

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 25 Number 8

August 2025

Division Coming Events

August Monthly Meeting
Saturday, August 16, 2025.
10:30 am.

Home of Joe Skorch at 542
Eastway Ave, Kannapolis, NC

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

We just got back and have recovered from the 2025 NMRA National Convention in Novi, MI. I have to tell you that it was an action packed 6 days. Joe Skorch, Dave Thrums and I managed to squeeze in a number of clinics as well as layout tours. The Carolina Southern Division was very well represented at the event. Dick and Karen Bronson, Ed and Cynthia Smith, Tim Rumph, Richard Selby, and Chad Barnette were all there

with us for some or all of the event. The event was well thought out with the layout tours and special events spaced out so each attendee could plan out their schedule without much loss of time.

The National Train Show opened Saturday morning. It was a little different than the last one I attended in Cleveland years ago. There were a number of key suppliers to our hobby that were not present (Atlas, Bowser, Rapido, Kato, etc.) this time around which surprised me. In their place there were several hobby shops and private vendors selling their stock, much like our train shows in Hickory and Spencer. Yet I did get to talk to several folks at Walthers, Bachman, Rail Scale Models, and Woodland Scenics, however. A rather large number of modular layouts were also up and running.

So, now having time to reflect on the adventure for a while, I have a couple of thoughts I'd like to share. If you have the opportunity to go to a regional or national convention, go to it! I met and talked with a number of modelers from the Midwest as well as others from Wisconsin, Arizona, Texas, and Scotland. You will learn some different perspectives on the hobby. As mentioned above, the NTS gives you a chance to talk to a supplier or two. However, if such a trip is out of your reach, CSD offers our own version of similar events. Our annual Railroad Model University will give you a number of clinic topics to choose from for a one-day commitment. The local train shows, while more regional in nature than the NTS, do offer a chance to get out, meet some new folks, see some modular layouts, and (perhaps) buy something that you have been looking for.

Don't forget, we have a tour of Lionel, and a meeting at Joe Skorch's house set for August, and our annual picnic coming up in September.

Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

July just flew by didn't it? Here we are now just a month and a half away from fall! It was quite a busy month for me. I got to help out at Wade's on two different occasions and I got to attend the National Train Show in Novi, Michigan.

Since I could not get tickets to the convention itself, I decided to spend some extra time exploring The Henry Ford, a sprawling museum complex in Dearborn. What an amazing place it is! And Mr. Ford had plenty of interest in trains and I got to experience some of his collection while I was there. I plan to share my photos in an upcoming edition of the Brass Pounder.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this August edition of the BP - I am so excited this month as we have a new contributor this month. That's right, our own Dylan Petro has submitted an article this month. I hope you enjoy reading his article! Pair that with the conclusion of Dave Myers' five-part series on scratch building the Waxhaw bridge. Thanks Dave for bringing this series to us! I also encourage everyone to contribute something to the Brass Pounder. It is "our" newsletter after all. We're not after Pulitzer Prize winning writing here - just an interesting thought or two on model trains that we can share with one another. Won't you send an article, a paragraph, or even just an interesting photograph that you took? We can turn just about anything into an interesting piece for the whole group to enjoy.

Please send to: editor@carolinasouthern.org

Division and Regional News

Wade's Train Town

Wade's Train Town – July Stats

Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

Open houses: 4

Attendance: 133

Volunteers: Chad Barnette [2], Tim Rust [2], Bob Halsey, Ed Smith

We are, once again, requesting members to step up and volunteer to spend one Saturday a month, at most, at the Legacy Train Exhibit at the Newton Narrow Gauge Museum. We just leveled out at 4 volunteers again, but proved how fragile these manning levels are by having an illness among us. We really need one or two more bodies to solidify our obligations. So if you can see fit to volunteer, it will be really appreciated

The AP Report from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

Took some time off for Vacation and then some surgery. The first round is in the books.

The next meeting will be building switches at Joe Skorch's house. You need to take his class on building switches so you can get a Merit Award under Civil Engineering AP.

For the ones that would like to work on the Chief Dispatcher AP Award . Classes will start back up soon.

Only takes 7 to be a Master Model Railroader

Seth Gartner is at 5 AP's
Michael Chance is at 4 AP's
Joe Skorch is at 4 AP's

CSD Monthly Meeting Noes

Contributed by David Myers, Clerk

Carolina Southern Division, Mideast Region
National Model Railroad Association
Monthly Meeting
July 19, 2025

Attendance: 9 in person

The July meeting of the Carolina Southern Division was held at the home of Deputy Superintendent Alan Hardee.

Alan showed us his layout and discussed the techniques and materials he uses as his work continues. Special attention was given to his completed helix. Alan's unique double pinwheel helix design was featured in the July 2025 *Brass Pounder*. The helix is now operational and impressive.

Those in attendance passed a couple of enjoyable hours exchanging ideas and stories.

The meeting “adjourned” just before noon.

Alan, thank you for your hospitality.

David Myers,
CSD Clerk

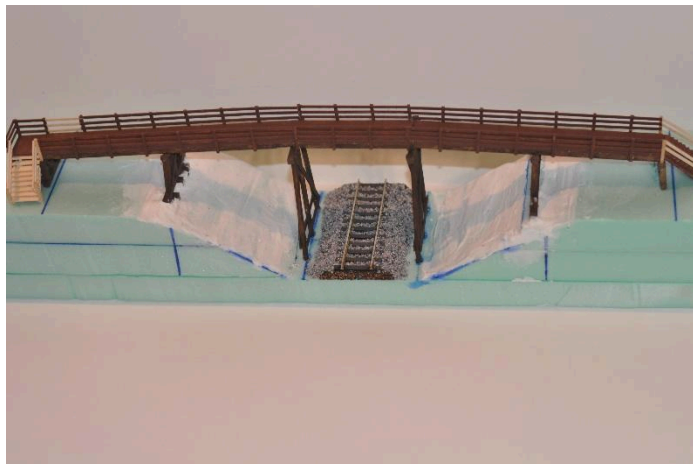
Scratch Building the Waxhaw Bridge, Part 5

Contributed by David Myers, Clerk



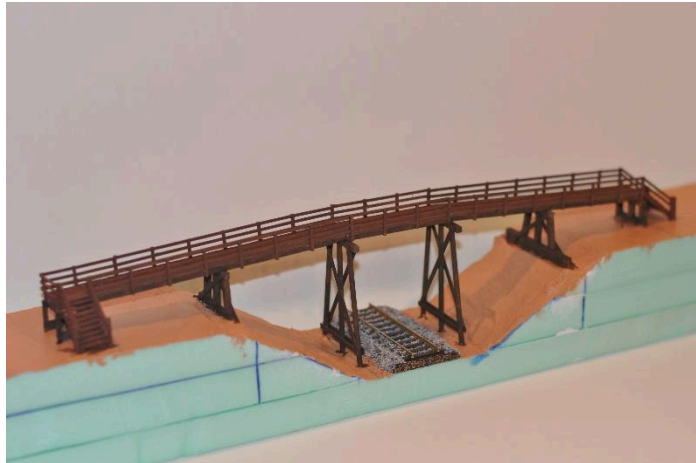
The Waxhaw Bridge

With all the major bridge components assembled, it was necessary to smooth out the rough contours of the embankments. I used Woodland Scenics Foam Putty. It is light weight, water soluble, and easy to work with. I used a very small putty knife to spread the putty on the embankments. I used a wide (half inch-ish), slightly damp paintbrush to smooth the putty and remove the most conspicuous lines left by the putty knife.



Foam Putty on the embankments

Several years ago, like many of us have done, I took a clod of what passes for dirt in North Carolina to Sherwin Williams and had them color match a can of semi-gloss latex paint. I use semi-gloss paint to seal the surfaces where I will install ground cover. This not only protects the water-soluble Foam Putty, but if there is ever a bare spot in the ground cover, it looks like bare dirt anywhere in the southeast.



Latex paint applied to areas to receive ground cover

The areas for the landscaping beds at each end of the bridge are bordered by railroad ties. I used 8x8 inch scale lumber stained to look like creosote to outline the beds. With the beds defined, I made 48-inch-wide sidewalks from styrene, glued them in the appropriate positions at each end of the bridge, and painted them to look like concrete. With sidewalks in place, I installed street curbs made from styrene and painted them to look like concrete. I allowed for a foot or so of street by the curb. With the curbs and streets defined, I removed excess length of foam from each end.



Landscaping beds, sidewalks, and curbs

I made a mixture of dark brown ground foam to resemble wood chip mulch and used it for the landscaping beds. I made a mixture of fine and coarse ground foam to resemble a summertime greenish-brown growth of grass and weeds.



Ground covering added to beds and embankments

I added various colors of moss and clumps of coarse foam to resemble the shrubbery in the beds and growth on the embankment.



Shrubbery and weeds

It was time to dress up the foam base of the bridge. Black acrylic paint worked very nicely. It covered the foam well and dried thoroughly.



Finished foundation

The Waxhaw Bridge has metal fencing by the stairways at each end to prevent pedestrians from slipping on the stairs and falling into traffic. The Faller Garden Iron Fence kit was the best match available. I cut fence sections to appropriate lengths and placed them at each end of the bridge.



Safety fence at the south end of the bridge

The bridge was complete! After appropriate ceremonies, the bridge was opened and soon enjoyed by locals, tourists, and train watchers.



This model reflects the current configuration of the Waxhaw Bridge. Some of the historical photographs of the bridge that are available (like the one under the title above) show the configuration of the bridge before its latest restoration by CSX.

Lessons learned:

1. The Waxhaw Bridge was a good “first-time” scratch building project. It is nearby and can be easily examined, photographed, and measured.
2. Scratch building, while sometimes frustrating, is fun and very rewarding. There is a great deal of satisfaction in watching a pile of mail-order, scale lumber as it becomes something recognizable.
3. Like any job, proper tools are essential. Although somewhat expensive, the precision slicer and sander I bought for the project made the uniformity of the pieces possible. Easy cutting and shaping the foam foundation was possible with an electric foam cutter.
4. Be patient. Give the glue on components and major pieces time to dry thoroughly before attempting to add or combine pieces.
5. My photography needs improvement. I need to find a filter that prevents photos in LED lighting from having a yellow tint. I need to work on depth-of-field.

Correction:

Thoughts of a Carolina Southern Division Model Railroader

Contributed by Dave Thrams

Correction to "Thoughts of a Carolina Southern Division Model Railroader" written by Dave Thrams in the July 2025 Brass Pounder.

I wrote: "Last year's celebration of November's National Model Railroad Month saw 20 layout owners open their layouts to an average of more than 40 visitors each Saturday!" That statement is misleading and wasn't well thought out.

We did have 20 layouts owners sign up to open their layouts, so I didn't mess that up. Do you remember we asked you to register online before visiting the layouts? After you registered, I would tell the layout owners who signed up so they knew who to expect, and I would send you the address of the layouts so you could find them. Most every member signed up to visit multiple layouts and, in my paperwork, I called those "registered slots". However, I did not translate that into English for my article, and I probably should have talked about this completely differently. But here goes!

A better way to have written this might have been that an average weekend had 40 registered slots, meaning that if that weekend had 5 open layouts, then each layout may have received 8 visitors that registered for the event, thus 40 slots. No home layout actually received 40 visitors, instead, most layouts had 6-10 visitors. What I liked about visiting layouts last year was that there was not a huge crowd at each layout. I could see the layout and really talk to the layout owner to get to know the modeler and learn their goals and dreams for the layout. It was great fun!

So, if you are thinking about opening your layout this year for our November Open House Celebration, you will receive a reasonable number of visitors and won't be overrun with 40 or so visitors. If you opened your layout last year and did not receive 40 visitors, that's right, no one did. I had fun talking with the visitors that did come, got to know them better, and had a great time! If 40 people showed up at my house, I would not have been able to talk with everyone.

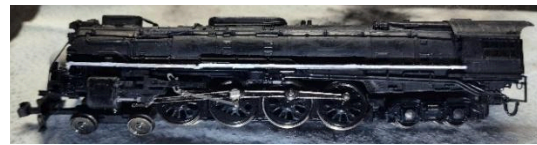
I also wrote in that same article: "We are not professional modelers, so professionally written articles are not required." Well, okay then, and I'll try to do better next time.

My Milwaukee Road #261 project

Contributed by Dylan Petro

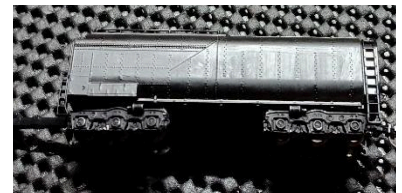
I started this side project because I wanted a 4-8-4 for my Milwaukee Road excursion set. It's usually paired with one to three FP7 diesels that look great but nothing looks better than seeing a blast from the past steamer pulling excursions, at least it is for me. There are a few brands that have some variety of 4-8-4's to choose from, however Kato's Union Pacific FEF-3 runs particularly well, with only a few known running issues, so I chose this one to become a similar version of Milwaukee Road's #261 4-8-4 steam engine. Even though I knew this engine wouldn't be exactly like #261, it would be close enough at a quick glance, and good enough for me to enjoy it.

I started by removing the "elephant ears," and them aside. I used black acrylic paint to cover UP road names, emblems, and numbers. I painted a white pinstripe on the engine's side.



put
all
later

Since #261 had wheels in sets of six with an arched bracket, I bought the closest looking pair of wheels to that, which were Kato UP water tender wheel truck pieces, and painted those black. To the tender's underframe I carefully cut off the centipede plastic wheel cover pieces with wire cutters and a hobby knife and sanded the edges. The front set of wheels that holds the power pickup arm that connects to the engine was particularly challenging since there are manufactured cutouts for the arm's brackets on the stock wheel set to easily fit into and move side-to-side in. So how did I cut a 2-3 millimeter hole in thin molded plastic? Precise heat and some ingenuity. It took some tinkering, but I took a metal brake hose wire from an MTL coupler truck set and a high tension micro-spring, and shoved it onto my soldering iron with the metal wire wedged in-between the spring coils, and tediously melted 2 holes into the plastic framework.



After trial and error, I had to cut open one of the holes and make the other end closed since the bracket arm center hole needed to be centered in the middle of the truck. From there I fitted the wheel sets into place, which uses the same twist-on bracket clips as the stock FEF wheel sets.



I had never done custom decals before so after watching a few videos online to get a rough idea of how to do it, I bought some decal paper. At the time I didn't know there was "white film" decal paper. The decal paper I got was clear film, and putting a colored decal with a clear background on a black surface takes almost all the color away. So, for some of the decals, I printed the number or emblem on regular paper, glued it to an empty space of clear decal paper, cut it out, removed the decal backing with water, and placed it onto the desired area.



I gave the engine and tender an all over coat of clear gloss to give it a shiny look. I

re-applied some paint to the wheel hub caps on the engine and any other coverups where white was

showing. In the future I plan to paint the cab outline red.



Overall, I am pleased with how this project came out, and will enjoy having a steam option for my Milwaukee Road excursions.

-Dylan Petro

Coming Soon! A Trip to Lionel

Contributed by Chad Barnette, Editor



Who would've thunk? At least not me. I had no idea the Lionel headquarters was right in our backyard....right there in Concord, North Carolina.

Well, many thanks to John Yarbrough - he has arranged for the CSD to have a tour of the Concord Lionel factory in August. This tour is only available during the week so it will be on Wednesday 8/13/25.

Be sure to register as space is limited to the first 20 registrants.

See you there!

<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/Lionel%20Tour%20Registration.html>



2025 CSD Model Railroad Open House Saturdays

Contributed by Dave Thrums

It's getting close to celebrate National Model Railroad Month again! Can you help us celebrate by sharing your layout in November 2025? We need your help for this to succeed.

I heard loads of positive feedback from everyone last year and it didn't matter at what stage of construction the layout was at.

Is your layout under construction with benchwork and a little track? Okay!

Is your layout fully scenicked? Great!

It doesn't matter if you can run a train or not on your layout. Let's celebrate by sharing your layout for National Model Railroad Month.

If you live in the Carolina Southern Division, we have a weekend reserved for you and your layout! See the dates below and please consider opening your layout for others to stop by

and see what you've accomplished and learn about your future plans for your layout. CSD members can learn from your ideas for your layout.

Let's share the World's Greatest Hobby!

If you are like many of us, and enjoy visiting model railroad layouts, these proposed dates can help you plan your visits. I say proposed because if we get more layouts this year in these areas, or if you live outside these areas and would like to share your layout with CSD members, we can rearrange this plan. The more layouts, the better!

Proposed dates:

November 1, 10 am –3 pm (Southwest) Gaston County/West CLT area

November 8 10 am –3 pm (Southeast) Waxhaw/York area

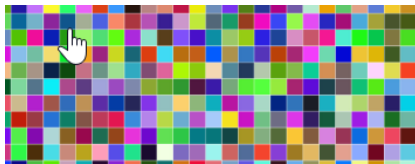
November 15, 10 am –3 pm (Northwest) Hickory/Statesville

November 22, 10 am –3 pm (North/Northeast)

No matter where you live, if you would like to share your layout and help us celebrate National Model Railroad month with our Carolina Southern Division members, please contact:

Dave Thrums at Paymaster@carolinasouthern.org or call (704) 747-6823

Alan Hardee at Assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org or call (704) 689-3867



Digital Distractions

An image captured at this year's 2025 NMRA National Convention. Check out additional photos [here](#).



Division Brass

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