

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

Purpose: Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting
Date/Time: Saturday, November 7, 2015
Place: Home of Bruce De Young
Attendees: Bruce De Young, Bob Dennis, Tom Casey, Jim Fawcett, Tom Wortmann, Jim Walsh, Anthony Piccirillo, Mark Moritz, Jim Homoki, Andy Brusgard, Chuck Diljak, Fred Dellaiacono

Not in attendance: Ciro Compagno

Meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM

November 7, 2015 - Motions Submitted and Approved
(2015.11.7.1) Retire and dispose of the old plastic GSD sign.

Reports were presented:

President's Report – We have not met since our August Summer meet that was a tremendous success, at least for attendance. There were over 100 attendees and maybe 105 to 110. We did not make any money because we did not charge for the meet but it did not cost us anything either. Bruce got great feedback from the Susquehanna division and they are interested in doing something with us next summer. More recently, the MER meet in Mt Laurel had an attendance of about 275 and about 1/3 from the NER – many from the GSD. Overall it was a good meet.

Vice President's Report – Jim had nothing to report.

Secretary's Report - Copies of the draft minutes of last meeting (6/28/2015) were distributed and accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report – For the calendar year January to November, we are operating at a slight profit of \$135. Bob circulated a chart comparing the last 3 years. A look at it shows that we have a steady income of about \$1000 per year. The NMRA gives us about \$200 each year. Bob discussed some of the expenses that we incurred as well as some of the funds that we received. Bob also mentioned that he opened three \$500 CDs. They are 15 month CDs and he opened one per month for 3 months. We still have adequate funds in our checking account. We don't spend that much right now. However, we may need to funds to lay out for the convention even if we will get it back from the NER. A question about cost for a down payment on a hotel evolved into a discussion of convention hotel requirements. Bruce resolved that we should keep at least \$2000 available. In consideration of the upcoming convention, we should focus on meets and activities that can generate income. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Education Committee and AP Reports – We are doing well. A group went to Staten Island to visit Tom and Bob and they both ended up with merit awards for structures. After this BOD meeting, they will have completed the paperwork and requirements for Model Railroad Engineer - Civil. Bruce visited Ed Suhy and he is now doing the paperwork for Electrical. Tom stopped by Andy Rubbo's on the way home from the convention and did the paperwork for his Golden Spike. Tom is trying to get Andy interested in the AP program. Andy has many elements on his layout that qualify for consideration. The 2015 Mallery Award winner is Mark Moritz. This year there were 4 people who would have qualified for the award but Mark's modeling with 119 points earned him the award for 2015.

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Event Report – Jim Faucett said that the **Garden State RPM** now has their own insurance as a 100% NMRA club. Also, the GSD is no longer a sponsor and not involved in the meet. However, we will list it as an upcoming event as a courtesy to our members.

Winter meet – The Dater School in Ramsey, NJ has been secured for January 23 with a snow date of Feb 6. It is within walking distance of the train station and all downtown eateries. Two layouts so far – Fred’s and the HoHokus club. Bruce is trying to find a new layout. Fred and Tom Wortmann will give clinics. Andy may be able to arrange with the NJ Hirailers for an open house.

Spring meet – Ciro was supposed to talk to Bob Clegg but Bob was busy with the convention. Ciro will be speaking to Bob about a dual meet in the spring and the possibility of going back to Hillsborough

Summer meet – Mark discussed a meet in Morristown. He is looking for a large facility with a parking lot in Morristown itself so that lunch locations would be within walking distance. We reviewed options and format for the meet. There was a discussion of the Morris Museum as a possible location too.

Fall meet – no location has been suggested. Jim H noted that if we want to go back to Hillsborough just give him the date. There was a suggestion that a “works in progress” clinic would be a good format for that building. Jim F and Jim H will work on lining up the workshops. Bruce noted that the sooner that we get a date and location, the sooner we can begin publicizing the event. Jim Fawcett added that for the last “works in progress” clinics meet there were 4 cycles and 8 stations. It ran from 9 until 1 with a few layouts in the afternoon.

Membership & Club Chair’s Report - Tom Casey presented the membership list and a sheet tracking our membership since January 2013 and focusing on full members. We are down to 226 full members and we also have 6 railpass members. Our membership has been slowly eroding over the years. Tom also included information for the NER and our percentage of the NER has remained fairly steady at around 14% - therefore we are experiencing the same trend as the NER – our renewal rates are fairly stable too. Another distributed sheet focused on railpass members and about 1/3 of the railpass members renew and remain members We retain 40% of the people who join as full members – probably more motivated. Bruce suggested that we continue to pay the railpass for a visitor to our meet who is interested in joining. Bob Dennis brought up the NMRA policy on a visitor being limited to 3 visits without joining. He mentioned that it becomes an issue of personal liability for the board members. To fulfill this tracking, we will maintain our sign in sheet to keep track of visitors who are not in the NMRA. Bruce wants to account for NMRA members from other divisions who attend our meets. If we notice that somebody is constantly coming as a guest and does not join the NMRA, they should be taken aside and explained the policy and given the alternative to join. However, we still wish to increase membership by inviting guests to join through the rail pass, complements of the GSD. Bruce suggests that as part of our announcement for the winter meet, we invite our members to bring a friend. In a discussion of members who may not be renewing, Fred suggested a personal contact to help keep them as members. Andy uses tactful emails to contact members who are past due on their renewal. Tom W discussed using a telephone contact and reaching out with concern for the person as he does for another organization that he joined. Bruce agreed that when it is possible, personal contact is best and that is why he is in favor of signing up members in person at our meets. Bruce will make telephone contact to people in the Ramsey area in preparation for the winter meet. He will invite them to come and emphasize that the meet will be conveniently close to their location. Mark noted that for younger members, we may need to use a more appropriate approach like texting. Conversely we have members that don’t respond to email. Anthony suggested direct mail as an additional means of contact. Mark agreed that focused mail is good for certain things. Chuck suggested that Constant Contact has many tools besides email and Andy noted that he is continuing to learn about all the capabilities. Anthony spoke about our Facebook account and introduced the need for us to have a policy for our Facebook page. Tom W suggested that the Facebook page should have a link to the GSD web page and noted that our web page already links to the Facebook page. The Facebook page has plenty of content and Anthony maintains it. He also asked for suggestions of content to go on the page. Some suggestions included posting our calendar of events, notification and link when a new

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issue of the Whistle Post comes out, link to our web page, photos from recent GSD events, continue to solicit photographs and some video as well. The pictures should be accompanied by some description.

ACTION – Anthony will update the Facebook page to include GSD events and a link to the GSD web site. He will also respond to the emails that came through Facebook.

Bruce asked if there is anybody who could come to our next BOD meeting to help us strategize about using social media to benefit the GSD. There was a discussion of determining some new and creative ways to use constant contact to help the GSD to engage and grow our membership. Chuck and Andy can look into better uses of Constant Contact.

Whistle Post Report. – Jim H noted that it is better if he can get the content earlier. For the upcoming event, send some layout photos and descriptions. Jim would like to get the descriptions for the Winter meet by mid-December. Chuck noted that the meet information going to Jim should also go to him and Andy so that they can also promote the meet through email. He has some “how to” articles but would appreciate if anybody has some content for the next issue. Anthony asked if he could post the Whistle Post on Facebook and he was advised to use a link to the newsletter.

Old Business –

- Ciro is not here and therefore the description of Events Chairman remains open.
- Tom Casey’s research into past president position remains open. However, Bruce has some more to discuss later in this meeting and plans to close it out today.
- Update the GSD welcome CD is closed – We will use up the current supply of CDs and then decide what we will give new members so that they feel that they got something tangible for their membership dollars. There was a short discussion of various suggestions that we might consider.
- Tom C to contact new clubs and get permission to publish their info. This is still open. Tom has contacted some clubs. Bruce said that as they are contacted and provide permission, notify Tom W the web site and Jim H for the Whistle Post.
- Jim F action concerning the Garden State RPM is now closed.
- Bruce confirmed that NJIT and Stevens do not have model railroad clubs but he discovered that at one time Stevens had a club.
- Ciro to work with Tom W are still working to move yahoo group photos to the nergsd.com site. This item is still open.
- Bruce contacted Ted Dilorio concerning the Garden State RPM.
- Anthony set up a GSD Facebook Page. We can upload content to the page and Anthony will approve it before it is posted to the page.
- Anthony discussed the use of direct mail contact with the membership. Bruce noted that he thought that a post card would be a good method of contacting some of our long time members that may not have attended recent meets.
- Ciro has not reported on contact with Bob Clegg about Hillsborough and that will remain open. However, Ciro must do it soon because it impacts scheduling our upcoming meets.

New Business –

- Jim F related information concerning the passing of Tony Koester’s daughter.

ACTION – Bruce will send a condolence letter to Tony Koester on behalf of the GSD to express sympathy for the loss of his daughter.

- Bruce brought up the plastic GSD sign and recommended retiring and disposing of it.

MOTION – Approved – Retire and dispose of the old plastic GSD sign.

- Bruce distributed copies of our constitution and by-laws. He is interested in having an Immediate past President position to allow the former president to remain on the board and leave a board position for another GSD member. A new position on the board would require a modification of the constitution for the section that describes the members of the board of directors. A constitution change will require a vote by the GSD membership. In general, the constitution would be modified

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in Article 4, Officers and Directors, in Section 2 where Immediate Past President would be inserted before "at least 2 directors". There was a discussion about the membership voting online and possibly through Constant Contact.

- The Bylaws will also be changed in Article 4 by changing section 6 to be for Immediate Past President and moving Directors at Large to section 7. The section 6 would use the same description as used by the NER Bylaws but without the term limit.

ACTION: Jim W will distribute the modified sections of the Constitution and Bylaws for review by the board of directors.

NER CONVENTION hosted by the GSD

Bruce reported that at the NER meeting at the end of the MER convention, John Doehring announced that the 2016 NER convention would be in Albany. For 2017 there is no awarded site but the GSD is willing to do it and Little Rhody stepped forward for the year after. However, Bruce has discovered that the Susquehanna Division will be hosting the MER convention in 2017 in the fall nearby in the Scranton area. Bruce will stay in contact with Barry and monitor his date so that we can arrange a date that is separated from theirs. Tom W asked if we can swap with Little Rhody to avoid a conflict in 2017 and then have 2018 on our own with no conflicts. All agreed that Scranton is a good location for the MER and it will hurt us. Bruce agreed to contact John and explore the possibility of swapping for 2018.

ACTION: Bruce will contact John Doehring and explore the possibility of swapping with Little Rhody for the 2018 NER convention.

In the NER, we have two smaller divisions that are right next to the GSD. It would make sense for us to partner with the Metro-North Division or the Hudson Valley Division. Bruce considers that we would probably try to have our convention in the northern part of New Jersey adjacent to Orange or Rockland Counties – part of the Hudson Valley Division. Tom W insisted that no matter what year we do the convention, we need to be looking for hotels NOW. Since Fred Dellaiacomo and Bruce live near to the area of interest for the convention location, they will start to look into the hotels. Fred reported on some hotel research in the corridor that Bruce mentioned. He discovered 4 hotels that could accommodate the size of convention that we expect. They are the Sheraton in Mahwah on 287, the Doubletree by Hilton in Mahwah with a convention center and banquet facilities, the Crown Plaza in Suffern, and the Hilton in Woodcliff Lake. Mark Moritz also suggested the Hilton in Pearl River. Fred and Bruce will do the legwork for finding appropriate hotels in the corridor of interest. Of course, the first thing that must be determined is if we are having the convention in 2017 or 2018. We will need a convention chair appointed by the president. Then we will need to organize in subcommittees for the various activities of the convention – clinics, layout tours, operating sessions, prototype tours. Bruce mentioned that there is a convention handbook on the NER web site but it is very much out of date. Bruce asked about an after action report for our last convention in Parsippany. Tom W said that he and Norman sent that report to the region. Bruce asked Tom W to get that report to this group.

ACTION – Tom W. will distribute to the BOD the 2006 Parsippany NER convention after action report. Andy suggested that we have a request for proposal with a list of requirements for the convention that will be used for discussions with hotels as well as the basis of their proposals. Tom W stepped up and offered to be the convention chair and Bob offered to co-chair. Chuck presented a name and logo for the convention. One other activity for consideration would be something like the modeling with the masters program offered at the national conventions. It could be Clark Kooning along with some local MMRs and be scheduled for Thursday afternoon requiring early arrival by the participants only. It could be a draw to bring extra people to the convention and be even better than the regular make and take clinics. To get Clark we would need to be committed at least a year ahead of time. Tom W asked if we wanted to have manufacturers and vendors there along with a huge white elephant table. Jim H volunteered for operations or layout tours – Bruce responded that if Jim took care of operating sessions then he would organize the prototype tours. We have lots to do but first we must lock down the year and identify the location. Tom will send us the after action report and as we read through it we need to identify the areas that will need coverage and see if there is something for which you can volunteer.

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We will also need people beyond this group and we will need to find volunteers in the general membership. Tom W reminded us all that it is not a long way off and that we needed to have started yesterday. We need to start moving out now especially if we host in 2017. Bob reminded us that there are people in the region that will help and Bruce noted that he will approach the Hudson Valley Division. We can also contact Metro North as well.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Next BOD Meeting 19 MAR 2016 at the home of Bob Dennis

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Walsh

Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD