



# THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 17 Number 6

November-December 2017

## Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

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

**Jan 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**Division Annual Business Meeting,**  
**Hunter Acres Baptist Church**  
***COME TO VOTE***

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

### **Other Events**

**Jan 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**World's Greatest Hobby Train Show**  
**Charlotte**

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

It's hard to believe that it's November already. Let's take a look back at Division 12 activities for September and October. Jack Parker, MMR once again hosted the annual picnic at his home on Mountain Island Lake. Mother Nature played her part and provided us with a warm and sunny afternoon. Division members enjoyed great food and fellowship and even got to meet some of our newest members. Thanks to Lucas for helping me cook the "Original Hardee" hot dogs and burgers. Fred Miller, MMR gave us a great clinic on using Arduinos for sound and lighting effects for layouts and buildings.

Our next big event was the Mid Eastern Regional Convention hosted by the Susquehanna Division in Harrisburg, Pa. on October 12 -15. The convention had something for everyone: contest room, silent auction room, clinics, layout tours and operation sessions. We had six members from Div. 12 attending, including Dick Bronson, Dave Chance, Michele Chance, Alan Hardee, Fred Miller, Don Stafford. I Hope I didn't miss anyone.

The next Div.12 activity was a swap meet and meeting at Brookford Community Center in Hickory on November 11<sup>th</sup> where several members brought model items to sell and we enjoyed conversations around Wade's Train Town layout.

We will not meet in December. January will be a busy month for our division. World's Greatest Hobby On Tour will be in Charlotte, NC January 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Our Annual Division Business Meeting will be on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January

at Hunter Acres Baptist Church. This will be an important meeting as most offices are up for election. Gil will hit his term limit as Director, Fred will end as Clerk, John will end as Treasurer. Superintendent and Asst Super will also be up for re-election. Think about who you would like to see leading this division. Maybe it is YOU. RMU will be January 27<sup>th</sup>, check the division website for the latest details.

November and December also brings a lot of holiday train displays to our area. Metrolina Model Railroaders had their HO scale French Broad and Catawba modular layout on display at the Southern Christmas Show in Charlotte at The Park Expo on Independence Blvd. The 11 day show opened on Nov. 9th and ran through the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens in Belmont offers a fantastic holiday light display from Thanksgiving through Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>. Several different trains, including a smaller Metrolina layout, are on display at DSBG during this time. The Holidays and model railroading share a magical bond. As you enjoy the Holidays, be sure to include some model railroading to keep those holiday memories alive. Happy Holidays from my family to yours.

## Editor's Notes

By Fred Miller, MMR

As Alan pointed out, we are in the midst of model railroading Holiday Time. Perhaps only in our deep seated memories, we all look forward to that intriguing train gift under the Christmas tree. I hope you fulfill those dreams and have a Happy Holiday.



### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

This will be my last *Brass Pounder*. If anyone is interested in taking on the challenge of producing the CSD newsletter please contact me or the CSD Board. I will be happy to share all templates and other development tools and tips to facilitate a transfer of the reigns.

Each Division in the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) of the NMRA publishes a newsletter for their division membership. This provides a useful way to share events and member modeling experiences. It would be a shame if our Division did not continue this tradition.

Recently Clint Hyde, editor of the MER *LOCAL* newsletter, initiated a gathering of Division newsletter editors with the intent to share experiences and

tools. This would be useful for anyone stepping up to create the *Brass Pounder* for our Division.

## Notes from an Old Car Knocker

by Gil Brauch

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As I finish up my final term as a member of the Carolina Southern Division's Board of Directors, there are a few items that I have observed that I want to share with the Division's members. The point of the remarks that follow is to hopefully give some perspective that will help us move forward together in increasing our enjoyment of our little sector of The World's Greatest Hobby.

Even though I grew up in Charlotte and visited here frequently during my career years, I had no contact with the ferroequinologists in our area until I brought an N Scale layout down from Northern Virginia for the convention the Division hosted in 1998. Upon retiring and moving to Hickory in 2002, I began looking around for fellow modelers and re-established contact through our CSD. Over the years since then I have enjoyed meeting new friends, learning new skills from our talented members, and helping us introduce new folks to our hobby. Our Division has a great deal of positive potential and many talented people in it. However, sometimes

we do not live up to that potential and that should be of concern to all of us.

There are many voices out there that constantly predict doom and gloom for model railroading in general. "The hobby is dying" is a phrase you hear all too often. What that often means is something like: "I'm getting too old to do this anymore and the hobby can't get along without me so I guess it's going away too." If you look around you can see that the hobby is changing, but is far from dead. We have moved from an era of 'brick and mortar' hobby shops in every town to internet-based merchandising; from large, established clubs with huge, permanent layouts and rigid administrative structures to smaller groups rotating among friend's layouts for work and operating sessions; from every modeler having their own railroad empire to module-based groups where everybody has a piece of the action; from basement/garage empires to frequent public displays of the products of our skills and talents. In this transition, particularly the latter part, we are involving more people, just in a different way. The time is here for us to quit bemoaning 'the way it used to be' and begin looking forward – as a group – to discover how things can become. Some of the ways we do this is through our annual Railroad Modeling University and by showcasing the skills of modelers through projects such as Wade's Train Town. Another way is by upgrading and maintaining the interactive layout at the Levine Museum of the

New South as a part of their exhibit on the cotton industry in the south. But we could be doing so much more and that's where the "– as a group –" comes in.

Model railroading in the CSD may not be dead yet, but it is approaching a comatose state. We have close to 100 NMRA members within our Division's boundaries, but rarely do we see more than a dozen members at our monthly meetings or other group activities. Our leadership is trying hard to develop activities that will engage our members and encourage them in the hobby, but outside of them, nobody seems to care. We frequently hear the phrase "what's in it for me?" as an excuse for not joining in. Well, how can you know that if you never participate? Our division has been invited to sponsor the 2020 Mid-Eastern Region convention. That is huge undertaking and will require the effort of more than just a handful of us. Right now, I personally don't see us being able to pull it off. We can't even seem to get volunteers to work on our existing projects, much less organize and pull off a convention requiring dozens of us to pitch in in one way or the other. My departing advice to the leadership is that unless we individual members step up and demonstrate that we can commit to significant participation in our regular activities that we should respectfully decline the invitation for 2020. As much as we would like to think so, this decision is not up the leadership, but it is up to us as

members to show through our increased active participation in all aspects of the Division's events that we are up to the task.

And that's my view from between the sidings...

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

## **Riding the Metro North to Grand Central Station**

By Bob Halsey

For many years, the primary route for Connecticut commuters to get to and from the Big Apple was via the New York, New Haven, & Hartford Railway. It was also the fastest surface route between New York City and Boston.



**Figure 1 Interior of Metro North car— every seat filled 60 sec later!**

But the NY, NH, & H 4-track mainline between New Haven and NYC is now operated by the State of Connecticut using the modern commuter trains of Metro North and by AMTRAK running the fast Acela passenger trains between the two big cities. The Metro North self-propelled trains are definitely a far better alternative to the hassles of driving on congested I-95 or the old parkways, and then having to deal with city traffic and parking!



**Figure 2 Seal of Ownership**

Recently, my wife and I visited her brother in Darien, and while there we planned to go to the City to have lunch and then see a show on Broadway. While we waited at the Darien station, two Acelas flew by, one heading to Boston and the other to NYC, going so fast (at least 79 mph, maybe faster!) that I didn't have time to whip out the iPhone for a picture! Later, while on the train, the same thing happened when we zipped by some interesting maintenance-of-way equipment.

The fall scenery was not yet spectacular, but we passed several locations where we got a view of Long Island Sound and the north shore of Long Island. Of course, the scenery degrades as the train gets into the built-up area, especially around Harlem, and then it is a long dark tunnel to the last stop.



**Figure 3 Grand Central Station**

Once we arrived at Grand Central Station in midtown Manhattan, we had no trouble finding a cab to take us west to the Broadway theater district close to Times Square. Although Grand Central is one of the most heavily used stations in the world, we were lucky because it was Sunday, and therefore did not have the thousands of weekday commuters. Many of the hundreds of tourists were taking pictures just like I was, because the station interior main hall is really quite beautiful!

Grand Central fortunately will not suffer the same shameful fate as the old Pennsylvania Station, which the City decided to remove the entire architec-

turally classic upper part of the building from, and replaced it with the not-at-all scenic Madison Square Garden arena.



**Figure 4 Grand Central main vaulted hall**

This is because former NYC resident Jackie Kennedy was able to convince the federal government to designate Grand Central Station as a National Historic Site. So Metro North, AMTRAK, and the surviving commuter line remnants of the New York Central will be travelling there for many years to come! If you ever visit the City or southern Connecticut, take a ride on Metro North!

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## **Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge**

The RPM Valley Forge returns for its seventh edition on March 23 to 25, 2018.

It will be held at the same great location, The Desmond Great Valley Hotel, Malvern, Pa.

Events of the four-day weekend start Thursday evening and Friday morning with operating sessions. Registration opens Friday at 5:30 Clinics begin 7pm Friday evening, run all day Saturday, and conclude Sunday at noon. 52 clinics are planned. Vendors' room and model display room open Friday evening, Saturday evening dinner, and a self-guided layout tour Sunday afternoon.

See [www.rpmvalleyforge.com](http://www.rpmvalleyforge.com) for details, a list of the clinics, and to download a registration form.

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## **RMU - 2018**

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The Carolina Southern Division of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) is pleased to announce its annual Railroad Modeling University (RMU).

This promises to be another great opportunity for modelers of all skill levels, to come together for a one of a kind teaching and learning event.

This year RMU 2018 is January 27, 2018. Our "Snow Date" is February 17, 2018 at the same location:  
Christ the King (CTK)  
13501 S Tryon Street  
Charlotte NC, 28278  
Google Map link: [Christ the King](#)

First class starts at 9 AM. Register now to insure you get your choice of classes. Online registration closes January 24, 2016.

- You do not need to be a member of the NMRA to attend RMU.
- You can find the list of classes at <http://carolinasouthern.org/RMUclasses18.htm>
- You can register for classes at <http://carolinasouthern.org/RMUregister18.htm>

We have clinics from 9 am until 4 pm in four sessions with up to eight classes each to choose from.

## Class Offerings for 2018 RMU

Basic Model Railroading, Michele Chance : If you have questions , Michele has your answers. She walks attendees through how to get started, scale vs gauge, layouts and modules, time period, where to build, construction, DC vs DCC, rolling stock, cost and links to terminology and resources.

Planting Buildings, Michele Chance : Not watering buildings like you water flowers, but putting in a foundation and making your structure moveable for clean-up or future moves. Michele Chance

Cars 101, Jack Monette: This clinic is designed to acquaint the modeler with basic scratch building techniques. We will not build a car, but we will demonstrate cutting and fitting, proper gluing techniques, measuring, and many other aspects of scratch building. We will look at a composite gondola that won a merit award and discuss how to improve on it. I have built an improved version of the model to demonstrate the improvements. This car will be given to one of the students. Plans for this car are included. Basic tools, glues and solvents will be presented along with their advantages and disadvantages.

Open Car Loads, Jack Monette: This class covers coal hoppers, gondolas, and flat cars. The main focus is on coal loads for hoppers. Jack will also discuss how to make pulp wood loads, pipe loads, and others. There will be no special charge

for materials, but THIS IS A MAKE-AND-TAKE CLASS AND IS LIMITED TO 10 PERSONS.

Track & Wheels — Making It Work, Jack Haynes: Two of the most common and frustrating problems with model railroading is track and wheels. Jack addresses common problems with track, wheels, and couplers, while demonstrating to attendees how to use a NMRA Standards Gauge to identify the cause of such problems. Attendees are invited to bring their own NMRA Standards Gauge.

Documenting Your Railroad, Doug Algire: Learn how to document your railroad for posterity and insurance purposes. The class covers using photos, spreadsheets, and other means to document your model railroad.

How to Solder Like a Pro, Alan Burdick: How to solder circuit boards, rail or make drop feeders. Alan learned to solder while working on the Apollo project at NASA in Florida. The right tools, and skills can save hours of troubleshooting. Please bring a soldering iron (15 to 40 watt) and an extension cord. Also (optional), if you have any or all of the following supplies bring them, too: solder, small sponge, needle nose pliers, wire stripper, a small section of track with rail joiners, a used tooth brush, alcohol, liquid or paste resin, to name a few.

Lighting the Layout, Neal Anderson: Although most of us already have lighting for our layout area, we often have difficulty uncoupling or rerailling cars without using a flashlight or squinting. Neal will show how to make a simple, inexpensive lighting system that is easy to install and will greatly improve the light level for your operations.

Laying and Ballasting Track, Neal Anderson: Neal will demonstrate a way to lay ballast down on a section of track three feet long, glued and ballasted in ten to fifteen minutes.

Making Scenery, Ty Brown: Ty will share how he develops a scene from the ground up. He will cover building the base - ground cover, rocks or mountains - using both foam and hydrocal and hydrocal molds. He will also cover adding basic water effects.

LED Lighting, Joe Burden : Joe returns to RMU with his always popular class on LED lighting. Attendees will be introduced to LED basics, size, placement and using LEDs for turnout indication.

Reversing Loops, Roy Becker : Learn the ins and outs of using reversing loops. It includes design, wiring, and using DCC components to manage the reversing loop.

Light, Sound & Motion Animation for Model Railroads, Fred Miller, MMR : Lights and sounds have become commonplace in our model locomotives. But this clinic will explore some ways to add light, sound and motion to your layout. Various projects will be described and demonstrated, some using commercial products, others with electronic circuit details for construction provided. The clinic will cover animation of semaphore signals and crossing gates. The clinic will make ample use of actual implemented projects on Fred's HO Traction modules.

Sound Animation (Layout Background Sounds), Fred Miller, MMR : Adding background sounds is a way to enhance the "multi-dimensional" effect on your layout. Industry, city or country sounds broaden the viewing and operating experience. There are a number of commercial "sound boards" offering pre-recorded or recordable capabilities with prices ranging from \$10 to \$100. The quality of the recorded sound varies as well as the playing time.

Multi-function Animation Decoder, Fred Miller, MMR : This clinic is about a custom designed inexpensive decoder which was designed to operate lights, sounds and motion for animating buildings on a layout. The decoder operates from DCC track power and accepts DCC commands to initiate the animations. The construction and details of the decoder will be presented along with several animated demonstration buildings operated from both a LocoNet time-of-day scheduler and a standard throttle.

Tips and Tricks from a Master Model Railroader, Jack Parker, MMR: Mr. Parker will demonstrate and discuss Tips & Tricks he has learned over his 50 plus years of model railroading. Everything from weathering to scratch building will be discussed.

All Day MPR1-1 NMRA Achievement Program and Judging, Dave Chance : The first class period is where you will learn about the NMRA Achievement Program and how you can earn the designation of Master Model Railroader. If you have a model(s) you like to be judged for the Achievement Program you must sign up for this class. Please bring your models and appropriate paperwork. This class is taught by Dave Chance who is the Achievement Program Chairman for the Carolina Southern Division (CSD).

Modular/Sectional Layout Construction, Gil Brauch : Gil will explain how to build your layout in smaller pieces to enhance your enjoyment, even if you are not severely space limited. It can also make your layout easier to move should you have to relocate.

Check out the schedule for these clinics at:  
<http://carolinasouthern.org/RMUclasses18.htm>

### Division Brass

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**Come to the January Division Annual Business Meeting and VOTE for whom you would like to provide leadership in the years to come.**

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