

THE BRASS POUNDER

Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Division 12, Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

Volume 11 Number 5

November 2011

Carolina Southern Division Events

Open House & Division Meeting at Train Town, Brookford

Saturday, November 12 10:00-4:00

See article below for info on demonstrations and other activities.

Division Business Meeting 12:30 PM followed by a presentation on creating specialized scenery by Gil Brauch

1st Thursday Division Meeting

Thursday, December 1, 7:00 pm

Don Cantema, who was Vice President of Operations for Lionel in the mid 90s. Think about bringing your favorite Christmas train for a “show and tell”.

Williams Lodge
19416 Zion Ave
Cornelius, NC

Nov 12 9:00-5:00 Nov 13 10:00-4:00

Best Friend of Charleston Train Show

Danny Jones Armory Park

5000 Lackawanna Blvd

North Charleston, SC

<http://www.bestfriendofcharleston.org/>

Nov 9-20 **Southern Christmas Show**

The Park Expo and Conference Center

2500 E. Independence Blvd.

Charlotte NC, 28205

<http://www.southernshows.com/scs/>

November 20, 10am – 3pm (yep, Sunday)

Thompson's Old Fashioned Model Train Show

Village Inn Golf and Conference Center,

6205 Ramada Drive, Clemmons, NC

January 14, 2012

Carolina Southern Division

Railroad Modeling University

A full day of displays, classes, clinics, demonstrations for model railroaders of all ages and skill levels.

Registration Now Open

<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/RMUmain.htm>

June 1 - June 3, 2012

South East Region Convention, Gatlinburg, TN

<http://www.ser-nmra.org>

July 29-Aug. 4, 2012 Grand Rails 2012

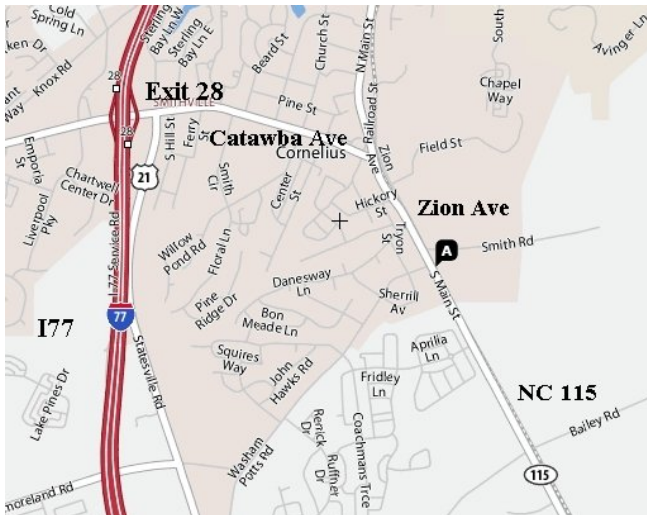
NMRA National Convention, Grand Rapids, MI

Oct 18-21, 2012

MER Convention, Suffolk, VA

July 14 - July 20, 2013

NMRA National Convention, Atlanta, GA





**CELEBRATION OF MODEL
RAILROADING MONTH
and the
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
GRAND REOPENING OF WADE'S
TRAIN TOWN
November 12, 2011
Brookford Community Center,
Brookford, NC
By Gil Brauch**

Hickory, NC – The Carolina Southern Division of the National Model Railroad Association is hosting a celebration of National Model Railroading Month and the Fifth Anniversary of the Grand Reopening of Wade's Train Town on November 12, 2011 at the Brookford Community Center, 1700 South Center Street, Hickory, NC. The time frame is between 10 am and 4 pm.

The event features demonstrations of various aspects of the hobby of model railroading such as building scenery and structures, laying track, using sound on your layout, hooking up electrical systems, building structures 'from scratch', and more. Expert help will also be available to answer questions about the hobby and to offer assistance and advice on minor repairs to folks with train sets that don't work quite right any more.

Also included will be a hands-on operating experience for those who want to actually operate a model train in a simulated industrial setting.

All this is in addition to being able to view and enjoy Wade's Train Town. Built by Brookford resident, the late Wade Warren, this 18 foot by 24 foot work of art includes over 250 buildings he built from kits and thousands of 'little people' residents, most of which he painted by hand. The Carolina Southern Division is proud to be involved in restoring and maintaining this layout

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for the enjoyment of young and old as a heritage layout.

More information about the layout is on the web at:

<http://carolinasouthern.org/TrainTown.htm>

The MER Convention!

By Bob Halsey

The 2011 MidEast Region Convention, known as Piedmont Crossing 2011, certainly achieved all the objectives any of the 224 attendees could have expected from such a well-planned, well-executed event. Those of us who were fortunate to be there learned a lot about model railroading from the many presenters, visited layouts that we normally would not get to see, and found unusual bargains at the vendor tables and in the "white elephant" room. We enjoyed a very nice North Carolina barbecue dinner on Saturday evening, met many fellow modelers, and most importantly, had fun the whole time!

The presenters came from all over the region, from the "State of South Jersey", to our own Fred Miller and Dick Bronson. Especially interesting was the all-day (Friday) hands-on clinic by Gene Song and Steve Milley on constructing and painting/weathering a Bar Mills laser-cut wood kit as part of a diorama, which included a short section of track. Of course, we had to learn how to hand-lay track, which we all did, and although looking more realistic than flex track, is way more time-consuming! Dan Fisher discussed steel buildings (he is a structural engineer) and gave us a laser kit of a small steel shed. Obviously, no one could attend all the presentations, but two other very interesting ones that I attended were: "Railroad-worthy Industries" by Mat Thompson, who showed us ways to enable your layout industries justify the use of more rail traffic movements, and how to make your industries seem larger than they really are; and "Adding a river to your railroad" by Bob Clegg (Superintendent of the New Jersey Division). His

“waterway” is a typical Jersey area one, a rather stagnant polluted brown color (no pure rushing white water!) (I loved it, and am going to add a couple to my future layout!). He gave a CD of his presentation to each class attendee.

The auction after the Saturday banquet consisted of items donated by various individuals and vendors, which helped the MER finances and pleased the winning bidders! The after-dinner speaker was the current director real-estate operations for the North Carolina Railroad, and he gave a very informative briefing on the history of, and future plans for, the NCCR. I didn't know that the original maintenance shops for the NCCR were set up in a small village west of Raleigh that came to be called “Company Shops”, but is now better known as the City of Burlington!

After a leisurely breakfast on Sunday morning (the Embassy Suites “free continental breakfast” is a high quality full meal!) we attended the MER business meeting, and then departed for the real world. Many thanks to MER and the Carolina Piedmont Division for arranging and carrying out such an enjoyable convention! Watch for photos in the next issue of the “LOCAL”!

A Visit to the Piedmont & Western Railroad in Valdese, NC

By Bob Halsey

On August 13, three die-hard rail fans carpooled west on I-40 to exit 111 at Valdese to visit one of the largest and finest model railroad layouts in the state of North Carolina! This HO empire takes up three large rooms in the basement of the Old Rock School in Valdese. The P&W Club was having open house day, and was receiving many visitors, partly a result of a major arts & crafts fair occurring on the town's main street less than a block away. It was easy to see why non-railroad folks, especially the younger ones, experienced that “gee whiz” factor upon seeing this extensive and well-detailed layout up close, and with three major trains running (the club usually runs more

when they have a full operating session, but didn't want too many engineers crowding the visitors).

Our “conductor”, greeting all visitors, was Ken Humphreys, wearing a completely authentic conductor's uniform. In real life, Ken is a minister at the First Presbyterian Church in Bessemer City. The dispatcher, using three computer monitors to oversee the three train movements (one long unit coal, one mixed freight, and one passenger local) and several yardmasters, was none other than Kenny Mann! (Kenny has operated on many area layouts, including his own). Other club members present included Joe Bost, Grant Robbins, Bobby Cox, Alan Coleman, Tim Skidmore, Gene Austin, the two Mike Outens (Sr. & Jr.), Tony Putnam, Michael McCall, and Jeff Whisenant. The P&W handles primarily coal and general freight as a subsidiary of both the Clinchfield Railroad and the Southern Railway in the 1950s-1970s period. It is controlled by a Digitrax system and tortoise switch motors, and runs on code 83 rail. The P&W has many mountains, tunnels (with TV cameras in the tunnels), and hand built structures, and they are adding a narrow gauge logging/saw mill section in the third room. They are also going to relocate the dispatcher's station into this room. So, although the club started building this layout in January 1989, it is still expanding! You can view photos of this magnificent layout on the club's website at www.pwrr.org, but it would be far better to go there and see it for yourself!

The P&W club decided they didn't have enough to do, so in 2004 they obtained permission from the town council to build a Railway Museum in the ground floor of the school! The museum contains a very detailed replica of a small-town depot, part of a Pullman porter's compartment, a steam locomotive headlight, lanterns & signal lights, a working telegraph (a real “brass pounder”!), and many smaller items. They also have a Fairmont “speeder” which was used for many years on the Clinchfield.

First Thursday Division Meeting October

By: Jack Haynes

The first Thursday Division meetings continued in October and November with interesting presentations. The meetings have been held at the Williams Lodge in Cornelius which provides a meeting room with plenty of space for presenters to set up their exhibits.

In October, Frank Binder discussed building structures using various levels of kits and scratchbuilding. He described several ways to add realism to basic structures through finishing and detailing. Using several basic Atlas station platform kits, he showed how using painting, weathering, and detailing can produce a model of increasing quality.



Frank uses an Atlas platform to illustrate detailing

Frank went over some of the tools and materials he uses to customize a structure kit, his choices of adhesives, paints, and washes. For gluing wood, he recommends "Stick Fast" woodworking glue in the Thick or Medium set to have some working time before it sets hard. He also uses Elmer's "stainable" woodworking glue. For stains, he uses various colors of India ink or acrylic paints. He gets to the shade he wants by

adding one drop at a time to an eyedropper or pipette of water and testing each on a scrap of wood keeping track of how many drops were used for each scrap. After the scraps dry, he chooses the one that is the closest match to what he wants.



Basic tools, glues, and paints provide the materials to produce realistic models.

Frank brought along many models to illustrate his techniques including a highly detailed diorama of a back street scene in a city.



Detailed city scene showing how Frank's methods can produce high quality results.

It was an evening well spent learning how another modeler gets highly realistic, quality results with basic materials.

First Thursday Division Meeting November

By: Jack Haynes

For November, Todd Arnett gave a presentation on how he used a CAD (Computer-Aided Design) program to plan his layout. It was a PowerPoint presentation using a computer-linked projector to show the concepts he wanted to communicate and then the computer models he developed. Todd has extensive experience using CAD in his work, so he was comfortable with AutoCAD, a professional grade program. He described alternative programs such as AutoCAD LT, and model railroad specific programs such as 3rd PlanIt, CadRail, and (free) XtrkCAD. He described, generally, the tradeoffs of each in terms of capabilities, learning curve, and cost. He mentioned that older copies of AutoCAD can be found for sale on the Internet, but cautioned that newer versions require a licensing key issued by Autodesk and only one is issued for each package.



Todd's projector shows a slide while he explains his results.

Todd explained several CAD concepts and how they are used to make drawing easier.

"Layers" in a CAD program keep different kinds of objects separate in the drawing making it easier to work with only one kind at a time, such as drawing roadbed or track centerlines, while displaying, but not changing benchwork. Layers also can be used to control the color and line style used to display objects on each layer.

Objects that are reused often, such as turnouts, are drawn once and then grouped into "blocks". A copy of the block is then inserted into the drawing anywhere that turnout is needed.

The coordinate system in the program can be defined as a User Coordinate System (UCS). This can be helpful in placing track by defining one axis to be along the direction of an existing track element and placing or moving another track element (e.g. turnout) along that line until it is in the desired position, for example to produce a desired track center distance in a yard ladder.

Another advantage of a CAD system is that the track plan is highly accurate. This avoids a frequent problem with plans drawn to scale on paper that the planned track configuration really will not fit in the physical space available.

Todd discussed some considerations in designing any layout such as vertical curves, S-curves, and maximum grades.

CAD can also be used to draw track schematics of a layout to plan operating constraints such as passing siding capacity.



It takes a couple of tables to hold the print of Todd's planned yard

Todd then showed some of the results of using AutoCAD to design the layout he is planning, beginning with the room plan. With a computer program, everything is drawn at 1:1 and then scaled as appropriate for printing. For Todd, the printing scale was also 1:1 and he unrolled a long plot of his planned yard. Printing services are available at commercial outlets where you can get such large prints by bringing in your computer file.

Todd's presentation is on the Division Website:

<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/2011-11%20Meeting.htm>

Division Picnic September 17, 2011

By Jack Haynes

September 17 was the day for our annual Division Picnic at Jack Parker's house on Mountain Island Lake. The weather was a little cool and damp, but the rain stayed away and we were able to set up, meet and eat outside on the lawn. Our thanks to Jim Rager who did most of the planning and Dave Draxler who handled a lot of the cooking, and, of course the Parker's for opening their home for this delightful event.



Food and company was plentiful as Division members and guests chow down at the Picnic

Following lunch, Rick Knight gave a demonstration on how to make realistic trees from weeds. Early September is prime time to harvest several weeds that make realistic trees. Rick's favorite is a roadside weed with white flowers. The flower/seed head has a nice branching structure that represents trees very well. An application of cheap hair spray and some ground foam turns one into a tree ready for the layout.



Rick tries to keep everyone awake after lunch by showing how to make realistic trees

After Rick's talk, Jack Parker had several models he had built set up for judging for AP

points. Dave and Michele Chance guided two apprentice judges, Jim Rager and Bob Halsey, in evaluating the models. Jack's modeling skill was apparent in the models. See the AP Progress report by Dave Chance in this edition for the results of the judging.



Jack Parker's stock car model and information sheet was used to help train new AP judges



Jim and Bob work at judging Jack's models under guidance of Michele and Dave

While the judging was going on, Jack's layout was fired up and open for running trains.



Dave Draxler explains how to operate a throttle to run a train on Jack's layout

Achievement Program Progress Report for November 2011

Dave Chance, CS Div. 12 AP Chair
November 7, 2011

This year only had two members who earned awards. Two members earned Gold Spike awards in July. In addition to the Gold Spike award, one member also earned two Achievement Program awards. We currently have one MMR, one member with 6 certificates, four members with 5 certificates, two members with 3 certificates, four members with 2 certificates, and four members with 1 certificate. Eighteen of our members have earned the Golden Spike Award. The CS Division has earned a total of 46 AP Certificates. The awards earned so far in 2011 are as follows:

1. Dave Draxler -- Master Builder - Scenery, September 1, 2011.....first AP certificate!
2. Dave Draxler -- Chief Dispatcher, September 1, 2011.. second AP certificate!
3. Dave Draxler – Golden Spike, July, 2011 first award!
4. Joe Howard – Golden Spike July, 2011 first award!

Congratulations to both Dave Draxler of Charlotte and to Joe Howard of Cornelius for their excellent work and in earning these Awards!

We have one member, Jack Parker, who has six certificates and is working on his seventh, Master Builder – Cars. He has built six of the seven required models, with five of those earning Merit Awards. To complete the requirements for this category, all he needs to do is build two scratch built cars of any type. These two models don't need to be judged for Merit Awards, just completed.

Four of these cars were judged in September at the annual picnic meeting. The judging team consisted of two NMRA judges, Dave and Michele Chance, and two apprentice judges, Jim Rager and Bob Halsey. This was the apprentices first time at judging models. Thanks to Bob, Jim, and Michele for being part of this judging team. Three of the four models earned a

Merit Award and the fourth was only a few points shy. Here is a list of his models:

1. SP Outside Braced Boxcar, class A50-6, P&W # ??, scratch built, 7/9/2010, 97 pts.
2. 36' Steel Mill Gondola, LV #13788, craftsman kit, 7/2/2010, 89 pts.
3. SP Outside Braced Boxcar, class A50-6, P&W #13725, scratch built, 9/17/2011, 113 pts.
4. USRA Boxcar to Cement Car Conversion, P&W #4006, craftsman kit, 7/2/2010, 98 pts.
5. 36' Stock Car, D&RGW #36948, craftsman kit, 7/2/2010, 96 pts.
6. Rail Post Office Car (RPO), P&W #7508, kit-bashed, 7/2/2010, 80 pts.

The “Piedmont Crossing 2011” MER convention’s contest judging team of 16 had four team members from the Carolina Southern Division. I also noticed that former Carolina Southern Division member, Steve August, was also judging. There were 28 excellent models that were judged in the contest, with quite a few receiving Merit Awards for their effort. There were also several models in the popularity contest, where each visitor viewing the models, is allowed to vote for his/her favorite in each category. The model with the most votes in each category, wins in that category. The categories include “My Favorite Engine”, “My Favorite Train”, and other similar titles. Look for Photos of the winners and other excellent models in a future issue of the MER Local magazine.

We have several members currently working on AP projects. If you are working on an AP project and not listed below, please let me know so I can add you to the list. Several members listed below have only the paper work to complete. I can help with paper work but I can't do it for you. Current projects include but are not limited to the following:

- Dick Bronson -- Electrical Engineer and Civil Engineering.
- Jim Allen – Author and MB Locomotives.
- Jack Parker -- MB Cars, received Merit Award for boxcar at Milwaukee '75 Convention.

Dave Chance -- MB Cars, MB Structures,
Civil Engineer, Author, and MB
Locomotives.

Ed Locklin -- Electrical Engineer.

Carl Baumgart – MB Structures

Michele Chance – Electrical Engineer and MB
Structures

Seth Gartner – Chief Dispatcher and
Association Volunteer

Jim Thomas - Chief Dispatcher

Jerry Shepardson – Scenery and Electrical
Engineering

Neal Anderson – Scenery, Association
Volunteer, and Electrical Engineering

Dave Draxler – Electrical Engineer

Tim Rumph (at large) – Chief Dispatcher

Please note that Tim, while not residing in the CSD, lives in an area that is not in a Division, and is therefore receiving my help. Anyone not residing in an active division within the MER can receive help from any of the MER AP Chairs from any of the divisions.

As many of you know, the CSD was fortunate enough to have Martin Brechbiel, MER Contest Director, come down last May and present a clinic on contest and merit award judging. On completion of this clinic, everyone who attended

and not already a judge, is considered an apprentice judge. An apprentice judge will be considered an MER judge after having judged in each category at least once at an MER contest. This will probably take at least five years if the person judges at each MER convention and judges a different category each time. Judging is taken very seriously by the MER and the NMRA. There has been much talk on the subject of “certified judges”, but the process of certification will need more discussion before this can become a reality. Right now the emphasis is on consistency of judging, no matter who judges or where the judging is done.

Remember, I will be happy to help anyone who is working on an AP project, and anyone needing help getting started in the AP program. I will also be happy to come to your home to look at your layout for a Golden Spike, scenery, structures, etc. or to help with paperwork, etc. on an AP project. Let me know if you need help with your project, from understanding the requirements to assisting with the paper work. Send me an email or call me on the phone and we will schedule my visit.

loconut@carolina.rr.com
704-933-4200

The Division Brass

Superintendent Bob Halsey
xnavman@roadrunner.com
Asst. Superintendent David Ward
daviward@windstream.net
Clerk Jack Haynes
jbh108@earthlink.net
Paymaster Dick Bronson
dick@rr-cirkits.com
Director 2011 Fred Miller
tractionfan@aol.com
Director 2012 Jim Rager
jamesrrager@roadrunner.com
Director 2013 Open
AP Chairman Dave Chance
loconut@carolina.rr.com
Webmaster Gil Brauch
dddmail@charter.net
Newsletter Editor Jack Haynes
Fun Committee Chair Open
RMU Chair Rick Knight
rghkiii@roadrunner.com

Division Website:

www.carolinasouthern.org

Submissions For Brass Pounder

Next Issue Submission Date
Jan 2012 December 27, 2011

Articles are welcome on any railroad topic, model or prototype. Your editor is available to assist in preparing the materials.

Editor: Jack Haynes:
jbh108@earthlink.net
7317 Easen Ct, Charlotte, NC 28211
704-296-2493

