

# THE BRASS POUNDER

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

Volume 10 Number 5

December 2010

## *Upcoming Division Event*

### **Carolina Southern Division Annual Meeting**

January, 15, 2011 11:30  
Texas Ranch Steakhouse & Saloon  
1310 West Sugar Creek Road Charlotte, NC  
(same location as last year)  
Directions:  
Take I85 to Exit 41, W Sugar Creek Road, turn North. Restaurant is right next to the exit.

### **Carolina Southern Division Railroad Modeling University (RMU)**

January 22, 2011 8:30-4:00  
Northside Baptist Church,  
333 Jeremiah Blvd. Charlotte, NC  
<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/RMUmian.htm>

## *Calendar of Events*

### **The World's Greatest Hobby on Tour**

February 12-13, 2011  
Cobb Galleria  
2 Galleria Pkwy SE, Atlanta, GA  
[www.wghshow.com/shows/2011/atlanta.html](http://www.wghshow.com/shows/2011/atlanta.html)

### **Easley Train Show**

Central Railway Model & Historical Assoc  
February 26 1-5, February 27 12-5  
J.B. Owens Sports Complex  
111 Walkers Way, Easley, SC  
<http://www.crmha.org/index.html>

### **Asheville Model Train Show**

March 4 (Fri) Noon - 7, & March 5 9 - 4  
Western North Carolina Agricultural Center  
<http://www.asheville-trainshow.com/show.html>

### **8th Annual NC Railroad Expo**

April 9, 2011 9 -4  
Alexander Chapter-NRHS  
Hickory NC Metro & Convention Center  
Hickory, NC  
<http://www.tarheelpress.com/Trainshow/>

### **Tichy Train Group Factory Tour**

with Carolina Piedmont Division  
April 16, 2011  
Burlington, NC  
<http://www.tichytraingroup.com/>

### **Macon Tracks, SER Regional Convention**

May 20-21  
Macon State College, Macon GA  
<http://www.tface.org/2011.htm>

### **2011 NMRA National Convention**

"The Unconventional Convention"  
July 3-9, 2011  
<http://www.x2011west.org/>

North Carolina Op Session Weekend  
September 2 -4 (Labor Day)

### **National Narrow Gauge Convention**

September 7-10, 2011  
Hickory Metro Convention Center  
1960 13th Ave. Drive SE  
Hickory, North Carolina 28602  
<http://www.narrowgauge2011.com/>

### **MER Regional Convention 2011**

October 27 - October 30  
Embassy Suites Hotel  
Cary, NC  
<http://mer.nmra.org/MERConv/MERConv.html>

# Railroad Modeling University, Update

By Bob Halsey

We have now finalized the RMU schedule, after making a few final changes at the December 9 planning meeting. This is definitely going to be the most educational, most interesting, and most well-attended RMU that the Carolina Southern Division has ever held! We have five classrooms available, and they will be in use for all six seminar periods.

The on-line registration form is now available at our website:

**[www.carolinasouthern.org/RMUmian.htm](http://www.carolinasouthern.org/RMUmian.htm)**

along with the schedule of classes. You should enter both your first and second preference seminars for each period, to allow us to ensure all attendees get as many of their first choices as possible, and that no seminars are overcrowded.

The seminar schedule as of now includes the basics (all taught by veteran model railroaders):

- Model Railroading 101 & 102
- ABCs of Scenery
- Track Laying and Wiring
- Introduction to DCC
- Weathering
- Railfanning 101
- Railfanning Safety

And some more advanced subjects:

- DCC in Detail
- DCC Decoder Installation
- Scratch-building Structures
- Light, Sound, and Motion Animation
- Programming Digitrax Sound Decoders
- Signaling Your Layout
- Painting and Decaling
- Developing and Enhancing Prototype Operations
- Building a Better Model

All of the above (and possibly more) for only \$10 per family (adult plus kids), including refreshments! Lunch will be served on the premises (Northside Baptist Church) on RMU day, **Saturday January 22, 2011**, for only \$5 per person, and will consist of a roast beef or chicken sandwich, potato salad, fruit cup, drink & chips.

So send your registration in as soon as possible, whether by on-line or by Pony Express, and get ready to learn and enjoy!

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## Layout(?) in Progress

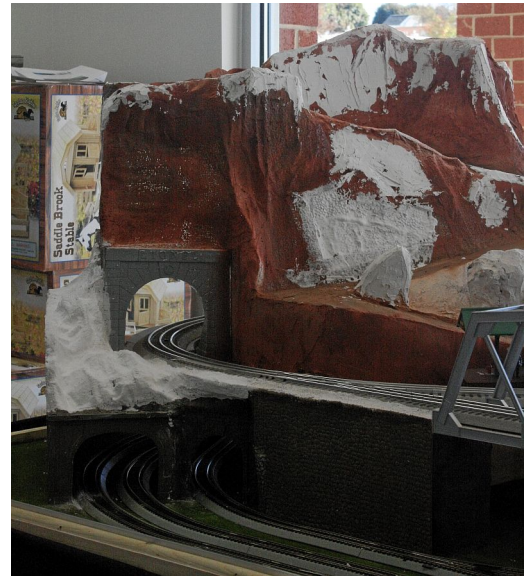
by Bob Halsey

Recently, four of our members were called upon (on very short notice) to build a very unusual layout – an HO and a Lionel O27 both within the limits of a 5'x 9' area! The manager of the Mooresville Hobbytown, Brent Johnson, had asked CSD member Bob Halsey last May if we could put this hybrid animal together in his store prior to start of the Christmas shopping season, using the top

surface halves of a ping-pong table and a couple of box sets off the store shelf. It would serve as a demonstrator aimed at getting more young people interested in model railroading.

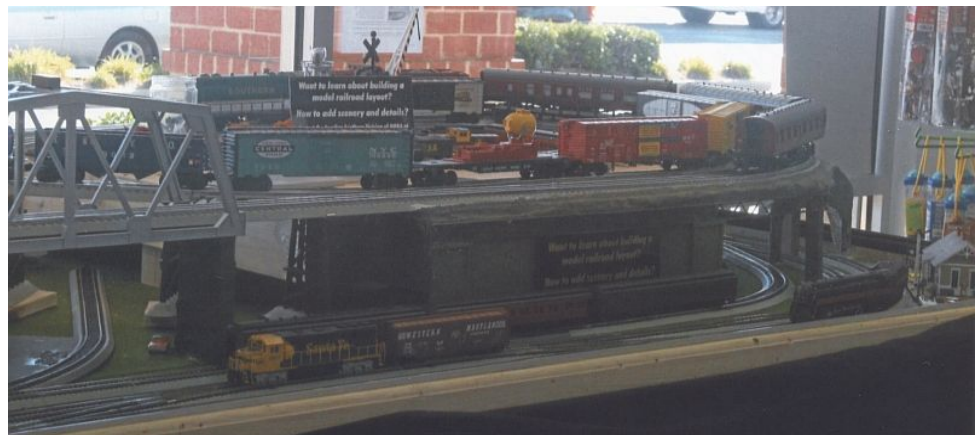
Thinking this would be a snap (just put the larger Lionel on the outside perimeter and a smaller HO set on the inside, right?), Bob said “No problem, I’ll round up a couple of our experts, we’ll start on it right after RailOps weekend (mid-October), and have it up and running before Thanksgiving!”

Of course, we would have to build some benchwork underneath, but that turned out to be not a problem, since one of our “team” of four model railroad misfits was Bob Wessmiller, an expert woodworker who has a complete woodworking shop in his home. Likewise, opening the box sets (each had the usual plastic roadbed track pieces, one transformer, one engine and a few cars) and plopping them on the now rock-solid table should be just as easy. Except that another member of the “team” was Bob Loehne, one of the few really dedicated Lionel-crazy people in the CSD (probably in all of the MER), and he decided that we needed an entire upper level just for the Lionel, complete with extra pieces to form an outer loop with left & right turnouts leading to an inner figure 8. But he also wanted a mountain with a tunnel through it, and this styrofoam Mt. Everest now closely resembles Space Mountain and is topped by one of those huge rotating tower beacons! So Bob “the Builder” again swung into action and built an elevated platform, in two sections, with plastic bridges and trestles connecting the two.



Meanwhile, Jim “Sure Hands” Rager and Colonel Bob were trying to assemble not one, but two HO sets (a freight and a passenger) on the original surface while enduring difficulties

caused by dripping Hydrocal, loose Styrofoam bits, and dust from plaster cloth falling on the HO track. After we decided on the HO configuration (an outer loop with crossovers to an inner loop that includes a passing siding) we took up the track pieces and glued down a layer of that fake green matting, then nailed down the



pieces. A major challenge was having to “blend” the scenery from the upper “Lionel-fantasy” level into the lower HO level, and still make it look sort of realistic. Amazing what you can do with plaster cloth, Plastruct “stone” panels, assorted plaster tunnel portals, some of that fake green vegetation(?) stuff in bags, cross-piece plastic girders, and a lot of water-based paint! Fortunately for us, Brent let us use whatever we could find on his shelves (we just gave the price labels to him & his clerks to remove from inventory).

Then came time to test-run all of this! Lionel Bob’s two trains ran fine (one at a time, of course), although the front of the freight diesel misses the rear of the caboose by about a quarter of an inch (no exaggeration!) at the figure 8 center crossing, and he only runs his trains at one speed: full throttle!!

(Kids just love to watch all the near collisions at the crossing!) The HO trains needed a little work – tunnel portals had to be widened, tracks cleaned (all that plaster and Styrofoam!), and, shades of Model Railroading 101, we had to add weights to some of the cars and to the steam engine’s tender, and bend up some coupler trips!

Well, the turnouts all got wired (with switches and HO controller housed in a neat little drawer, thanks again to Bob the Builder), plastic passenger stations added to both levels, along with an HO house, lumberyard, moonshiner’s cabin, cows, deer, people & cars placed appropriately, and everything was finally running just before Thanksgiving! We worked on this project almost every day for three weeks; Brent paid for our lunches, and we met and talked with a lot of prospective model railroaders, young and old, some of whom we will see again at RMU. When one lady asked why we were doing this, she was told “Ma’am, we’re on work release!” We are still waiting for the folks from Model Railroader magazine to show up to do an article on this masterpiece, although we’ll probably be lucky if we don’t get ex-communicated from the NMRA!

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## Rockford Belt Line

By RBL Superintendent Larry Lau

Photos by Larry Lau

The Rockford Belt Line is a fictitious railroad serving industries in and around ROCKFORD, Illinois and TIMBUKTU.

Statement: This railroad is built for enjoyment. The entire layout is built using the 8’ rule. If it looks good at 8’, it is just fine. There is no rivet counting, measurement in scale inches, and strict adherence to prototype. Belligerent plagiarism and copying is practiced on this model railroad.

There was an actual Rockford Belt Line that served a number of industries in Southeast Rockford, Illinois. There were four railroads that serviced Rockford in the 1940’s into the 1960’s Illinois Central (IC), Chicago and North Western(CNW), Chicago Burlington and Quincy(CBQ) and the Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific(CMStP&P). Each of these railroads could service any industry using the Belt Line, all sharing the same trackage. The Milwaukee was responsible for the minimum maintenance of the right of way.



***Downtown Timbuktu***

In 1949 I was hanging out with the guys at Nihan and Martin Pharmacy Soda Bar when glancing through the magazines I came across Model Railroad. This started my model railroading career. The first layout was an oval with one switch to a siding. Power was an old Lionel Transformer and a bridge rectifier to convert the AC to DC. Scenery consisted of painting the board green and Oatmeal boxes cut in half, painted silver to represent storage tanks. Motive power was a Mantua 0-4-0 switcher. Equipment was an Ambroid Pennsylvania outside braced reefer and a Mantua Metal side gondola with paper overlay. In college I was a member of a college model railroad club. The next layout was in Wickliffe, Ohio. It was a small switching layout. Next came a layout in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It was a 9’x12’ layout copied from Model Railroad. After moving to Charlotte a 21’x26’ layout depicting

the Illinois Central Railroad Iowa Branch from Chicago, Illinois to Waterloo, Iowa was constructed. This was the first real layout, it had 100% scenery and I was able to run operating sessions of 5 people. I had built this layout with bolted together 2'x4' sections. When I tried to move it from that location to the current house I discovered that I neglected to also keep the switches and buildings off of the joining points. We salvaged track, switches, and the buildings.

The Rockford Belt Line is the third iteration of the layout in the current location. The others got too complicated. Now it is simple. It is an "L" shaped layout one leg being 8' by 30" and the other leg being 10' by 24 ". The largest industry served is the Lab Gas Company makers of fine perfumes (you must be a current or past owner of a Labrador Dog to appreciate the humor). The RBL also services the Dry Well Ink Company, Guido's Arms supplier to Gangs and Insurgents, US Congress Pork Barrel Distribution Center operated by the Halliburton Company, Mooney Plumbing, Earl Oil, a Team Track, a junk yard (not named), and a Rockford freight house. There is a Car and Engine Repair facility, and engine servicing (Steam and Diesel). Rockford has tall buildings, a park and cemetery. Timbuktu has all of the normal village buildings. There is a commuter service between Rockford and Timbuktu.



***Overall picture of Timbuktu Leg of Layout***

The Rockford Belt Line uses other railroad's engines. These are based on engines I like: a Camelback, a Shay, and Diesel/ Steam switchers. None of them are RBL locomotives, but this will be corrected once I figure out how to make decals using the Micro Tool package. The time period being the 50's to the late 60's, and the equipment reflects that era.

The layout is about 50% scenery completed using the 8' rule.

The plan is to have operating sessions that will consist of a Rockford Switcher, a Timbuktu switcher and the commuter train operator. Each switcher operator would receive a switch list for the distribution of interchange freight cars, the changing of position and distribution of freight cars at industries, and the assembling of an outbound interchange. The commuter operator would be responsible for on time departures and arrivals between Rockford and Timbuktu.



***Rockford Side of Layout***

Anyone is welcome to visit. Please call ahead of time to confirm the availability, the directions, and the Home Owners Association parking rules.

## Operations Exchange

By Seth Gartner

November 9, 2010, Charlotte, NC. The on-time arrival of train 73 from Raleigh brought 10 model railroaders to the CSD for a day to visit and operate two local model railroads. The railroaders get together weekly on Tuesday as the Central Carolina Operating Group. They rotate among three well done railroads in the greater Raleigh area. Several years ago Rick Knight and I were warmly welcomed to join them after emailing and inviting ourselves. We had a thoroughly enjoyable time. I thought a reciprocal invitation was in order and after a few emails our plan was crafted. The morning train left Raleigh on time and collected the group from stops along the way from Cary to Burlington. The group enjoyed a beautiful morning under the guidance of 1:1 operations by NC Amtrak.

Rick Knight and I met the group at the Charlotte station and loaded into two cars for our first destination, Jack Parker's Piedmont and Western. Jack had a few trains running and answered questions as some refreshed memories from past visits and others tried to take in the magnificent splendor from his many years of work. The group was invited to return for a true operating session on a future visit to the area.

The shuttles then headed to Seth Gartner's Piney Fork Branch of the New York Central Railroad. A quick lunch was served with some even choosing to sit outside on the deck enjoying the perfect fall day.

Assignments were then made for what turned out to be a busy and productive four hours of running trains. Steve Benezra took the helm as the dispatcher and with the three yard positions filled, the trains began to run. At least fifteen trains ran, and sets a record far above past operating sessions. This was possible because of a ready supply of engineers standing by to keep the coal and freight moving.



The crew then knew it was approaching time for the afternoon train 76. The railroad was shut down and the group returned to Charlotte's station before the train backed in for boarding. Farewells were exchanged and the operators returned home satisfied that all went well with their long day.

An invitation has been sent to me for attending any of their upcoming weekly operating sessions. Additionally, this has been extended to any others in the area who might be interested in a reciprocal day of riding trains to operate on model trains some Tuesday. I want to thank Rick Knight for helping me out with transportation on this effort. We have talked about repeating this event with visits to other railroads in the greater Charlotte area during the upcoming year. This may help to get more in-state interest for the NC RailRun Operations Weekend scheduled for Labor Day weekend (September 4-6, 2011).



# CAROLINA SOUTHERN

Division 12 of the Mid Eastern Region, NMRA



## Annual Division Business Meeting

The Annual Division Business Meeting will be held 11:30 am  
15 January 2011

Location: Texas Ranch Steakhouse & Saloon  
1310 West Sugar Creek Road Charlotte, NC

### Meeting Agenda:

#### Call to Order -

Steve August

#### Treasurers report.

Dick Bronson

#### Clerks report

Approval of minutes of last year's meeting..

Jack Haynes

#### AP Report.

Dave Chance

#### Web / Brookford Report.

Gil Brauch

### Election Nominations:

#### Director 2013

Roy Becker – retiring director

(Division members may make additional nominations from the floor at the meeting)

**NOTE: All elected officers and voters must be members in good standing of the NMRA and reside in the counties included in the Carolina Southern Division (NC Counties: Cabarrus, Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Union. SC Counties: Chester, Lancaster & York)**

### Plans for 2011

Railroad Modeling University – January 22, 2011

Tichy Train Group Tour – April 16, 2011

OpSession Weekend – September 2-5, 2011

MER Convention – October 27 – 30, 2011 Cary, NC

### Old Business

### New Business

Is there any other new business.

### Adjourn

The Division Brass

Superintendent	Steve August
Asst. Superintendent	Bob Halsey
Clerk	Jack Haynes
Paymaster	Dick Bronson
Director 2010	Roy Becker
Director 2011	Fred Miller
Director 2012	Jim Rager
AP Chairman	Dave Chance
Webmaster	Gil Brauch
Newsletter Editor	Jack Haynes

Division Website:  
[www.carolinasouthern.org](http://www.carolinasouthern.org)

Submissions For Brass Pounder

Next Issue	Submission Date
March 2011	February 15, 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](mailto:jbh108@earthlink.net)  
704-296-2493

**FIFTH ANNUAL**

**"TRAINS FOR A CURE"**

Item From South Charlotte Weekly

Please join the Montalbano Family for our "Trains for a Cure" display benefiting The Susan G. Women Breast Cancer Foundation, Charlotte Affiliate. An elaborate Christmas village display with multiple trains running on different levels. Please stop by and enjoy the trains as well as helping support the fight against Breast Cancer.

This event will take place Dec. 1st thru Dec. 30th (with the exception of the 24th & 25th) A special visit from Santa on Dec. 17th & 18th from 7pm — 10pm.

20133 Beard St., Cornelius — Exit 28 from 177 (Catawba Ave.) A few blocks past Victoria Bay Subdivision — Beard St. will be the first left after the light.

Visit our website: [www.trainsforcure.org](http://www.trainsforcure.org)