

NMRA BULLETIN

DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM MANAGERS

Chief Administrative Officer —
Jenny Hendricks
P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
O: 423-892-2846 Fax: 423-899-4869
e-mail: hq@nmra.org

Library - 423-892-2846 or nmraops@nmra.org

Education Department Manager —
Bruce De Young (HO, HO3)
Holly, MI 48442
H: 248-369-8745 C: 201-803-9766
e-mail: educate@nmra.org

Howell Day Museum Committee Chair —
Allen Pollock
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0243
H: 573-619-8532
e-mail: museum@nmra.org

Information Technology Department —
Ben Sevier
Kailua Kona, HI 96740
(808) 747-6824
e-mail: itmanager@nmra.org

Development & Fund Raising Department
Manager — Alan Anderson
West Jordan, UT 84088 H: 801-613-0801
e-mail: fund@nmra.org

Marketing Consultant
Christina Ganzer Zambri
Somerset, NJ 08873 H: 732-609-5221
e-mail: marketing@nmra.org

Meetings and Trade Show Department
Manager — Bob Amsler
Saint Louis, MO 63111-2338
H: 314-606-6118
Fax: 314-754-2688
e-mail: conv@nmra.org

Publications Department Manager —
Don Phillips
Mason, OH 45040-2269
H: 513 226-2233
e-mail: pubs@nmra.org

Standards and Conformance Department
Manager—Carl Smeigh
Wesley Chapel, FL 33543
H: 727-512-9729
e-mail: tech-chair@nmra.org

**Have you changed your address or
other membership information?
Notify Headquarters**

**e-mail: hq@nmra.org
Phone: 423-892-2846 (8am–4pm ET)
Mail: P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy TN 37384-1328**

REGION PRESIDENTS

Australasian Region—Graham Young
12 Hickory Court, Buderim QLD 4556
H: 61 7 5479 0339 M: 61 418 364 375
e-mail: president@nmra.org.au

British Region—Charles Hendy
39 Dartmouth Road
Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 0DD
United Kingdom +44 7940032509
e-mail: brprez@nmra.org

European Region—Alain Kap, MMR® (HO,
HO3, On3/30)
Kammerforststrasse 3a
D-54439 SAARBURG, Germany
Phone: +49 6581-603045
Mobile: +352 691-325089
e-mail: erprez@nmra.org

Lone Star Region— Donna Orr
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087
e-mail: lsrprez@nmra.org
H: (972) 342-8598

Mid-Central Region—David Neff
5479 Chestnut Hill Dr., Willoughby, OH 44094
H: (440) 269-1229 e-mail: mcrprez@nmra.org

Mid-Continent Region — Brad Slone MMR®
PO Box 313, Dixon, MO 65459.
H: 573 308 7144
e-mail: mcorprez@nmra.org

Mid-Eastern Region — Kurt Thompson,
MMR®
350 Ternwing Drive, Arnold, MD 21012
410-507-3671 (cell)
e-mail: merprez@nmra.org

Midwest Region—Steve Studley
5115 N Echo Bend, Bloomington IN 47404
H: (812) 876-9726 e-mail: mwrprez@nmra.org

Niagara Frontier Region—Richard Hatton
205 Country Lane, Stayner ON L0M 1S0
705-428-9997 e-mail: nfprez@nmra.org

North Central Region—Scott Kremer
42490 Ravina Ct, Northville, MI 48168
H: (734) 420-2314 e-mail: ncrprez@nmra.org

Northeastern Region—John Doehring
34 Hadley Rd, Pepperell, MA 01463
H: (978) 877-9148 e-mail: nerprez@nmra.org

Pacific Coast Region—Frank Markovich,
MMR®
1904 Chula Vista Dr., Belmont, CA 94002-3622
H: (408) 505-2727 e-mail: pcrprez@nmra.org

Pacific Northwest Region—Jeff Herrmann
PO Box 1012, Rathdrum, ID 83858
H: (714) 651-3903 e-mail: pnrprez@nmra.org

Pacific Southwest Region—Pat Raymer
2655 El Caminito, La Crescenta, CA 91214
H: (818) 957-7351 e-mail: psrprez@nmra.org

Rocky Mountain Region—Lowell Didas
4894 S. Forest Circle, Taylorsville, UT 84129
801-759-7829. e-mail: rmprez@nmra.org

Southeastern Region—Larry Burkholder
206 Coyatee View, Loudon, TN 37774-2172
H: (865) 408-9903 e-mail: serprez@nmra.org

Sunshine Region—Jeff Guzowski
4658 N Candlewood Dr.
Beverly Hills, FL 34465
e-mail: ssrprez@nmra.org

Thousand Lakes Region—Jay Manning
7100 Stoney Creek St, Sioux Falls, SD 57106
e-mail: tlrprez@nmra.org

NMRA Canada President—Ed Molenkamp
Edmonton Alberta T5M 2M9
e-mail: presca@nmra.org

**Region Secretaries: send all
changes in Region officer infor-
mation to the NMRA Secretary:
secy@nmra.org.**

2022 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
St. Louis, Missouri August 7 – 14, 2022
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org
• 2023—Dallas, Texas

rev 6/29/21

THE 2021 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

By PETER R MAGOUN, MMR®

OFFICERS & BOARD

John Stevens
Gerry Leone, MMR®, HLM
James Gore, PhD, MMR®
Robert Hamm MMR®
Jack Hamilton, MMR®
Rick Coble

FOR SERVICE AS

VP Administration
VP Special Projects, CSRM Exhibit
At-Large North American District Director
Eastern District Director
At-Large Worldwide Director
Secretary

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Robert Amsler
Carl Smeigh
Frank Koch, HLM
Bruce DeYoung, MMR®
Ben Sevier
Christopher Palermo
Didrik Voss, MMR®
Don Phillips

General Counsel, Meetings & Trade Shows
Standards & Conformance
CFO, AP Chair, CSRM Exhibit
Education Department
Information Technologies
Intellectual Property Counsel
Standards & Conformance
Publisher

HDM/CSRM

Allen Pollock, HLM
Charles Getz, HLM
Robert Brown, MMR® (HLM)
Mike Brestel, HLM

HDM Committee Chair
California State Railroad Museum Exhibit
California State Railroad Museum Exhibit
California State Railroad Museum Exhibit

OTHER SERVICE

Gordon Robinson, MMR®
Clark Kooning, MMR®, HLM

NMRAX, virtual conventions
Modeling With the Masters® Program

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!



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT MAY 2021

GOLDEN SPIKE

Lone Star Region

Dean Ferris, Decatur, Texas
Greg McComas, Keller, Texas
Gert Muller, Murphy, Texas

Mid-Central Region

John Witt, Rocky River, Ohio

Mid-Eastern Region

Fredrick Humphrey, Chesapeake, Virginia
Richard Steinmann, Reston, Virginia
John Swift, Toms River, New Jersey

Pacific Southwest Region

Steven Bradley, Oceanside, California
Rudy Spand, San Diego, California

Southeastern Region

Rob Wright, Flat Rock, North Carolina

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

Sunshine Region

Al Sohl, MMR, Port St. Lucie, Florida

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Niagara Frontier Region

Gary Reynolds, East Amherst, New York

Northeastern Region

Chuck Diljak, Wayne, New Jersey

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

Lone Star Region

David Griffith, Lewisville, Texas

Niagara Frontier Region

Gary Reynolds, East Amherst, New York

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

British Region

Gordon Robinson, Burray, Orkney, UK

Lone Star Region

Dean Ferris, Decatur, Texas
Greg McComas, Keller, Texas

Mid-Eastern Region

Richard Steinmann, Reston, Virginia

North Central Region

William Wemhoff, Decatur, Indiana

MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

Lone Star Region

Tom Greco, Duncanville, Texas

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

British Region

Mick Moignard, Aylesbury, Bucks, UK

Mid-Eastern Region

Ronald King, Bainesville, Virginia
Richard Steinmann, Reston, Virginia

Midwest Region

Eric Peterson, Carmel, Indiana

Pacific Southwest Region

Frank Baker, Scottsdale, Arizona

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Lone Star Region

David Crumpton, Arlington, Texas
Greg McComas, Keller, Texas

Mid-Eastern Region

Richard Steinmann, Reston, Virginia

Midwest Region

Robert Perry, Avon, Indiana

CHIEF DISPATCHER

British Region

Brian Clark, Great Denham, Bedford, UK

Lone Star Region

Dean Ferris, Decatur, Texas
Greg McComas, Keller, Texas

Mid-Eastern Region

Richard Steinmann, Reston, Virginia

North Central Region

Norman Logan, Northville, Michigan

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

Lone Star Region

Ken Mason, Kenner, Louisiana
Don Winn, San Antonio, Texas

Mid-Central Region

Fred Soward, Louisville, Kentucky

Northeastern Region

Chuck Diljak, Wayne, New Jersey

ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

Mid-Central Region

Robert Ashley, Akron, Ohio

Mid-Eastern Region

Fredrick Humphrey, Chesapeake, Virginia

Midwest Region

David Down, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin
John Dramm, Waunakee, Wisconsin
Corinne McGeever, Stoughton, Wisconsin
Steve Preston, Waunakee, Wisconsin

North Central Region

Norman Logan, Northville, Michigan

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #680 Gordon Robinson, Burray, Orkney, UK

MMR® #681 Gary Loiselle, Rockford, Illinois

MMR® #682 Chuck Diljak, Wayne, New Jersey

MMR® #683 Frank Baker, Scottsdale, Arizona

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

The NMRA now accepts

PayPal[™]

- Renewals
- Memberships
- Books
- Donations
- Online store
- EVERYTHING!

**DOUGLAS HARDING EARNS
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #676**

I joined the NMRA in 1982, soon after I graduated and started working full-time. The following summer, my wife and I attended the National Convention in Winnipeg. We were treated so nicely, we continued attending National Conventions. Working weekends in rural Iowa, I could not attend Region or even local events, especially when held on Sundays. The National was a family vacation, taking us to a new and different location each year while educating and entertaining us along the way.

Unlike many, I didn't grow up with trains. As a child, the only train I had was a small, wooden train and track, which disappeared while I was still very young. I had forgotten about it until, just before he passed last year, my uncle insisted he had given me my first train, a small wooded train set, which triggered a vague memory. But I always attribute my first train as a gift from my new bride, who gave me my first electric train set — an HO Bachmann set — for our first Christmas. We were away from home so I could attend Seminary. We were on our own, unable to be with family. She got a kitten; I got a train. The kitten loved chasing the engine. Thus, the journey began, or as my wife likes to say, "I had no idea what kind of monster I was creating."

Being a brand-new model train owner, I began a hunt for hobby shops. I found the Gingerbread Stop in Warren, New Jersey, a fascinating little store crammed with brass, scratchbuilding supplies, and books. Owner Bob steered me to a local club, who took me in under their wings. At the club, I learned how to hand-lay track, use an airbrush and soldering iron, create scenery, repair balky locomotives, and witness the first creation of CTC control systems, reduced to fit in N-scale locomotives. The club also introduced me to the NMRA, local events, and layout tours. Being in New Jersey meant there were many such events and tours to attend.

Those early moments with model railroads and model railroaders influenced me to build a layout, one designed so it could be moved. Today, I have a large HO layout that, as I write, is crated and prepared to move to its final home. My career has



brought forth many moves, and retirement brings what we hope is the last. The new basement is being prepped to house my 28x50 layout. I hope to have it up, running, and hosting op sessions by Christmas. Op sessions with 10 to 20 people were being held almost monthly until COVID hit. With the COVID shutdown, I made some videos of the layout. Watching this one will give you a real feel for what I have created in my basement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyRMqJSS4vU>

Living in small rural communities meant my layout was never on a layout tour. That changed when the local Division held a meet where I was living about 15 years ago. I immediately volunteered, and we were on tour! My wife was as excited as I was. She arranged traffic flow, chairs, and snacks while I cleaned and prepped the layout. It was payback time for all the many layouts we had toured at NMRA conventions. I was caught off guard when I was suddenly approached by several "attendees," who turned out to be local NMRA officials. They announced that I had earned my Golden Spike certificate then and there; they had seen enough and felt I was qualified. I had earned a few merit awards for models prior, but getting

that Golden Spike award when I had not even asked for it, wow, that felt good!

I remember approaching those same NMRA officials the following year with paperwork for my Author and Volunteer certificates. Jokingly, I apologized for only having found 140 author points, hoping it was enough (42 was all one needed). It was their turn to be caught off guard. Thus began the journey toward my MMR®. (Thank you, Jon Hotvet and Gerry Leone.)

I again hosted a layout tour, this time in a new location for a combined two-Region Convention. We had just moved when I learned of the convention. I offered to host a tour and op session even as crates were still stacked in the basement. Ten months later, we had a dozen operators and more than 75 visitors — I was in seventh heaven. Attendees included some Region

and National officials I knew. They took a look and wondered how come I didn't have my MMR®. Thus began the final leg of the journey, evaluation visits were arranged, paperwork was finished, and certificates were awarded. They offered guidance on the elements I needed to complete those last certificates. I now have eight certificates, and a ninth (Dispatching) is in the bag once I find the records that are now packed for the move.

Many people have offered a hand along the way. "Bob" of the Gingerbread Stop, knowing I had no money, made sure what I had was spent well on things I could use and enjoy for years to come. Marshall Young, hobby shop owner and local NMRA director in Iowa, got me started entering contests. Bill Schaumburg, then-editor of *Railroad Model Craftsman*, published my articles and taught me how to research and find railroad history. Kurt Stoebe shared his love of the Minneapolis & St Louis and introduced me to operations, helping to set up my op sessions. Clark Propst showed a photo of the Decker Meat Plant at an RPM, and I thought, "I could build that," taking me down a path I had not expected (but have truly enjoyed). Jim Providenza asked in-

nocently at dinner one night, “Can you come to our Convention and do a clinic on meatpacking?” Suddenly, I was a clinician, presenting at local, Division, Region, National, RPMs, and historical societies. And Roger Ward, son of a M&StL engineer, freely shares his father’s extensive collection of M&StL artifacts, photos, maps, and more with me. Gentlemen (and yes, there have been a few ladies as well), it has been quite the journey, one not possible without your friendship and encouragement.

The NMRA is scale model trains, but it is also the relationships we build as we go about creating our scale model trains. My plan is to continue “paying back” for all I have received on my MMR® journey.

**Certificates Earned
Douglas Harding, MMR® 676**

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

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
4 2 3 - 8 9 2 - 2 8 4 6



NMRA® Presents: Concrete in Railroad Construction

CONCRETE In Railroad Construction



Published by the
ATLAS
Portland Cement Co.
30 Broad St. New York
Reprinted by the
National Model Railroad Association

- Published by The Atlas Portland Cement Company in 1909
- 232 pages, 6"x 9" format, hardcover with dust jacket
- New foreword by Tony Koester, NMRA Board member and well-known model railroading author and editor
- Over 120 black-and-white photos and illustrations
- Original preface written by Sanford E. Thompson, a civil engineer described as one of the leading concrete experts of the time
- Describes the use of concrete in numerous railroad-related applications, including bridges, piers, retaining walls, stations, tunnels, and many others

\$25⁹⁵ NMRA® members

\$35⁹⁵ Non-members

Dealer inquiries welcome

Order online: www.nmra.org or by Mail: P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384

Phone: (423) 892-2846 Fax: (423) 899-4869

U.S. Shipping: \$8⁹⁵ Inquire about international delivery. All funds in U.S. dollars. V, MC, AMEX & DISC accepted.

TN residents must add 9.25% sales tax. National Model Railroad Association®



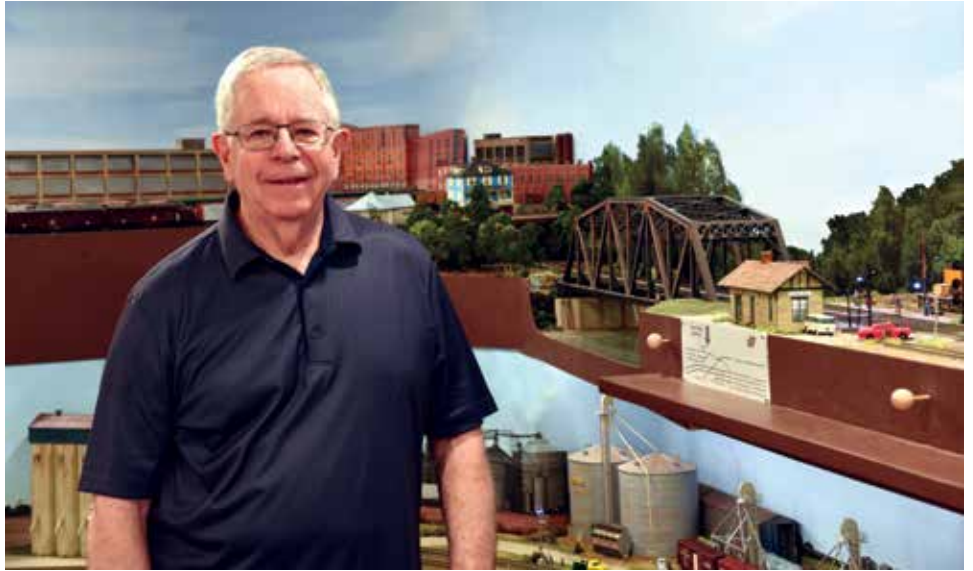
**JIM OSBORN EARNS
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #677**

A fascination with trains was cemented at an early age. My childhood home was in Northlake, Illinois, and situated exactly three blocks from the Chicago & North Western Proviso Classification Yard. Every summer day, I could hop on my bike and pedal over there. I admired the gigantic, wonderful machines. The hump yard and TOFC facility's endless activity amazed me. At night, I would open the second-story dormer window of my bedroom to capture the horns, whistles, brake retarders' squeals, and, of course, the occasional crash of cars kissing hard. My own personal railroad symphony put me to sleep at night with visions of the day's visit.

One day, I came home to find a 4x8-foot sheet of plywood in the basement. It had been painted gray and dotted with dyed green grass sawdust splotches courtesy of my mom. My dad had assembled the oval of track and single turnout. I could not believe my eyes. My folks suggested since I now had my own railroad, there was no need to visit the yards — very clever on their part! My model train interests started like those of so many others with a Lionel train set.

At age 12, I read about the NMRA in one of the train magazines. The article included mention of a registry of model railroads that members could visit. I joined. Soon I received my junior NMRA credentials and the model railroad registry book. There, I found a member in a neighboring town, convinced my mom to contact him, and arrange a visit. Thus, I began learning about HO scale and the endless possibilities of the hobby. "The rest is history," as they say.

My NMRA membership and interests in trains lapsed when I went away to college. Work and marriage followed; no time for trains anymore, and my interest had gone dormant. In 1998, I read about a train show at Harper College, Palatine, Illinois, not far from our home. I thought, *Why not see what's going on?* Sponsored by the Fox Valley Division of the NMRA, the show featured 28,000 square feet of modular layouts, clinics, activities, and vendors. A very charis-



matic modeler/host saw me wandering around and introduced himself: Harry Sorensen. By the time I left, Harry had made sure I had the membership application in hand and an invitation to their next Division meet.

Before I knew it, Harry and others had me on the Highwheeler Train Show volunteer work staff. (Harry could have sold sand to Egypt!) Shortly thereafter, I became a Division trainmaster and later a director of the Midwest Region Board. The Division Achievement Program Trainmaster suggested I fill out the paperwork for AP Volunteer and AP Association Official. Those were the first two AP Certificates I received.

I eventually built a small layout in a spare bedroom. I did it all on my own because spare time was tight. I enjoyed the construction aspect, even though I did not really know what I was doing. Lumbering along, my only guidance was what I read in magazines. I'd heard about DCC. As an electrical engineer, it intrigued me. I bought the System One DCC components. That offered a new dimension to running trains, but something was still missing. About the same time, my wife Mary suggested that we move away from the hustle-bustle of the Chicago "burbs." It was at the peak of the housing bubble. We could not find anything to her liking, my budget, and with *adequate* (think more) *train space*.

Eventually, we happened across a house 45 miles out of the city. It backed up to a protected wetland. Mary was inside the home for less than a minute, saw

the view, and announced, "We have to buy this!" I did not know what to say, but then I blurted out the only thing that came to mind: "It's a wonderful home and view, but will there be space for a decent train layout?" To which she replied, "You can have the entire walkout basement." Music to my ears, and as I'd learned in business, stop talking when you make the sale.

My previous layout misadventures now led me to seek help and wisdom from those with experience. Retired now, I also had more time to invest. Jim Spice (former North Shore and Western Division Super) and Art Jones (FVD member) have great planning and construction skills. They troubleshot my track plan before the first rail was laid and advised me on how to build the framework. It was not long before I had the first version of the double-deck "plywood central" up and running.

One day, at the Division meet, the late Don Brandstater (FVD AP trainmaster) asked if I was retired and free on Tuesday mornings. (I remember thinking *That's an odd question.*) It turned into my first invite to an operating session. Fortunately, the crew was understanding because I had no idea what I was doing. With their help, the knowledge grew, and so did my interest in operations. Jim Spice and MMR® Don Cook also hosted frequent operating sessions and allowed me to dispatch on occasion. After several sessions, I remember asking Jim how I was doing. He answered, "Did you have any cornfield meets?" When I said "No,"

he announced, “You pass,” and signed off on my dispatcher creds.

Further changes to the “plywood central” needed to take place so I could adapt it to my new interest in operations. The late Don Cook, Bert Lattan, Dan Sylvester, Jim Allen, Don Drum, Mike Jorgensen, and other NMRA members all contributed ideas for modifying the design to a more operations-oriented track plan. The Chicago & North Western, Western Division was born. The layout design, construction process, and operating scheme eventually qualified me for the Chief Dispatcher, Civil Engineering, and Electrical Engineering AP Awards.

I soon began to realize that bigger was not necessarily better. (This is something I quickly share with other modelers starting a layout.) The behemoth 42x17-foot double-decker layout had an incredible appetite for structures and scenery. It took me about a month for each building to be scratchbuilt, kitbashed, or detailed. And then there are the prototypical scenes to blend the structures into the layout. While the efforts qualified me for the AP Structures and AP Scenery awards, I calculated I would be on the other side of the grass before the upper deck was done. At that point, I began to consider estate sales and other sources of quality structures to fill in around my own work (a practical but necessary compromise I was not happy about). One day, MMR® David Leider showed up at my house with three banker boxes of highly detailed and historically accurate structures. An incredibly skilled modeler, he’d built them because he liked the research and history behind each one. He’d already built a small and very complete layout in his home. Wanting a place to display them, he thought of me. My layout was licking its hungry chops at the prospect! Many of David’s amazing scratchbuilt structures are prominently displayed and integrated into the Western Division’s pike. What great gifts of friendship — and no more estate sales!

Along the way, I was asked to write feature layout articles for the *NMRA MAGAZINE* (*SCALE RAILS* back then) in conjunction with both the Milwaukee 75 National Convention and the joint Fox Valley and DuPage Division Midwest Region Convention. Learning and writing about the other NMRA layouts was a valuable experience. I used these articles

and a couple of clinics to qualify for the Model Railroad Author AP Award. I currently manage the Midwest Region and FVD websites and edit the Fox Valley Division newsletter *The Semaphore*. I am also currently the chairman of the Midwest Region Internet and Election Committees.

Gary Children, the Midwest Region Contest Chairman, wanted me to become a contest judge. He invited me along to help assess a layout, cars, and locomotives on MMR® David Crement’s East Broad Top On30 empire to teach me the process. What a terrific experience! One of David’s many skills is re-creating prototype scenes. I was amazed at his ability to accurately transform a photograph into rolling stock, buildings, and scenery. He shared many of his scratchbuilding tips to spur me along. His layout, locomotives, and cars are a re-creation of portions of the EBT railroad.

Now I had eight AP Awards hanging on my “Wall of Shame” -- but no MMR®. What remained? The dreaded Railroad Equipment category! About three years ago, I decided to get on with it. In a C&NW Historical Society publication, I saw an article about the C&NW drover cars the railroad had operated. I thought, *That’s what I’ll start with — an unusual car and it is a passenger car* (which is required for the award). Boy, was that a learning experience! I researched the car, copied and drew plans, and started on the underframe, brake rigging, etc. Other challenges started coming fast: the stairs, the platform, the ladders, the handrails, the rivets, the window details, and more. The project came to a halt, and the whole thing sat in an old kit box for two years. I was too busy going to operating sessions and decorating my layout. I had lost the construction bug.

Then came along the other bug — COVID-19. Suddenly, there were no op sessions, Division meets, bull sessions, breakfasts, shows, etc. After years of the benched drover car parts staring at me every time I walked into the workshop, its moment had finally arrived; there was nothing else to do! It was then that I also learned that our mind is a wonderful thing. When we do not have an answer to a problem, we quickly dismiss it *consciously* — but our subconscious keeps working without our awareness. Two years later, those challenges had solutions. It was not

easy, but I pressed ahead and made progress. Steve Miazga of the WISE Division got me over a big hump. He suggested carving the car windows out rather than cutting them out all at once. It was a liberating insight. I had already wrecked three sets of carbody sides because I’d messed up the window holes. Now I knew how to make those darn windows.

When completed, I dropped the finished car off with the region AP chairman to be judged, and the model received 114 merit award points! I was back in the game and realized I could do this. The other seven cars were built during the remaining year of lockdown before I received the vaccines. I also created a clinic on scratchbuilding AP cars to share my experiences and hopefully help other members take the journey! I finally had the dreaded AP Cars Award certificate in hand — and subsequently the MMR® award.

As I write this recap of my journey, I am reminded of the value of the diverse membership, camaraderie, challenges, and learning opportunities the NMRA offers. I am grateful to the organization, those mentioned, and other members I have inadvertently failed to acknowledge. I benefitted from the knowledge of so many that I hope to pass on to others.

I will close with a few summary thoughts:

- 1) The Achievement Program is not a journey you should take alone.
- 2) Scratchbuilding cars was a challenge — but really not too bad — you can do it.
- 3) If you do not have a solution to a problem, sleep on it; it will eventually come to you.
- 4) Stop talking when you make the sale.

And most importantly,

- 5) Do the passenger car last — you will be ready for it.

Certificates Earned
Jim Osborn, MMR® 677
Association Volunteer
Association Official
Chief Dispatcher
Model Engineer – Civil
Model Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Structures
Master Builder – Scenery
Model Railroad Author
Master Builder – Cars