

# **THE BRASS POUNDER**



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

**Volume 25 Number 5**

**May 2025**

## **Division Coming Events**

**April 4-5**

**Spencer Train Show @ The NC  
Transportation Museum**

**1 Samuel Spencer Dr, Spencer,  
NC 28159**

**Saturday, May 17th from 9-5**

**And**

**Sunday, May 18th from 10-4**

## **Superintendent's Corner**

**By Andrew Stitt**

We have a full summer of activities planned for the members of the Carolina Southern Division. Beginning in May, we will have a table at the train show at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer on the 17th and 18th. This will be in lieu of a regular meeting as I anticipate a fair number of our members will be there at one time or another. So please stop by the table and say hello.

In June we will begin our regular monthly meetings again. The date for this meeting will be the 14th, but the location and clinic topic(s) have yet to be defined. If anyone prefers a location, please let me know. The following Saturday, we have been invited to travel to Cassatt, SC for a day of fun on the Dreams Come True

(outdoor) Railroad featuring free rides around a very large 7-1/2" gauge railroad. More details will appear in a separate article.

The July meeting is planned for the 19th. Again, location and clinic topic(s) to be determined. In August, we will have a meeting as well as an outing to visit and tour the Lionel headquarters in Concord. Details of the date and time are being worked out and will be announced very soon as reservations will be needed for this event.

Then closing out the Summer, many of you responded in our Annual Meeting survey that you wished to continue with the Division picnic. Again, details will be announced as we get closer to the date, but it is on the calendar.

As a side note, several members I know are planning on attending the NMRA 2025 National Convention in Novi, Mi in July. If you have already signed up or are thinking of signing up, please let me know. While it is a big event with many activities, it would be great to coordinate a get together so we can see one another, compare experiences, and get a group picture or two. Joe Skorch and I are planning on attending.

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## Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Well happy May to everyone out there! May has me thinking of train shows. Of course you've heard (or I hope you have) of the train show in Spencer at the North Carolina Transportation Museum coming up later this month. More details on that later in this issue.... And here's the one I'm super excited about - The National Convention and the National Train Show.



You see, I've never been to a national before. If you've been following along, I just went to my first ever regional show for the MER a couple months ago. And now I want more! More clinics, more friends, more layouts, and of course more train show. My timing couldn't be better apparently because it seems this year they have positioned the show to be more accessible to more people - that is to say they have lowered the price. I'm sure folks who have been to shows past have an opinion on how this one compares, but the only way to find out I guess is to go. And I say you can't go wrong with good people and good trains.

So now I begin the process of planning out my trip. Half the fun is the excitement leading up to the big event after all. I hope you will all consider joining me. Flights are cheap (\$200 or so roundtrip from Charlotte).

Registration is cheap (\$125). You can even get a Friday/ Saturday pass for half that price if you just want to drop in for a couple days and that also includes entrance to the National Train show. That's all for now - hope to see you in Detroit!

## Division and Regional News

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### Wade's Train Town

#### Wade's Train Town – April Stats

Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

Open houses: 4

Attendance: 68

Volunteers: Ed Smith, Chad Barnette, Tim Rust, Gil Brauch, Bob Halsey

We are, once again, requesting members to step up and volunteer to spend one Saturday a month, at most, at the Legacy Train Exhibit at the Newton Narrow Gauge Museum. We just leveled out at 4 volunteers again, but proved how fragile these manning levels are by having an illness among us. We really need one or two more bodies to solidify our obligations. So if you can see fit to volunteer, it will be really appreciated

### The AP Report from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR



#### **This is a short intro to the AP Awards in Structures.**

To clear some doubt about wondering if you can ever get this AP, Here's a new way of looking at it. First start with a kit from a box. Copy the parts from the kit to plastic or wood. That will give you two buildings to build. Make notes on a piece of paper as you build on what you used for materials. You can take photos too. Add lots of details to both of the buildings. When you are done you will have one kit bashed building and the second one will be a scratch-built building. You can also build a bridge doing the same thing. After that you will have four structures built. So with that being said. You will only have to build six items, because you will have a total of twelve structures built. Only six need to get Merit awards. Just so you know that's what I'm doing now.

## Scratch Building the Waxhaw Bridge, Part 2

Contributed by David Myers, Clerk

The decks for the center span and the two ramps are completed for now. Hand rails and guard rails will be added later. The next step will be the support piers.



There are three sets of piers. One tall pair of piers in the center carries the center span over the railroad track with a clearance of twenty feet. Two pairs of shorter piers support the midpoints of the ramps and the ends of the ramps as the ramps slope downward to street level.

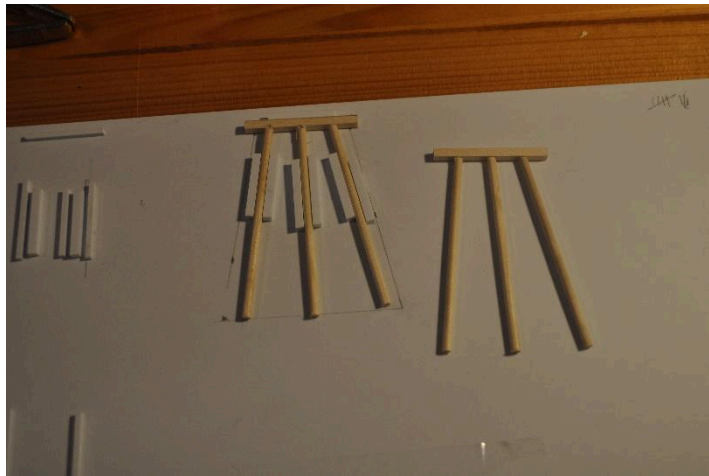


The two center piers, the midpoint pier, and the end pier at the steps to the street looking south.

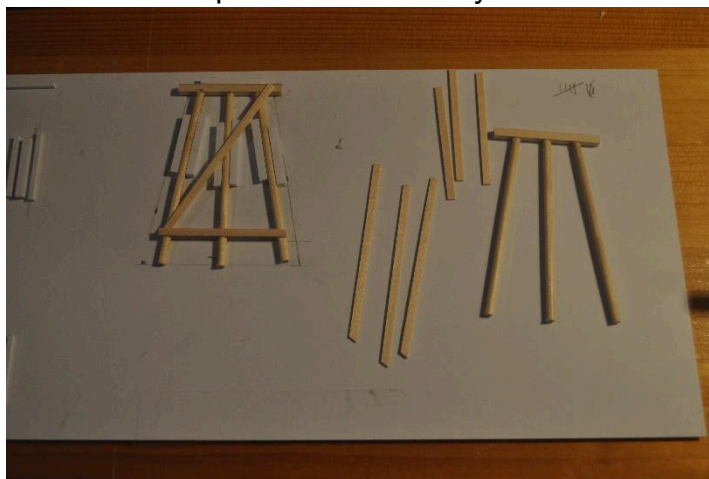
The two center piers are each supported by three twelve inch diameter poles (perhaps originally intended as telephone poles). The center pole is vertical and the two outside poles are at a ten degree angle. Each pier is topped by a 12" x 12" x 14' beam.

I prepared a jig of styrene for assembly of the piers to ensure consistent reproduction of the ten degree angle.

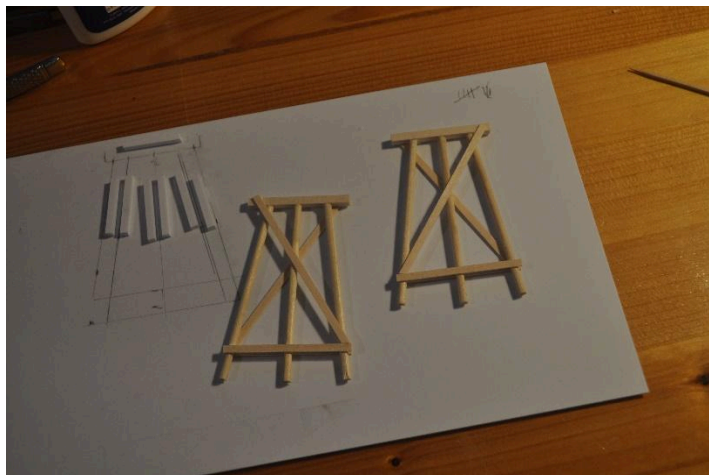




The center piers are braced by 3"x 7" boards.



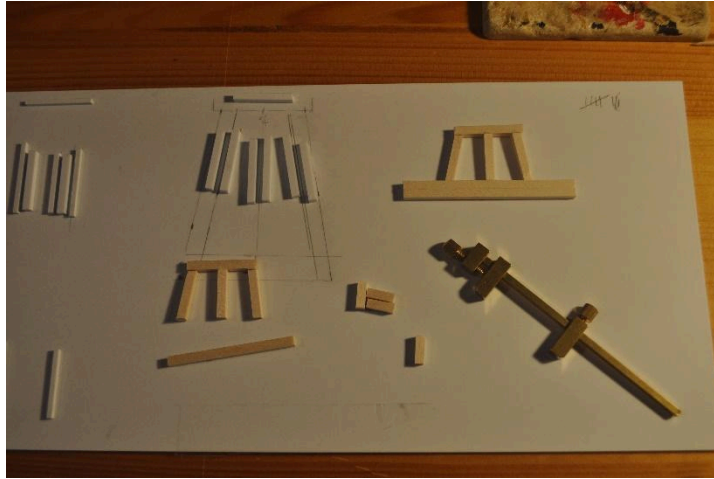
Bracing the center piers in progress.



Bracing for the center piers completed

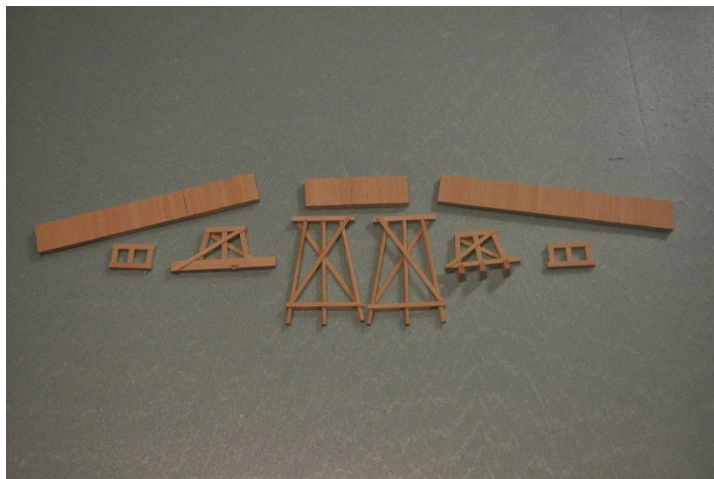
The midpoint piers each are made from 12" x 12" beams. Again, the center beam is vertical and the outside beams are at a ten degree angle. Again, the piers are topped with 12" x 12" beams, but only about 8' long. The jig for the center piers was used to assemble

the midpoint piers. The midpoint piers rest on 12" x 12" beams embedded in the embankment. Like the center piers, they are braced by 3" x 7" wood boards.



Assembling the midpoint piers.

The end piers are, of course, the shortest. Each end pier consists of three vertical 12" x 12" supports capped with a 12" x 12" beam and resting on an embedded 12" x 12" beam foundation.



The three decks and six piers

Now to the railings.

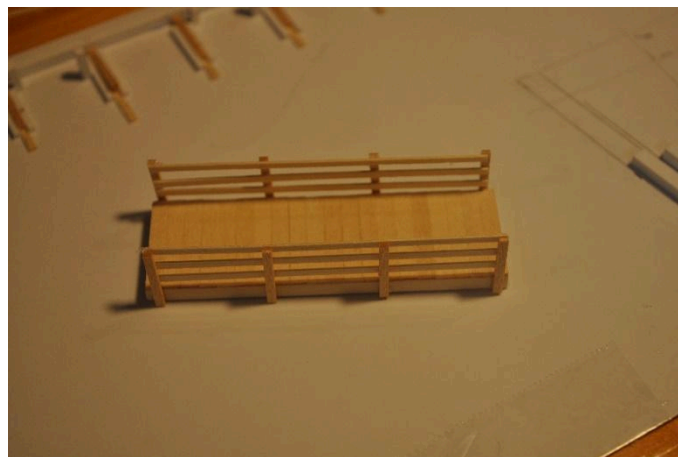
The railings on the center span and ramps are 2" x 6" boards. The railings are supported by a total of thirty-two 4" x 6" x 4.5' balusters. Attachment of the balusters to the decks was simplified because the balusters are mounted at right angles to the decks and not vertically. (Didn't need to figure out those angles!)

As with the decks and piers, I constructed a styrene jig to facilitate precise assembly. I made it long enough to accommodate six balusters to permit use for both the center deck

and the ramps. I allowed a full day for the glue to dry for each step. This ensured all the parts stayed together when they were removed from the jig.



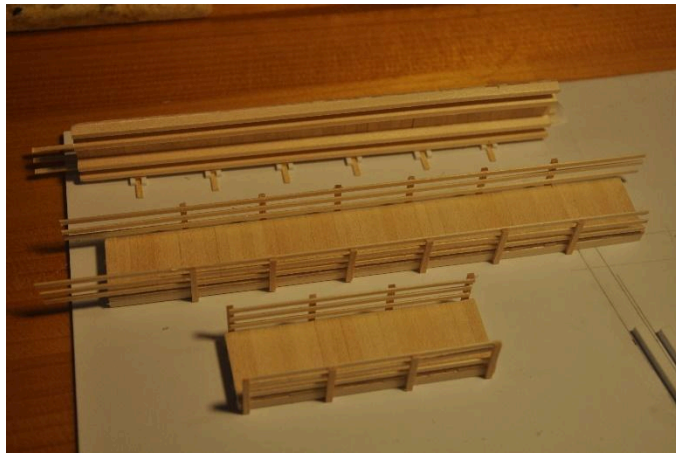
Handrails for the center span in the jig



Handrails on the center span



Handrails for the south ramp in the jig



Completed handrails on the center span and south ramp.  
North ramp in the jig.

The next step will be to construct the stairways at the north and south ends of the bridge.

## From The Roundhouse - Updates from the NC Transportation Museum

Contributed by Marcus Neubacher



The N.C. Transportation Museum will be hosting its Historic Spencer Shops Train Show on May 17 and 18. Once again, this show will be held mostly in the historic Back Shop completed in 1905 and will feature a large selection of items from vendors of model trains and memorabilia. The museum will have several modular layouts in multiple scales on display during the show. A night photo shoot is being planned, and more details will be available soon on the museum's website at

[www.nctransportationmuseum.org](http://www.nctransportationmuseum.org).





## **Dreams Come True Railroad**

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

At the invitation of the owners, David and Denise Schleper, members and their families of the Carolina Southern Division have been invited to visit the railroad on Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>. For those of you who are considering a visit, they have created a very nice environment for enjoying their outdoor railroad. The 7-1/2" railroad winds through an extensive pine forest with many scenic views, including a tunnel! They have also built a very large, screened clubhouse complete with running water and toilets.

The Schlepers have offered to provide lunch, but for this we will need to get an accurate headcount prior to the visit. Please contact Neal Anderson or Scott Davenport if you are planning on attending and would like to have lunch provided by our hosts. It is requested that those attending donate \$5 per person to help cover the cost of the food and beverages.

The address for the Dreams Come True Railroad is:

2164 Beaver Dam Road

Cassatt, SC 29032



## **Dreams Come True Railroad Invite**

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

Scott Davenport and myself will be hosting the meeting of the Carolina Southern Division 12 at the railroad on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2025.

Dreams Come True Railroad will be having an open house that same day. You can come early and ride the trains. We can even teach you to drive the trains. The meeting will be at 11:00 am and lunch will be after. The railroad will be open for you to ride on. We have 2 miles of track that is currently being expanded. It has two indoor bathrooms that are in the club house. We will be cooking up hamburgers and Hot dogs in the club house. Chips and drinks will be there.

There is a live powered steam engine on the railroad, gas powered diesel engines, electric powered steam engines, and electric powered diesels engines. Don't forget to do some car pooling to get there.

Come see what we have been doing as a Group of railroaders.

Thanks,

Neal Anderson

2164 Beaver Dam Rd.  
Cassatt, SC  
29032-9371

# An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Contributed by Chad Barnette, Editor

A permanent layout in my basement (glorified crawl space) - an idea whose time has come. It has been far too long since I had any kind of permanent layout I could call my own. Since moving to the area three years ago the only work I've done has been on my N-scale T-Trak modules. I still have those, but I've been itching to have a permanent layout in a larger scale. Not having a real idea of what I wanted.....not having a plan.....feeling stagnant in my efforts.....these are all things that have contributed to my inaction.

But I finally said I'm just going to start. Let me repeat that phrase, if only for me to hear it and soak it in. I'm just going to start. I think the pressure of not having something perfect and maybe not having a plan at all keeps us all from enjoying the hobby. I said to myself. "You know what, I just want to have some fun". All that inaction had sucked the life out of me. Not everyone will agree, but I've come to the point where I think, "who cares if I have a plan or not". It's all about the enjoyment of the hobby. Was I enjoying it before when the basement just seemed like a depressing place where nothing good ever happened? No, I certainly wasn't. But....spoiler alert. I am having fun now.

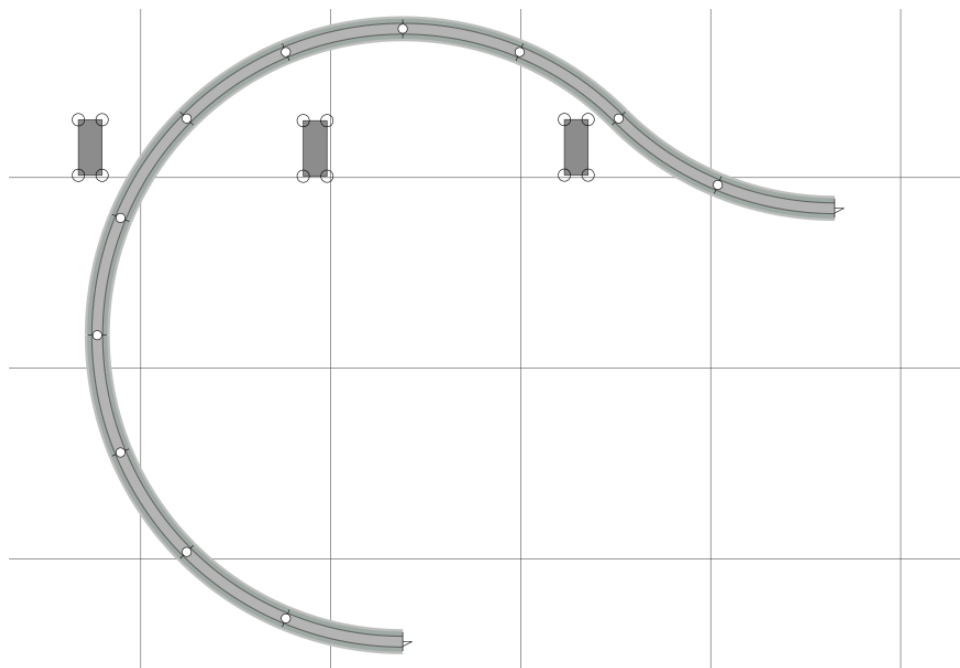
Some of you might have to look away - you may cringe when you see how unorganized of an approach I ended up taking. And for an engineer, I must say I have surprised myself as well, but in a good way. Here's the space I'm working with. A space approximately 15 feet long and maybe 30 inches deep.



My "plan" is simply to establish the continuous running portion of my layout - spurs and yards and any point-to-point elements will come later. Yes, I want to watch my train go round and round. It brings me joy to not always have to manipulate the scene. Well anyways, here comes the real joy. Thirty inches isn't enough to turn around - I've got some 21" radius track and on this particular end of the layout I don't want to encroach on the doorway. So I'll need



to do some tunnel boring deeper into the depths of the crawl space. Here's sort of what that looks like. I'll be going through that white wall which has studs 18" on center.



After creating really messy and uneven holes in the walls, my plan could now continue. I would need a couple of pieces of one by to cantilever off of the stud walls.













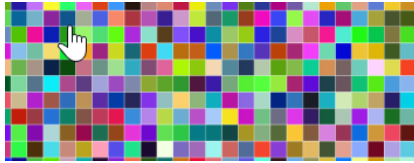




And now here we are in present day. Do you know what I see in the picture above? Potential! Pure potential! I have not been this excited in quite a long time. Sure there's no real plan. Sure I'm using Kato track. Sure this doesn't look like a lot of folks' idea of putting a layout together. For me though, it's a vessel to get to where I want to be. A running layout where I can start to do structures and scenery which I've decided are my favorite part of the hobby at the moment.

Did you ever hear about that organizing lady a couple years ago? Marie Kondo I think her name was. She would tell you to hold something and that you should only keep it if it "sparked joy". Well cutting those two holes on the wall and shoving that sectional track through there has done just that for me. It has sparked joy in me again as I begin the journey on this idea whose time has come.





## Digital Distractions

A Look at our hobby online



Check out “Main Track Trains”. Another channel that I wasn’t yet familiar with, but the video quality looks to be on par with some of the better channels. Here’s an excerpt from the channel’s description. Enjoy!

Hello! My name is Mike and I’d like to welcome you to my channel, The Main Track. Here, I’m featuring progress on the construction and operation of my HO-scale model railroad layout. It recreates the Missouri-Kansas-Texas “Katy” Railroad’s Sedalia Subdivision in west-central Missouri as it appeared in the summer of 1987.

[Main Track Trains](#)

### Division Brass

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