

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

Purpose: Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting
Date/Time: Saturday, June 11, 2016
Place: Home of Anthony Piccirillo
Attendees: Bruce De Young, Tom Casey, Tom Wortmann, Jim Homoki, Jim Walsh, Anthony Piccirillo, Mark Moritz, Chuck Diljak, Fred Dellaiacono, and Bob Robbins of the Hudson Valley Division

Not in attendance: Jim Fawcett, Bob Dennis, Ciro Compagno, Andy Brusgard

Meeting started around 9:45 AM

Motions Submitted and Approved: NONE

Reports were presented:

President's Report – Bruce indicated that since our last meeting most of his activities were related to the 2018 convention. He attended a meeting of the Hudson Valley Division in April. They were very open to joining with us to co-host the convention in 2018 and we are moving forward with that plan. Bruce is going to the National Convention in Indianapolis in July.

Vice President's Report – Jim Fawcett did not attend the meeting.

Secretary's Report - Copies of the draft minutes of the last meeting (3/19/2016) were distributed and accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Dennis did not attend the meeting.

Education Committee and AP Reports – Bruce noted that at the joint Spring meet with the NJ Division several certificates were presented and we will have a few more to hand out at the Summer meet. He has Tom W's corrected certificate, some for Chuck and maybe some for Ed Suhy. Bruce was contacted by Craig Bisgeier with regard to his Civil, Electrical and Scenery certificates and he plans to visit with Craig. In general, Bruce observed that we still have good activity related to the AP program.

Event Report –Summer meet – The location will be in the senior center at the Morristown town hall and Mark indicated that it will begin at 9 AM on August 6. He produced a map to show the meet location as well as places for lunch. We must set up chairs before the meet and remove the chairs at the conclusion. There are many restaurants within walking distance of the meet location. There is no fee for using the senior center but we plan to make a donation to the center. Most of the meeting program is planned since Mark arranged for Rudy Garbely to do a presentation about the local Morristown and Erie railroad. We still need one or two clinics. So Fred volunteered to do a clinic on roof details and Anthony will do one on installing DCC in legacy locomotives. The details must be identified quickly to be in the next Whistle Post. While clinicians were being discussed, Tony Koester was identified as a possible clinician for the Fall Works in Progress clinic as well as a clinician for the 2018 NER convention. For the afternoon at the Morristown meet, the Morris Plains Club will be open, Steve Kay's layout will be open and Mark could also open his layout as well. The M&E was not a likely activity for that afternoon but it would be good for a prototype excursion during the 2018 convention. Mark mentioned that the Whippany Railroad museum is very close by with many pieces of railroad equipment on display. Jim Homoki will consult the list of layouts to see if there is another one nearby. Jim also needs descriptions of the layouts for the Whistle Post within the next week.

Fall meet – We will be back in the Hillsborough town hall and Jim Homoki has locked in Oct 1 as the date with a plan for works in progress clinics. Hillsborough is a great facility for that type of meet. We

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had 8 clinics the last time we had this type of meet in Scotch Plains. Jim Homoki said the he will present one of the clinics for this time. The other clinics will need to be identified and we need some layouts for the afternoon. Bruce mentioned the Black River and Western and we determined that it would be good for the convention but not for a meet. Jim H will work with Jim F about other clinics. **Winter meet** - Bruce will contact Bob Dennis to remind him about his plan for our winter meet at The Model Railroad Club, Inc. in Union NJ. There is some concern about handling a large group for the clinics. It is difficult to demonstrate a "how-to" clinic because it is difficult to see the presenter due to the long narrow shape of the space. After we get the location we can plan the details of the event.

ACTION Bruce requested that Tom W update the Brass Section of our web site to reflect Ciro as the Immediate Past President as well as the addition of the 2 new BOD members – Fred and Chuck.

Membership & Club Chair's Report - Tom C was unable to put together the usual membership list update and other tracking information. The membership total should still be around 230. In the next week, Tom C will provide new member information to Jim Homoki for the Whistle Post.

Whistle Post Report. – The schedule is tight this time because Jim Homoki is leaving for vacation at the end of the month and needs to put the newsletter together before then. Therefore we have 2 weeks left to get everything together. He needs the rest of the information for the summer event and accompanying photos for the layouts. This time it may go out without a modeling article.

"Erie Limited" 2018 Convention Report including report on Convention Hotel

Bruce and Fred visited hotels in northern New Jersey to find a one for our 2018 convention. Bruce had pricing from several hotels and discovered one that would be a good choice. The main consideration was the adequacy and cost of the meeting rooms that we would need for our convention. The DoubleTree on route 17 in Mahwah, the Sheraton by the old Ford plant, the Crowne Plaza hotel on 287 in Suffern, Best Western on route 23, Hilton in Woodcliff Lake and the Marriott in Park Ridge. Bruce and Fred prefer The DoubleTree and it is almost a brand new hotel. It seems to address our needs although the meeting rooms will minimally meet our requirements. We would use every meeting room in the hotel for our convention. Some of the other hotels had much more meeting space. However, before we commit to the DoubleTree, Bruce would like two other people to visit the hotel to assess how well it works for us. The Sheraton is too expensive if it is available. The Best Western had more than enough meeting rooms although their quoted price was high but may be negotiable. The room rate of \$89 included a continental breakfast. DoubleTree had a flat fee of \$10,000 for all the meeting rooms that we needed but Bruce was not sure if there would be any additional charges like all the other hotels. Bruce will ask on the next visit to make sure about additional charges. The banquet is \$41 per person and the room is \$129 per night including a full buffet breakfast. In the vicinity of the hotel are several restaurants. Also the hotel would be very convenient for the Hudson Valley Division. Considering \$10,000 for the meeting rooms and 150 attendees, the cost would be \$67 per attendee to cover the meeting rooms. As a recent registrar for the NER conventions, Bob Robbins thinks that the 150 attendance will be possible considering the two divisions as cohosts. Bruce also put together a summary of information with the costs of 2016 regional conventions around the country. The information indicates that a convention registration fee of \$65 or \$70 would be reasonable. The current NER registration fee of \$50 is very low when compared to the rest of the country. For the area being considered, the higher registration price would be necessary. Also, at least half of the regions charge for the spouse or accompanying family member. Banquet costs are in the \$40 to \$45 range and the rooms cost \$115 to \$130 per night. We must consider pricing around the country to determine a reasonable price for the convention. For pricing our convention Bruce considers the break-even point at 150 attendees. This number is reasonable when compared to recent NER conventions

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None of the contacted hotels would negotiate the price of the facility based upon room bookings. Apparently they have no problem booking their meeting rooms. There is also a Super8 motel right across the parking lot from the DoubleTree hotel. Bruce discussed a planned second visit to the DoubleTree with Fred, Tom W and Bob Robbins.

A last minute response was from Park Ridge Marriott that had some beautiful meeting rooms. The fee was \$9000 but they added a fee 23% of bringing the cost up to \$11562. The Banquet cost \$55 to \$67 per person and the rooms are \$139 per night without breakfast. The breakfast cost \$15 for continental and \$20 for a buffet. They did offer a free hospitality suite and king room for 3 nights.

Bob Clegg had provided information pertaining to the MER convention at the Hotel ML.

Discussing our anticipated final costs, they were correlated to other regional conventions for 2016. The registration could cost \$65 for early bird and \$75 for later registration. Bruce raised a discussion of having a day pass registration for Friday or Saturday that would cost more than half the price of the regular registration. We also need to have a great website that is easy to navigate and containing lots of information - we need to do it ourselves. Chuck suggested that constant contact may have tools to help us with the convention. Bruce noted that we should be promoting the 2018 convention in every newsletter as well as any meet that we attend or host. He also read a report from Bob Dennis on the last NER board meeting indicating that the Pacemaker convention is going well and planning is underway for conventions in 2017 and 2018. Sunrise Trail backed away from the convention in 2019. Jim Homoki agreed with the idea of the day pass and made a point about the invited groups and registration. Tom W said that in 2006 invited groups had the registration fee waived for clinics and activities in the hotel not including the banquet or home layout tours. At other conventions, if you bring in a clinician from outside the region, the registration is waived. Although that is a common practice, Bruce is not sure if we can afford to do that. Depending on the space in the convention facility we could display some modular layouts. Tom W noted that somebody has volunteered to organize the silent auction and it will only require personnel to watch the room and not do any transactions until the end of the auction. We could end the auction earlier and avoid a mad rush as seen at other conventions. Tom W reported on the status of the NER website and our plan to build the convention website. We have a volunteer to do the convention website but we first need restored access to our information. Tom also noted that he needs people to start working on activities to support the convention. Things like contacting owners of the layouts toured in 2006, finding railroad museums and railroad related points of interest. Bob Robbins asked what is expected from the Hudson Valley Division – Tom mentioned rail tours hobby shops and non rail activities. We discussed the list of layouts that we maintain and Tom W said that Al Oneto volunteered for ops sessions.

Tom W mentioned that Andy would organize rail tours and in particular the light rail in Hoboken. We need to get that summary of the clinic survey to find potential clinicians. Bob Robbins indicated that Hudson Valley Division could work on the organization of clinics. Tom will send his entire spreadsheet. Right now we are just gathering information to put together into a plan.

Bruce mentioned that Clark Kooning, who runs the modeling with the masters program at the National conventions, is interested in getting to more regional conventions with a similar program. We could get him but there is a fee for it and it could be a draw. They are usually done earlier than the main convention and might not cause conflict with meeting rooms at the hotel. Bruce will get a proposal from Clark so that we can decide. Chuck is doing the map book and the convention guide book.

Bob Dennis will be responsible for the posters for the clinics including arrangements covering cancellations

If we can get a commitment from the NER and arrangements with the hotel before September, then we could have a poster and/or flyers at the Pacemaker convention in Albany.

Discussion of what draws people – operating sessions, layouts, rail tours, speaker at the banquet.

Jim Homoki will coordinate the layout tours and Al Oneto will be the Operating Sessions Coordinator

Bruce will make the contact with the zinc mine and get that organized.

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Tom W is really concerned about getting nonrail activities organized. Things like the NJ center for the arts in Newark, Grand Central Tour in Manhattan, Woodbury Commons outlets for shopping as well as Paramus Mall. Chuck checked out some wineries and there is a train to a winery near Phillipsburg. Bruce went to Phillipsburg last year and noticed that there was a renovation going on. Tom W. related that all some people want is some place to photograph trains Near the Suffern yard across the street and raised up is an Irish pub Layouts on the fringe of the general location of the convention can be planned for the trip to the convention or on the way home. Tom advised that people start signing up The "spouse" clinics will compete with railroad clinics for meeting room space. Chuck suggested that we get a way to share files – like dropbox Bob Robbins is our official liaison to the Hudson Valley Division. Include him on lists and email messages.

Old Business –

- Since Ciro was not present, the item pertaining to an events chairman remains open.
- The item about Tom C contacting new clubs and getting permission to publish their info is an ongoing activity. Therefore, it will be removed from old business and merged into Tom's membership and club report. Bruce noted that we need to get the club listing as updated as possible since these clubs will be important for the 2018 convention. Tom W. pointed out that any contacts that we are making for any current events should be noted for use in our convention preparation. Bruce suggested following up with the Berkshire, Dover and West Milford club at Camp Jefferson that we visited in the summer of 2012. They were never added to our list.
- Tom W and Ciro to move pictures from Yahoo to the NERGSD website. Tom will check into it. Bruce noticed that there are still pictures on the yahoo site. We need to move them off and to our new site. We also need to check with Andy to see if we are done with our yahoo email address so that we can end that as well.
- Anthony and the board discussed the situation with the Facebook account and called his granddaughter to answer our questions. Anthony will work with her to make the Facebook page work better for the GSD.
- Tom W sent the Parsippany convention after action report to the BOD. Tom also researched and purchased a public address system.

New Business –

- We received 100 of the boxcar shells from the NMRA for use in clinics or modeling contests. Fred has an idea for a contest to make a model using at least 80% of the shell in the project. Promote the contest at the Summer and Fall meets and collect entries and announce winners at the Winter meet by popular vote. We could charge \$2 per shell distributed at the Fall and Winter meets and the money is used for prizes for first, second and third place winners. Bruce suggests that we need a one page flyer that promotes the contest and have it at the meets and in the Whistle Post.
- Tom W will send Jim W the last board of directors list with the confidential information for use by the board. Jim will update the document as required.

Meeting adjourned around noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Walsh

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Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD