

# NMRA BULLETIN

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**Region Secretaries: send all  
changes in Region officer infor-  
mation to the NMRA Secretary:  
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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](mailto:ntsreg@nmra.org)

• 2023—Dallas, Texas • 2024—Long Beach, California

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## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

**MAY 2022**

#### **GOLDEN SPIKE**

##### **Mid-Central Region**

Michael DeSensi, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Ken Martin, Brick, New Jersey

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

Jeff Johnston, Eugene, Oregon

##### **Thousand Lakes Region**

Rich Holzapfel, Sherman, South Dakota

Todd Marks, Harrisburg, South Dakota

Scott Nesbit, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Richard Remiarz, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

#### **MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER**

##### **Mid-Central Region**

Benjamin Lanza, N. Royalton, Ohio

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Christopher Conaway, Moorestown, New Jersey

#### **MASTER BUILDER - CARS**

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John Witt, Rocky River, Ohio

##### **Mid-Continent Region**

Craig Drenkow, Norfolk, Nebraska

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Robert Cook, Chesapeake, Virginia

##### **Northeastern Region**

Thomas Emmett, Newport, Rhode Island

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

#### **MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES**

##### **Mid-Continent Region**

Craig Drenkow, Norfolk, Nebraska

Dean Smith, Rolla, Missouri

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Thom Radice, Long Branch, New Jersey

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

John Bilahorka, Kennewick, Washington

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

#### **MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY**

##### **Australasia Region**

Malcolm Jenkins, Seven Hills, Queensland, Australia

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Michael Prokop, Hamilton, New Jersey

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

Phillip Miller, Pasco, Washington

### **Sunshine Region**

Jeff DeVido, Coral Springs, Florida

#### **Thousand Lakes Region**

Richard Remiarz, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

#### **MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS**

##### **Australasia Region**

Malcolm Jenkins, Seven Hills, Queensland, Australia

Peter Jensen, Narara, New South Wales, Australia

#### **MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL**

##### **Australasia Region**

Craig Mackie, Parkinson, Queensland, Australia

##### **Mid-Continent Region**

Dean Smith, Rolla, Missouri

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Michael Prokop, Hamilton, New Jersey

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

George Fuchs, Hermiston, Oregon

Phillip Miller, Pasco, Washington

#### **MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL**

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##### **Mid-Continent Region**

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##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

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##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

George Fuchs, Hermiston, Oregon

Jeff Johnston, Eugene, Oregon

Phillip Miller, Pasco, Washington

David Morgan, Hermiston, Oregon

##### **Thousand Lakes Region**

Richard Remiarz, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

#### **CHIEF DISPATCHER**

##### **Australasia Region**

Malcolm Jenkins, Seven Hills, Queensland, Australia

##### **Mid-Central Region**

John Witt, Rocky River, Ohio

##### **Mid-Continent Region**

Dean Smith, Rolla, Missouri

##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

Rick Stoneking, Lumberton, New Jersey

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

### **Sunshine Region**

Douglas Bowman, Orlando, Florida

#### **Thousand Lakes Region**

Richard Remiarz, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

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##### **Mid-Eastern Region**

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##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

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##### **Mid-Continent Region**

Dean Smith, Rolla, Missouri

##### **Northeastern Region**

Jerry Growchow, Cambridge, Massachusetts

##### **Pacific Northwest Region**

David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

Jeff Johnston, Eugene, Oregon

##### **Thousand Lakes Region**

Richard Remiarz, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota

#### **MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®**

MMR® #706 Malcolm Jenkins, Seven Hills, Queensland, Australia

MMR® #707 John Witt, Rocky River, Ohio

MMR® #708 Dean Smith, Rolla, Missouri

MMR® #709 Craig Drenkow, Norfolk, Nebraska

MMR® #710 Robert Cook, Chesapeake, Virginia

MMR® #711 David Clune, Eugene, Oregon

AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP program or requirements, start with your local or Region. If you still have questions, contact Frank Koch at [fjkoch@hotmail.com](mailto:fjkoch@hotmail.com). If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

## DON BERGMAN

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #701

## The Journey to My MMR®

**B**orn in 1943, I grew up near Standale west of Grand Rapids, Michigan, rarely crossing rails. I faintly remember, at age 3, going to the GR depot canopy to welcome Uncle Ken home from World War II. Another time camping, my dad paced a steamer northeast of Higgins Lake. I must have seen more, now deep in my subconscious, because my parents said one of my first sentences was, “Smoke, smoke, must be a train.” My dad took us to see planes!

Growing up, I was a fan of Roy Rogers and a mythical version of the West from radio and TV. An engine wouldn’t start during one of my MMR® evaluations, and I automatically said, “Come on, Nelly Belle.” My favorite Christmas toys were Roy Rogers miniatures: a metal ranch house one year, the town the next, with furniture inside like doll houses. Figures in poses of typical ranch work or town life with ranch equipment, fences, rodeo chutes, animals, horses in different poses, bulls, cows, and calves. I enjoyed setting a scene and creating adventures. The bad guys always lost.

While I got “dollhouses” for Christmas, my older brother got a Marx 3-rail train set and a couple of Plasticville buildings, which I played with more than he did. Behind Standale stores was a dump. One day, while dump scrounging, I found a box of track with four turnouts and thought I’d struck gold! Playtime was primarily ranch sets, with trains a distant third behind plastic models. Occasionally, I would mix ranch and trains, but the dissonance between the scales bothered me, so I usually kept them apart. I was envious of cousins with “prototypical” 2-rail American Flyer trains.

Still playing with the “dollhouses,” somewhat into high school, I realized I needed an adult pastime and to stop playing with “kid’s” toys. Admiring train sets in catalogs and noting adults in *Model Railroader*, maybe trains were the answer. In January 1961, as a junior in high school, I took my Christmas money and purchased an HO Gilbert set: an 0-6-0 Pennsy slope-back tender with sound. (Sound? It had a piston that forced air out in sequence with the drivers.) I still have it. That was it. I was hooked. My freelanced Anaconda & Silver Bow



Railroad morphed from one to three 4x8s in a J-shape by the time I graduated from college. I had a few Revell kits but lots of balsa wood structures, even a 10-inch-long x 6-inch-high trestle. When I tried a mountain with an elevated track on the third 4x8, it was a disaster but a learning experience.

With little cash for dates during college, there were several “dates” with me working on the railroad and my future wife (taught by my mom) knitting! We married in 1966. Our honeymoon rental had no place for trains. She supports my hobby and brags about it to visitors, but when it takes too much of my time, she wants a sign over the door, “The Other Woman!”

I graduated from Calvin College in 1967 with a BA in education with a history major and started a 30-year career teaching in Kalamazoo, Michigan. To celebrate the occasion, my wife and I took a three-week trip visiting the west’s ranching territory and National Parks through Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana. Going through Alamosa and Durango on the way to Mesa Verde, we stopped in each place for too short a time. I discovered the Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge. Live steam! Once home, I began to research Colorado narrow gauge. Another trip in 1970 included a ride on the Durango & Silverton.

From 1967 to 1972, we rented a duplex. I built the second A&SBRR in a 12x24-foot basement room in 8x3-foot

modules with a duck-under — a mistake I never repeated!

In 1970, Bob Van Dyk, a student, was sitting in the front row in my junior US History class doodling! I took the paper and sternly said, “You should be taking notes; see me after class.” He expected a scolding; instead, I handed him his paper and said, “You’re a model railroader, huh?” He was drawing a track plan! “Would you like to come over and see my layout?” He did, and it has grown into a life-long friendship despite political and religious differences: the power of model railroading, Bob and I were essentially lone-wolf modelers, reinventing wheels until 2000.

My wife and I moved into our first home in 1972. Though the 3x8 modules could be removed from the rented basement, they could not make it into the new home — a good time to start over. A Colorado theme was never in doubt. Time to pick a prototype. Using Beebe and Clegg’s *Narrow Gauge in the Rockies*, borrowed from Bob, I decided on Rio Grande Southern. The bridges sealed the deal. The plan was to use my standard-gauge collection, mostly Tyco, imagining RGS surviving into the 1960s by going standard gauge.

The basement deal with my wife was: one-third kids, one-third hers, and one-third (24x16) mine. Eventually taking half of her third, giving me 3/6ths, was a mistake she will not let me forget! The track plan was

drawn, benchwork completed, and 25 feet of track laid. Then Bob, now out of school and a confirmed bachelor (that would end in several years), started collecting HO<sub>3</sub> brass engines despite modeling in N scale. When he brought over his C-16, 2-8-0, I knew I had to go narrow gauge. It's just so cute. Over the next 14 years, I provided the basement, lumber, scenery, scratchbuilt track, structures, and cars. In addition to supplying labor and several structures, Bob, without a layout on which to run his nicely painted engines, "stored" his collection of 2-8-0s, 4-6-0s, and 2-8-2s in my basement — an expense I could not afford. This incomplete layout resulted in an article in the November 1989 *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette*. Unknown at the time, it was the start of my Author certificate.

In 1975, we took our two young boys for a ride on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. We moved in 1984, dismantling the layout, labeling every support item, saving the towns and every section of roadbed and track. We moved again in 1991 into an 1880 Victorian in the Kalamazoo Stuart Ave. historic district. Neither time did a layout get past the benchwork stage. As funds became available, I began to purchase Bob's engines as he switched to Ann Arbor Railroad HO standard gauge.

In July 1995, a deeply personal family event that caused me to lose my job set in motion a series of improbable events that culminated in my MMR<sup>®</sup>. Our lives became very different from that point on, and we lost every friend except Bob. In September 1997, Bob invited me to the first of our five trips to Colorado. The most recent trip was in August 2021 to the C&TS Iron Horse Round Up, a ride behind RGS No. 20, and another tour of the RGS right-of-way. We usually slept in our minivans near the tracks.

In November 1998, we "got-out-of-Dodge," moving to Holland, Michigan, where my wife secured employment. I told her we are in this condo until the nursing home! Condo? Good, no yard work, more time for trains; bad, smaller train room than hoped for. I started my current layout in a 20x18-foot room shared with descending stairs, a furnace, and a water heater. Bob and I drew plans for six months. The first benchwork went up in the summer of 1999. The 1970s Ridgway and Rico yards, structures, including a scratchbuilt Ridgway depot, and Bridges 45-A and 44-A all survived the moves. About one-third of this new layout's track are sections saved from the 1970s layout, used wherever they would fit.

The May 2012 issue of *NMRA MAGAZINE* highlighted this layout.

My claim to fame among RGS fans, prompted by poor memory, is a searchable database of 22,000-plus records in 14 fields of RGS published and internet photographs, timetables, maps, paper records, etc. This database makes detailed searches possible, such as a photo of the right side of engine No. 20 in 1945 or the back side of the section house at Hesperus.

In 1999, I started a part-time job at Parker fluid power parts distribution store. On the first day, I watched CSX trains going by and was scolded all day by Tom Vander Lip (D), "Get back to work, Bergman!" At day's end, we discussed trains and modeling. He invited me to his Thursday night group. The first time I attended, Bruce Chubb MMR<sup>®</sup> gave a talk on DCC. That meeting had a dual impact.

First, with my attention to modeling having slowed during the 1990s when I was working on restoring our historic home, that meeting introduced me to DCC. It immediately altered my plans for operating my layout. I had planned on using my collection of rotary switches to control each block. Always short on modeling funds, it led to a lot of scratchbuilt track, structures, cars, and weeds for trees. I had made my block-controlling rotary switches from discarded TV 13-channel selector switches. Now, it's NCE DCC all the way.

Second, our lone-wolf days were over. I had never had an op session on my layout. Bob and I had operated on Bill Nicholas's (D) layout several times. Now, I began attending numerous op sessions with Tom's group. It also reintroduced me to Bruce. I had operated on his layout twice in the late 1960s. He completely went off my model railroader radar when I moved to Kalamazoo.

I attended several work sessions on the Sunset Valley Oregon System. But these were limited, as I was back at teaching at a local school in Holland from 2000 until retirement in 2004. Through Bruce's sessions and other means, I met numerous modelers, several of whom have become friends: Russ Venlos, Dex Decker, Duane Hall, Frank Dekker, and Pete Burkey.

In 2004, I started weekly work sessions on Bruce's SVOS. The first six months were assembly-line production of large Ponderosa Pine trees. Then a little scenery, plasterwork, and rock coloring. About 2006, Bruce handed me eight laser kits of the same Southern Pacific Depot and asked

if I'd kitbash them into the various alterations for 12 SP depots and freight houses on the SVOS. Once these were completed, about 2008, he asked me to start scratchbuilding (using styrene) prototypical structures for which there are no kits that come close for bashing. The first was the depot at Salem, which took 1½ years of Wednesday work sessions. Then it was the Harry and David's headquarters building with its Art Deco Towers, East Portland's Sperry Flour, an SP Freight Station, VC and East Portland Interlocking Towers, and Albany's Lane Hotel, SP&S and SP depots, RX building, and Ernie's Coffee Shop. Portland Union Depot was at my home getting painted as I wrote this. My claim to fame on the SVOS is a dozen kitbashed SP structures and two dozen scratchbuilt prototypical structures. Bruce taught me many new techniques along the way.

With Bruce's encouragement, I started looking into the MMR<sup>®</sup> program. Recently, I ran across an NMRA Membership card from 1976, member 21504. That membership lasted a couple of years. I rejoined in 2003.

Studying the directives, I realized most categories were within reach except Author. In 2005, I started giving clinics at conventions on "Modeling the Prototype," "Building Trestles RGS Style," "The RGS Then and Now," "The Four Railroads of Silverton," and "D&RG and C&S/RGS Double Deck Stock Cars." When several magazine articles were rejected, I was a bit discouraged. During COVID, I did little train modeling. I was back in my dollhouse phase, building two, 1-inch-to-1-foot scale dollhouses for two nieces' daughters.

In November 2000, I ran across a My Google RGS Map on Steven Hayworth's website with about 200 points of interest. Steven gave me permission to work on the map. During the winter of 2020–2021, I added close to 2,000 more points, including photographs from the C&TS Friends collection. In late January 2021, it dawned on me it might qualify for Author points. I emailed the URL to Skip Luyk, MMR<sup>®</sup>, of the Grand Rails Division for review. The points awarded put me over the top for Author. You can find the map at "rgsrr.info," clicking on "Right-of-Way Map."

I had kept track of op sessions on my RGS and other layouts since 2006, which, along with my RGS paperwork, earned me Chief Dispatcher.

Next was Structures. I added some detail to six RGS scratchbuilt structures:

Telluride Depot, Vanadium Mill Complex, Omega Ore Tipple, truss Bridge 46-F, curved Bridge 44-A, and Lizard Head Snow Sheds. I also picked the first six structures listed above that I built for SVOS. I met Skip and Tom Post at Bruce's in the summer to start Structures. The first six I showed hit merit awards; when I pointed out six more, they said you earned it. Then I noted I needed a bridge. So, Structures stalled.

Looking over the requirements, I realized that Cars, Civil Engineer, Prototypical Model, and Scenery would still take some work. I have lots of nice scratchbuilt but not "super-detailed" cars. During the summer of 2021, I added brake and other details to a DP D&RGW snowplow kitbashed into RGS Rotary No. 2, and a Labelle Coach kit turned into RGS Outfit Car 0260. I added details to scratchbuilt RGS plow flanger 02, RGS 27-foot boxcar, D&RG(W) gondolas, box, and stock car.

I used four months to spruce up several scenes by doing things I had put off, including the San Miguel River bottom in my Ophir Loop scene, for Scenery and Prototype Model.

I hit a snag with Civil Engineer. I have several crossovers, 58 (10 stub) of my 86

turnouts are hand-laid many with scratch-built frogs, but my scratchbuilt turntable was not operational. I still did not qualify. I then built a gauntlet track on a piece of Homasote in January 2022 and e-mailed Skip. He and Tom visited for four hours on February 3. Starting by looking at a bridge 46-F, I had finished the task.

The process was challenging and fun and forced me to do things I was putting off, and yes, I even learned new stuff.

Assuming I am "loaded," non-model railroad visitors frequently comment on the expense of the hobby. I tell them it can be expensive, but there are things one can do: free rotary switches, hand turnout throws, scratchbuild, use a discarded fake Christmas tree or weeds for trees. Most of the lumber was purchased in 1972. I ask them what they do for fun. I hear ATVs, golf, fishing, Friday tavern night, travel trailer, Lions season tickets, etc. Then I ask how much that costs a year. Wow, I don't spend that much! The difference is this: a big chunk of what I have spent for my fun for the last 50 years you are looking at right now.

A model railroader is a lot of things: dreamer, designer, planner, imaginative, historian, carpenter, sculptor, electrician,

civil engineer, model builder, painter, and observer of things natural and man-made. But first and foremost, we are artists. Others ask me, "Why?" I respond, "Why does an artist paint?" Some comment on the time; my response is again, "You're looking at 50 years' worth of my time. What do you have to show for 50 years of golfing?"

I am still "setting a scene creating my own adventures," such as two friends operating trains on RGS Timetable No. 57 with one not paying attention to the fast clock. Two engines with momentum come around the blind curve heading into Placerville and hit head-on; two good guys died this time! And the cowboys herding cattle in the pens at Old Placerville will soon ride to assist the survivors.

### Certificates Earned Don Bergman, MMR® #701

- Master Builder – Cars
- Master Builder – Structures
- Master Builder – Scenery
- Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
- Master Builder – Prototype Model
- Model Railroad Author
- Chief Dispatcher

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We make it more fun.

# MALCOLM JENKINS

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #706

I live in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. I retired in 2011 from full-time work as a mechanical engineering consultant, working mainly with heavy machinery in the sugar and mining industries. In contrast to the machines weighing up to 4,000 tonnes on which I worked, I model in N scale. I started in N scale in the early 1970s, when the scale was quite new. I have always wanted to model the Australian prototype. When I started, absolutely nothing for Australian prototype was available ready to run in N, so I started a lifetime of kitbashing and scratchbuilding. Inevitably, this approach slowly developed some skills.

After a modeling gap of a few years, I moved to Adelaide in 1983. An encounter with an uphill freight train restarting with three giant GM 3,300-hp diesels reawakened the urge to model, and so I started modeling the South Australian Railways. Of course, at the time, nothing South Australian was available in N, which led to more kitbashing and some serious scratchbuilding, including venturing into custom brass etches and, more recently, 3D-modeling and printing.

Over the years, I have been very slowly building a layout covering a portion of the Adelaide Hills, including Belair, which was my station in life from 1983–1988. Retirement has enabled more serious progress, and the layout, including a lower level with Murray Bridge, was effectively completed in time for the 2015 Australian National N Scale Convention in Brisbane. What started as a “modern image” contemporary layout in 1985 has become a historical mid-1980s period layout.

Since the completion of the layout, my interest in operations has grown. Duncan Cabassi, current President of the NMRA Australasian Region, is a great source of inspiration. Duncan’s vast experience with operations inspired me to develop my layout for operations and gave me some crucial practical ideas for terminals and staging areas to improve operability. Duncan is still a regular Yardmaster during our operating sessions, constantly popping out new ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Rolling stock inspiration came from a few key people: Peter Boorman, an incredibly skilled scratchbuilder who has provided a vast range of kits of Australian proto-



types in N scale; Gavin Thrum, a prolific scratchbuilder of South Australian prototype locomotives; Ross Balderson, probably Australia’s greatest N-scale structural modeler; and Phil Badger, MMR®, who has also produced a huge range of kits and RTR Australian prototype in N scale.

## Giving Back to the Hobby

Almost as soon as I started scratchbuilding South Australian prototype models, I worked with a couple of cottage industry manufacturers so that my models could be made available as resin kits for other like-minded modelers. For over 30 years now, my models have been made available by Rob Carpenter and Peter Boorman. More recently, with the advent of 3D-modeling and commercial printing, I have made other models available directly via Shapeways. Altogether, I have made over 60 of my models available in one or another of these ways.

I have also made presentations at the Modeling the Railways of South Australia Annual Convention, covering the availability of SAR models in N scale; the scratchbuilding/kitbashing of a railcar; and my prototype modeling of the crossing of the Murray River at Murray Bridge. I have made presentations and given clinics at the biennial Australian National N Scale conventions covering my approach to designing

custom brass etches; prototype modeling; and the use of 3D-modeling to produce rolling stock (also covered in a clinic at the Clinics Weekend of the local Division of the Australasian Region).

I have written numerous articles for the *Newsletter of the Victorian N Scale Collective*, covering various techniques and ideas I have developed, as well as following the development and expansion of my home layout. An article on my approach to prototype modeling has also been published in the NMRA AR Magazine, *MainLine*.

I was encouraged to undertake the NMRA AP journey by Duncan Cabassi and Arthur Hayes, the current AP coordinator for the local Queensland Division. I earned the Prototype Modeling certificate for my representation of the Belair station and surrounds and rolling stock involved in a three-day-per-week splitting of a mixed train into its passenger and freight sections.

## Certificates Earned Malcolm Jenkins, MMR® #706

- Master Builder – Motive Power
- Master Builder – Cars
- Master Builder – Structures
- Model Railroad Author
- Master Builder – Scenery
- Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
- Chief Dispatcher
- Master Builder – Prototype Modeler

## MMR EARNED

### CRAIG DRENKOW

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #709

**M**y journey in model railroading is a little different than a lot of stories you have heard. I never had a Lionel train under the Christmas tree. As a child, Christmas was always a favorite time of the year — that's when the Christmas catalogs came out with all the train sets in the back. For some reason, "Santa" never brought me one. I always liked trains, and a trip to Grandma and Grandpa's house was a favorite time since they lived just across the road from a Milwaukee Road train line with two to three daily trains. When the train whistle blew, the adults at the gathering always got a kick out of my two brothers and me running out into the yard (or to the window if it was cold).

Captain Kangaroo was a favorite show, especially when they had the shows with trains. I didn't get my first train until the early-to-mid-1980s, when a local grocery store had a display of Bachmann starter sets and extra pieces and cars. You can imagine how well it ran, and I was getting a little frustrated. My wife spotted a story in the local paper about the local club having an open house. I went to visit and got up the courage to ask about joining after overhearing a conversation between another visitor and a member. The next week, I showed up at their regular work



night and joined the group. Those guys were very friendly, and I volunteered when one of them asked for help with wiring.

That group fell apart after losing three locations about the time the layouts were starting to run well. One of the members contacted me several years later and asked me to come to an NMRA Division meeting. That led to me joining the NMRA and learning about the Achievement Program. At first glance, it looked so intimidating, but I was encouraged to look at each category and see what I had already done.

I earned my Golden Spike in May 2009. My first AP certificate was Model

Railroad Engineer – Electrical in August 2012. In July 2019, I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, and after a severe reaction to the first round of chemo, I spent three months in the hospital. While there, I decided to concentrate on finishing my needed certificates. Our Region lost its AP chairman while I was in the hospital, and a call went out to all Divisions asking for a volunteer to take on the role. I emailed, asking what qualifications were needed for the position, and was told I would make a great AP Chairman. Brad Slone then asked Marty Vaughn to help me get up to speed as he had been the chairman. After leaving the hospital, I finished the last four certificates needed. It was kind of fun learning to do the AP paperwork for submitting to National on my own certificates.

I want to thank Dr. Dennis Brandt, MMR®, for his guidance, as well as Brad Slone, and Ryan Moats, and the rest of the executive board of the Mid-Continent Region for their support.

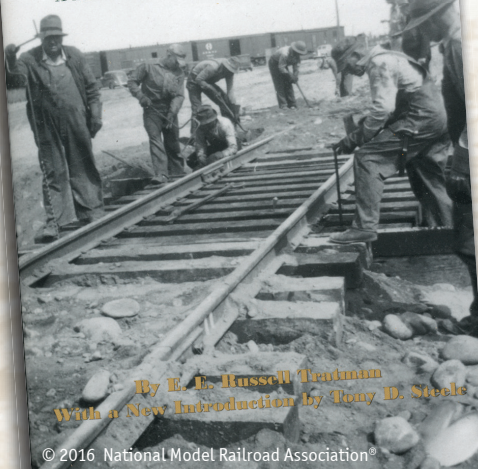
#### Certificates Earned Craig Drenkow, MMR® #709

**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Association Official**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Master Builder – Cars**  
**Master Builder – Structures**

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# BOB PHELPS (1937–2022): PIONEER IN MODEL RAILROADING

by Mike Arnold, Atlantic District Director

**B**ob Phelps passed away at his home in France suddenly in March 2022. He had been the product design engineer for PECO for more years than I have any memory of (1964–2016). Bob designed the track and turnouts on which many layouts run. In 2019, he received the Distinguished Service Award at the NMRA National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, for his outstanding service to the hobby of model railways, or model railroading. I was honored to be there with Steve Haynes, PECO sales manager (and others). Upon receiving the award, Bob was very humble and taken by total surprise. He simply said, “I was doing my job.”

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®, recognized that Bob was one of our hobby’s true pioneers and made strenuous efforts to get Bob that recognition, albeit posthumously. Bob was awarded the ultimate accolade our hobby can offer. On Sunday, May 29, 2022, I had the honor of bestowing that award to his widow, Liz, at a memorial event held at PECO’s premises. It was attended by his family, friends, NMRA members and former colleagues at PECO.

The award plaque presented to Liz arrived safely onto the shores of England via a number of people attending Indy Junction the weekend before. Gordy brought it back and posted it to me. The plaque reads: “Pioneer in Model Railroading, Bob Phelps, 1937–2022. Product Design Engineer, PECO, 1964–

2016. A modeler of U.S. prototype railroads, Bob worked to improve the appearance, utility, and reliability of model track in many scales. Among his many contributions are the PECO Code 70 and Code 83 HO track lines.”

Code 70 and Code 83 track with Unifrog turnouts will be Bob’s lasting legacy. Our model railways will be an enduring tribute to him. The Streamline HO Code 83 track line was very much a personal project of Bob’s, according to Steve Haynes. To put Bob’s work (and that of PECO) into context, in the USA, Dunkin’ Donuts advertises that “America runs on Dunkin’”; you could say — without any fear of contradiction — “The hobby runs on PECO.” Bob was an NMRA member due, in part, to his passion for all things Union Pacific.

Bob follows in the footsteps of many other Pioneers who have become household names in the hobby in the USA and Canada: Irv Athearn (Athearn Trains); Albert Kalmbach (publisher of *Model Railroader*, etc.); William K. Walther (Walther’s wholesalers and manufacturers of PECO products in North America); Joshua Lionel Cowen

(Lionel Trains); Charles Pittman (motors); John Allen (layout design); Märklin Brothers (no, not the comedy act); Bernd Lenz (the father of DCC); and Bob Rands (Micro Engineering track).

You may not have heard of Bob Rands, but mention of his name leads me to this: let me quote from the article by Jim Six (another renowned modeler in the USA) in the May 2022 issue of the digital magazine *Model Railroad Hobbyist* about his choice of track for his new layout:

“Micro Engineering and PECO have the best rail profile. PECO has the most accurate ties (aka sleepers). The combination of best rail profile, best ties, and best spike heads make PECO the all-around best track for me.”

Irv Athearn now has some decent track to run his trains on in the great model railroad empire in the sky. 🚂

**Editor’s note:** For a more about Bob, see “A Brief Appreciation of the Life and Work of an Exceptional Modeller and Product Designer” in the June 2022 issue of PECO’s *Continental Modeller*.

**Left:** Pecorama — the narrow-gauge Beer Heights Light Railway that loops around the company’s grounds — ran this special train for Bob’s family. — Mike Arnold photo



Above: Mike Arnold presents Liz Phelps with Bob Phelps’ Pioneer in Model Railroading award — the hobby’s highest distinction. — Peter Bowen photo

