

THE BRASS POUNDER

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

Volume 12 Number 5

January 2013

Carolina Southern Division Events

January 26, 2013

Annual Division Business Meeting

10:00 AM Lone Star Steakhouse
Rt. 150, Mooresville.

Directions: I-77 to exit 36 (Rt. 150)

West on Rt. 150 approx 1 mile

Lone Star is on your right.

After the meeting, lunch will be available there
(optional). Meeting agenda - see below

January 19, 2013 9:00 - 4:00

Railroad Modeling University

Northside Baptist Church, Charlotte

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

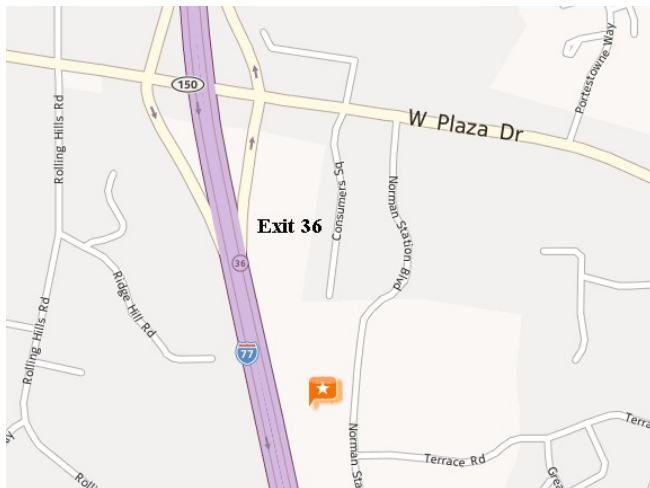
Monthly Meetings

No January meeting

February meeting:

Saturday, February 16 10:30 AM

See web site for program details.



HobbyTown USA,
168-W Norman Station Blvd., Mooresville

North on I 77 to exit 36
Right at end of ramp
Right at Wal-Mart sign

Saturday January 12 10:00 - 2:00

Saturday February 9 10:00 - 2:00

Wade's Train Town Open House

Brookford Town Hall

Calendar of Events

Saturday, January 12, 9:00 - 4:00

Atlanta Model Train Show

North Atlanta Trade Center

1700 Jeurgens Court

Norcross, GA

www.gserr.com

Saturday, February 2 10:00 - 5:00

Sunday, February 3 12:00 - 5:00

Central Rwy Model & Hist Assn Train Show

Easley, SC

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

July 14 - July 20, 2013

Peachtree Express

2013 NMRA National Convention

Atlanta, GA

<http://www.nmra2013.org/>

Layouts In Progress

By Bob Halsey

Several of our members have made a lot of progress in adding to and improving their layouts over the past few months. Bob Wessmiller has added a number of industries and has plans to install a few more. Dick Beck has revised a major part of his layout; Larry Paffrath is nearing completion of his N gauge Norfolk Southern including several major yards and will be adding scenery and more industries. Dave Draxler has added some new spurs and a new sawmill.



Neal Anderson works on his new helix While Jim Rager and Bob Wessmiller work on the new upper deck

The most extensive work is certainly that being done by Neal Anderson to his super sized HO layout. The KK&L is becoming even larger with the addition of another double track helix at the south end, which connects to a new lower level and major passenger station. He still is adding track work and has much scenery and industries yet to appear. It will definitely be a layout to visit at our next RailRun weekend!



Neal's layout features this steel mill

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Another of our members, who only has a simple 4 x 8 HO setup, has done a lot of work helping out many of us with our rolling stock and control systems. Roy Becker definitely knows how to solve electronic problems and at one time or another has made house calls to many of our layouts. He installs DCC chips and lighting in locomotives and operating maintenance of way equipment, and is always ready to help our members.

He considers his layout as being primarily a "test track", and conducts seminars at every RMU.

Speaking of helping model railroaders, Rick Knight has held "open house" days at his KB&D Railroad (Norfolk Southern from Spencer to Ashville) recently. The kids really love it, especially when they get to run the trains, and even Moms, Dads, and grandparents are invited to become "guest engineers"!

So I hope everyone continues to have a very busy and Happy New Model Railroading Year! If anyone has any updates, photographs or new information about ongoing layouts in progress please forward them to Jack Haynes. Thanks!

CSD Swap Meet

Jack Haynes

On November 10, the Division hosted a Swap Meet at the Brookford Town Hall, home of the Train Town display layout maintained by the Division.



Visitors can spend a long time looking at the many detailed scenes on the Train Town Layout.



The Central Carolina N-Scalers were busy early setting up their modular layout for the Meet

A steady stream of visitors came through the meet all day. Besides the Train Town layout, there was also an NTrak layout set up for the day by the Central Carolina N-Scalers.



Fred Miller's traction diorama is just the right height for one of the visitors



Bob Halsey and Jim Rager show visitors some cars and kits they have for sale



It took a little stretching for this one to get a look at the NTrak layout.



The sales room had lots of quality cars and structures and also some basic inexpensive items

What To Do With My DC Powered HO Engines?

by Dick Beck

Over the past several years since I decided to “get back into HO trains”, many different engines have accumulated in my collection through purchases and repairs.

My collection is a vast mixture of steam and diesel engines. Some of the engines are older Mantua 4-6-2 heavy Pacific steamers from the mid 1950’s, and others are from the 1960’s and 70’s. The collection also includes some West German manufactured Fleischmann and Italian manufactured Rivarossi units.

What was I to do other than watch them collect dust and wonder if they should be sold, swapped, or somehow move them to another collector? None would run on my layout since it had been converted to a NCE DCC system several years ago; and using a four foot DC test track just was not too inspiring.

After sharing my dilemma with several other railroaders at the Monday evening Ops Sessions at Rick Kinght’s KB&D RR, Roy Becker discussed how the DC engines could be run on my DCC layout by simulating a decoder in the DC engine by hardwiring a decoder directly to the track bus.

It was suggested that a NCE ALTO decoder be used to power the DC engines. NCE markets this decoder for use in Atlas “O” scale engines. A wiring schematic was drawn by Roy and the service connections were made by Roy to the decoder.

The next step was to put everything together. The original schematic included a DPDT center off switch to isolate the DCC side of the system from the DC side when running a DC engine on the layout. Everything was powered through the NCE SB3a booster—a separate DC transformer was not required. Protection was added as the DC ALTO decoder circuit runs through one of the existing NCE EB1 district circuit breakers.

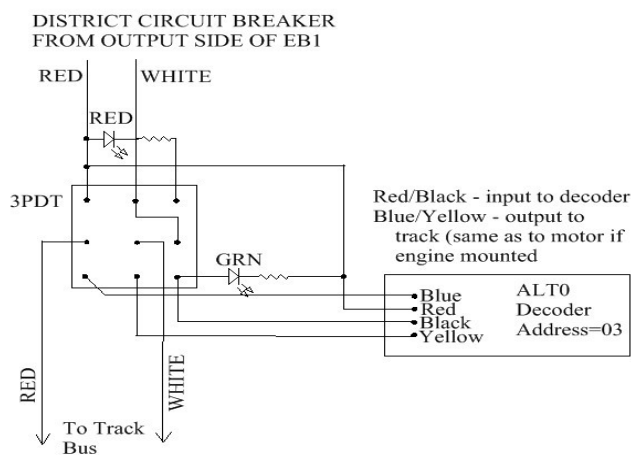
After reviewing the proposed wiring schematic, there was additional concern that a fail safe double protection circuit or cutoff was necessary. Besides, I was interested in adding a little “flash” by including some LED indicator lights in the primary circuit drawn by Roy. The “flash” tends to keep the next generation interested in running trains.

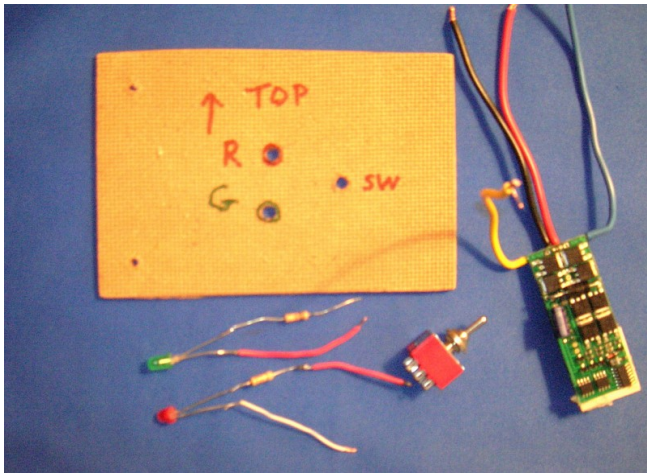
A simple SPST toggle switch was added along with RED and GREEN LEDs and the appropriate resistors indicating ALTO decoder DC status. However, everything did not work “as expected.” My electrical engineering talents were not up to par. It was literally back to the drawing board.

So, while on vacation to the beach, and after a few brews, I enlisted the electrical engineering expertise of my retired brother-in-law who had worked for a NASA subcontractor at Kennedy Space Center in the early years. He suggested the DPDT and SPT be removed and a 3PDT on-on switch be used as their replacement. A new schematic was drawn (see pictures) and the circuit was constructed.

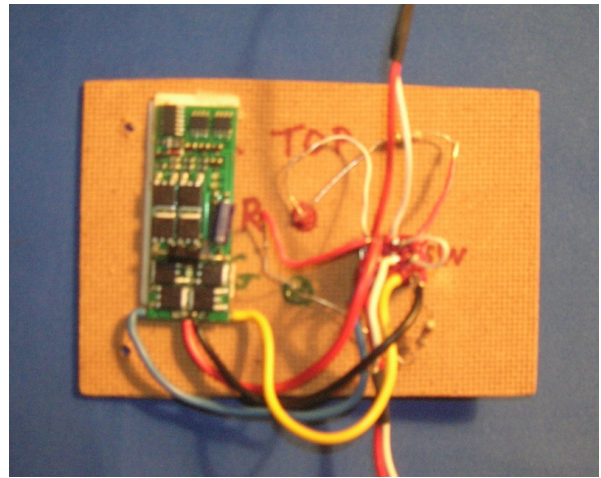
With some trepidation, the new panel was wired to the layout and powered up. Everything worked fine. An extra DC transformer is not required as everything is powered through the NCE SB3a booster and EB1 circuit breakers.

NCE ALTO Decoder for DC or DCC





Parts needed and back of panel

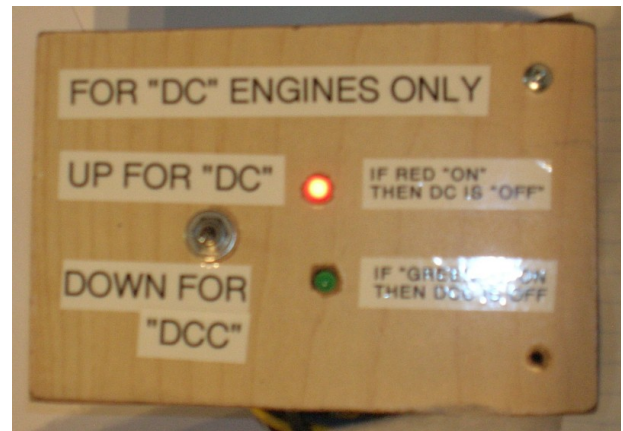


Rear view of assembled panel

To operate DC engines on the DCC layout, one must be cautious to remove all DCC engines from the layout—just for added safety. After that is done, the 3PDT switch is set to DC mode, the green LED lights up and DC trains can be operated. The LED indicators give a visual indicator that the system is “ready to run a DC engine.”



Switch is up for DC and Green LED is lit



Switch is down for DCC and Red LED is lit

To run, one only needs to place the DC engine on the track. Using the existing NCE throttles, select engine number “3”, and away the engine goes. The cab address for all the DC engines is the same. The decoder “thinks” it is mounted in the engine since the drive/motor voltage goes directly to the engine through the track bus.

In operating DC engines, the engineer needs to be cautious to NOT enter a district that is DCC powered—remember the booster is still operating other districts as if they were DCC. Thus, the limitation to this design is that only one DC engine can be run at a time and NO DCC engines should be on the layout. Worst case would be to cross either a DC engine into a DCC district or the opposite. Should that happen, then something will most likely “smoke.”

Result-- DC engines have a new life and the dust bunnies are not as thick on some engines.

To return to DCC running, remove any DC engine from the layout, reverse the above process and make sure the 3PDT is set to DCC mode and the DC indicator LED is RED. Place a DCC engine on the track and DCC operations can be resumed.

Much thanks to Roy Becker for the initial idea and circuit design, Jack Haynes for help in “proofing” the original design, and Richard Warren for the re-design improvements that led to successful operation of DC engines on my DCC layout.

* Copyright 2013 Dick Beck

Carolina Southern Division

Annual Business Meeting Agenda, January 26, 2013

- Welcome members and visitors
- Discussion of October 2012 MER Convention
- 2013 MER Convention will be October 10-13 in Rockville, MD
- 2013 NMRA Convention will be July 14-20 in Atlanta, GA
- Reports:
 - Paymaster
 - Membership
 - Brookford Project
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - Achievement Program
 - Railroad Modeling University
 - RailRun Weekend
- Need new Fun Committee/Calendar Coordinator
- Plans for 2013:
 - Monthly meetings
 - Swap meet?
 - Railfan trips
 - RailRun weekend
 - Annual Picnic
 - Boy Scout Merit Badge Day at the Explorium
- Elections for Paymaster and Director
 - Introduction of Paymaster candidate
 - Directors nominee for Director 2015: Gil Brauch
- Recognition for Services Rendered
- Member Suggestions and Other Business
- Adjourn

The Division Brass

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Division Website:

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Submissions For Brass Pounder

Next Issue Submission Date
March 2013 February 22, 2013

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

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