

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 24 Number 4

April 2024

Division Coming Events

April Meeting: RMU

**Time: Saturday, April
20th**

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

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

I'm reminded when I look at the newly revised map for the Carolina Southern Division about the geography we cover. With the calendar telling us that Spring is now here, it is simple to note the differences in our area. The South Carolina counties are full of yard activities including getting gardens going and mowing the grass. Here in central and western North Carolina, we're still getting into that mode with the dogwoods and Bradford pears blooming. From my days of traveling through Southwestern Virginia, I know there can still be some cool nights, and days in the 60's as a sign of things to come.

So, this is a good time of year for model railroaders in this area. The train show in Hickory is in early April. I'm told it will be the biggest one yet. The May train show at the NC Transportation Museum is in the planning stages. With work continuing on their back shop, they are still designing the floor plan and related final details. While I know many of us don't need to buy any more "stuff", it is still fun to see what other folks have for sale, and what they think things are worth. It's also fun to catch up with folks we haven't seen in a while to learn what they have been up to. And it's always fun to look at the modular layouts at these shows and talk with the operators to learn something new.

The CSD Railroad Model University is scheduled for April 20 in Concord, N.C. For those of you who are not familiar, for a registration fee of \$10, you are entitled to attend and choose from a complete day of clinics on a variety of modeling or prototype subjects. These clinics tend to be a little more in depth than those at our monthly meetings. Power Point presentations are not uncommon either. It is also the perfect time for anyone who has thought of presenting a clinic to step forward and give it a try. They are fun to plan and present, and I can assure you someone within the audience will ask a question or two. There will also be a white elephant room, and a model evaluation room for those interested in the NMRA AP. Finally, I'm told there will be a T Trak layout present if you care to check it out. You can keep up to date on this event on our website: www.carolinasouthern.org

I've learned from looking at the monthly CSD membership roster that a majority of you do not take advantage of joining in on our gatherings. While the train shows are not sponsored by CSD, we will have tables representing the Division along with members present to answer any questions about the Division, the MER, the NMRA and its activities. I recognize there are a wide variety of reasons to attend or not attend such gatherings. I do appreciate that you are members of the Division and support our efforts. I would like to meet as many new faces as possible at any of these events to learn more about what interests you. This will help provide me and our BOD with setting a direction for the future

Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette



Wow, it's now a month later than last time! As you may recall I said last time that I would work on my scheduling game a bit. I'm happy to report that I have made an attempt to work on organizing and scheduling my time for the hobby that I love.

With me it takes scheduling something to ensure that I get it done. It's too easy at the end of the work day to not want to work on it, even though it's something that I enjoy doing. I have included an expanded article on this topic later on in the issue. Check it out!

Area Train Shows

Carolina Train Show - April 13th at the Clarion Hotel, 3695 Foothills Way, Fort Mill, SC from 9am-3pm.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

I target the 1st of each month for publication. Please submit articles for publication by the 25th 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

By Chad Barnette

NMRA Survey

Contributed by Gordy Robinson, MMR, NMRA President

Hey There, NMRA! It's Your Turn!

Your NMRA leadership team is embarking this year on a journey - to develop a bold, new, and energizing future vision for the Association – looking out to 2030 and beyond. In 2025, the NMRA will celebrate its 90th birthday, and we want this new vision to point the Association (and our great hobby of model railroading) directly toward a future of continued growth, evolution, and joy - for the next ninety years.

But we don't want to do this alone. Indeed, we're looking to build our goals (and our plans to get there) through many voices - including national and regional teams, local divisions, and individual members all across the globe.

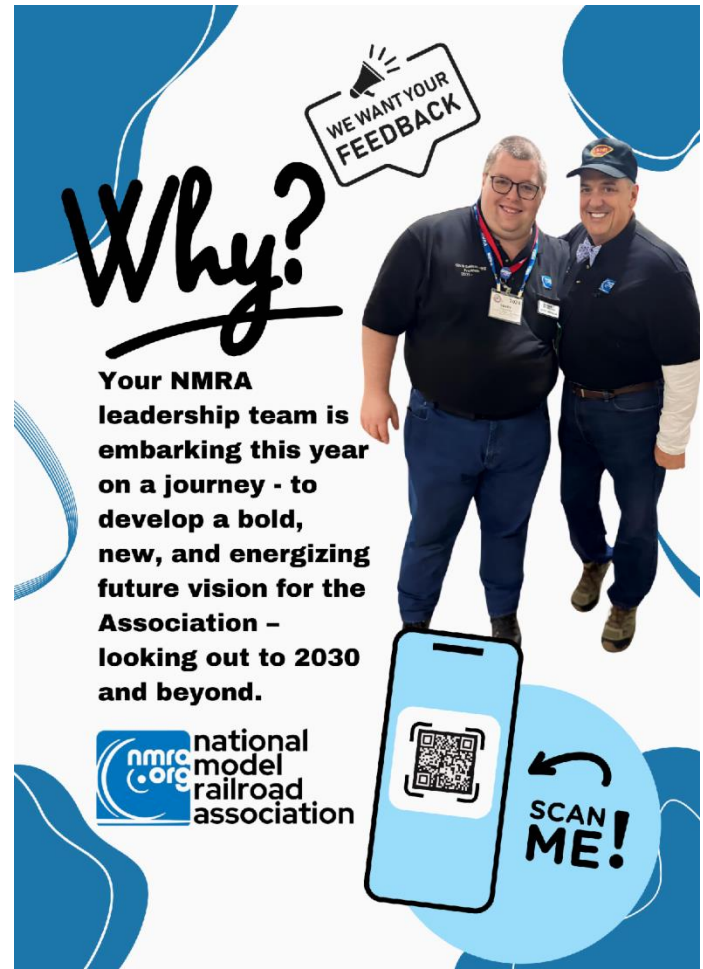
We're initiating this work now with a confidential, online member's survey - to provide you with an opportunity to tell us what you like and appreciate most about the NMRA, what you don't and would like us to improve or change, and where you see our future ahead – in growth, development, and value delivered to members and to the hobby.

Proving us with your input should only take about 30 minutes (and a little bit of thinking). You can find the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NLXS8T7>

We hope that you will participate here and engage with us in this future-building process – by letting us know what you like and want to keep, what you think we might change or add, and what you'll ultimately value most – as we build the NMRA now toward 2030 – and way beyond.

Best,



Gordy Robinson, MMR
NMRA President

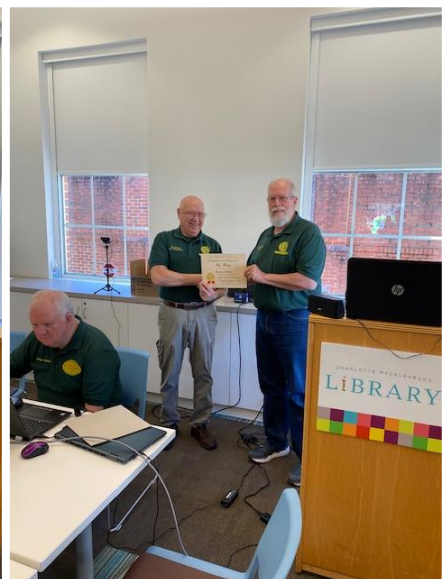
AP Awards from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

The following members have received AP credit since the March issue was released..

- Doug Algire has his AP in Chief Dispatcher
- Dave Trams has his AP in Volunteer
- Roy Becker has his AP in Volunteer
- Andrew Stitt has his AP in Chief Dispatcher
- Doug Algire turned in a building for a Merit Award

Pictured: Dave Chance receives his Golden Spike Award in February (left). Dave Thrams (middle) and Roy Becker (right) receive their Volunteer awards.



Official March Meeting Notes

Contributed by D. E. Meyers, Division Clerk

March 16, 2024

Mecklenburg County Library, Davidson, NC

The meeting was called to order by the Superintendent at 10:00 AM. Thirteen members present and three members online.

The Superintendent reported:

The Red Springs trip to ride the speeders has two spots still available. Contact Andrew Stitt, David Thrans, or Joe Skorch if interested.

The Hickory Train Show is the first weekend of April. (April 5-6, 2024). Hours are Saturday 12-7 and Sunday 9-5. Parking will be available in the parking deck next to the hall. 280+ tables have been sold to vendors. CSD will have two tables.

Carolina Train Shows will have a show at the Clarion Hotel in Fort Mill, SC, on Saturday, April 13, 9 AM to 3 PM. They will also attend the Spencer Train Show, May 18 and 19.

Neil Anderson reported on the Railroad Modeling University (RMU) for Doug Algire. Assistance is needed on Friday evening at 6 PM for set-up (6 persons), registration Saturday morning (2 persons), sale room during the day Saturday (2 persons), and teardown Saturday afternoon (6+ persons). Twenty-one clinics are scheduled. There is room for more clinics if anyone else desires to present one. Registration for RMU is now open on the CSD website.

Ed Smith reported on Train Town. (Gil Brauch was manning the site.) Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. S gauge and Lego layouts are coming soon. Representatives from the Statesville Museum visited Train Town seeking advice and/or assistance on installing a recently donated layout at their location.

Neil Anderson announced and presented awards for the NMRA Achievement Program.

Roy Becker – Association Volunteer

David Thrans - Association Volunteer

Doug Algire - Chief Dispatcher

The Superintendent reviewed upcoming meetings and events.

March – Red Springs trip to ride speeders

April – 5 & 6, Hickory Train Show
20, RMU at West Concord Baptist Church,

May – 18 & 19, Spencer Train Show

June - Oakboro outdoor

July - mtg location tbd

August- mtg location tbd

September - Annual picnic, location tbd

October - MER Convention in Raleigh

November - mtg location tbd

Roy Becker conducted a very informative and interesting clinic and demonstration on soldering for model railroad projects. His notes are attached.

The Superintendent adjourned the meeting at 1120.

Submitted by – David Meyers, Division Clerk

The Workbench Wing

This month is a special treat. A look into Superintendent Andrew Stitt's workbench area. I'm noting how clean and organized it is. It's also reminding me that my workbench is a standup style workbench and I've developed sit down envy while seeing some of the recent setups!! Here are a few words from Andrew on his setup:

"Here is my workbench all cleaned up as I'm waiting for some supplies for the next project. It has two work stations with cutting mats, and a glass panel on one for a flat surface. Paint and glues are somewhat organized. The Ultimotion sander is my favorite tool. Plenty of light too."



Things to Know About Soldering

Contributed Roy Becker

What is the metal called solder?

It is a metal or metallic alloy used when melted to join metallic surfaces. For years the two metals combined to make solder were Tin and Lead. Here are the characteristics of each metal. Tin melts at a temperature of 449.5° Fahrenheit. Lead melts at 621.5° Fahrenheit. In the current day safety regulations Lead is "Known to cause cancer" therefore, the new solder is a combination of up to 4 metals. The most optimal, lead-free solder is comprised of 3% antimony, 1.5% zinc, .5% silver and 94.5% tin. By mixing different portions of the metals the melting point of the solder can be modified. When nearly all solder was a combination tin and lead the most common ratio was 60% tin and 40% lead. I have included a Chart for the different ratios of metals to show the melting temperature of the combination. The first page deals with tin and lead ratios. Notice that the 63% tin and 37% lead has only one melting point while all the others have a range for its ratio. The primary reason the most common ratio of 60/40 is lead is cheaper than tin and it provides a good low melting temperature. The range is based on how accurately the ratios were controlled.

In addition to the combination of metals for melting point, strength of the solder is another consideration for the components of solder. In model railroading we are normally concerned about a good electrical connection, so we need to use what is most readily available and low pricing. If you have health concerns, be sure to avoid solder that has Lead in it.

The next consideration is the addition of flux in the solder. Flux is a cleaning agent to prepare the two surfaces for a good joint connection. There are two primary kinds of flux inside of solder, acid and rosin. Acid is probably the most efficient at cleaning the area, **HOWEVER**; never, Never, NEVER, NEVER use acid flux on your railroading endeavors. We all have the knowledge that acid eats away what it comes into contact with, so it is in soldering that is primarily used to make an electrical connection. In time if the acid isn't properly neutralized the wires will deteriorate and there is no longer a connection. If your solder has flux inside of it be sure it is rosin core. Here is another note about solder. In addition to the ratio of metals the diameter of the solder is another consideration. The melting point will be determined by the alloy itself however, when it melts, thinner diameter will have better flow control than a large diameter solder. Here is another note and that is if the diameter is too small the quantity of flux inside is not enough to clean the area of the connection. The solution to that is adding flux directly to the two surfaces to be joined. Flux is offered in a paste and liquid form. The liquid will flow into the joint better but may flow farther than you need and could cause a problem when the solder follows the flux. With paste solder be sure to carefully place it where it needs to be.

In all of this we have only considered the solder. A heat source is needed to melt the solder. There are many types of soldering devices. Growing up I had to use what my dad had so I began with a Weller soldering GLIN.



This is NOT an ideal tool for delicate work on a model railroad. It might be okay for the 12" to the foot scale. There are a variety of soldering pencils. Neal has one where the tip is heated with the flame of a built-in butane torch. Most are electrical by connection to a cord; however, many operate on internal batteries. I own about 4 different soldering stations which have a soldering pencil connected to a base station that gives the ability to control the temperature of the tip of the pencil. Now that I brought up the thought of controlling the tip temperature it is good time to explain why we need to know the melting temperature of solder alloy ratios. If you want to build a bridge that is made of brass it is typically soldered. Brass is a very good conductor of heat, therefore soldering near a joint of an already soldered joint can break the joint already made. The process is done by using a soldering station with very precise temperature control and a large selection of solders with different melting temperatures. Start by soldering with the highest melting temperature solder, then the next closest joint with a slightly lower melting point, and so on. We're not here to do that type of soldering, just thought you'd like to know.

Even though solder melts at temperatures as low as 361° Fahrenheit we need to heat the two metal surfaces to a higher temperature so the solder can flow to make our electrical connection. I typically set my station to 700° Fahrenheit. Just a note when I need to unsolder something I typically set the temperature to 800° Fahrenheit. It loosens the solder more quickly and therefore reduces the contact time causing less other problems like melting plastic ties. My selection of 700° is not an arbitrary value. My first soldering station was made by Weller and the tip temperature was determined by the tip connected. 700° is the most popular preset tip temperature.

Now onto the soldering itself..

Scheduling Some Fun

Contributed by Chad Barnette

I have reached the ultimate conclusion for myself in terms of my favorite hobby – if I do not schedule myself time to work on my hobby, I will get very little of it done. Between work and family, I find myself exhausted at the end of the day and it is all too easy to sit down and watch a program, or spend an hour cleaning up the house. However, I think it's important for our mental health to spend some amount of time each day doing things we enjoy.

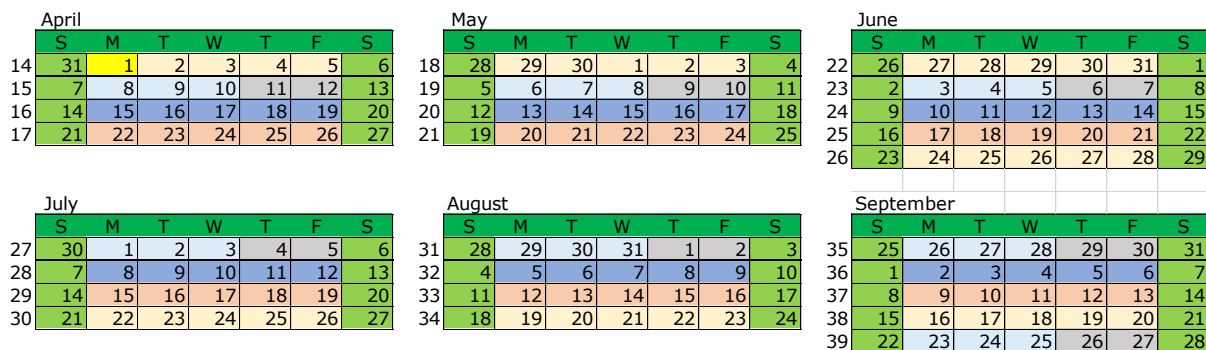
I think something that keeps me from wanting to work on my models is that it can feel daunting sometimes. We all know it's all about enjoying the journey and not necessarily the destination. For me I think that if I map things out a bit, I can simultaneously enjoy the journey, but also see the destination on the calendar.

Currently I am enjoying working on structures. I enjoy trying to recreate a miniature world of my own. So I decided there were just a few categories that I could break this into that would make things more manageable. The idea here is to give way more than enough time to accomplish each step. In this way I account for those days when I truly do not have enough time to work on things for whatever reason. On those days, I won't feel a sense of failure just for not having worked on the models. I'll see that I have enough time to stay on schedule and still make progress. And, more importantly, plenty of time to enjoy the process.

In my case I have broken down the steps to creating a structure into 5 categories:

- Design the model on my computer (four walls + roof and associated textures)
- Design windows / doors / utilities etc
- 3D Printing and post-processing steps
- Painting
- Assembly and weathering

What you enjoy doing most is probably different than what I enjoy. But I encourage you to create your own calendar and set your own pace. You can feel good about yourself when you are able to check something off your list. You'll know that you didn't rush things, but you accomplished a goal that you set out to do. We can all hang our hats on that!



- Design basic structure / siding
- Design windows / doors / exterior details
- Print structure and windows - curing and post processing
- Painting structure and accessories
- Structure assembly and weathering

CLOSING PAGE BONUS

Pictured below is a scene from Dave Meek's O-Scale Thunder Mesa Railroad, located in Jerome, Arizona. I have been following Dave's Youtube Channel and really enjoy his work. An ex-Disney Imagineer, you can see the standard of quality you'll find on his layout.



Division Brass

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