

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 20 Number 1

January 2020

RMU 2020

15th Annual Railroad Modeling University

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN AND THERE IS STILL ROOM IN
MOST OF THE CLINICS – [CLICK HERE](#)**

Saturday, January 25, 2020

9:00am – 4:00pm

Northside Baptist Church

333 Jeremiah Blvd,

Charlotte, NC 28262

Superintendent's Corner

By Alan Hardee

Division Coming Events

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

Wade's Train Town Open House

**Saturday Jan 11th
10:00am – 2:00pm**

**Brookford
Community Bldg
1700 S Center St.
Hickory, NC**

**As of publication,
CSD meeting plans
for January are not
set. Members will be
notified by email
when details are
established.**

HAPPY NEW Year! And welcome to 2020. As we say goodbye to 2019, let's think back upon the year we had. The new people we met who became our friends. Trips to conventions or other destinations for vacation. Perhaps finishing modeling projects, or at least worked on them. Even completing the requirements for Master Model Railroader. All of this was accomplished in 2019 and can be built upon in 2020. Set goals for yourself, or to use the popular phrase this time of year, New Year's Resolutions. Finish that layout you have been working on, or finally start building the layout you have been planning. We can all showcase our success this year at our 2020 convention (Hint, Hint). Meet more new people this year by helping out with the division table at the train shows. You never know when you will find that one person who likes the same prototype and/or era as you. I hope to see you at RMU on Jan 25th (see announcements), another great opportunity to meet, greet, and further expand the hobby.

2020 will be a very busy year for our Division and we have several opportunities for you to help with. The MER Convention in October will need a lot of help on the different committees that the committee chairmen have been working hard on in the background. The Division itself needs your help as well. Several

positions are up for election this year. The positions for Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Clerk, Paymaster, and one Director position will be open this year. The Paymaster and Director will term out this year and cannot run again for that position. Super, Asst. Super and Clerk are eligible to serve again. **Division 12 NEEDS YOU!!!** I am waiting to hear back from the North Carolina Transportation Museum on the use of their conference room for our division meeting on January 18th.

Wishing you all the best in 2020.



A PHOTO MONTAGE OF 2019 IN *THE BRASS POUNDER*



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 IS OPEN AT THIS [LINK](#)

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
- Shane Wilson, President of [Scale Trains](#) to be keynote speaker at banquet

MORE INFORMATION IS ON OUR WEBSITE

<http://carolinasouthern.org>

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

[Asheville Train Show](#)

Friday Feb 28th

noon - 7:00pm

Saturday Feb 29th

9:00am – 5:00pm

WNC Agricultural Center

765 Boylston Hwy

Fletcher, NC 28732

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

Happy New Year. It seems like yesterday that I became the Division's Clerk and editor of this newsletter. Yet here I am, starting into my third year. In the cliché pattern of good news and bad news, the good news is that I'm still enjoying this. The bad news I have to stretch for – maybe all good news is becoming boring?

RMU is just around the corner. This year it will be held at a different location; Northside Baptist Church, 333 Jeremiah Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28262. The big day is Saturday, January 25th. The clinics start at 9:00am, but the doors will be open at 8:00. I encourage you to come a little early and look over the bargains at the white elephant sale table. If you haven't already registered, you can get started by [clicking here](#). There is still room in most of the clinics.

As of publication, details for January's monthly meeting are still uncertain. I'll notify members by email when it's settled.

Several members are already busy behind the scenes making preparations for our hosting of the MER's 2020 Annual Convention, CAROLINA SPECIAL. Those efforts are already showing benefits. Registration is open on our dedicated convention web pages. See the links on the banner at the top of the home page at <http://carolinasouthern.org>. Hotel information and registration is also active at those links. The clinic schedule is starting to take shape, layout tours and other activities are being arranged. In late breaking news, Shane Wilson, President of [Scale Trains](#) has accepted Alan Hardee's invitation to be the keynote speaker at banquet. I've been busy notifying other Divisions as well as neighboring Regions.

I'll close my remarks by asking you to SPEAK UP about what else you'd like to see in 2020. Our three-part clinic series during monthly meetings last year was well-received. Want to do something similar? What would you like to see?

Hope to see you at RMU.

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

As usual, the Division did not hold a monthly meeting during December. Our Superintendent, Alan Hardee is still working on establishing a venue for January's meeting. When details are set, I will notify members by email.

Not having a meeting doesn't mean there's no news in the division. Work has been going on behind the scenes as we get ready for RMU this month and for the MER Convention in October. Key events include:

- Registration for RMU is still open, and there is room in most of the clinics. If you haven't already registered, begin the registration process at this [link](#)
- The CSD Website now is active with information about the [2020 Convention](#).
- [Registration](#) is now open for the 2020 Convention.
- The 2020 Convention will be at the Crown Plaza Charlotte. The CSD Website includes a link for [hotel information](#) including a link for hotel registration.
- Late breaking news, Shane Wilson, President of [Scale Trains](#) has accepted Alan Hardee's invitation to be keynote speaker at banquet

REGIONAL NEWS BITS AND PIECES

Throughout the area, members of our Division have been active as the following bits and pieces show.

On The Division's [Facebook Page](#) Joe Skorch recently posted seeking to find out others who might be interested in joining a Saturday operating session on his Southern Pacific layout. Joe holds regular sessions about once each month during the week. This effort recognizes that not all of us are retired. This photo is from one of Joe's recent weekday operating sessions.



Speaking of Facebook, Scott Perry's recent posts indicate that he's back at work on a couple of projects. He's scratchbuilding a couple of structures in O scale. The pictures and captions on the next page show his project on one of them – an interesting engine shed...



Scott Perry is constructing engine shed walls one piece at a time. In this photo he's working on a second wall, while the first is visible in the background. Photo from Facebook post.



In this photo Scott is starting to set the rafters in place. Scott has affectionately termed his rafters as "roofies." Note the use of a small square to keep thing aligned. Photo from Facebook post.



Here Scott is doing initial alignment of the engine shed walls. Notice in the background a photo of what is undoubtedly the prototype inspiration for this project. Photo from Facebook post.

If you think it takes a good deal of organization and planning, you'd be right. Scott Perry has set himself up with a two-station work area. To a disorganized model builder like me, his well-organized modeling desk is a perfect role model.



Scott Perry's well-organized two-station work area. Photo from Facebook post.

Elsewhere on Facebook, our newest Master Model Railroader, Neal Anderson was out just before Christmas running his 7½" gauge train. He posted a few interesting videos, and I managed to capture this image from a screen shot.



Neal Anderson, MMR, operates his scratchbuilt 7½" gauge locomotive, controlling it from his perch on a scratchbuilt flatcar, followed by his scratchbuilt caboose. Looks like he's towing another train with an engineer who's enjoying the ride. Photo from Facebook video post.



I'm pretty sure I mentioned in a past issue of *The Brass Pounder* that Andrew Stitt recently decided to redirect his model railroading from HO scale to On30. He dismantled all but the benchwork of his previous HO scale York Railroad and made the switch. Not only is Andrew changing scales, but he's going to "dead rail" as well. With onboard batteries, his locomotives will not have to rely on rail contact for power. Reverse loops and wyes? No electrical challenge there.

In October I had the privilege of a get-together at Andrew's house to see what he's been working on. He's already got about a third of his main-line installed. An ingenious installation of a repeater allows him to wirelessly control the locomotive using his NCE DCC system, so all the sound functions and other DCC features are available without worrying about track power. The group talked a lot, enjoyed a demonstration run, and discussed future work and operations sessions. I can't wait.



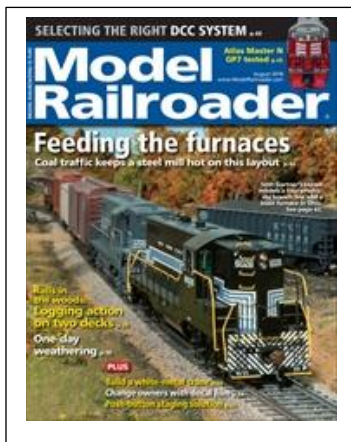
Andrew Stitt's On30 ten-wheeler on a demonstration run.



A collection of On30 craftsman kit hoppers based on ET&WNC prototypes are ready for op sessions.



Andrew Stitt (rear center) leads discussion of future plans on his On30 ET&WNC layout.



Back to social media for news, Seth Gartner continues to post great pictures of various scenes on his NYC Piney Fork Branch railroad. This awesome railroad was the cover story in the August 2018 edition of *Model Railroader*. Here's a couple of pictures from December posts on the Facebook page for Seth's Piney Fork Branch.

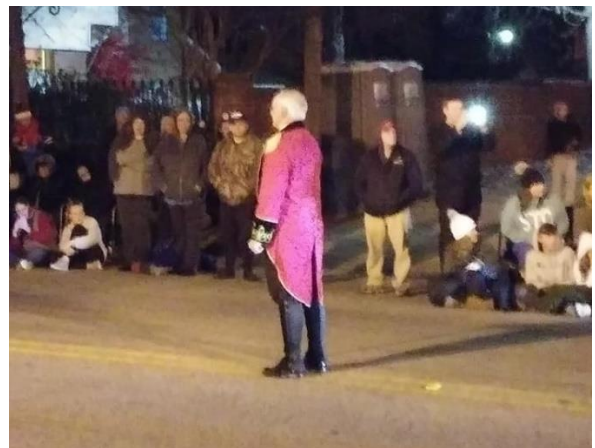


Seth's post says there's fish in the water. The attention to detail on his railroad is amazing. Seth's post also explained why PRR motive power is appearing on NYC rails. Photo from Facebook post.



Seth posted this interesting photo to show a gondola load of some sort of mechanical blower that he "imagineered" using assorted parts. It's why we never throw stuff away. Photo from Facebook post.

Finally, in bits and pieces, from a post by Dave Thrums on the Carolina Southern Division's Facebook page, it appears that RMU Chairman Doug Algire led the 80th Christmas parade in York, SC.



RMU Chairman Doug Algire leads the 80th Christmas parade in York, SC. Photo from Facebook post.



My Southern S-Line Recessed Turnout Controls

By Tim Rumph

In most places I'm using [Blue Point](#) turnout controls for my layout, as shown on the right. This includes the mechanism for holding the points in the proper position and electrical contacts for controlling the frog polarity, among other things. The threaded rod and clevis are size 2-56 and are available from any general-purpose hobby shop which sells radio controlled airplane or cars. In that application, they are used to control things connected to a servo, but we're not using servos in this application. Since local hobby shops are becoming hard to find, these are also available online.

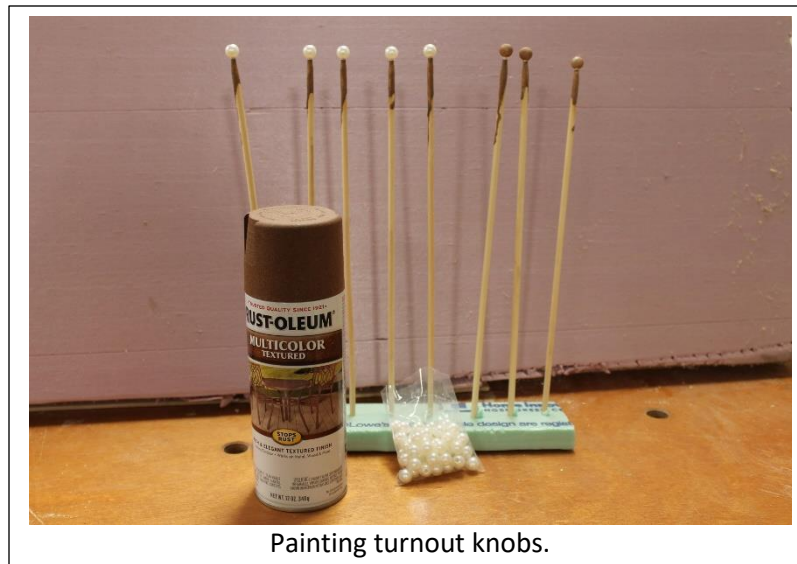
This is a simple push/pull actuator, and the rod just comes to the edge of the layout. If that picture showing the rod end looks dangerous, it is. Since this is right above my washing machine, I've managed to poke myself in the head more than once when tending to laundry. The people that make the Blue Point have a knob available that works pretty well. It's shaped like a small wooden flowerpot, so that the rod end is recessed into the open end of the knob.

I wanted something that felt a bit more "railroad" and what I came up with is shown on the next page. I bought 10mm faux pearls at a local craft shop. The paint is from a big box building supply. This is a texture paint, so it not only is sort of a rustic color, it also feels rough to the touch, kind of like a rusty piece of metal. The color is "Rustic Umber". I paint them by sticking them on the end of a bamboo skewer from the grocery store, held up in a scrap block of foam. The photo shows both before and after painting.



Blue Point turnout control mounted under a turnout.





The knob gives me something to hold onto, but it's still sticking out of the fascia where it can be accidentally bumped or damaged by people passing in the aisle. I decided to recess the knob as show below.



The openings for the knobs are 1-1/2" diameter and are cut with a hole saw. On this section of the layout, the knobs and rods are above the table that supports the layout. To make the recesses, I marked where the rods were located on the back of the 1/8" Masonite that I use for the fascia. I cut 2-1/2" squares of 1/2" thick plywood and glued them to the fascia. I drilled through these with the hole saw, going about half way through from one side, then flipping the fascia over and drilling from the other side. This gives a smooth finish on both sides and makes it easier to remove the plug stuck in the hole saw. I also cut 2-1/2" squares of 1/8" Masonite for the bottom of the hole, and drilled through the center for the rod.



Below is the completed fascia from the back side. Like I mentioned before, the support table is below the rods here, so the pieces of plywood were added above it. In areas where they are below the table, the holes will be in the support along the front of the layout. I kind of liked the look of the unpainted fascia that I have in the staging yard, so I masked around the holes and just painted the pockets. However, the Masonite soaks up paint like a sponge. This resulted in a brownish-black irregular blob around the hole, so I wound up painting the whole Fascia black, which also looks okay.

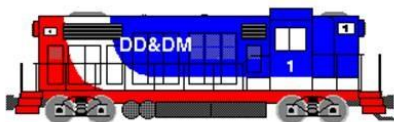


I've started sending information forms asking people to host layout tours and operating sessions during the MER convention here in Charlotte in October 2020. I'm still sending these out, so if I know that you have a layout, I'll be in touch. If I don't know about your layout, please contact me and I'll get the information to you. Also, if you know other people who have layouts, please ask them to contact me.

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The DD&DM Railroad Company

The Twin Lines



Affiliated with



A Visit with a Master Model Railroader

By Ed Gumphrey

Back in November, I had a meeting with Ed Smith at the home of Gil Brauch, MMR. All three of us had planned on giving scenery clinics, and we decided to make it a team effort to avoid any overlap. Gil had proposed a series of four clinics that would occupy the entire RMU day. So, we were getting together to talk over plans about what information to present, decide on which props to use, who would talk about what, and so on.

I had previously seen some of Gil's excellent model building work on T-Track modules and was anxious to see more. Thus, during the email exchanges that scheduled our meeting, I had arranged with Gil to also bring along my camera for an opportunity to capture some photos of his N scale railroad, the DD&DM Railroad Company, *The Twin Lines*. By the way, when you talk to Gil about it, he'll tell you with a grin that "N scale" stands for "Normal scale."

With our planning work completed, I had the pleasure of spending several hours, including an enjoyable lunch, with one of our Division's most active members. Besides recently earning honor as a Master Model Railroader, Gil also notably serves as the Division's webmaster. Over the past two years as editor, my frequent email exchanges with Gil can attest to the fact that being webmaster is a busy task. In addition to the ongoing challenges of keeping our calendar and other features up to date, it also includes recent special needs. He had to completely rework our web page last summer, migrating away from legacy software to a newer version of HTML editing software. That effort also entailed archiving all of the content of our previous website. Close on the heels of that task, Gil handily dispatched the requirements of this year's RMU information and registration pages. As if that wasn't enough, Gil also built an entirely new set of web pages dedicated to Carolina Special, the MER's 2020 annual convention that our Division is hosting in October of this year. Those new convention pages, including links for hotel registration, were tested, refined and launched on schedule.

As any active member of our Division knows, Gil is also the heartbeat of our efforts at Wade's Train World in Brookford. Were it not for his dedication to keeping this effort alive it would have ended long ago. Gil's dedication to keeping Wade Warren's layout and idea alive dates back to 2006. Back then, Gil worked with a handful of other volunteers to restore the railroad's functionality and make other repairs. Those efforts prevented the demise of Wade's Train World, as the city was pressing for its removal. Gil has tirelessly worked on that effort since then. Fortunately, Ed Smith has become very active in the Division over the past two years and now volunteers to share some of the responsibility of hosting our monthly open house events in Brookford. I know Gil gave a sigh of relief when Ed stepped up to help. You can also count on Gil to be at RMU during set-up time and giving clinics. As for meetings, I don't think he's missed a single one since I joined the Division. All of which is to say, I tip my hat to Gil's dedication of time and effort for the Division.

Gil is also active with the [Central Carolina N-Scalers](#). Involved in both N-Track and T-Track standards, that active group frequently sets up its modular railroad at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer as well as area train shows. I promise you'll usually find Gil at any of their events.



An overall view of MMR Gil Brauch's N-scale railroad area.

The DD&DM Railroad was named in honor of Gil's twin daughters, Debra Dene and Donna Michelle. Thus, it's moniker as *The Twin Lines*. Gil thought their initials together had a nice "railroad" sound, and I agree. It's a free-lance bridge line that links the Norfolk Southern with CSX and includes focus on the "Unifour" area. The railroad is a combination of sectional and modular construction. Some of the modules date back to the early 1980s when Gil was active in the Northern Virginia N-Track group. The main area in the front consists mostly of N-Track modules merged with permanent benchwork for a higher elevation area. An innovative twist

features removable sections that lift off the module frames. Gil has a number of different scenes constructed in similar fashion. Over the years, it gave him considerable flexibility in changing scenes on a module. These “back-up” scenes are shown in a photo further down. In the back corner, shown below, two operating levels are topped by a display shelf. This L-shaped section of the railroad was built along the lines of a two-part article, *Bookshelf Railroads*, in *Model Railroader* from January and February of 1977. It’s an ingenious use of the inherent girder property of plywood to fabricate brackets to support the shelves.

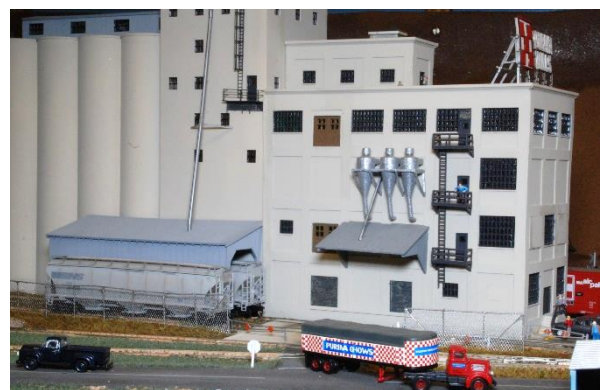


The back area of the DD&DM Railroad features shelves built following an two part article in *Model Railroader* from January and February of 1977.

This section features some very nicely detailed industries and is the heart of most switching operations. Gil explained that he had recently removed paper backdrop and was experimenting with card stock for a replacement backdrop as you can see in the pictures.



Gil Brauch explains some of his display items.



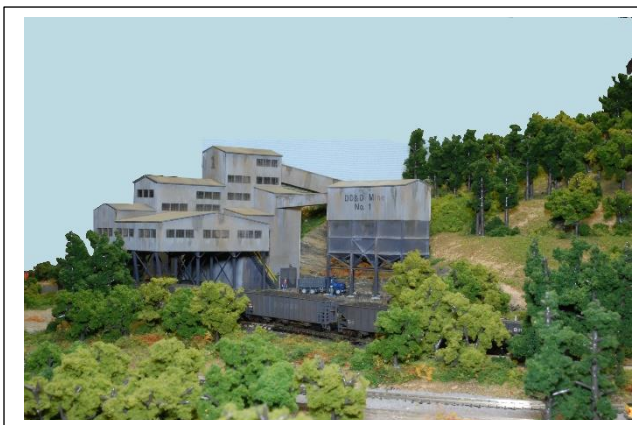
Gil incorporates great detail into his scenes.

The railroad runs DCC, and Gil uses a Digitrax system. We didn't operate much while I was there, but I asked Gil about the difficulty uncoupling in N-scale. Picking up a nearby skewer, he demonstrated that it's just as easy as in HO scale. We talked a bit about how much N-scale has improved over the years. Those improvements, especially in operational reliability, have contributed not only to the growth of N-scale in general, but the expanding number of modular groups across the country.



DD&D Mine № 3 is on a section that dates back to Gil's activity in the Northern Virginia N-Track group in the early 1980s, as attested to by the lettering on the girder bridge. This scene shows how terrain is used to advantage, with track at three different elevations, all realistically blended in a scene about a foot deep.

While moving around Gil's layout with my camera, tripod and light, we discussed taking pictures and my activities as editor. I made the comment that I should have brought along some light blue posterboard so we could temporarily raise the height of Gil's backdrop that dissects part of his layout. That led to comments about photo editing software, and I remarked that I rarely used it. I couldn't resist with this picture of DD&D Mine № 1, so I decided to play with it a little bit. The two pictures below show the results, before and after manipulation. I hope I haven't opened a can of worms for myself....





Even when moving in for a close picture, Gil's craftsmanship stands up to scrutiny.



Part of the UNIFOUR section includes engine servicing facilities.

Going back to my earlier mention of lift-out scenes, the picture on the next page shows Gil's shelf with various scenes for his N-Track modules, with some T-Track modules on the upper shelf. The two smaller pictures show two of his T-Track modules that he lifted down and set onto the arms of a chair. To me it's incredible the amount of detail packed into such a small space. These modules are only fourteen inches deep (maximum). Even the end module with Jake's Garage is barely two feet wide.



Gil stores his collection of lift-out scenes on a shelf. The lower shelves hold four different scenes for N-Track modules. There are two T-Track modules on the top shelf.



One of the other things that impressed me in Gil's railroad area, was how he has displayed all of the railroadiana that we all tend to collect over the years. Many of Gil's displays include models that he earned Merit Awards for during his journey toward MMR. He has personalized a lot of items – in case you missed it, in the two pictures of T-Track modules you can make out the backrest of the director's chair with DD&DM markings. Gil has also built attractive display cases, taken advantage of wall space for mounting pictures, and neatly organized everything. With that in mind, I encourage you to look back at the overall view pictures at the beginning of this article.

So, that's the highlights of my visit with a Master Model Railroader. I didn't cover everything we talked about, including his career in the Army, his choice to settle in Hickory, and other various topics. If you'd like to know more about him, I encourage you to read an article by Rusty Doss when Gil was one of the Directors. The article starts on page three of the [January 2015 Brass Pounder](#). Check it out.

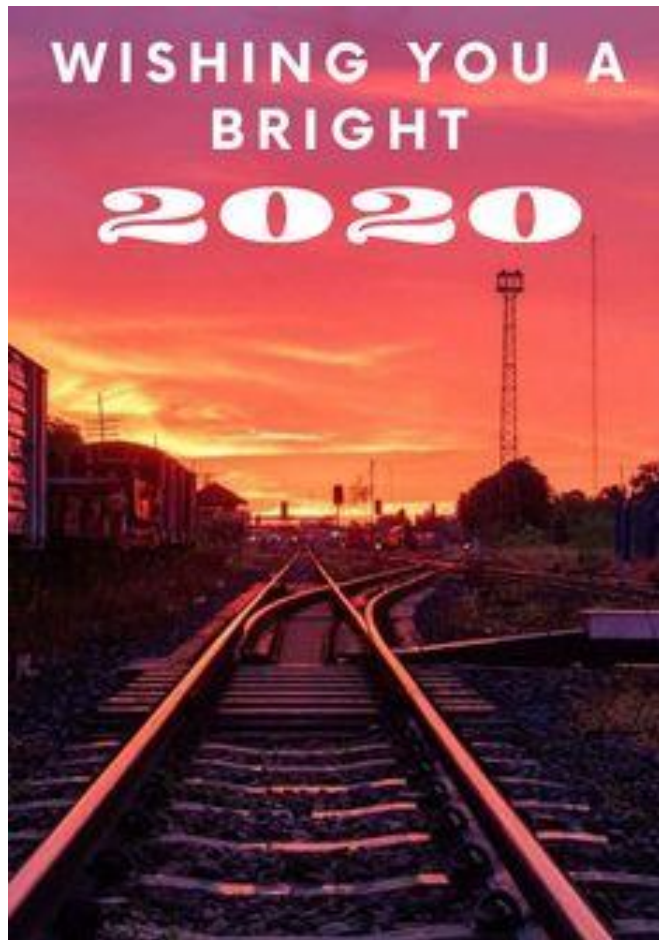


Gil built a display case that holds a variety of models.



Gil's coveted MMR certificate is surrounded by his Golden Spike Award at the top and his seven other Achievement Certificates.

CLOSING PAGE BONUS



Division Brass

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