

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

Purpose: Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting
Date/Time: Saturday, April 22, 2017
Place: Home of Jim Homoki
Attendees: Bruce De Young, Tom Casey, Bob Dennis, Tom Wortmann, Jim Homoki, Jim Walsh, Chuck Diljak, Fred Dellaiacono, Anthony Piccirillo, Mark Moritz and Paul Harbord

Not in attendance: Jim Fawcett, Ciro Compagno and Andy Brusgard

Meeting started at 9:07 AM

No Motions Submitted at the meeting

Reports were presented:

President's Report – Bruce reported on information from the NER conference call. The NMRA Board approved transfer of the Lakeshores Division from the Niagara Frontier Region to the NER. Now the NER has the second largest membership of the divisions in the NMRA. He also introduced Paul Harbord who will be running for the Director position that was vacated by Anthony. Bruce also emphasized that as a volunteer organization, the NMRA needs volunteers at all levels. We will be needing them at our 2018 convention.

Vice President's Report – SENT BY EMAIL: The timeline for the November open houses is that layout owners will be emailed by the end of this month and all entries will be posted to the main open house website by the end of May. There are about 65 layouts on record in our division.

Secretary's Report - Jim Walsh distributed the draft minutes for the last BOD meeting. A few errors were discovered and the corrections were identified. Minutes were accepted with noted corrections.

Treasurer's Report – Bob reported that from year to year our financial status is about the same to within \$100. We mostly break even. The region pays for the 2018 convention and what we spend is reimbursable. We received \$212.31 for the half year from the NMRA. It is based on our membership numbers. Bruce mentioned that at the Mid-year NMRA meeting he learned that our problem with membership is retention. This is directly related to the division and where any corrections would be focused. We could actually grow as an organization if we had 50% retention. Bob also noted that we don't need to increase funds on hand for the convention because almost everything is paid for by the region. He also passed around the reasonably priced give away cards that we purchased to give to new members and people who sign up for our convention. The company had a good price for the cards at 2300 for \$83 and the same company will make our signs. We had 7 lawn signs and we need to account for them. Treasurer's report was accepted.

Education Committee and AP Reports – Bruce reported that 4 AP certificates will be awarded at the spring meet. Three certificates are for Craig Bisgeier and a Golden Spike Award for Kai Ebinger. While we may be visiting layouts, Bruce reminded us that any NMRA member can fill out the paperwork for the Golden Spike Award. You do not really need a photograph either.

Event Report - **Spring Meet** will be on May 13 at the 4H center in Bridgewater. Bruce has a conflict but he will reach out to Jim Fawcett or Ciro to stand in for him. The main issue at the 4-H center is we cannot use a coffee pot and need to purchase coffee boxes. We will need 6 dozen donuts and probably 6 boxes of coffee (maybe 1 decaf). We also need a half-gallon of milk and quart of half and half. The next time we use that facility, we should sign up for the kitchen so that we can use our coffee

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pot. Checklists for the meet should be shared on Dropbox. Chuck will also have a backup clinic ready as a precaution. In case somebody brings a model for judging, Bruce suggested that we have the criteria and a blank copy of the judging form.

SUMMER EVENT Saturday, July 1st at the VFW on Staten Island. We will have Chuck's clinic on coal mines and Bruce may have one on foreground and background scenery. Since it is summer we would like to have some outdoor activities. Some items were discussed including a lighthouse museum and MTA facility. Tom W and Bob D will check with Chris Oliva to see if he can help with the MTA facility. There are also several good layouts on Staten Island. We have use of the coffee pot and parking is on the street.

FALL EVENT PLANS. Bruce has not heard back from Bill F about the Littell Center but Paul may have a Masonic Lodge in Park Ridge. It could be a site for the Winter meet or backup for the fall. The issue for Park Ridge will be finding layouts. Bruce will contact John Bazelwich about the Littell Center and the dates we had given to Bill F were September 23 or October 7.

Membership & Club Chair's Report - Tom C emailed the report to the board but does not have any to hand out. He sent them as pdf files but he could send Excel files by request. He discussed his observations from tracking Rail Pass members since January of 2011. Around 50% renew the first year but long term retention is about 30%. This is around 37% retention for those who first joined as regular members. Jim W asked if we communicate with them to find out why do not renew. Andy sends email to those who are 30 and 60 days past due but we do not contact them by phone. Anthony volunteered to make that telephone contact and he will coordinate with Andy.

Whistle Post Report. - Jim H reported that it was tough getting the layout information together but the next one will be coming up in about 5 weeks. He needs new articles. He thought that one about our work with the 4-H club would be good but Bruce would like that for an article in the NMRA magazine. There was a discussion of the status and upcoming projects for that modeling club. In soliciting for Whistle Post articles he asked if anybody has some new work on their layout that could be turned into an article. In addition, Bruce reminded us that we always need new content for Facebook. For the next Whistle Post we should also have an article about the upcoming 2017 NER convention.

"Erie Limited" 2018 Convention Report - Our slogan is "Come ride the Erie Limited"

- Tom W. has received recent reports from Chuck and Bruce.
- Bruce has information needed but he will not start gearing up until after November.
- Fred is good until things start moving along
- As Tom W tries to get somebody to run nonrail activities he gets feedback that we may need a room for them. When we are working out our plans we should consider a room for them.
- Jim H is good for layouts and he has been coordinating with Al Oneta about operating sessions. Al will follow up for layouts outside the GSD. In discussing distances to Op sessions, an hour drive seemed like a good limit.
- Fred mentioned that there are 2 layouts at Cedar Crest for layout tours.
- Jim H suggested that we will need to make our schedules carefully so that it works for everybody.
- Bob D contacted MRC while in Springfield. Tom W has somebody checking out the manufacturer list to see what needs to be changes or updated.
- Bruce checked with Walter Palmer for space requirements for the Hudson Valley portable layout. They need 8 feet by 16 feet. There is plenty of space for other modular layouts. Discussion of possibilities included Hub Division, Sussex County Group and North Jersey N-Trak.
- We want to have at least one modular layout focused on operation where beginners could be introduced to model railroad operations. Give them a chance to operate. Any new layouts should be set up to operate since it is often a popular activity at conventions. N-Trak is probably not set up for operations but we need some scale diversity. We want an N scale layout in the hotel.
- .Anthony offered an HO 2 foot by 10 foot Timesaver layout that could be used for the convention.

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- We need a person responsible for recruiting and coordinating space for modular layouts.
- Jim W reported that he confirmed the information for the Old and Weary shop. Tom instructed that we want to see what they will do to support us since it may end up getting them more business.
- Tom W mentioned that Bill F had volunteered to do the convention web site but he has not contacted Tom. Tom's plan is to have the web site all set up and ready to go well before it is required to be operational. Bruce told Tom to speak to Ciro since he had been in contact with Bill.
- We had a discussion of the registration form required for the convention as well as processing it through the NER. We cannot populate the form until we book the optional activities and that will not be until September. The rail related activities usually do not make arrangements until about a year away but the nonrail activities could be booked now.
- The optional activities will have a "REGISTER BY" date so we will know that there are enough people to have the event. If the interest is too low an event may be subject to cancellation.
- Tom W asked if the NER would support offering spouses free admission to the convention. Bob D suggested that we need to request it from the NER especially if it can help increase attendance. Of course the banquet will not be free for the spouses.
- Bruce reported that he did speak to Clark Kooning about having Modeling with the Masters at the convention. Bruce said that it may give people an additional reason to attend. It is a popular item at the National conventions and this is an opportunity to attend this program at a regional convention. We would need to cover Clark's air fare, hotel room and materials and it will be for 15-18 people. It could boost attendance and bring some people to the hotel a day earlier. It would probably start on Thursday morning. If there were 2 instructors, we could offer the program to 30-35 people. We all agreed to have Modeling with the Masters at this convention – it could be a draw.
- Bruce will contact Clark and Peter Youngblood and discuss further details of having Modeling with the Masters at our convention.
- We still need to find a speaker at our banquet. Jim W suggested Bernie Kempinski since he recently released a book on rail marine operations. He was the banquet speaker at the 2016 MER in North Carolina. Nobody was familiar with him as a speaker. We should ask somebody who attended the 2016 MER convention.
- Bruce had an idea that we could honor a well known person in the hobby at the banquet as an additional enabler for attendance. The NER has some that recently retired like George Sellios or Bob Van Gelder that could get honored.
- Mark asked about excursions and said that he would contact the M&E. Mark also suggested a wine train from Phillipsburg. Tom W suggested that he coordinate with Andy.

Old Business –

- Tom and Bob will check on the MTA contact as already discussed
- Ciro is absent and the item remains open.
- Chuck will check with Ron about our Facebook page and report on activity.
- We have an idea about the lawn signs but not complete accountability.

New Business – none

The next BOD meeting will be on Sunday June 11, 2017 and hosted by Bruce.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Walsh

Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD