

## GEORGE P. LANDOW

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #737

I received my first train set and was introduced to model railroading because my father wanted to become a country doctor. The Second World War had just ended, and my father had moved to New York City before seeing a physician's advertisement for a country practice. And so my family drove to Dover Plains, New York, arriving at precisely the same time a monster Hudson pulled into the town station. I had a camera and still have the photos taken that day, as well as the S-gauge American Flyer bright red hopper, flashlight cattle car, and bright red caboose. My father nailed track onto a large piece of plywood, as I did years later for my son, daughter, and then my two grandsons.

My first attempt at a railroad layout was 20 years later when we moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where I built the first version of the HO-scale Albion, Pawtuxet & Galilee Railroad, which was inspired by Anthony Trollope's novel, *The Way We Live Now*. The name of the railroad itself draws upon Rhode Island history — (Galilee) the fishing port, (Pawtuxet) the state's Indian heritage, and (Albion) textile mills representing the state's English roots. This first version of the AP&G took the form of a four-foot square panel with a high trestle, a long tunnel, and a turnout. I had just built the underpinning to extend the railroad when we took in a teenage foster daughter, who needed the living space, and that was the end of construction of the first AP&G.

In 2000, I started the new layout in the basement of my in-laws' house. This version still had all three towns — Albion, Pawtuxet, and Galilee — and HO scale. Galilee had a major dock and boatyard, a small town, a large space for the Pawtuxet Railroad yards, and a large urban station, town cathedral, fountain, and N-scale buildings in the distance. The right-hand side of the U-shaped layout had a sharply inclined bridge and trestle heading to an upper level where a logging operation took place. Down below, the town of Albion existed with a small sta-

tion, the Turner and Ruskin Dye Works, and a lumber yard.

The last version of the AP&G was On30, with power on board. A few years ago, I had become annoyed with broken solder joints, so I took MMR® Mike Tylick's advice and started from scratch, telling Mike, "If you want me to build an On30 layout, you've got to design a track plan." I then began to disassemble the HO version and sell the buildings, some of which had been the subject of articles in *Model Railroader*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, and other periodicals. With the money made available by selling the old equipment, I approached Justin Maguire, MMR®, and asked if he would do the construction work — strengthening the benchwork and laying the track, and I would do all the scenery. He agreed, and we began work immediately.

The new version of the AP&G with its power on board worked flawlessly. Locomotives and trains made their way effortlessly through the complex railroad yard Mike had created. Since the buildings and rolling stock are so much larger, much of the AP&G had to be condensed. A BTS dock complex and oyster cannery serves as the primary feature of the harbor. Moving away from the harbor, we pass a small logging engine house and related facilities, including a BTS cookhouse. The track continues in a sharp circle and heads to the engine yards of Pawtuxet, in the background of which is a street of 19th century stores that are lit and furnished. Crossing a sink that divides the layout, we come upon the 1950s-era town of Albion with its large factories, stores, and train station. Again, all of these are illuminated so that we can see they are filled with people and furniture. At the very end of the layout is a series of scratchbuilt office buildings, a roundhouse, a coal chute, and engine yard components.



The layout has basically seen completion, but there are still things I would wish to improve. For example, I believe the Bachmann tank cars are out of scale, as they are HO. I would like to find a way to build On30 scale tank cars. Similarly, the same is true of flatcars and boxcars, where I think the brake wheels are out of scale, and I would like to work on these.

Thanks to my wife Ruth, who has been the guiding spirit of the AP&G in many ways, because every time she thought I had spent too much time on the computer doing the academic work for which I was paid, she would shout out, "Leave the computer! Go down and work on your trains!"

### Certificates Earned George P. Landow, MMR® #737

**Master Builder—Prototype Modeler**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Master Builder—Cars**  
**Master Builder—Scenery**  
**Master Builder—Structures**  
**Model Railroad Author**

## DON WINN

EARNS

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #740

Like many of my generation, I received a Lionel 027 train set when I was around five years old. That train set later gave way to an Aurora road racing set, which was very popular in the 1960s. I didn't get back into trains for over 40 years.

I bought my kids a Brio wooden train set and enjoyed building different track designs for them. I started taking my youngest son, Andrew, to local train shows, and he showed a real interest. We got an HO train set and a sheet of plywood and started building a layout. We then joined the local modular club and adopted some HO modules to scenic. Later, I built 20 feet of new modules to allow switching operations on the club layout.

I learned about the NMRA from reading *Model Railroader* magazine. Andrew and I attended the 2010 NMRA National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and we were really hooked after that. We started attending national conventions regularly, initially focusing on layout tours, then clinics and operations. Andrew moved on to other interests, but I was firmly addicted to the hobby.

It must have been at the Dallas Train Show where I learned about Division meetings in the area. We had meetings in my home Division (Division 1 - Fort Worth), but I also faithfully attended the monthly meetings in Division 3 - Dallas. There, I realized the real value of NMRA membership is what you can learn from the many experts in your area.

My first AP certificate was Electrical. If you have built even a small railroad, you have probably already completed the work; you just need to write it up. The track-laying for Civil was easy for me, but hand-laying switches seemed like something far beyond my skill level. In searching for a gauntlet turnout for a scale track, I found a how-to article using a Fast Tracks jig, which interested me, and eventually I built well over 50 turnouts.



“Playing trains” while earning credits for the Dispatcher Certificate was great fun, and I enjoyed learning how other model railroads were set up. I’ve done some 1:1 scale operations, volunteering at the Austin Steam Train. Working as a student brakeman gave me a new respect for what it’s like to be a real railroader. Thanks for the great experience, Doc!

The Cars Certificate required skills far outside of my comfort zone. Several unsuccessful attempts reinforced that sentiment, but I finally built a Great Northern water car that merited. After that, I had the skill and confidence to build more, and merited on all eight cars. I’m presenting a clinic at the 2023 Texas Express on how to get going on building cars.

As I noted in a recent article in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*, I believe the most important certificates to earn are those that help to support the hobby. I earned my Volunteer Certificate early on, working on our Region convention while also working as a Railroading Merit Badge counselor with the Boy Scouts.

I’m a mechanical engineer, not an English major, so how and why did I earn the Author Certificate? It started when the OPSIG editor pleaded for someone to take photos and write a story on the ops sessions at a national convention. I asked how that works, and he said, “Take

good pictures and don’t write anything negative.” I wrote several articles for the *Dispatchers Office* and have continued writing articles ever since, including an article in *Model Railroader* earlier this year. At some point, I realized most of what we read in our hobby magazines and historical journals is written by volunteers.

Several years ago, I moved to San Antonio, Texas, finding that despite being the seventh largest city in the U.S., there was absolutely no NMRA activity. I ran for the position of Division Director (now in my third term) and presently host bi-monthly meetings that draw at least 25 participants. We’re only required to earn one of the three certificates in the Service category, but I would challenge you to get involved and help keep the hobby strong.

After earning seven AP certificates, I still needed one from the railroad setting category. I have six scratchbuilt structures so far that have merited, and I plan to finish the Structures Certificate, but I decided to work instead on putting some scenery over the helix that visitors first see when entering my train room. It was a fun yet challenging project, earning me the Scenery Certificate.

I’ve met hundreds of fellow modelers over the past 13 years and can count dozens of good friends among them. If I narrow my shout-out to those who

were really instrumental in setting me on the path to earning my MMR®, it would be three guys from LSR Division 3. Jerry Hoverson, MMR®, was the Division Director, and he always had a good program that made the meetings worthwhile. The hands-on clinics significantly advanced my skills and knowledge in the hobby. I'll admit I didn't finish all the many projects, but I still learned something from them. Did I really need a scratchbuilt wooden water tower or a scratchbuilt speeder shed for my layout? It didn't matter to me; I would take the challenge and learn something from it. I finished that speeder shed, earning a merit award, and I recently found a good spot for it on my new layout.

Duane Richardson, MMR®, our Contest Chair and current LSR AP Chair, provided tips and tricks at every meeting and was always helpful in showing me how to improve my models to bring them up to merit level. He always said, "It will make you a better modeler" he was right. Larry Swigert, MMR®, was the group's cheerleader, constantly preaching that we should all try to achieve MMR® status. Thanks for the great guidance and support, guys!

Special thanks go to my lovely wife, Judie, who has always supported and encouraged my time in the hobby.

### **Certificates Earned Don Winn, MMR® #740**

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

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