

NMRA BULLETIN

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or by mail to the address listed under “Administration Department Manager” below.

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ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

**NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT
JUNE 2011
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Southeast Region
James Duckworth, Memphis, Tennessee

**MASTER BUILDER — CARS
Midwest Region**
James Dalberg, Paoli, Pennsylvania

**MASTER BUILDER — STRUCTURES
Southeastern Region**
Charlie Crawford, Marietta, Georgia

**MASTER BUILDER — SCENERY
Southeastern Region**
Robert McIntyre, Alpharetta, Georgia

**MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — CIVIL
Mid-Continent Region**
Ryan Moats, Omaha, Nebraska

**MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — ELECTRICAL
Southeastern Region**
Charlie Crawford, Marietta, Georgia

**CHIEF DISPATCHER
Lone Star Region**
E.J. Merkel, Bertram, Texas

**ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL
Mid-Central Region**
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Southeastern Region
Fred Coleman, Naples, North Carolina

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Dianne Rowland, West Chester, Ohio
Don Rowland, West Chester, Ohio
John Shields, Cincinnati, Ohio
Jim Stewart, Cincinnati, Ohio

Southeastern Region
James Deaton, Johns Creek, Georgia
Hugh Teaford, Memphis, Tennessee

**MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR
Pacific Northwest Region**
Charlie Comstock, Hillsboro, Oregon

BOD ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

It's Portland, Oregon, for the 2015 convention

Report by Tony Koester with Dave Thornton

The 2015 and future National Conventions

At its annual (summer) meeting in Sacramento, California, on June 30–July 2, 2011, the Board of Directors considered two proposals for the 2015 National Convention. Doug Auburg, the recently retired National Clinic Chairman and now 2015 Convention Chairman, presented the winning bid for Portland, Oregon. The tentative dates are in late July through early August.

The Board continues to review additional ways to attract favorable attention to the benefits of NMRA membership, especially among non-members. At the Sacramento BOD meeting, Standards & Conformance Department head Didrik Voss and his wife, Mary Kay, presented more information about an intriguing proposal for a week-long “cruise convention” or, as many associations and user groups are now hosting, a “cruise seminar” in the 2016–2017 timeframe. Many details remain to be worked out before the BOD can formally consider a bid, but the idea proved highly popular among spouses of convention attendees who learned of the proposal. A number offered to make deposits on the spot!

The proposal recommends buying out an entire cruise ship's capacity on a repositioning cruise between Vancouver, British Columbia, and San Diego, mostly likely in late September. NMRA dues and normal revenue streams would not bankroll the cruise, as those who want to take the cruise would have to send deposits before a contract signing two years prior to the cruise. If there is insufficient response, all deposits or full payments would be refunded. If there is sufficient interest and the contract is signed, then no refunds could be made, but normal travel insurance policies purchased by each passenger would cover those who have to cancel after that cut-off date.

This would be a marked departure from the usual convention format, one intended to attract a different audience. Clearly, some of the normal events could not be accom-

modated or would have to be handled in a much different manner. Carrying a model of, say, a large industry on board for contest judging would be problematic, as would hosting a silent auction. Layout, SIG, and prototype tours could be accommodated with pre-cruise tours in Vancouver and 12-hour stopovers in Seattle, San Francisco, and San Diego, but most activities would be aboard the ship. Of course, the highly popular extra-fare “city” tours offered by the cruise line would still be available. A tentative proposal is for the National Train Show to be held in San Diego following the cruise.

Those who have never taken a cruise may be surprised to learn that the price of a cruise includes all regular meals. You'll never go hungry on a cruise ship! Drinks are extra, as are tours. There would be professionally staged live shows in the ship's theater each night for those not attending clinics. There's even an indoor swimming pool.

Various types of accommodations at different price ranges are available from inside cabins to luxurious suites; third and fourth passengers in a room often sail at very reduced rates. Special airfares may be available to further reduce the total cost to a point that is quite comparable to staying in a convention hotel and dining out.

It's clear that such a major shift from our usual format will require some creative scheduling. For example, those who usually drive to conventions may need to budget for air, train, or coach travel back to the port of embarkation. But it's equally clear that on occasion the NMRA needs to step far outside its comfort zone and do things that attract a whole new audience. When word of a cruise convention or seminar gets around the hobby, we may find that NMRA membership becomes very attractive to quite a number of modelers and their spouses who formerly wouldn't give us a second look. And those of us on tight travel budgets would have several years to set aside funds for this memorable event.

Beyond the possibility of a cruise seminar or convention, the Board is investigating the feasibility of holding our convention in the United Kingdom, where we held our memorable 1971 NMRA convention. No formal bid has been received, however.

The Board is also reviewing the timing of all conventions. A mid-summer date has

become almost a tradition because of the lower hotel and convention center rates over the Fourth of July weekend. It also accommodates youngsters during summer vacation from school. But July isn't a popular time for many NMRA members because of family functions, as well as summer temperatures and humidity.

Constructive suggestions for these and other convention formats may be directed to the Convention Committee headed by Pacific Director Peter Jensen or to S&C Department head Didrik Voss.

Attendance tops 2,000!

The upward trend in National Convention attendance that began in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, continued this year as paid registrations at the Unconventional Convention in Sacramento topped the 2,000 mark. The Board congratulated Ray deBlick and his convention committee for a job well done.

We now look forward to making the trip to centrally located Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the 2012 convention. Check nmra.org for registration and program information.

Diamond Club fund drive

The Diamond Club fund drive, created to help underwrite the costs of scanning the 100,000-plus images in the NMRA archives in Chattanooga, Tennessee, has surpassed the initial goal of \$75,000 with \$100,000 donated and 9,000 images scanned and online as of May 2011. The estimate for scanning our entire image collection is \$300,000 to \$400,000. So while revenues generated by image sales will contribute to the scanning work, additional and ongoing donations are needed to continue this enormous project, which brings our vast archives within easy, 24/7 access by members and other researchers around the globe.

The initial archive scans are now available for viewing and purchase at <http://archive.nmra.org>, or via a direct link from www.nmra.org.

Regular communications with all members

The Board continues to explore ways to allow regular and timely communication with all members, including the approximately 4,000 members who do not subscribe to the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. The seemingly obvious solution — to email regular news bulletins to all members — is

only a partial solution, as a substantial portion of our membership tells us that they do not have access to email. While it is clear that the Internet and World Wide Web will play increasingly important roles in NMRA communications and the delivery of value to all members, the BOD appreciates the plight of those who do not have Web access.

The Publications Committee and other members of the leadership team are continuing to investigate print-based alternatives and the inherent cost implications, but no formal proposal was available at Sacramento. A detailed report is expected at the winter BOD meeting in February at a location to be determined. Communications Director Gerry Leone will email details of the winter BOD meeting site and dates to all Region presidents and Division superintendents, who are expected to relay this information to all members in a timely manner.

Financial report

Chief financial officer Frank Koch reported that the NMRA remains in good financial shape, but continued cost pressures are expected to result in ongoing deficit budgets without an increase in income. Our annual audit is underway, he stated, and minor adjustments to our accounting reporting are being made. When it becomes available, a summary of the 2011 budget will appear in *NMRA MAGAZINE* and be posted on our website, nmra.org.

NMRA Regulations require dues and subscriptions to reflect changes to the Consumer Price Index. For that reason, and to ensure the financial wellbeing of your Association going forward, in 2012 dues will increase by \$5 to \$44 and subscriptions by \$3 to \$22. Sustaining members (includes magazine) will increase by \$13 to \$110, and student memberships (also includes magazine) will increase by \$4 to \$32. The highly successful 6-month Rail Pass trial-membership program will continue at \$9.95; the current conversion rate to full memberships after the trial period is at 65 percent.

NMRANET standard adopted

The board heard updated presentations for two versions of the definition of the physical layer of the layout control bus called NMRANET. In a change from its position at the winter BOD meeting, the Board selected S-9.6.1, but the final approval must await Board review of the final wording of the new Standard.

The Board thanked the developers of both versions, which were led by Don Voss and Bob Jacobsen. They and their teams contributed countless hours of development work toward NMRANET, and Digital Command Control users as well as the model railroad industry as a whole will greatly benefit from their efforts. Several manufacturers have been waiting for this new Standard so they can adopt it for their product lines.

Gallery exhibit at California museum

July 7, 2011, will be remembered as a major milestone for the NMRA, as it marked the official start of fund raising for a scale model railroading exhibit in the Gallery area of the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, California. The Sacramento museum and adjacent Old Town Sacramento are the West Coast's third largest tourist destination.

The exhibit, which is being designed and constructed by a separate corporation affiliated with the NMRA, is now raising funds for the estimated \$750,000 cost. No NMRA dues or regular revenue streams will be used to fund this project. Substantial donations have already been received, including \$25,000 from member Brad Joseph in memory of his father, Dee, and another \$25,000 from Reid Dennis. Attendees at the exhibit kick-off reception matched Reid's donation within 30 minutes for a total of \$75,000. Additionally, an anonymous donor has promised to match all donations up to a substantial limit.

Eastern Director John Roberts also serves as president of the NMRA Model Railroad Museum Committee. North American At-large Director Charlie Getz and *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette* editor Bob Brown have served as key members of this committee.

NMRA veterans honored

The 2011 BOD meeting was adjourned in honor of Dennis Hill, who died while serving as superintendent of PNR's 4th Division, and Bob Boomsma, long-time member of the NMRA Calendar Committee. The Board extended its condolences to Australasian Director Peter Jensen and his wife, Barbara, who had to return home just prior to the convention following the death of her mother.

MMR EARNED



ROBERT G. (BOB) MANGRUM EARNS MMR #456

Like a great many of the membership of the NMRA, I was introduced to model railroading at an early age, receiving my first train set at my first Christmas in December 1948 when I was 7 months old! Obviously, it would be a few years before I really understood what was so fascinating about electric trains.

My father was a master machinist and modeler in his own right, and by the time I was nine, he had built a small shelf layout, primarily to test his scratchbuilt HO brass steam locomotives. At that time I became fascinated with the daily operations of the railroad, a passion I still retain. A relocation because of my dad's job change led to a new layout, a traditional 4 x 8 in my bedroom; this was eventually followed by a third shelf layout, which would claim half of a two-car garage. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, we used TruScale wooden roadbed, with my dad and I hand laying not only the track, but Daddy scratchbuilt his switches as well. The amount of trackage laid, as well as the number of rolling stock available to the railroad, was limited as a result. Then, I reached the teenage years with a subsequent competition from other interests as I entered high

school. After high school graduation, I left home to attend college; when I returned that first Thanksgiving, my garage layout was dismantled and all the buildings and so forth were packed away. My dad said, "You're in college and interested in girls and cars now."

That ushered in the armchair model railroader era, which lasted through active duty with the Army, graduate school, courtship, and two relocations as I advanced in the college faculty ranks. As a university professor of American history, my professional interest and my modeling interests have dovetailed nicely. Finally, with the purchase of our first house, management deeded the one-car garage area for my sixth layout, an around-the-perimeter shelf layout. Solving the myriad construction problems associated with that layout prepared me for the next house with a two-car garage! As we only had one automobile, it was reasonable to develop half of the two-car garage for the seventh version of the Texas & Southern, a proto-freelance Class I railroad set in 1966 that connected Kansas City and Corpus Christi, Texas. I model a portion of the Lee Subdivision with two staging yards,

one representing tracks to the north and one representing tracks to the south of the modeled sub.

As I had grown up as a model railroader, it was only natural that when my sister married, my dad and I would try to interest my new brother-in-law, Melvin Richards, in the hobby. I am happy to report he is a very active model railroader and NMRA member as well. When his son was born, he received a train set for his first Christmas. Today, my nephew, Thomas, is also actively involved in model railroading both in HO and N scale and a NMRA member also.

All the above is background to relate the process of how I reached this point in my modeling life to achieve this singular honor as a MMR. Melvin went to a division meeting of Division 3 (Trinity River Division) of the Lone Star Region in which they talked about the Golden Spike award; he encouraged me to contact Tom Browning (himself a new MMR, #455), at that time in charge of helping NMRA members earn the Golden Spike within the LSR. Tom quickly agreed to come visit my layout. This was before he realized that I lived three hours away from his home in the Dallas area! To Tom's credit, he drove that distance, and I received my Gold Spike award in November 2007. It was while visiting that Tom encouraged me to pursue the certificates necessary for the MMR, noting that I had a great amount already done toward scenery and electrical based upon the state of my current layout. (Tom would repeat that long drive along with Duane Richardson MMR #391 to judge electrical, civil, and scenery.)

With Tom's encouragement, as well as the continuing support from my mother, Melvin, my dear wife, Cheryl, my sister Marita, and my nephew, Thomas, I launched myself into the project and began to earn the necessary certificates for the MMR. I would be remiss if I didn't specifically acknowledge each of them for encouraging me to "stay the course" in those times when I began to question whether I could indeed, accomplish this recognition in the hobby. I also wish to thank several other LSR members who participated in judging various parts of my AP process.

In addition to the Golden Spike, Bob has earned the following AP Certificates: Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical, Model Railroad Engineer—Civil, Master Builder—Scenery, Master Builder—Cars, Chief Dispatcher, Model Railroad Author, and Association Volunteer.