

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

## NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

MAY 2019

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#### Lone Star Region

### GOLDEN SPIKE

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Bill Parker, Lexington, Kentucky

#### Mid-Eastern Region

Larry Paffrath, Cornelius, North Carolina

#### North Central Region

Michael Finkler, Holland, Michigan

#### Northeastern Region

Gordon Spalty, Rochester, New York

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Gary Deitrick, Filer, Idaho

Ray Mackey, Prineville, Oregon

Bill Purinton, Prineville, Oregon

James Voorhees, Prineville, Oregon

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Joe Walters, Bear, Delaware

#### Northeastern Region

Thomas Oxnard, MMR®, Exeter, New Hampshire

### MASTER BUILDER - CARS

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#### Mid-Central Region

Joe Fields, Louisville, Kentucky

David Lawler, Avon Lake, Ohio

#### Mid-Continent Region

Todd Summers, Marion, Iowa

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Frank Baker, Scottsdale, Arizona

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### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

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#### Mid-Central Region

David Lawler, Avon Lake, Ohio

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James DeMarco, Kendall, New York

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#### Northeastern Region

James Kerkam, Duxbury, Massachusetts

David Trimble, Centerville, Massachusetts

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### ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

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#### Rocky Mountain Region

Joseph Lemmo, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Tom Gay, Fargo, North Dakota

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Dave Thrans, Stanley, North Carolina

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William Jameson, Melbourne, Florida

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Howard Veihdeffer, Jr., Hyde, Pennsylvania

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Eric Peterson, Carmel, Indiana

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#### Mid-Central Region

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#### Mid-Eastern Region

Charles Higdon, Toms River, New Jersey

Bernard Kempinski, Alexandria, Virginia

#### Midwest Region

Emil Mosny, Jr., Rockford, Illinois

#### Pacific Southwest Region

Robert Bridges, Surprise, Arizona

Annette Palmer, Fullerton, California

#### Sunshine Region

Benita Jameson, Melbourne, Florida

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#### Mid-Central Region

Fred Soward, Louisville, Kentucky

#### Mid-Eastern Region

Bernard Kempinski, Alexandria, Virginia

### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER

Stan Pirzchalski, MMR® #639 Colleyville, Texas

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

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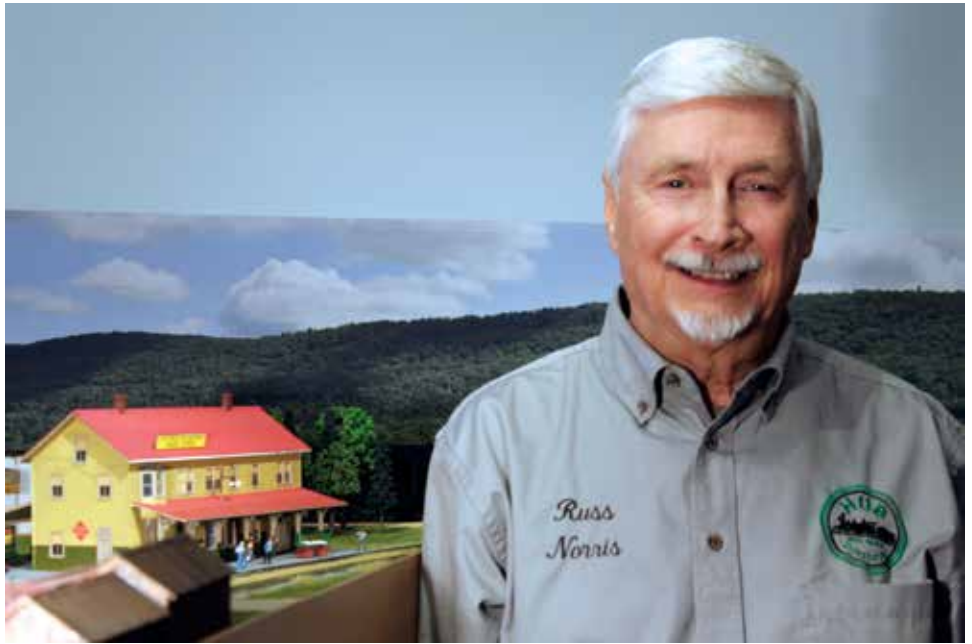
## RUSS NORRIS EARNS MMR® #638

Growing up in Maywood, New Jersey, just ten miles west of New York City, one of my earliest memories is lying in bed next to the window on a hot summer night listening to the wail of a steam whistle on the Susquehanna Railroad six blocks away. I never actually saw steam operate on the Susquehanna, but I can remember walking to Maywood station with my mother and watching my dad arrive home from work on a commuter train of ancient heavyweight cars pulled by an early diesel locomotive.

When I was about ten years old, I received my first Lionel train set for Christmas. It was a freight pulled by a massive black Pennsy S-2 steam turbine. Lionel sold thousands of them, but the PRR built only one. Over the years, my collection grew to include Santa Fe A-B-A diesels pulling a line of fluted aluminum passenger cars and a Western Pacific A-A lash-up. One year, my dad spent hours working secretly in the basement to surprise me on Christmas with an actual layout made from a pair of 4x8 plywood boards laid end-to-end. It had a figure-eight track plan, a passing siding, and Plasticville houses.

Eventually, I drifted away from Lionel trains and became involved with short wave ham radio. The trains were boxed up and put away, and when I left home in 1960 to study electrical engineering at MIT, I lost track of them. The only memory I have of model railroading for the next 20 years was a visit to the Tech Model Railroad Club at MIT. I recall being puzzled by the constant clicking noises emanating from the huge layout. Only later did I learn that the club railroad was controlled by hundreds of old Bell Telephone relays under the benchwork!

My engineering career was derailed in 1965 when I made the momentous decision to enter seminary and study for the ministry. Little did I know that moving away from a career in EE would lead me back to my childhood interest in electric trains. The re-awakening came in 1972 when I accepted a call to a small parish in Mount Union, Pennsylvania, which happened to be the northern terminus of the narrow gauge East Broad Top Railroad! The EBT was a short line — a little over 30 miles of track — connecting the coal mines on Broad Top Mountain in southern Huntingdon County to the Pennsylvania Railroad. The EBT was a tourist line by the time I arrived in Mount



Union, and a glorious Winter Spectacular provided me with my first opportunity to see and ride behind a working steam engine.

About the same time, I became good friends with the local Presbyterian minister down the block, who was a Lionel fan. He didn't have a layout — he just liked to sit on the floor in a spare room and watch the trains go round. But it was enough. I was bitten by the model railroad bug again and began haunting local hobby stores. I decided that HO was more to my taste than the bulky Lionel O gauge. Still single at that point in my life, I used my evenings to begin experimenting with "upgrading" my acquisitions. I bought an 0-8-0 heavy switcher and decided to convert it into a 2-8-0 Consolidation. I was reading all the model magazines I could find. For some reason, I thought my new engine would look really cool with an Elesco feedwater heater on the smokebox. I wasn't sure what a feedwater heater did, but I sure liked the look of it! I still have that locomotive.

As I began to accumulate a small fleet of locomotives, I decided my freelanced model railroad needed an appropriate name. Central Pennsylvania is shaped by mountains and valleys carved by receding glaciers from southwest to northeast. The valley closest to the EBT followed a great curve along Blacklog Mountain from Port Royal, Pennsylvania, on the PRR main line, to Hancock, Maryland. What a great name for a railroad — the Blacklog Valley! I decided to make my new road a bridge route, connecting the Pennsy with the Western

Maryland. In the back of my mind was the thought that, at some point, my Blacklog Valley Railroad might connect with the East Broad Top.

It has been more than 45 years since I made the fateful decision to build a railroad reflecting my fascination with central Pennsylvania and the EBT. Since then, the Blacklog Valley has gone through five incarnations, beginning with — believe it or not — a pair of 4x8 sheets of plywood laid end-to-end in the parsonage basement! Each of the succeeding layouts allowed me to experiment with different aspects of building a miniature world in my basement or attic. Each time we moved, I would try to incorporate some aspect of the previous layout in the new one. My present model railroad occupies some 400 square feet, on 2-inch extruded foam supported by a wooden grid. But hiding in all that benchwork is a spline loop I built years ago when we still lived in Pennsylvania.

I left Mount Union in 1978 and became the pastor of a church in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, some 45 miles away. Hollidaysburg was an old railroad town. It was founded 150 years earlier where the Pennsylvania Canal ended at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. Canal boats were then hauled over the mountains on the Allegheny Portage Railroad by stationary steam engines, then lowered down the western slope, and refloated for the trip west to Pittsburgh. By the time I moved to Hollidaysburg, the canal basin had long since been replaced by

the Sam Ray Shops — a huge railroad car repair facility just blocks from the church I served. It turned out that a member of my congregation happened to be the Quality Control Manager for the Juniata Locomotive Shops in Altoona, just down the road! One memorable day he took me on a personal tour of the facility, which was under Conrail control at the time. It was awesome to walk through the same shops where they built the great K-4s passenger engines for the Standard Railroad of the World!

Over the years, we moved from Pennsylvania to South Carolina to New York City, where I ended my career working in social services. In 2006, I retired, and my wife and I moved to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where I began work on the fifth version of the Blacklog Valley Railroad, only this time something new had been added. Shortly before I retired, a member of the Friends of the East Broad Top made it known he was looking for a new home for his Hallmark brass model of EBT No. 18 — the last and heaviest of the famed EBT 2-8-2s. It was a steal at \$300! Since then, I have accumulated all but one of the six modern mikes, plus the M-1 gas-electric motor car.

It was clear, having bought all that narrow gauge brass, I would have to build a layout with HO<sub>N3</sub> track to run it on! So the fifth (and possibly last) incarnation of the Blacklog Valley morphed into a dual-gauge operation, combining the free-lanced BVRR with iconic scenes from the prototype East Broad Top. I designed the railroad with a dual-gauge yard similar to the one in Mount Union, where the Blacklog Valley would meet the EBT. There would be a Chance coal processing plant as on the prototype, as well as a large brick factory, of which there were three in Mount Union. I planned to have the narrow gauge tracks curve out of the fictional town of Blacklog (modeled

after Mount Union) and pass through the historic shop complex at Orbisonia, with its eight-stall roundhouse and turntable. The narrow gauge would continue to climb, passing through one of the EBT tunnels, before emerging at Robertsdale, where the coal mines were located.

While I was working on this extensive building project — which took me more than ten years to complete — I found that I could use many of the steps along the way toward the NMRA Achievement Program. I began to document my work using a blog that I established early on: “The Blacklog Valley Meets the East Broad Top Narrow Gauge.” That led to my first AP Certificate — Author.

My Hallmark narrow-gauge locomotives were all DC-powered. I decided to move to DCC, which required learning how to install sound decoders, LED lighting, and speakers in tight spaces. I opted for the NEC Power Pro system with radio control. Building the DCC track work led me to pursue the Engineer — Electrical Certificate. As the layout began to take shape, I developed new modeling skills that led to the Structure and Scenery AP Certificates. I scratchbuilt a miniature version of Robertsdale’s Company Square, which led to the Prototype Modeling award. Even the Motive Power award was a spinoff of the railroad, as one of the three locomotives I built was the EBT’s 0-6-0 standard gauge shifter at Mount Union. So achieving the MMR Certificate really grew out of the daily experience of building a model railroad, which, in turn, represents more than 45 years of developing my skills in model railroading!

Retirement also gave me the opportunity to explore the broader modeling community. I attended my first Regional Convention. I went to the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Augusta, Maine. I also

made the long trip back to Mount Union twice for the Annual Fall Reunion of the Friends of the East Broad Top, which not only inspired new work on my layout but earned several first place awards in model building — along with my favorite award: The coveted Rivet Counter Award!

In 2012, I attended the Amherst Model Railroad Show in Springfield, Massachusetts — the largest such event on the East Coast. There, I had the good fortune to meet Peter Higgins, the Membership Chair of the HUB Division. Peter is one of those folks who doesn’t take “no” for an answer. Not only did I become a member of the NMRA, but he recruited me to serve on the Membership Committee. That led me to become more active with the Division, which, in turn, led to my being elected to the HUB Division Board, which allowed me to qualify for the AP Award in Volunteer Service.

My story ends with a surprising twist. Not long ago, I received a phone call from a cousin of mine back in New Jersey — someone I had not seen in many years. He told me he was cleaning out his attic and ran across a cardboard box of old Lionel trains, and he wondered if they might belong to me! I had no idea what became of those boyhood treasures, but he offered to send them to me. The box arrived just before Christmas. As I carefully unwrapped the contents, I gasped. I was holding in my hands a Pennsy S-2 steam turbine! My very first Lionel locomotive! Also in the box were the Western Pacific A-A diesel units and a handful of railroad cars.

I took the engines to the local model railroad club in Hyannis, where they put the nearly 70-year-old locomotives on their O gauge track — and to everyone’s astonishment, they ran perfectly! I always knew Lionels were well-built, but after 50 years in the attic? They now occupy a place of honor in my train room, a reminder of the adventure that began for me a lifetime ago — a journey that has given me countless hours of pleasure and enjoyment — and a connection to my childhood that was entirely unexpected.

## Did you know?

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# Announcing the 2019 award winners for service to their Division

By Gerry Leone, MMR® NMRA Vice President / Special Projects

**U**nsung heroes. Every Region has some, and most Divisions have at least one. These are the men and women who give of themselves to help their fellow Division members get more out of the NMRA. Sometimes it involves extra time, sometimes it involves extra money, but it always involves extra effort. They don't do it for the glory, but for the betterment of their Division. These are the individuals the NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division is meant to honor.

This year is the third year this special honor was awarded, with NMRA President Pete Magoun announcing their names at the Saturday evening banquet at the Salt Lake City convention. The recipients were chosen by the NMRA National Board members and officers, along with each Region's President, most of whom consulted with their Division Superintendents or Presidents.

We're extremely proud to share the names of this year's recipients of the award, with information from the individuals who nominated them:

**Alan Harris (Australasian Region)** – Alan is currently the Superintendent for the North Coast Division of New South Wales, and has served in that position for several years. He's extremely active in recruiting new members at train displays and shows, which usually last two to three days, paying his own expenses to be there.

**Mike Hughes (British Region)** – As the British Region's Marketing Coordinator, Mike has made his South East Surrey, Kent, East and West Sussex Division more effective, engaging and welcoming. From preparing posters and negotiating discounts for members, to coordinating multi-national trips and getting national publicity for the NMRA, Mike has taken his job personally and done "beyond-the-call-of-duty" work for the NMRA.

**Riley Triggs (Lone Star Region)** – A member of the Region's Division 4, for the last seven years Riley has been the editor of The Marker Lamp, taking the newsletter

from a printed 20-page flyer to a 50+ full-color electronic version. Besides investing his free time in publishing the news of the local NMRA, Riley co-chaired an extremely successful Lone Star Region convention last year.

**Richard Briggs, MMR® (Mid-Central Region)** – Richard is a volunteer's volunteer. In his early years he held several different offices and roles of the Region's Buckeye Division, including Superintendent. After serving terms in Regional offices, Richard returned to Division service, chairing a major convention along with serving as Assistant Superintendent, as mentor for new Division officers, as Achievement Program manager, and as Boy Scout Program manager.

**Dave Salamon (Mid-Continent Region)** – Visitors are sometimes surprised that Tulsa, OK, is such a hotbed of model railroad activities. It's thanks to the Indian Nations Division's super, Dave Salamon. Dave's been in charge of the Division for 12 years, brings in nationally known speakers for Division meets, produces its newsletter, and coordinates an "op-till-you-drop" weekend for locals and those coming in from out of state.

**Howard Kaplan (Mid-Eastern Region)** – In the words of the person who nominated him, "Howard is a dynamo of the Philadelphia Division." He was elected to the Division's Board in 2011 and continues to serve as its treasurer. In 2016 he added the Division's webmaster hat to his head, and later that year become co-editor of the Division's newsletter. Two years later he became its sole editor. In addition, he volunteers at not only his own Division events, but those of other Divisions.

**Marion Brasher, MMR® (Midwest Region)** – In his early years as an NMRA member, Marion helped found the Illinois Valley Division, which grew and spawned two other Divisions. When the IVD fell on hard times in later years, Marion once again was instrumental in re-establishing the Division, serving multiple terms as its

Superintendent, and building it back to its original size. Along the way he's been an invaluable mentor to members of all skill levels.

**Peter Nesbitt (Niagara Frontier Region)** – Peter served as the first Superintendent of the St. Lawrence Division and has worked tirelessly for it ever since. He's helped members of all skill levels get more out of the hobby by presenting innumerable clinics and serving as photographer for members with articles destined for major publications. In addition, he served as the Achievement Program chair for 16 years, traveling throughout the Region to members' homes for evaluations.

**Eddie Allen (North Central Region)** – At the heart of the Three Rivers Division you'll find Eddie Allen. He served on the Division's Executive Board for 20 years, and continues to donate his talents by shooting videos of all Division presentations and operations for the Division's video library.

**Ray Howard (Northeastern Region)** – Ray Howard served as Superintendent of the Lakeshores Division for 10 years, only recently stepping down from that role. He was a driving force behind the Division's successful initiative to move from the Niagara Frontier Region to the Northeastern Region in 2017, and has edited the Division's newsletter for the last four years, all the while continuing as an impactful mentor to others.

**Doug Wagner (Pacific Coast Region)** – The Daylight Division owes a lot to Doug, who has taken on almost every position available. He's one of the few members who consistently participates in each of the far-flung Division events, and drives other locals to them. He presents clinics, chairs meetings, organizes events, and is a cheerleader for the entire Division.

**W. Gene Swanson, MMR® (Pacific Northwest Region)** – Gene has served the Region's Fourth Division for over 25 years in a variety of roles, most importantly, as manager of the Tacoma Clinic, an event that routinely draws over 50 attendees and

introduces new modelers to the NMRA. Under his direction the Clinic has become a major educational outlet for the Division. In the words of the person who nominated him, "he exemplifies the kind of member we would all like to become, in the highest tradition of NMRA service."

**Don Vest (Pacific Southwest Region)**

– In the Arizona Division, it's Don who makes things happen without being asked. He consistently opens his heart and time to share the hobby, and has a take-charge attitude that helps provide greater interest in the hobby to both young and old. He currently serves as the Division's Membership Chair, and co-chair on the Regional convention hosted by the Division.

**Andrew Saez (Rocky Mountain Region)** – Andrew's been a Board member of the Silver San Juan Division for almost a decade. He helps plan Division activities, assists with setup and tear-down of events, shoots photographs of events, and even brings refreshments. He's open, friendly and makes new attendees feel welcome.

**Gary Jarabek (Southeastern Region)**

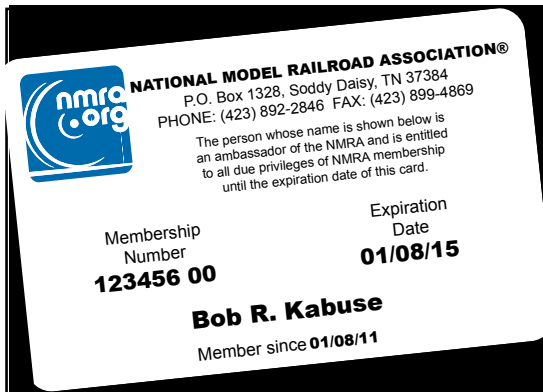
– Gary is a stalwart of the Piedmont Division. Having served as a two-term director, he currently manages the Division's apparel sales. His largest responsibility is chairing the annual Piedmont Pilgrimage, an 80+ layout open house event lasting six weeks. He also edits and distributes the Pilgrimage's comprehensive guide and makes sure layout hosts have assistants.

**Richard Segall (Sunshine Region)**

– Gilbert's been an exemplary leader of the Northern Division, and in the Region as a whole. He continues to help host Division activities on a regular basis and works to educate members about the hobby. In the words of the Region's past president, "Richard represents what the NMRA is all about."

**Miles Rohan (Thousand Lakes Region)**

– Miles is the only surviving founding member of the Prairie Lakes Division. Each year at Christmas he opens his home layout to the general public, and hosts many operating sessions there throughout the season. He's known for single-handedly taking a huge display layout to the Clay County Fairgrounds – the largest county fair in the world – to both publicize the hobby and the NMRA. In addition he's served on the Region's Board in a number of positions.



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