

2015 Central Savannah River Division Southeast Region
National Model Railroad Association Email News Compilation

January 2015

Happy New Year!

In two weeks, I will be attending the Region Board of Directors meeting in Panama City FL. There were some items that we discussed at our Division Business Meeting that I will continue to pursue with the Region. If you have any requests for issues, ideas, suggestions, let me know.

Plans for the March 7 Division Event are going well. We will rent a room at the St. Paul Lutheran Church on Hitchcock Parkway about 1 mile west of the Silver Bluff/ Pine Log intersection in Aiken SC. The room will open at 8AM, and we will formally start the session at 9AM. The morning will have clinics and open discussion, and then we will break for lunch and go on layout tour(s). Thanks to Robin Riley for arranging the meeting location. Cost for the room will be \$25, so we will request a nominal donation to cover expenses (else they all come out of my pocket - we have no division treasury).

Jack Connors requested a clinic on DCC Configuration Variables, and we are working with Rick Bell to use one of his clinics (he may have a conflict, we are still working out scheduling). A thanks to Don Barnes - he will be allowing us to use his computer projector for the clinics.

If you have suggestions for other clinics (we would like to run one or two more) let me know. I'll provide another update next month as planning proceeds.

Keep in mind there is a lot of information available on the SER website at <http://ser-nmra.org/>. There is an archive of past monthly news for the division, so if you've missed a previous email, you can catch up there. Also is information on this summer's SER convention nearby in Greenville SC. I hope you will consider joining me at the convention. <http://ser-nmra.org/convention/2015-greenville-convention-palmetto-excursion>

Please vote in the NMRA national elections! There are several folks from our area running for Office, I hope you will consider them and support them.

February 2015

MARCH 7!

The March 7 event is firming up. We will rent a room at the St. Paul Lutheran Church on Hitchcock Parkway about 1 mile west of the Silver Bluff/ Pine Log intersection in

Aiken SC. The room will open at 8AM, and we will formally start the session at 9AM. There will be a small donation requested (five dollars or less) to cover costs for the event and coffee.

The address for the location is
961 Trail Ridge Road
Aiken, South Carolina 29803

There will be a clinic on DCC Configuration Variables, especially covering CV 29. We will also have a TV and videos playing. If you have models you would like to show off, we will have a table for that. We will also set up a "swap table" if you have some excess equipment you'd like to sell. After lunch, we will offer up some layouts to tour, and if sufficient interest is there, we could set up an op session.

We are still accepting ideas for things to do, clinics to hold, and certainly will have some time available for socializing.

Guests are allowed, so we may show them what the NMRA does, and encourage them to join.

SER BOARD MEETING I did attend the SER Board Meeting as the Division Superintendent. Several things affecting our division were covered. Per discussion (and vote) at our business meeting, we have withdrawn the bid for the 2017 Regional Convention. However, we have been asked to host another "mini-meet" which is looking like it will be September or October 2016. We will primarily follow the successful schedule and events we had at the last MiniMeet. We will discuss ideas for the mini meet on March 7, and upcoming division meetings.

It was noted at the Board Meeting that several of the smaller divisions are having difficulties. This includes our own, which is the smallest of all of the 15 SER Divisions in geographic area and membership. I am a proponent of creation of larger divisions to ease the infrastructure needs, and to draw upon larger pools of volunteers. In my experience, in any volunteer organization I have been in over the years, only about 10 to 20 percent of the members are willing to volunteer. For a division our size, that translates to three to five people. And I do appreciate those who have volunteered - Robin Riley, Andy Chandler, Don Barnes to help with the March 7 event.

SHOULD WE WORK TO MERGE IN WITH ANOTHER DIVISION (OR PORTION OF A DIVISION)?

This is going to be a real question to deal with in the next few years. The SER Board is at least open to allowing us to pursue merger(s) with neighbors. Of course, before such a merger occurs, there will need to be a vote of all affected membership, and a majority in each of the affected areas much approve.

I did find out some history on our division at the board meeting. Some years back, Roy Tritt and other local members did not feel like they were being well served in the division they were in, and did not want to drive the distances involved to get to the divisional events. Thus, they went through the process to form the 9th Division, our Central Savannah River Division.

ADVANTAGES OF STAYING AS IS: We do indeed have local control of our division, and we don't have to drive very far to division events. The Region does offer stipends to the divisions for operating events, (though one must apply to the Board for the money for a specific purpose).

DISADVANTAGES OF STAYING AS IS: It is very hard to throw a division event with the current small size of the division and small number of volunteers. We have no treasury. Currently, no one else has expressed an interest in being Division Superintendent. After my current (third) term is up in October 2016, I will not run for another term as Superintendent.

How the March 7 event goes will certainly turn out to either end up on the advantage list, or the disadvantage list.

Side Note on Finances: Only \$2 of your annual NMRA dues goes to the Region, less any fees if you use Pay Pal or a Credit Card. There is no routine stipend provided to the Divisions. Regions and Divisions are not allowed to collect dues (though they can do fund raising, and collect fees for attendance at events).

My personal opinion is that the statement "I don't want to drive distances to a division event" isn't much use when there are very infrequent local events. If we were part of a larger division, my hope is that we could do multiple events per year around the division, drawing upon the ability to plan things by email and phone with a larger group of volunteers. We could also have the resources to put together a more formal newsletter and a treasury and apply for Region support funds.

I have been having some discussions with the Atlantic Division superintendent (covers a narrow coastal strip from Myrtle Beach down to Brunswick GA) and will continue to converse with him on a proposal. Bottom line though is - nothing will be done without involvement of the division members in the decision. And if you'd like to be involved in the planning process, let me know.

What do you think? Let me know!

March 2015

It's now less than a week to the March 7 division event. We have the plans firmed up for the day, and believe everyone will find something of interest and also plenty of model railroad friends to meet.

We will meet at the St. Paul Lutheran Church on Hitchcock Parkway about 1 mile west of the Silver Bluff/ Pine Log intersection in Aiken SC. The room will open at 8AM for coffee and socializing. We will formally start the day at 9AM.

The address for the location is

961 Trail Ridge Road
Aiken, South Carolina 29803

There will be a clinic on DCC Configuration Variables, especially covering CV 29. A short "cheat sheet" will be provided with common settings. Two demonstration clinics will be held - one on N scale coupler installation, and the other on track laying with ACC glue. We will also have a TV and videos playing. We will have several operations clinics available if there is sufficient demand for the topic(s) involved.

If you have models you would like to show off, we will have a table for that. We will also set up a "swap table" if you have some excess equipment you'd like to sell. If you have informatoin you'd like to share with others, bring it along, we will fit it in, and you will likely find someone interested in what you have to demo or talk about.

We will then break for lunch. In the afternoon, there will be two home layouts available for touring and Q&A.

Don Barnes' HO Scale Baltimore and Ohio. It is 16 miles from the meeting location. This is a large 36 foot by 78 foot model railroad representing the B&O from Baltimore MD to Cumberland WV. Don has done a LOT of research on the protoype. The layout is under construction, no scenery yet, but does have several fine scale representations of actual buildings on the B&O, and Don uses Fast Track turnout jigs to handlay turnouts. The model of the Brunswick MD yard is larger than most people's complete layouts. The model railroad is operated following B&O historical documents.

Steve Prevette's N Scale Burnt Hills and Big Flats, www.bhbf.weebly.com. It is 9 miles from the meeting location. This model railroad is fully scenicked and was published in the Great Model Railroads 2015 magazine. This is a free lance, single track railroad operated using Time Table and Train Order. I've use just about every common scenery techique available over the past 30 years, so you can take a look at a variety of methods to do scenery. WARNING - check your GPS against the map provided. Many GPS units attempt to route you over a road between two neighborhoods that is not completed, and in fact, is blocked off.

Maps to the layouts, and the Aiken Train Station museum layout (published in the GMR 2014 mag) will be provided to meeting attendees. Even for the folks who regularly operate on the layouts, this time will provide some time to examine the railroads, the construction techniques, and ask questions of the owners.

Guests are allowed, so we may show them what the NMRA does, and encourage them to join.

There will be a small donation requested (five dollars or less) to cover costs for the event and coffee.

I hope to see you there! Including - we have a new member who just joined the NMRA and the division who lives in Aiken - Roy McLain.

April 2015

From your Central Savannah River Division of the Southeast Region of the National Model Railroad Association

I know it is not quite April yet, but wanted to go ahead and report out on a few things. Consider it an early April Fool's.

DIVISION EVENT. The Division Event on March 7 was a success. We had six division members and one guest present. Thanks to everyone who made it a success, including Jack (doughnuts), Andy (coffee) and Don (computer projector). Special thanks to Robin Riley for arranging for the location. The location certainly provides a good option to the division for future events.

DIVISION HISTORY. Division member John Parker was able to provide some history for the division. At some point in the past, Aiken was part of the Palmetto Division, and the boundary line between the Palmetto division and the neighboring division in Georgia was the Savannah River (state boundary). This divided the members in South Carolina from those nearby in Georgia. A group, including Roy Tritt, petitioned the Region for formation of the CSR Division, as they believed they were not getting much service from the two divisions that covered the CSRA. John did say since the formation of the division, not a lot has happened for division activities. Except for the 2012 mini-meet and the event held this month, no one remembers the last time the division did anything for its members.

DIVISION PRESENT. I have been trying as Superintendent to understand the needs of the division members. In my opinion, the preceding paragraph points out that 1) there was a concern as part of larger divisions, the area did not have much going on locally available and 2) as a stand-alone division, there has not been the ability to offer much locally either. The event at the St Lutheran's Church did show that we have the capability to do local events as the cost of the venue is extremely reasonable. If we did not have a church member in the group, the cost would be greater.

We did have a discussion at the event of the merits of continuing the division as it currently exists, or attempting to create a division encompassing a broader area through either merger or division boundary realignments through the Region. At the business meeting last fall, consensus (and voting results) was to follow the path of merger. However, there was a good discussion of the merits and demerits of attempting a merger at the event.

DIVISION FUTURE. Alan Mole of the SER board of directors has offered to run an internet based, anonymous survey for us. In the coming days, you should receive an invitation from Alan to take a survey about the Division. This will ask questions like - how far away are you willing to go for a meeting, and should the division continue at its current geographic size, or try to form in with neighboring division(s) to create a larger division. This survey will allow you to make your opinions known, and provide information to the division and region leadership as to what path forward we should take. Please take a few minutes to take the survey.

May 2015

Less than a month to go to the regional convention! This one is close by, in Greenville, so I hope you all will take the opportunity to participate. It starts on June 5. Members Don Barnes, Bill Winn and myself will be giving clinics at the convention. Speaking of Bill, please welcome Bill Winn as the newest member of the Division.

See <http://www.palmetto-excursion.org/> for information.

Once we get through the convention, it will be time to start planning our Fall division meeting. We will hold our annual business meeting, and fill in with a day of model railroading activities. I hope we will build upon the success of our previous event this year. I anticipate we will hold the event at the same location as the Spring event.

Also to keep in mind - we will host a region mini-meet in the Fall of 2016, similar to the one we hosted a few years ago. I will be contacting USC Aiken in the coming weeks to get a weekend scheduled, likely in September 2016.

See you in Greenville

June 2015

ANNOUNCEMENT! MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 3, 2015.

The CSR Division will have its annual business meeting, and a whole lot more, on October 3, 2015, starting at 9AM. We will meet at the St. Paul Lutheran Church on Hitchcock Parkway about 1 mile west of the Silver Bluff/ Pine Log intersection in Aiken SC. The day long session will include hands-on demonstration clinics, including building turnouts using Fast Tracks jigs, weathering rolling stock, and airbrush painting. Layout tours will depart from the session if there is sufficient interest. Please be sure to join us for a Hands-On theme day.

We will have a minimal donation in order to pay for the rent on the room (\$25 for the day) and coffee/donuts. Thanks to Robin Riley for arranging the location and volunteering a clinic. Don Barnes will also demonstrate his Fast Track turnout jigs he uses, and I will demonstrate weathering rolling stock with acrylic paints and paint brush. If you have an idea for a demonstration you would like to give, or have a request for one to be given, please let me know.

The meeting will also include our annual business meeting. This is an off-year for elections, but we do have to start planning for the 2016 Mini Meet for the Region. This time we have more than a year to prepare, so ought to be able to top the one we gave last time!

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We had three division members at the Regional Convention in Greenville earlier this month. Don Barnes, Bill Wynn, and I all gave clinics with good interest and attendance. The OPSIG offered a whole lot of operating sessions, I got in two sessions, plus two layout

tours. Jennie and I enjoyed several of the excellent downtown Greenville restaurants, and the convention banquet was one of the best I've tasted (no rubber chicken!).

The Board of Directors meeting did include a discussion of the potential to change division boundaries, especially to help our neighbors in the Atlantic Division whose long (Myrtle Beach to Brunswick GA) but thin division makes it hard to do activities. I am hoping we can come up with a win-win for the eastern divisions in the Region to help bring sufficient critical mass together to provide more offerings like our October 3 upcoming session.

As usual, if you have any suggestions for Division activities, always willing to try something. I'd like especially to hear from the members around Statesville to see if they'd like to have us gather there for a future meeting.

July / August 2015

Here is an update on your NMRA SER Division, the Central Savannah River Division.

Next event is **October 3**. The Central Savannah River Division will hold its annual business meeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aiken, SC. The daylong session begins at 9AM and will include hands-on demonstration clinics, including building turnouts using Fast Tracks jigs, weathering rolling stock, and airbrush painting. Layout tours will depart from the session if there is sufficient interest.

Planning continues for the event. If you have requests for topics to be covered, or are willing to cover a topic, let me know. So far Robin Riley and Don Barnes (and myself) are covering the three topics listed. We've gotten coverage in the Region News Email, so hopefully will be a good turnout. If you are in the Aiken/Augusta area and would like to host a layout visit, we can schedule that for the afternoon.

For those outside the Aiken / Augusta area, I am definitely interested in holding events away from Aiken / Augusta. If you are interesting in helping to find a location for an event in your area, I'd be happy to work with you on that.

Remember we are hosting a Region mini-meet in the Fall of 2016. We need to spend some time on planning and volunteers at this year's fall meeting. We've got enough advance time to set up some tours, get publicity and find hotel discounts. **But we need to get moving!**

Region items:

Glen Hall, Region President sent out this request:

The Rocky Mountain Region is asking all regions of the NMRA to support their initiative for a petition to the National Board. The petition is to change wording of the definition of the Gold Award (Best of Show). Currently, after the best of show is picked, second becomes first etc. This petition would do away with this policy and the Gold Award (Best of Show) would keep the first place award. Please pass this info to your division members and if they wish sign the petition, then return to me.

If you are interested in this is, I can forward you the files and the petition for your review.

Local items:

I've supplied a couple of clinics to the NMRA "Edu-Train" program on operations. If you have clinics you'd like to provide I can put you in touch with them if you've not read about them in the national publications / emails. It does require adding "speaker's notes" to the power point on difficult subjects.

The Tuesday night operating sessions continue. Don is pushing on with construction on his B&O, now working on the first major town west of Brunswick. I decided to remove the "call on" signals "controlling" entry into my Mayfield classification yard, based upon conversations with the Operations Special Interest Group. Both Don and I continue on our journey of learning about and implementing Time Table and Train Order. After two years wait, the N Scale Atlas (with Loksound) Alco S-2 switcher finally arrived. It is rather amazing what it can do in such a small package. Except for the lack of belching black smoke, it really captures the Alco diesel behavior.

Next update will be in September, the final reminder for our October 3 meeting!

September 2015

The big news is our upcoming Fall get together is less than a month away on **October 3**. The Central Savannah River Division will hold its annual business meeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aiken, SC. The daylong session begins at 9AM and will include hands-on demonstration clinics, including building turnouts using Fast Tracks jigs, weathering rolling stock, and airbrush painting. We will also hold a Q&A session - bring your questions about modeling, wiring, DCC, scenery, operations, etc. and we will have our resident "experts" help with answers. If you'd like to serve as an "expert" yourself on some topic, you are certainly welcome to join in on the session. Layout tours will be arranged if there is sufficient interest. I will offer up my layout for any scenery questions. I've done most every scenery technique over the years, from hard shell to plaster cloth to styrofoam. A definite improvement these days is the use of ground foam for ground cover, rather than (any one remember it?) zip texturing. For information and directions, please contact Steve Prevette at [803-392-7684](tel:803-392-7684) or prevette@atlanticbb.net. A small donation will be accepted in order to offset the cost of the room rental. If you are willing to bring coffee or doughnuts, let me know. We could also head out as a group for lunch if you are of the mindset to do so.

We will also discuss the Fall 2016 mini-meet we will hold here in Aiken. This meeting does count as our required annual business meeting also.

The OFRRA operators are also included on this announcement. Guests may attend this event, with the caveat of you can only attend three times as a "guest" without becoming an NMRA member. So this gives you a chance to try out the NMRA.

If you haven't heard, the Region is offering a first time, free membership to military and ex-military

members, see attached file. This is a \$44 value, does not include the NMRA magazine or SER newsletter. It is available to those service-members who have never been a NMRA member before.

October 2015

The division held a clinics and business meeting session October 3, 2015. Six division members were present, Don Barnes, Jack Connors, Andy Chandler, Robin Riley, Walter Reichel, and myself. All three division officers were present (Andy, Robin, and myself).

The following clinics were provided:

Andy Chandler - a history of Kingan's in Indianapolis, a railroad serviced industry.

Steve Prevette - Show and tell on scenery materials, also weathering of a freight car using brush painting demonstration

Don Barnes - Constructed a Fast-Trak turnout

Robin Riley - Airbrushing demonstration.

Thanks to all who attended, provided clinics, Andy and Jack (coffee and doughnuts), and Robin for arranging the location.

The annual division business meeting was held from 9:43 AM to 10:10 AM as part of this event. The following are the meeting minutes:

General election will be next Fall. Steve will not run for a 4th term as superintendent, Robin (current asst. superintended) has volunteered to run as superintendent.

We will host a mini-meet in Aiken for the Region on September 23, 2016. The concept will be same as the one we hosted a few years ago, with the following exceptions/additions: Don's layout being the party/operating session location for Friday night, and Steve will host a layout tour/ operating session Friday afternoon for early arrivals. Robin's layout will be added as a layout tour if ready. Members were assigned to tasks as follows:

Arrangements with USC Aiken (Saturday) and Bobby's BBQ (Friday Dinner) - Steve

Negotiate with Quality Inn (or other hotel if needed) - Robin

Publicity (MR, NMRA, hobby shops) - Andy

Flyers and maps - Steve

Coordination with Aiken Train Station Museum - Don

Speakers / Clinics coordinator - Don

Driving tour map for Graniteville railroad historic sites - Steve

A discussion and a variety of votes for planning for the Division's future were made. Steve has provided results/comments to the Region Prez and Secretary.

We will schedule two clinics / planning sessions prior to the mini-meet for division members. The plan is to hold them in February and May. If anyone away from the Aiken/Augusta area would like to host one of these events, we'd be happy to come to your area.

Member recruiting and retention were discussed. Andy accepted the action to contact division members in his area that we have not heard from. Andy will also contact the Fort Gordon Morale / Welfare / Recreation department to make it known we have model railroading activities available, and also to advertise the military Region membership deal.

==== One final item - A soldier at Fort Gordon contacted me with the following request:

My late grandfather (WWII Vet) passed away 10 years ago and my dad and I split his model train collection (estimated over 75 cars/engines) along with his complete track and village set up. From his collection I inherited 23 cars and 2 engine sets that I would like to sell to someone that would appreciate and find enjoyment with them.

I will provide his contact information to anyone interested. He also supplied photos and a spreadsheet listing the items. His listing indicates they are Lionel, MTH, Rail King, Williams, and K Line. I am no expert on O, but by the photos the items look to be in good condition.

November 2015

I hope you and your family have a Happy Thanksgiving tomorrow.

News for the Division includes helping Robin Riley get his N Scale railroad up and operating in the Tuesday night (OFRRRA) routine. We've developed an initial roster of trains, and ran the layout through its paces last night with a small group of operators. This does bring the OFRRRA group (no direct affiliation with NMRA, but many in the group are NMRA members) to three layouts in the round robin sequence.

We do have a new member of the division, David Little. He is moving into the area from Washington state. Welcome, David.

For me, work has brought a lot of travel. I am helping Fluor with initiation of a contract to operate the Chalk River nuclear site in Canada. I'll be there again for two weeks in December. One nice thing about NMRA is you can find a lot of model railroading contacts, and have already found some local model railroaders in Pembroke ON and have visited two layouts and hope to be part of an operating session during the December trip. Some nice Canadian National and Canadian Pacific modeling up there, although the railroads no longer go through the area.

I am working to regain contact with USC Aiken to get a contract for the Fall minimeet. Once I have that in hand, I'll author some advertising pdfs. I do need your help in preparation for the minimeet, slated

for September 24th. Many of you have assignments you volunteered for at the last division meeting, so we'll be ramping up the preparations in 2016.

We do want to think ahead to doing the next Division get together, Robin will be helping us with arranging for the location which has worked well the past several meetings.

The expanded 57 page online version of the Summer 2015 SouthErneR V56 #3.5 is now available on the SER's website ser-nmra.org with articles on the Greenville convention contest results, Robert Folsom's N&W railroad that was on the convention's layout tour, and Part 3 of the Editor's Euro-Trip 2014 showing the value of a high magnification lens.

Finally, if you have any ideas /information/ pictures you'd like to contribute to the monthly division news, or turn in for the SER newsletter, let me know and I'll be sure to share your inputs.