

NMRA BULLETIN

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2016 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:

2016—Indianapolis, Indiana • July 3–10 • www.nmra2016.org

Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328

423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org

• 2017—Orlando, FL • 2018—Kansas City, MO • 2019—Salt Lake City, UT

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2016

GOLDEN SPIKE

Mid-Eastern Region

Alan Bibb, Stafford, Virginia

Pacific Coast Region

Layton Gillette, Coarsegold, California

Pacific Southwest Region

Kevin Honda, Westminster, California

Southeastern Region

Howard Sutton, Crossville, Tennessee

Sunshine Region

Richard Segall, Hawthorne, Florida

MASTER BUILDER — CARS

Midwest Region

Ron Christensen, Stevensville, Michigan

MASTER BUILDER — SCENERY

Mid-Eastern Region

Ronald King, Gainesville, Virginia

MASTER BUILDER — PROTOTYPE MODELS

Northeastern Region

George Landow, Providence, Rhode Island
Russell Norris, West Hyannisport, Mass.

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — CIVIL

Mid-Central Region

John Hemsath, Bay Village, Ohio

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — ELECTRICAL

Mid-Continent Region

Mark Malmkar, Kearney, Nebraska

Mid-Central Region

John Hemsath, Bay Village, Ohio

North Central Region

David Capron, Suttons Bay, Michigan

CHIEF DISPATCHER

British Region

Peter Lloyd-Jones, Horrabridge, Yelverton,
Devon

Mid-Eastern Region

Charles Higdon, Toms River, New Jersey
John Volger, Point Pleasant, New Jersey

Northeastern Region

Kenneth Faulter, Phippsburg, Maine

Niagara Frontier Region

Grant Knowles, Nepean, Ontario

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Paul Evans, Feering, Colchester, Essex
Patrick Grace, Arlesford, Colchester, Essex

Mid-Continent Region

David Heinsohn, Elmdale, Kansas

Midwest Region

Jeffrey Jarr, Chicago, Illinois

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Mike Hughes, Worthing, West Sussex

Mid-Continent Region

Robert Spurgat, St. Joseph, Missouri

Mid-Central Region

Paul Musselman, Highland Heights,
Kentucky

Pacific Northwest Region

Geoffrey Bunza, Portland, Oregon

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

British Region

Terry Wynne, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire

Mid-Continent Region

David Heinsohn, Elmdale, Kansas

Midwest Region

Jeremy Dummmler, Wauconda, Illinois

North Central Region

David Capron, Suttons Bay, Michigan

AP QUESTIONS

If you have questions about the Achievement Program or requirements, start with your local or Region AP manager. If you still have questions, contact Frank Koch at fkoch@hotmail.com. If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

MMR GROUP

All Master Model Railroaders (MMR) are invited to work with other MMRs by contacting C.J. Riley, MMR, at cjriley42@yahoo.com.

MMRs: Master Model Railroader shirts and extra patches are available by contacting HQ in Soddy Daily, TN

Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's exactly what happens when you participate in the National Model Railroad Association's Achievement Program. One Merit Award here, another there, and pretty soon you're on your way to becoming a Master Model Railroader. All the while learning and having a ton of fun.

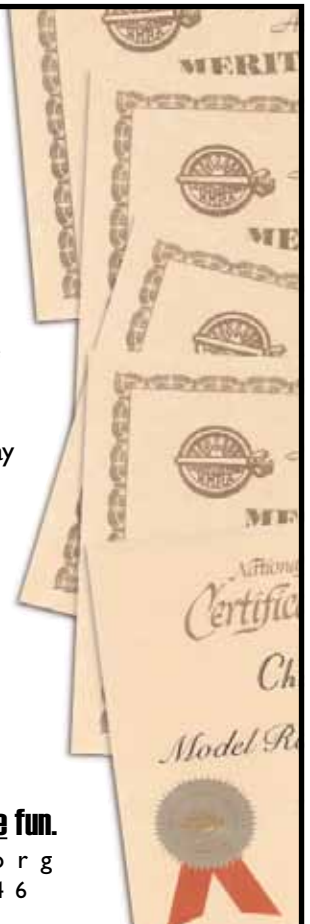
The Achievement Program is modelers helping modelers become better modelers and get the most out of their hobby. And it's yet another benefit of NMRA membership.



Visit www.nmra.org.
Then improve your
skills. And your hobby.

We make it even more fun.

www.nmra.org
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BRUCE PETRARCA EARNS MMR # 574

Having heard lots of MMR stories over the years, I feel my story is unique. If you think your story is special, it is. Earn your MMR and tell yours. Please. I want to hear it.

I'm not a life-long model railroader. I never worked for a railroad. I wasn't even a railfan for most of my life. But, I'm getting ahead of the story.

Today, I'm building an HO layout that models a railroad I dealt with on a daily basis in California. When I was in school, I saw the Santa Maria Valley Railroad as a nuisance — tracks in the street and grade crossing bells ringing when I was trying to get to class. Do I look at it differently now? Yes.

I had O-27 toy trains as a kid. I inherited a Marx set early on, and Santa brought me a red Lionel NW2 for my fifth Christmas. The trains didn't make a family move when I was in high school.

I got interested in electronics early: got my ham license when I was 12 (WN0DZJ). I still have an extra class license (KX0E).

Boy Scouts was a major part of my developing years.

When I learned of the NMRA Achievement Program and the MMR certification, it reminded me of the Eagle Scout program.

Eagle required 21 merit badges in lots of things: some were required and some were choices. I chose some things that didn't necessarily interest me as a 12-year-old: book binding, for example. But each merit badge was its own adventure.

Similarly, the MMR requires seven certificates, some of which involve things that I wouldn't ordinarily do.

I built styrene models as a kid. You could tell mine because they always had a least one of my fingerprints in glue on the most visible portion of the exterior. The paint job would be terrible, if I even bothered to paint them. Mostly, I chose models where the styrene color was correct for the finished model.

I earned a BS in electronics (Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo) and a MS in engineering (University of California Santa Barbara). Also, got my private pilot's license at this time.

I then followed a career in the aerospace and computer industries. As that wound down, I became a business owner.

In 1998, I was one of the founding members of the PebbleCreek Model Railroad Club. Without PCMRC, I probably wouldn't be a model railroader today, certainly not an MMR.

When (the late) Gary Gelzer moved to PebbleCreek, he joined the club. A NMRA OpSig member, Gary introduced me to the NMRA and to operations, as well as his GNC railroad.

The PCMRC introduced me to the concept of DCC, which led to my starting Litchfield Station (litchfieldstation.com) in 2000 as a DCC decoder installation business. A decade later, when I sold the business, it was arguably the second largest business in the DCC niche market in the world. After I sold Litchfield Station, I joined the staff of Model Railroad Hobbyist magazine, as their DCC columnist. Again, I'm ahead of myself.

My first encounter with the NMRA was the PSR convention in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 1999. I joined then. Although AP awards were mentioned at meets, I didn't see anything in the AP program for me. So, I wasn't thinking about requirements or signatures or such.

I began giving clinics about DCC at every level: National, Divisional, and Regional. I gave clinics for some clubs.

I must pause at this point and discuss my wonderful spouse, Linda. Not only does she support my hobby, she aided and abetted it, working with me at Litchfield Station and giving clinics at events from NMRA National Conventions to club meets. She even suggested and co-authored an article

with me on contingency planning for model railroaders.

About 2009, Gary Gelzer suggested that I was almost qualified for Chief Dispatcher. My response was something like, "Huh? What's that?" He helped me reconstruct the signatures I hadn't collected along the way. I did the planning and the string diagrams and sent in the forms. My AP career was started.

Then, I realized that I had Author done. I did the paperwork and sent in that package.

At the meets, we were told that judging contests would make us better modelers. So, I started judging.

The Modeling With The Masters program led to a three-day weekend structures clinic led by Fran and Miles Hale. There, the attendees learned the difference in goals between Contest Judging and AP Evaluation. This weekend set up my Structures Certificate, even though I wouldn't finish it for a couple of years.

With more clinics and some judging, the Association Volunteer Certificate came in focus. Once I reduced the task to a spreadsheet, what I needed to do to become clearer. My target was set, and there was a plan. I earned the certificate in 2015.

I did Cars in 2016.

Ironic isn't it? A graduate engineer, I was to finish the engineering certificates last. As it was, I needed parts of three layouts and trackwork on a separate board to meet all the requirements.

Along the way, I had decided that model railroading was not, for me, a competitive sport. Contests are fine for some. I made it a priority to not ever enter a contest on the way to MMR. While you can earn a Merit Award either place, Contest Judging and AP Evaluation have different goals.

Is getting your MMR hard? We tend to make it harder than it needs to be, but it does require focus. The sooner you focus, the sooner your personal path will show itself.

I've heard MMRs joke that MMR stands for Mediocre Model Railroader. Well, let's see: only half of the cars or structures I built even need to earn a Merit Award, which means a "C" grade or better. That sounds pretty mediocre to me. What this simplistic view is missing is the path necessary to getting so many little divergent things accomplished.

So, how does this relate to you? Start now collecting signatures for everything you do — clinics, articles, volunteering, operating, and so forth. Get organized. Plan. Limit the scope of your projects. Re-plan. Think. Re-think. Use your resources. Get smart.

If you have at least a small layout or a few modules, you may have already done the work to be an MMR. Your dues are already paying for the program. Why don't you get what you are paying for and have earned? You, too, can be an MMR.

**AP Certificates
Bruce Petrarca**

**Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Author
Association Volunteer
Master Builder – Structures
Master Builder – Cars
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**



MIKE MACKEY EARNS MMR #573

Remember visiting the toy section of the Sears and Roebuck store in Tyler, Texas, during Christmastime at the age of 8. The over-and-under Marx train set was the toy of my dreams! The Southern Pacific steam engine with five cars and a red caboose that I found under the tree Christmas morning started me on a journey that I'm still enjoying today.

Like most young boys, the trains at the crossing fascinated me, and I never missed an opportunity to wave at the conductors or the engineers of passing trains. With my hometown being the corporate head-

quarters of the St. Louis & Southwestern Railroad (aka Cotton Belt), and the fact that Tyler was situated on the intercontinental main line, I had plenty of chances to wave to trains passing through town. The famous Blue Streak Merchandise blasted in and out of our city on its daily trek from Chicago to Los Angeles. That train would later be known as the "Fastest Freight Train on the Rails!" Tyler had more than 120 trains passing through on the main line on any given day. Add to that the Missouri Pacific also had service to Tyler, and you can see how I was in "train heaven."

I started building model cars and planes as an early teen — 113 in one year to be exact — but once built, they just sat there. I wanted something with some movement and action. I modeled trains in between high school athletics and Boy Scouts. I attained my Eagle Scout rank at 16, and once that goal was achieved, I had more time to devote to hobbies. I returned to model railroading and found a local hobby shop around the time I was 16 or 17 that really devoted a lot of inventory to model railroading. While there one day, I picked up an application for the NMRA. I still have that application sitting on my desk. (I've wondered if National would accept the \$200 life membership listed on the application if I were to send it in?) Needless to say, it's obvious I didn't send it in back then. I wish I would have. I have no doubt that I would have gained much more from model railroading through the years if I had.

College, a new marriage, kids, and life, plus a five-year stint working for the SSW/SP, got in the way of any serious attempts to build a railroad. There were no clubs in the area, but an occasional visit to Dallas gave me the chance to visit Bobbye Hall's Hobby House — a mecca for model railroaders and the source of Hallmark brass locomotives. Little did I know that, while I was there, I was rubbing shoulders with men that I would learn were legends in our hobby. Names like John Allen, Bill McClanahan, Jim Findley, and Cliff Robinson were regulars at the store. That hobby store, and Mrs. Hall, helped more railroaders than anyone can imagine and ever know. I'm so grateful that I had the chance to experience time spent there before it closed.

I moved to Dallas and joined a local club where I met several modelers who became lifelong friends, and we remain friends today. Chief among them is a dear friend, Mr. Pat McCarthy. These men have been instrumental in my achieving this honor. A

business career led me away from the hobby for a number of years until a friend suggested a return to model railroading. I'm glad I took the advice, because I joined a well-known club in Fort Worth that held an annual train show. While working the show, I was approached by a gentleman about joining the NMRA. Larry Swigert, Regional Membership Chairman for the Lone Star Region. He worked his magic, and ten minutes later, I was the newest member of the Lone Star Region. An upcoming convention had me assisting where I could and meeting scores of new friends in our hobby. During the convention, Duane Richardson (Contest Room Chairman), urged me to enter some of my work. I was very reluctant because I was not that confident in my skills and didn't know if my work would measure up. I took home first and second place in diesel locomotives and also a Merit Award for a building I entered. I also gained a huge helping of confidence. Duane's mentoring has helped me make tremendous strides as a modeler, and for that, I am very grateful. That was 2013. Since then, I have worked on my AP Certificates, along with involvement in OpSig, our local Division, our Region, and the annual Regional Conventions. I've been fortunate enough to operate on layouts of world-class proportion — layouts that I've seen in magazines and on videos for years. I owe it all to the NMRA. This year, I am co-chair for our convention to be held in Arlington, Texas, this June. I'd invite you to attend by visiting www.daylightexpress.com.

I've also begun building layouts for individuals and museums across the country. Who would have thought that Sears and Roebuck toy train could have led to this? I find it ironic that little Southern Pacific train set would have had such an impact on my life, career, and friendships. I am very blessed and grateful to the "World's Greatest Hobby."

**AP Certificates
Mike Mackey**

**Golden Spike
Association Volunteer
Chief Dispatcher
Master Builder – Scenery
Model Railroad Author
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Cars**