

# THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 24 Number 12

December 2024

## Division Coming Events

CSD Annual meeting will  
be held at the Newton  
Depot on Saturday,  
January 18, 2025.

10:30 – 12:00

## Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

Whew, what a month the Carolina Southern Division had in November! In case you missed it, November was National Model Railroad Month. To help celebrate that distinction, we decided to ask all members to open up their layouts to visitors. And I think it was a great success. We had 18 layouts open over the course of the four weekends in the month. Their locations extended from Cherryville to Hickory to New London, and Lancaster S.C. Most were open for several hours to allow those driving some distance to plan their trip. I'm pleased to say that I met some members for the first time.

To me, what made this event great and worth doing again is the opportunity to see what other modelers are doing. What are their ideas in planning the layout as well as their goals. Tips offered and given also seemed to flow freely. I know that I have one suggestion that I will definitely try to help improve my forestation on the ET&WNC. I also learned from several of the layout owners I spoke with that having their layout open for visitors gave them an inducement to get something done (i.e. clean the track to get things running, do some electrical or scenery work, or paint a backdrop). Many enjoyed having neighbors come by to see what the layout looked like. I had two kids that helped me in the early stages of building come by to see how the layout has progressed. I think they were impressed.

So now, we take a pause to enjoy the holiday season. Perhaps this may also mean some train room visitation may be in order, but for now (outside of an operating session) I'm taking a break! I wish everyone the best, and we'll see you at the Annual Meeting in 2025.

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## Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Holy cow! It's been a full year of editing the Brass Pounder. I made it! Shout out again to our past editor Ed Gumphrey who helmed the BP for a full five years! I hope I can continue to do justice to the work done before me.

This year has been a wild ride full of highs and lows. Thankfully, the highs were much more bountiful than the lows. So, I think the highest point in the year for me had to be attending my first ever NMRA convention (of any type) which was of course the 2024 Piedmont Junction, hosted by the Carolina Piedmont Division. From the clinics to the banquet to the raffles, it was all so much fun. It was fun mostly because I got to enjoy it with fellow Carolina Southern members. I also got to meet some new faces from sister divisions all over the MER.

It was those smiling faces that made the whole thing. And that, unfortunately, brings me to the low for the year. And that was losing one of our beloved members. I'll hold off on specifics for this month's editor's notes, but I will elaborate more on my personal thoughts next month. For now, you may read the announcement later in the issue. I am also

holding off because we may have other members submit some things they would like to share as well, and we simply didn't have time to put it all together for this month. This one stings even though I'm a new guy just really starting to get to know folks.

As I would suspect though, the best way to honor any brother or sister modeler that we may lose, is to really give it our all. I can see a lot of personal growth in myself this year as I've tried to get more involved with CSD, and I am excited for more of that in 2025.

Chad



# Division and Regional News

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## Keith Iritsky

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent



Keith Iritsky (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) passed away in November after a sudden illness. He had been a member of the Carolina Southern Division for a number of years. During that time, he has helped maintain as well as host the Train Town exhibit at the Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum in Newton, NC. Keith also served on the Board of Directors of the Division, as well as serving as clinic chairman. Keith and his wife Cindi regularly attended Division meetings as well as any outings. They also attended several regional and national conventions.

Keith was an outstanding modeler with great attention to detail in the structures he built as well as other aspects of the hobby. His main interest was the Central Railroad of New Jersey although he liked most northeastern railroads. He also had a growing interest in narrow gauge lines, and recently attended the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Pittsburgh. Keith also enjoyed operations and was keenly involved with a railroad simulation application.

Our condolences go out to Cindi and his family.

## Wade's Train Town

### Wade's Train Town – November Stats

Open houses:	6
Attendance:	157
Volunteers:	Gil Brauch (2), Tim Rust, and Ed Smith

## AP Awards from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

The month of November, being National Train Month, yielded quite a number of AP awards, including:

- 3 Golden Spike awards
- 2 Chief Dispatcher awards
- 2 Scenery awards



There are several more in the works, so stay tuned!

## CSD Annual Meeting

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

This is to announce that the Carolina Southern Division's Annual meeting will be held at the Newton Depot on Saturday, January 18, 2025. It will start at 11 AM in their meeting room. On the agenda for the 2025 meeting are reviews of the Division's financial status, report of activities within the Division, updates from the various model railroad clubs within the Division, and the election to fill the director position being vacated by Ed Smith (who is term limited out).

Tim Rumph has agreed to run for election to the position, but if you wish to seek election to the position, or to nominate someone for the position, please let an officer or board member know so that we can prepare ballots ahead of time.

As has been our recent practice, the Division will provide lunch for those attending. The meeting will also be broadcast via Zoom for those not able to attend in person. Please click here to sign up. [Register](#)

## Help Wanted

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

Railroad Model University has been a signature event for the Carolina Southern Division for some time now. It stimulates participation in learning about a number of subjects that are of interest to you. Earlier this year, our leader in this event resigned for personal reasons. We are now looking for someone (or several) within our division to step forward and take on a leadership role(s).

You will not be alone in this effort. Roy Becker remains as registrar for the event to help keep things organized. Our relationship with the West Concord Baptist Church is strong. In fact, they have proposed supporting the effort in 2025 by providing lunch for attendees.

We have decided to move the event into March for this coming year to help capture members' free time before Spring begins, and family activities (youth sports, lawn care, etc.) start happening.

What the leader's responsibilities will include are reviewing the past events to see which clinics were the most popular or generated the most positive feedback. Using this information going forward, add new clinics to the clinic roster. Equally important is recruiting clinicians. We have a lot of experience within CSD that should be able to provide these. Finally, asking for feedback from the attendees is also important to help plan future events.

So, please consider helping CSD with this event. Contact me directly if you are interested or have more questions.

## **November 2024 Layout Tour**

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

Earlier in 2024, the Carolina Southern Division decided to try something new to help celebrate November as National Model Railroad month by having public and private layouts open to members and visitors. Assistant Superintendent Alan Hardee, and Treasurer Dave Thrans accepted the assignment given to them by the BOD. Through their efforts, 17 private layouts, and 3 public ones agreed to be open for viewing.

Due to the geography of the Division, they decided to divide up the area where the layouts were open into 4 regions to make it possible for the members and visitors to be able to see as many as possible during the month. Each region was assigned a specific Saturday (there being 4 Saturdays this November before Thanksgiving) so that made it easier to organize. A reservation page was placed on the CSD website ([www.carolinasouthern.org](http://www.carolinasouthern.org)) so that reservations could be made in advance. This enabled the layout owners to have an estimate of how many visitors might be attending, but it also provided 2 additional benefits. It encouraged members and visitors to visit the website, plus it kept the layout owners contact information off the web. The week of the open house, Dave sent the layout owners a list of the names of those who said they might be coming.

All feedback from both the layout owners and the visitors has been positive. Several of the layout owners I spoke to used this event to work on or finish a particular aspect of their layout. Some of the layouts that had not been operational were put into service. A number of scenery projects were completed. Also noteworthy, many of the layout owners used this opportunity to invite non model railroad friends or neighbors to check things out. While we have members (and layouts) in South Carolina, we had visitors from three states attend as we had a visitor drive in from Virginia to visit 3 of the layouts!

I anticipate that this will happen again in November 2025, and that the word will spread further. Thanks to Alan and Dave for their efforts in making this a success, and to all the layout owners who took their time to share their interest with others!



The layout of Dave Myers, Clerk

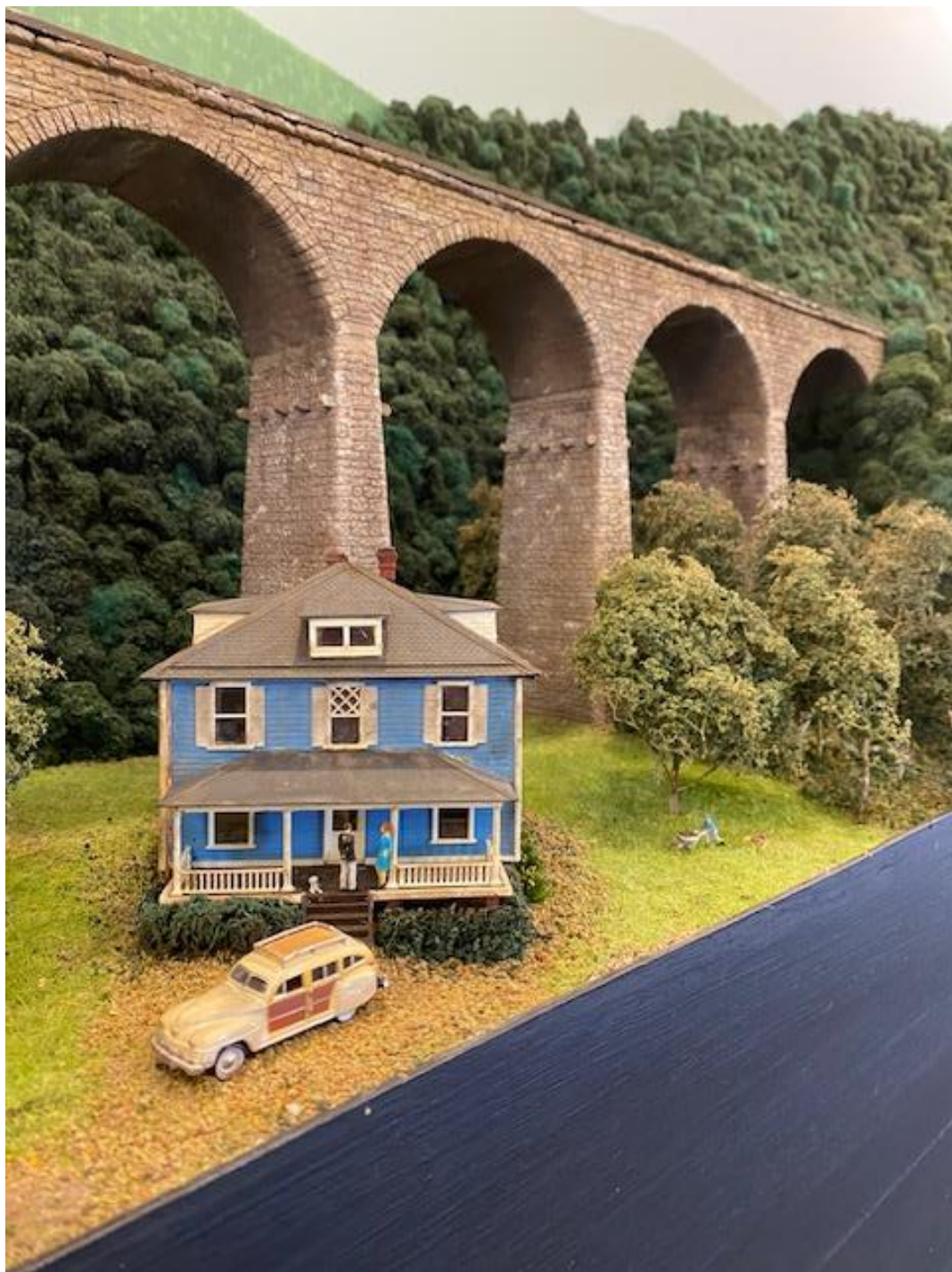


The layout of Dave Myers, Clerk



The layout of Ed Smith, MMR





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The layout of Ed Smith, MMR







The layout of Gil Brauch, MMR

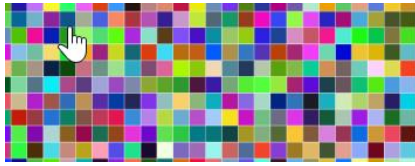


Visitors to Seth Gartner's layout



Visitors to Seth Gartner's layout





## **Digital Distractions**

A Look at our hobby online

Here's another favorite of mine.  
"Boulder Creek Railroad" by Luke  
Towan.

[Click here](#) to check out Luke's  
collection of videos. Prepare to be  
overwhelmed by the sheer detail  
and the breadth of videos that he has  
amassed over the years. Definitely  
hours of enjoyment to be had here,  
and certainly lots of tips and tricks  
can be gleaned from his approach.



### **Division Brass**

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