month or once every two months. Arrange a get together and see who shows up. If nobody shows up, enjoy the coffee. The other thing that Chuck wants to talk about is the officers – Ciro is not present at the meeting but he did present an update on that. Also our planned events over the next year. Steve Ascolese feels that socially it is good to meet more people but his interest in attracting people is by seeing more trains or models if you join. That is why we are in this hobby because we love trains and building models. Maybe instead of coffee it could be centered around seeing somebody's layout. Chuck said that could work too. He just used coffee as an example but we do layout tours as part of our division events but getting together at a layout or a train museum would be great. Jim H suggested something along the lines of an operating session. Maybe even some kind of introduction to operations. It could be operations or even work sessions – whatever works to engage the group in the activity. Bring the members out and get them more involved and they are more likely to stay with the organization. Be sure to include the new members so we don't lose them. Mark would like to know who the new members are so we could contact local ones. Chuck said that is part of a report – there are reports on new members, members that are deceased, members who have moved, there are all kinds of reports available. Chuck would like to see what kind of reports are available to help him with his idea. Tom W suggested a mentoring program. Reach out to a new member and try to get him/her involved. Unfortunately, many model railroaders are content to work on their layouts by themselves and may not be interested in socializing. Maybe the get together could be to discuss models, bring a finished model or a work in progress to get some help with some difficult part – get advice. Chuck said that he will try it with the members in his area. Paul reminded him that he is nearby and Chuck said that maybe they could meet at the club in North Haledon. Fred also suggested that for people who leave the NMRA, we should try to find out why they left. Chuck said that information is hard to get. Chuck is trying to figure that one out. Jim H noted that it is a huge challenge to get the new members but a problem when they start to leave. Chuck said that our organization would be strong if we could keep half the members that we get. Paul observed that people join and then if they do not see any interesting activity, they leave. Chuck said that if they are sitting back and waiting then we should entertain them. Chuck really thinks that the organization can grow if we can engage the members before they decide to quit. That concludes the presidents report.

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**NER REPORT** – Chuck missed the last NER meeting but he saw the minutes from it. Roger Oliver resigned as the NER treasurer and the convention treasurer so they are looking for a new treasurer. Chuck does not know when Roger's resignation takes effect. However, the NER does have a finance committee. END REPORT

**Vice President's Report** – We skipped the Vice President's Report since Jim F was absent.

**Secretary's Report** - Jim W had distributed a DRAFT of minutes from the last meeting of February 2, 2019. There were no comments on the draft and the minutes were accepted as written.

**Treasurer's Report** – Bob D was unable to put together a financial summary, but we did receive a distribution of \$199 from the NER. Other than that, our balance basically stays the same. Bob did not get to move the account yet. We also received roughly \$250 from the last meet. Bob will lay it out and email the info to Jim W. We previously discussed moving our account to Capital One bank but now Bob is looking at other banks. Treasurer's report was Accepted.

**Education Committee and AP Reports** – Steve is working with 2 members. One member is working on his Golden Spike but he went on a vacation with his family – that adjusted his schedule. Steve is also working with Alex Nawotka who is going for his electrical certificate. Steve will check back with them. Chuck reminded Steve to let him know if he needed help. Tom W said that he could help too. Chuck remarked that the AP program really helped him to improve his modeling. Fred suggested that when a member gets a certificate or merit award, we should have pictures on our web site to feature the modeling that earned the award. Even show pictures of the evaluation process so people are aware of the evaluation teams that are available to evaluate their modeling. Chuck noted that on our web site there is a list of Achievement Program participants and the certificates that they have earned. Steve will update that web site list and Tom W will fix the link for that list. Education and AP report was accepted.

**Event Report** - Jim W read a note from the Oakland Library thanking us for the donation and they extended an invitation for us to visit again.

**SPRING EVENT:** Hillsborough, NJ. Jim H reported that the municipal building is all set for our event but the NJD has not identified their clinic. We will have a clinic from Rich Newmiller on building the Diamond Glass model. Jim H is also having trouble getting layouts. So far Jim has his layout and Bill Chapin's layout. Jim H will see if he can get Andy Rubbo to open his layout. Since the event will be a joint meet and our business meeting, we would like to expedite our business. We can waive the reading of reports – present the offer to the membership. The slate of candidates will be presented probably by Ciro. Chuck can run the meeting and Ciro will run the election part of the meeting.

**SUMMER EVENT:** Jim W reported that we secured the Hope Township Community Center thanks to JP Mikesh being a volunteer fireman in Hope. Given 3 choices, the BOD agreed on July 27 as the date for our summer event. Possible layouts include Ed Suhy, Tony Koester and Ted Pamperin. Harold's may not be an option. For clinics, Jim Walsh will have a clinic on photography and Craig Bisguier will be doing his clinic on 3D printing.

**FALL** – Tom W asked about dates to consider for the fall meet on Staten Island. Chuck said that since the NER convention is in September, our fall meet will be in October. Chuck suggested finding the dates that are available.

**WINTER** is possibly at Park Ridge. Chuck wants to reach out to Ron Klaiss to see if he will support a make and take clinic. Paul will look into dates in February.

**Membership Chair Report** – Andy is unable to attend this meeting because he had to work at his NYSME/ MTCA train show swap meet. Tom C had no February information from the NER. Bob D noted that the NER office manager was having trouble distributing the information. John Doehring will be dealing with the issue. Tom C reviewed information that he had from the January report. We have

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206 regular voting members and 16 Rail Pass members for a total of 224. Two members are past due by 30 days and 1 person is 60 days past due and no new members reported. For the 12 month period, 155 renewals on average. We have 28 lifetime members, 39 members renewed for 2 years and 3 members for 3 renewed for 3 years or more. In discussion of tracking past due member status, it became clear that Tom C would need to track the names to determine if they renewed or dropped out. Tom does track Rail Pass members all the way back to January 2011 and indicates their current status. Now that the Rail Pass requires some cost to the members, do we see a difference in number of people converted to regular memberships? Tom C said that the numbers are about the same. Mark asked about the new Rail Pass members indicating that we should be reaching out to them. He wanted to know if any were in his neighborhood. Tom C said that if Mark sends Tom his email address, then Tom will send the list to Mark. Mark suggested that Tom C send the list to all BOD members. Tom C noted that we are still around 14% of the NER membership. Chuck distributed some information that he had prepared. Chuck made some observations based upon information that he received from Tom C. For December 2017 to January 2018, we had 5 new members. An increase of 5 full time members. Chuck made an assumption that anytime there was an increase of regular or Rail Pass members, he put it on the new members line. Another assumption was that if there was a decrease in the number of members, he put it under loss-unknown reason. Then when you get to the report of December year to date, we see 33 new members added but we lost 34 members over the course of a year. Chuck is interested in welcoming those 33 new members and to get them involved in our organization. However, for those 34 lost members, they are lost opportunities for the organization to grow. We really need to know the reasons behind losing those members. We need to reach out to find out why those members left. We need to engage new members to make them feel welcome and track why we are losing members. Make personal contact with members who left. Fred recommended checking the division meet participation by the members who left. Andy reaches out to members who fall behind before they are dropped from the membership. Tom C will look through the membership lists from one year to the next to find members who left the group Jan 2018 – JAN 2019. Mark suggested that we have a group to call them. Mark, Tom C, Bob D, Andy and Chuck will be that group. When Tom C comes up with the list, then the group will have a conference call. Chuck noted that National does not focus on this level and we really need to do it. Tom C will send the information to Bob D, Chuck, Mark and Andy. The membership report was accepted.

Whistle Post Report. – For a change, Jim H has several articles early and he is in good shape. He plans to have a draft of the issue by next week. Chuck wants an article about the upcoming tour of the High Line. Jim H will include the information about the election. Jim also asked about any information on upcoming events to be included. Send him the information. The Whistle Post report was Accepted.

4H Program - Bob D said that we are doing well with the 10 children in the modeling club. They are making small model buildings for the Jim Rizzolo Timesaver switching layout. For this meeting they will be putting on the roofs and installing the windows. Once the buildings are completed, we will have them for the layout that we can bring to train shows and meets. The next meeting is April 15 and Ciro, Paul, Bob D, Fred and Chuck will be there. Bob D reminded us that participation is applicable to the Volunteer Certificate. Bob D also noted that we will not be participating in the program next year. Chuck will speak to Jan about it. The 4H modeling club report was accepted.

SPECIAL EVENT: Tour of the High Line in NYC: The High Line tour is scheduled for June 1 with a June 8 rain date and we will meet in the morning near an entrance to the High Line. The morning activity will be a walk along the High Line with some historical information about buildings along the way. We will have lunch in the area of the pier. In the afternoon we will ride on the fireboat. We will be making a donation for the fireboat. Chuck said that similar to this event, he would like to do something special every year. Maybe we could do the Gulliver's Gate trip like we planned for the convention but

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had to be cancelled. Last year we also had the ride on the Black River and Western railroad steam train. We should consider some things for an event next year.

GSD Election: Ciro was absent but he provided Chuck with a report about the election. He approached some members about becoming directors. He reported that Scott Dunlap was not interested and no response from Chris Oliva. JP Mikesh is interested and accepted a nomination as director. He is already working on organizing the summer meet in Hope. Ciro will also contact Alex Nawotka and Mark Lutz. That is all that Chuck knows at this time but Jim H will need to get the information from Ciro for the Whistle Post. Chuck will reach out to Ciro.

### Old Business:

- We still need somebody to monitor out Facebook. For now Andy will continue to work with Facebook and Chuck will concentrate on the Constant Contact side of social networking. They both will be posting to Facebook. Mark asked about progress in our search for somebody to maintain our Facebook presence. Chuck said that we are still looking but the connection will be through direct personal contact. Andy and Chuck are good for now. Chuck is an Admin on the NER group.
- We are still always looking for clinics. When you speak to members in your area, see if anybody is interested in providing a clinic to the group. We need clinics for the fall meet and also for next year. We can also make an appeal to membership at our events. Chuck would like to have less reliance on the board and get more members involved. Keep this item ongoing on our list of old business.
- Chuck called Bill Frankenfield and had a good conversation. Bill will put together an invoice for the website work he did for our convention. Chuck noted that Bill participated in the last GSD meet in Oakland. Chuck will continue to maintain contact with Bill.
- One item remaining open is that Chuck still needs to contact Ron Klaiss about supporting a future "make and take" clinic.

### New Business:

- Concerning marketing at train shows and the tablecloth, we have one and it cost about \$100. We will be using it at the Patterson Museum on May 11 from 12:30 to 4:30PM. Let Bob D know if you can make it. We have the table there to promote our organization.
- Other new business, we need somebody to be the clinic chairman. To make sure that we have people lined up for our clinics and looking out for new clinics. We really need somebody to be clinic chairman. Somebody to organize the clinics and support the GSD meets.

Mason Logie arrived at the meeting to speak about our trip on the Highline and the John J Harvey. The fireboat is docked on an old railroad barge that has an EL caboose and restaurant on it. They are on pier 26 and you cross an old B&O float bridge to get to the old barge and the John J Harvey. The lightship Frying Pan is next to the Harvey. Mason is a licensed New York City tour guide and he will give us a short tour of the High Line and also show us some interesting buildings. These include Manhattan Cold Storage and the Lehigh Starrett Building – with elevators that were able to lift 40 foot boxcars. Behind the Post Office is an old B&O freight house. Mason will provide Chuck with a writeup about the special event and Chuck will pass the article to Jim Homoki for the Whistle Post.

The next GSD BOD meeting will be hosted by Bob Dennis on June 29, 2019.

Meeting adjourned around noon, 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jim Walsh*

Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD