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# **WHISTLE POST**

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



The next Event is in Staten Island, Saturday, September 23, with an afternoon tour of Miniature World



## Publications

Of all the many aspects and facets of our hobby perhaps one of the most under-appreciated and under-practiced is the collection and enjoyment of its literature. What, you may ask is that? Most of us focus on other things, but reading the many books, magazines, and other printed material can be fun too. Especially for those of us with a historical interest in the hobby. While today, much of the magazine publications are digital, in the past, the printed materials were all that there were. The hobby as we know it, goes back about a century, and the existing monthly magazine publications, such as Model Railroader and Railroad Model Craftsman, about 90 years. There have been other magazines that have come and gone during that time, and there are others published today as well.

When I was a high school student, I had the collector's gene, and would organize my MRs in yearly binders. I acquired older MRs from the 50s and early 60s too, and prided myself on having a complete set between about 1958 through the early 1970s (I don't have them anymore. They were discarded when I was in college). Remember that there were no digital retrieval systems then, and if you wanted a reprint of an article in any discipline, you needed to locate a copy and duplicate it. In the medical literature, for example, you needed to write to the author of the article and ask for him or her to mail a reprint (extra articles were generally printed for the author at the author's expense for that purpose). So having volumes of bound publications meant you had the ability to retrieve articles from past issues quickly and easily. Often that meant finding it in a library. Very few libraries carried model railroading publications.

Although I no longer do so, I used to read old editions of MR and RMC, enjoying the old articles. I know folks who do that now in fact. It is an "armchair" way to enjoy the hobby. You need not build anything to do it. It suited me when I was in the phase of my life where I was raising children and had no time or opportunity to build a layout. It also suits the needs of someone who has little or no space for one. Now that digital archives are available, this can be done on line. Hopefully, RMC will soon follow MR in this.

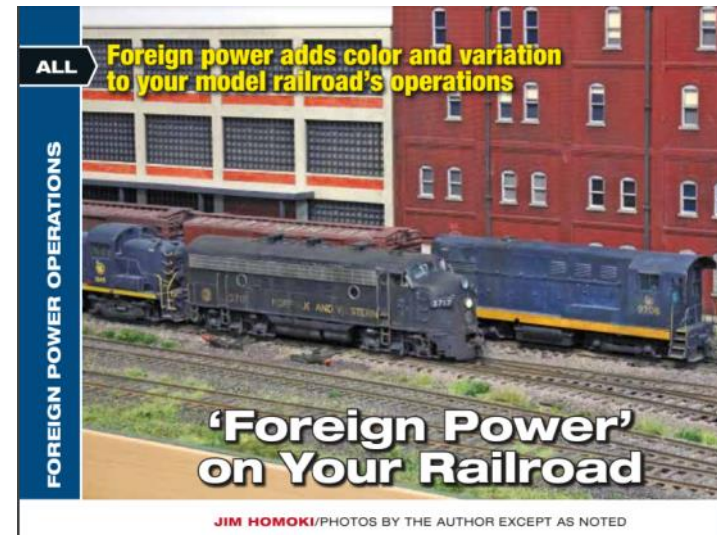
There also is a large amount of books out there available to the dedicated hobbyist or collector. I am not aware of many of us who focuses on model railroad/railroad book collecting, but I am sure they are out there. There are encyclopedic books, books on historical railroads in general, specifics on various railroads, books on how to model, etc. Those on modeling go through cycles about each generation, as technology of layouts evolves, equipment changes, and operating techniques change. My own small to moderate - sized collection goes back to the 1930s. It's very interesting to read how layouts were constructed then and how the fundamentals have remained the same. Also interesting are the sales materials and catalogues period. It surprises me



## Write an Article

It has been a while since I put out a plea for articles, but it is that time again. There is nothing in the hopper for future Whistle Posts, and I have been relying on the regular columnists to fill the pages. Surely there are members working on something that would be of interest to others. Articles also provide an opportunity for clubs to share their projects with others and promote themselves. Show us what is new!

On a national level, the September issue of Railroad Model Craftsman has an article by GSD member Tom Picirillo, MMR, and I have an article in the October issue. Tom's article is on upgrading a vintage O Scale New Haven motor, a rare subject for a national magazine. My article was put together just before the demise of my layout. Give writing a try if you've never done it. It is very easy to start out small with the WP.[WP](#)



how some of these models show up in the swap meets and show sales from time to time, and are recognizable as being in those postwar catalogs.

At this time of life, I am into decluttering, so I don't save model railroad publications anymore. I think most of us are in this situation. So we are relying on the publishers to preserve access to older articles. I suspect that with the passage of more time, this aspect of the hobby, the enjoyment of older literature, will disappear, as more and more of the information is on the internet. [WP](#)



## Upcoming Events

**GSD Fall Event** Saturday September 23, Esposito Community Center at St. Christopher—St. Mary Margaret Church, 136 Midland Avenue, Staten Island, NY. SIRT related clinics are scheduled from Mark Pitanza and Chris Oliva

**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/>

**Pacific Southern Railroad Annual Show** October 14 and 15, 2023. See Page 8 for details. <https://www.rockyhilltrains.org/>

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

**NJ Division Meet** November 2023 Details TBA

**NJ Division Meet** January 2024 Details TBA

**Amhurst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show** January 27-28, 2024, West Springfield, MA <https://www.railroadhobbyshow.com/>

**GSD Winter Event** February 24, 2024, snow date March 2. Fulton Friendship Lodge, Park Ridge, NJ. A Make 'n Take format is being considered.

**GSD Spring Event** May 2024, a joint meet with the NJ Division. Details TBA

**NMRA 2024 National Convention Surfliner 2024**, August 4-11, Long Beach, CA  
<https://www.surfliner2024.org/>

**MER 2025 Convention** Sponsored by the New Jersey Division

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

A pair of C&O locomotives lead a train through the West Virginia scenery on John Montagna's layout. John's fine layout was open for the Summer Event. (Photo by Jim Walsh)

**GSD website**

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

**Visit the GSD Facebook Page:**

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



## A Return to Staten Island on September 23

A new and unique tour is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday, September 23, following the morning clinics and activities. We will start at 9:00 with doors open at 8:30 for our typical format of clinics, Bing 'n' Brag, door prizes, and announcements. The event will be at a new location, the Esposito Community Center at St. Christopher—St. Mary Margaret Church, 136 Midland Avenue, Staten Island, NY.

Both clinics will be focused on the Staten Island Railway, which is part of the MTA. Chris Olivo will present a brief history, from the beginning to its hey day to its consolidation. What types of equipment use to run on the line, what is running now, and what will be running in the future, with a brief discussion on how Subway cars are made.

The second part of our Staten Island double feature will be by modeler, author, and historian Marc Pitanza, who will present a comprehensive program that will show the history and infrastructure of this former B&O's New York City branchline. Entitled **Consider the SIRT**, Marc will present hundreds of rarely seen prototype photos, and will explain why you should seriously consider the SIRT for your next layout or modeling project. He will also share photos of current modeler's projects inspired by the SIRT and its equipment.

**Below: Want to know more about locomotives like this Staten Island Railway unit? Chris Oliva will tell you about it and much more as part of his presentation on September 23.**



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Left: Marc Pitanza will present a history of the Staten Island Railway at the Fall Event.

After a break for lunch, arrangements have been made for a tour of the workshop and exhibitions of Miniature World, previously known as Gulliver's Gate. Gulliver's Gate was located at Times Square before being disassembled and moved to the Empire Outlets, St. George, on Staten Island. Come see this large HO Scale exhibit being re-built in its new home. The exhibit includes well-known sites and places around the world in various forms of transportation including a vast network of track, roads, highways, bridges and tunnels. It's a great opportunity to see incredible scale modeling up close. [WP](#)

# Miniature World

**LOCATED AT  
EMPIRE OUTLETS  
55B RICHMOND TERRACE  
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301**

## PARKING

Public parking is available onsite:

Up to 3 Hrs - \$5  
Up to 5 Hrs - \$10

Street parking is also available a short walk away.



# **The Master Builder - Structures Certificate**

## **AP Corner By Mark Moritz**

Anyone who has built a layout, no matter how small, puts some sort of structure on it. Usually, we tend to either buy them built, say, at a swap meet or hobby show, or ready-to-use. But some of us with the “build-it” bug enjoy building our own, or just want something more unique. Some kits are very popular, and the models can be seen almost everywhere, while others, especially craftsman kits, are only occasionally encountered. Scratch built structures, of course, are unique, and are often constructed to copy a prototype which is not available commercially.

1 - To qualify for the Master Builder - Structures certificate, the applicant must build twelve scale structures. But “structures” doesn’t mean only buildings and bridges, but also signal towers, oil derricks, docks, power line towers, cranes, and ships.

- a - There must be at least six different types of structures. A wood frame building and a brick one would be different types, for example.
- b - One of the six must be a bridge or trestle.
- c - At least six of the twelve models must be scratch built.
- d - The other six must be super detailed.

2 - You must earn a score of at least 87-1/2 points on six of the twelve models in an AP Merit Award evaluation. Our AP committee can evaluate and judge your structures conveniently at your home, or at a Division Meet.

3 - You must submit a Statement of Qualification, including :

- a - An attachment giving a detailed description of each of the twelve models, with:
  - Identification of all scratch built features;
  - All commercial components used;
  - Materials used in building the model;
  - A notation that the model is operational, if it is intended to be;
  - If the model is a kit, who is the manufacturer.
- b - Verification of the Merit Awards
- c - Photos of the model are helpful although not required.
- d - The twelve structures do not need to be of the same scale or era, or on the same layout. They can be separate from a layout for ease in judging.

These requirements put the certificate within reach of many model railroaders. Look at your layout or structure collection and see whether you can meet these requirements, either with models you have already built, or by building a few more. If you have any questions, please contact me.[WP](#)

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## **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://www.themodelrailroadclub.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>



# SEVERAL FIRSTS AT THE SUMMER EVENT

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

The more than 60 members attending the summer meet experienced the first time that the GSD gathered at the Morris County Library and it was a good place for our event. This was a near record attendance for a summer event. The facility was conveniently located off of I-287 and within a short distance to all of the layouts so it looks like a good venue to return to for the future. We had two morning clinics that were interesting to the attendees and there were five layouts available for self-guided tours. Another first for the meeting was the opportunity for GSD members to visit John Montagna's layout and it is one fine layout. Probably the universal question of the day was "Why haven't I seen this before?" It should be no surprise that it was a featured layout in the 2022 issue of Model Railroad Planning. [WP](#)



Above: An enthusiastic and capacity crowd gets ready for a beautiful day both inside and out.



Above: For a change, Jim Walsh is on the other side of the camera, receiving thanks for his clinic presentation. (Photo by Paul Harbord)

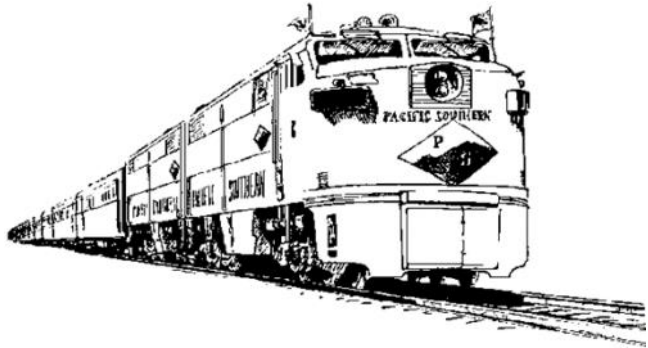


Right: The Morris Plains Model Railroad Club was open for visitors during the Summer Event.

# PACIFIC SOUTHERN RAILROAD



Come to our 44th Fund Raiser for Rocky Hill Community Services



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TRAIN SHOW;  
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WORLD**

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**One Weekend Only!**

**DATES:** Saturday, Oct 14 and Sunday, Oct 15, 2023  
**SHOW TIMES:** 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 Noon, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM

Plan to arrive 20-30 minutes early to allow for parking  
No reservations required, Pay at the door  
45-minute show is limited to 50 guests

**ADMISSION:** DONATION \$10.00 PER VISITOR / 5 and under free

All donations go to RH Fire Co and RH First Aid and Rescue Squad

See more at [www.pacificsouthern.org](http://www.pacificsouthern.org)  
Find us on Facebook at ...  
[Pacific Southern Railroad |Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PacificSouthernRailroad)



**Location:**

Home of Carl and Anne Pate  
26 Washington St, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553  
(Georgetown-Franklin Turnpike or Somerset County 518)  
(860) 633-2052 (voice calls only, no text messaging)

**Directions:**

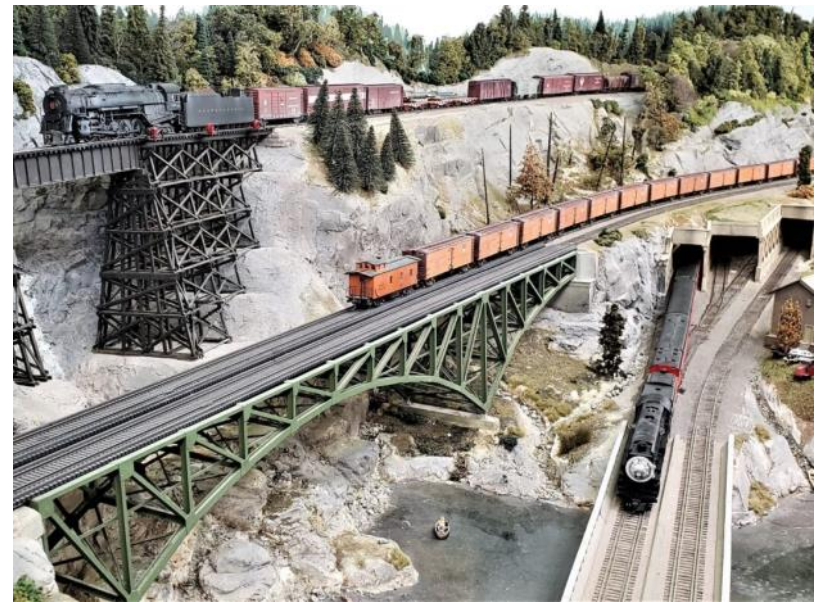
¼ mile east of the intersection of US Hwy 206 and Rt 518.  
(5 miles from the center of Princeton)

**Parking:**

On the north side of Washington St or Merritt Lane (a 5 minute walk) where designated.

**Safety:**

Masks required.  
Bring a small stool for toddlers so they can see better





# MAKING THE CUT DIFFERENTLY

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JIM WALSH

In this hobby we are constantly using cutting devices in building models or layouts. We have many tools that are used for cutting wood, plastic, wire, track, paper, metal or other materials that we encounter in model railroading. Over the years a modeler can assemble a large collection of tools just for cutting operations because certain tools excel at specific jobs and we always need the right tool for the job. In the beginning of your hobby journey you have few tools and try to make them do more but eventually you get the tool that makes a task easier or even possible.

I guess the basic cutting tool for many is a hobby knife with a No.11 blade and it is often included in the tool list for model building projects. We use it often and it usually does the job well. Of course we always make sure that the blade is sharp and for that many modelers have hundred packs of these blades. Instead of a hobby knife, some hobbyists use a single edge razor blade and it may be better for some cutting jobs. One tip that I got from Bruce De Young, a former GSD president, on his YouTube channel (JerseyHighlandsBruce) was using a mini razor blade scraper to hold the razor blade for cutting operations. A single edge razor blade is also the cutting element in the NorthWest Short Line Chopper. I found a good tip about using The Chopper in Patrick Lawson's article, "Scratchbuild a Gambrel Roof Barn", in the August issue of Railroad Model Craftsman. Sometimes the razor blade deflects cutting through thicker material and he was cutting wood HO scale 12 by 12 timbers. So he cut halfway through then turned the piece 90 degrees, cut halfway through again and turned the piece another 90 degrees and finished the cut.

However, there are some lesser-known cutting tools that work very well for cutting particular materials. One tool is the rotary cutter and I discovered that this is a great tool for cutting aluminum foil when I scratchbuild corrugated metal roofing. The action of using a rolling blade for cutting is well known for slicing pizza but not as well known in our hobby. Unlike a pizza cutter, a rotary cutter's blade is replaceable.

For years, a hobby knife was sufficient for removing parts from the sprues. However, when I started building some Proto 2000 freight car kits I discovered some very fragile parts that broke when using the hobby knife. Referring to a Micro-Mark catalog, I discovered a tweezer type sprue cutter. It makes clean cuts to safely remove a part from the sprue. Another Micro-Mark purchase was a package of five double edged blades with ultra fine teeth along with a wooden handle and a very small miter box made to fit those blades. The blades are made for very precise and smooth cuts in wood, plastic and resin.



**Above: Originally purchased as a scraper, this tool is a good handle for cutting with single edge razor blades.**

**Below: Not a typical tool in a model railroader's shop, the rotary cutter is useful for cutting aluminum foil and other special materials.**



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I once bought a hobby knife blade that was designed for distressing wood for models. It was similar to a No. 17 blade but it has small saw teeth instead of a cutting edge. It was meant to be scratched across the wood piece to make it look old and worn. Recently, I noticed that one of my Zona saw blades was very worn but most of the wear was through the middle of the blade. There were still good teeth on the ends and I cut a strip from the area with the good teeth. I inserted the strip into an X-ACTO No. 5 handle and made my own version of that wood distressing blade.

Some of the tools that I use in this hobby are ones that I use for home repair and renovation. A tool that I use for home projects may have potential as a hobby tool. One example is a utility knife roofing blade that is sold to cut roofing material and it does that well. However, it can easily cut sheet material too. I found it useful when I was trimming the translucent drafting film for my photography light box. The blade allows you to cut material without needing to lay it down.

My latest cutting device is my homemade hot wire foam-cutting table. A thin nichrome wire heats up and easily cuts through pieces of foam. I am still working on developing the right power supply. I made this to support construction of a model of the Paulinskill Viaduct on Joe Valentine's layout. Some time ago, I created templates for the arches but I needed a table to properly cut out the 2" thick foam using the templates. I made a short video of the first test of the hot wire foam-cutting table. See it on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/VxPuSOrWLnk> WP

**Below: Looking similar to tweezers, this sprue cutter can remove the parts from a sprue without damaging those parts. These photos show two different views of the tool.**



**Above: Fine double edged blade with a handle and special miter box are shown in the top photo and the bottom photo shows a close-up of the blade showing the fine teeth for making some precise cuts.**

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Right: The main picture indicates where the worn Zona saw blade was cut to remove a section with good teeth. That piece was assembled into an X-ACTO handle similar to the commercial blade in the blue handle. The inset photo shows a close-up comparing the one from a recycled blade to the commercial one.



Below: Sold as a blade to cut roofing materials, this blade is handy to perform other cutting chores.



Right: For cutting foam parts, you can make precise cuts with a hot wire foam cutting table. This one was homemade and does a good job.

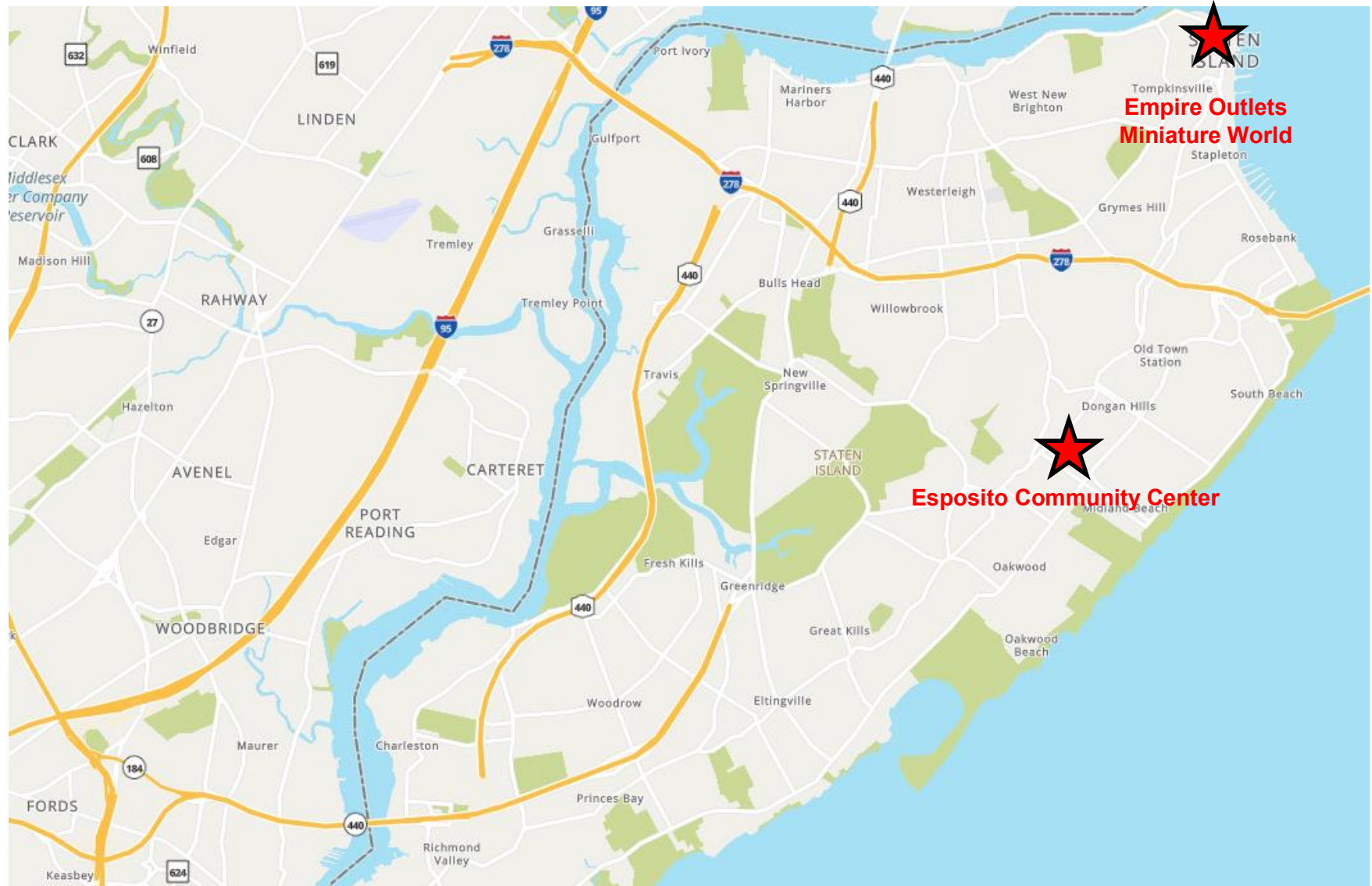


# MAP FOR THE SUMMER EVENT

Directions: See the next page

Esposito Community Center at  
St. Christopher—St. Mary Margaret  
Church, 136 Midland Avenue,  
Staten Island, NY.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**  
**DOORS OPEN AT 8:30**  
**EVENT STARTS AT 9:00**





## **NEXT DIVISION EVENT**

Esposito Community Center at  
St. Christopher—St. Mary  
Margaret Church

### **TIME:**

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

### **DATE:**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

### **LOCATION:**

**136 MIDLAND AVENUE  
STATEN ISLAND, NY  
SEE THE MAP ON PAGE 12**

### **COST:**

**\$5 EVENT FEE  
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

### **WEBSITE FOR MEETS:**

**SEE PAGE 3  
[HTTPS://WWW.NERGSD.COM/](https://www.nergsd.com/)**

### **AGENDA:**

**INTRODUCTION  
TWO CLINICS  
BRING 'N' BRAG  
DOOR PRIZES  
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN  
AFTERNOON TOUR**

## **Directions to the meet location and Empire Outlets Mall**

### **From the Goethals Bridge:**

Follow I-278 to exit "TODT HILL ROAD"; at the traffic light make a RIGHT turn onto Slosson Avenue (NOTE: THIS TURNS INTO TODT HILL ROAD). Take TODT HILL ROAD as it twists and turns until it ends at "RICHMOND ROAD" (you'll pass Moravian Cemetery and Church entrance and come to a traffic light). Make a left turn onto RICHMOND ROAD and proceed through the traffic light until you reach MIDLAND AVENUE. At MIDLAND AVENUE turn right. Proceed, passing St. Christopher School, and over the Staten Island Railway, as soon as you cross the railway cut you'll see a Church parking lot. You can park there. The Esposito Community Center is on MIDLAND AVENUE AT THE NEXT CORNER – EDISON STREET. Additional parking is on the street.

### **Directions to Miniature World from the Esposito Community Center:**

Follow MIDLAND AVENUE to FATHER CAPODANNO BLVD. Make a left turn. Follow FATHER CAPODANNO, it will turn into LILY POND LANE after the intersection at OCEAN AVENUE. Follow LILY POND LANE to the end (under the expressway and past the bridge). Lily Pond Lane ends at BAY STREET. There you will make a left turn. Follow road to the end (at the Ferry Terminal), make another left. Parking on the street is available but it is metered. There is a parking lot where you can pay \$5 for 3 hours. You can also have lunch there. Some suggestions are "Shake Shack" and "Ruddy and Dean".



## **AT THE THROTTLE**

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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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Jim Walsh captured these scenes on Steve Kay's Lackawanna Terminal Railway. Steve's HO layout was open to division members during the summer event.



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