

THE BRASS POUNDER



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

Volume 25 Number 4

April 2025

Division Coming Events

April 4-5

**Hickory Train Show
Come drop by the CSD table at
the Hickory Train Show.
Hickory Metro Convention Center
and Visitors Bureau
1960 13th Ave. Dr. SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Friday: 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM,
Saturday: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

Spring has arrived here in North Carolina. Looking out the train room windows reminds me that needs in the yard are beginning to take precedent over activities in the basement. Not much longer can we put things off waiting for warmer weather! Sticks need to be picked up (although not burned around here in NC). The weeds are beginning to pop up and will need to be cut back to give the plants we want to have a chance to gain supremacy.

All of this doesn't mean that efforts on the model railroad need to grind to a halt. We just need to prioritize what needs to be done with what we want to do. Perhaps that scratch building project will now take a little longer to complete. More time for "glue to dry", or "paint to cure". Thought can now be given to searching for the perfect details or decals to help make the scene better. Research time can be allocated to finding a better way to solve that electrical challenge.

As you know, RMU was a success! We had about 50 attendees there attending the clinics offered. I was impressed with the amount of knowledge that was shared during the classes. In the ones I attended there was open communication with those attending being welcomed to ask questions. The amount of creativity demonstrated was very impressive. I hope all of the attendees came away with more knowledge gained on the subjects than when they walked in.

We will be taking a break from having meetings for the next two months while the Division is represented at model train shows in Hickory, and Spencer. I hope we will see you there.

Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

What a busy time it is! Summer is on the horizon with ninety plus degree days coming up this weekend. It's as if we skipped right over spring. I have been so busy with work, but the business has been outweighed by the excitement to get to work. I'm looking forward to getting a couple scenes done for my new HO layout.

With the warmer weather it makes it that much easier to pop into the basement or spend some time in the garage. I won't be drawn to go inside after 5 minutes because it's so cold. That's what I love about this time of year.

In all honesty I have felt pretty sad about sending this issue out. It reminds me of the surprising loss of Ed Gumphrey. There's a nice piece later in the issue on Ed, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Ed in my column. After all, if it wasn't for Ed turning over the reigns of the Brass Pounder in late 2023, I would not have been nearly as involved as I have been. I got to meet Ed in person when he came to my home in 2023 to teach me how to run the Brass Pounder. I had had a few interactions with Ed previously, but meeting him in person cemented my view of Ed - a kind and thoughtful person, and one who was passionate about trains as we all are.

In honor of Ed, let's all read an issue or two that Ed put together over his nearly six years of service as editor of the Brass Pounder. It's a blessing to have some of his musings permanently that we can all enjoy whenever we like. Here's to you Ed - you will be missed, but most certainly never forgotten.

Ed's Brass Pounder Archives

January 2018 - November 2023

[Brass Pounder Archives](#)

Division and Regional News

Wade's Train Town

Wade's Train Town – March Stats

Open houses: 5
Attendance: 117
Volunteers: Ed Smith(3), Gil Brauch, Bob Halsey(2), and Tim Rust



AP Awards from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

At RMU, Joe Skorch was presented with the 3 Civil Engineering certificates needed to complete his AP for Civil. Soon he will officially be able to check that off the list! Congrats Joe!



Scratch Building the Waxhaw Bridge, Part 1

Contributed by David Myers, Clerk

After many years of gluing together plastic kits from hobby shop shelves, I finally decided to take the plunge into scratch building. As I do that, I will present a series of updates as I progress through this project. My desire is to encourage others to take the plunge and to pass on what I learn.

The first thing I needed to do was to determine what to build. With an address in Waxhaw, North Carolina, why not pick the most famous structure in the town – the Waxhaw Bridge.



The Waxhaw Railroad Bridge was built in 1888 to connect North and South Main Streets in Waxhaw. It is a rustic truss structure constructed from large wooden timber. It is accessible by stairs on each end. Once intended for vehicular traffic, it was designated for pedestrian traffic about 1940. The bridge is owned by CSX Railroad Company and is the last remaining wooden footbridge over the CSX. The bridge was restored to its present configuration in 2007-8.

After consultations with some experienced scratch builders in the Division, I had a list of tools and materials which I ordered.



Precision Slicer and Sander

Next, I needed to learn more about the bridge. I spent an afternoon with a camera, notebook, tape measure, and plumb line photographing the bridge from every angle and measuring everything but the pedestrians on the bridge giving me funny looks.

With this information, I began construction. To gain experience with the tools and techniques, I decided to begin with the decks of the center span and the two approach ramps. They looked to be the simplest, most straight forward pieces to make.

There are several online sites where “real world” measurements can be converted to any scale measurements. I chose to convert feet and inches to HO scale sizes in centi-meters. A tenth of a centimeter (mm) can be easily measured with a ruler.

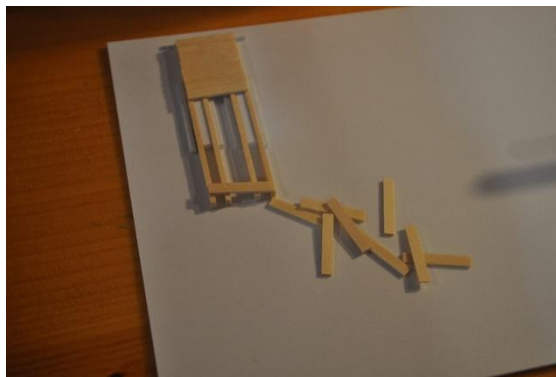
Use of basswood, not balsa, was strongly recommended to me. I ordered HO scale lumber of basswood in the appropriate dimensions, 8”x8”, 4”x6”, etc.



HO scale lumber

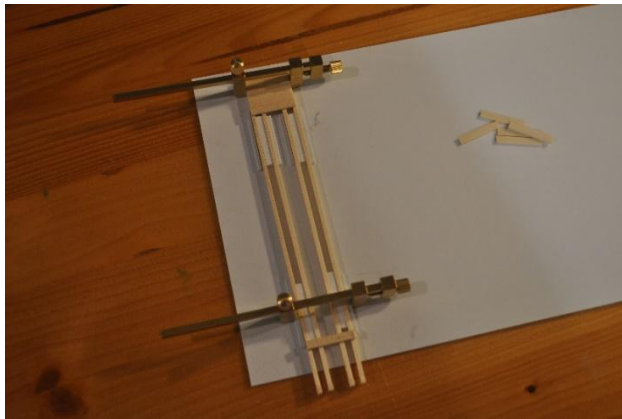
One of the first things I learned is the difference between “square cut side” and “off cut side” on the slicer. This will apply to any cutting tool where the blade has a straight or flat side and a beveled side. The “square cut side” (the flat side of the blade) will produce a straight, perpendicular cut. The “off cut side” will produce a beveled cut. The beveled cut should be sanded to a perpendicular surface before measuring and cutting the next piece. The center span has four 6” x 12” x 20’ horizontal beams and twenty 4” x 12” x 6’ planks. Each ramp has four beams. Forty-two planks on the north ramp and forty-five planks on the south ramp.

I made a jig from styrene parts to facilitate assembly of the decks of the bridge. Small clamps contributed to the effectiveness of the jig.

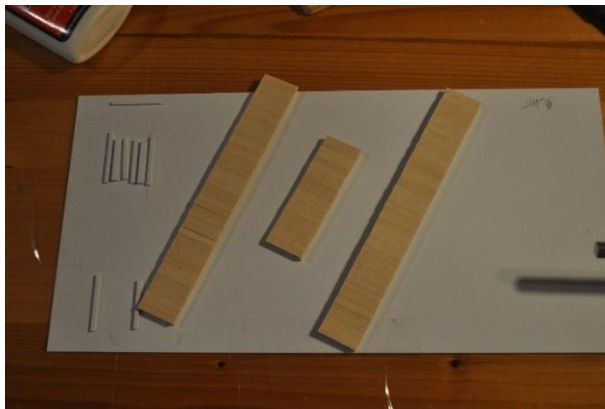


Beams and planks for the center span deck in the assembly jig

Ordinary white glue works well to glue the wooden pieces. I was able to find a bottle of Midwest Products “Balsa and Basswood Glue” which does very nicely. I gave the assemblies a full twenty-four hours to dry before removing them from the jig.



Beginning the north ramp assembly in the jig.



The completed north ramp, center span, and south ramp decks.

I plan to begin construction of the piers as the next step.

From The Roundhouse - Updates from the NC Transportation Museum

Contributed by Marcus Neubacher



The N.C. Transportation Museum will be hosting its Historic Spencer Shops Train Show on May 17 and 18. Once again, this show will be held mostly in the historic Back Shop completed in 1905 and will feature a large selection of items from vendors of model trains and memorabilia. The museum will have several modular layouts in multiple scales on display during the show. A night photo shoot is being planned, and more details will be available soon on the museum's website at www.nctransportationmuseum.org.

The Easter Bunny Express is coming soon on April 12, 13, 18, and 19. It will feature train rides, including the option of having breakfast, lunch, or a snack with the Easter Bunny on the train, plus lots of fun family activities for those who have children. On April 18 and 19, the event will include a free egg hunt.

Tractors and Trains is always a popular crossover event, with antique and modern tractors plus farm life demonstrations. Of course there will be train rides available as well. Later in the summer, the Fire Truck Festival will take place on June 14. The Fire Truck Festival is always the museum's largest single day event.

For those interested in Day Out With Thomas [™] and THE POLAR EXPRESS [™] Train Ride, those events will be coming up as always in the fall and winter. Tickets for Day Out With Thomas [™] were on sale to members March 31 and to everyone on April 1. Tickets for THE POLAR EXPRESS [™] Train Ride will be available to Lifetime, Family Platinum, and Family Premium members on June 3, to all members on June 4, and to everyone on June 5. If you want to enjoy this magical holiday event, you are encouraged to get tickets as soon as you can because it sells quickly.

Aside from events, there is a lot happening at the museum. The Bob Julian Roundhouse is having its roof replaced, while work continues on the renovation and expansion of the Powerhouse and the Car Repair Shed. All of those projects are expected to be completed by this summer.

More information about museum events and activities are on the website at www.nctransportationmuseum.org or on the museum's Facebook page.



Ed Gumphrey

Contributed by Joe Skorch

The CSD has lost one of its former leaders and good friends with the passing of Ed Gumphrey.



Ed was a former Carolina Southern Division clerk and Brass Pounder editor for a number of years and was responsible for getting many of us to write articles for the newsletter that would ultimately result in AP awards in the author category.

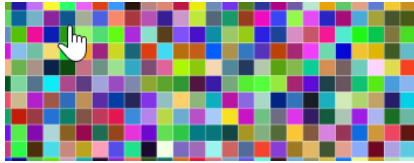
Ed was always there for thought provoking conversation and advice anytime you needed it. He will be missed by many of us not only as a fellow model railroader but also as a good friend.

The following is an excerpt from Ed's obituary.

Edward Peter Gumphrey Jr, "Chip", age 76, passed away in his home in Shelby, NC on Friday, March 7, 2025. Ed was a retired Chief Warrant Officer, United States Navy. He was also a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and brother, and a friend to so many

Named after his father, he was born in Washington, DC on July 31, 1948 as the son of an Air Force officer. He attended Culver Military Academy and later Clemson University before he enlisted in the United States Navy. He served for an honorable 20 years. His assignments took him and his young family all over the country and internationally before his retirement in 1988. Following his retirement, he worked as a project manager for defense-related ship building programs. Upon his retirement in 2014, he and his wife relocated to Shelby, where he enjoyed the beauty of the Carolinas, the warmth of the community, and the quiet pace of life in his final years.

For the full obituary, please click [here](#).



Digital Distractions

A Look at our hobby online



I recently stumbled across this channel. It's called "My HO Scale World of Model Railroading". This gentleman seems to have some nice skills to impart to the world. He has generated quite a lot of content in this, his first, month of posting to Youtube. Give his videos a try, and patronize a fellow model railroader by hitting that subscribe button.

[My HO Scale World of Model Railroading](#)

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