

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 16 Number 3

May–June 2016

Coming Events

(See CSD Website for
further details)

CSD Monthly Events:

Unless noted, all
meetings at Hunter
Acres Baptist Church,
4620 Heman Drive,
Charlotte

Saturday, May 21st
10 AM Layout Visit
Alan Hardee
908 S. 9th St.
Bessemer City

June 18th, 9:30 AM
An Introduction to
Modular Model
Railroading

July 16th, 10:AM
Layout Visit
Ty Brown
4777 Camp Cabarrus
Dr., Kannapolis

Other Events

June 25, 9AM
13th Annual NC Model
Train Show & Sale
Metrolina Expo Trade
Center

Oct 20-23, MER 2016
Fall Convention
Durham, NC

Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

When working on a model railroad, the mind will sometimes wonder. This happened to me recently while rebuilding the yard area on my Carolina Central. The area that we actually model may be small, but we want the impression that it goes on forever. To achieve this, we paint the backdrop blue, add clouds, background building, and trees. There are even photo backdrops to choose from to help us with this. We also want connections to the world beyond the layout. This can be achieved with interchange tracks on the layout to represent a connection with another railroad. The use of hidden staging areas gives the illusion that the trains we operate connect to the outside world. There is another connection that we sometimes forget, people.

We need to connect with other people. It's how we exchange ideas, learn modeling tips, and make new friends. These meetings can be one on one, or group clinics like at our Railroad Modeling University. The Carolina Southern Division is a great way to make your connection with people within our hobby. There are a lot of members in this Division that I haven't met yet. I want to make those connections, and call everyone FRIEND.

I met Jack Dziadul from Carolina Piedmont Division 13 when he presented details on the upcoming MER Convention at our RMU in February. I learned that Jack lived in Sanford, NC. My in-laws also live in Sanford so this had my attention. I now have a new connection with a model railroader outside our division. I made plans to meet when I visited Sanford for Easter. Jack and Bob Bridges invited me along to see a couple of layouts that will be on the MER Convention schedule. The first stop was Jim Babcock's HO Scale B & O layout based in Pittsburgh. Jims Layout was just photographed and submitted to Model Railroader. Most of the structures are scratch built to match photos of buildings from the area. The next Layout we visited was Lou Sassi's On30 Sandy River & Rangely Lakes. You may know Lou as a nationally known author and

Superintendent's Corner – continued

photographer. It was an honor for me to photograph his layout. I did have to promise Lou that I would not post any photos of his layout on the web. I will share the photos of both layouts at an upcoming meeting.

My next visit to see the In-laws just might turn into a railfanning or operating opportunity with my new FRIENDS.



Editor's Notes

By Fred Miller, MMR

We have some interesting articles for you in this issue of the newsletter. Bob Halsey shares his visit to Alaska with notes and photos of the Alaska Railroad. I've got some notes on the recent National Train Day at NCTM in Spencer.

And Andrew Stitt, our Program Director, has some updates on the Division's coming events.

Have you noticed the number of online model railroading teaching aids? In addition to the various discussion groups, Kalmbach has a great digital presence with their *MRExtra* newsletter which is related to a subscription to MR. I find the *MR Video Plus* extra fare offering particularly entertaining and informative.

Submissions For Brass Pounder

Next Issue	Submission Date
July-August 2016	July 1, 2016

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

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And a new online offering has been announced: *Model Railroad Academy with Allen Keller*. This seems to be a combination of Allen Keller's old layout visit videos as well as new "comprehensive proven tricks, techniques, insight and inspiration" from other modelers.



Division Program Notes

By Andrew Stitt

May 21, 2016

Our visit to the Southern Piedmont Live Steamers was unfortunately cancelled by the live steamers because of a lack of crew members. (Editor's Note: Alan Hardee stepped up to offer a layout visit and working session at his layout starting 10AM. Burgers on the grill are offered for compensation to work teams doing cork, track and some wiring).

June 18, 2016

The June meeting will be titled "An Introduction to Modular Model Railroading". It will feature a panel presentation put on by myself, Gil, and Alan. It will be held on June 18th at 9:30 AM at the Hunter Acres Baptist Church in Charlotte. Among the things we will present are modules of varying types of construction, what goes into building them, and a discussion of using modules as a home layout, all or part. We intend to have modules available for viewing as well as comparison.

July 16, 2016

The July meeting will be on the 16th (after the national convention and train show) and will be hosted by Ty Brown at his house at 10 AM. Ty has a 1:20.3 layout inside his basement. It has more than 100 ft. of

running track, so it will be fascinating to see what Ty has done with this large scale within his basement. In addition, Ty is going to share some of his knowledge and experience on casting and vacuum forming for modelers. Topics on casting will include making RTV molds, degassing, pressure casting, and hollow casting. Ty's address is 4777 Camp Cabarrus Dr., Kannapolis, NC 28081. Due to limited space this visit is limited to NMRA members only. Andrew CSD Program Director



Railroading Way Up North

By Bob Halsey

Some of us may have enjoyed watching the recent TV series about the Alaska Railroad and its wintertime difficulties. These are certainly not exaggerated, and the ARR is surely a vital necessity to the individualists who choose to live out in the wilderness.



Figure 1 - Alaska RR SD70 Diesel

Division Website:
www.carolinasouthern.org



Figure 2 Front of train



Figure 3 - Rear of Train



Figure 4 - Train Enroute

But most people who have contact with this historic line do so in the summer, when the scenery is most beautiful, and snow is normally seen only on distant mountain tops. This is when the majority of the thousands of tourists from the “lower 48” ride the modern coaches and dome cars traveling between Fairbanks, in the center of Alaska, and Anchorage, down on Cook Inlet leading to the Pacific Ocean.



Figure 5 - Early AAR Power

The most popular stop is Denali National Park, halfway between the two cities, where visitors can see the very scenic park, see lots of wildlife (eagles, caribou, moose, bears, etc.), go white-water rafting for 11 miles on the Nenana River (you wear rubber suits), watch sled dog training, and take a bus tour up 90 miles into the park interior to get a view of the highest mountain in North America – if the weather is clear! The park is the size of Massachusetts. Next stop south of Denali Park is Talkeetna, where serious hikers and cross-country skiers (in the winter) get off to start their ordeals.



Figure 6 - Maintenance of Way



Figure 7 - More MOW at DP Station



Figure 8 - Hi-Railer at Denali Station



Figure 9 - Speeder at Fairbanks Station

Construction of the ARR began in 1914 to serve the gold miners, lumbermen, fur trappers and other denizens of that rugged country. The construction camp grew so large, that the Post Office decided it needed a name, so they held a contest. The winning entry was named after the steamship which brought most of the miners, workers, and supplies up from Seattle – the S.S. Anchorage. The camp is now a large modern city and the site of the railroad’s major freight yard, passenger station, and maintenance facility (they do have some unusual Maintenance of Way equipment!). From there you can go north to Denali Park and Fairbanks or southeast to Whittier and Seward. But the line, a single-track main with passing sidings, does not go west to Nome, or east to Canada and the “lower 48”, not even to Alaska’s capitol, Juneau!

The ARR carries a lot of oil, lumber, coal, gravel, and general freight (autos, food, and items found in most stores), and of course, people! The passenger trains (2 or 3 a day in each direction) pulled by 2 SD70s, are money makers and fun to ride, with kitchens and dining tables on the lower levels of the dome cars. The dining area servers (in the summer) are all very attractive college girls

on vacation, many from Bulgaria and other eastern European countries, and all speak perfect English with no accents!

Just as with highway and road work, most ARR track maintenance is done from May to September. The main highway between Anchorage and Fairbanks was built early in WWII to help the Army defend Alaska, and from Fairbanks it connects with the WWII-built Alcan Highway that goes down through Canada to Montana. Fairbanks is the site of the main campus of the University of Alaska with its excellent museum. There is a restaurant in town that advertises “the northernmost Southern Barbecue in the U.S.”, and it is as good as the best you can get down here!

The Fairbanks passenger station has a large room at one end that contains the layout of the Tanaka Valley Model Railroad Club, which is a very detailed, operating HO scale depiction of a typical ARR section with mountains, bridges, and associated industries. They are looking for additional members, because like many of our large layouts down here, most of the work is done by a handful of talented, dedicated individuals!



Figure 10 - Tanaka Valley Model RR Club

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I did not get a chance to check out the model

railroad scene in Anchorage, but the station gift shop has a variety of HO items on sale.

Although there are a few adventurous souls who drive their RVs up from the lower 48, it is far more convenient to fly from Seattle to one of Alaska's major cities via Alaska Airlines, or ride a luxury cruise liner up from Vancouver, B.C. But if you want to do some serious wildlife and whale watching, fly to



Sitka or Juneau and then board one of the smaller vessels (they're comfortable but not very big!) that take you into the Inside Passage, and you will see glaciers, whales, bears, salmon streams, waterfalls, etc. really up close, and go hiking and kayaking. In any case, whatever type visit you prefer, make sure it includes a ride on the Alaska Railroad!!



Figure 11 - Unusual Alaska Road Signs

Notes on National Train Day at Spencer

By Fred Miller

I had the opportunity to visit one of our favorite railroad places on Saturday, May 14th. The NC Transportation Museum offered up a celebration day for members and the general public.

The Saturday events included the usual train rides with both a train of coaches and a train of cabooses



And some of those great restored diesels and steam engines were operating for the

trains or on exhibit at various spots around the museum and in the roundhouse.

Norfolk Southern was there with their repainted Southern Railway SD40 #3170. In fact it was put to work pulling the caboose train for a few trips



One of my favorite little diesels (because I have a Bachmann HO model of it) a GE 45 Tonner, was on display. Unfortunately it has only been cosmetically restored and not operational.



As many of you can guess, what really got my juices flowing was the exhibit of Charlotte Trolley Car No. 85. After a bunch of political meanderings at Charlotte Trolley, Inc., the car has a new home (at least for a few years) at NCTM where it will be well cared for and maybe even put into operation with a trailing generator car as in the early days in Charlottes South End.



The little four-wheel Greek car that was used for parades and celebrations in Charlotte, was also moved up to Spencer



One of the several presentations given during the day was put on by a couple of the original Charlotte Trolley guys who actually restored Car No. 85. Lots of interesting tidbits were offered up for us traction fans.

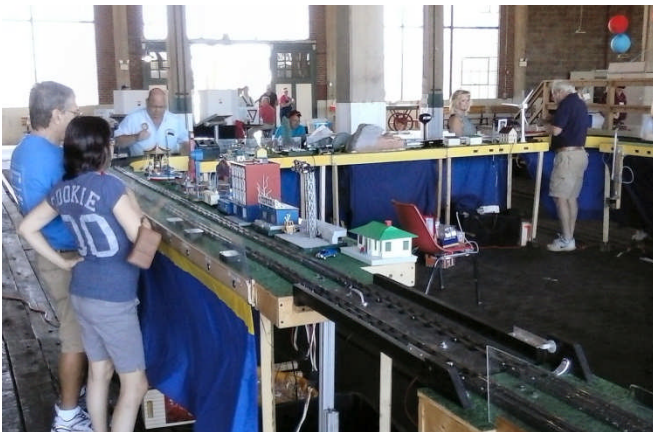


Recognize this guy? He is of course Marcus Neubacher, a member of our Division and now Director of Administration at NCTM. He's responsible for arranging many great events at the Museum.



The National Train Day event also included a few operating layouts including the N Scale modular group and a S Scale tinplate club

I reported in the last issue of the BP that my wife and I had enjoyed the special NCTM's dinner train event. Well I again enjoyed lunch in a nice dining car during this visit.



And our Division was represented with the traveling Show Table. Thanks to Alan and some of his Metrolina Model Railroaders buddies for staffing the table.



Although the attendance at the National Train Day did not seem to be much over a typical Saturday, I thought it was a great day



Carolina Piedmont Division (<http://cpd13.org/>) will build on the very successful conventions that we hosted in Cary in 2005 and 2011. We are planning to incorporate a Railroad Prototype Modelers (RPM) room at the convention. We now have the custom Hotel Registration link here: <http://tinyurl.com/nzcjwvz> Last day to book: 9/30/16 at the special \$99.99/night rate.

Make your plans now to join us next Fall from October 20 – 23, 2016 at Tracks to the Triangle in Durham, NC.

Division Brass

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If you are a member of the NMRA and would prefer to receive the full color version of *THE BRASS POUNDER* by an email attachment, please let the editor know.

If you are not a member of the NMRA but would like to join and continue to reap the benefits at the National, Regional and Division level, please contact the editor for information.

Fred Miller, MMR

Editor

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(see additional contact information elsewhere in this newsletter or our web site)