

# NMRA BULLETIN

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**Notify NMRA Headquarters**

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changes in Region officer infor-  
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2024 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:  
Long Beach, California August 4 - 11, 2024 (<https://surfliner2024.org/>)  
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)  
• 2025 Novi, Michigan

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# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

## NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

JUNE 2024

GOLDEN SPIKE

### Australasia Region

David Orr, Modbury North, South Australia, Australia

### Mid-Eastern Region

Michael Junod, Southampton, Pennsylvania

### Northeastern Region

Robert Schmidt, Staten Island, New York  
Dan Shepard, Bayside, New York

### Pacific Northwest Region

Trevor Dring, Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
Ryan Jehn, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

### MASTER BUILDER - CARS

#### Northeastern Region

Peter Eaton, Derby Line, Vermont

### Pacific Northwest Region

Trevor Dring, Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
Greg Kujawa, Bozeman, Montana

### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

#### Australasia Region

Peter Kendall, Essendon, Victoria, Australia  
Phil White, Kellyville, New South Wales Australia

### Mid-Continent Region

Cornell Barkhurst, Calamus, Iowa

### Pacific Coast Region

Anthony Thompson, Berkeley, California

### Pacific Northwest Region

Trevor Dring, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

#### Australasia Region

Peter Kendall, Essendon, Victoria, Australia

### Lone Star Region

Wayne Jones, Cedar Park, Texas

### Mid-Eastern Region

Bill Fay, Virginia Beach, Virginia

### Northeastern Region

Thomas Lynch, Jr., Camillus, New York

### Pacific Coast Region

Anthony W. Thompson, Berkeley, California

### Southeastern Region

Milton Burge, Snellville, Georgia

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

#### Lone Star Region

Wayne Kelly, Nevada, Texas

### Mid-Central Region

Mark Pekelnicky, Parma Heights, Ohio

### Mid-Eastern Region

Michael Junod, Southampton, Pennsylvania

### Thousand Lakes Region

Kenneth Borowski, Eagan, Minnesota

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

#### Australasia Region

David Orr, Modbury North, South Australia, Australia

### Pacific Coast Region

Anthony W. Thompson, Berkeley, California

### Pacific Northwest Region

Rob Huddleston, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

Blair Sturgeon, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

### Thousand Lakes Region

Kenneth Borowski, Eagan, Minnesota

### CHIEF DISPATCHER

#### Mid-Continent Region

Greg Gramlich, Wentzville, Missouri

### Northeastern Region

Mark Moritz, Morristown, New Jersey

### ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

#### Mid-Central Region

Matt Goodman, Columbus, Ohio

### Mid-Continent Region

Bruce Hochberger, Bellevue, Nebraska

### Southeastern Region

Paul Spilman, Clyde, North Carolina

### ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

#### Midwest Region

Larry Tschopp, Tolono, Illinois

### Pacific Southwest Region

Stephen Drees, Tucson, Arizona  
Rick Watson, Tempe, Arizona

### Rocky Mountain Region

Robert Amesen, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Lake City, Utah

### MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

#### Pacific Southwest Region

Rick Watson, Tempe, Arizona

### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #769 Kenneth Borowski, Eagan, Minnesota

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 Ray Persing at [achiev@nmra.org](mailto:achiev@nmra.org).

# Did you know?

We have over 15 hours of professional videos produced by Model Railroader Video Plus, TrainMasters TV and Model Railroad Academy in our NMRA Video Library. These are the same videos people pay a subscription fee to see...but for us they're FREE!

Just log into [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) as a member, click on "Membership / Member Home" and click on the blue box beneath the photo that says "Video Library."





## CONNIE JONES COY

EARNs  
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #763

### I Love Trains

I love trains: the real ones that once ran through my birthplace, Wayne, Nebraska, as well as model and toy trains. As a child, I loved hearing the train whistles and bells as we excitedly watched and counted the billboard boxcars, tankers, and gondolas when we were stopped at crossings.

When I was about 8 or 9, my older brother received an American Flyer train set. He liked it, and it looped around our basement for a while. To tell the truth, I played with it more than he did. I even took my Barbie for a gondola ride on several occasions. I don't know what ever happened to that set, but I didn't become interested in building train layouts until much later.

My love of trains continued when I visited Europe and rode the rails in the early 1970s on a student rail pass — what a great way to see everything and ride with the natives! I have ridden the New York City subway and the San Francisco BART. I even rode a small train line from Fort Myers to Port Charlotte when I lived in Florida.

When I was on my honeymoon with my husband (John Coy, MMR#730) in 1991, I learned we were about to become a team of model railroaders. We came across an HO Atlantic Coast Line GP35 in a little hobby shop in Nashville, Indiana. This engine was from a line in the state of Florida.

I said to him: “Isn't this neat? You know, I have always loved trains. I played with my brother's American Flyer more than he ever did.” John replied, “I have modeled HO trains since I was 12. I never thought I would do it again. I got rid of my HO stuff a year before I met you.”

We had never talked about trains before we were married. We bought this engine on the spot. Our first HO layout was soon to follow, and then two more. We even put an HO loop under our 1992 Christmas tree when we lived in Billings, Montana.

While in Billings, we met several model railroaders and joined the Yellowstone Valley Railroad (YVR) club (a modular group). The club displayed its layout in various locations in Billings. I enjoyed being involved and seeing some of the members' personal layouts.

During our time in Billings, and as we were involved with the YVR, we built a basement layout. I enjoyed creating the scenery, ballasting the track, and assembling

kits for water towers, houses, depots, and whatever else we wanted.

I had a real knack for this as I had developed crafting skills in my 20s when I belonged to a craft-of-the-month club. I also learned painting in high school and developed my painting skills years later through watching and trying the various techniques shown on the painting shows offered on the PBS TV network. This skill was very handy for painting backdrops, buildings, rolling stock, and whatever else needed paint/weathering on our Glacier Line.

When we moved back to Indiana in 1996, we built a small layout in the loft of our Avon home (sadly, it had no basement). When our son was 10, we bought him a Lionel O-27 train set for his birthday, hoping to interest him in the hobby. Two years later (2005), we moved into the home we live in today. One major requirement for that home was that it had to have a basement.

We built a layout for our son in a corner of our basement using his Lionel set. We added many Lionel accessories, but our son wasn't interested. However, this layout did give us something to operate while planning and designing an HO layout for ourselves in that basement.



One day, John compared one of our O-scale boxcars to one of our HO boxcars. He immediately knew he wanted to shift to O-scale. John asked me what I thought, expecting me to be upset. He was surprised when I agreed to shift to the larger scale. I enjoyed setting up and running our son's toy layout more than he did (sound familiar?), and I found the larger scale very appealing due to how easy it is to see and handle and how well it stays on track.

As we looked at what was available in O-scale, John and I noticed how realistic the MTH engines were with soundboards and how the smoke poured out of them. We were won over by how realistic the various available brands of O-scale rolling stock and engines looked.

We decided to build our new layout in O-scale and continue to use the realistic modeling and scenery style we were doing in HO. Our O-scale Glacier Line is based on the Great Northern Railway as it journeys around the southern border of Glacier National Park.

However, we wanted to do something completely different and unique. We opted to use three-rail track. We believed that not too many folks would model a prototypical railroad using three-rail track. Our belief paid off, as the Glacier Line has been featured in two professional videos and multiple publications.

The Glacier Line took several years to build. In August 2018, my husband joined the NMRA and became interested in the Modelers' Meets put on by the Central Indiana Division and the camaraderie of fellow model railroaders. He also paid for NMRA memberships for me and several members of our Glacier Line crew. John read about the Achievement Program (AP) and decided to try it. He encouraged us to do so as well.

At first, I thought the AP was a contest and wasn't sure about having my work judged. John explained to me that the AP isn't a contest. It is an educational program designed to help modelers improve their skills. John began to keep track of my volunteer hours and dispatching hours just in case I later decided I wanted to work toward the MMR. Before I knew it, I had earned a couple of Certificates and the Golden Spike. I was hooked.

When our layout was photographed and videotaped for *O Gauge Railroading* magazine, I realized that the scenery I was creating might also earn a certificate.

I wrote articles for the *NMRA MAGAZINE*, took photographs for several articles, and completed the Author's Certificate in January 2020.

With all the time we had during the COVID pandemic, I was able to build cars, earn four Merit Awards, and receive the Cars Certificate (2021). In addition, I put together what was needed to earn the Electrical Certificate, and I also received the Scenery Certificate during that time (2021). I served as Secretary of the Midwest Region and earned the Association Official Certificate in May 2024.

It has been quite a fun journey to do what was needed to earn the MMR. This experience has really helped me hone my skills. I appreciate all I learned about making detailed, realistic-looking rolling stock and scenery. I even bought and learned how to use an airbrush!

I have learned so much at Modelers' Meets on various techniques for building, weathering, and creating scenes on a layout. Seeing others' layouts and involvement in the events, Region meetings, and train shows continues to be such a treat. I am always blown away when I see the creativity and skill of those in this hobby!

John and I still have plenty of rolling stock to weather, which should keep us busy for years. We are also upgrading our buildings. We are in the process of constructing structures that mimic the reality of our prototype area.

When I was near earning MMR No. 763, John began working on a project to

link all Master Model Railroaders' names on the official online listing to their respective bios. The purpose is so others may learn more about each respective MMR versus merely reading a name on the official online listing.

During his research, John discovered that I am the twelfth woman to receive an MMR in the history of the NMRA. John and I are the fifth married couple to receive MMRs and the first couple to do so in three-rail. I am the first female three-railer and the fifth overall three-railer to achieve MMR. I am the first woman in the Central Indiana Division and Midwest Region of the NMRA to earn the MMR.

I am thrilled to have earned this distinction from the NMRA and humbled to know that I am somewhat of a pioneer in doing so.

What can I say? I LOVE TRAINS!

(For a 23-minute video of the layout, please Google "The Glacier Line video," and the OGR video productions' video will appear.)

### Certificates Earned Connie Jones Coy, MMR® #763

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

## THE NEW NMRA MODEL RAILROAD DIRECTORY IS NOW ONLINE and READY TO USE!

Now whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more. And it's only available to NMRA members.

Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org), click on "Member Home," then "Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout (as long as it's an operating home or garden railroad). Join in the fun!



**We make it more fun!**

## KEITH STAMPER

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #767

**M**y interest and passion for trains began when I was about 12 years old and living in what was then Southern Rhodesia. In 1954, my family immigrated to Southern Rhodesia from South Africa, where my father began working for the Rhodesia Railways. He was a master coach builder.

My exposure to steam locomotives gave me an appreciation for the technology of boiling water and turning it into motion. I would often visit the local station in the city, watch the giant Garratt locomotives working the yard, and see one of my father's friends (an engineer). Cab rides were offered, and I spent many a happy Saturday afternoon riding in the cab of a Garratt.

My first layout was built on a 4x8 sheet of plywood in my bedroom and consisted of Hornby Dublo British trains. In 1963, my family relocated back to South Africa, and my train layout was sold to a school friend. I had to settle for model train magazines for a few years. I was 13.

I began modeling in N-scale when a visit to the local hobby shop rekindled my interest in trains and models. At about age 17, I built a small N-scale layout that fit under my bed in my parents' home. This layout kept me occupied for several years. Then, for a few years, high school, college, fast cars, and girls got in the way of the hobby.

I married in 1974 and became a serious model railroader when I discovered narrow gauge and saw photos of Denver & Rio Grande K36 and K37 models in HOn3 on the back of *Model Railroader* magazine. Narrow gauge soon caught my attention.

I started a small HOn3 layout, and my love for the Colorado narrow gauge and fascination with all the three-foot gauge railroads grew. Modeling in HOn3 halfway around the world was a huge challenge. I did a lot of scratchbuilding since so little was available. The local model railroad group was intrigued by HOn3, although many had never seen nor heard of the scale and prototype. I was a lone wolf amidst the standard gauge modelers.



As a technologist, I could accomplish most things electrical and mechanical, and building a model railroad was a great way to enjoy the hobby. My HOn3 empire grew to fill a single-car garage.

In 1983, I was transferred from South Africa to Canada and began a new life living in the Toronto area. I first saw an On3 D&RGW layout at a friend's home, and the larger scale caught my attention. Not long after seeing the On3 layout, I headed to the local hobby shop, traded my entire HOn3 brass locomotive collection, and came home with On3 models. I began building car kits and painted the brass locomotives I had acquired. PFM sound was also available, and I purchased a PFM SS for my new On3 locomotives.

Living in the Toronto area allowed me to join a narrow gauge group. I met several modelers and attended monthly meetings held at members' homes.

In 1985, I and three members of the narrow gauge group attended the Mid-Atlantic Module Meet held in the Howard County Fairgrounds near Baltimore—the start of my 34-year attendance at the narrow gauge module meets. Our group, consisting of Gerry Cornwell, Al Collins, and Harold Midwood, built an On3 module and participated by traveling from Toronto to the venue and enjoying a weekend of narrow-gauge camaraderie.

One year, when we arrived at the meeting to set up our modules, one of

the local fellows nicknamed us the “Maple Leaf Mafia”: we became known as the MLM. I fondly remember the yearly trips to the Mid-Atlantic narrow gauge module meets. They were the best of times.

I learned the skill of brass locomotive construction from a local Toronto modeler, the late Harold Midwood. A dedicated and skilled craftsperson who loved the On3 Kodama K27 locomotives, Harold taught me how to make these exquisite models operate and run well on a layout. Harold and I developed a friendship that lasted until his passing in 2001.

My longtime tenure in the hobby has allowed me to acquire many skills. I enjoy working on all aspects of the hobby, whether it be building benchwork, hand-laying track, or installing Power on Board with DCC decoders.

In 1994, another job transfer moved my family and me to the Chicago area, and I was fortunate to meet a group of narrow gauge modelers: the Midwest Narrow Gauge Circle. I soon began attending monthly meetings with yet another great group of modelers. I lived in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and purchasing a home there meant a new On3 layout, as the previous layout in Toronto had become part of other MLM members' layouts.

Five years later, I transferred again to the Dallas, Texas, area and met the late Gary Rush and Marc LaChey, MMR 725. After gathering at a local hobby shop,

Gary, Marc, and I decided to build a sectional Sn3 layout and show it at local train shows. Soon, other modelers joined in, and we would meet on a Saturday morning at Gary's art studio — the perfect place to build a layout. We traveled to several train shows to exhibit our Sn3 modular layout, including a few narrow gauge conventions.

I decided to leave Texas and return to Toronto to be near family. I retained my large collection of On3 equipment and built a layout in the basement of our home.

Looming retirement in 2016 led to moving to a new home in a smaller city — just far enough away from the hustle and bustle of Toronto. We searched for a home with a suitable basement and discovered a ranch-style home with a large train room that would allow for my final layout. I had 42x12-foot, 6-inch of dedicated space.

This layout was to be On3 and allow for point-to-point operation. My skills as a food packaging production line designer allowed for the use of CAD, and track plans were soon prepared for the new layout. Work began on the layout in April 2016, the day after I returned from the office and retirement began.

The layout took shape very quickly. With all benchwork in place and the track plan at hand, I began hand-laying my track. In 2014, I decided to go to Power on Board with radio control. Thus, the layout would be built with zero requirements for track power. All turnouts were built in place without the use of any templates.

From early 2016, when layout construction commenced, and work had reached a point where most of the scenery was completed, and the trains were running, I began hosting operating sessions for various members of the MLM.

In May 2022, Marc LaChéy (MMR 725) encouraged me to enter the NMRA Achievement Program, and I decided to proceed. I had hesitated to begin the AP as my career kept me very busy, and I was unsure of the time I would have to devote to working on my MMR. Now I had time.

As I had a well-established layout, it was time to apply for my first AP Certificates, Scenery and Civil Engineering.

Niagara Frontier Division AP Manager Ron Tuff (MMR 366) visited my home along with other NMRA members to evaluate my work, and thus, I earned my Scenery and Civil Engineering Certificates in September 2022. I was encouraged to

continue now that I had accomplished two of the seven required certificates. Ron was most helpful and encouraged me to become a better model builder. Realizing that building to the best of my ability was something that really made me think that completing every aspect of the process should be better and not just “good enough.”

My next challenge was to earn my Cars Certificate, and I built cars, three of which were scratchbuilt as per the NMRA requirements. I scratchbuilt a combine and hi-side gondolas, all in On3 scale. My combine required me to form a clerestory roof, and fellow narrow gauge modeler Dave Adams kindly helped with his photos on how to build a vacuum box. Using my vacuum box, I formed the required components for the roof. An evaluation followed, and I earned my Cars Certificate.

Motive Power followed. I decided to build a brass locomotive kit in 2019 and purchased a Backwoods Miniatures Garratt kit. The incentive to earn my Motive Power Certificate encouraged me to work on the Garratt locomotive kit again, which had languished for a while. Building the Garratt brought back memories of those long-past years as a boy in Africa. I decided the Garratt would become one of the three locomotives required to earn my Master Builder Motive Power. The brass model Garratt earned a merit award, as did my scratchbuilt Mack Railbus and the Rio Grande Southern Galloping Goose brass kit. All these models were built to On3 scale.

I was fortunate to have an article describing Power on Board published in the November 2023 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman* and a few articles on various topics in NMRA local magazines, such as “How to Paint a Brass Locomotive.” Most recently, the January/February 2024 *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette* featured my layout. I also presented a few clinics at various Niagara Frontier Region's International Division gatherings. I earned my Author Certificate.

Next came my Dispatchers Certificate, earned by participating and hosting operating sessions on my home layout, The Colorado & Rio Grande Southern Rwy, along with other narrow gauge layouts in the Maple Leaf Modelers group. I am also a HOMES (HO Model Engineers Society) HO club member. We hold op sessions once a month. Besides running trains as either a brakeman or engineer, I had the

opportunity to learn the dispatcher role. I found operating on the HOMES club layout to be challenging, and I learned a lot about prototypical train operations.

My Electrical Certificate was based on layout work and hands-on demonstrations with guidance from Ron Tuff (MMR 366), NFR AP manager. My work in the technology field afforded me the opportunity to apply my electrical skills to satisfy the AP Electrical requirements.

As a member of the NFR International Division, I look forward to every opportunity to give back and serve in some way. Ron Tuff helped and encouraged me as I journeyed through the Achievement Program. I want to thank Ron for his advice and encouragement, for which I am truly grateful.

I also owe a debt of thanks to my longtime friend, Marc LaChéy, who encouraged and mentored me along the way with advice on how to best accomplish my goals. Marc and I have traveled to Colorado and spent many happy times at Durango & Silverton or Cumbres & Toltec. We try to attend the National Narrow Gauge Conventions together most years, and I have been fortunate to have been present at more than 23 since arriving in Canada in 1983.

Working on my MMR has been a rewarding endeavor. As I approach my 75th year, the MMR program is the culmination of my lifelong passion for model trains and the hobby.

Participation in the NMRA and the Achievement Program has taught me many things. Am I a better modeler because of my participation? I would answer with a resounding yes! I intend to engage in the hobby for as long as possible and hope to help and encourage other modelers to join the NMRA and participate in the AP.

My wife Claire has always encouraged my model railroading activities and supported me while I worked many hours on projects to earn various certificates. I am most grateful to Claire.

### **Certificates Earned Keith Stamper, MMR® #767**

**Master Builder – Scenery  
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil  
Master Builder – Cars  
Master Builder – Motive Power  
Model Railroad Author  
Chief Dispatcher  
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**