

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 22 Number 3

March 2022

Division Coming Events

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

DIVISION MEETING

**The Division's
Monthly Meeting
for March will be
held on Saturday,
March 19th at
10:00am at The
Cherryville Model
Railroad Club and
Museum in the**

**Cherryville Depot
105 N Depot St.
Cherryville, NC
28021**

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

Earlier in February, Punxsutawney Phil predicted 6 more weeks of winter before Spring arrives. While that might seem like a bad thing to most folks, we as model railroaders welcome the extended time to continue with our indoor projects (pardon to garden railroaders & live steamers). Certainly, I know I can go days in my basement without needing to look out the window. Yard and garden activities, as well as recreational ones will soon come into play for our valuable time devoted to our hobby.

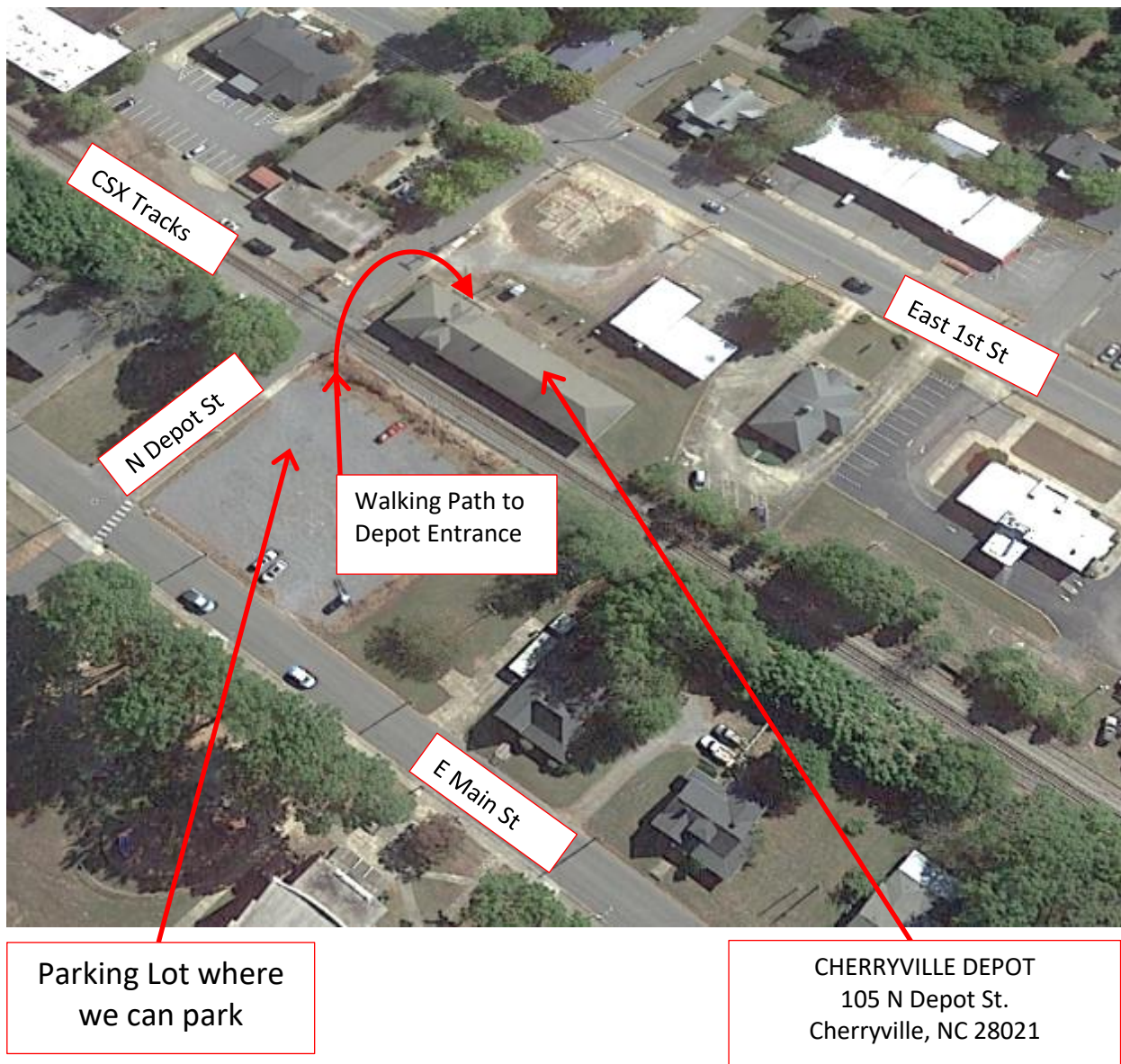
That being said, train shows are beginning to reappear, just as the daffodils are in our yards. The great thing about going to train shows is not only the thrill of the hunt for that one item(s) you've been looking for, but also the return to interacting with your fellow modelers. I have friends and acquaintances from across the state that I rarely see (although I communicate with them via email) that I run into at train shows. How have you been? Survived Covid? How's the family? What's new with your railroad? Want to see some pictures? You know the drill. So even if you don't (think) you need anything, there are still benefits to going.

Similarly, renewing participation in Division activities brings good things to you and fellow members. Learning what people have been doing is always interesting. Perhaps you could use some help with a project? Perhaps you didn't know someone else

could use a helping hand. Asking others about how to do something. We have a great untapped opportunity to gain knowledge at Division meetings.

So as Spring approaches, the time is coming to stick your head up, look around, and think about getting out and seeing what else is going on in the hobby beside your train room!

For our upcoming Division Meeting on Saturday, March 19th, we'll meet at the train depot in Cherryville. Located at 102 N Depot Street in Cherryville, it's the home of The Cherryville Model Railroad Club and Museum. There's a parking lot across the tracks from the depot. This view should help you get your bearings. See you there!



UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

20th Annual North Carolina Railroad Expo

**April 1-2, 2022
Fri 12:00-7:00pm
Sat 9:00am-4:00pm
Hickory Expo Center
1960 13th Ave Dr SE
Hickory, NC 28602**

**Fort Mill SC
Model Train Show
April 9th
9:00am – 3:00pm
Clarion Hotel
3695 Foothills Way
Fort Mill, SC 29708**

Historic Spencer Shops Train Show

**May 14th – 15th
Saturday 9:00am –
5:00pm
Sunday 12:00 – 4:00pm
NC Transportation
Museum
1 Samuel Spencer Dr.
Spencer, NC 28159**

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

I thought January went by quickly, until last month flew past me. Spring is just around the corner, the Fletcher train show was just a week ago, and more train shows are on the horizon. See the list to the left.

Thanks to Dave Myers for lending his equipment and technical expertise to help improve the quality of our Zoom option for monthly meetings. If you have any doubt that it's a popular option, read between the lines of the meeting news beginning on page 4 – counting the people at Rick Beam's house, there were as many Zoom participants as there were in person at the NC Transportation Museum. Speaking of which, thanks also the Marcus Neubacher for making the space available for our February meeting.

Our meeting for March will be an interesting field trip to the train Depot in Cherryville. For those who have never seen the railroad artifacts and layouts, it's worth the trip. See more details on page 8.

Instead of meeting the third Saturday of the month, in April our meeting will be another field trip on Saturday the 9th. Like we did back in 2019, we'll be visiting Tichy Train Group for a factory tour. For a preview, see the article from our last visit in the [May 2019 edition](#). Tichy is in Alamance, near Burlington. It's close to 2 hours driving time from Charlotte, so we'll try to help organize carpooling. Let me know if you can take some riders. I can promise you'll enjoy the trip – it's well worth the driving or riding time.

I'll close my comments this month on a familiar note. Please let me know what projects you're working on. I'd like to expand my roster of regular contributors, not to mention my almost empty backlog of articles.

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

Train Town Box Score

February 2022

Open Houses 5

Attendance 142

Hosts: Gil Brauch, Keith Iritsky, Ed Smith (3), Chad Barnett, Bob Halsey, Ken Riddick, JJohn Yarbrough, and Larry Paffrath

To volunteer, go to:

<http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html>

(#)=frequency (r)=first time host

Please, don't forget that volunteers are still needed for upcoming weekends. Here's the Box Score for last month. Follow the link to volunteer to help and get your name added to the list. Like Gil has said, C'mon folks.

MEETING

Next up in the news is a report on the February Meeting. It was held at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer and with Zoom for members who couldn't appear in person. From pictures (thanks to Joe Skorch), it looks like 11 attended in person and there were four connected on Zoom. Notably, Rick Beam's camera on Zoom showed about a half dozen other members there, so about 20 members attended in all.

It's clear that the Zoom option increases participation. Also, from my end as a Zoom participant, the new hookup provided much better audio than the meeting in January.

Superintendent Andrew Stitt called the meeting to order approximately 10:00am and jumped right into meeting topics. First up was presentation of the Golden Spike award to Bob Halsey. He earned this last year, but this was the first opportunity for AP Chairman Neal Anderson MMR to present him with his certificate. Congratulations to Bob.



Bob Halsey received his Golden Spike Award

After the presentation, Andrew talked about upcoming meetings. We will continue to look for a regular location (home) for monthly meetings. Libraries offer a good option that is relatively economical. There are still some Covid restrictions in place at some libraries in the area, so booking library meeting rooms isn't available right away. It does appear to be a viable option going forward. We will plan some layout visits when we can. We're also going to do more "field trip" meetings. After the meeting, background plans came to fruition, and our next two meetings will be field trips.

In March, on Saturday the 19th, our meeting will be held at the Depot in Cherryville, NC. See the aerial view on page 3, and more info below on page 8. Then, in April, on Saturday the 9th, our meeting will be a field trip to Alamance, NC, home of Tichy Train Group. See more details about this trip also on page 8.

Back to the February meeting. Andrew also emphasized the continuing need for volunteers at Newton Depot and talked about working to get name tags for meetings and events. Several options are being explored. Then, Andrew handed off the meeting to Neal Anderson, MMR for an update on the Convention.

Neal said things were continuing to be organized behind the scenes, and the pace would pick up in March. He'll have upcoming information on a tour of the Convention Hotel and menu details. He's working to establish an economical lunch option. Neal also announced various Convention Committee assignments. The full list can be viewed on the Convention website at <http://carolinasouthern.org/MER2022leaders.html>. Beginning in March, the Convention website will have more details added, including photo previews of layouts open for tours, clinic schedule details, and more. More help will be needed as we get closer.

Stay tuned.

After Neal's Convention update, Andrew introduced the group to Marcus Neubacher, Director of Administration at the NC Transportation Museum. Marcus talked about becoming a member and then introduced June Hall, the Museum's Volunteer Coordinator. She talked about the various ways you can volunteer to help. Want to drive a locomotive? The volunteer program offers a patch to become qualified. If you think that's just a pipe dream, ALL the engineers at the Transportation Museum are volunteers. Notable, Marcus stated that only 9% of the Museum's budget is met with state funds. The rest of their budget comes from admissions, sales and membership fees. It was a good presentation, and hopefully sparked some interest for future volunteers. During her presentation, June pointed out that you can volunteer in a multitude of areas. They include Automotive, Aviation and Interpretive programs as well as Rail Operations and Special Events. For more information, see the Volunteer tab of the Museum's website at <https://www.nctransportationmuseum.org/volunteer/>.

For more details about volunteering, contact June Hall at June.hall@ncdcr.gov or by phone at 704-636-2889 ext. 268.

Enjoy some snapshots from the meeting, courtesy of Joe Skorch.



Andrew Stitt opens the meeting with business discussion. Thanks to David Myers who provided equipment and expertise for the improved Zoom setup.



Alan Hardee zips up his jacket as Neal Anderson, MMR grabs his notes. True to his word, Neal's Convention update was short and sweet.



Marcus Neubacher, Director of Administration of the NC Transportation Museum, opens a presentation about the Museum. He was followed by June Hall who provided more information about the Museum's volunteer program.



Participants listen to Marcus Neubacher. A TV in front of the speakers let everybody see those who were participating by Zoom.

CONVENTION NEWS



If you haven't been in touch – **BREAKING NEWS** - Our Division is hosting the Mid-East Region's convention in Charlotte from October 20-23, 2022. The web pages for the convention have been activated. Check it out at <http://carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html> Updates will be coming this month, and throughout the period leading up to October.

LAYOUTS NEEDED

By Alan Hardee

Do YOU have a home layout?

Do you have a friend with a home layout?

If you answered YES to either one of these questions, I need you to contact me for information about the 2022 MER Convention. The Carolina Southern Division is hosting the 2022 MER convention in Charlotte, NC in October. We need Layouts for tours and/or operating sessions during the convention.

Please contact me by email at 2022tours@carolinasouthern.org or assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org or by phone at 704-689-3867.

I hope to hear from you soon.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIP MEETINGS

The Division's next two meetings will be field trips to these interesting locations:

SATURDAY, MARCH 19TH
10:00am at
Cherryville Depot
102 N Depot St,
Cherryville, NC 29021



The Cherryville Depot is home to the Cherryville Model Railroad Club and Museum. We will meet in the waiting room end of the depot, which contains a number of interesting railroad artifacts and pictures. Be sure to spot the photo of the depot before it was restored, especially the gaping hole in the roof. The baggage room end of the depot contains operating layouts in HO scale, 3-rail Lionel, a table with a loop for Standard Gauge, and an overhead loop of G-scale. After the meeting, members can see the layout and meet club members who will be there running trains. See you there.



SATURDAY, APRIL 9TH
10:00am at
Tichy Train Group
3260 Nova Lane
Alamance, NC, 27201



We have received an invitation from the Carolina Piedmont Division for a tour of the facilities at Tichy Train Group in Alamance (Burlington), NC on Saturday April 9th at 10:00am. Don Tichy leads the tour group through the factory explaining and demonstrating the research, design, engineering and production of his great kits and detail parts. The tour now includes his new product line of decals. The visit will require an early morning start to get there in time – perhaps we can work up a carpool or two from CSD. If you give me permission to release your contact information, I can help facilitate connecting you with somebody who has volunteered to drive. Three years ago we made a tour and it was great fun. You'll also have a chance to save some money on great Tichy kits.



STILL ON SCHEDULE

By Ed Smith

Last month I described the installation of the multiple main bus lines on my layout. As of this writing, we have completed half of the lower mainline and all of the helix. Wiring the mainline consists of 3 gauges of wire: #12 for the bus, #16 wire for the connection between the bus and feeders, and #22 for the feeder drops (pic 1). Holes were drilled close to the rail on every piece of track and feeders were stripped, bent to form, and soldered in place (pic 2). Different wire colors were used for each main; red and black, and brown and blue. A resistance soldering tool from Micro Mark is being used for the job (pic 3). This unit is far better and faster than a regular soldering iron. It also causes far less heat damage to ties, etc. It uses a carbon rod for heating (pic 4).



Pic 1: Various gauges and colors of wire awaiting installation



Pic 2: Feeder drops are bend to shape and soldered to every piece of track.



Pic 3: Micro Mark resistance soldering tool is faster than a regular soldering iron.



Pic 4: A carbon rod is used for heating.

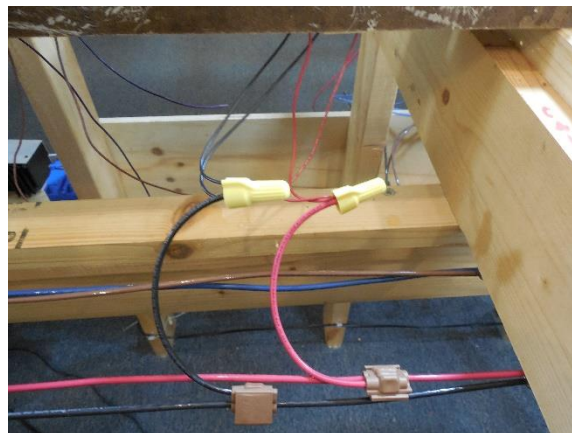
Soldering the bus/feeder connections is the ultimate installation, but it has drawbacks. Soldering creates a permanent installation that may not be wanted when trouble shooting and it is labor intensive. There are many new devices on the market for reliable connections. I'm using 3M Displacement Connectors and yellow and green Scotch Loks (pics 5 & 6). A typical installation is shown below (pic 7). The brown connectors accept #12 wire for Bus and as small as #18 wire for the Secondary. Installing the connectors is relatively simple, and all you need is a good pair of wire strippers and a quality pair of pliers to crimp the connectors (pic 8).



Pic 5: A variety of wire connectors are being used – easier than soldering all connections.



Pic 6: Feeder and drops can be pre-assembled and then connected between the bus and track.



Pic 7: A typical installation with feeders off the bus and power drops up to the track.

We also have finished installing the Loconet cables for the Digital System. This consists of a 6-conductor cable and RJ12 connectors. I purchased several sets from Digitrax (pic 8). Each box has 50' of cable, 20 connectors, and a tool for stripping the wire covering and crimping on the connector. I also purchased another 400' of cable, in 50' lots, to connect all my Digitrax apparatus. Of major importance is the wire relationship to the connector on each end. An easy way to solve this is to keep the white wire on the right side of each connector, making sure they are always the same (pic 9).

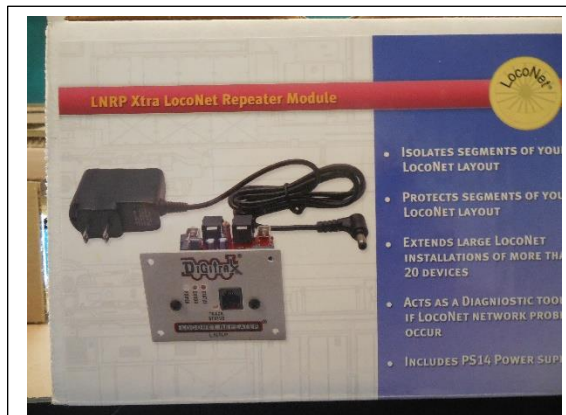


Pic 8: Digitrax Loconet set contains 50' of cable, 20 connectors, and a crimping tool.



Pic 9: When assembling loconet wire runs, always keep the white wire to the right before crimping on the connector.

My Loconet consists of 2 cable runs connected at my LNRP (pic 10). This unit serves several purposes. One, it is located in the middle of my series run of 24 UP5s and 1 UR93, and along with 6 other PS14 power supplies, it enhances the signals for the throttles. These PS14s are located at every 4th UP5 around the layout. The main benefit of the LNRP is that it provides 2 avenues for your Loconet. One for UP5s, etc., and another isolated connection you can use for Command Station and Boosters.



Pic 10: Digitrax LNRP is centrally located and enhances signal to other stations.

Finally, I made a decision on the location of my UR93, for wireless communications. I picked a spot located in the middle of the room, above the layout near the 8' ceiling (pic 11). After consultation with Digitrax, I replaced my CFL lights with GE LED lamps, because they warned there may be some interference from CFLs. Although this was expensive when you're talking 170 lamps, the finished product is excellent (pic 12). I used Daylight LEDs with higher lumen ratings on the lower level, and Soft White LEDs on the upper level. The upper lighting is not as harsh now and I've decided against an upper-level valance. So, in effect it is not only cost saving, but labor saving with no 300' valance installation needed. Although my wife, Cindy, does not participate in my hobby, she constantly amazes me on how she knows what is going on. To her credit, she is the one who found the LED lamps at Sam's Club, and brought me samples to try on my layout. They turned out to be perfect.



Pic 11: Digitrax UR93 for wireless communication is mounted in the center of the room at the top of the backdrop near the ceiling.



Pic 12: Lighting was changed, using LEDs instead of CFLs to avoid possible interference with Loconet signals. Next up is getting things operating.

By the time my wife and I leave for our Panama Canal trip in the middle of March, I believe the main bus project will be nearing an end. Next up, getting the Digitrax System operational. That's the plan.

Until next time,

ED

CLOSING PAGE BONUS



March is Mardi Gras month. The Smokey Mary steam locomotive float from the New Orleans Krewe of Orpheus, founded in 1993.

Division Brass

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