

# NMRA BULLETIN

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**Have you changed your address or  
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2023 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:  
Dallas, Texas August 20 - 26, 2023 (<https://www.2023texasexpress.com/>)  
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328  
423-892-2846 • [ntsreg@nmra.org](mailto:ntsreg@nmra.org)  
• 2024—Long Beach, California

rev 07/23/2022

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT JUNE 2022 GOLDEN SPIKE

#### Northeastern Region

Douglas Margison, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Mike Bennette, Nine Mile Falls, Washington  
Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho

#### Pacific Southwest Region

Tim Gilliland, Yuma, Arizona

#### Sunshine Region

Brandon McKenny, Tallahassee, Florida  
Herb Schneider, Cape Coral, Florida  
Mark Wilson, N. Fort Myers, Florida

### MASTER BUILDER - CARS Australasia Region

Ross Balderson, Bungendore, New South Wales, Australia

#### North Central Region

Milt Moore, Gibraltar, Michigan

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Rick Martin, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho  
Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho

### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho

### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

#### Mid-Eastern Region

Roger Bir, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
William Howard, Hamilton, New Jersey

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Mike Bennette, Nine Mile Falls, Washington  
Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho  
Tracy Stutler, Sagle, Idaho

### MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

#### Australasia Region

Ross Balderson, Bungendore, New South Wales, Australia

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

#### Australasia Region

Ross Balderson, Bungendore, New South Wales, Australia

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Mike Bennette, Nine Mile Falls, Washington  
Robert Ray, Meridian, Idaho

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#### Pacific Southwest Region

Mona Raymer, La Crescenta, California

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#### Mid-Eastern Region

Kevin O'Connor, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Rick Martin, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho  
Ed Molenkamp, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
Peter Ulvestad, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada

#### Rocky Mountain Region

Thomas May, Durango, Colorado

#### Sunshine Region

Robert Leonard, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

### MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

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Kevin O'Connor, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

#### Pacific Southwest Region

Jeff Cauthen, San Diego, California  
Jeffrey Smith, Lakewood, California

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Neil Maldeis, MMR®, Ely, Minnesota

### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® 712 Ross Balderson, Bungendore, New South Wales, Australia

AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP program or requirements, start with your local or Region. If you still have questions, contact Frank Koch at [fjkoch@hotmail.com](mailto:fjkoch@hotmail.com). If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

THE

# NMRA MODEL RAILROAD DIRECTORY

IS ONLINE and

## READY TO USE!

Whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more. And it's only available to NMRA members.

Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org), log in as a member, and click on "Model RR Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout



Join in the fun!

We make it more fun!

## DAVID HAMILTON

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #703

**M**y interest in trains began as a youngster growing up in Chicago in the 1950s. One of my first memories was standing in a Sears Roebuck parking lot with my grandfather when a Chicago & North Western steam-powered commuter train passed by on C&NW's North Line right-of-way. Around the same time, my father began building a 4x8 layout in our dining room, featuring an American Flyer Silver Streak passenger train. It wasn't long before we moved the original layout into our basement, and it quickly tripled in size. I realize now that my father was the model railroader, and my brother and I were just going along for the ride.

I soon had a newspaper route and income to spend on American Flyer freight cars and accessories. But as often happens, interests change, and I abandoned the hobby until after marriage. Even though our first home was too small for a layout, I started to visit hobby shops and would occasionally pick up an HO freight car or locomotive. In 1977, we finally bought a house with a basement. The seller happened to be a model railroader, and he sold me the lumber from his layout, which unfortunately had just been disassembled. I used the plans from



an article in *Model Railroader* and began to build my first HO model railroad.

I joined the NMRA in the early 1970s and attended a Regional convention in Rosemont, Illinois, where I met Tom Hoffman, a member of the Fox Valley Division. He invited me over to see and operate his layout, and those visits gave me a new purpose for building my railroad. Tom was also a Fox Valley Division officer. With his encouragement, I began

volunteering in Fox Valley activities, including High Wheeler, layout tours and clinics, eventually serving as the Division Clerk/Treasurer.

Around this time, we moved to a different home where I built a 20x25-foot railroad, which was more operations-oriented. Tom encouraged me to become more focused on a specific region. I decided to concentrate on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy along the Mississippi River, which eventually became the "Burlington River Division," running between East Dubuque, Illinois, and LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

In 1992, we left the Chicago area and moved to Plymouth, Minnesota. I became a member of the Twin Cities Division of the Thousand Lakes Region and started building my third and current model railroad. I became the Clerk for the TCD and finally qualified for the Association Volunteer AP. I also served as the Clinic Coordinator for the NMRA 1999 National Convention in St. Paul.

Around this time, I was invited to join an operating group called the Tuesday Night Roundhouse and met John Hotvet, MMR®. John asked if I would be interested in filling a vacancy for the TLR Treasurer position, which ultimately led to my earning the Association Official AP. At this point, I decided to jump into

## The *NMRA TURNTABLE* makes the internet a little smaller.

If you're spending hours doing internet video searches, you're wasting valuable modeling time! The *NMRA Turntable* brings the best of the best model railroading videos to your mailbox every month. It's one more benefit of NMRA membership!

**If you're not receiving it, contact NMRA HQ and make sure they have your current email address!**



the Achievement Program, and over the next three years, I qualified for the Chief Dispatcher, Electrical, and Civil certificates.

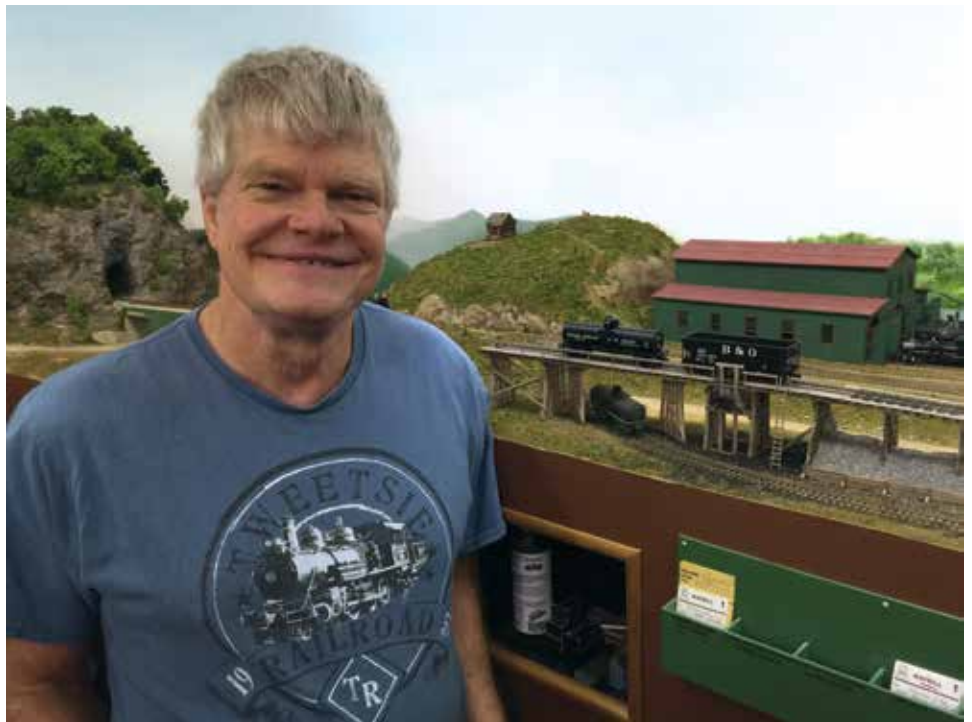
During the next eight years, I concentrated on operations, both on my railroad and others. I also enlarged my railroad to encompass the entire lower level of our home to its current size of 1,000 square feet. And then came COVID-19. All local operating sessions came to a halt, and I suddenly had a *lot* of spare time on my hands. My first thought was to get serious and complete the requirements for the Scenery certificate. Even though most of the railroad was already scenicked, I spent the summer of 2020 enhancing the scenery on a large portion of the layout. I received the Scenery certificate in September 2020, which left the dreaded (to me) Cars certificate.

Even though I had done a lot of kitbashing, I had attempted very little scratchbuilding. Another fellow modeler, Tom Gasior, MMR®, mentioned a series of clinics hosted by the Lone Star Region on scratchbuilding flatcars he had followed, which was the incentive I needed. I downloaded their clinic PDF and spent the next several months working on the most difficult modeling task I have ever attempted. I completed the requirements for Master Builder – Cars in March 2022.

It has taken me 25 years to achieve Master Model Railroader® status, and I'm very grateful for the support I've had along the way to achieve this goal. I'd like to thank Lester Breuer, MMR®, for his technical assistance, and Gerry Leone, MMR®, Neil Maldeis, MMR®, and Alan Saatkamp, MMR®, for their continued encouragement. Thanks also to my wife Karen for sharing my interest in both model and real trains for more than 50 years. I've learned so much from different aspects of the hobby and made many good friends along the way. It's been a long journey, and I've enjoyed every minute of it.

**Certificates Earned**  
**David Hamilton, MMR® #703**  
**Master Builder – Cars**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Civil**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Association Official**  
**Association Volunteer**

## MMR EARNED



### DEAN SMITH

EARNs

**MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #708**

**U**nlike many model railroaders, my earliest roots in our wonderful hobby came not from trains but planes. My dad built and flew remote-control airplanes back in the early 1960s. Some of my earliest memories are watching (and later helping) him cut and pin balsa wood parts to plans, covering lightweight frames with fabric, and installing the now-primitive electronics. I loved accompanying him when he flew his planes. I wound rubber bands that powered the early solenoid servos and even sometimes got to take the controls. In the days before citizens band radio, Dad needed a short-wave license to fly. He taught me Morse Code, and, while I am no longer proficient, I will always remember the sentence, “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.” Dad’s favorite plane, Blue Bird, hangs from my basement ceiling.

I soon expanded my modeling career with plastic car, tank, and airplane models. When I showed Dad my first model — slapped together one day after school — he gazed at it for several minutes, slowly turning it to view all sides, and then passed honest judgment: “Son, it looks like you put the glue on with a

two-by-four.” Dad and I knew I could do better, and I learned to take pride in my work from him. Dad was definitely a perfectionist. One of my mom’s favorite sayings was, “A perfectionist takes great pains and then gives them to other people.” Today, a photo of Dad overlooks my modeling area to ensure I go easy on the glue.

My bedroom shelves were soon lined with models, and my ceiling was crowded with airplanes hanging from a thread. Yet, it bothered me that my growing collection of models, unlike Dad’s planes, sat gathering dust. I can thank my friend, Bill Albert, for introducing me to a new hobby: model railroading. We were 12 when he asked for my help with his fledgling 4x8 HO-scale layout. My first experience with model railroading was lying on my back on a basement floor with a soldering iron and flashlight under a sheet of plywood while Bill propped up one end with his shoulder. Benchwork came later. As soon as we successfully ran his first train around a loop of track, I was hooked. I now saw a way to give my models a way to earn their keep. Unfortunately, Bill’s career as a model railroader proved to be short-lived. This had something to do with him deciding to light a passenger car on fire while driving it around his layout in the dark. The resulting melted plastic on his mother’s laundry spelled the end

of the hobby for him, but I was just getting started.

At 14, I built my first layout in a corner of my parents' basement. I modeled a fictitious railroad, the Cedar Ridge and Tuckahoe, hand-laying rail on Tru-Scale milled ties and feeling pretty good about my accomplishment. Two weeks later, I discovered none of my trains stayed on the track. Using my NMRA track gauge, I soon realized I had to remove all the rail and re-spike it, this time gluing it down to keep it from creeping out of gauge. This wasn't the last time I screwed up and had to redo a mistake! Also at this time, I discovered John Armstrong's book, *Track Planning for Realistic Operation*, and started running my trains more prototypically.

Like a lot of us, I took time off from railroading for college. After graduating, starting my first job, and marrying my wonderful, understanding wife Sandy, I got serious again. I joined the NMRA and began planning my new layout. I love fantasy and seriously considered modeling the narrow gauge Misty Mountain Lines of the Middle Earth Railway. While hauling mithril from the mines of Moria, shipping Old Tobey tobacco from the fields of the Shire, and sup-

plying beer to the Prancing Pony in Bree remains a great idea, my love of history ultimately led me to decide to model a prototype railroad. While leafing through *Model Railroader* magazines for inspiration, I came across Jim Kelly's "Railroads You Can Model" article on the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad. This 66-mile narrow gauge short line had everything I wanted in a model railroad. I found my prototype! After moving to a larger house, I set out to bring my ET&WNC-Vida Division Railroad to life. I soon met John and Sharon Waite and, along with many other very special people, helped form the ET&WNC RR Historical Society in 1988. Sandy and I recently returned from the 32nd convention and, as always, had a wonderful time.

I live in rural south-central Missouri, which is not exactly a mecca for model railroading. An elderly woman who lived along the prototype's main line was once asked why the ET&WNC was so deeply loved by the people of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She paused a moment before replying, "Well, it's because it's the onliest railroad around." I often felt my railroad was in the same boat, and for years I was

pretty much a lone wolf when it came to working on my railroad. In fact, the majority of my operating crew are not model railroaders. Ranging in age from 10 to 75, they simply enjoy bringing the Vida Division to life. I now find the friendships I made, and continue to make, both in the NMRA and the Historical Society, are my favorite part of the hobby. As I continue to meet more like-minded folks through the NMRA, I now know the Vida Division is not so isolated after all.

One of these special friends is Brad Slone, MMR®, currently the president of the Mid-Continent Region. When I met Brad in 1986, it was the first time his parents let him drive by himself after dark. Brad developed into a skilled modeler and earned his MMR® several years ago. He remains a good friend and is a long-time member of my operating crew. It was Brad who suggested that I look into earning my MMR®. He assured me I was already well on my way — except for the paperwork. COVID finally provided the catalyst to get started. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed documenting my work, as it also serves as a historical record of my railroad. While most of my Achievement Certificates are dated on

## THREE BIG BENEFITS OF NMRA MEMBERSHIP:



Those are the discounts that manufacturers and hobby shops in our Partnership Program are giving us right now. Partners like Micro-Mark®, Model Rectifier Corporation®, Badger Airbrush®, Unreal Details®, Hot Wire Foam Factory®, Logic Rail™ Technologies. And over 30 more companies. It's savings that can actually pay for your membership!

And are you taking advantage of our other big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

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**We make it more fun.**

the same day, the work that went into them spanned several decades.

I earned my first Merit Award in 1984 for the LMS Lumber Company, named for my dad and based on an E. L. Moore structure from my first *Model Railroader* (April 1973). I earned another Merit Award, along with Best Freight Car and the narrow-gauge Light Rail Award for Hopper Car No. 12 at the 2017 Mid-Continent Regional Convention. Did I mention I have good friends in the NMRA? I was busy thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail in 2017, and Brad “borrowed” the car and entered it in the contest on my behalf. Since he didn’t tell me he was doing this, to “make up” for it, he borrowed my entire unfinished hopper car fleet and presented me with the completed models at my welcome home party.

My AP documentation began with Model Railroad Engineer – Civil, as I had already scratchbuilt 45 turnouts, a diamond crossing, and a gauge separation turnout. I drew an accurate scale drawing of the Vida Division, including all the required information. When Marty Vaughn, MMR®, Allen Pollock, and Brad Slone came for the official evaluation, I presented them with written documentation of my work and showed it to them in person. Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical logically followed, as I also had everything already completed for it. I enjoy scratchbuilding structures and completed the requisite number prior to Marty, Allen, and Brad’s visit. Since I usually build my structures into scenes, an on-site evaluation was required. I aimed to be thorough in my documentation to assist the evaluators and establish a record of each model’s construction. I earned five merit awards for Master Builder – Structures to go with my original award from 1984, and my additional structures passed muster. Since model railroad cars are portable, I entered several in the model contest at the Mid-Continent/Lone Star Regional Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Working on your MMR® indeed makes you a better modeler. Before entering them in the contest, I updated several cars, adding more complete brake detail, uncoupling bars, and other details to make them more accurate. I earned a sufficient number of Merit Awards to complete Master Builder – Cars and brought home a few plaques as well. I want to thank Marty Vaughn and Duane

Richardson, MMR®, for the helpful clinic on the Achievement Program they presented at this convention.

My good friend, Sharon Waite, helped me overcome my fear of scenery, and it is now one of my favorite parts of the hobby. My layout contains more than enough scenicked area to meet Master Builder – Scenery requirements. Compiling the photos showing my progress from benchwork to completed scenes was an enjoyable, nostalgic exercise. Operating sessions on the Vida Division began as soon as hardshell was complete in 2002, so documenting the requirements for Chief Dispatcher presented little problem. While I had adequate operation time logged on the Vida Division, my involvement in the NMRA has opened up many opportunities to operate on other layouts. I am now a regular operator on the club layout in Mexico, Missouri, and have been lucky enough to operate on layouts in Tulsa, Texas, Chicago, St. Louis, and Tennessee. A growing number of model railroaders are now expressing interest in making the journey to operate on the Vida Division — another benefit of being involved in the NMRA.

As a retired educator (and, admittedly, a bit of a ham), I find I really enjoy creating and presenting clinics. I presented my first on the operations of the Vida Division at a Regional convention in 2015. This event led to me repeating the clinic at the ET&WNC RR Historical Society convention and then to preparing an article for the 2016 *HOn3 Annual*. Since then, I have presented clinics at several Narrow Gauge and NMRA conventions, as well as on NMRAX. I am excited about the growth of virtual presentations, which allow information sharing all over the world. I am scheduled to present several clinics at Gateway 2022 in St. Louis and the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Tacoma, Washington. This, along with several published articles over the years, gave me adequate points to qualify for Model Railroad Author. Presenting a clinic more than once counts toward Association Volunteer. By also volunteering at conventions and teaching Railroading Merit Badge to many Boy Scouts, I qualified for Association Volunteer. I am also forming a youth operating group on the Vida Division to help bring more young people into the hobby.

In any endeavor as major as MMR®, no one gets here by themselves. First, I want to thank Mom and Dad, who instilled a love of modeling and a sense of pride in a job well done. I want to thank my friends in the NMRA, the ET&WNC RR Historical Society, and the operators on the Vida Division, especially Brad Slone, Bob Woodley, and Tom “Short Rail” McKenzie. Brad, Marty Vaughn, and Allen Pollock spent a full day evaluating my layout and providing constructive input. I am grateful for all the friendships I have made through my involvement with the NMRA, and I have been made to feel welcome in the homes of many fellow modelers. I am also grateful for the help I have received along the way, and I look forward to giving back and assisting other modelers with their modeling journeys. I want to thank my children, Greg, Stephen, and Becky, who all insist that they never realized until their teenage years that not everyone was lucky enough to have a model railroad in their basement. Stephen and Becky are both experienced operators. Stephen helps me with electronics projects, and Becky has been instrumental in creating postcards, excursion fliers, newspapers, and an upcoming coloring book for the Vida Division. While not directly part of operations, these additions help bring the Vida Division to life. Thanks also to my precious granddaughters, Rose and Marcella, for keeping me young. Rose recently informed her daddy that, while he might like trains, “No one likes trains as much as Grandpa and I like trains.” Marcella, now one year old, sits in my lap while I practice my clinic presentations. She is a very supportive and enthusiastic audience. And, finally, a special thanks to my wonderful wife Sandy, who has been with me through it all.

**Certificates Earned**  
**Dean Smith, MMR® #708**

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

## BOB COOK

EARNS

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #710

I was introduced to model railroading by my parents, who gave a Lionel 027 set to my brother and me. (My father was an HO model railroader but never set up his equipment, in my memory.) The set continued to grow through my adolescence to two 4x8 plywood panels in our basement. Growing up in Westchester, New York, and Princeton, New Jersey, I was familiar with the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Other distractions detoured me from modeling from my teen years on. I attended the U.S. Naval Academy and entered the submarine service after graduation. After four submarines, I commanded the USS SEA DEVIL (SSN-664).

My father gave my son an HO set in 1985, which rekindled my interest in the hobby, only in HO scale. The hobby was of more interest to me than it was to my son. A procession of layouts started, each more complicated than the prior, adding elevation and area. They never progressed to the point of scenery because moves dictated by the Navy led to dismantlement. None of the layouts had a specific prototype or area, although I started to collect trains from the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Along the way, I joined the NMRA and several model railroad clubs, serving as a president of the Chesapeake Bay and Western in Grafton, Virginia, and secretary of the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders (NVMR) in Vienna, Virginia. While at NVMR, I was introduced to Digital Command Control (DCC), and I was hooked. I retired from the Navy in 1998 and moved to State College, Pennsylvania, and began the process of building a large basement layout, starting with the layout room itself. I decided I needed to base the layout on a prototype and picked the Virginian Railway. I never knew of its existence until I bought a 12-pack of coal hoppers by Walthers in the hobby shop on the Norfolk Navy Base. I soon found several aspects of the Virginian that appealed to me. They ran Fairbanks-Morse Trainmasters, powered by the same diesel engine that served as an emergency power generator on board



my submarines. The Virginian ran from the coal fields in West Virginia to Norfolk, the same place my submarine berthed. They ran an overhead wire section from Roanoke to Mullens, and I had always liked the appearance of electrics. My son went to Virginia Tech, which was alongside the railroad. The Virginian was mainly single-track and used Timetable and Train Orders for control. That aspect would create challenges for operating the layout. They had a magnificent bridge over the New River at Glen Lyn, which I chose to model and make my signature structure on the layout. I would have a staging yard that combined the east and west ends. I wanted point-to-point operations and an ability to run continuously for engine break-in and speed matching. I had enough space to allow a parallel track of the Norfolk & Western. I model in HO scale the Virginian Railway in the late 1950s from Roanoke to Clarks Gap with a staging yard representing Norfolk and Mullens. While steam and passengers were gone from the Virginian by then, they still operate occasionally on my layout.

That layout progressed to the point of trackwork and electrical wiring. With the arrival of grandchildren and the desire to move with my wife to where the weather was more compatible, we moved in 2006 to Chesapeake, Virginia. I had planned to build an outbuilding, but my Homeowners Association demanded it be made out of brick. Fortunately, my

mother came through and financed a room expansion in the attic in 2009, where I now have a 34x14-foot layout. It is smaller (but with more levels) than State College, so I had to downsize portions. The track proceeds from Roanoke along the walls and a center peninsula, rising at a 2-percent maximum grade to Clarks Gap, entering the helix to allow return to Roanoke for continuous running or down another level to the staging yard. For example, it doesn't have a Norfolk & Western line except for an interchange at the east end of the Roanoke Yard. I finally progressed beyond trackwork and electrical. Yea!

I started participating in operating sessions within the Tidewater Division with the encouragement of Chuck Davis (MMR®) and Mark Nieting. That opened the door to the Achievement Program. In May 2019, Norm Garner (MMR®) and Chuck Davis came over to judge four of my structures on the layout, and each earned merit awards. My model of the Glen Lyn Bridge was included in that mix. It took four Bridgmaster kits by Three Brothers Mfg. The ends of the four bridges had to be altered to align with the bridge pilings, which skewed about 20 degrees from perpendicular to the track. I carved a piling out of pieces of balsa wood and made a mold. I got the plans for the pilings from Mike Dodd. I made three pilings from Hydrocal. The remainder of the bridge was built using

Micro Engineering viaducts. The model is more than ten feet long — about a 40-percent compression.

Included in that trip was an evaluation for a Golden Spike award, which I received in July 2019. Later that month, Norm and Chuck, along with Bill Fay, came back to the layout. I was ready for evaluation on four skills.

I earned my Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical certificate — I just needed to document the work I had already done on my layout. My layout uses a Digitrax system and is divided into blocks using BDL-168s for block detection, allowing a dispatcher to monitor a JMRI Panel Pro status. Four train order signals are spread through the layout for the dispatcher to control trains. A number of cabooses and passenger coaches have marker lights with a DCC mobile decoder and a self-designed flicker-free circuit. All turnouts are powered by Tortoise machines with powered frogs.

I earned the Master Builder – Scenery certificate, again evaluating work already on my layout. Here, I must give credit to Dale Ridgeway, MMR®, for the many bags of sedum and Mark Nieting for boxes of sagebrush I used to make trees. For Master Builder – Structures, I decided I needed something extra if I was going to earn the certificate. I'd been looking at cutting machines and laser cutters. I decided I needed something to improve the straightness of cuts and the squareness of corners. I selected a Silhouette Cameo 2. Along the way, I also got interested in 3D printing. I bought an X-pro filament printer. For the drawing, I use Autodesk Fusion, which is free for non-commercial use. While the learning curve is somewhat steep, there are many YouTube videos to guide you. I used the 3D printer to make details on the structures. My most remarkable building is the Virginian Railway's power station in Narrows, Virginia. I had to compress it to fit on the layout. 3D components on that building include the roof-top coal dust collectors, support lattice for coal piping, embossed "Virginian Railway" casting, and a ring at the top of the two smokestacks.

For Master Builder – Civil, I removed a double-track crossing over a single track, replaced it with a hand-laid one, and installed an auto-reverser circuit for the frogs. I also built a crossover and a turnout on a table "Timesaver" layout.

That certificate was followed by Chief Dispatcher in August 2019 — operating on layouts of Chuck Davis, Mark Nieting, Tom Sullivan, Mike Kipps, and mine. Through my work on the board of the Tidewater Division, involvement in hosting operating sessions, and volunteer work around the Division, I earned Association Volunteer in October 2021.

All that remained was one certificate, either Cars or Motive Power. Since I had several detailed built cars, I chose cars. I soon found that 3D-printing with a filament printer would not meet my needs, so I bought a resin printer. Shapeways printed my first 3D car. The remaining three scratchbuilt cars were my prints. I used drawings and pictures from the Norfolk & Western Historical Society to create the CAD file in Autodesk Fusion.

After many attempts, I had the cars I could present for evaluation.

I must give credit to people who inspired me: Doug Kirkpatrick (MMR®) at NVMR, Jerry Lauchle (MMR®) of State College, Pennsylvania; Norm Garner (MMR®) Chesapeake, Virginia; and Chuck Davis (MMR®) Norfolk, Virginia.

So, it's been an exciting journey, but the layout isn't done yet. Got to get back up there and finish it!

### Certificates Earned Bob Cook, MMR® #710

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

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