

**Carolina Southern Division
Annual Business Meeting
January 21, 2012**

Meeting was held at the Williams Lodge, Cornelius, NC.

Meeting was called to order by Superintendent Bob Halsey at 10:05 a.m. There were 17 members present and two visitors. For the benefit of all members and our visitors, he had everyone present introduce themselves and state their position, if any in the Division.

Bob welcomed two visitors, John Janosko, MER President, and Dick Buchan, a MER member who had accompanied John to our meeting. John reported that the MER had a Board meeting last week. The regional convention in Cary had a net profit of approximately \$3000 which will be divided between the MER and the host Division. This year the Tidewater Division will host the MER convention on October 18 -21, 2012 in Suffolk, VA. They have over 20 layouts scheduled for tours. They are working with Norfolk Southern to try to arrange a a tour of their coal loading facility or intermodal yard. The 2013 convention will be in Maryland in the Columbia area and 2014 could be in the Hagerstown area. He suggested that if our Division had interest in hosting a convention soon, we should contact Eric Dervinis who is the MER Executive Convention Chair. MER elections are this year. The current officers are running for reelection. We should contact Dave Chance if anyone is interested in running for a Regional office.

Dick Bronson presented the Paymaster report (attached). Our current balance is approximately \$3000. We had net income this year of about \$1500. Rail Run made about \$300, \$119 came from the MER distribution of dues, and the 2011 and 2012 RMU's made about \$1800 combined. Expenses were for the Timesaver materials, copying and postage totaling about \$700.

Jack Haynes, Clerk, presented the membership report. The Division gained 16 members last year to a total of 133. Many were Railpass members who have renewed as regular members. Seven are current Railpass members.

Bob Halsey reported that the 501(c)3 committee is making progress. They are gathering information they need for the application. They expect to complete the process in about 3 months. It is essential to show educational activity. There will be more discussion at the next meeting.

Gil Brauch reported on Brookford (attached). Train Town held 12 open houses last year. There were also 7 special shows including 6 for children attending a summer camp with a total of 313 children. At these showings, Gil included a presentation of Operation Lifesaver to teach safety around railroads. At the November Open House, they held a 5th anniversary celebration. Division members set up tables with displays and demonstrations to show visitors more about model railroads. There were 117 attendees.

They are planning to expand the event into a "regional" swap meet. The whole community center is reserved for the event which should provide plenty of room for tables.

Restoration is complete on about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the layout including new lights. About 90% of the mainline track is ballasted. Since inception, Division members have put in 2438 hours over the five years. \$2077 has been collected in the donations jar. All money collected is dedicated to restoration expenses.

There is a current balance of \$540 in the restoration fund.

They will continue to have work sessions the second and fourth Thursday at 6:30 and monthly open houses on the second Saturday.

Gil reported on the web site. We experimented with online registration systems this year. One was tried for the RailRun but had some problems. A different system was tried for RMU which worked well and includes a link to PayPal for registration fees. He suggests putting a "Donate Now" button on our home page that would use this link.

The only major change to the web site was a change in the color scheme to match the new green/yellow scheme of the new Division logo. He posts the monthly E-Newsletter to the web site. He reminded everyone to use the Reload button on their browser each time they visit the calendar page to be sure they are getting the latest content and not older info cached on their local system. Changes he makes to the calendar are posted immediately, but the browser may not recognize that it has changed. Gil suggests that site visitors check the buttons just below the headlines for the latest information. He does not send out emails with every update since he is updating the site more frequently. He asked that everyone send him photos and/or write-ups of events or locations for posting on the site.

Jack Haynes reported that there were six issues of the Brass Pounder newsletter last year of 8 pages each. They are distributed by posting a PDF file to the web site and emailing the membership that is available. This year he has begun mailing a printed two page version to members for whom we have no email to ensure all members know about Division events and how to contact officers. In September, the Division started to email an "E-News" newsletter to all members. It contains information on upcoming events to serve as a reminder.

Bob asked everyone to send in pictures and articles for publication. They don't have to be big or polished, we will take care of scanning photos, formatting and proofreading written copy.

Dave Chance reported on the AP Program (attached). There were only two members receiving certificates this year with a total of 4 certificates. Two Golden Spike awards were earned by Joe Howard and Dave Draxler. Dave also earned Master Builder Scenery and Chief Dispatcher. We have two members close to the MMR with 7 and 6 certificates. Altogether we have 46 members with certificates. There were 14 Division members at the Piedmont Crossing Convention. Neal Anderson participated in contest judging.

Martin Brechbiel visited the Division from Virginia to do a clinic on judging. Seven members attended and are now apprentice judges. They can become MER judges by judging in each category at least once working with a qualified judge. It usually takes several conventions to do them all.

Dave is going this coming week to see Division member Anthony Perkins' layout for Golden Spike and look at some of his models for merit judging. He is also helping an NMRA member outside our Division area who lives in an area with no active division. It is not permitted to work in another division's area, but he can where there is no local division. He explained that in presenting clinics, the first time counts as author for handouts. Subsequent presentations of the same clinic count for Volunteer. There was some discussion on the treatment of handouts in various forms such as PowerPoint or web site pages.

Bob Halsey stated that he was impressed with the quality of the contest models at the convention, but

that should not intimidate or discourage members from presenting their models for judging. Dave said that he knows there is some very high quality modeling in the Division.

John Janosko stated that in some Divisions they have members bring models to meetings not to be judged, but to get suggestions. A member brought a model, did a little of the suggested work and had it judged for 90 points.

Gil suggested that judges should include what the modeler has done right so they are encouraged to continue and improve. John Janosko said that at MER, they are trying to keep judges focused on just the area they are supposed to judge, e.g. scratchbuilding, and not critique a model on other points. Bob Halsey said that we will have a session for modelers to garner suggestions and help to make a model better so it can get a merit award.

Rick Knight asked John Janosko why the MER does not include Division Superintendents on its board as other regions do. The superintendents could then get NMRA officer points. John responded that the feeling in MER is that having more board members would make meetings cumbersome. They have changed the requirements for MER President so that Division Superintendents qualify. Previously you had to have been a Regional officer before you could run for President.

Rick Knight reported on the Program & Fun Committee. They have put together the calendar for this year and it has been posted on the web site. They will have some changes as they get more information and add specifics for some future meetings.

Rick reported the RMU had 75 attendees this year. He has a large stack of evaluation slips to go through. The only "complaint" he has run across so far is that some sessions should have been longer. Any comments or suggestions should be directed to Larry Paffrath who will organize the 2013 session. There was some discussion on who should be our target audience with RMU and other activities: young kids, teens, young adults. Dick Buchan said that experience has shown that promotion should be oriented toward 45-year olds. MER is targeting clubs and social organizations for presentations to promote the hobby both as a personally satisfying activity and as a social contact activity.

Bob Halsey said that the next Board meeting will be before the March 1 Division meeting. He reviewed the agenda for that meeting and invited suggestions for other topics.

It was suggested that we move the Thursday night meetings to 7:30 to allow members to get there from farther away, especially considering the congestion on I77 in the early evening. After discussion, Dave Chance moved that the time be changed, Michele Chance seconded. Motion was adopted unanimously.

Responding to a question, Bob Halsey stated that any member is welcome to attend board meetings. They would not be entitled to vote on board actions.

The meeting recessed at 11:20 for a short break.

Meeting reconvened at 11:30.

Jim Rager presented the Nominating committee report. Nominations are Bob Halsey, Superintendent, Larry Paffrath, Assistant Superintendent, Ken Trent, Paymaster, Dave Draxler, Clerk, Roy Becker,

Director 2014, Rick Knight, Director 2013.

Gil moved to accept the committee report, second by Dick Beck. Motion accepted by unanimous vote. Bob then opened the floor for other nominations. None were offered. Bob asked for unanimous vote for the nominated officers. Vote was unanimous.

Bob Halsey presented service appreciation awards to several outgoing and former officers: Steve August (Super 2008-2011), Fred Miller Director (2009-2012), Dick (& Karen) Bronson (Paymaster 1999-2012), Jack Haynes (Clerk 2006-2012), and Rick Knight (Operating sessions, RMU, Super). Steve will receive his awards via USPS.

Other Business:

Bob invited all to gather for lunch at the Acropolis where we have a room reserved. Dick Beck stated that he had some used HO track with him that he had been given for sale (cheap) if anyone wanted some.

Fred Miller stated that he was looking to retire as MER Business Manager. If anyone was interested, they should contact him and he will work with them to ease the turnover which will probably take some time.

Rick Knight said that Larry Lau, member and former Superintendent was in poor health. He will be moving soon to Chicago to be near family. Rick suggested that members could call or visit Larry before he moves.

Bob gave a check to the Paymaster given to the Division for assistance in building a layout.

Gil moved that the meeting adjourn. Ken Trent second.

Meeting adjourned 11:55

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Haynes
Clerk