

# *The* **WHISTLE POST**

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



In this Issue:  
Upcoming Virtual Event on July 24  
Simple Turnout Modifications  
AP Corner; Tools and Tips



## Back to the Future?

As I write this, society is opening up again as COVID is retreating. Not to get our hopes and expectations up too much, but for 16 months we have been first locked-down, later limited in our interactions, and now we are getting back to life as we knew it before COVID. It will take awhile longer, but we are now going about largely without masks, restaurants are open again, movie theaters are open, etc.

The pandemic has taken a toll on our hobby as a well. A large appeal of this hobby is the socialization that is a big part of it. We were used to in-person meets, train shows, and other activities which brought us together and allowed us to enjoy each other's company. For months, we were isolated, but now, sixteen months after we went into lockdown, we are poised to resume in-person events.

Our board of directors just met, and I am pleased to tell you that, beginning with our fall meet, on October 30, we will be in-person again. We will follow the State's guideline for being fully vaccinated to attend without a face mask, or to wear a mask, if not. Our regional convention, the MillCity21 event in Massachusetts, will be in-person on October 8-11. The summer Greenberg show, on August 14-15, will be in-person. Other conventions and meetings scheduled for this summer and fall are to be in-person too.

No doubt, some things will remain in our post-Covid world, which will be different from the way they were before. We have all become accustomed to "Zoom" meetings, and they will have a role in our future, although it remains to be seen just how much they will permanently replace live in-person meetings. But for our hobby, there will be an opportunity to bring things back to where they were pre-COVID. We have found, for instance, that, although our virtual meets were very good, the attendance did not match that of our live meets. We hope to get back to our usual attendance.

So the leadership of your organization is looking forward to the future, looking back to pre-COVID events for templates for our future functions. We are especially looking forward to seeing you all back in-person again.<sup>WP</sup>



## Club News

I was thinking about what we do not print much of in the Whistle Post (WP), and that is news about clubs.

I have my suspicions on why this is so, other than the obvious fact that clubs send in little to no information to be included. Part of that may be because their focus is on club activities rather than what the NMRA does. Also, I suspect that many members are satisfied with what they get out of the club and are not NMRA members.

In any case, news releases and articles about club projects for the WP are welcome. Shows and other events can be posted on the GSD website, as it often done for the New York Society of Model Engineers. I'd also like to see a few article submitted to the WP, as I could use them.

The Pacific Southern in Rocky Hill is one club that is trying to get back to normal with an open house this fall. Founded in 1964, they have a long history of presenting shows for the public, which was suspended for a few years, picked up again, and then cancelled last year. This year their annual show will be the weekend of October 23-24. There is no information yet on their website, but it should be available soon. The website is [www.pacificsouthern.org](http://www.pacificsouthern.org).

If any clubs, listed or not listed on Page 10, would like a little more publicity to promote their activities or would like to be added, contact me at [whistlepost@nrgsd.com](mailto:whistlepost@nrgsd.com). <sup>WP</sup>



## Upcoming Events

**GSD Summer Event** Saturday July 24 9AM-12PM to be held virtually on FreeConferenceCall.com

**New Jersey Division Event** Saturday September 18, 2021 Details TBA

**Lehigh & Keystone Valley Model Railroad Club** sidewalk sale and open house, Sunday September 19, 10AM-4PM, 705 Linden St. Bethlehem, PA  
[www.lkvmodelrailroad.com](http://www.lkvmodelrailroad.com)

**Northeastern Region 2021 Convention "Mill City 2021"** October 8-11, 2021 Westford, MA <http://www.milcity21.org/>

**MidEastern Region 2021 Convention "Mount Clare Junction"** October 21-24, 2021 Hunt Valley, MD <https://mtclarejct.com/>

**Pacific Southern Railway** in Rocky Hill, NJ, Annual Show is back for 2021. October 23 and 24, 2021. [www.pacificsouthern.org](http://www.pacificsouthern.org)

**GSD Fall Event** Saturday, October 30, to be held in-person. Details TBD

**NMRA 2022 National Convention St. Louis, MO** August 7-15, 2022

**Hindsight 20/20** An online day of prototype clinics held via Zoom approximately every two months. <http://speedwitchmedia.com/>



# FreeConferenceCall.com®

Until it is decided 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>

The meeting will open up at 8:30 to provide participants a chance to test their connections.

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## On the Cover

The station at Corona on Kai Ebinger's layout is busy with the arrival of the Union Pacific M-10000 streamliner, City of Salina. Since most of the buildings in this town were constructed and installed during the pandemic, Kai decided to name the place Corona.

Jim Walsh photographed this scene on Kai's layout. Kai does not model any specific prototype or era. He prefers to run the equipment he likes, which can be pretty diverse.



If you missed the virtual NER convention held December 1-4 or NERx event held April 10-11 the activities were recorded and are available on the [NMRA's YouTube channel](https://www.nmra.org/youtube). Just look for "NERx" in the video titles.

# NER COUPLER

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.



## July 24th will be the next Virtual Event

What hopefully will be our last virtual event will be held on Saturday, July 24, from 9AM-12PM, using FreeConferenceCall.com. We're looking forward to meeting in person again in September.

There are two clinics on tap, the Bring 'n Brag segment that is now called Just Brag since it is done virtually, and there will be two virtual layout tours. We will have Fred Dellaiacono's Ramapo Central, and the layout of Kai Ebinger, both in HO scale.

Like many model railroaders, Jim Walsh was interested in static grass and converted an inexpensive electronic fly swatter into a device to apply static grass. It worked but he wanted a better device and recently he finished building a new one. Jim will be presenting a clinic that follows his progress in designing and building his new static grass applicator. He also shares some of his experiences and insights from the project. The photo below shows the completed static grass applicator.

**Below: A clinic by Jim Walsh will discuss the construction and use of his improved homemade static grass applicator.**



Chuck Diljak recently finished meeting the requirements for the Cars certificate in the NMRA Achievement Program. In his clinic **Car Tipping, or Tips on Building Cars**, Chuck will share with you some of the tips he learned and help demystify the brake system, often a show-stopper for many modelers. In scratch building his cars, Chuck often bent his own grab irons, stirrups steps, uncoupling levers, and piping. He also scratch built the poling pockets, brake levers, and roof walks where needed. There are also a few tricks to getting your couplers at the right height when scratch building the bolsters for your cars. **WP**

**Below: Lunde #4 shoves hoppers using an idler car as a buffer towards the scale house. The Susquehanna hopper is a super-detailed resin kit from Funaro & Camerlengo while the Wyoming Valley idler car is scratch built.**





# ***Simple Turnout Modifications***

## ***Article and Photos by Fred Dellaiacono***

When rebuilding my staging yard to include an arrival/departure track I replaced several Peco turnouts with Atlas turnouts. I converted them to an offset spring design similar to how the Peco turnouts functioned. This was easy to do without destroying the turnout and it works well. The spring could have been placed in the center of the track, but the hole in the throwbar would have had to have been filled and then redrilled for the wire.

I used 0.020" phosphor bronze wire, but steel music (piano) wire could also be used. A smaller wire diameter such as 0.012" should work for the steel wire.

I found the hole in the tie should be close to the diameter of the wire, but the springing action worked best with the hole in the tie bar slightly elongated.

The photos show how the wire was curved into a "C" shape and inserted into the throwbar and adjacent tie. **WP**

**This page: The photos show how Fred added a wire to the throwbar outside of the rails to provide springing action on Atlas turnouts similar to that found on Peco turnouts.**







## AP CORNER

by Chuck Diljak

### Paperwork, Schmaperwork.

It is a common complaint. Many members say there is too much paperwork with the Achievement Program.

I think I have toiled more preparing my annual tax returns than I have on AP paperwork. And, I would rather spend time on the AP paperwork than on my taxes. I hate taxes. But I love model railroading.

Until a few years ago, when you completed an AP category, separate "Statement of Qualifications" and "Record and Validation" forms needed to be completed. If you remember the forms, they appeared to be redundant, often asking for the same information. One of the things Frank Koch did when he became AP Program Manager at National is eliminate the "Record and Validation" form. In one bold stroke, Frank eliminated half of the paperwork required when completing a category in the AP.

With the remaining Statement of Qualification form, or SOQ, for the non-modeling categories, it is only required to check boxes, obtain signatures, and attach copies of merit awards if there are any. For the modeling categories, you need to do a little more. I suggest including a photo of each model and a description describing the model, identifying the components you scratch built and the components that are commercial parts. For example, this is what I included as text that accompanied a photo of my Lehigh Valley "Wrong Way" boxcar in my SOQ documentation for cars:

"This is a scratch-built car using prototype drawings from the March 2000 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman* and prototype photos I found. Everything is scratch-built except for the trucks, brake components, couplers, eyebolts, door hardware and NBWs. The grab irons, stirrup steps, brake lines, and uncoupling levers were bent from wire. The car was painted boxcar red and the trucks black as per the photo found in the CNJ/LV Color Guide Book by Morning Sun Books. The car was weathered with an airbrush. The artwork for the decals, except for the diamond, were created by me."

There is not much to it! It is pretty much what you can say in five minutes of the "Bring 'n Brag" segments at GSD events.

The more challenging paperwork is the information that accompanies the evaluation form. This is where you get into the details on various categories, such as Construction, Detail, Conformity, Finish & Lettering, and Scratchbuilt for Cars, Motive Power, and Structures. Or, Terrain, Structures, Background, Lighting, and Realism/Conformity for Scenery and Prototype Models. Not only do you provide written information in each of these categories, but you should also attach photos and drawings of the prototypes. Also include in-process and finished model photos. I also included photos of the completed model before decals and painting, helping the evaluators see what is scratchbuilt and what is not.

Remember, the people evaluating the paperwork were not with you when you did your research or constructed your model. There has to be documentation for them to review as they look over your work. This is true with the evaluators that review your work as well as the Regional Achievement Program Chairman and the Achievement Program Manager at National, who do not see your work.

What I have always done for the evaluation documentation is begin writing and accumulating documents when I start a project and keep it updated throughout the build. When I complete a project, the paperwork is nearly ready to go, only requiring finishing touches. It is no longer a daunting task when you spread the documentation work over the length of the project instead of procrastinating to the very end. And, make sure you celebrate and enjoy the moment when it is done! You also have the makings of a great article for the *Whistle Post* or clinic for a GSD event.

### AP Activity

Jim Homoki, Mark Moritz and I met at Mark's house to evaluate cars, early May. Jim and I evaluated Mark's narrow gauge passenger car shown here, which earned merit. This was the last car Mark needed to meet all of the requirements

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in the Cars category. Jim and I reviewed all eight of Mark's cars and signed off on his Cars paperwork. Look for an update in the next issue of the *Whistle Post*.

Jim and Mark evaluated all of my cars, which met merit. In addition to the four cars, they looked over the other cars I built that were not evaluated and signed off on my Cars paperwork. Mark also signed off on my paperwork for Association Official, giving me my sixth and seventh certificates in the Achievement Program, earning MMR #682. **WP**



## July Event Layout Tour

The July event will feature two virtual layout tours. Fred Dellaiacono will present his HO scale Ramapo Central. The Ramapo Central is set in the 1940's and the layout is a walk-in design, filling a 10'x20' room with a 1'x10' extension for staging. While the layout is designed as a loop to loop, it is operated as a point to point, as you will see during this layout tour.

We've seen several locations on Fred's layout in past issues of the WP, and with this tour we can expect to see the entire layout. Below is a photo typical of the steam power that can be found on the Ramapo Central.

We will also have Kai Ebinger show his HO scale layout, which is unnamed. A scene from his 11' x 28' layout is the cover photo on Page 1. **WP**





# TOOLS AND TIPS: BE SAFE, NOT SORRY

BY JIM WALSH

The other day, an idea for this column hit me, or more precisely, sliced me. I was drilling a hole through a very thin metal part but the drill bit perforated the metal and spun it around like a propeller. That thin metal piece was sharp enough to leave a slight superficial cut in my finger. I was lucky that it was minor but it made me think about what I could have done to prevent it from happening. Originally, I used a wood block to back up the thin strip of metal and I "secured it" with my finger clamping it down against the wood. However, my finger could not hold against the force after the drill bit cut through the metal part. My new configuration used a vise, some clamps and piece of wood to properly secured the metal and I drilled another hole without another accident. Also remember to wear some leather gloves when you handle very thin sheets of metal. Being thin they can easily cut skin but not the leather.



**Above:** The photo on the left shows the Pony 3½ inch bench vise that has been clamped to my workbench for decades. The photo on the right shows the bench vise holding a piece of wood with two clamps to secure the thin metal strip to the piece of wood. The metal stayed in place while the hole was drilled through it.

That experience reminded me of how important it is to exercise safety and take necessary precautions to prevent accidents and maybe disasters. You may think that cutting a corner will save you time but it may cost more time or have worse consequences. Remember that if you cut too many corners, you are going in circles. The core of our hobby is to model the real railroads but for those railroads, safety is essential in all that they do. We should follow that example and focus on working safely.

In considering safety I cannot forget my head, especially when working under the layout. Balding heads have a special magnet-like attraction to wood. It seems the less hair you have, the more your head is drawn to the wood benchwork. The skin on my head is no match for the wooden benchwork especially sharp corners but I found that wearing a hat provides some protection.

Recently, while installing Tortoise switch machines and considering safety, I wore safety glasses and a hat protecting my eyes and head while working under the layout. When inserting the spring wire through the throw rod from below and sighting through the hole in the layout, falling sawdust or debris could get into your eye. However, safety glasses or goggles keep the foreign materials from falling into your eyes. They are also great when drilling holes under the layout. During that work session, we learned another lesson the hard way. Drilling through the layout the drill bit cut into a wire under the layout, causing a short and tripping a breaker. The lesson is to always check beneath the layout before drilling and now it is one that we will not forget.



**Above:** Before drilling the metal part using the setup in the photo to the left, I realized that I needed more light and I grabbed this grill light that was nearby in the garage. It supplied the right amount of light right where it was needed. It's good to have this light and I am glad to have an additional use for it.

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Much of the work that we do with a Dremel really requires eye protection from flying shavings and debris. However, when I am using a cutting disk, I also use a face shield to be prepared if the cutting disk breaks apart. Wearing gloves can be a good idea as well. Don't forget to secure or contain the part that you are cutting off because it may "disappear" when you are finished cutting. Also, be diligent when using high temperature devices like heat guns, hot glue guns and soldering irons. Besides getting burns, there is sometimes danger of fire. Watch what the heat gun is aimed at or what is contacted by the soldering iron. Never leave the devices unattended and always unplug them when you are finished working. While working with them be sure that they are properly supported to keep them from falling and manage the wires so that nobody trips on them.

Most of your tools come with instructions and there is always a section about how to be safe when using the tool. Even though you know all about it maybe it's a good idea to read those safety instructions just in case they are telling you something that you didn't know. Besides the tool instructions also follow the safety information for the materials that you use like glues, paints, solvents etc. Hopefully my recent experience will remind me to work safely and inspire you to do the same.[WP](#)



**Above: Some examples of equipment to protect eyes and face: Safety goggles, safety glasses and a face shield.**

**Below: When possible try to avoid launching items into the air. You could "shoot your eye out" if a small part was flying through the air. Of course that is also a good reason to wear eye protection. In this case, a surgical hemostat secures the end of the spring wire as it is cut to size. This keeps the piece of wire from flying through the air. Similarly, if you don't secure or contain a small detail part as you remove it from a sprue, it may be launched into the air only to land in the carpet and join hundreds of missing Kadee coupler knuckle springs.**



**Above: Some gloves from left to right: Leather palmed work gloves are good protection when working with thin metal sheets. Chemical resistant gloves protect from solvents and chemicals. Thin (5 mil) nitrile gloves prevent paints and stains from discoloring your hands. For general work, Gorilla Grip gloves are easy to work in and protect your hands from things like wood splinters or even hot glue.**

## NEXT DIVISION EVENT

THE SUMMER EVENT WILL BE  
HELD VIRTUALLY!

TIME:  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

DATE:  
SATURDAY, JULY 24, 2021

LOCATION:  
ONLINE USING  
FREECONFERENCECALL.COM.  
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COST:  
FREE (BUT YOU HAVE TO BUY  
YOUR OWN COFFEE AND  
DONUTS!)

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

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

## An NMRA partnership with Northlandz is coming!

You may have heard that there is a new owner of Northlandz, located on Route 202 South in Flemington. Promising changes are in the works! NMRA Marketing Consultant Christina Zambri has been discussing a partnership with Northlandz that should prove very beneficial to both parties, with great opportunities for the GSD. Details should be available within a few months.



### 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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Summer 2021

## ~~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 [gsdtrains.com](http://gsdtrains.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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"GSD of the NMRA@GardenStateDiv"