

# THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 18 Number 1

January - February 2018

## Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

**Division Coming  
Events**  
(See CSD Website  
for further details)

**Jan 27, 2018  
CSD's Annual  
RMU (Railroad  
Modelers  
University)  
Christ the King  
Church**

**Other Events**

**Mar 23-25  
RPM Valley Forge  
Convention**

Welcome to 2018. January is a very busy month for Carolina Southern Division 12. The World's Greatest Hobby Train Show was in Charlotte, NC January 13-14th at The Park Expo Center. Thanks to everyone that stopped by the NMRA booth to say hello and even volunteer to help man the booth. We are still awaiting word from National office on how many new people were signed up through the Rail Pass program.

The 2018 Annual Division Business Meeting was held on January 20th at Hunter Acres Baptist Church. This was an important meeting for everyone as it was election time and several division positions were term limited. Thank You Fred and Gil for all your time serving CSD. Congratulations to the following CSD Officers:

Superintendent – Alan Hardee, elected to 2nd term  
Assistant Superintendent – Jack Monette, 1st Term  
Clerk – Ed Gumphrey, 1st Term  
Paymaster – John Stevens, 3rd Term  
Director – Larry Paffrath, 1st Term  
Newsletter Editor – Ed, Gumphrey

We are in need of a Publicity Chairman to put us out there in the public eye. We also need a Program Chairman to plan our monthly activities. This can be clinics, layout visits and/or Op Sessions, Prototype tours, or Museum tours each month. Our February meeting will be held at the layout of Seth Gartner at 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 17. Check the website for address and directions.

Congratulations to Metrolina Model Railroaders on becoming a 100% NMRA Club for 2018. If you would like more information on this local model railroad club, contact me at [superintendent@carolinasouthern.org](mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org)

Also we had a discussion about our division hosting the 2020 MER Convention. An informal poll conducted in October proved positive but we still need to hear from you. Our next step is to get detailed responsibilities for the positions that CSD will handle. I have reached out to Division 13 for their input from the 2016 convention they hosted.

RMU – Railroad Modeling University was held on January 27th at Christ The King Church, 13501 S. Tryon St. Charlotte, NC. The classes started at 9:00 in the morning and ran until 4 p.m. It was a highly successful event and you'll be able to read more about it in the next edition.

Let's make 2018 the best year yet and have fun doing it.

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## Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

This is my first edition of *The Brass Pounder* since being elected as Clerk and appointed as editor during the CSD Annual Meeting on January 20th. First off, my sincere thanks to Fred Miller for his service as editor over the past years and his detailed turnover of files and tips to me. I recently sent an email to the CSD membership soliciting inputs for this newsletter. I welcome your feedback at [editor@carolinasouthern.org](mailto:editor@carolinasouthern.org) and encourage you to submit your ideas and articles for publication.

One of the first feedback topics I received regards format. Most of you are reading this on a computer screen or tablet, and some may even be reading on your smart phone. Two column layout works great for printed material, but can make scrolling difficult on electronic displays. With hopes that it makes this easier for you to read, and following the lead of the *The Local* (MER Newsletter) I've shifted to page width layout. I'm also going to be using hyperlinks. Any time a link to either a web page or email address appears, I'll give you the ability to hot link directly to the target site.

**UPCOMING  
AREA TRAIN SHOWS**

**Central Railway Model & Historical  
Association Train Show**

**[Central, SC](#)**

**February 9 & 10, 2018**

**Carolina Coastal Railroaders Train Show**

**[New Bern, NC](#)**

**February 24 & 25, 2018**

**Asheville Train Show**

**[Fletcher, NC](#)**

**March 2 & 3, 2018**

**NC Railroad Expo Train Show**

**[Hickory, NC](#)**

**April 7, 2018**

## **Upcoming Area Train Shows**

By Ed Gumphrey

I'll include this billboard in future issues of The Brass Pounder when there are shows scheduled. Not all the shows listed are in CSD counties, but I will list those within commuting distance. I'll try my best to stay a couple of months ahead of schedule to help with your planning. Clicking on the blue hyperlinks will take you to a website with more detailed information.

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## **REGIONAL NEWS**

As CSD members know, we just held office elections during our Annual Meeting on January 20th. Well, our regional organization needs help too. The MER has reached out to the Divisions seeking nominations for key offices in preparation for the upcoming MER election this summer. Nominees are needed for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Please consider offering your name to the slate. Your support would not only be valuable to the Region, but could also help you qualify for the Association Official AP award. If you are unable to make a commitment for yourself, please encourage other members who might be interested. Give it serious consideration. For more specific information, and to submit nominations, contact Alan Hardee, our Superintendent [superintendent@carolinasouthern.org](mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org) prior to May 30th.

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# A Cab Ride at Cass

By Ed Gumphrey

In *Back To The Future III*, just after Marty and Doc have hijacked the train and are headed to where they've staged the DeLorean time machine, Doc pulls on the whistle cord for a long blast. He exclaims "I've wanted to do that my whole life." If you're like me, you probably said to yourself, "me too!" Remember the brief flash of excitement over the thought of operating a steam locomotive and blowing the whistle? Well, I can tell you from experience, it is indeed exciting.

This story begins in my office back in Virginia Beach in the fall of 2008. From my office decorations, Frank Severance, a friend and colleague where I worked, was aware of my love of trains. An accomplished photographer, he had stopped by to share some pictures from his recent railfan trip chasing one of Union Pacific's Challengers. During the chat, I mentioned the [Cass Scenic Railroad](#) as a great

place to experience the sights, sounds and smells of steam railroading at its close-up best. Frank had never been there and after I showed him some photos from the web, he decided to go see it the next weekend. Three weeks later, he stopped by again.



Frank is one of those people that you instantly like. Always living life at full throttle, he would make friends everywhere he went. This time he had loads of great pictures from Cass, including from his cab ride. As it turns out, he had actually made two trips. During the first, he had taken many photos, which he then printed and gave to the crews on his second trip. Although they frequently posed for pictures with visitors, they rarely got a chance to

see the photos and had been delighted. Imagine my jealousy. I told him how much I'd love a cab ride. Frank smiled and promised he could hook me up.

We met in Cass early in the morning on October 17, 2008. Frank was greeted by crewmembers as if he were a long lost friend, and soon I was grinning from the cab of Shay No 5. West Virginia mountain country is beautiful in the fall, and the ride halfway up Bald Knob to Whittaker was fantastic. Surrounded by fall colors and taking in the sounds and smells of a working Shay, I began my cab ride. Rather than try to describe the scene any better, I'll let the pictures and captions tell the story. Needless to say, getting to pull on the whistle cord was a



thrill. Sadly, Frank Severance passed away in 2016. I am forever grateful for the experience he arranged for me. Like Doc said in *Back To The Future III*, I wanted to do it my whole life.



*The engineer oils around prior to the run bu Bald Knob*



*Teaching the next generation, the engineer shows an apprentice how it's done.*



*Shay No. 5, built in 1905, is the oldest Shay at Cass.*

You can get more information at <http://www.msrlha.org/roster-locos.html#shay5>



*The business end of the running gear. With its vertical cylinders turning the crankshaft, power is transferred through the drive shafts to the geared trucks. Shays aren't fast, but with their gearing are able to produce exceptional torque for pulling loads up steep grades.*



*Blowing down as we start the run.*



*Trackwork sweeps through the beauty of fall. The Cass Scenic Railway snakes up Bald Knob through a series of switchbacks. The line climbs 2500 feet in 11 miles.*



*Keeping the firebox stoked. On the uphill run, the "fireman" stayed pretty busy, but she was able to relax a bit on the downhill stretches. The next picture shows why I put quotations around "fireman."*





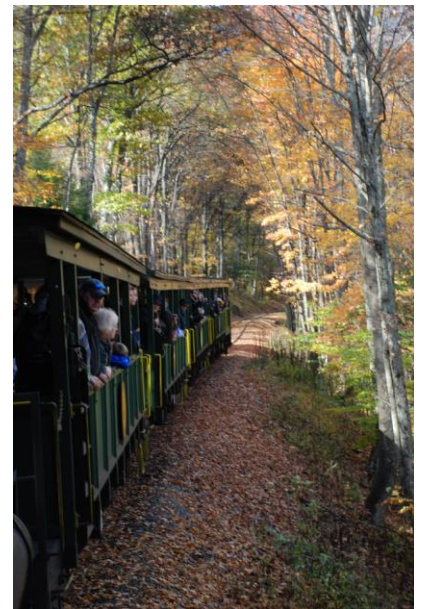
*Don't ever think that you over-weathered a structure. This abandoned sawmill just outside of Cass would make a great scratchbuilding project.*



*For October, Cass had a number of Halloween displays along the route.*



*Looking back over the coal pile and water tender, a view of where we've been.*



*Looking the other way.*



*Open passenger cars are pushed up the hill.*



*It takes a steady hand on the throttle and an engineer ready to give a shot of sand. Even the geared Shay occasionally slipped when there were wet leaves on the rails. The maximum grade at Cass is 11% and even at 2 or 3 mph, the Shay works pretty hard at times.*



*Mother Nature pretty much says it all.*







*Pulling in to Whittaker for feedwater and a brief stop, halfway up Bald Knob. Some pretty interesting railroad equipment there. Several cabooses, log cars, a crane, and log skidder are among the attractions.*



*On the return trip to Cass, I ceded my locomotive perch to Frank and I took a spot in one of the open passenger cars.*

### Division Brass

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