

# THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 24 Number 10

October 2024

## Division Coming Events

**2024 MER Convention**

**October 17-20**

**Marriott at Research  
Triangle Park  
4700 Guardian Drive,  
Durham, NC 27703**

## Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

One of the things that I think is very important to our organization is communication. We are a large group of folks who have a common interest in model railroading, and yet we are a geographically diverse group as well. While most of us would tend to think of Charlotte as the hub, I'm willing to bet many don't set foot within that city's limits on any sort of a frequent basis. Instead, except for those who travel for a living (Alan, Roy), most of us probably don't travel too far from home on a daily basis. So how do we keep in touch – communication.

Communicating has changed quite a bit in my lifetime. No, we didn't have a crank phone in our house growing up. But my grandmother did have a party line - something you don't see much anymore. Moving forward in time, when I started working and traveling for a living, my life depended on pay phones. Now you would be hard pressed to find one. Then cell phones popped up! Big and clunky at first but look at what they have become! They are super convenient including the applications one can load on them. Who among us hasn't taken pictures with one? Who among us hasn't used GPS once or twice when going to a place for the first time?

New types of communication have also greatly affected the way we send & receive information. Who would have thought we would have computers at our personal disposal years ago? Joe Skorch has done a wonderful job at maintaining and updating the Division's website. It provides a wealth of information to you on a timely basis about what is going on within CSD. If you haven't looked at it lately, I encourage you to do so. Recently he spent quite a bit of time establishing the member layout page. This is going to be super important to each of you in helping to decide which layouts to visit with our planned home layout tours to celebrate model railroad month in November. Similarly, Chad Barnette has been doing a great job publishing our newsletter, The Brass Pounder, on a monthly basis. Chad provides us with current information on what is going on in addition to member contributed articles. They both will be providing updates about the layout tour event. Secretary David Myers also helps communicating CSD news by providing flash email reminders about CSD events and Zoom calls.

As I close, let me mention that we had a very nice time at the CSD Picnic held in September at the City Park in Kannapolis. It is fun to be able to visit with fellow members as well as enjoying some good food. We were blessed this year to have very nice comfortable weather. I will also remind you that the MER Piedmont Junction convention will be taking place in Durham later this month. There is still time (as you read this) to register and come on. It's always nice to meet other model railroaders and talk trains face to face too!

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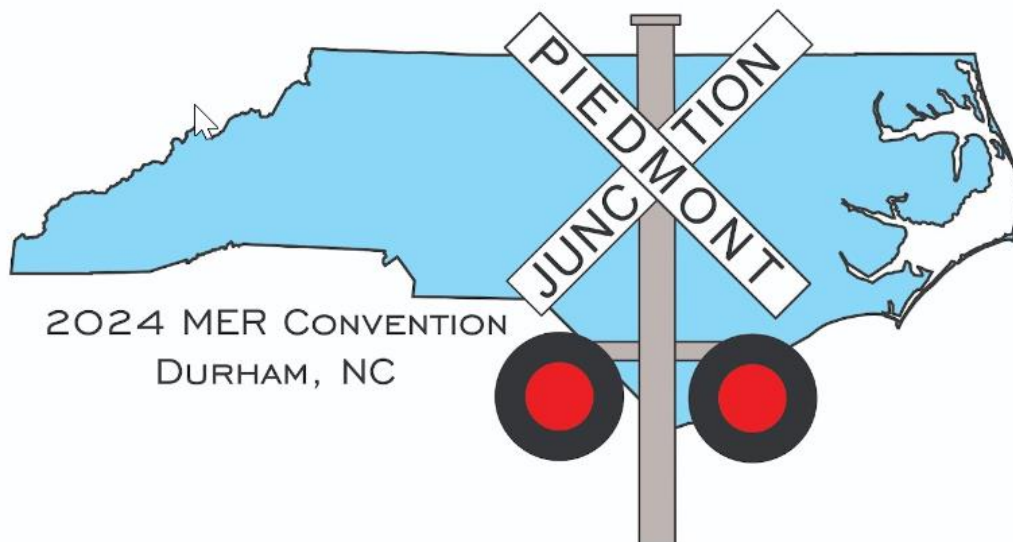
## Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Wow, what a busy month it's been for me. Professionally there's been a lot going on that has stolen away from my precious modeling time. It's been hard to get my mind on modeling when there's so much to think about. That's probably the best time to model in reality – something that requires full mental clarity can help push out things we don't care to think about.

What I'd like to think about right now is how excited I am to go to my first NMRA convention. You read that right – I have never been to a local or national convention and I'm all set to attend The Piedmont Junction.

If you haven't heard (and judging by the Superintendent's Corner, you should have) the Piedmont Junction is being held in two shorts weeks in Durham from October 17-20. I saw some stats a while back that showed at least 16 folks from our division plan to be there. I am hoping for even more given the proximity of this particular event.



**DATE: October 17-20, 2024**

# Division and Regional News

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## Wade's Train Town

### Wade's Train Town – September Stats

Open houses: 4, 1 closure due to storm  
Attendance: 50  
Volunteers: Gil Brauch (2), Ed Smith, Tim Rust



### AP Awards from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

Neal encourages everyone to bring any items you wish to have judged for merit awards to the upcoming MER convention.

### CSD September – Annual Picnic

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

The CSD annual picnic was held at Kannapolis Village Park on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Andrew was kind enough to provide some photos from the event. It looks like all had a great time to connect and relax over the gourmet spread.



# CSD NMRA National Model Railroad Month Celebration

Contributed by Dave Thrams



The Celebration is on and what a celebration it will be! Twenty layouts are scheduled to be open as I write this update from last month's Brass Pounder article. Thank you to all the layout owners that are opening your layout and homes to us. To us visitors, I cannot stress enough, the importance of respecting these layouts and homes we will be visiting.

Most layouts are open from 10am – 3pm, but due to layout owner schedules, a couple layouts have different hours and are open from 10am – Noon and are annotated with \* next to their name.

To visit a layout, or many layouts, you need to register on the CSD website at [carolinasouthern.org](http://carolinasouthern.org). A couple days after registration ends, you'll receive the home addresses of the layouts and the owners will get a list of registered visitors. **Registration begins October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends October 27<sup>th</sup>.**

To help you plan your visits, see the layout list below and visit the CSD website at [CSD Member Layouts \(carolinasouthern.org\)](http://CSD Member Layouts (carolinasouthern.org)). This website shows several member layouts for us to view online anytime and not just for this event. So, most of the layouts below are on the CSD website, but not all of them yet. Also, not all the layouts on the website are open for this celebration event.

The registration page will list the layouts below and you can register for as many or as few layouts you want to visit. Planning ahead seems crucial if you want to see multiple layouts in 5 hours. Thank goodness for GPS mapping! Have a great time visiting these layouts and their owners. Enjoy their efforts and please thank them for allowing us to view their labor of love.

## **November 2 Hours: 10 am –3 pm (Southwest) Gaston County/West CLT area**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Alan Hardee	Bessemer City
Dave Thrams	Stanley
Seth Gartner	Charlotte
Piedmont & Western Club	Charlotte
Cherryville MRR Club* (10am -Noon)	Cherryville

## **November 9: 10 am –3 pm Southeast CLT**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Dave Myers	Waxhaw
Dick Bronson	Waxhaw
Tim Rumph	Lancaster
Gordon Miller	Matthews
James Thomas	Matthews
Chad Barnette	Fort Mill

**November 16: 10 am –3 pm (Northwest) Hickory/Statesville**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Neal Anderson	Statesville
Ed Smith	Taylorsville
Wades Train Town	Newton
Keith Iritsky	Morganton
Gil Brauch	Hickory
John Short	Nebo

**November 23: 10 am –3 pm Northeast CLT**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Joe Skorch	Kannapolis
Andrew Stitt	New London
Marcus Neubacher* (10am-noon)	China Grove

## **Narrow Gauge Conventions are for Everyone**

Contributed by Keith Iritsky

If you have scenery, track, rolling stock, engines, electronics and wiring, or structures on your layout, going to a Narrow Gauge Convention or show can benefit you greatly. I am an HO modeler working on a medium sized layout with standard gauge track. I have all of the above-mentioned items on my layout. What's the difference between my layout and a narrow gauge one? The distance between the rails! I still need to learn and always improve the techniques used to create this miniature world, so clinics and vendors can help with that endeavor. I've attended several National Narrow Gauge Conventions, one being in Hickory in 2021, and this past one a few weeks ago in Pittsburgh Pa. Upcoming conventions will be , 2025...St Louis, 2026...Minneapolis, 2027...Hickory NC. The Hickory convention was a great time, with clinics on a vast array of subjects. And a large amount of vendors, for just coming out of the Covid situation. The Pittsburgh convention was even more enjoyable. They had plenty of railroad activities, such as the Age of Steam Roundhouse, and a East Broad Top train ride with two lucky participants winning a cab ride via random drawing. The Jones and Laughlin Steel no. 58. It's a 24" gauge steel mill demonstration in Youngstown Ohio with a 45 ton Porter 0-4-0 tank locomotive and 10000 feet of track. A limited number of attendees were given the opportunity to learn how to operate a narrow-gauge steam locomotive.

Martin Welberg, Dutch scenery master was at the convention, conducting a hands-on clinic where attendees worked side by side with him, making a take home diorama, as well as giving two scenery clinics. The Pennsylvania Trolley Museum was nearby. The Waynesburg and Washington Railroad was another activity that could be attended during the convention. There were lots of things to do in Pittsburgh that were very close to the hotel.

The Contest room was packed with all sorts of dioramas, structures, cars, engines, and photos, each attendee was given a ballot to vote for their favorite models, and boy was it

tough to decide which model to vote for, they were all excellent. Most of the models were scratch built (Photo 1,2)



Photo 1 - Scratch built box cab MOW engine.



Photo 2: Scratch built Touring motive power.

Some of the clinic topics were; How the 1920's Ringling brothers and B&B circus moved, Building 1880's shortline structures and rolling stock, Model lighting with LEDs, Maine ice harvesting, Making models like Dr Evil- a laser cutting adventure. A clinic on weathering with Koshur salt, Hand laying better track and switches, building a locomotive critter, Modelling a waterfront (Photo 3), modelling rural scenes, plowed fields, barns, and fence rows (Photo 4), and the benefits of going dead rail (Photo 5).

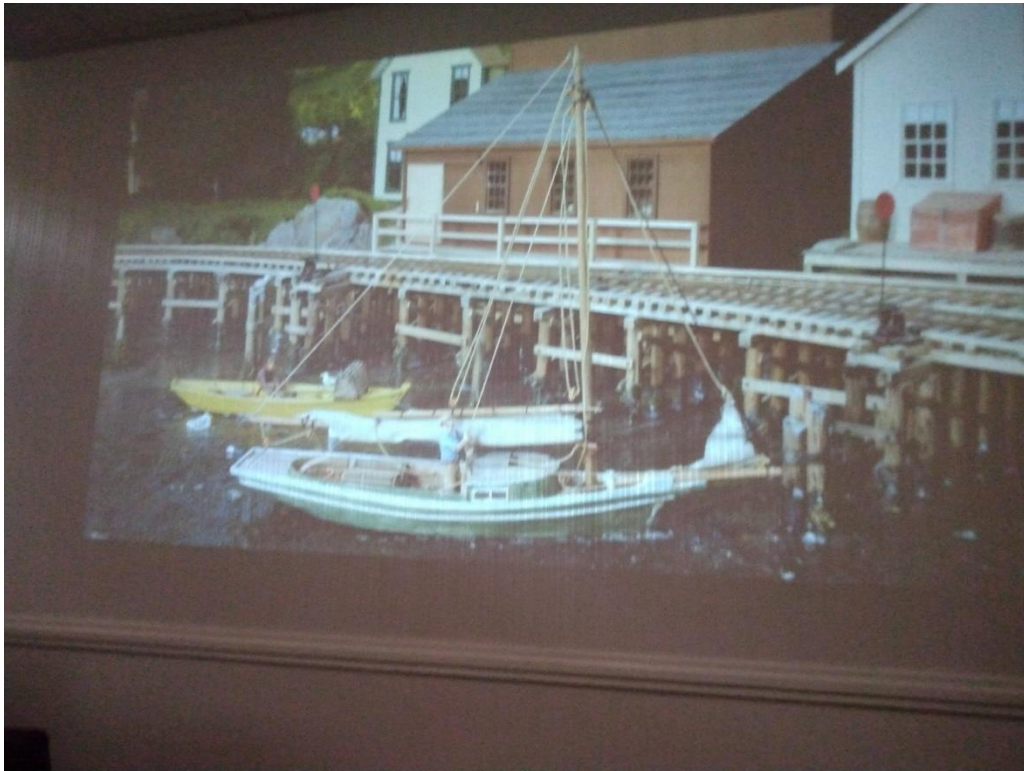


Photo 3: A waterfront scene by Pete Leach” Modelling Rural Scenes, plowed fields, barns, and fence rows.



Photo 4: Barn diorama by Matt Woods. Getting the most from Gatorfoam, and The benefits of going dead rail.

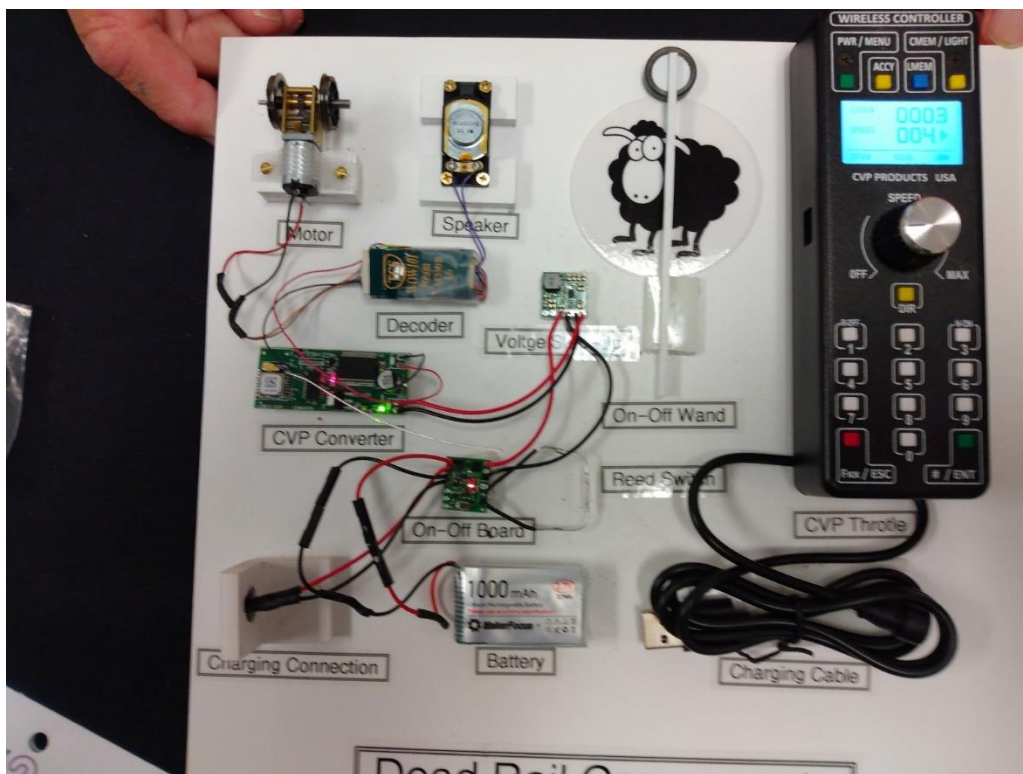


Photo 5: Dead Rail mockup Board. All you need to use dead rail.”



There were 11 home layouts and operating sessions. Ken Hannawalt's Turtle Creek Railroad was quite impressive with the amount of track, and industrial switching he had incorporated in his layout.

The vendor room, (oh my poor wallet), was very large, and there were other rooms scattered through the hotel with vendors that needed a bit more space, such as BEST with lots of kits, laser cut shingles, figures, and castings. B&B Hobby "The tool guy", where I picked up some fine tipped tweezers and Hunterline stains. Banta model works, and FSMKits.com, who had a bunch of George Sellios' Fine Scale Miniatures kits. And lots of other kits at 20- to 50% off. Of course, this is where I spent the majority of my money. I offered to pay the \$9.95 price marked on the original boxes, but he wasn't biting. There were at least 80 Vendors at the convention. The other big-ticket item I got was an Ultimotion cutter for 160\$. Usually, I'm too cheap for a purchase like this, but It is a quality tool, and very versatile I'll do an upcoming review.

There were 9 modular/Display layouts there as well. Larry Knapp's ON30 World War One modules were top notch.









On a sad note, I was looking forward to meeting Al Judy, a great modeler, but sadly he passed away on August third. I was looking forward to seeing his Burned Train Shed and Shay diorama he built and was going to bring to the convention. I always enjoyed watching YouTube videos about his layout.

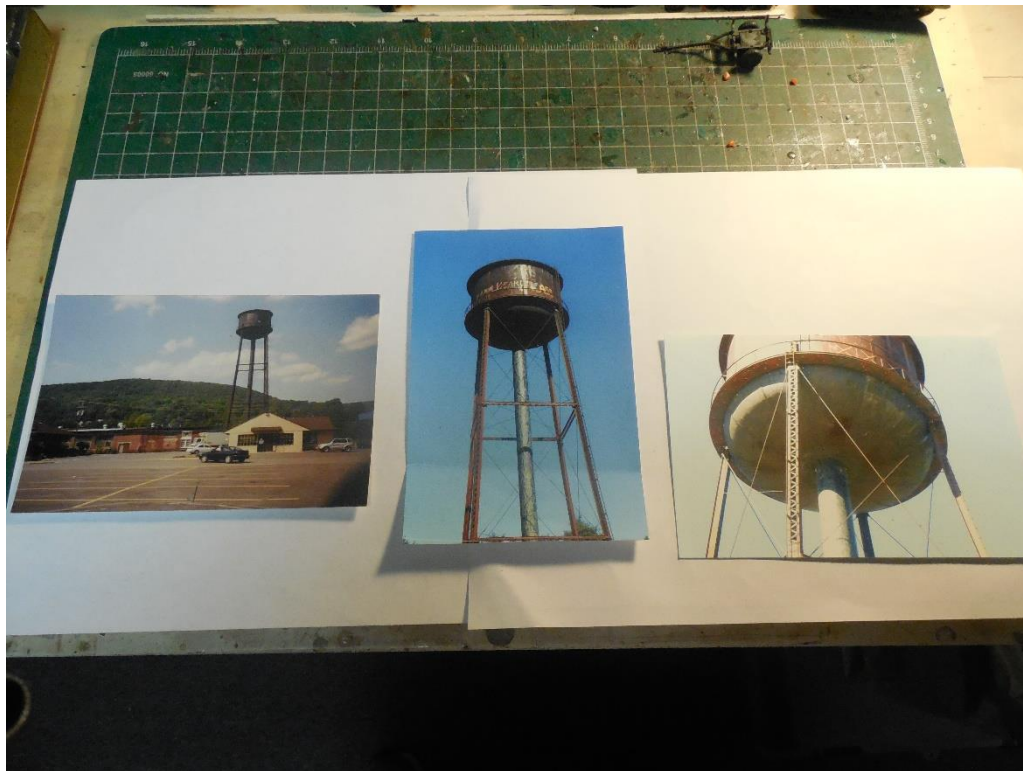
To wrap up, it was a great time, and if You get to attend a Narrow Gauge convention, and are not a Narrow Gauge modeler, do it anyway, Ya might learn some new techniques, and meet some great folks.

## Best Laid Plans

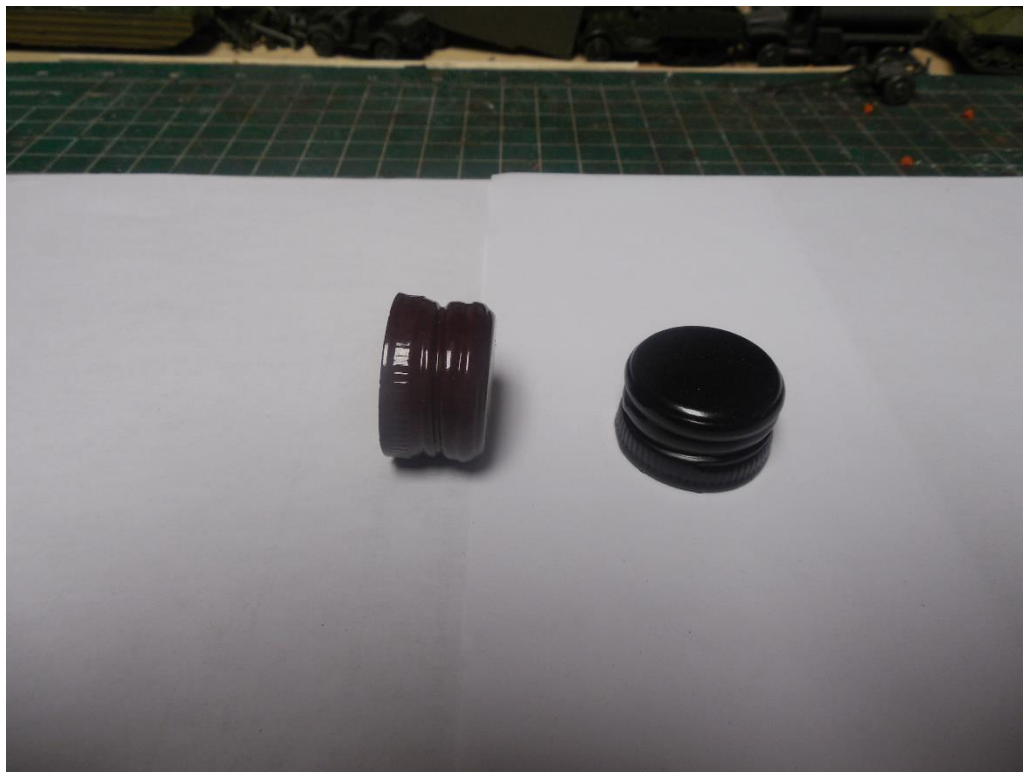
Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

This month's article was going to be about scratch building a signature water tank on my Erie Railroad (pic 1). These tanks were a little smaller and had rounded bottoms, not conical. I couldn't find anything that closely resembled these tanks in kit form. As a wine drinker, I realized the twist caps from bottles came close to the desired size and could be formed into an appropriate tank (pic 2, 3). I assembled Central Valley Beams for the legs, cut .01 styrene for the conical top and walkway, and decided to use .020 phosphor bronze wire for the walkway railing and guy wire supports (pic 4, 5, 6). I laid out the railing supports, drilled the holes using a #78 drill, and secured the railing supports (pic 7, 8). Here's where the project hit a snag. Securing the phosphor bronze ring for the railing to the supports was nearly impossible. AC adhesives did the job, kind of, but not to my standards. Regular adhesives didn't work, and soldering the ring to the supports was a disaster. The parts are so small, that the induced heat distorted the styrene ring platform. So, I had most of the parts needed

to support the tank, but not a detailed tank to complete the project. Enter a change of plans. We should always be open-minded to change and new ideas.



Pic 1



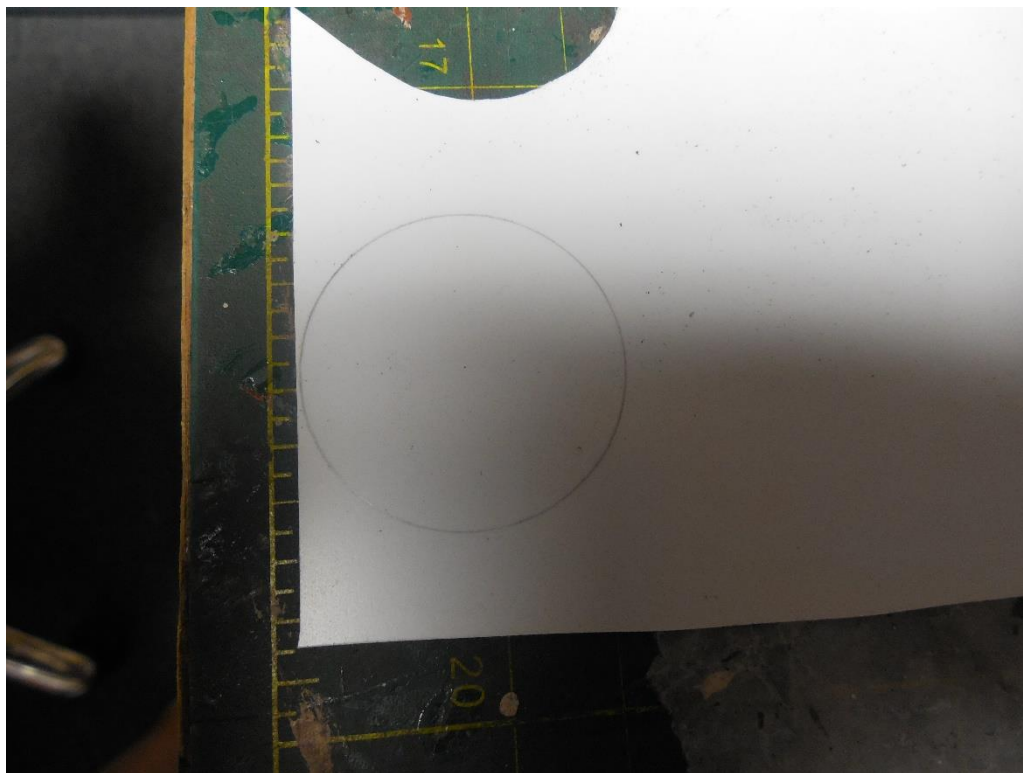
Pic 2



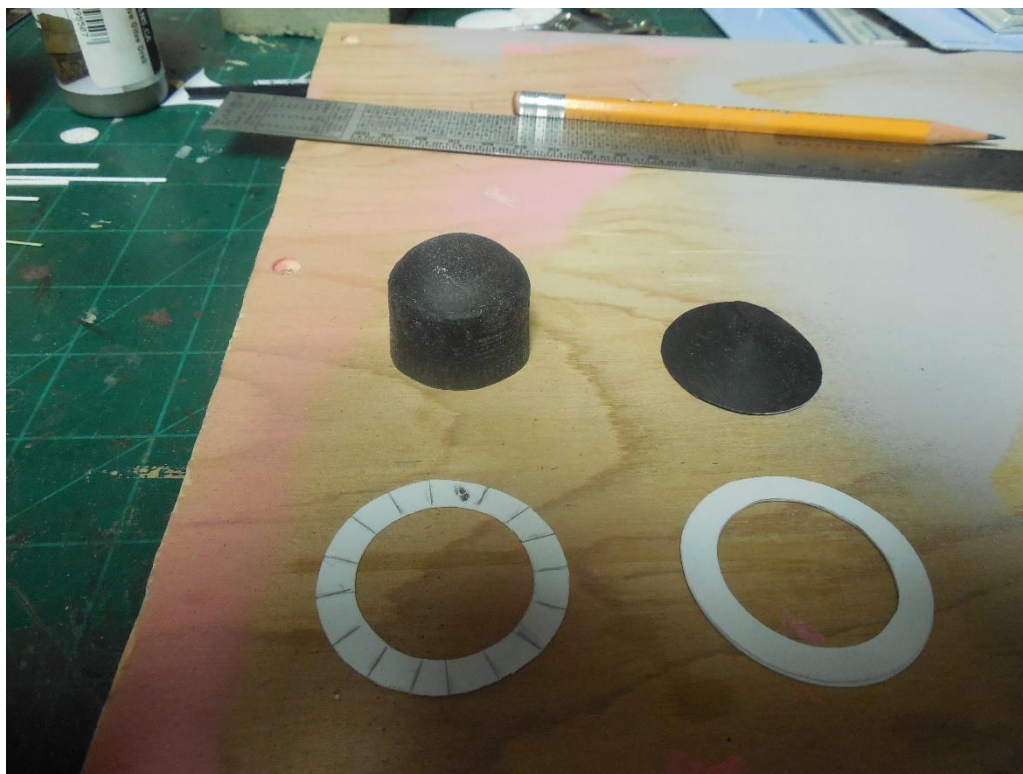
Pic 3



Pic 4

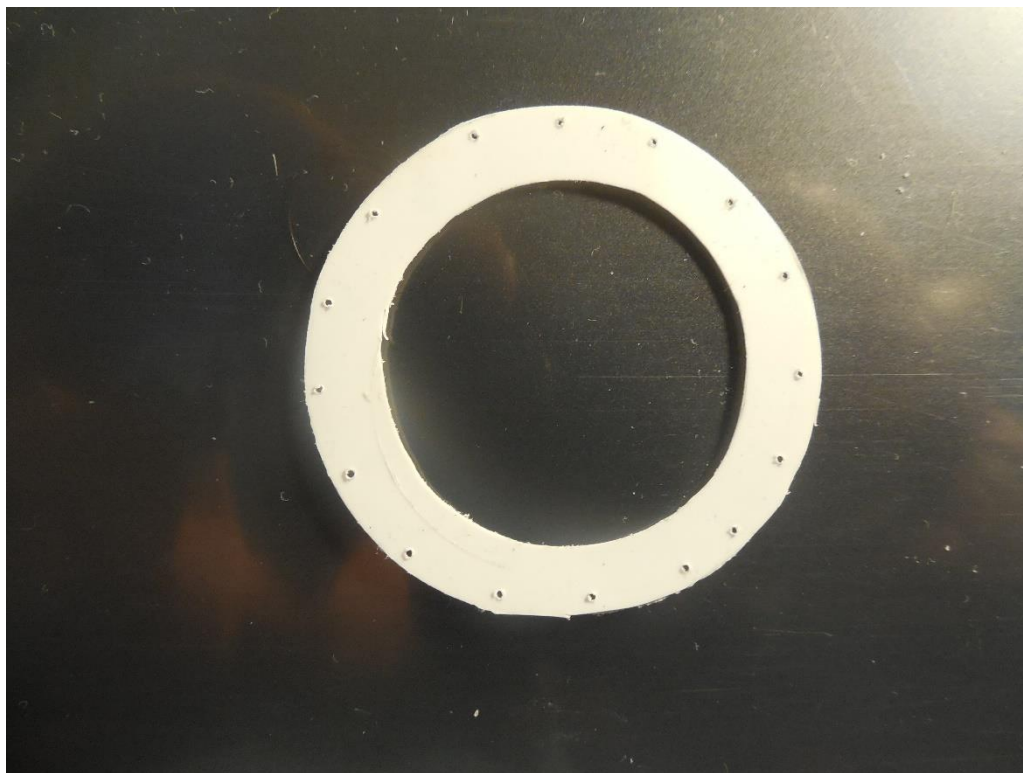


Pic 5



Pic 6





Pic 7



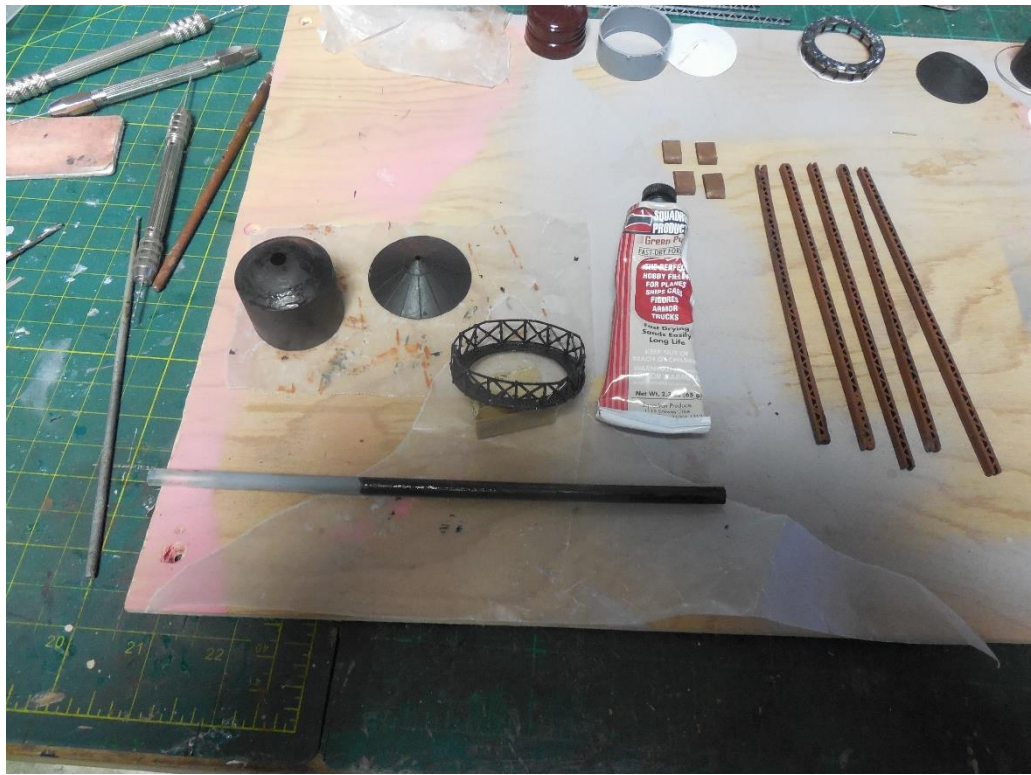
Pic 8

I discovered that the Tichy water tank kit-bashed may fit the bill (pic 9). Using my assembled part, support legs, beams, wire, Tichy rivet plates, and the Tichy kit water tank and detail parts, I felt confident I could build the tank (pic 10). First, I cut about 1/3 of the tank off and

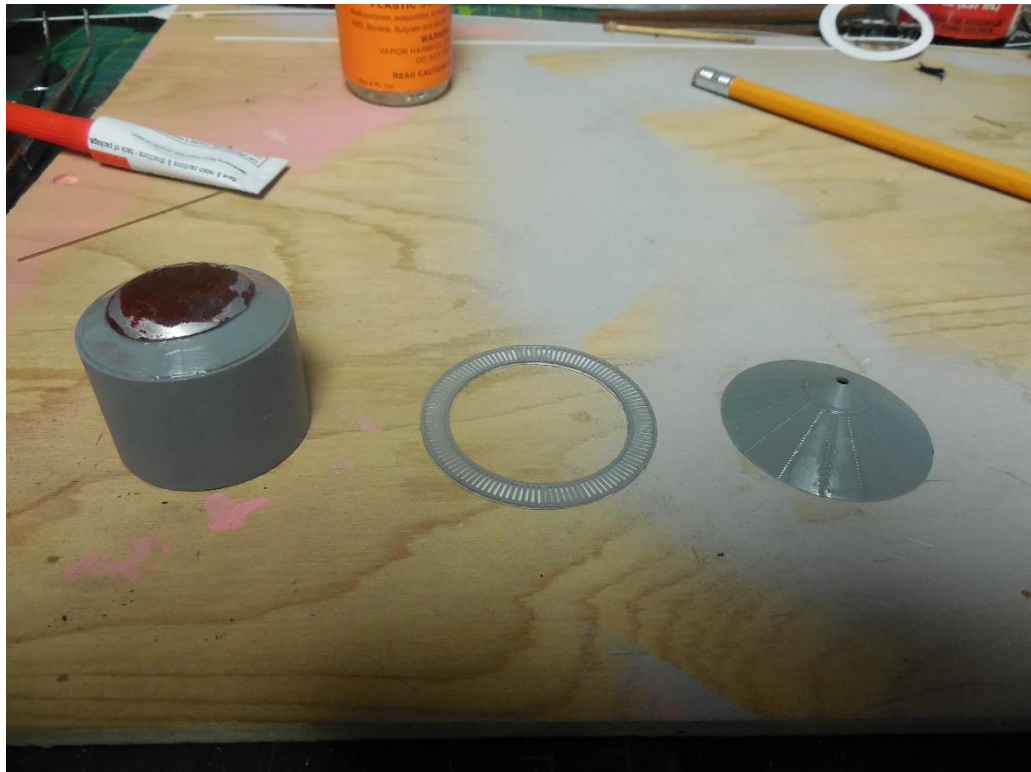
sanded off the conical bottom. I added a piece of the wine-cap tank to the bottom to attain the desired shape. Squadron putty was used to fill in the gaps and then sanded. Also, a .01 ring of styrene was glued to the bottom of the walkway to make it a solid walkway (pic 11). The walkway was completed by adding strip styrene and Tichy boltheads, cut from bolt detail parts, and Archer resin rivet decals to the bottom (pic 12, 13). The pieces were assembled, DullCoted, painted flat black, decals added, and rust highlights added, using Pan Pastels (pic 14). With the kit-bash completed, I changed one water tank to a completely different water tank (pic 15). It was a good result.



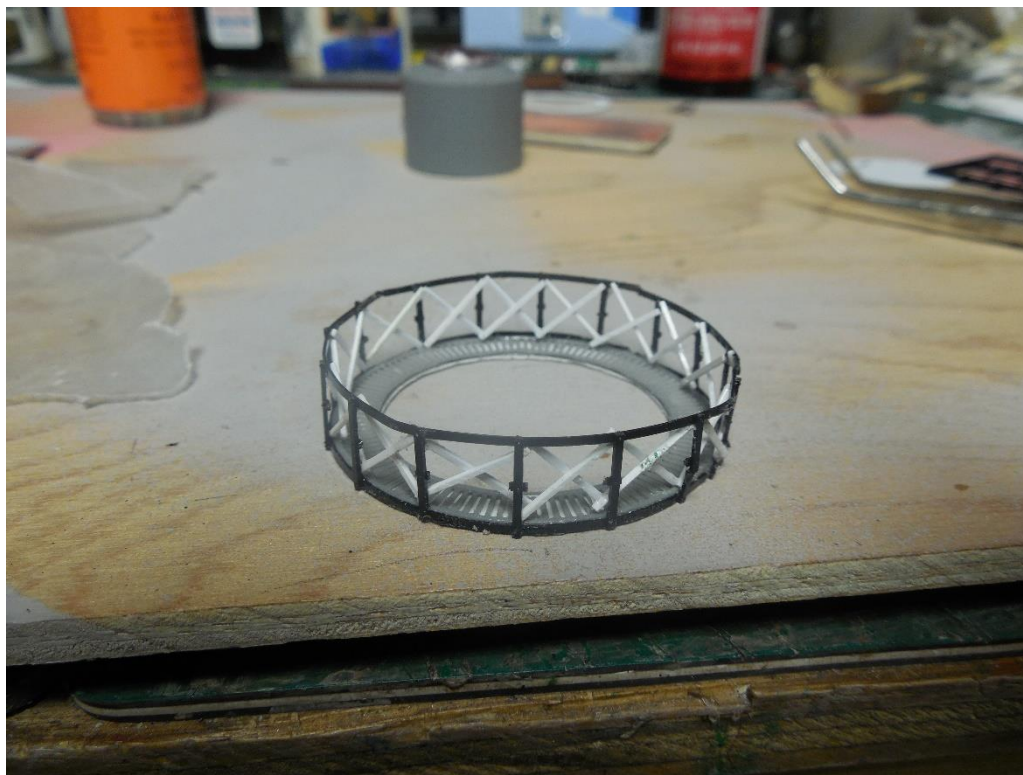
Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11



Pic 12



Pic 13

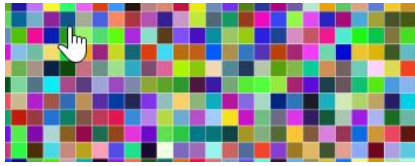


Pic 14



Pic 15

Until next time,  
.... ED



## Digital Distractions

A Look at our hobby online



Here's another favorite of mine. Thunder Mesa Studio. A gentleman by the name of Dave Meek (former Disney Imagineer I believe) has a studio near Jerome, Arizona. He chronicles his O-scale projects on his YouTube channel. I find his approach and his videos some of the most watchable and relaxing in model railroading. Here's Dave's description of his site:

[Subscribe](#) to the Thunder Mesa Studio YouTube channel for an ever growing collection of model railroading and maker videos with an emphasis on story-based modeling. There's a new build video just about every week with projects ranging from scenery and structures to rolling stock, electronics and special effects. In addition, a new weekly feature called "Workbench Wednesday" puts the focus on specific models, tools, ideas, or techniques used regularly at the studio.

### 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>	<b>NEW</b> David Myers	<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>	<b>NEW</b> Keith Iritsky	<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>	Chad Barnette	<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>