

# THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 23 Number 11

November 2023

## Division Coming Events

**OUR NOVEMBER  
Meeting and Activity  
will be on Saturday  
November 18th at the  
David C Waymer  
Recreation Center  
14008 Holbrooks Rd  
Huntersville NC, 28078**

[Click here for a link to  
Google Maps](#)

## Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

In October, several of our Carolina Southern Division members attended the MER Convention. This year it was in Altoona, Pa which is quite a railroad town. Pennsylvania Railroad through and through. There were many activities and train watching opportunities as well as train riding in addition to the clinics and contest room at the hotel. I know I had a good time touring the East Broad Top narrow gauge railroad in nearby Orbisonia, and the Bricktown Museum in Mt. Union. That museum is sponsoring the building of a HO dual gauge rendition of the EBT and PRR around Mt. Union. It runs well and should be quite an exhibition when it is completed.

Saturday morning at the Superintendent's breakfast, we got to meet Gordy Robinson, the president of the NMRA. Among other things, Gordy requested that the MER act to bring all members

living within the region's boundary into an active division. As you know from earlier communications, CSD, in conjunction with the CPD to the East, took action to include some of the counties from the inactive Piedmont Crescent Division into an expanded footprint for CSD. At the meeting, a map was distributed showing Virginia and Maryland. Virginia has an inactive division (the Blue Ridge Division) that extended from Bristol to Harrisonburg (along I-81). After some discussion, it was decided that the far southwestern part of Virginia would be added to CSD as we are directly adjoining to these counties. This area includes the 15 counties bordering I-77 north to W. Va., and south on I-81 to Bristol (where the SER exists). More on this overall expansion of CSD's territory will follow as we go forward.

Sunday morning, prior to the annual meeting, Gordy presented us with some of the improvements forthcoming to address administrative issues the national organization is facing. I encourage each of you to continue to read the Bulletin as these come into effect. Later at the MER annual meeting, a motion was passed to set forth the boundary changes affecting the various divisions. Again, more will follow on this as I learn more about it.

It is also worth mentioning that our own Ed Smith was awarded for his models being entered in the contest! Way to go Ed!

**UPCOMING  
AREA TRAIN EVENTS**

**Metrolina Southern  
Christmas Show**

The Park Expo and  
Conference Center  
2500 E. Independence  
Blvd. / 800 Briar Creek  
Rd.

Charlotte, NC 28205  
Booth 31B near the  
ramp to the food court  
**11/9/23 – 11/19/23**  
Sun-Wed 10am-6pm  
Thur-Sat 10am-9pm

**Fort Mill, SC  
Train Show**

Clarion Hotel  
3695 Foothills Way  
Fort Mill, SC

**December 16, 2023**  
9:00am – 3:00pm

**Editor's Notes**

By Ed Gumphrey

This is my last edition as editor of The Brass Pounder. I hope you have enjoyed reading it over the past five years. I have certainly enjoyed my role. My sincere thanks to Chad Barnette for volunteering to take over. I wish you every success and hope you enjoy it as much as I have. Bye Bye.



**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

I target the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for publication. Please submit articles for publication by the 27<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:editor@carolinasouthern.org)

---

## DIVISION AND REGIONAL NEWS

By Ed Gumphrey

### Train Town Update

Contributed by Ed Smith

Here's the October update on Wade's Legacy Room at the Newton Train Museum:

<b>Train Town Box Score</b>	
October 2023	
Open Houses	4
Attendance	53
Hosts: Keith Iritsky, Ed Smith, Gil Brauch, Tim Rust, Bob Halsey, and Fred Brooks	
<b>To volunteer, go to:</b>	
<a href="http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html">http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html</a>	
(#)=frequency (r)=first time host	

Attendance was down during October. We continue to have far more visitors each month since our move to Newton. I want to thank all our volunteers. We could always use more volunteers, so if you're interested, we'd welcome you. See the link in the score box above or on the CSD website.

### October Activity

The October Division meeting and activity were held at the home of superintendent Andrew Stitt. At the business part of the meeting, Andrew updated everyone about actions taken at the recent MER convention held in Altoona. Most importantly, those attending the annual meeting approved modifications to divisional boundaries for several divisions. In addition to approving the previously mentioned extension for the Carolina Southern Division, it was also approved for the further extension of the Division into Southwestern Virginia along the lines of I-77 north to West Virginia, and southwest along I-81 to Tennessee. These counties were previously part of the Blue Ridge Division that had become inactive. There will be more detail for the December Brass Pounder (hopefully including a map).

The clinics were based around removable loads that Andrew made for his On30 ET&WNC layout. He displayed a number of different types of loads and discussed the methods used to build them. He also did a short presentation on Dead Rail featuring a Soundtraxx Blunami decoder and his Apple iPhone. Dead Rail is a natural selection for On30 and O scale as well. The size of motive power lends provides ample room to accommodate receivers and batteries alike. I've published other articles in the past about some of the advantages of dead rail:

- Dirty track? No problem.
- Reverse loops? Ditto – no problem.
- Simplified layout wiring? Big time.
- Adaptable to portable Electronics? You betcha.

To round out the clinic discussions, Keith Iritsky talked briefly about his experience having a structure judged at the recent SER convention. Those of you who were at the August meeting hosted by Rick Beam are familiar with the Fine Scale Miniatures kit that Keith entered for judging at the MER Convention in Altoona. As you will recall, he was modifying the kit to be an iron and steel works. He finished the kit and modifications, and C. Drew & Co. Ironworks came to life. Keith was rewarded for his effort at the Convention. Congratulations to Keith for winning the Favorite Model Award.



After the meeting and clinics were over, Andrew was joined by Keith Iritsky, Tim Rumph, and Jim Thomas for an operating session on the layout for a few hours. The crews were too busy running trains to be taking photos, but Andrew was kind enough to send me a couple of photos of his layout taken prior to the meeting. I heard that Keith, Tim and Jim all went away with a positive experience.

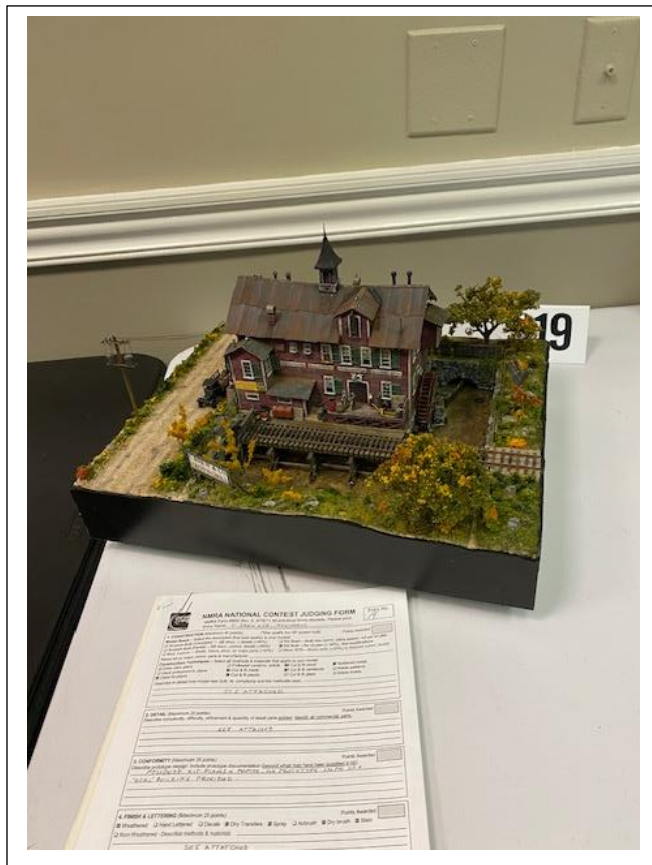


# DIVISION ANNUAL MEETING FOR 2024

Before I delve into Convention activity during October, I want to catch your attention for the Division's upcoming **Annual Meeting**. Last year's venue was so popular that the BOD decided to do the same thing again. Our **Annual Meeting** will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at Newton Depot, 1123 N Main Ave, Newton, NC 28658. Like last year, the Division will provide **FREE BOX LUNCH** individually customized by the Depot Deli for all attendees. In order to claim your **FREE BOX LUNCH**, go to our [website](#), click on the link for registration, fill out and submit the form. The annual meeting is especially important for elections. Make sure you have a say in selecting Division leadership going forward.

## Convention Activity

The Carolina Southern Division was well represented at the 2023 MER Convention, Round the Curve to Altoona. Alan Hardee, Dave Thrans, Andrew Stitt, Roy Becker, Keith and Cindi Iritsky, and Ed and Cindy Smith all attended. In addition to Keith Iritsky taking the Favorite Model award, Ed Smith captured two awards. His Erie RPO car won the Passenger Car honors, and his Erie Military Equipment train captured the honors for Favorite Train. You'll see duplicate photos of some of the contest winners. I included the following two pictures from Andrew Stitt of Keith's winning structure and Ed's winning RPO because they show the models as presented in the contest room with the paperwork adjacent to the entry. As I'm sure both winners will tell you, the detail and accuracy entered on the paperwork for your contest submission can have a huge impact on how the model is judged.





Ed Smith's award winning Military Train is on the first three tracks at the front of the table. Note the mid-train pusher that Ed describes later in his article about the convention.

Photo by Jerry Lauchle, MMR from the MER website.

Andrew also sent me a couple of other photos that capture key moments of the MER Convention from his perspective. First up, a photo from his visit to the East Broad Top. Obviously, a guy who models narrow gauge railroading would treasure seeing some steam on a prototype narrow gauge railroad. Another key ingredient of Convention fun is sharing the fun with friends. From left to right, Roy Becker, Andrew Stitt, Keith Iritsky and Ed Smith, MMR. I could be wrong, but I'd be willing to bet that Ed is sporting a newly acquired EBT T-shirt.



Oh yeah, if you missed the advance notice about the Division's Annual Meeting in January, go back to the top of Page 5.

## More Convention Activity

Starting on page x are articles from Ed Smith, MMR, about both preparation and participation in the MER Convention at Altoona. I also received a number of pictures from other CSD members. Some of these were emailed directly to me, and others were captured from Facebook. With my thanks to Dave Thrams and Alan Hardee, I provide just a few to whet your appetite. Check out Allan Hardee's posts on the Carolina Southern Division FACEBOOK page. While you're there, scroll on down to earlier in October when Dave Thrams posted some great photos and brief videos of Norfolk & Western 611 along with an enticement to see how you can ride a train pulled by this iconic locomotive.



More folks sharing the fun. Left to Right, Dave Thrams, Alan Hardee and NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR, enjoying a ride on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad.



Ed Smith, MMR, receives honors for two contest winners at the MER Convention



A view from the park area at Horshoe Curve, one of the Pennsylvania Railroad's most famous spots. Now double tracked, it once was 4 tracks wide.



Looking across the valley through an open passenger car window as 1309 pulls a train around the sweeping curve.



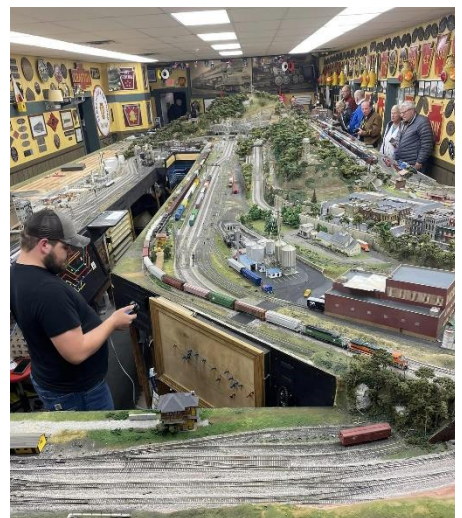
Dave Thrams, Ed & Cindy Smith, and Alan Hardee at WM Scenic RR



WM 1309, a compound 2-6-6-2, thus qualified to be correctly called a mallet.

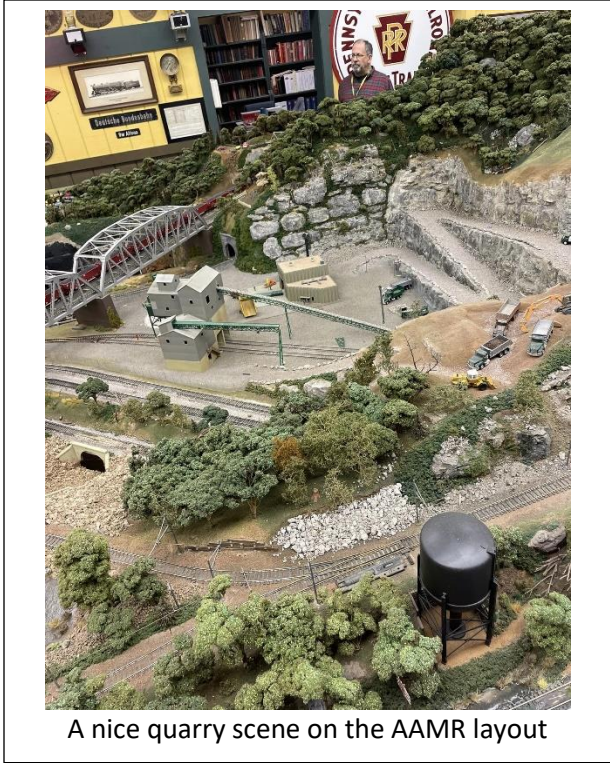


The engine servicing facilities at the layout of the [Altoona Association of Model Railroaders](#)

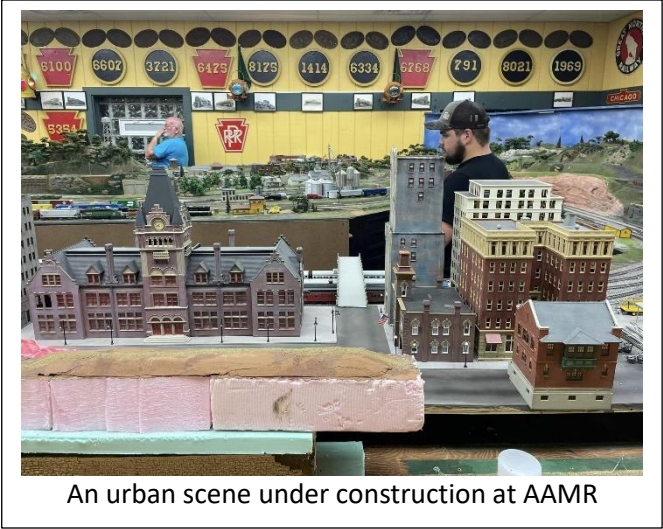


An overall view of the densely-packed layout at AAMR



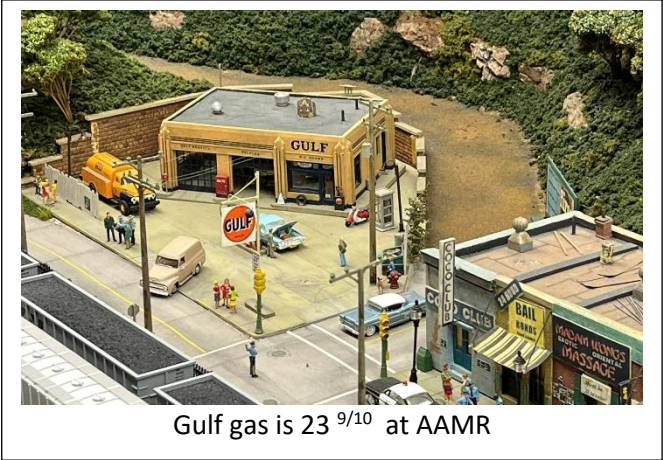


A nice quarry scene on the AAMR layout



An urban scene under construction at AAMR

Alan Hardee also visited the Altoona Model Train Museum Association, with a layout that features an HO scale rendition of Horseshoe Curve.



Gulf gas is 23 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>10</sub> at AAMR



---

# ALTOONA – MER REGIONAL CONVENTION

## OCTOBER 2023

By Ed Smith, MMR

Our regional convention was held from October 19th until October 22nd in Altoona, PA. First, I would like to thank the Susquehanna Division 11 for sponsoring an entertaining 4 days. The host venue was the Altoona Grand Hotel. The hotel easily accommodated the lodging and festivities, and the daily rate was very reasonable for today's rates. The only minor drawback was the luncheon staff was limited, causing delays which interfered with afternoon activities. That said, it was a very minor blip in a wonderful convention.

The daily itinerary was loaded with interesting events. There were over 40 diversified modeling clinics, over a dozen self-drive layout open houses and museums, multiple daily OP sessions, a railroad museum and roundhouse tour on Saturday, a Western Maryland train excursion, East Broad Top excursion, and of course, the Horseshoe Curve. There was the White Elephant room and the Celebration room for contests. So, there was plenty to occupy a model railroader.

My wife and I started early on Thursday morning, boarding a bus to western Maryland. We then boarded the [Western Maryland Scenic Railroad](#) in Cumberland, Maryland. The train was pulled by vintage steam and had about 10 passenger cars filled with convention goers and rail fans (Pics 1 & 2). We were joined in our car by Alan Hardee and Dave Thrans for an enjoyable afternoon ride through the Maryland countryside filled with Fall colors. We arrived in Frostburg, Maryland for a short layover where there were shops, the station, and an old turntable (Pics 3 (Alan Hardee photo) and 4). We returned to Cumberland on the train and then boarded our bus for our return trip. All in all, it was a leisurely, entertaining day.



Pic 1: WM 1309 with steam up, is ready to pull an excursion train of about 10 passenger cars



Pic 2: Cindy Smith waits patiently by a lamp post while Ed goes about taking pictures.



Pic 3: WM 1309 at the historic Frostburg station for a brief layover during the excursion.



Pic 4: This 100' turntable at Frostburg is long enough for 1309, but approach tracks are too sharp until the track can be modified.

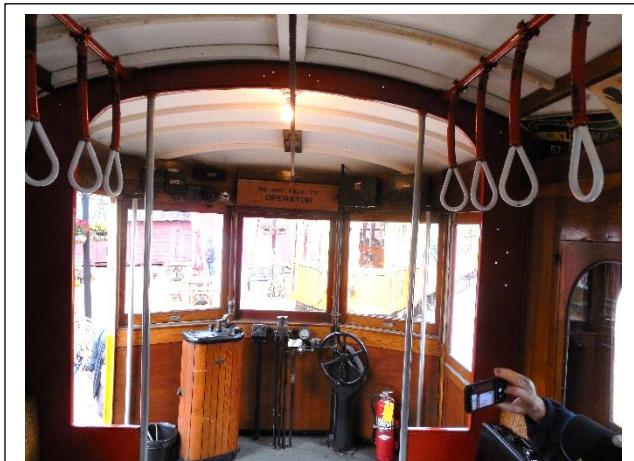
On Friday my wife and I had an early wake-up call for our excursion to the iconic East Broad Top Railway in Orbisonia, PA. We were joined on this trip by Andrew Stitt. We arrived at the Orbisonia station and immediately went to the [Rockhill Trolley Museum](#) for a nostalgic ride on vintage trolleys (Pics 5, 6 & 7). Next, we boarded EBT narrow gauge coaches for our rail excursion. The motive power was original vintage narrow gauge steam engine #16 (Pics 8, 9). After our approximately 1-hour trip, we returned to Orbisonia and toured the historic turntable and shops (Pic 10). We had lunch in the Trolley Museum station, then boarded our bus to visit the Bricktown Model Railroad Club and Museum. Here we saw a large HO and HON3 railroad, depicting the vintage railroads of this area, which is under construction. Also, in an adjoining room were relics of the brick manufacturing era that once dominated this area and was serviced by the EBT. An aside to this tour is where the women seemed to disappear. It seems the basement housed an amazing large Halloween Maze with animation and lighting that had a high scare factor. The women did return to the bus and we made our way back to Altoona. It was another great trip.



Pic 5: Johnstown #355 is one of over 20 operating trolleys at Rockhill Trolley Museum.



Pic 6: Eager passengers await the start of their nostalgic ride.



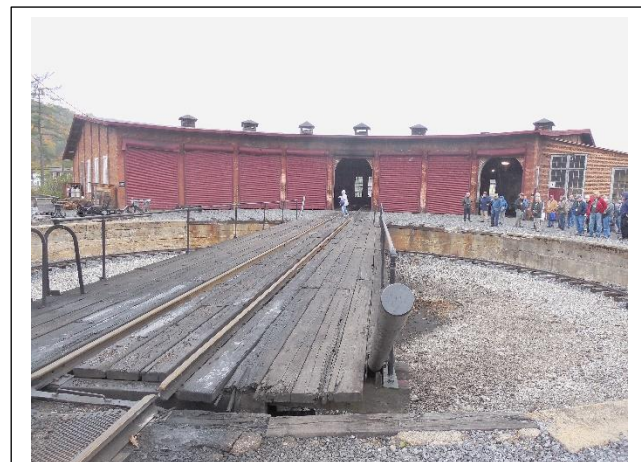
Pic 7: The motorman's station on trolleys were usually duplicated at each end.



Pic 8: East Broad Top #16. The narrow gauge 2-8-2 was built by Baldwin in 1916.



Pic 9: A closer look at #16.



Pic 10: EBT Turntable and shops.

I would be remiss not to mention the Celebration/Contest room, which was filled with various modeling entries (Pics 11, 12 & 13). Keith Iritsky and I were our Division standard bearers in the contest room, and we were both awarded for our efforts. Also, the White Elephant Room was a popular spot (pic 14). Here, I was finally able to sell my 1st Edition Walthers DCC Turntable. To my amazement, it sold 5 minutes after it was placed on the table. This enabled me to purchase several items myself.

They also had a multitude of door prizes that were awarded on Saturday. In all my years of conventions, I have yet to win any of these.

Our division was well represented by Alan Hardee, Dave Thrans, Andrew Stitt, Roy Becker, Keith and Cindi Iritski, and me and my wife, Cindy. We all seemed to enjoy the festivities on Saturday evening. We attended the banquet where we enjoyed attendees'

camaraderie, food and drink, and the award ceremony. On Sunday morning, Gordy Robinson, our organization's President, held a 1-hour Q & A and update on the NMRA. I must say, seeing and meeting Gordy throughout the 4 days, I came away with a very positive feeling for his leadership.



Pics 11 & 12: The Celebration/Contest room was filled with models, photos, dioramas and other entries.



Pic 13: I was happy to have my Erie Military Equipment Train selected for the Favorite Train award.



Pic 14: The White Elephant Room was a popular spot. I was surprised (and pleased) with how quickly my 1<sup>st</sup> edition Walthers turntable sold

So, another Regional Convention is over. Next year it is in Durham, NC, at the Piedmont Junction, September 26-29, 2024. So, it is close by and you should think about attending. These are very enjoyable events. I think you'll have a good time.

Until next time,  
.... ED



## ERIE POWER NOVEMBER 2023

By Ed Smith, MMR

About a year ago, I wrote an article for the Brass Pounder on building a returning WWII military train. (*Editor's note: Here's an example of how time flies. Ed's article was published in the [November 2021 Brass Pounder](#).*) That article inspired me to build thirty-four pieces of military rolling stock. With the MER Regional Convention in Altoona, PA, on my agenda, I decided to enter my military train in the "Favorite Train" contest. I needed motive power for this train.

Since I model the late 1940s, I decided steam power would be appropriate. Like most model railroaders, I have many pieces in my train inventory. I decided to use the Brass Pacific 4-6-2 from Sunset Models that I acquired from Walthers when they had the Circus Train promotion years ago. As I searched for the Pacific, I realized I had purchased 3 of these brass engines (pic 1). These would be perfect for this project. I could add more power for pulling my long train.



Pic 1: Three brass Pacifics.

What I had to do was convert the Walthers decals to Erie Livery (pic 2). The first step was removing the old decals from the engines and tenders without damaging the original paint. To do this, I used Walthers Solvaset and a pencil eraser. I applied the Solvaset on the decals, let it set for a while, then slowly erased the loosening decals (pic 3).



Pics 2 & 3: The original circus train decals, and using Solvaset and an eraser to remove them.

Using distilled water and a Qtip, I cleaned the areas on the units where the decals were and let them dry (pic 4). I researched the numbering order of Erie Pacifics and, using Champ decals, distilled water for decal submersion, and Walthers Solvaset, I re-decaled the units for the Erie RR (pic 5).



Pics 4 & 5: The decaled areas were cleaned and dried, then re-lettered with Champ decals in Erie livery.

The final step was weathering the pieces. I used Acrylic Rust paint to highlight the piping and wheels, then Pan Pastels on both the engines and tenders. For reference on weathering, I referred to an article by Tony Koester in Model Railroader November 2013, "Weathering Steam Engines with Pan Pastels". I was pleased with the finished product (pic 6). Finally, I added engineers to the cabs.



Pic 6: A trio of re-lettered and weathered locomotives, ready for their crews.

I submitted the 3 Pacifics and 27 pieces of my military rolling stock in the contest room. When staging the train, I used 2 units on the lead of the military train and one as a pusher in the middle of the train. I don't know if it was the sheer size of the train or actually the modeling, but I was fortunate to receive the Favorite Train Award. All in all, it was a fun and fulfilling project (Pic 7).



Pic 7: The completed train staged on the front three tracks in the contest room.  
Photo by Jerry Lauchle, MMR from MER website

Until next time,  
.... ED



## CLOSING PAGE BONUS



Nothing says Thanksgiving better than a striking image of fall colors. Here's Shay #4 working hard on the Cass Scenic Railroad in West Virginia.

Image from website.

### Division Brass

<u>Superintendent</u>	Andrew Stitt	<a href="mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org">superintendent@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Asst. Superintendent</u>	Alan Hardee	<a href="mailto:assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org">assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Clerk</u>	Ed Gumphrey	<a href="mailto:clerk@carolinasouthern.org">clerk@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Paymaster</u>	David Thrams	<a href="mailto:Paymaster@carolinasouthern.org">Paymaster@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Director 2025</u>	Ed Smith, MMR	<a href="mailto:director1@carolinasouthern.org">director1@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Director 2026</u>	Joe Skorch	<a href="mailto:director2@carolinasouthern.org">director2@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Director 2024</u>	Larry Paffrath	<a href="mailto:director3@carolinasouthern.org">director3@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>AP Chairman</u>	Neal Anderson, MMR	<a href="mailto:Apchair@carolinasouthern.org">Apchair@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Webmaster</u>	Joe Skorch	<a href="mailto:Webmaster@carolinasouthern.org">Webmaster@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Newsletter Editor</u>	Ed Gumphrey	<a href="mailto:editor@carolinasouthern.org">editor@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Program Chair</u>	Keith Iritsky	<a href="mailto:program@carolinasouthern.org">program@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>RMU Chair</u>	Doug Algire	<a href="mailto:RMUchair@carolinasouthern.org">RMUchair@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<u>Membership Chair</u>	Nancy Campbell	<a href="mailto:membership@carolinasouthern.org">membership@carolinasouthern.org</a>