

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 22 Number 6

June 2022

Division Coming Events

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

DIVISION MEETING

**The Division's
Monthly Meeting
for June will be a
Zoom meeting on
Saturday, June
18th.**

**Members will be
notified by email
with a link to the
meeting during the
week before the
meeting.**

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

I recently had the opportunity to represent the Carolina Southern Division at the train show at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer. The Division was asked to put on some modeling demonstrations for those attending the show. With the help of Alan Hardee and several other members of the Metrolina model railroad club, we set up some tables for display purposes.

I decided to show passers by a technique for making scale trees, using the Woodland Scenic's forest canopy kits. I was pleasantly surprised by the number of people who noticed and stopped by to watch. I had many questions asked, as well as favorable responses as to the finished trees.

While recognizing that there are many ways to populate our layouts with trees and forests, I was reminded that, as model railroaders, or those simply interested in miniatures, we all have a desire to learn different ways to do things. If you are a member of one of the local clubs, an operating group, or simply working on something privately, you know that learning new things can be very enjoyable. Or putting it another way, "I never thought of doing it that way".

That's one of the purposes of this summer's series of clinics on building dioramas. Many fundamental aspects of building a model railroad will be displayed. We had a group discussion about how to get started in May. I think everyone who attended got something out of it. I hope you will take the opportunity to participate in the upcoming months, and contribute from your experience.

UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

There are no
scheduled train
events in the
nearby area until
this fall.

Columbia, SC in
October and
Fort Mill, SC in
December

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

Whoosh! And another month flies by. In last month's newsletter, Ed Smith gave us some information about his cruise through the Panama Canal. That prompted me to reminisce about my Navy days, so I threw in a little trivia in my rambling notes. Thus started a bit of a chain reaction. I think most model railroaders are also interested in other big machinery and infrastructure. From strip-mining and heavy construction equipment to super-sized bridges, "BIG" engineering captures our interest. So, it was not surprising that I received a few comments about the Panama Canal.

It turns out that visiting member Stephen Wood is married to a woman born and raised in Panama. He and his wife regularly visit her family there, and he has transited through the canal as well as ridden on the Panama Canal Railway. He was kind enough to share an article he originally wrote for the adjacent Carolina Piedmont Division.

I hope you enjoy his article as much as I did. Of course, I was again prompted to fall into my "sea story" mode and throw a bit more trivia into the game. I'll close out the Panama Canal focus with a little more trivia. Interestingly, the width of the Panama Canal locks dictated battleship design for both the United States and Great Britain. Prior to 2016, the maximum lock width was 110 feet. The Iowa class battleships of the U.S. Navy and HMS Vanguard shared 108 foot beams. The axis powers of World War II didn't share the same concern over canal passage. Japan's Yamato and Musashi had a 128 foot beams and Germany's Bismarck and Tirpitz had a 118 foot beams.



USS IWOA (BB-61) transits through Panama Canal locks with one foot of clearance on each side.

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

May 2022

Open Houses 4

Attendance 250

Hosts: Keith Iritsky, Gil Brauch, MMR, Ed Smith, Larry Paffrath, Fred Brooks,

To volunteer, go to:

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

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

It's hard to believe the month of May is already over. At the Newton Museum and Wade's Train Town, it was a great month. The Train Fest on May 14th, in conjunction with the Newton Festival, saw our venue packed. Wade's had at least 205 guests, and it was hard to keep track. The museum's cab rides totaled 214 and it was estimated we had 500 guests. It was so busy, that the new Depot Deli across the street ran out of food. Every month proves that this couldn't have been a better decision. With what we add to the museum, and their future plans, the future is bright.

Now, here it comes. We are still looking for volunteers to help. If you're interested in helping, use the link above to schedule a Saturday.

That's it for now.

ED Smith

MEETING

May's meeting was held at the home of Joe Skorch on Saturday, the 21st. Seven members were present, and I was participating by Zoom. Andrew opened the meeting at 10:00 am by having participants introduce themselves and briefly discuss their model railroad interests. The introductions provided an overall view of the diversity in our hobby. Scales varied from N scale to O Lionel, and On30. Layouts varied from [Free-mo](#) to double level (like the host's), from large to small, with some in the planning stage.

Superintendent Andrew Stitt then discussed Division business. Here are some bullets of key topics:

- Name tags are now available from the Division's haberdasher. The website will soon be updated for ordering.
- Wade's Train Town in Newton continues to be a success story. We saw over 200 visitors last Saturday.
- Help is still needed. Sign up at <http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html>
- The Division has two "Timesaver" layouts. We are considering setting one up at Wade's, which would provide a "hands on" experience for visitors.
- The Train Show at Spencer on the 14th and 15th was a good place for the Division to show some of our work with Metrolina display and active displays for making trees and turnouts. There were 180 tables at the show.
- At Spencer, Andrew Stitt talked with a gentleman who had a Z scale display which may be displayed at the Convention in October. If so, we will have display layouts from Z to O scale.
- Andrew noted that there are no NMRA standards for Z scale. If you have ideas for developing standards, contact links can be found at <https://www.nmra.org/contact>
- An overview of Convention planning status:
 - Hotel registration and reservations are now available on line at <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/clthuhf-nmra-6682155e-1201-4b1c-b058-e01abe299b2b/>
 - Convention registration page is under development and should be open in June.
 - The [Convention website](#) has seen four updates in May, with more to come.
 - There is still room for more clinics at the Convention.
 - Some additional information on layout and railroad-related tours has posted.
 - General Store and White Elephant procedures for operation and bookkeeping are under development.
 - The Convention Hotel is located close to the Charlotte Light Rail.

After the business discussion, the Zoom meeting was closed and Andrew started the first of a series of clinics on building a diorama. That was followed by lunch, and then an operating session on Joe's layout.

Our thanks to Joe Skorch for hosting the meeting.

Okay, so you've finished reading my somewhat clinical summary of the meeting. Here's a more personal observation, along with some pictures, from host Joe Skorch:

The Host's Point of View

By Joe Skorch

The CSD May meeting was small for attendance but big on information and features. As I hosted the meeting this month and after a 2+ year hiatus I was not sure what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised to welcome 2 new faces to the group and to coax one of the regulars from our operating group to attend. Of course it took an operating session to do it.

The meeting started with Andrew Stitt bringing everyone up to date on the happenings within the Division. The topics included were an update on the convention covering the need for layout tours, clinicians and the continuous need for volunteers at Train Town, the train show in Spencer, and having a presence at more train shows in the future.



Since this was a guest Zoom meeting we were limited to 40 minutes of on air time. A result of this was that we went quickly into Andrew's demonstration of using foam board as a modeling medium and the use of a variety of tools and techniques for working with foam. There seemed to be a genuine interest in creating projects as a learning process which could be applied later to the members own layouts.

After the demonstration lunch was served comprising of Turkey or Ham sandwiches, potato salad, baked beans, chips, an assortment of cookies, watermelon and of course salad so the members could tell their wives that they had salad, which very few did.



After lunch we went to the train room where I gave the members an overview of the layout. A few of the members seemed overwhelmed by the scope of operating trains which was not a problem, as we all started somewhere, myself included. Larry Keller who is one of the regular operators on the layout took new member Al Mitchell under his wing and was showing him what he does to operate on the layout. Larry also is quite experienced at operations and has his own On30 layout in Indian Land, South Carolina. The session lasted nearly 3 hours and it was fun to see the layout operate with everyone enjoying themselves while learning a new layout. If you ever thought about trying operations don't be intimidated as we all started somewhere. After the initial learning process you will learn to relax and enjoy the moment.



With thanks to Art Brearton, here's some more pictures of the operating session...





CONVENTION NEWS UPDATE

As more members volunteer to host layout tours and operating sessions, here's some previews of layouts that you can see during the upcoming Convention...

David Myers



Dave has an HO Scale, 10' x 17', walk-in layout, featuring the Southern Railway during the transition era. No prototype location was selected, but, inspired by the prototype, the track plan represents his best use of the available space.

For an operating concept, the layout is point-to-point with a lower level, combination reverse loop and three track staging area at each end. A branch allows for switching local industries and a continuous running loop. Another branch line to the upper level serves a coal industry. A narrow gauge HOn30 railroad connects three coal facilities on the upper level.

Summer scenery has been applied to all areas except, of course, the hidden reverse loops/staging tracks. More than forty-five separate buildings or railroad service structures have been assembled from commercial kits. All brick buildings have been treated to show mortar. All stores and businesses have been painted and signage applied. Several structures (not all) have been weathered. Interior lighting is being added to some of the downtown buildings. The town and railroad have a population of 140+ figures of people, about 50% of which are hand-painted by Dave.

Track is code 100 Flex Track. Turnouts are Atlas and Peco. All track is on a plywood base and cork roadbed. All visible track is ballasted. The east-west run through the layout is a single track main line with a passing track near the yard and engine facility. The passing track also serves as a switching lead. An electrically operated turntable serves the steam locomotive facility.

The railroad operates with CVP Easy DCC with a third, wireless throttle. Three trains can be operated simultaneously, but there is really only room for two at a time. Reverse loops are controlled with DPDT switches. Lower level turnouts are power operated from the control panel. Visible turnouts operate with manual ground throws. (Dave thinks it is fun to follow the trains around.) The layout includes automatic flashing warning lights at three grade crossings, operating block signals, and downtown operating traffic lights. CCTV monitors the lower level.

John Short

The HOn3 Rio Grande Southern is set in 1940, during the late summer/early fall time frame. The model railroad includes portions of the entire line from Ridgway, Colorado to Durango, Colorado. Additionally, a small representation of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Silverton Branch is included. The railroad is operations-oriented, and makes use of a North Coast Engineering (NCE) Digital Command Control (DCC) radio control system. Durango, a focal point on the layout, contains a scratchbuilt model of the 10-stall roundhouse as it existed in 1940, and the necessary coal, sand, ash, and water facilities.



Rico, a division point on the prototype as well as the layout, contains a scratchbuilt model of the Pro Patria Mill, as well as a connection to the seldom-modeled Enterprise Branch. The Enterprise Branch is a freelanced addition on a second level, added for operational challenges. Iconic locations, including Ophir, Vance Junction, and Placerville are

also included. The Telluride Branch, which connects to the main line at Vance Junction is also included on a second level. This branch serves the mining community of Telluride, and the major mines and mills located above in Pandora. The railroad terminates in the town of Ridgway, where a roundhouse, turntable and complete engine servicing facilities are located. The turntable is a 65' turntable, rather than the prototypical 50' turntable. I used a larger turntable so that K-27s, as well as K-28, K-36, and K-37 locos, could be turned, since there was no place to install a wye. The layout, and its predecessor (dismantled upon my retirement and relocation to North Carolina) have been featured in the *Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette* and *Great Model Railroads* 2014.



The model railroad is approximately 1,000 sq. ft, and is located in the basement of John's log home. Access is via an inside or an outside stairway. Trackwork is 100% complete, with basic scenery completed for about 80% of the layout. The minimum radius is 24", with maximum grades of about 2.5%.

Andrew Stitt

Andrew's layout is inspired by the ET&WNC in the 1920's when the line was operating at its peak. The HOn30 layout is 30' X 30'. The point to point trackage is Micro Engineering flex track, and mostly hand laid turnouts made with a Fast Tracks jig. Trackage is 100% complete and features the line from Hampton, TN through the Doe River Gorge to Cranberry, NC, with two staging yards. One staging yard represents Johnson City, while the other represents points beyond Cranberry (Pineola, Shulls Mills, and Boone, NC). Scenery is about 60% complete.

Control is Dead rail using NCE DCC & Tam Valley receivers. All locomotives are equipped with (Soundtraxx) sound decoders. The layout also features a wye, turntable, and reverse loop.

To further improve operations, the ET&WNC has contracted with the Pittsburgh Lumber Company to handle logging operations at Crab Tree, and Cranberry.



THE PANAMA CANAL RAILWAY

By: Stephen C. Wood



Panama Canal Railway Company logo on the side of their passenger cars.

Over the fifty-six years I have been alive I have traveled many different railroads in a few countries. I remember as a child going to Harmon Yards with my grandfather who was the Chief Draftsman for the New York Central. Taking the midnight train from Grand Central Station to Salisbury, North Carolina. The sleeper cars were fun for me as a child and putting a penny in our shoes outside our room for the porter to shine. The thrill of sitting at six in the morning with my uncle and grandfather in the hotel Yadkin's restaurant in Salisbury, North Carolina and watching four or five trains go right by the window. What a thrill! I was in the Army stationed in Germany in the mid 1970's and I took the train all over the country through Frankfurt Central Station, Munich Central Station heading to the Alps, and even Hamburg Central Station. In 1998 or 1999 I took an Amtrak across the country which was an adventure with an overnight stay in New Orleans.

Then in 2005, I got married to a woman from the country of Panama. We go there at least once a year to visit the family, see the country and to explore. In 2010, we took two large adventures. We took a boat ride with my in-laws, my wife and our three girls through the Panama Canal. What an adventure and about eleven hours later we docked on the Pacific side of the country. At that point, my in-laws took a bus ride with the three girls back to the Atlantic side where they lived. My wife and I stopped in the capital for the night.

At six o'clock the next morning, we woke to ride the Panama Railroad. I felt like a three-year-old boy getting money to get any candy or toy I wanted. We caught a taxi to Corozal Passenger Station, located at the refurbished commissary building previously used by the U.S. armed forces, near the community of Albrook. Before we took off, I found time to purchase a few items from the Panama Canal Railway Store. The sun was coming up and I knew we would have a gorgeous day for the sixty-five-minute ride from the capital to Colon where my wife was born and raised. In between the cars there is a large observation platform where it is open to the elements. I left my wife sitting inside the car as I went outside to stand. We traveled through the lush jungle and every once in a while, I saw the scenic Panama Canal.



In the jungle making the first curve.

As we pulled out, we were being pulled by an F-40 locomotive, one at each end, as they have no way to turn the train around. As we were being pulled through the jungle we passed a freight train on the passing track, which was headed by a GP-10. That train had containers from various ships coming from the Atlantic side. The car everyone enters is a dome car with two gorgeous paintings over each door.



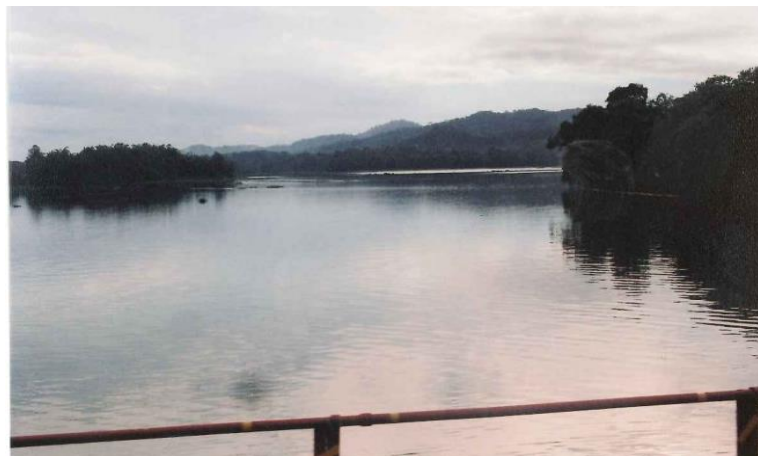
Inside the observation car. Hand paintings at both ends of the car.

This dome car is a refurbished 1938 Southern Pacific car, which seats 60 people. Most of the passengers sat in one of the other five luxurious cars. One interesting fact is that each of these train cars is named after a river in Panama; Rio Indio, Rio Bayano, Rio Mamoni, Lago Gatun, Rio Pequeni, and the Rio Chagres.



Name of the car for one of the rivers that flow through Panama.

As for the locomotives, what was interesting is that each one is named after a city or town along its route and you would never guess the numbers of the loco. In the fleet of ten locomotives, the first one is numbered 1855 - the year the railroad was originally inaugurated and it is named after the end of the route in the morning or the beginning of the route at night, The City of Colon. It ends with locomotive 1865 named after the City of Ancon. Maybe when I am down there this year I will get the entire list.



Crossing the only trestle. It's about half way into the train ride.

Loving Panama and wanting to learn about my wife's country and culture, I studied everything I could, including their railroad system. I learned that on January 28, 1855, a train ran from the Atlantic Ocean all the way across the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific for the first time. In 1904, President Roosevelt appointed a commission to build the Panama Canal so the railroad had to be moved at the cost of nine million dollars.

The railroad carried gold (never losing a shipment), freight and passengers. When the canal had been completed the railroad lost most of its business carrying freight. Then when

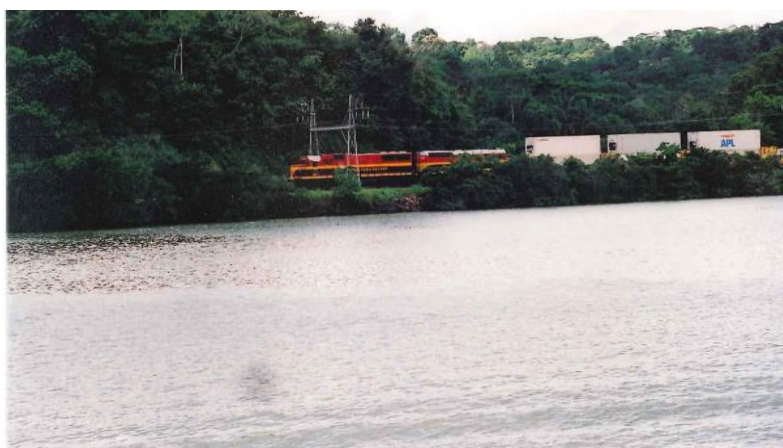
the highway was completed in 1943 most of the last of the freight and passenger service dwindled down to nothing.



Cargo train on the siding waiting for us to pass.

In 1977 when President Carter signed over the Panama Canal to the Panamanian government, he also signed the Carter-Torrijos Treaty and the Panama Railroad was turned over to the Government of Panama. The railroad had already declined and was in disarray. The railroad was losing over \$4 million dollars per year. It was not until 1998 when the National Assembly granted to the Panama Canal Railway Company the exclusive rights to develop, construct, operate, renovate, reconstruct modify and manage a railway and its infrastructure. The Panama Canal Railway Company joint ventured with Kansas City Southern, a U.S. Class 1 Railroad and Mi-Jack Products, which is North America's leading intermodal terminal operator.

What is amazing is the equipment that the container trains have. If I remember I was informed there are over twenty (it seems like I saw more) articulated 5-well double-stack bulkhead type cars



While going down the Panama Canal, lo and behold a cargo train passes. The next morning, I was at this location on the passenger train heading to Colon.



Cargo train passing the Corozal Passenger Station in the capital.

In addition to those cars, they own flat cars, hoppers and reefers. Like any great railroad, they now own MOW/track equipment cars. There is a Ballast Regulator kept in the capital along with a swing loader and a tamper. Recently I was talking to my father-in-law who told me he had seen some new vehicles on the rails like cars. I inquired by e-mail to the railroad and they informed me they now have a fleet of Hy-Rails, which included a truck for track inspections, a vehicle used to grease the rails and turnouts, and more. In the same e-mail, I inquired about the containers and how they were off loaded and I was informed they have twelve hostlers and ten trailers used in terminal operations.



From the boat we took down the Panama Canal. Here is one of the ports they use to unload the containers onto the trains. This is on the Pacific side.

After sixty-five minutes of pure bliss, we arrived at the end of the line at the Atlantic Passenger Station, located at Mount Hope in the city of Colon, near the Port of Cristobal.



When we arrived at the Atlantic Passenger Station - located at Mount Hope in the city of Colon, near the Port of Cristobal, I was able to take this photo.

CLOSING PAGE BONUS



Ukrainian trains
provide an
invaluable means
of evacuation for
thousands during
Russia's invasion.

Photo from internet

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