

# NMRA BULLETIN

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2019 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:

2019—Salt Lake City, UT • July 7–13, 2019 • <http://www.nmra2019slc.org>

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)

• 2020—St. Louis, MO • 2021—Santa Clara, CA • 2022—Birmingham, England

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

APRIL 2019

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##### Lone Star Region

Mike Armstrong, Keller, Texas

##### Sunshine Region

William Harding, Jacksonville, Florida  
Kenneth Hold, Jacksonville Beach, Florida

#### MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

##### Northeastern Region

Russell Norris, W. Hyannisport, Massachusetts

#### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Alex Belida, Rockville, Maryland  
Alex Mende, Grantville, Pennsylvania

##### Northeastern Region

Malcolm Houck, Maynard, Massachusetts

##### Pacific Northwest Region

George Wolfrum, Boise, Idaho

##### Rocky Mountain Region

Martin Pirnat, Durango, Colorado

#### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Brian Kampschroer, Dillsburg, Pennsylvania

##### Pacific Northwest Region

Bob Jensen, Poulsho, Washington  
George Wolfrum, Boise, Idaho

#### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

##### Lone Star Region

James Kelly, Houston, Texas

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Steve Benezra, Hillsborough, North Carolina

##### Pacific Northwest Region

Raymond Clifford, Leduc County, Alberta, Canada

##### Rocky Mountain Region

Mike May, Durango, Colorado

#### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

##### Pacific Northwest Region

Raymond Clifford, Leduc County, Alberta, Canada

#### CHIEF DISPATCHER

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Michael Garber, Midlothian, Virginia

##### Midwest Region

John Coy, Avon, Indiana

##### Sunshine Region

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Richard Webster, Port Saint Lucia, Florida

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##### Pacific Northwest Region

Bob Rorabaugh, Bothell, Washington

##### Rocky Mountain Region

Joe Costa, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Kristin Phillips, Colorado Springs, Colorado

#### MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Alex Belida, Rockville, Maryland  
Ernest Little, Manassas, Virginia

#### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® 637 Raymond Clifford, Leduc County, Alberta, Canada  
MMR® 638 Russell Norris, W. Hyannisport, Massachusetts

AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP program or requirements, start with your local or Region AP manager.

If you still have questions, contact Frank Koch at [fkoch@hotmail.com](mailto:fkoch@hotmail.com)

If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

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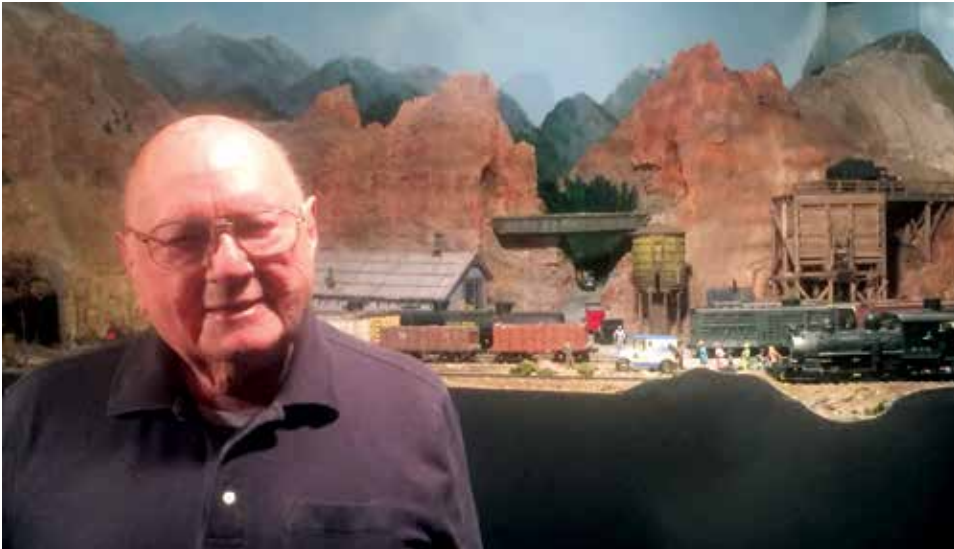
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Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org), click on "Member Home," then "Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout (as long as it's an operating home or garden railroad). Join in the fun!



We make it more fun!



### SHELLY LEVY EARNS MMR® 627

My San Juan & Tellurton Railroad is a freelance On3 layout built as a tribute to the late Don G. Brown and the late Jeff Dutton. It was the inspirations from these individuals that have kept me on track through my journey of model railroading.

Growing up through the Depression where there was not a lot of extra money, my first toy model train was a Marx train from my parents when I was 9 years old. However, my interest in trains faded as shop classes in school and working in a tool and die shop came to dominate my attention. In time, my formal education took me into the directions of engineering and applied mathematics.

It was not until the late 1950s when my wife Ginny and I were rearing our children in Kansas City that model railroading surfaced into my life. Here, we developed a lifelong friendship with Don and Sandy Brown. Don had an avid interest in trains, both prototype and models. My second foray into model railroading was in 1956 when Ginny gave me a Christmas present of an HO Varney 10-wheeler called the *Casey Jones*, Don having selected the gift. Soon afterward, there was a 12x4½-foot layout with 100 feet of track, 13 turnouts, a turntable, and a 4-track yard, with all track hand-laid with Code 100 steel rail. It was, however, without scenery because I was not yet a serious model railroader; my focus was more in the electrical engineering and track laying.

I joined the NMRA in 1961. Don asked me to do a clinic on ASTRAC, an early train control system, for the 1963 Kansas City NMRA Convention. My presentation was on electrical details, not operating benefits for model railroaders. My clinic tanked. I

avidly read the NMRA publications without attending meetings. As for my layout, my youngest son had a better idea for the control panel in 1973; the wiring was cut, but the new panel was never installed. The railroad lay dormant until 1988 when my 7-year-old grandson asked, “Grampy, can you make the trains go?”

Upon my retirement in 1990, Don’s widow, Sandy, learned that I was running trains with my grandson; she offered me Don’s narrow gauge “engines” as his legacy. Narrow gauge items were special to Don — he had operated a sideline business called San Juan Engineering, which designed and marketed On3 kits of facilities used by the San Juan Mountain railroads.

At that time, I connected with Larry Alfred, a model railroader at the engineering firm where I had worked. He suggested that I attend the local NMRA’s Turkey Creek Division meetings, as well as join an O-scale group in which he was involved. This brings me to my third iteration into model railroading: I purchased the outstanding unfinished On3 layout built by Jeff Dutton in 1998. Jeff was a professional builder of architectural models; he had an HO layout, and in 1985, he started his On3 layout representing railroading in the Colorado Mountains. At the time of his death in 1996, his unfinished layout included realistically modeled scenery of the mountains of Colorado. His trackage was hand-laid Codes 83 and 70. Two outstanding features of Jeff’s layout were his forced perspective of the detailed mountains and a 14-foot-long trestle. In 1998, Suzie Dutton, his widow, allowed his layout to be put on tour for the NMRA National Convention in Kansas City. In November of that year,

I bought Jeff’s layout, cut it into 12 segments, and moved them into my basement. The front segment contained two buildings, Leah’s Luggage, named after their daughter Leah, and Kuhn’s Feed and Grain, honoring Suzie’s parents, and those items remained with Suzie.

I had three main reasons for purchasing Jeff’s layout. First, I desired to restore his layout so that people might see his fantastic railroad. Since I had no experience in doing scenery, his layout provided a physical model to study, emulate, and be challenged to achieve scenery additions that were on par with Jeff’s. Finally, in acquiring the layout, I gained 11 years of model construction, which seemed a good strategy for a 75-year-old just getting into the hobby.

Jeff’s layout was a C-shape on three sides of a 17x25-foot room without columns. I had allocated 40x22 feet of my basement for the train room, but two columns restricted placement if his layout was to remain intact. The usual time-consuming examination of alternate plans and preference consideration lasted two years, but I loved the challenge it presented. Since Jeff had not left any documentation of his track plan, I created one by taking “aerial” photos of each segment, using those photos as a background image for CadRail to prepare a CAD drawing of the segment’s track. The overall track plan was completed by merging these drawings. Then I employed CadRail to design the future expansion: the plan is for an around-the-wall layout containing one and a half loops from the eastern to western terminals. When completed, the entrance into the layout area will be a “duck-under” with a clearance of 68 inches formed by a high steel arch bridge.

The part of Jeff’s layout that had already been completed scenery was restored in 2002, and new features and track have since been added. And so, the San Juan & Tellurton railroad is a point-to-point system designed to provide operating sessions. The era modeled is 1930–1940. Four towns are on the line: at the east end is Virginia City and Westcliffe is the western terminal. There are two routes between these towns: one passes through the town of San Juan, and the second goes via Tellurton in the lower country. The restored TC&W, Jeff’s layout, includes the town of Tellurton and the mountain scenery to the west. Expansion includes Westcliffe, a mining area, and eastbound tracks to connect (in the future) to San Juan and Virginia City

(named for my late wife as part of her legacy of encouragement, artistic advice on scenery, and allowing me to play with my trains, provided they remained downstairs). Temporary tracks provide a shunt back to Tellurton and the main line that runs beyond the trestle to permit continuous operations.

As I started to build the additions to Jeff's layout, I decided to set up modular benchwork. Since I knew my children eventually would have to remove the trains from the basement, I constructed lightweight modular benchwork using an X-support system that added strength for lightweight I-beams. I replaced the cut-out area, where Kuhn's and Leah's stores had been removed, with a scratchbuilt mercantile and a kit-built feed store, and I updated the hobo's fire camp that Jeff had built using fiber optics for the glowing embers. In some areas, I installed electronic chip-driven LED switches to control the turnouts. Westcliffe area scenery has been overhauled three times, again, emulating Jeff's techniques so that it blended well from one module to the next.

Over the past 22 years, I had not intended to work toward the MMR® achievement award when getting back into model railroading, instead seeing it as a challenge to learn new things. Over a decade ago, Ron Morse, member of Turkey Creek Model Railroad group, encouraged me to explore the MMR certification because I had shown interest in so many facets of model railroading. Although I had written articles for *Railroad Model Craftsman* and volunteered at NMRA conferences, it was camaraderie from the Turkey Creek Model Railroad group and the Narrow Gauge groups that have motivated me to continue the layout construction. I must admit that it is getting a little "tight" in the basement, but doesn't every model railroader face this problem? Last December, I finished my last Certificate on car building, and I am hoping to complete Virginia City soon and show it off to my great-granddaughters. Following that, the San Juan town will be built and track tied into Westcliffe.

**Certificates Earned**  
**Shelly Levy, MMR**  
**Model Railroad Engineer—**  
**Electrical**  
**Model Railroad Engineer—Civil**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Master Builder—Scenery**  
**Master Builder—Structures**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Master Builder—Cars**

## MMR® EARNED



### CHURELLA EARNS MMR® 630

**A**s with so many other model railroaders, my interest in trains started when I was very young. I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, where we lived half a block from the Pennsylvania Railroad branch line that once ran all the way to Cleveland — but the few trains that used the route usually ran only as far north as Mt. Vernon. When I was four years old, the PRR merged into the Penn Central, so my formative years coincided with some of the darkest hours in the history of American railroading. No matter — I still loved the times when my father took me to the Columbus Union Station. It wasn't likely that we would see a passenger train — the only possibility, Amtrak's *National Limited*, passed through in the middle of the night — but I still enjoyed looking down at the tracks and the freight trains passing slowly underneath.

Buckeye Yard opened in 1970, and I visited there many times as well. I still remember seeing locomotives turning on the big loop track adjacent to Trabue Road. Another treat was going to a local hobby shop and looking in the glass display cases at all the beautifully painted HO-scale models that looked exactly like the locomotives that I had seen. Yet, my first models were from Lionel, bought used at the Goodwill store. It was quite the roller-coaster ride, going

and not knowing whether I would find nothing at all or a treasure trove of "pre-owned" engines and cars. The best day, by far, was when I brought home the *Super Chief*, complete with shiny silver passenger cars and Alco PAs in their Warbonnet livery.

High school and college put my modeling efforts on hold — although my college years at Haverford ensured that my dorm room was less than a mile from the former PRR main line west of Philadelphia. I returned to Columbus to earn my Ph.D. in history and found that I needed a creative outlet that would give me a break from all the effort that I was putting into my research and writing. The result was my first layout, an HO-scale freelanced mixture of Santa Fe and Southern Pacific in the area around Phoenix, Arizona, and set in the steam-to-diesel transition era. It was fun to build and earned me a Golden Spike Award in 1997.

That first layout also taught me several lessons. One was that stringing together a bunch of track and buildings does not necessarily make for a layout that operates realistically. Another was that my primary modeling interest lay in structures with scenery a close second. The end of graduate school meant several moves, and that was the end of the layout. That was just as well since I had done about everything that I wanted to do with it. I was also in danger of falling into a trap that ensnares many model railroaders — I bought all the locomotives, rolling

stock, and structure kits that appealed to me without having a clear sense as to how I wanted all the elements of the layout to fit together.

I eventually returned to Columbus for a few years and married my wonderfully supportive wife, Marianne. When I was at loose ends as to where to go next, she encouraged me to put aside the structure kits and scratchbuild something. Her suggestion caused me to think back to a road trip that I had made, just after college, when I wanted to see something of the West. I spent a fair amount of time in Colorado, and that included a trip to Caboose Hobbies in Denver. There, amid the aisles of On3, Sn3, and HOn3 models, I found a (very) small section with kits from Sandy River Car Shops. They were the proverbial “box of sticks” – milled floor and roof, stripwood, some basic instructions, and not much more. But they appealed to me because they were different — in a scale/gauge combination that I had never seen before: On2.

My original idea was to use the equipment as the basis for a freelanced sugar-cane plantation railroad set in the Caribbean. I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of building the kits, and in the process, I started to learn more about the prototypes that had inspired them. Between the 1870s and the 1940s, a group of five two-foot-gauge railroads offered service at various locations in Maine, hauling everything from pulpwood to slate to summertime vacationers headed for hunting lodges. I soon acquired more Sandy River Car Shops kits and built representative examples of equipment from each of the five railroads. Then, with my wife’s encouragement, I built (from scratch) models of many of the structures that had once existed along one of those lines, the Bridgton & Saco River. The next step was to lay track and place the scratchbuilt structures on a module that replicated the town of Bridgton, Maine.

While I enjoyed building and displaying the Bridgton module, I soon decided that the Bridgton & Saco River did not offer enough operational variety to keep things interesting. So, it was on to the granddaddy of all the Maine two-footers: the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes. I started to augment my car kits with some scratchbuilt rolling stock, using styrene instead of wood. From there, it was a small step to create some styrene masters, pour some RTV rubber to make molds, and then produce urethane castings. Once assembled and painted, they

looked pretty good. Good enough, in fact, to win Merit Awards. The same was true of some of my scratchbuilt structures. In 1999, I earned my first three AP Certificates in cars, structures, and scenery.

My modeling was on hold through several more moves. In 2001, I got a job at a university in the Atlanta area. As I told our realtor, my sole requirement was a ranch house on a full basement, and he came through for us! Since then, I have been building a large On2 layout in that basement, trying to replicate the SR&RL as it existed in the summer of 1919. My goal was to make the model depict reality as accurately as possible. That provided an interesting challenge and ensured that I would not buy kits just because they appealed to me. One of my favorite parts of the layout features Strong — the principal junction on the railroad. That led to an AP award for Prototype Models in 2017.

I have shared my tips and techniques through a number of articles in a wonderful (but now sadly defunct) magazine, *The Maine Two-Foot Quarterly*, as well as in other publications. I am also fortunate that, as a historian, I have been able to write several books about railroads. All that added up to more than enough pages to qualify for the Author AP Certificate, which I earned in 2017.

Five down, and two to go! I decided to focus on the Civil and Electrical AP Certificates since those naturally complement one another. Installing background sound and structure lighting added a new dimension to my models and now enables nighttime operating sessions. A particularly fun challenge involved building three working ball signals, using linear actuator motors mounted under the benchwork. I already had a track plan, and the layout included the six required track features. The three scratchbuilt track elements also entered the mix. The turnout was no problem because ready-to-run turnouts are not available in On2. I had already built several of them, and the crossover was really nothing more than two turnouts joined together. The third element was a bit of a puzzler because none of the remaining options on the list actually appeared on the prototype Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes. Then inspiration struck when I realized that a gauntlet track was basically two non-operating stub switches, placed back-to-back, with a four-rail connecting track between them. I put all three elements on a display board to make it easier for the judges (and me!) to keep

track of everything, wired it up, and waited nervously for the three MMRs who evaluated it. With three Merit Awards and all the other required elements in hand, I now had the seven AP Certificates that I needed for MMR®.

The process of becoming a Master Model Railroader® was well worth the time and effort. It taught me many valuable lessons and helped me make and strengthen friendships with superb modelers and amazing people. Earning the AP Certificates pushed me in new directions and encouraged me to learn new skills. Even the process of documenting what I had already done was worthwhile — it showed me how all of the different elements of our wonderfully varied hobby fit together. Like so many other things in life, that documentation would have been much easier if I had just kept up with the paperwork as I went along — and that is one piece of advice that I learned from other modelers that I will pass on to everyone else who is working their way toward the requirements for MMR.

Even though an MMR is an individual achievement, no one can earn that award without the advice, support, and encouragement of many other people. The most important, by far, is Marianne Holdzkom, my beautiful, talented, and understanding spouse of 24 years. My model railroad support team included Marty Vaughn, MMR, from the Buckeye Division of the Mid-Central Region, who got me set up for judging the AP entries for Cars and Structures. For more than a decade, I have been a member of the North Atlanta Rail Barons, a fantastic group of modelers who have supported my efforts and shared their expertise with me. Howard Goodwin, MMR, one of the founding members of the group, kept reminding me that I needed to keep my paperwork up to date, and to get my models judged — thanks, Howard! Peter Youngblood, MMR, who I first met at Kennesaw Trains (now also sadly defunct) has been wonderfully supportive of my modeling. Randall Watson and Charlie Mason, MMR, have evaluated my modeling and have served as AP Chairs in the Southeastern Region and the Piedmont Division. The AP program truly does depend on their hard work and dedication — and the efforts of other officials like them.

So, what’s next? I only have seven AP Certificates, and I would like to earn the other four to make a complete set. I have accumulated nearly enough time units for the Volunteer Certificate, and I’m about half-

way to the requirements for Dispatcher. I am hoping that my desire to earn the Motive Power Certificate will give me the courage that I need to tackle one of my dream projects: scratchbuilding a steam locomotive in brass. Association Official might have to wait until I retire, but I want to challenge myself there as well and assist in the operation of the superb organization that is

the National Model Railroad Association. Along the way, I intend to give back — or perhaps the phrase is “pay it forward” — by assisting anyone who wants to improve their modeling skills, encouraging them to earn AP Certificates, and helping them fulfill the requirements for MMR. It has been a thoroughly enjoyable journey to Master Model Railroader, and I want the fun to continue!

**Certificates Earned:  
Albert Churella, MMR**

**Master Builder-Scenery  
Master Builder-Structures  
Master Builder-Cars  
Master Builder-Prototype Models  
Model Railroad Engineer-Civil  
Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical  
Model Railroad Author**

## MMR® EARNED



### DENNIS IVISON EARNS MMR® 636

I am typical of most model railroaders in that I received my first train set (Lionel, of course) on my first birthday. We set it up every Christmas, usually a week or two before Dad bought the Christmas tree so that I could “play with the train” as my dad called it. I was in elementary school when I received an Arnold N-scale train set as a birthday present. I ran that train on the carpet until the wheels were so full of fuzz that it couldn’t move anymore; so I’d take the locomotive apart, clean out the shag carpet fuzz, put it back together, and then start all over again. Taking things apart and rebuilding them was never an issue for me. I had been building stuff as far back as I can remember: Gilbert Erector Sets, American Plastic Bricks by Etsy/Halsam (before LEGOs), Lincoln Logs, and tons of plastic model kits.

By my teenage years, I was comfortable with power tools. After helping my dad with home repairs, a room addition, and a large patio construction project, he trusted

me. He recognized that I followed safety instructions, knew the proper use of tools, and had enough confidence to use anything in the garage; thus, I was allowed access to the workshop, and I quickly took advantage. Model railroad layouts soon followed, along with soapbox racers, forts, and a large pirate ship made out of produce crates that held three friends. I wish I had saved the labels off those crates!

I mowed the neighbors’ yards, cleaned pools, cleaned out garages, and scoured the neighborhood for bottles to return for the deposit. Basically, I did whatever I could to get a little cash to spend on hobbies.

I took a short hiatus during my high school years while chasing girls and racing cars. When I was 18, my parents decided to move, but I didn’t want to go with them and leave my friends. So, I stayed behind, but soon realized that I needed something to keep me busy! I rediscovered my love of model railroading and proceeded to fill the entire living room of my first apartment with a layout. No TV, no furniture, and nothing but trains! Since then, I’ve spent more than 42 years in this great hobby and haven’t stopped.

I worked for 25 years as a firefighter for the Anaheim Fire Department. During the quiet lulls in the evenings, I’d sit in the entertainment room with the rest of the crew. As they watched TV, I would build many of the structures that later appeared on my various layouts. As I set up for the evening “build,” a colleague would usually whine, “Oh man, not that infernal sanding again!” In addition to crafting structures for the layout, I also indulged in my other passions: building 35th-scale armor and 72nd-scale aircraft, both from the World War II era.

Narrow gauge railroading and early steam engines have always tugged at me. So, after retirement, and 35 years in N-scale, I gave away or sold my entire collection and made the switch to On30. My current layout

is the South Pacific Coast Line and is almost ten years old. The layout is based on the SPC, in the transition era — the transition from horse and buggy to horseless buggy.

Earning the title of Master Model Railroader® was something I aspired to achieve for nearly 15 years, but I couldn’t get past my reluctance to complete “all that paperwork!” It took the encouragement of some NMRA members and insistent friends to finally get me over that perceived hurdle. Their patience and guidance showed me that the paperwork was not as burdensome as I thought and was worth the effort to gain the honor of the title and to be included in the same class as the icons of this hobby. My ambition now is to help and support any friends and members who are interested in becoming an MMR®. Because this is a road best traveled together, I am an MMR today because of friends and supporters who pushed me along the path. Now it’s time to return the favor.

I am grateful for the support and love of my family, my brilliant and lovely wife of 33 years Christine, and our two sons who have grown to become outstanding young men. Of course, I must thank my parents, who encouraged me and allowed me to make mistakes, to learn along the way, and to “get in there and get dirty.” I’d especially like to thank my father, who taught me how to work with tools and my hands. If you can imagine it, you can build it.

**Certificates Earned  
Dennis Ivison, MMR**

**Master Builder- Scenery  
Master Builder- Cars  
Master Builder Structures  
Model Railroad Engineer- Civil  
Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical  
Association Volunteer  
Model Railroad Author**