

Train Orders

Official Newsletter of the New Jersey Division,
Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association



March 2025

Volume 36 Number 4

The March Meet will be Works In Progress at Switlik Park

John V. Gallagher, Superintendent

We look forward to the popular meet format of multiple simultaneous clinics called Works in Progress (WIP) Different from the traditional “one size fits all” having two hour-long clinics format presented to all attendees, WIP offers members a choice of several shorter half-hour clinics presented simultaneously.

The meet facility is set up with round tables that seat 8 to 10 attendees. At each table, a clinician will present a clinic up close and personal. In this less formal format, attendees can ask questions and clearly see demonstrations. Some clinics can involve attendees with hands-on activity. After the 30 minute clinic, a bell will sound ending the session and members move to another table for another clinic, much like changing rooms after a high school period. This format continues with members attending four clinics of their choice. There will be about 8 different topics offered during the meet.

Feel free to bring your notebook and taking photos with your phone to provide you with references to study and try at home.

The one comment I get is that members must make a choice of topics. If that is a concern, let one of the directors or me know. We can try to get the clinic topic repeated.

Finally, if you like the format, consider volunteering to present a WIP clinic at a future meet. The clinician presenter clipboard is passed to all attendees at each meet with a column to check for presenting a WIP clinic. It is much like showing a fellow modeler how to do a modeling technique at the workbench in the layout room.

Bonus! Presenting a WIP clinic can earn you Author and Volunteer credits in the Achievement Program. Be sure to provide the attendees with a “handout” that can be a list of magazine articles, YouTube video titles, or a list of tools. The presenter gives the WIP clinic four times so it adds up! 🚂



January Favorite Model Display was
Joseph Weisbrod's NJD Gondola with a Load

Next Division Meet

Saturday March 15, 2025

9 a.m. to noon

Switlik Park Recreation Building
5 Fisher Place, Yardville, NJ 08620

Model Display News

Favorite small Diesels & Critters

Clinics:

**Eight 30 minute Clinics
presented four times each.**

(See Page 5 for Details)

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The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in Train Orders in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division.

Train Orders welcomes contributions from the New Jersey Division membership and . Letters, articles, photos and other items may be submitted to the editor, Fritz Plenefisch, at fplen3@verizon.net or to 327 Sharps Lane, Hamilton, NJ 08610-1334. Please include return postage if you would like materials returned.

Cutoff Date for submittal to the May issue is April 10, 2025.

Items received after this date may appear in the next issue

Superintendent and Director of Clinics

John Gallagher
njdiv.super@gmail.com
856 228-2239

Clerk/Secretary

Joe Zebrowski
609 268-9451
trackjack@comcast.net

Director- Membership

Geert Marien
732 757-1061
geert@mindspring.com

Director-Editor

Fritz Plenefisch
609 585-7660
fplen3@verizon.net

Paymaster/Treasurer

Tom Neukirchen
609 584-5184
t.neukirchen@aol.com

Assistant Superintendent, Bookstore and Door Prizes

Mike Prokop
njwrr@aol.com
609 610-2687

Director-Contest Chair

Jack Menaker
732 789-5449
jackmenaker@yahoo.com

Director

Thom Radice
732-713-5649
thomradice@gmail.com

Division AP Chair

Glyn Thomas, MMR
732 801-7528
glynthomas42@gmail.com

Visit us at <https://njdivnmra.org> and join us on
Groups at <https://groups.io/g/NJDivNMRA>

NJD Information Page

March Division Meet
Saturday March 15, 2025
Switlik Park Recreation Building
5 Fisher Place, Yardville, NJ 08620
"Works in Progress" type clinics

Next Board Meeting
Host – Tom Neukirchen
Saturday April 12, 2025, 10 a.m.
Please let us know if you plan to attend
njdiv.super@gmail.com

May Division Meet
Joint Meet with the
Garden State Division
Saturday May 10, 2025
Kingston Fire House
8 Heathcote Dr, Kingston, NJ 08528

90th NMRA Convention,
Station No VI- Hosted by the
NORTH CENTRAL REGION NMRA
July 14-19, 2025 Novi, Michigan
Convention HQ is the Sheraton Hotel
21111 Haggerty Road
Novi, Michigan

The Philadelphia Division
Is hosting the Mid Eastern Region
Convention October 16-19, 2025

NJ Division Area Hobby Shops

* **AAA Hobbies & Crafts**
706 N. Whitehorse Pike,
Magnolia, NJ 08049
(856) 435-7645
www.AAAHobbiesandCrafts.com

* **Sattler's Hobby Shop**
14 Haddon Ave.
Westmont, NJ 08108
(856) 854-7136

* **The Train Room Online Store**
www.thetrainroomNJ.com
e-mail thetrainroomnj@msn.com

* **Yankee Dabbler - Track 33**
101 W. Kings Hwy, Bellmawr, NJ
08031

* **Offers discount to NMRA members.**
Must show Current Membership Card

Membership Information

Any person who is a member of the NMRA and lives within the boundaries of the NJ Division as defined by the NMRA is also a member of the division. Non member guests are welcome to attend three of our meets, after which they will be asked to join the NMRA.

NJ Division Annual Activity Fee:
\$10.00 (optional and includes 5 meets)
or individual meets \$5 at the door.
First time guests, no charge!

National Model Railroad
Association P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy TN 37384-1328

View From the Cab

John V. Gallagher, Superintendent

Looking to the Future

In September 2009, I volunteered and was elected to the board of the New Jersey Division. I first joined the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) in 1971 and renewed it for another year. I was then in graduate school, married with a son. Graduate students don't get paid much so I gave up flying airplanes and my NMRA \$3 membership. I did continue some O scale trolley modeling. After earning my PhD and beginning my college career at then Glassboro State College (now Rowan University), I did spend more time trolley modeling and joined the East Penn Traction Club. In 1993, our club displayed its trolley modules at the 1993 NMRA National Convention at Valley Forge. I decided to rerail my membership and joined the New Jersey Division (NJD). I kept my original NMRA number! I continued my membership to the present which I treasure, especially the friends I have made.

During my years as a director in the New Jersey Division I filled the positions of Meet Layout Coordinator, Clinics Director (which I still do), Assistant Superintendent, and then as Superintendent which I will complete in September. It has been a lot of work, much of it fulfilling. I am now 85 and it is time to reconsider future goals. I will be an active member of the Division but will step down from Directorship responsibilities. However I

will still offer clinics, and hope to earn some Achievement Program (AP) Certificates

For you, here are opportunities for stepping up and running for election as a Director. The Board will be reorganizing so the new Director may have different responsibilities. The present board is made up of good, dedicated people. You can contact me if you want to discuss this opportunity or speak to one of them. Thanks for your support.

The 2025 NMRA National Convention

The NMRA celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2025. That's THIS YEAR! Since you are a member and NMRA is an important part of your life and of your model railroading hobby, maybe you might want to give thought to attending this convention. Many of you have attended the NMRA National Convention in 2006 in Philadelphia. As the New Jersey Division, we played an important support role in that convention. We attended clinics offered by modeling leaders in the NMRA, competed in contests against leading modelers, attended the National Train Show where one could speak with top officials of manufacturers about your needs and preferences, and met fellow modelers from around North America and the world. Top layouts in the area were open for visits. See page 28 of the current NMRA Magazine that features one of the l

layouts open for the convention. Impressive. The convention is being held in Novi, Michigan July 14 through 19th, a location about 8 miles north of the Detroit suburbs. Go to the NMRA web site for more detailed information on registration, motel/hotel facilities, the convention program, events and other features that may motivate you to attend. You can get there by airline, train via New York city on Amtrak, or the drive from Philadelphia will take about 9 hours 15 minutes to center city Detroit, all Interstate highways. You will need to add time for rest stops, meals, and even an overnight if you need proper rest or want to visit some railroad or historical sites on the way. You will also need to add at least 30 plus minutes at the Detroit end to get to Novi. Check it out with your GPS.

If you have some of your best models you want judged for the AP program and/or want to compete with some of the best modelers in the contests? This is the event, nothing ventured – nothing gained! You can enter motive power, rolling stock and structures. See the September or October issues of the NMRA Magazine for the 2024 convention contest report. Our members Dave Albertson, Fred Willis, and/or Glyn Thomas, MMR's can give you advice on entering. See page two for contact information.



Model Display News

By Jack Menaker, Model Display Chairman

The November Joint Meet with the Philadelphia Division did not have a Model Display.
 The March meet display is "Maintenance of Way Equipment".

Scheduled Meet	Display Table Topic	Special Notes
January 2025	NJD Gondola with a load	
March 2025	MOW Equipment	Anything goes
May 2025	Favorite Diesel	Critters
September 2025	12" x 12" Diorama	
November 2025	Special Open Flat Car Load	
January 2026	Picture of something special on your layout	
March 2026	Kit Bash/Scratch Built	



**January 2025 Favorite Model Display was
 Joseph Weisbrod's NJD Gondola with a Load**

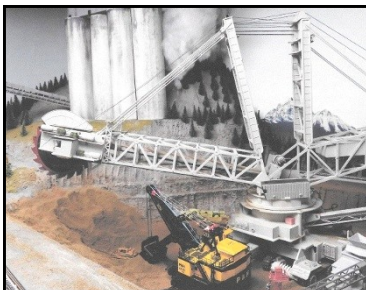
The model that gets the most votes for the topic will get, a Framed Certificate and a Voucher to cover our yearly fee. When you come to the meet remember to vote for Best in Show.

We have given permission to the Garden State Div for the May joint Meet to participate in the contest.

GSD has invited us to join them in their Bring & Brag. Bring a completed model or a project you are working on, and briefly explain what it is you have done. This can even include things like your new layout design, or a very old model that you acquired.



Best of 2024 Model Displays



**Rick Spano's N scale Bucket
 Wheel Excavator.**



**Jack Menaker's Piece of
 Weathered Rolling Stock**



**The January Favorite Model
 was Herb Gishlick's Observation Car.**

Clinics

John V. Gallagher, Director of Clinics

Clinician	Clinic Title
Jim Shepard	Creating a Diorama – TJ Reilly by Bar Mills
Bill Kennedy	Bridges, Towers Footings [tentative]
Dave Albertson	Follow up on the South Street Bridge
Mike Mosher	Arduino Applications
Mike Prokop	Let's Talk Connectors
Glyn Thomas, MMR	Recent Structure Models
Ray Russell	Multi-deck layout construction and LED lighting
Pete Suhmann	Exploring the Use of Veroboard to Improve Power Pickup & Distribution on a Locomotive
YOU?	Contact me at 856-261-2668 or njdiv.super@gmail.com

Feel free to bring your notebook and taking photos with your phone to provide you with references to study and try at home. Please check with the Clinician before taking pictures.



GONDOLA CAR #1968 SELLS OUT

By Geert Marien (Gondola Car Director)

The NMRA NJ DIVISION 50th anniversary SPECIAL CAR NJDX 1968 has sold out. This is one of two HO scale 52' 6" 70 TON RIVETED DROP END GONDOLA A produced by Tangent for the division (the other is road number 2018). They were issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the division which was founded in 1968.



The Wilkes Barre South Street Bridge Model

Dave Albertson

The South Street Bridge was built in 1925 to span the Lehigh Valley and Central Railroad of New Jersey Freight yards. It was designed to accommodate vehicular, trolley and pedestrian traffic. The Bridge was razed in 1992.

The actual bridge structure is 1,790 feet. This equates to 20.5 feet which is not practical for a Model Railroad. One span of steel structure fit our location. The span was

compressed to 270 scale feet, which nicely spanned the Wilkes Barre Lehigh Valley and Jersey Central yard.

The model was built using detailed plans found on the Library of Congress web site (loc.gov). Dimensions were compressed to fit the allocated space on the Garden State Central club layout. The structure is comprised of Central Valley Bridge beams, Plastruct beams and scratch built

gussets, braces and foundation buttresses. 3D printed parts included intermediate gussets, top parasol braces and interconnecting beams.


The build time on the model is roughly 350 -400 hours over a six-year period. During that time many challenges were encountered and conquered. The bottom chord of the bridge uses sections of Central Valley bridge beams fastened on a ¼" dia length of basswood. To fasten the center deck crossbeams, I modified



Portal entrance view of the Prototype South Street bridge



Portal entrance view of the model bridge

commercial clamps with brass I beam stock to extend the reach of the clamp. Many of the smaller components were time consuming to scratch-build, so 3D printing was used to create these. Photos show the Bridge mounted on The Wilkes Barre section of the Garden State Central club layout. 



View of the model bridge truss section and yard tracks



View of the model bridge railings

NJD SURVEY RESULTS


By Thom Radice

Thanks to all of you who participated in this endeavor. We sent the survey/questionnaire to the 166 members of whom we have email addresses. Of those, 14 were returned as undeliverable, which means that potentially 152 members did receive the survey. Of these 152 respondents, we received 65 completed surveys which is a very good response ratio in the world of surveys.

You may recall that our intention as the board of directors is to hear and learn from you all that you find appealing in addition to what would be needed to increase division meet participation. On behalf of the board, we certainly very much appreciate your partnering with us to provide fun and educational experiences through our meets. There were some doubts as to the return we would receive but you showed up. We would ask that you continue to work, and play, with us as we look for ways to improve the division meet experience; maybe not every single one. We don't want to set too high an expectation. But know that we are committed to making adjustments that address your suggestions. With your support we can't miss.

The following are the themes of your responses. One-off comments are not included as we are looking for key themes that address most members' needs or desires.

Here is a translation of your input:

- Over 70% indicated that they attend at least 1 division meet per year. 23% less than 1.
- Over 85% indicated that they would attend more division meets if they had the dates three or more months ahead of time.
- Unexpected or routine conflicts prevent 57% from attending.
- 27% said it is usually too far to travel.
- Regarding the question about "What would make Division Meets more interesting":
 - ◊ Clinic protocols, e.g., adding graphics, Better/more interesting clinic topics, e.g., outside speakers.
 - ◊ Perhaps a railfan movie periodically.
 - ◊ Occasional show & tell by members to see their work.
 - ◊ Model making techniques and perhaps a take away model. 

Let's Talk Connectors

By Mike Prokop

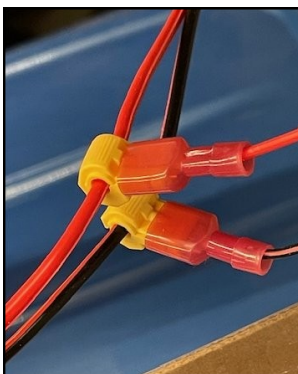
Being connected or having connections is just as important in building your layout as it is in real life. However, let's explore how we use connectors to complete wiring circuits in order to power and run our electric trains. We use hundreds if not thousands of feet of wire to accomplish the above but, nothing will move down the track unless those wires are correctly connected to power sources or digital command components. Luckily these small electrical components we call connectors are readily available to complete this task.

At our disposal are a plethora of connectors ranging from heavy duty ones to work with high voltage AC to miniature components capable to handle low voltage digital signals flowing through our wiring networks.

My clinic will explore a wide range of connectors that I've used in building my previous HO layout, the New Jersey and

Western, as well as the current On30 Hill Valley model railroad. I'll show and demonstrate connectors that I've discovered that in my opinion work and perform great and I'll have examples of connectors that I've used and have been disappointing failures.

But wait! Since I'm not the sharpest pencil in the pouch when it comes to many things model railroad, I'll be looking to get your input and ideas on the connectors you use on your railroads. Hopefully the clinic will be interactive and many ideas will surface during the discussion. Let's face it, the model railroad hobby is a very cooperative institution and most of the great ideas I have are actually gleaned from my fellow modelers. So, if you attend my clinic bring your knowledge and expertise on the subject of connectors and certainly bring examples of the ones you like to use. 🚂



Membership News

By Geert Marien **Membership Director**

The New Jersey Division is no longer Subsidizing "Rail Pass".

It had been decided by the board some time ago to fund rail pass (at about \$19.00 per applicant) in the hope this would encourage people to become full members. Unfortunately this group has not done well for its intended purpose, therefore the New Jersey division has decided to no longer fund this class of NMRA membership. However prospective members may still avail themselves of this option with the NMRA by paying the \$19.95 fee themselves. In this case a new application and funds should be sent directly to the NMRA by the applicant/prospective member. See for information the nmra.org web

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP EARLY

Due to delays in the mail and processing and updating membership information you should renew your membership as soon as possible after receiving your application in the mail or by keeping track of your renewal date and renewing online at least three months in advance. Please do it as soon as possible and do not wait until the last minute. Either way we're happy to have you as a member of the New Jersey division!

KEEP YOUR INFORMATION UP TO DATE

You should keep your information (Especially your home and e-mail address) up to date with the division and with the NMRA. There is certain critical information that relies on this! Don't miss! Keep everything up to date right away! 🚂

Second Section

Layouts open for viewing for the March Meet

We have four layouts to visit at the time this TO is issued.

Maps listing them along with directions and the time they will be open are available at the meet.

Please contact a Board member if you would like to host an open house for your railroad when we are close to your area. 



The New England & Western Railroad is a freelanced New England railroad set roughly in the late 60's to early 70's. Motive power is leased from other regional railroads, mainly B&M and MEC, operating with NCE DCC. .
An operating session typically requires six operators and about two hours.

LAYOUT #1



LAYOUT #2

Contemporary regional railroad that serves an intermodal terminal, local businesses and also provides commuter service for a regional transit authority.



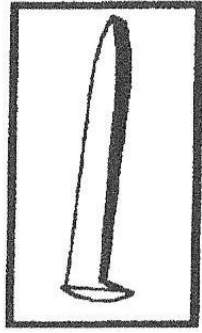
LAYOUT #3

The layout design is a double track folded dogbone with a center island. It's era is the late 1950's central Pennsylvania and is shared by the Pennsy, Reading, and Lehigh Valley.

LAYOUT #4



This free-lanced prototype HO scale, DCC layout, set in the mid-1960s is a walk-in design occupying a 14 ft. x 20 ft. area with 490' of track. The dual track mainline leaves Greenwich yard, climbs a 2.25% grade into the mountains and interchanges with the saw mill and logging operations. Scenery is 100% complete and the railroad serves 30 customers.



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM APRIL 2019

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FORM AND SEND TO YOUR DIVISION OR REGION AP MANAGER

Member Name: _____ NMRA#: _____ Expiration: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ Country: _____ Zip/Post Code: _____

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____ Division: _____

- The Golden Spike Award (GSA) will be awarded to any NMRA member who completes the Qualifications Checklist, obtains the necessary signatures (Division AP Manager or some local NMRA member approved by the Division AP Manager), and if the applicant does not already hold MMR status.
- The GSA will be administered by the Division and Region AP Managers.
- AP requirements and definitions apply for scratch building and super-detailing.
- The Division AP Manager will submit the signed form to the Region AP Manager who will issue the Golden Spike Award certificate.
- The Region AP Manager will then forward the completed form to the National AP Manager so that an announcement can be made in the NMRA Magazine.

GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

- ☐ Display six units of rolling stock either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or superdetailed commercial kits.

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

- ☐ Construct a minimum of eight square feet of model railroad or module(s) including scenery in any scale.
- ☐ Construct five structures either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or superdetailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

- ☐ Three types of track are required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial track may be used.
- ☐ All installed track must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command or other form of control).
- ☐ Provide any one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: _____ Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Region AP Manager: _____ Region: _____



A standard Pennsylvania Railroad end of train kerosene marker lantern. These were used in pairs at end of passenger cars without electric marker lights and on the tail end of a caboose.

Fred Ciocchiola Photo