

# Association Official

article by *Larry Alfred, MMR*

## Introduction

Welcome back to the ongoing saga of the NMRA's Achievement Program. Over the past months we have seen how the basic skills and knowledge of the model railroading hobby have been emphasized by the AP. We have learned that building rolling stock, structures, and scenery are core skills associated with the program. In addition, we have been exposed to other requirements for civil and electrical "engineering," as well as the operational side of the hobby with Chief Dispatcher. And so, at this point, you may ask, "What is left?" The answer to that question is tied up with one of the most satisfying aspects of the model railroad-

## Certificate Requirements

To qualify for the Association Official certificate, you must have served in an office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Director, and have completed satisfactory service in one of the following:

- At least one year in office at the national level.
- At least two years in the office(s) at the regional level, of which one shall be Region President or Trustee.
- At least three years in the office(s) at the regional level, if other than Region President or Trustee.
- Division Superintendents or Directors who serve as voting members of the Region

in the positions of Region President and Region Trustee (a position on the NMRA Board of Trustees). Some regions allowed this, and, because these were both covered offices, credit can be claimed for both positions, thus requiring only one total year of service to qualify for the Association Official Certificate. Sometimes there have been questions about whether a particular office qualifies for Association Official. Generally, if holding an office makes you a voting member of a Region or National Board of Directors, then it counts.

The final requirement for this certificate is, of course, the paperwork. You must submit a Statement of Qualification (SOQ) listing the offices you held with dates (which must be a matter of public record), and containing the signature of a qualified witness to the record (usually the Region President or Secretary).

## My Experience

By way of a personal introduction, I am Larry Alfred, a lifelong model railroader and NMRA life member since 1976. Living in the Kansas City suburbs, I am a member of the Turkey Creek Division of the Mid-Continent Region. I have served in various positions at both the Division and Region levels, including six years as the Kansas City Director on the MCoR BOD, four years as MCoR Vice President, and currently as MCoR President. In 1998, I served as General Chairman for the NMRA National Convention in Kansas City. I model the Rio Grande Southern in the late 1940s in On3 and continue to try to find time to actually build a layout. As a result of my early MCoR BOD service, I was awarded the Association Official Certificate on October 14, 1986. After a certain amount of procrastination, the achievement of MMR followed on May 1, 2004.

## Motivation or — Where Should You Go From Here?

As we have seen previously, the requirements for the Official Certificate specify one to three years of service, depending on the level of that service. So, how can an NMRA member who is or wants to be active in the Achievement Program best approach



Above: As if Tony Koester has nothing better to do, he volunteers to serve the membership as the NMRA World-Wide Director. His example should be heeded by all who read this: Volunteer some of your time to the NMRA. — *Judy Koester photograph*

ing hobby and the NMRA, that is, service to the organization. The service categories of the AP program include certificates as an Official, Volunteer, and Author. The Author Certificate was covered in part two of this series in the February 2008 *SCALE RAILS* issue. This month we will look at the requirements for the Association Official Certificate and how you can qualify for it.

Board of Directors, either by election, appointment, or automatic by-law provision, shall be eligible for the certificate on the same basis as any other Region Board member (i.e. three years of service required).

Over time, there have been questions about these requirements that resulted in appropriate clarifications. For example, "satisfactory service" has been clarified to mean that you actually performed the duties of the office, not just being elected and holding the title while doing nothing. Another clarification addresses those members that, prior to January 2005, concurrently served





and satisfy these requirements? The short answer is...involvement. Step forward and volunteer to serve in an appropriate office. Often (at least in MCoR), there are BOD vacancies and an appointment to one needs only one person to request it. Attaining a national- or regional-level elected office will likely be a little more of a challenge. However, this path can only begin with the

initiative to search out and volunteer for appropriate opportunities.

I believe that some choose to avoid this certificate because of perceptions about the time necessary to satisfy requirements. If this has been the case for any of you, it's unfortunate because, although a challenge, the Official Certificate is very achievable. Unlike most of the "modeling-"related

*Above: President Mike Brestel and Membership Services Department Manager Jan Wescott work for the NMRA membership on a daily basis without pay! They are two very hard-working people. — Miles Hale, MMR photograph*

certificates where the participant's efforts are judged against general standards, the service-related certificates require only that — service. Don't be timid. By serving the organization at any level, you will be leveraging your time significantly by helping others, achieving a measure of self-satisfaction, and fulfilling AP requirements. Three for one: It doesn't get any better than this!

### Summary

I hope that this portion of "The Year of the MMR" series has explained the details of the Official Certificate and, more important, convinced you that it is very achievable. The only real requirement is the motivation to become involved in the organization and operation — the "workings" — of your region or the national level of the NMRA. To put this in a sports marketing context, "Just do it!" 🏆

*Left: Bob Amsler (legal council), and Nobby Clarke (Atlantic Director) shared some sunlight on Cajon Pass in Southern California during the NMRA convention in Anaheim. — Stephen M. Priest, MMR photograph*

