

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 19 Number 12

December 2019

RMU 2020

15th Annual Railroad Modeling University

REGISTRATION IS OPEN – [CLICK HERE](#)

Saturday, January 25, 2020

8:00am – 4:00pm

Northside Baptist Church

333 Jeremiah Blvd,

Charlotte, NC 28262

Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

Season's Greetings

Division Coming Events

(See [CSD Website](#)
for further details)

**As usual, CSD will
not have a meeting
during the month of
December. Wishing
all of you a safe and
enjoyable holiday
season.**

**Wade's Train Town
Open House
Saturday Dec 14th
10:00am – 2:00pm
Brookford
Community Bldg
1700 S Center St.
Hickory, NC**

The Holidays and model trains seem to go together perfectly. Just about everyone remembers getting their first train set. Some may have been for a birthday, but most were for Christmas. Waking up early and rushing out to the tree to find a train set running around underneath was instant enjoyment. I had a chance to reflect back to that happy childhood memory recently.

Most of you know that I am also a member of the Metrolina Model Railroaders club in Belmont. I served two terms as President, with the second term during the same period I started my first term as your division Superintendent. Wow, that was a lot of model railroading activities. I am Thankful and blessed to have a very understanding wife. The big event for Metrolina is displaying the modular layout during the 12 day Southern Christmas Show. THANK YOU to all of the division members who took time to help during the show. You probably heard some of the same comments that I did to take you back to that happy childhood time. Thousands of people visited the layout and if you had a chance to converse with them, they all had similar stories to share. The guys remembered getting their first train set around the tree. The ladies remembered their dads and/or their brothers having trains and most still had the sets in storage. A

few ladies told me that they were jealous of their bothers because they received trains and wished they had their own set. Most of these sets were Lionel and they had a pink set for girls for this very reason.

I received my first train set around the age of 7 or 8. It was an HO scale Tyco set with the Red and Silver war bonnet Santa Fe F unit. You know the one. That set expanded from a circle on a board to an oval on a larger board. This expanded set had a passing siding on one side and sidings for spotting cars on the other. I didn't know it then but that was basic operating. Scenery and buildings followed and that lasted a few years before going into storage. A move, marriage, and big snow storm later, the set came out of storage again to take me back and rekindle my interest into model trains. I awoke one morning after it had been snowing all night. Total for that storm was 13.5". Snowed in and looking for something to do with my time, I found an old box packed away. Upon opening it, my childhood memories came back. Inside were all my trains from years past. Nothing fancy, just some Tyco and Model Power Locomotives and freight cars, but that was enough to get me started again. Then came the 4 X 8 layout with Athearn Blue Box Equipment. After the move to my current home in 1994, a new layout was started. An 18" around the wall shelf layout. Some of you may remember this as it was on the Layout Tour during Junction 98. That layout is now gone as my wife threw me out of the house. No, actually just my trains had to leave. But the good news was that they got to move into a brand new 16'X24' building. Several modifications later, I've settled on a double decked around the walls with a center peninsula for the connection to both levels. My layout will be on the Carolina Special 2020 layout tour so you can check out the difference.

Just think, if I hadn't received a model train for Christmas that year, I probably wouldn't be a model railroader today. I wish everyone a very HAPPY HOLIDAY.



Merry Christmas



LOOK SOUTH IN 2020

MID-EASTERN REGION 2020 CONVENTION CAROLINA SPECIAL

OCTOBER 15TH – 18TH 2020

**Crowne Plaza Charlotte, Executive Park
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

**Carolina Southern Division is proud to be hosting
the MER 2020 Convention**

REGISTRATION WILL BE OPENING SOON

Convention activities will include:

- A wide selection of model railroading clinics, including by some nationally recognized names in the hobby
- Tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum Back Shop and other non-public areas
- Tour of the Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum
- Tour of Wade's Train World in Brookford, a layout maintained by the CSD
- HO, S and N scale operating layouts in the Convention Hotel
- Home layout tours in the area, to include The Piedmont & Western and NYC Piney Fork Branch, which were both cover stories in *Model Railroader*
- Operating Sessions

MORE COMPLETE COMING TO OUR WEBSITE IN THE COMING WEEKS

<http://carolinasouthern.org>

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey and Gil Brauch, MMR

UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

Central Railway Model
and Historical
Association Rail
2020 [Model Train Expo](#)
Friday Feb 7, 2020
1:00 – 7:00pm
Saturday Feb 8, 2020
10:00am – 4:00pm
207 Rock Springs Rd.
Easley, SC 29642

I'll start my comments this month with a heartfelt wish to all for a **MERRY CHRISTMAS**.

With that, I gladly cede my space for these important thoughts on the Division's hosting of the MER 2020 Convention provided by Gil Brauch, MMR:

The Carolina Southern Division is proud to be the sponsor of the 2020 Convention of the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association called the **CAROLINA SPECIAL** which will be held October 15-18, 2020 in Charlotte, North Carolina. This annual event provides a venue for NMRA Model Railroaders from Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, plus parts of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and North and South Carolina to gather and share their craftsmanship and skill, enjoy the fellowship of fellow ferroequinologists, visit local layouts and prototype rail operations, and to generally have a good time.

No convention can be successful without the help of a small army of volunteers to handle the many details of the event. The more volunteers we have, the easier the task is for each one. We urge you to take contact [Neal Anderson](#) to volunteer for the area you are willing to help in. The sooner you volunteer, the better choice you will have for picking the area in which you can contribute most to the enjoyment of your fellow model railroaders during the event.

Oh, by the way, for those of you in the NMRA Achievement Program, since this is a Regional Event, you can accumulate Time Units (points) toward your Association Volunteer Award at twice the rate for a Division Event -- just saying...

Doug Algire is putting together a series of clinics on a wide variety of modeling and prototype subject including some for nationally known presenters. Also, there will be two special group tours and the opportunity to visit a bevy of home layouts on a self-drive basis.

It's time to step up and help The Division make this a successful convention.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

I target the 1st of each month for publication. Please submit articles for publication by the 27th of each month.

The preferred format is MS Word, but I can convert most other formats.

For questions and help, email me at editor@carolinasouthern.org

DIVISION AND REGIONAL NEWS

By Ed Gumphrey

The Division's November meeting was held Saturday the 9th at Wade's Train World in Brookford. The date also marked the annual open house and swap meet.

Public turnout was impressive. I spent most of my time between the meeting room where members were setting up their tables for the swap meet and the layout room. Every time I went into the layout room, there were a number of visitors. It's always a pleasure to see the wonder in the eyes of young children as they watch the trains run. If a picture is worth the proverbial 1,000 words, here's a few thousand about how people enjoy watching model trains...



At first, Dad was holding his son, which was a bit awkward. The young boy really enjoyed sitting and watching trains.



These brothers slowly walked around the entire layout, commenting to each other on the details and action scenes they observed.



Three people in this picture are CSD members, the other nine are visitors. This crowd level persisted through the whole open house period.



There's always discussion. The CSD members who volunteer as hosts at Brookford help keep the interest in model trains alive.

The trains on the layout ran well during the day. That doesn't happen through some kind of magic. The handful of CSD members who volunteer to work on the layout and act as hosts during monthly open houses perform an invaluable service. Our thanks for their efforts.



Gil Brauch, MMR and Ed Smith do some street repairs on the operating trolley diorama built by Fred Miller, MMR.



A collection of parts, tools, glues and paints enable the volunteers to make periodic repairs to the structures, locomotive and rolling stock.

While swap meet tables were being set up, there were plenty of gab sessions. Members roamed back and forth between the two rooms. As usual, I pounced on Fred Miller's table early. To my delight, he had a sizeable group of Jordan Miniatures kits and I snatched up a few along with some other items. Doug Algire had a number of items from an estate he was helping to liquidate. Neal Anderson, MMR, had a collection of rolling stock for sale, unfortunately too modern for my modeling period. Bob Halsey had an interesting assortment of Athearn "blue box" and similar kits for sale.



Neal Anderson, MMR had a selection of rolling stock and other items for sale.



Bob Halsey was clearing out some excess rolling stock kits at bargain prices.

I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with two visiting train enthusiasts. One is a relatively new member of CSD, the other was inquiring about membership. Events such as the Brookford open house presents us with good opportunities to recruit new members.

When there was a suitable break in the visitor influx, a brief meeting was held, with eleven members in attendance. The primary focus was updates on planning for hosting the 2020 MER Convention next October. Neal Anderson, MMR, gave us some info, which is summarized in a banner page below. Gil Brauch, MMR, discussed readiness for website updates for both RMU and the convention. As you know from my e-mail, **RMU registration is open** at this [link](#). Doug Algire provided an update on RMU planning. Looks like a good list of clinics. Check it out when you register.

The Division will not hold a monthly meeting in December. Our next event will be RMU 2020 on Saturday, January 25th. I look forward to seeing you there.

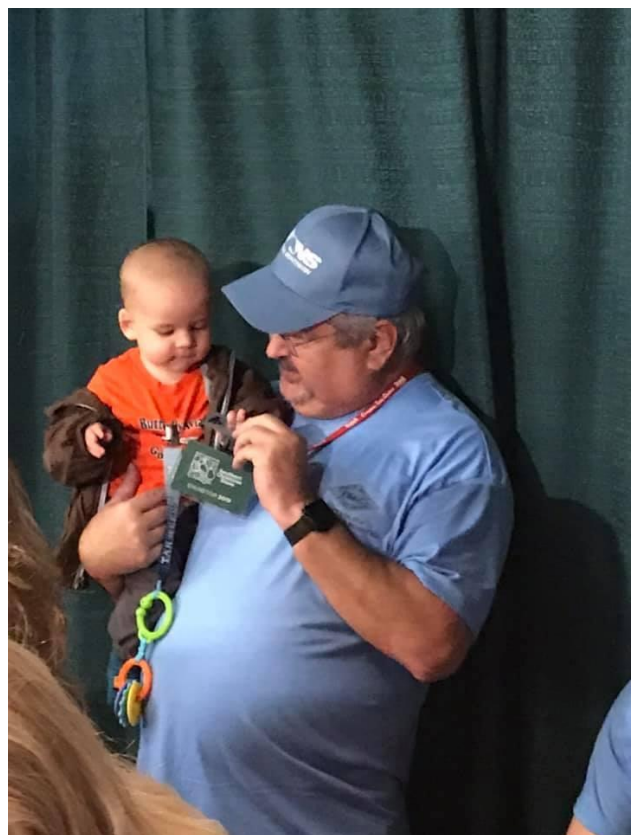
More Train Show Pictures

Photos by Alan Hardee

Continuing the theme of children enjoying train displays, it's especially true around Christmas. My thanks to Superintendent Alan Hardee for this collection of pictures from the Metrolina Christmas display...



An overview of the entrance to the Christmas display.



Superintendent Alan Hardee entertains a young visitor.



Metrolina members keep the trains running and answer visitors' questions.



This young visitor is enjoying Alan Hardee's LED - adorned Christmas train.



Visual evidence of the universal joy of watching a Christmas train display.



An overview of the entrance to the Christmas display.



How could I fit this in my house?



Thank goodness for plexiglass!



An aerial overview of the Christmas display.



New Year Resolutions

By Ed Smith

The old adage that time seems to accelerate faster as you get older just may be true. Where did 2019 go? It can't be almost over. Time seems to be flying by. I'm constantly reminded of something one of my journeymen told me when I was a 20 year old apprentice electrician. These journeymen were not only teachers of the trade, but also relayed years of wisdom about life. One day, this journeyman pulled out his 6' folding ruler and opened it up. He turned to me and asked how old I was. He pointed at the 20 inch mark and the 60 inch mark, which represented his age. He then pointed out the ruler had 72 marks, which closely resembled our life expectancy. For a 20 year old it had little effect, but I could see in his eyes he was pondering his future. He told me "We don't know how long we have on Earth, so live a full life."

Now, you may ask, what does this have to do with model railroading? The other day, I was working on the layout. I started thinking of all the articles I've written for *The Brass Pounder* in the last year and a half. The fruits of those articles were all over the layout room. I was amazed at what I had accomplished, but realized I had made little progress on the railroad as a whole. Now, I'm not discouraged. I enjoyed the construction and writing on each endeavor, and I did reach certain goals. The backdrop and scenery articles (pic 1, 2, 3) contributed to my attaining my Scenery A.P.



Pic 1 – This corner scenery insert uses N-scale in the background to enhance the sense of distance.

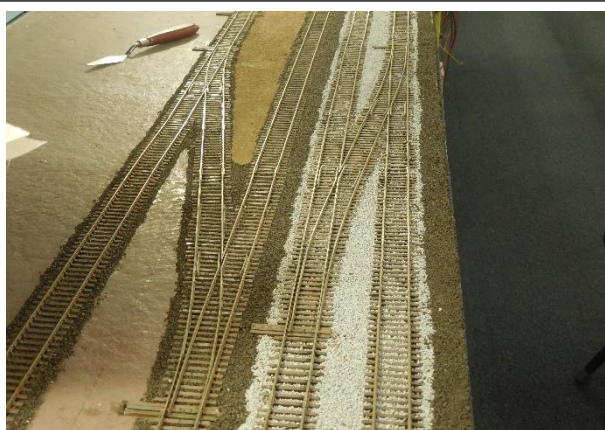


Pic 2 – Puffball trees provide a good background for the Erie's mountainous terrain.

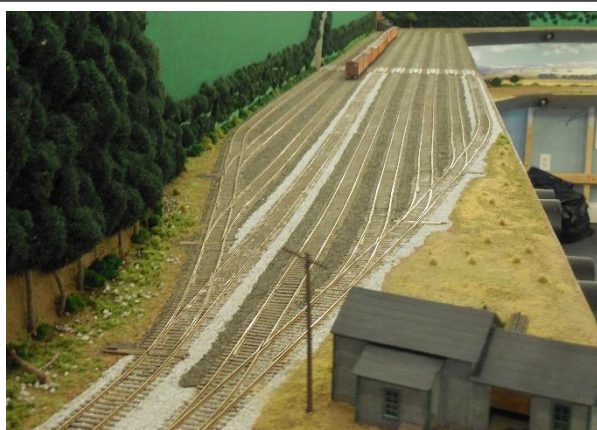


Pic 3 – Working on scenery articles helped me earn my AP Certificate for Scenery.

The track articles recently led me to receiving the Civil Engineering A.P. (pic 4, 5, 6, 7).



Pic 4 – Trackwork includes turnouts built with Fast-Tracks templates.



Pic 5 – Consistent results using the templates results in smooth-flowing track.



Pic 6 – Templates even allow for building reliable, smooth crossings.



Pic 7 – My trackwork articles helped me earn my AP Certificate for Civil Engineer.

Articles about scratch building structures have helped me make progress in the Structures A.P. (pic 8, 9, 10). This all was very enjoyable, but I realized it lacked structure to complete the ultimate goal, a working railroad. As I worked, I opened that 6' ruler and the old journeyman's comments came flooding back. Now, at age 68, I was looking at my hobby through his eyes. I wondered if I could finish this dream layout. Now, I'm not planning on checking out anytime soon, but a more regimented process is needed.



Pic 8 – This structure is one of the focal points along the main line.



Pic 9 – My scratchbuilt bridge recreates the prototype in miniature and was a delightful challenge.



Pic 10 – This scratchbuilt structure was the first that I submitted for evaluation and earned my first structure Merit Award. Along with others, it has me well on my way toward my AP Certificate for Structures.

This is where my New Year Resolution comes in. Really, it's a commitment. With our division hosting the MER regional convention in October 2020, I have offered to open my layout for viewing. The concept is a large HO double deck layout in various stages of completion. Reality is, people want to see trains running. My goal is to finish the double track mainline and re-install my Digitrax system. The Digitrax was removed so I could re-configure the bus and boosters for future signaling. My electrical skills will be put to the test. Scenery and structure construction will be at a minimum while I get trains up and running. Hopefully, in the new year, I can give you monthly updates leading up to the convention.

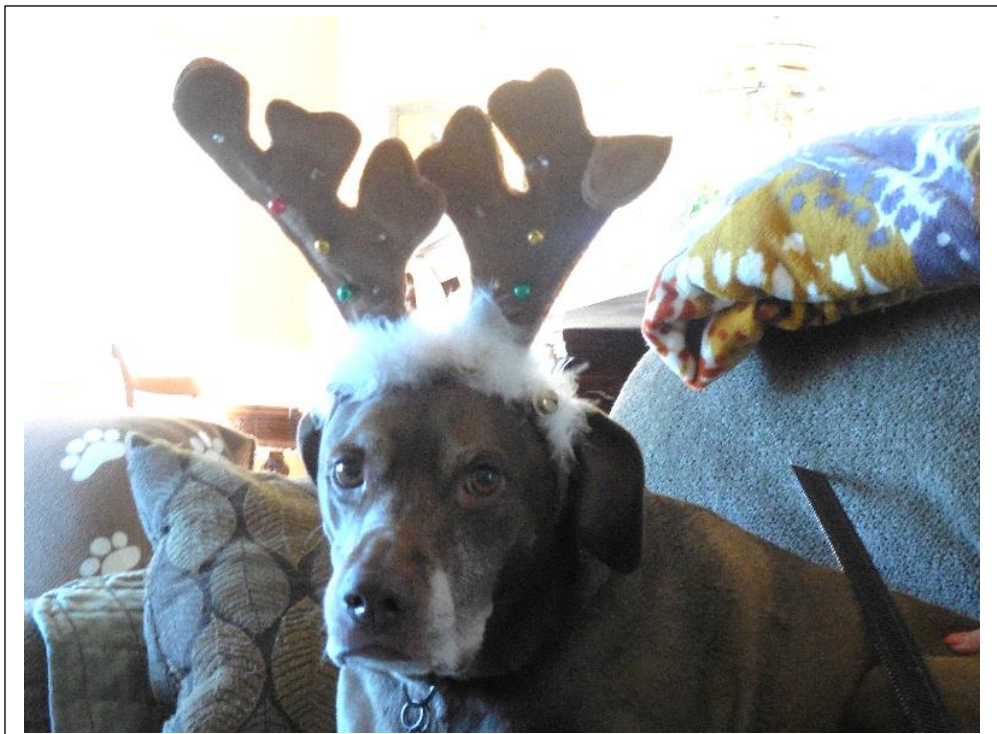
At this time of year, the old journeyman's voice comes echoing back. I've been very fortunate to have a full life. I have so much to be thankful for. A supportive wife, who is my best friend, a healthy family, and great friends, many of which I've met in the last two years within our division. So, from my wife, Cindy, myself, our family, and our dog, Elway, we wish everyone and their families the best of holidays and a Happy New Year.

Oh, by the way, don't forget to mark January 25th, 2020 on your calendar. That's the date for the Railroad Model University, known as RMU. It's a full day of clinics and camaraderie in our hobby, sponsored by our division. I will be making my debut as a clinician, along with hobbyists more qualified than me, including 4 MMRs from our division. So, make plans to attend.

Once again, **Merry Christmas.**

Until the next time.... (pic 12)

ED



Pic 12 – Merry Christmas from Elway

P.S. Santa, please bring me an 8' folding ruler.



Christmas Train Display at 300 South Tryon Street

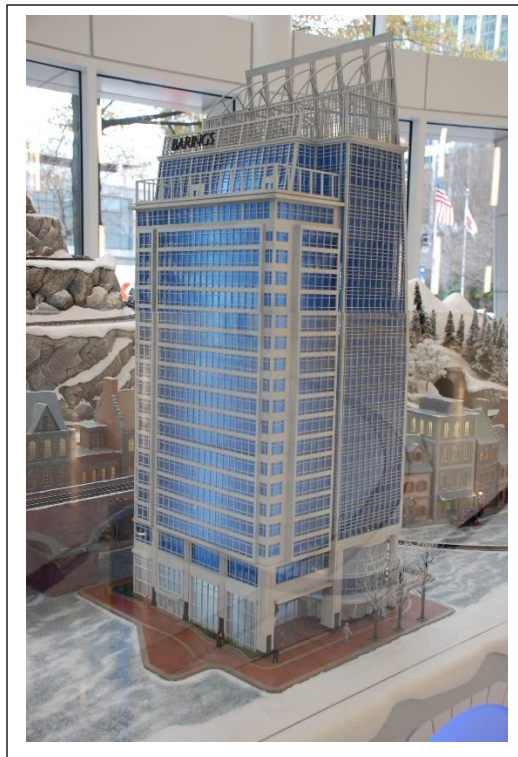
By Ed Gumphrey

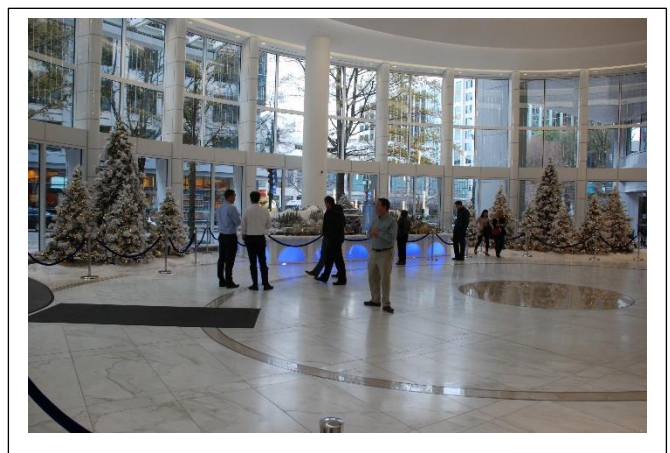
About a week ago, Gil Brauch, MMR posted a link and picture on The Division's Facebook page about a public display. The picture caught my eye and I decided to venture into the city and check it out for myself. The display was produced by [TW Train Worx](#) as one of six holiday displays they have set up from Texas to New York. The firm specializes in custom designed and fabricated layouts for private and commercial customers. Judging from the crowd's interest in the lobby of the Barings building at 300 South Tryon Street, they hit a soft spot with all who associate trains with Christmas. The various trains were in constant motion, and visitors walked around enjoying all the scenes on the layout.

The biggest challenge for my outing was fitting my Ford Explorer into one of the parking spaces in the parking garage I chose. I think they used a Smart Car for the baseline when they painted the stripes for the parking spaces, and that was made worse by the terrible job of parking that a lot of patrons did. Despite that hassle, the trip was worth it.

With apologies for the reflections off the plexiglass, I'll let the photos tell the story.







CLOSING PAGE BONUS



Merry Christmas

Division Brass

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