

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 23 Number 3

March 2023

Division Coming Events

**OUR MARCH
MEETING**

Saturday,

March 18th

10:00am – noon

**Mooresville Public
Library**

**304 S Main St,
Mooresville, NC 28115
In the Selma Burke Room
on the main floor.**

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we were not able to provide Zoom for the February meeting. So, I am going to recap what happened to provide everyone with a brief synopsis. The meeting was held at the Mooresville Public Library.

I opened the meeting with letting everyone present know that I still have one Certificate of Appreciation from the Division for helping with the Carolina Special Convention we hosted in 2022. If anyone knows Matt Robe, please forward me his address, and I will send the certificate to him.

Gil Brauch is arranging for the Division to have a table at the upcoming Hickory Train show at the end of March. Cindy Iritsky has graciously committed to host our table for the Friday/Saturday show. Please feel free to contact her if you are willing to help.

The NMRA is announcing the establishment of a new platform for interaction among the members. Named the NMRA Interchange, it is hosted on the Discord app. You can find it on the internet by googling: nmra.org/nmra-interchange. You must register the first time to enter the site, using your NMRA membership number. It is a monitored site with rules of conduct. Once inside, you will find many platforms with topics of interest to model railroaders. Longer term, it can be used to host meetings – division, regional, SIG, etc. Please check it out. It would be great if someone within the Division would learn the “ins and outs” and give us all a tutorial on how to use it. Further down the road, the NMRA is looking at streamlining the membership rolls as well as setting up reminders for membership information updating, and renewals.

The Division's Railroad Modeling University (RMU) is now set to be held in April. The information and registration are available on the CSD website. Flyers have been placed at most

of the hobby shops within our Division as well as others nearby. I am pleased to let you know that our neighboring Divisions within the SER have reached out to coordinate publicity on special events each are planning on holding. This should help us “get the word out” to a wider audience. I encouraged those attending this meeting, as well as all Division members to consider presenting a clinic. I also reminded everyone that this event is conceived on helping those curious about our hobby, so that clinic ideas need to reach those with all levels of experience. I listed some ideas for clinics: *Making Trackwork Better*, *Creating open loads*, *An Introduction to JMRI operations*, *Structure Detailing*, *Why do Trains derail?*, *Building with Styrene*, and *An Introduction to DCC*. Please give some consideration to these or any topics of your own. Contact [Doug Algire](#) if you would like to discuss this further.

I reviewed the results of the survey handed to those attending at the January Annual Meeting. I noted the most important thing I got out of the survey – a willingness of those responding to help others with questions about aspects of our hobby. As such, I suggested that we initiate a round robin Question & Answer session at each meeting to exchange each person’s experiences and knowledge on a given subject. To start things off, I presented a very brief conversation about basic layout wiring. It included showing different gauges of wire, a wire stripper, a terminal strip, and suitcase connectors. I encouraged those attending, if they had any ideas for discussion at a future meeting to let me know. Similarly, if any of the members have run into a problem, or have a solution to a problem they would like to share, to contact me so that I can put the topic on the agenda going forward.

Keith Iritsky’s clinic was on finding ways to do things less expensively. He showed a foam cutter he made, and demonstrated several things he was able to do with it. He also showed us a static grass machine he built providing quite a cost savings over purchased ones. He presented many other ideas he has used on his workbench or layout. He handed out to everyone a list of his favorite DIY & instructional You Tube pages. Conversations on a number of things related to his presentation continued for some time and concluded the meeting.

So, I hope this helps those of you who were not able to attend and might encourage you to come to the meeting in March, which will again be held at the Mooresville Public Library.

March Division Meeting Saturday March 18th, 10:00am – noon

Mooresville Public Library
304 S Main Street
Mooresville, NC 28115



UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

Hickory Train Show

21st Annual Rail Expo

Friday March 31st

12:00 – 7:00pm

Saturday, April 1st

9:00am – 3:00pm

Hickory Metro Convention Ctr
located in Hickory, NC along
Interstate 40 between exits 125
& 126

[See map here](#)

Railroad Modeling University (RMU)

Saturday, April 15th

9:00am – 4:00pm

West Concord Baptist Church,
225 Warren C. Coleman Blvd.,
Concord, NC 28027

[See Registration here](#)

Fort Mill Train Show

April 15th, 9:00am – 3:00pm

Clarion Hotel, 3695 Foothills
Way, Fort Mill, SC 29708

[See map here](#)

NCTM Train Show

Saturday May 20th 9:00am –
5:00pm

Sunday May 21st

10:00am – 4:00pm

May 20-21st

NC Transportation Museum,
Spencer NC

[See map here](#)

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

I am enthusiastic about the future activities in our Division. Here's a summary from my point of view:

- Open discussion of modeling techniques at monthly meetings
- Presentation of clinics at meetings, along with handouts
- Return of RMU, a signature Division event
- Advance reservations for meeting locations
- A volunteer Program Chair (Keith Iritsky) to keep up the momentum of future activity plans

That's it in a nutshell. As we put Covid further into the past and move into the coming spring and summer, things are really looking up.

Every month I list upcoming train shows in the green banner to the left of my comments. I normally limit the listings to locations within about a 90 minute drive from the center of our Division. But, would you want to make a Road Trip? Scott Perry, a former Division member now lives in Georgia. He contacted me with an open invitation to the Piedmont Division Train Show in Cartersville, GA (near Atlanta) March 11th and 12th. If you're up for a trip to see a great train show and re-connect with a good friend, the details are here

<https://themodeltrainshow.com/>

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.

RMU IS BACK !

We started Railroad Modeling University (RMU) 2004, and it has been a signature event for the Division until interrupted by Covid restrictions. RMU is an excellent opportunity to present or attend interesting clinics in all aspects of model railroading. It's also open to the public, giving us a chance to recruit new members to NMRA and the Division. Our 2023 session is on Saturday, April 15th, at West Concord Baptist Church, 225 Warren C. Coleman Blvd., Concord, NC 28027

Check out our website at this link to see the clinic schedule and decide which clinics you'd like to sign up for. Each class is limited in size, so don't wait too long.

[CSD RMU 2023 Classes \(carolinasouthern.org\)](https://carolinasouthern.org/rmu2023)

To register for RMU, use this link.

[CSD RMU 2023 Register \(carolinasouthern.org\)](https://carolinasouthern.org/rmu2023/register)

There are a few open time periods for more classes if you'd like to present a clinic. In addition to teachers for all the clinics, more volunteers are also needed to help with:

- Volunteer Coordinator. This is open. Primary asking and getting volunteers to help with registration, setup and tear down.
- People for the White Elephant sale table.
- People for the Division sale table. This could be the same people watching the White Elephant table. Could be more than one person and they can rotate shifts.
- At least two people for the Registration table.
- Four to six people to help setup the night before and teardown at the end of RMU.

To join in and help, contact Doug Algire at:

<mailto:RMUchair@carolinasouthern.org>

More details will be updated on the website as the full schedule is determined.

DIVISION AND REGIONAL NEWS

By Ed Gumphrey

February Meeting

As Andrew Stitt mentioned in Superintendent's Corner, the Division's February Meeting was held on Saturday, February 18th at the Mooresville Public Library. This was the first time the Division held a meeting at this venue, and it proved to be a nice facility. Our webmaster, Joe Skorch, posted a great summary on our website, which I have quoted below.

"The CSD February meeting was held on February 18th and if you missed it you missed a great one. The meeting was held at the Mooresville public library in a large meeting room that was closed off from the main library area. This assured us an isolated area to communicate.

"It started out with Superintendent Andrew Stitt presenting the customary latest news. He talked about the future communication channels of the NMRA (NMRA Interchange). More details of that will be in next month's Brass Pounder. He also mentioned the RMU coming up this April, and encouraged everyone to give some thought about presenting a clinic of their preference. Andrew then did a presentation on basic wiring methods which got the members who were present involved with relating ideas and experiences that they have applied to their own layouts. Topics included everything from wire sizes for main line and feeder wiring to members choice of soldering irons, tools for stripping wire, and wire connectors. It was nice to see all of those attending participating in the conversation.

"After the wiring discussion, Keith Iritsky gave a great presentation on how to do things on the "cheap" so we could all save a little money in our hobby. Handouts were given outlining some of his sources for making useful tools and organizers for our supplies that were basically very simple things that we don't normally think about using. He displayed a wire cutter for cutting foam, and a static grass applicator he made, as well as talking about techniques he used to make ground foam and other things used for making realistic scenery.

"We really hope that these sort of meetings will continue and encourage members to come on the third Saturday of each month. The next meeting will be held at the Mooresville Public Library March 18th at 10 am."

Train Town Update

Contributed by Ed Smith

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

Train Town Box Score
February 2023

Open Houses	4
Attendance	124

Hosts: Ed Smith, Gil Brauch, MMR, (2), Keith Iritsky (2), Bob Halsey (2),
Fred Brooks, Larry Paffrath

To volunteer, go to:

<http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html>
(#)=frequency (r)=first time host

We appreciate everyone who participates, but really need someone to step up and become a permanent host. As usual, the necessary information is on our [website](#).

Division Table at Hickory Train Show

Our Division will have two tables at the upcoming Hickory train show to promote our activities and benefits for members, and to recruit new members. If the Division has any previously donated items that they would like to sell, those will be on the table. Also, If any members have items they wish to donate to the Division, they are welcome to do so. Cindy Iritsky will be monitoring the tables. We'd like to get additional help staffing the tables – How about volunteering an hour or two during one of the two days of the show.....We welcome volunteers to help promote the Division at the tables Friday and Saturday.

Division member activities

In last month's newsletter, the "bonus" item on the last page was about signing up for a special wine dinner train ride at the NC Transportation Museum. Our Assistant Superintendent, Alan Hardee, managed to get signed up for the wine and dine ride with his wife. Judging from his public posts on Facebook, I'd say Alan had a good time.



6900 ready to pull the Wine & Dine train.

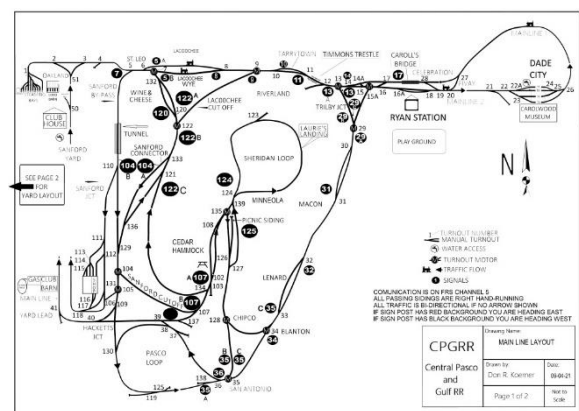


Alan and his wife Jeanette enjoyed the event.

I only have a passing familiarity with 7½" gauge equipment, so my impressions may be wrong, but it looks to me like the Central Pasco and Gulf Railroad may be one of the largest "layouts" in existence for the fascinating 7½" scale segment of our hobby. Last month fellow CSD member Neal Anderson, MMR, spent a good deal of time in Pasco County Florida enjoying his 7 ½" equipment as well as that of CP&G members. From his Facebook posts, it's easy to tell he had a great time. You'll also enjoy a look at the railroad's web pages starting at <https://cp-grr.com/home/>



Neal Anderson, MMR, enjoys his Mead 200 running on CP&G trackage.



A rough drawing of the CP&G track – over 14,000 feet!



Some live steam action on the CP&G. Photo from Neal's Facebook page.



Firing up the steamers. Photos from Neal's Facebook page.

Plan ahead for MER Convention

It's never too early to start planning for the conventions you want to attend. This year's MER Convention is being hosted by the Susquehanna Division (Division 11) October 18th – 22nd this coming fall. Their website is up and will be updated as we get closer to October.

[Round the Curve to Altoona 2023 \(mer2023.org\)](http://mer2023.org)

The Convention Chair is already reaching out to other Divisions, and here's his opening message...

"I am the Convention Clinic Chair for the 2023 Around the Curve to Altoona Convention hosted by our Susquehanna Division 11. I'd like to extend a warm welcome and invitation to each of you and any of your Division members who would like to present a clinic at our Oct 18-22 Convention. As you know, Altoona was the heart of the Pennsylvania Railroad during the heyday of American railroading. The Convention will provide visits to historic railroad facilities, sites, attractions, and provide educational experiences for all attendees.

"For those who have never presented at a regional convention they can earn 4 points toward the Author Achievement Program. This could be their first step in the path to achieving MMR status. We welcome any topic associated with model railroading or prototype railroading that is related to our model railroading hobby.

"As currently structured, our clinic program will offer 50+ clinic slots over the four-day convention. A clinic slot is based on a 45-50 minute clinic, 10-15 minutes for Q&A, and 30-minutes for setup, tear down, and break time between clinics. Each of our 3 clinic rooms will have a full audio/visual setup, tables for model displays or other support material, and a convention clinic team member who will introduce the clinician and provide any assistance needed during the presentation.

"For those interested in presenting a clinic or have questions kindly have them contact me by either phone or email. We sincerely look forward to welcoming you and many of your members to Altoona in October.

Best Regards,

*Barry Schmitt
717-877-1810
sbschmitt@comcast.net*



BACK TO WORK

By Ed Smith

Well, as I've said many many times in the past, time sure does fly by. I decided to take some time off from modeling after our MER convention. A little burnout and family health issues reared their ugly heads. Three months later, the hiatus is over. Importantly, the family issues are behind us, my hand surgery seems to be a success, and I'm raring to go. I've never been accused of doing things in moderation, so I have jumped into the deep end with both feet.

I'm closing in on attaining the MMR award, needing one more AP merit award. I've decided to pursue the Rolling Stock AP. Needed for this category are 8 pieces of rolling stock; 4 scratch-built, and at least 1 passenger car. I'm in the process of laying out 4 resin kits, which I will detail, 1 being the passenger car, which in my case is a baggage car (pics 1 & 2). This will complete half of the assignment, allowing me to concentrate on scratch-building 4 pieces.



Pic 1, A resin kit for part of Rolling Stock AP.



Pic 2: I'll use resin kits for 4 of the 8 cars needed.

Also, I've decided to upgrade my Walthers 130' turntable (pic 3). I purchased an early edition turntable about 7 years ago and by the time I got around to installing it, the system had been vastly improved. So, I purchased a new 130' (pic 4) and the advanced module upgrade. With the help of my electronics guru, Fred Miller, MMR, we are working on controls for a 24-track turntable system. If anyone is interested in an older version of the Walthers Cornerstone, 130' DCC Turntable, used only once to program the tracks, please contact me.



Pic 3: Tracks for 130' turntable laid out.

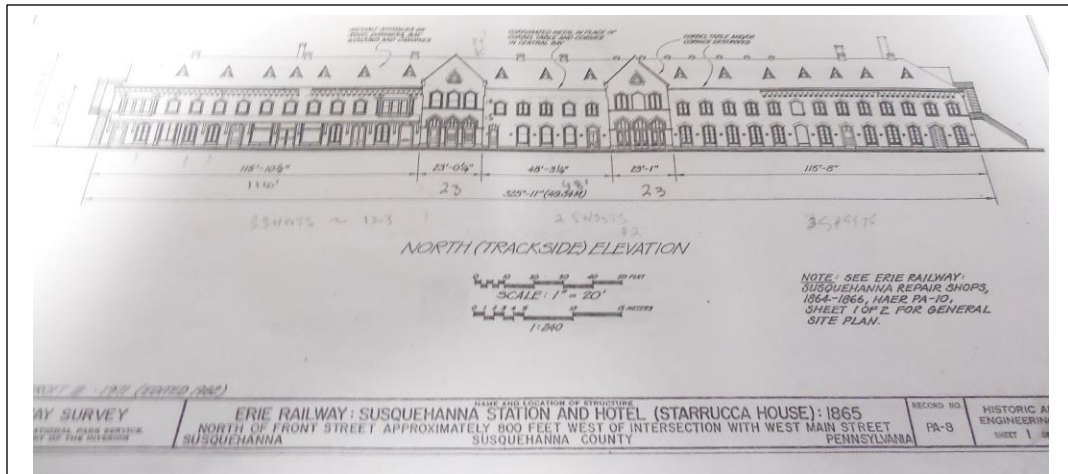


Pic 4: The updated version of the 130' turntable.

Finally, I'm in the process of scratch-building the Erie Station called the Starrucca House (pic 5). Using Erie architectural plans, pictures from books and magazines, and pictures I've taken, I have gathered a wealth of information for building this large building (pic 6). Also, [Monster Model Works](#), a company that produces laser-cut wood siding, is back in business, so I purchased enough sides along with parts from Grandt Lines and Tichy to build the project (pic 7). I had to purchase woodworking tools for making intricate cuts, but these made great Christmas presents. Plus, you can never have enough tools.



Pic 5: A vintage photo of Starrucca House.



Pic 6: Obtaining a copy of the 1865 building's plans was a real modeling prize.



Pic 7: Monster Model Works, Grandt Line, and Tichy Train Group provide the parts needed to build a model of Starrucca House.

On top of all this, I'm preparing 2 clinics for our upcoming RMU. This is a great segue into reminding you that this event is a great day of clinics and model railroading. If you have never attended, you should mark your calendar for Saturday, April 15th, and plan on participating. The necessary links are in this Brass Pounder and on our website.

So, there it is, my plate is more than full, but I wouldn't have it any other way. It's great to be back working on model railroad projects. So, stay tuned and see what the next few months bring. Trust me, the time will fly by and we'll be deep into Summer before you know it.

Ed Smith

CLOSING PAGE BONUS



The month of March and melting snow announce that spring is just around the corner, and track maintenance will get a little easier.

Division Brass

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Director 2026
Director 2024
AP Chairman
Webmaster
Newsletter Editor
Program Chair
RMU Chair
Membership Chair

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David Thrams
Ed Smith
Joe Skorch
Larry Paffrath
Neal Anderson, MMR
Joe Skorch
Ed Gumphrey
Keith Iritsky
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