

NMRA BULLETIN

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2025 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
July 14-19, 2025 – Novi, Michigan <https://nmra2025.com/>
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org

• 2026 Chattanooga, Tennessee • 2027 Tacoma, Washington

rev 3/30/25

2025 NATIONAL ELECTION RESULTS

MARTYN JENKINS - AT-LARGE WORLD WIDE DIRECTOR

JONATHAN SMALL - ATLANTIC DISTRICT DIRECTOR

LEE CALKINS - WESTERN DISTRICT DIRECTOR

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2025

GOLDEN SPIKE

Australasian Region

Peter Burrows, Ettalong Beach, New South Wales, Australia

Pacific Northwest Region

Dennis Terpstra, Shoreline, Washington
Daniel Haigh, Oak Harbor, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Jon Robinson, Woods Cross, Utah

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

Rocky Mountain Region

Cameron LaFleur, Clearfield, Utah

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Mid-Central Region

Kenneth Hanawalt, McMurray, Pennsylvania

Pacific Northwest Region

Lee Chessman, Post Falls, Idaho

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

Rocky Mountain Region

Keith Hayes, Denver, Colorado

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Mid-Eastern Region

Eric Dervinis, Downingtown, Pennsylvania

Pacific Northwest Region

Daniel Haigh, Oak Harbor, Washington
Dennis Terpstra, Shoreline, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Keith Hayes, Denver, Colorado

MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

Pacific Northwest Region

Greg Kujawa, MMR, Bozeman, Montana

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

Mid-Eastern Region

Andrew Stitt, New London, North Carolina
Joe Skorch, Kannapolis, North Carolina

Rocky Mountain Region

M. David Merrill, MMR, Saint George, Utah

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Mid-Central Region

Carter Jastram, Columbus, Ohio

Pacific Northwest Region

Daniel Haigh, Oak Harbor, Washington
Dennis Terpstra, Shoreline, Washington

CHIEF DISPATCHER

Mid-Central Region

William Grosse, Beverly, West Virginia

Mid-Eastern Region

Frederick Humphrey, Chesapeake, Virginia

Pacific Northwest Region

Lee Chessman, Post Falls, Idaho

Rocky Mountain Region

M. David Merrill, MMR, Saint George, Utah

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

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Mid-Eastern Region

John Sokash, Cary, North Carolina

Pacific Northwest Region

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Niagara Frontier Region

Mike Lafond, Ridgeway, Ontario, Canada
Walter Reid, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #789 Lee Chessman, Post Falls, Idaho

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

DR. ROBERT JOHN PERRY

EARNs
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #782

Model railroading has been a lifelong hobby of mine. I am originally from Massachusetts but, unfortunately, had very little exposure to real railroads in that area as a child. There weren't any good railfanning places to observe trains. My family did, however, go to many train museums and scenic train rides. I received my first HO-scale train set for Christmas when I turned eight. I did not have a permanent area for setup then, so my father made me a 4x8-foot platform out of plywood that was hinged to make three identical sections. In this way, it could be laid out on the floor but would then have the tracks pulled up and packaged away until the next time I wanted to play with it (which was essentially all the time). When not in use, the board could be slid under the bed. When it became apparent that this was not a passing pursuit, the "layout" had legs added and resided in the basement. Soon, a "bridge" was made to connect this little layout to our ping-pong table, and now trains ran across that as well. Buildings were from Erector Sets, Lincoln Logs, or any other building material I could find. Shortly after this, our family moved to a larger house, and I started constructing my first real layout.

Although I am now a newly retired eye doctor, everyone else in my family was an engineer in one form or another. At age 10, I took their knowledge and expertise and created my layout in the basement with very little assistance in the actual construction or wiring. This layout started as an area of about 10x10 feet with access only from the outside areas. I created a platform that could be placed on the layout for me to lie on while trying to reach the innermost areas. The platform had legs with lag bolts that could rest in certain layout areas without causing damage. The early locomotives and rolling stock were the typical Tyco or Bachmann of the day, and most buildings were cheap LifeLike kits. Everything was obviously DC back then, but I had a block system and could run multiple trains. I had a mountain area with a river of real water that flowed down the moun-



tain, over a waterfall, and into a lake. I made a pumphouse in the lake that recycled the water to flow again from the mountaintop. I was in my glory.

After a couple of years, I outgrew this area and expanded along the basement walls, encircling the stairs and leading to another layout area, which more than doubled my existing space. (My mother wasn't too happy that she had to lift a drawbridge whenever she came down the stairs with a load of laundry, but she put up with it.)

I was especially proud of a four-foot-long "steel through truss" bridge I made to connect two areas across a walkway. It was made of 1/8-inch square balsa strips. Despite its weak material, I designed it such that it could easily support 25 pounds in the center. I thought it was quite cool to make a bridge that weighed next to nothing and supported that much

weight...that is, until our mischievous cat decided to eat the balsa frame. That was the end of that!

I kept this layout for four years until my parents divorced, and we had to move. My mother and I entered an apartment, and the layout was dismantled. I can still remember my grandmother's tears as we were dismantling my masterpiece.

My uncle, Dick Raymond, was an electrical engineer and had always been interested in model trains but never had a layout. His children (my cousins) were about six years younger than me and not overly interested in trains at the time (that later changed). Since I was still in an apartment, he and I decided to figure out a way to make a new layout that would fit in an average-sized bedroom of 10x11 feet and be able to be modified to accommodate a different arrangement, if necessary, when I moved. This was

when I was headed to college but was commuting from home. My uncle took measurements of the commercially available turnouts and track pieces. (At this time, there were no computer design software packages.) I was fairly proficient at programming computers in BASIC and Fortran at that time. I decided to use my college's mainframe computer to design the most efficient track plan for my space and requirements using all the trigonometry and geometry I could muster from my uncle's measurements and the capabilities of the old HP RPN 11c calculators and the college's mainframe. At this time, everything was done on punch cards, and there weren't any monitors. Every iteration of the track plan had to be printed on a large tractor feed plotter printer that produced output sheets about three feet across. I'm sure the college wasn't too pleased with my use of all that paper, but they were kind of intrigued by what I was doing.

After we settled on the final design, construction began at my uncle's house, with the completed framework transported to my apartment. Since this layout needed to be portable, it was designed in four sections. Each could be folded back onto its mirrored section and crated for transport. Hundreds of wiring connectors were used to connect the separate sections and allow for easy disassembly when needed. I tend to be more of a modeler and electrical guy than an operator. I always remember my grandfather saying that the layout was really nice, but he preferred seeing the trains run!

This layout served me well and was subsequently moved several times to various homes that I later owned (even cross-country) once I got married. In Florida, I had a large loft area to house my layout, so I expanded the layout in space and complexity. DCC was added along with more elaborate electronic controls, block detection, signaling, computer interface, automated routing, etc. All my locomotives were converted to DCC.

I was fortunate to have two children, a boy and a girl. My daughter, Kimberly, liked looking at the trains but wasn't interested in model railroading. My son, Bob Jr., however, did express interest. We started him out with a toy train set up on a 4x8 sheet of plywood at two years of age. This soon changed into an L-shaped N-scale layout with both DC

and DCC control (in those days, converting an N-scale locomotive to DCC was a real bear!).

My wife, Mary, unfortunately is not a model railroader but has been very supportive of my hobby. She and I try to arrange a scenic, historic train ride on every vacation. She always looks for ideas as we travel for things I could incorporate into my layout.

Eventually, once my children married and they moved out of state to go to where their spouses were from, we contemplated where we wanted to live down the road. My daughter went to Colorado, and my son went to Indiana. We thought about buying a second home. Colorado was quite pricey and a long way away for a second home. We decided to buy a second home near our son in Indiana. We wanted to have a place to stay without imposing on the kids when we would come to visit. My only requirements for a second house for possible eventual downsizing were to have at least a two-car garage for my Corvette and a workshop, as well as some area where I could build another model railroad. The previous layout from Florida was starting to show its age, and I thought I could do better by starting over. We settled on a house with a 13x23-foot loft above the garage that I could use to build another HO-scale layout.

We started flying back and forth on most weekends. When my son started his own family, we decided we did not want to miss out on our grandchildren growing up, so we moved to Indiana permanently. We kept the Florida house for a while but then decided to sell it as it seemed that every time there was a hurricane, there would be some damage to either the pool enclosure or the roof tiles. It was too much to deal with when we no longer lived there.

The ophthalmology practice I worked in for 30 years didn't want me to leave, so they asked if I could fly back and forth. They made it worth my while, and for five years, I would fly down and work a week and then fly home for a week. (My mother was in a nursing facility in Florida, and I needed to fly down routinely to check on her anyway.) This year, my mother passed away, and there was no longer a real need to fly to Florida, so as of December 13, 2024, I am now officially retired.

When I was in Indiana, I worked on my new layout whenever possible. It took about two-and-a-half years to "complete" the 13x23-foot layout. Obviously, a layout is never truly complete, but at least it looks that way to others.

As an aside, my membership in the NMRA was an on-again, off-again affair. When I was a teenager, I was a member, but I had very little ability to participate in any NMRA activities, and the members there were not very active. I dropped my membership. I rejoined in Florida for a while, but again, there was little activity in Southeast Florida as very few people have basements or available space for a layout. I again dropped my membership. When I got to Indiana, I decided to try again, and I am so happy I did! I now belong to the Central Indiana Division (CID) of the Midwest Region. Shortly after joining, COVID hit. I left the Naptown Model Railroad club that I belonged to as I didn't want to take a chance on bringing COVID to them. (My wife is an ICU nurse who dealt with a huge group of COVID patients daily.) The CID decided to start doing "TrackTalks" via Zoom so members could interact during the shutdown. In so doing, I met several gentlemen who are now close friends, some of whom reside in Avon near me. These friendships got me involved in an operating group called the Glacier Line, a three-rail O-Scale layout owned by MMRs John and Connie Coy.

At that time, the Coys had recently started working on the Achievement Program for the NMRA and encouraged me to do the same. There was initially absolutely no interest on my part. I thought it would be just a bunch of people saying how poor my modeling skills were. After further discussion, I realized that the Electrical Certificate was of interest to me. I had always enjoyed the hobby's electrical aspects and thought I could at least qualify for that one. Given my history of engineering interest despite my career in medicine, I started learning C++ and Arduino programming to be able to automate various special effects for the layout. I decided the Electrical Certificate would be my one and only AP certificate attempt. After getting this, it was pointed out how I should easily be able to obtain the Volunteer, Chief Dispatcher, Scenery, and Author APs, as I had already done most of the work without any thought

of trying for the AP. I then put together the appropriate paperwork and obtained these as well. For completeness, I also received the Golden Spike Award.

Again, due to my interest in engineering, I taught robotics systems to high schoolers for 13 years as part of the FIRST program (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). I had always done old-style drafting, but through the robotics program, I started to do some robot design work via AutoDesk Inventor. When it came to considering doing an AP certificate for Cars, I thought that this would be a good time to try to put these skills to use and design and 3D-print the cars. A fellow NMRA member and friend of mine in Avon, Phil Burnside, who has become my 3D-printing mentor, has guided me with tips and tricks to get me started. I model the Canadian National Railroad and am always interested in their unusual rolling stock. I then set out to design and 3D-print all the cars needed for the AP judging. Some unusual ones included an articulated covered hopper, a stubby hopper, a mountain observation car, a

maintenance-of-way car where workers could eat and sleep, and a flatcar with 3D-printed a crane and asphalt roller. These all passed on the first attempt without difficulty. Since then, many other cars, details, and structures have been 3D-printed for my layout.

I have been involved on the CID and MWR boards for the past few years, making me eligible for my Official Certificate in April 2025. I figured I might try for the Prototype Model AP award before April since I was already designing a diorama for a historical society in Canada. My initial attempt at passing was not successful. However, the judges, Dan Hinel, Eric Peterson, and Dan Banks, were extremely helpful in their critique of the diorama, and after modification to correct the deficiencies, the Prototype Model passed its AP and thus earned my seventh AP (with the eighth still due in April) and, thus, my MMR.

Although I went into the AP as an unwilling participant, through the encouragement of John and Connie Coy, as well as several other NMRA members, I was able to push back my doubts and forge

onward to get my MMR. We now have four MMRs in Avon, Indiana, including the Coys, Phil Burnside, and myself. I have always felt that model railroading is the greatest hobby in the world and the best hobby to prepare for a career in engineering. What other hobby teaches you carpentry, electronics, modeling, history, computers, CAD, photography, and so many other related aspects? Additionally, without the NMRA, I am sure I would have continued as a “lone-wolf” modeler with a limited skill set and no interaction with other modelers. The camaraderie and educational benefits I have received through the NMRA are priceless!

Certificates Earned
Dr. Robert John Perry, MMR® #782
Model Railroad Engineer–Electrical
Chief Dispatcher
Master Builder – Scenery
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Author
Master Builder – Cars
Master Builder – Prototype Models

MMR EARNED

GREG KUJAWA

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #787

My first exposure to trains dates back to a Sunday afternoon in the mid-1950s when my dad took my older brother and me to the Michigan Central Station in Detroit. We were standing trackside next to a steam locomotive at the head of a passenger train when it suddenly released a bunch of steam from its cylinders. Imagine a three-year-old's response to that! I was told I was terrified and started crying. But, for some strange reason, that experience must have positively imprinted on me (go figure!) and did not dissuade me from building a life-long affection for trains. This affection was reinforced when I received a wooden train set (maybe a Jack-Built Snap-Train?), and, subsequently, a Lionel O27 set for Christmas. After that, I looked forward to adding more rolling stock and accessories to my Christmas wish list.



As is pretty common, this early interest in the hobby went dormant during my adolescent and young adult years. Then, in 1980, my first exposure to scale model railroading happened when I spotted the January 1980 issue of *Model Railroader* on a drugstore magazine rack. The modeled winter scene on the cover was so inspiring that I bought the issue, devoured all the content, and eventually wore out that magazine. There was no denying it — the “hook” was deeply set this time.

During those next few years, I focused on my career and family and stayed engaged in the hobby by reading as many back issues of *Model Railroader* as I could get my hands on at the local public library. I began building a few models and even started an HO_{n3} layout. While juggling work and home responsibilities, an “Aha!” moment occurred when I read an article about how everyone should have a hobby or activity just for its pure fun and enjoyment, with no ulterior motives or other purpose. I immediately recognized that model railroading had been providing that for me.

I first connected with the NMRA in 1987 when I attended the National Convention in Eugene, Oregon, just a few hours from home. This convention was the first of many I would attend over the years, often driving for a couple of days and tent camping to afford these enriching experiences. At the end of a week-long convention, I often felt like I had just survived a full week of college final exams. I was totally worn out from immersing myself in clinics and layout tours, studying models in the Contest Room, and shopping for hours at the National Train Show. This was total fun!

My journey in the Achievement Program began in April 2004 at the Pacific Northwest Region, 5th Division annual meet in Spokane, Washington. There, I earned the Golden Spike Award for a couple of HO-scale modules and several merit awards for individual models. During the following nine years, a new job assignment and a move to Washington, D.C., left me with scarce time and energy for the hobby. So, I made no real progress in the AP until after retirement and a move back to the PNR.

At the 2015 NMRA National Convention in Portland, Oregon, I attended the PNR membership meeting

and learned the Region’s newsletter editor position had been vacant for a few years. I had experience writing technical reports and thought this editor job was a way I could directly contribute to the hobby and NMRA while living in a remote location. So, I volunteered to become the Region’s newsletter editor. That was a big risk for the Region and me because nobody knew me personally, and I had never edited a newsletter. I guess I’ve been doing okay because I’m now in my tenth year as editor.

This volunteer work resulted in new connections and friendships across the Region, especially with Regional AP Manager Jack Hamilton, MMR®, and Division AP managers Bill Fassett, MMR® (5th Division), and Bob Parrish, MMR® (3rd Division). Bill eventually filled in behind Jack and convinced me to submit paperwork for my first two AP certificates, Volunteer and Author. Over the next three years, Bill and Bob teamed up, and I could find no place to hide. Their advice, unrelenting support, and confidence in my abilities got me over the MMR finish line with certificates for Structures, Civil, Electrical, Cars, and Scenery.

But wait! There’s more. When evaluating my layout for the Scenery certificate, Bob and Bill agreed that I should submit the paperwork for the Prototype Models certificate. So, after completing some additional work on structures and scenery, I did just that, earning my eighth certificate. This illustrates a point worth emphasizing — a current Master Model Railroader® can continue to work toward

earning more certificates. As Bob has succinctly put it, “Why stop with seven?”

Looking back, I recognize how true it is that the AP is firmly rooted in the NMRA’s mission of education. I have gained so much — new modeling and problem-solving skills, experience with different modeling materials and tools, knowledge about the prototype, and so much more. The AP has provided the framework to challenge myself to improve my skills and overcome obstacles, often through trial-and-error (aka failures). What a great program! And I try to give back to the hobby and NMRA however I can, such as continuing as editor of the PNR’s newsletter, *The Switchlist*, and, more recently, as an instructor trainee for the Modeling With The Masters® program.

I’d like to sincerely thank everyone who has inspired and pushed me toward achieving this major goal. And I want to especially thank my wife, Margaret, for providing so much support and putting up with my many extended disappearances into the train room over the past few years.

**Certificates Earned
Greg Kujawa, MMR® #787**

**Model Railroad Author
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Structures
Master Builder – Cars
Master Builder – Scenery
Master Builder – Prototype Models**



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