

NMRA BULLETIN

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**Have you changed your address or
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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
• 2020—St. Louis, MO • 2021—Santa Clara, CA • 2022—Birmingham, England

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT
JUNE 2019
GOLDEN SPIKE
Lone Star Region

Mike Armstrong, Keller, Texas

Niagara Frontier Region
Lloyd Henchey, St-Eugene, Ontario

Rocky Mountain Region
Kevin Anderson, North Salt Lake, Utah

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER
Lone Star Region
Tom Greco, Duncanville, Texas

Mid-Central Region
Michael Wolf, New Albany, Ohio

MASTER BUILDER - CARS
Southeastern Region
Joanna Long, Dayton, Georgia

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES
Pacific Northwest Region
Scott Calvert, Coquitlam, British Columbia
Tracy Stutler, Sagle, Idaho

Southeastern Region
Larry Smith, MMR, Pelham, Alabama

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY
Pacific Northwest
Bill Purinton, Pineville, Oregon
Daniel Toneges, Redmond, Oregon

Southeastern Region
Thomas Lloyd, Norcross, Georgia

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER -
ELECTRICAL
European Region
Mike Holly, Hinnstetten, Germany

Pacific Northwest Region
Brian Orysen, Roseburg, Oregon

Rocky Mountain Region
Kevin Anderson, North Salt Lake City, Utah

Southeastern Region
Thomas Lloyd, Norcross, Georgia
Alan Mole, Cumming, Georgia

CHIEF DISPATCHER
Northeastern Region
Paul Lessard, Manchester, New Hampshire

Pacific Northwest Region
Daniel Toneges, Redmond, Oregon

Rocky Mountain Region
Michael May, Durango, Colorado

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Mike Holly, Hinnstetten, Germany

Niagara Frontier Region
Walter Reid, Mississauga, Ontario

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Robert Hinkle, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania
Michael Prokop, Hamilton, New Jersey

Pacific Northwest Region
William Fassett, Spokane, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region
Lowell Didas, Taylorsville, Utah

Southeastern Region
Arthur Landrigan, Crossville, Tennessee

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR
Mid-Eastern Region
Michael Prokop, Hamilton, New Jersey

Rocky Mountain Region
Michael May, Durango, Colorado

Sunshine Region
Kenneth Farnham, Palm Bay, Florida

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER
Michael Wolf, MMR® #640 New Albany, Ohio
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 fjkoeh@hotmail.com

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

FROM HQ

The following NMRA Honors were announced at the annual banquet in Salt Lake City.

Meritorious Service Award (MSA)
Ken Liesse by the Marketing Department
Brian Barnt by the Standards & Conformance Department
Gert Muller by the IT Department

President's Award
Didrik Voss - service as Manager of Standards & Conformance Department
Scott Povlot for contributions to the IT Department
J. Anthony Koester for service as the Nominating Committee Manager
Stephen Priest - service as a Director

Distinguished Service Award (DSA)
Bob Phelps
Tim Warris

Honorary Life Member (HLM)
Brian Barnt

There were also 17 individuals identified by their Regions for service at the Division level (featured in the magazine last month).

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the internet smaller.**

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NMRA eBULLETIN?**

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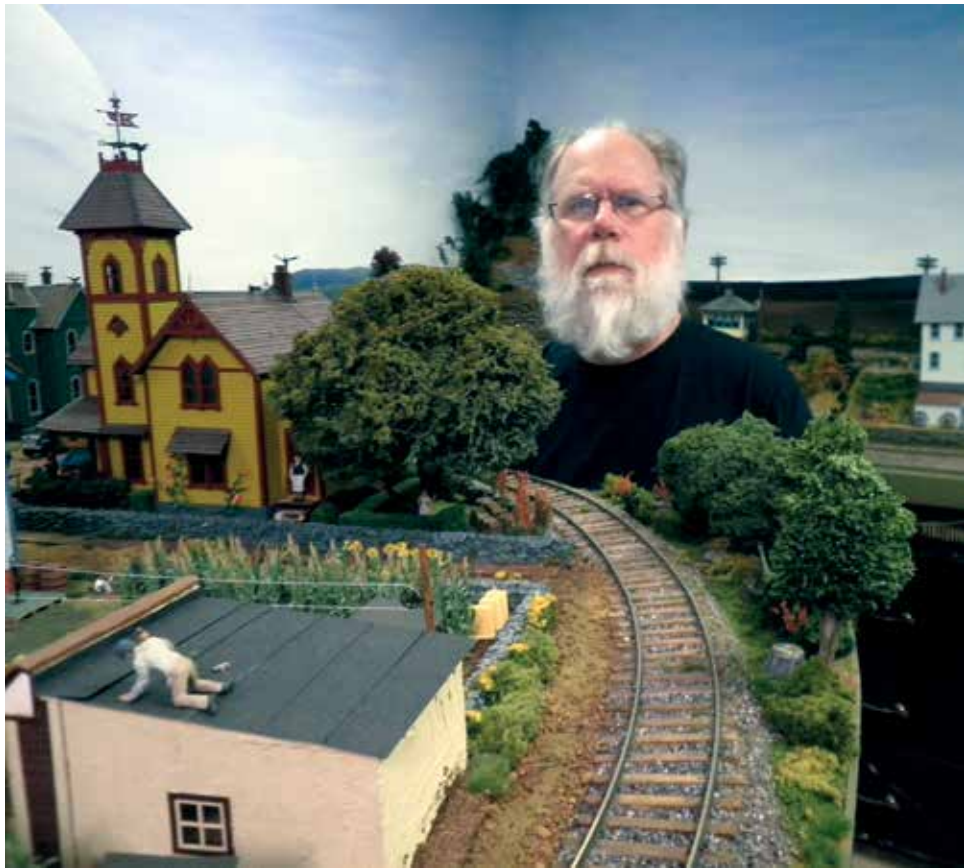
**MARTIN BRECHBIEL
EARNS MMR® #629**

How I started in trains” is something close to the usual, but with a bit of a twist. There was a family sideline business of buying and selling collectibles when I was a lad that unsurprisingly intersected with Lionel trains. That led to a modest layout that was always under construction in the back of the family workshop somewhat near the furnace but then never completed. I went off to school, and that was the end of model trains of any kind for many years.

I got my first degree in Chemistry, changed career choices, took a hard left turn away from medical school, went off to graduate school for a few more years, and got a second degree in Chemistry. This path also led to an intersection with marriage shortly thereafter and a stint in the pesticide industry. That stint did not last. Relocating to be with my wife led to another career shift into cancer research, and over a few years, a third degree in Chemistry. Along the way, children arrived on the scene and were added to the formula. And then it was career, career, career, career, family, family, career, career times another 15 years of existence in the “publish or perish” arena, more career, and no trains. In fact, the remains of the trains of my distant youth were all packed away in storage and did not make an appearance for several more years.

Then, my father-in-law reignited the model railroading flame with his basement HO and HOn3 layout. All those older Lionel trains came out into the light of day. Some were refurbished, and a small 3-rail layout was built in the unfinished end of the basement. It was truly self-limiting but served its purpose to teach me what I did and did not like about many things regarding just about all possible aspects of the hobby. That layout quickly reached its endpoint, and was discarded in toto since I decided it was time to move away from 3-rail to 2-rail. The appeal of O scale, however, stayed firmly in place. I found an old All-Nation NW2 in need of much help. I installed a new drive and generally put it to rights. I then rebuilt and re-detailed a Weaver RS-3 while building kits of rolling stock sold to me by Vince Waterman. This work was much better, yet still not right.

It was time to build a 2-rail layout and to model the time and location of my under-



lying railroading spark. When I lived with my grandparents in Greencastle as a lad, the main line of what had been the Cumberland Valley Railroad 75 years earlier had enough traffic that I could sit on the back steps, hear the trains long before they were visible, and then watch them travel back and forth. Across the street, there was a spur where cars would be switched out, and out in the middle of the road there were still remnants of track from when the train and the trolley ran through the center of town. The South Penn branch of the CVRR even ran up to Lemasters then, and on rare occasions, there would be a switcher with a car at the grain elevator there. Oh, yes, the die was cast, and I was off and running back to model in O scale a railroad long dead and gone. I found that I was going to have to build just about everything, so the local hobby shop became a regular destination.

It was here that I discovered the NMRA, or rather a subset of it: the Potomac Division of the Mid-Eastern Region. The hobby shop had free copies of the Region’s newsletters on the counter. I availed myself of these and thought perhaps I might join and attend an event or two to see how I might fit. After a time or three (and an open house or three),

I very bravely offered to host an open house since I had the layout and track operational to the point where my son was the actual operator having fun making the trains go round. The layout had a modest start of scenery at one end. I had also recently constructed a small display module that featured the construction of several boxcars in an assembly line along with a quirky asymmetric three-way stub switch, as well as a bunch of scenery. For the boxcars, I followed a good portion of the framing diagrams depicted in White’s book on freight cars.

The open house happened; bodies came and went. That day, I met Clint Hyde, who suggested that I might attend the upcoming Division Mini-Con. He also encouraged me to bring my models to the contest room. Really? Hmmmm....and much head-scratching was involved. I found the entry and judging forms, and after much guesswork and scribbling, I brought the display module and the completed cars that went on it to the meet. I dropped them all off in the contest room and went off to a day of clinics and some socializing, spending time being introduced to people.

When it was time to go, I was informed that I had to wait for the contest room results

before collecting my models. Much to my surprise, I was handed the Superintendent's Award plaque for the display, and then there were the scores for the two cars where I found I had earned Merit Awards! *Wait! What Merit Awards? Achievement Program? What's that? What were these people going on about now?*

I learned and built more models and the following year took a scratchbuilt coaling tower and a watering tower over to the Mini-Con. I was not keen on the latter, thinking it not my best work, but did so at the urging of my wife, who (once again) proved who knows best – I earned two more Merit Awards. The next year, I took a handful of my various scratchbuilt MoW cars over to the Regional Convention, thinking I might sneak out with another Merit Award, if lucky. Five Merit Awards and the President's Award later, I began to think that I might be onto something here. A Certificate for Master Builder Cars in 2003 confirmed that for me.

Lots of clinics and the like followed, but my attention turned now more to writing. Mr. Hyde, again, encouraged transforming my handouts from a few three-hour handouts on clinics into articles. Living in the "publish or perish" world, this was great fun and delightful recreational writing for me getting articles in the old *SCALE RAILS* magazine and the Regional newsletter. Then I got daring and sent off a piece to *O Scale Trains*. I was published there, and I never looked back! The next article made the cover of *O Scale Trains*, and I now had the points and more for Author. But that was just the beginning of that story – the short version is that I became a regular columnist in *O Scale Trains* and then Associate Editor. I look back to that time of being a wee lad when I thought that it would be so amazing to see my name in a magazine as an author, and now I see it in every issue of *O Scale Trains*. That never gets old!

Strangely enough, Motive Power followed, taking advantage of my burgeoning interest in trolleys and traction (that columnist job). That connection goes back to living in Greencastle with those traces of tracks in the middle of town. Perhaps they were from the Chambersburg, Greencastle & Waynesboro Railway? Regardless, they left their mark on me, so much so, that I am always building a trolley or traction item.

Volunteer and Structures neatly fell into place at the interface of all the clinics I conducted over time and buildings I created for the layout. Then things stalled for about a decade. I took over the job of

Contest Chairman for the Mid-Eastern Region (thank you, again, Mr. Hyde) and spent a few years re-vamping operations and how the judging was done.

That other life that paid the bills expanded to exert dominance over my free time. During a critical time in my career that took all that I had to give and asked for more, I found ways to deliver successfully. Fortunately, I could see that I would probably be able to come up for air on the other side, rest on the laurels, and resume pursuit of the AP and the elusive MMR. Silly me! I volunteered to be a candidate for the position of Director for the Mid-Eastern Region. Sillier yet, I served two terms and got Official while also putting forth what I still think was a good effort on behalf of the Region. I resigned as Contest Chairman, thinking that a decade was all that anyone should ever do such a job, retired from the cancer research career (dropped to Emeritus status), and thought that now I have time to get something done on my layout, and maybe, *just maybe*, move the pursuit of MMR back into the active column.

I have oft times found that the best-laid plans of mice overrule man's plans, so midway into the year, I ended up as Editor of *O Scale Trains*! Well, in for a penny, a pound, or a 16-ton weight, so I tossed my hat back into the ring and got elected as Secretary on the Board of the Mid-Eastern Region.

Prior to that, in a brief open window of time, I took a few days to clear my layout room, taking stock of the mountain of supplies stacked in there. With the help of my better half (have I mentioned how supportive and tolerant my wife has been forever?), we decided that I might have everything I needed to do the scenery, and, well, earn the Scenery AP certificate, as well as make the mountain go away. A flurry of activity early in 2018 and then a concerted major storm of action resulted in the completion of the layout scenery in early in 2019 ready for judging. I had a week before the judging and the arrival of Dave Chance, the Mid-Eastern Region AP Coordinator. I had a folder labeled Dispatcher, and I knew I had enough hours adequately distributed, too. All I had to do was "everything else" in about 120 hours.

Fortunately, in the NMRA, you meet people willing to help, and in some special cases, actually *teach* you about such stuff that might exist as a total mystery to you but is crystal clear to others. Kurt Thompson, MMR®, spent a few hours in the recent past at my one work table walking me through

that part of Dispatcher that I described as "everything else." People in the NMRA will actually help you! I pulled out my notes, took over a table, and (after running out to Office Depot for an assortment of fine-tipped color markers in the dead of night) got it done. Both Scenery and Dispatcher Certificates were issued a few weeks later, and my MMR application was on its way.

And, so ends that saga. However, there were some critical points along the way involving countless members of the NMRA from whom I learned, was mentored by, taught by, guided by, and who kept me pointed in the right direction, helping me traverse obstacles. Clint Hyde, John Griffiths, Mark Anderson, Chuck Hladik, MMRs Noll Horan, Bill Day, Bob Charles, Kurt Thompson, and a host of others, including my most excellent, supportive, and tolerant wife made this all possible. The Division newsletter in the local hobby shop that got me started also has to be credited; however, the newsletter isn't in hobby shops anymore, and there aren't many hobby shops either. This outreach action, sadly, seems to be fading away.

Lastly, the Achievement Program can be a means to becoming a better and more complete modeler. Even if you never take your participation to MMR, it's still a great way to learn, make friends for many years, and support the hobby through many of the categories.

Certificates Earned
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