

NMRA BULLETIN

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2020 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:

2020—St. Louis, MO • July 12–18, 2020 • <http://www.gateway2020.org>

Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328

423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org

• 2021—Santa Clara, CA • 2022—Birmingham, England

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

AUGUST 2019

GOLDEN SPIKE

Mid-Central Region

Mike Fahler, Wellington, Ohio

Pacific Coast Region

Scott Forrest, Half Moon Bay, California

Pacific Southwest Region

Gerry Bill, Laguna Niguel, California
Jeffrie Herrmann, Orange, California
Henri Sevnaeva, Corona, California

Rocky Mountain Region

Reid Demman, Draper, Utah
Len Hall, Layton, Utah
Eddie Strong, Orem, Utah

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

Mid-Central Region

Philip Gliebe, Waynesville, Ohio

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Mid-Central Region

Philip Gliebe, Waynesville, Ohio

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Mid-Eastern Region

Bernard Kempinski, Alexandria, Virginia

Mid-West Region

Kenneth Hojnacki, Madison, Wisconsin

Pacific Southwest Region

Jeffrie Herrmann, Orange, California

MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

Rocky Mountain Region

Gerald Carson, Woodland Park, Colorado

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

Mid-Eastern Region

Bernard Kempinski, Alexandria, Virginia
Scott Unger, Allentown, Pennsylvania

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Mid-Eastern Region

George Gaige, Palmyra, Virginia
Bernard Kempinski, Alexandria, Virginia

CHIEF DISPATCHER

Mid-Eastern Region

Robert Cook, Chesapeake, Virginia

Northeastern Region

John McHugh, Plaistow, New Hampshire
Irwin Nathanson, Diamond Point, New York

Pacific Northwest Region

Paul Vaughn, Graham, Washington

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Mid-West Region

Daniel Brewer, Granger, Indiana

Sunshine Region

Jim Gore, MMR, St. Petersburg, Florida

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Joe Walters, Bear, Delaware

Pacific Southwest Region

Pat Raymer, La Crescenta, California

Southeastern Region

Douglas Hughes, Knoxville, Tennessee

Sunshine Region

John Crellin, Bradenton, Florida
Kenneth Farnham, Palm Bay, Florida

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

Joe Walters, MMR® #644, Bear, Delaware

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 fjkoch@hotmail.com

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

The *NMRA TURNTABLE*
makes the internet a little
smaller.

If you're spending hours doing internet video searches, you're wasting valuable modeling time! The *NMRA Turntable* brings the best of the best model railroading videos to your mailbox every month. It's one more benefit of NMRA membership!

If you're not receiving it, contact NMRA HQ and make sure they have your current email address!



**RAY CLIFFORD
EARNs MMR® 637**

As a teenager, I didn't know anyone else who shared my passion for old rail-ways or model railroading. I was working all alone. I could only judge my work by looking at the pictures in *Model Railroader* magazine. I thought I was doing okay, but there was no one with any expertise to critique my models or offer suggestions.

Then, at the age of 30, working as an automotive mechanic, I met Al Krantz when I was working on his car. Al is an expert model railroader and was a member of the NMRA and the Extra Gang — one of Calgary's elite modeler groups.

Back in 1970, I was trying to build a Canadian Pacific station. I wanted to try using a new material called styrene. All that was available back then was plain sheet styrene. To make it look like siding, I had to scribe it using a hacksaw blade, ground to reproduce the novelty siding look.

Timidly, I showed Al my CPR station. Al looked at my work. He did not criticize it. Instead, he offered advice that made it look more crisp. Al encouraged me to take it and put it on the table at the upcoming Pacific Northwest Region meet. To my amazement, it won an award!

I listened to various people presenting clinics that day, sharing their knowledge and giving advice. What a great resource these clinics are!

By the way, I have put on a few clinics, and I know well how much time and effort it takes to prepare a short presentation. If you attend a clinic, do take time to thank and give feedback to the presenter. It means so much to know that their expertise is valuable.

I joined the NMRA after that meet in 1970 and was an enthusiastic supporter for the next 20 years. In 1979, Calgary was chosen to host the international NMRA meet. It was called Rail Rodeo. Planning started two years in advance.

I truly valued the time that NMRA friend, Gordy Johnson, spent with me, teaching me how to do scale drawings for the Rail Rodeo "Plan Book," a collection of 30 sketches and plans of small buildings well-suited for modeling. The prototype buildings were from the early 20th century and were mostly located in Heritage Park. Gordy did the artistic sketches and taught me how to draw accurate scale plans. The skill of be-



ing able to make accurate scale drawings has carried me through the rest of my life. I used it when I made proposals to Alberta Culture for museum models. I needed it again when I began figuring out how to assemble model construction machines. These machines that I later manufactured in my business were all first designed on paper, using the approach to making scale drawings Gordy showed me.

Being with other model railroaders and exchanging ideas motivated me. Competitive modeling challenged me to continually sharpen my skills. Winning awards gave me the confidence to think that I might have a future as a paid professional model builder. I built a super-detailed O-scale diorama of a backwoods sawmill. After seeing this model, Alberta Culture commissioned me to build a diorama of a pre-European native village for the Head-Smashed-In Interpretive Centre near Fort Mcleod. Other museum commissions followed; I have models at the Coalman Museum, the Museum of the Regiments in Calgary, and at the Reynolds Museum in Wetaskiwin.

Funding cuts during the 1990s ended this venture, but I saw a market for highly accurate models of antique construction machinery like scrapers, buggies, and crawler tractors. So, I bought a small metal casting machine and created master patterns in

brass, and cast, assembled, and hand-painted models.

This venture carried me for 25 years with models sold worldwide. I retired in 2010 at 70. Determined to continue modeling despite declining eyesight and motor skills, I purchased a laser cutter and learned computer-assisted drafting, which I use to continue to scratch-build fine-scale models.

The greatest gift that the NMRA gave me, however, was the amazing friends and mentors who have helped me in my life. Model railroading has also enriched my life by leading me into other areas of interest.

It gave interest to my travels to find and photograph unique old structures. It would drive my wife crazy that I was never content to

take a picture of the front. I would poke around the back and sides and record it from every angle. I was even worse when I got a digital camera. I no longer had to count the cost. Multiple close-ups of the smallest details became a must.

I used the photos to make scale drawings, which came in particularly handy when I was creating the ½-inch buildings on my touring streetcar display, Ray's Street Railway — a 20-foot-long enclosed display at Supertrain or the Edmonton Model Railroad Show.

One area of modeling I really like is to create figures. With figures, I can tell little stories. The Ray's Street Railway streetcar module had a group of figures about every eight inches posed to tell a story.

When I donated the streetcar model to the Leduc Historical Society, I saved a vignette that depicts an almost destitute farming family droughted out on the prairies during the Great Depression of the 1930s. They are heading for the Peace River country where there was more rainfall and free land for homesteaders. Unfortunately, their truck has broken down, and the father and his son are tackling the damage. The despairing mother and her crying toddler huddle on the running board. This vignette tells a story with emotion.

One tip I can share with you is to pose figures interacting, rather than in motion. Avoid showing people walking; it does not look convincing. However, a man leaning on the post at a tram stop, smoking, makes sense. A group of old guys standing together shooting the breeze looks natural. So does a young mother, stopped on the street with a baby buggy, while an older woman admires the baby.

A tip for planning structures for contest is to visualize it as a little story, even if you do not use figures. You can make the model “talk.” Show that something is happening even though the people are just out of sight.

My wonderful railroading hobby has taken me through many ages and stages in more than 60 years. There have been times in my life when I have been quite depressed and worried. My hobby has helped me cope by giving me an escape by leafing through model railroading magazines, gleaning ideas for projects. I could start a project and let it become an obsession. I could focus all my thoughts and energy on something I could totally control.

In the course of my life, I have progressed from a solitary basement modeler to competitive modeling, and on to taking my skills into the marketplace. There is no greater reward than having someone pay you for your work! But now I have come a full circle, and I enjoy making buildings and scenery for my layout, just for me.

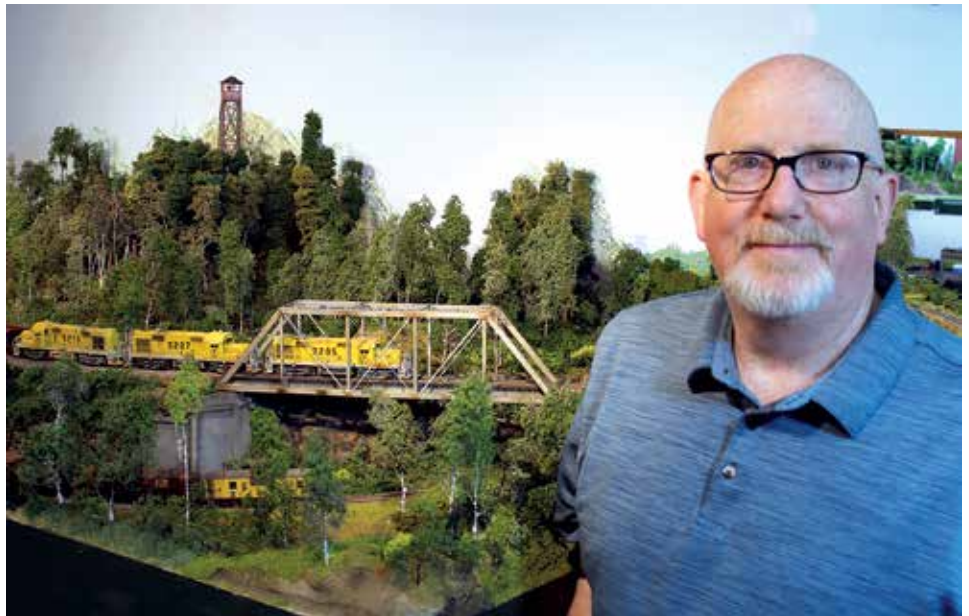
A big thank you to the NMRA organization for all you have done for me. An even bigger thank you to Doug Burton. Your help and encouragement kept me motivated to complete the tasks I had put off forever. Without you, I would never have painted the backdrop for my layout. Nor would I have attempted the daunting task of wiring a three-way switch. You helped me complete the final requirements for this Master Model Railroader award.

At this stage in my life, this Master Model Railroader Award means so much to me. Thank you again.

Certificates Earned Ray Clifford, MMR® 637

- Master Builder – Motive Power
- Master Builder – Scenery
- Master Builder – Cars
- Master Builder – Structures
- Association Volunteer
- Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical
- Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

MMR® EARNED



THOMAS W. GASIOR EARNS MMR® 635

Model railroading started for me with the standard Lionel train set when I was six years old. Setting up large ovals on the living room floor during Christmas season was always a treat. These trains then grew into a collection that I would share with my father, rather than build any layouts. Our house was not big enough for a permanent layout, so the temporary set-ups would have to suffice. I remember my Uncle John, who worked for the Chicago & North Western in Minneapolis, bringing me timetables of the various railroads during family visits at holidays. I would try to run my Lionel Santa Fe Warbonnet F-units and passenger cars to the posted schedule, making each lap around an oval equal a mile, on the journey from Chicago to Los Angeles.

Model building came next as I figured out and worked on the various plastic kits of aircraft, tanks, and ships. I learned about glues and hobby knives and how to store paint. I still wanted trains most of all, but O-scale was too big to create much in a limited area. Finding the local hobby shops and the bookstand full of modeling magazines opened my eyes to HO scale. These magazines, including the *BULLETIN*, featured layouts with wonderful scenery, rolling stock, and this thing called operations. Many kind mentors worked at these shops. They answered my numerous questions, and I learned of the NMRA, with local meets and tours.

The first local train shows were held in corridors of local malls (can you imagine that

nowadays?) and were a big draw. Getting to meet NMRA members from around the Twin Cities area at these shows helped me to network and get to know layout owners and earn invitations to operating sessions. My baseball coach found out I liked trains and invited me over to his N-scale empire for operation nights. The regular crew gave me a small mining town to run, and it was perfect for me to learn what to do (and what not to do). My offer to custom paint his engines and cars helped me gain a permanent spot on his crew roster.

School, sports, and other interests took up my high school years, and I just collected equipment at the large train flea markets that were very popular in the late 1970s. College was a train enthusiast dream. I enrolled at the University of Minnesota - Duluth: a port city with six major railroads, Amtrak service, and a short line that still sported switchers in full Great Northern paint. The Transportation Museum in the former Union Depot was the magnet for all the modelers and railfans. They even had a small contingent of youth modelers, and I stepped in to help them build a layout inside an actual boxcar. I met many great modelers there and made some friends for life. I also joined the US Marine Corps and served in the reserves for eight years, earning the rank of Sergeant. This path led me to southern California where many Marine Corps bases are located, as well as incredible mountain railroading and prototypes we did not see in Minnesota. Southern Pacific Gyalights were great to watch in the evening and night.

Moving after graduation to western Wisconsin was going to be my entry into the NMRA and mainly the Achievement Program. I started to find other modelers at the local hobby shop who shared my interest in trains. Soon, I was building a layout in the basement of my new house. Being invited to operating sessions helped me learn so many things about quality trackwork, wiring, and rolling stock. I compared my skills to my colleagues, and I lacked in many areas. Questions on how to improve my skills led me to the NMRA and the AP. It was also at this time I had my first opportunity to operate on a layout equipped with this new magical device called DCC, or Digital Command Control. I met Gregg Condon, MMR® at this time, and we formed a small group that enjoyed trains and modeling. I earned my Dispatcher Certificate with many hours on Gregg's and other's layouts.

The operation on one of the first DCC layouts in the area convinced me that this was the way to move forward. No longer tied to a control stand or hundreds of toggle switches, this new device was a real breakthrough. The hobby was changing forever, and I wanted to be part of it.

The Region asked for volunteers. I wanted to help out where I could, so I jumped in to help by becoming the newsletter editor. I was running a print/copy shop at the time, so that helped immensely with the layout and creation. I made new friends from all over the Midwest and learned what it took to be a Board of Directors member and the exact responsibilities of the officers. This time as editor would help me garner the AP Certificate for Volunteer.

Finally, a career change from white collar to blue, as the Union Pacific hired me on as a switchman in South St. Paul. A move back to the Twin Cities meant a higher number of model layouts, clubs, and hobby shops. I went from a house to an apartment during this transition, so I joined a club and met more NMRA members. I learned of FreeMo and thought this was a perfect way for me to have a minimal section of railroad but be able to combine with others to have a large layout and to participate in shows. They taught me about proper DCC connections and improved track laying. All the club members were counting on each other to have excellent track and wiring. The core group from Minnesota FreeMo went on to form and create the North Metro Model Railroad Club — one of the largest model railroads in the Midwest, and all 100% NMRA membership.

Relocating to my hometown, I met Diana. She was a lovely lady who also went to high school with me. We hit it off right away, and this led to a wonderful marriage. All of this meant a house, with a basement, and more. Once the kids were older and moved out, I had room for a permanent layout. She was amazed that I didn't take up the entire basement, but time concerns from being promoted to engineer meant my seniority was back at the bottom. I had to work odd shifts and be away for days at a time. I wanted to create a layout I could build and manage in short segments of time. I also wanted to enjoy running lone wolf style if no one could accommodate my 24-hour on-call schedule. I designed a medium, two-level layout, which became my basis for working on my AP Certificates. I figured I could earn the certificates if I followed best practices and have a better running and looking layout in the process. The result was the Splitrock Mining Company.

Being invited to other NMRA members' layouts for operating sessions allowed me to check out their wiring systems and get the maximum effectiveness from their DCC and eliminate pesky shorts. Following their advice, I created a better block system for my layout and eliminated those annoying stoppages due to shorts. Drawing up the wiring diagrams and doing the necessary short protection not only made my layout run better, but it helped me earn the Electrical Engineer AP Certificate.

It was time to build something. The layout needed some work cars, and I wanted them to be unique. Seeing the prototype cars every day helped me get photos and measurements of various flatcars carrying wheels and track panels, as well as gondolas with ties and track supplies. My scratchbuilt models were judged and received Merit Awards. Thanks to the Lone Star Region for posting its clinics on the Region's web page, I found a step-by-step process for creating scratchbuilt cars. My membership allowed me to get help all the way from Texas! My Rolling Stock AP was earned at the Regional Convention.

Fast Tracks' turnout building tools and lessons provided by their videos helped me with a major hurdle. I always admired the NMRA layouts of the masters who had hand-laid track that just flowed. Learning how to build switches and creating site-specific trackwork improved my layout operations and helped me earn my Civil Engineering AP Certificate.

One of the NMRA Special Interest Groups, the OPSIG, was looking for articles

to use in its publication. I offered a well-written synopsis of my iron ore-hauling line. I described how I used map pins to denote grades of iron ore for switching purposes, and the SIG published it. My photo of a mine turn even graced the cover of that issue. I used the same layout location to garner a spot in the NMRA calendar at a later date. This article, along with many pieces in our Regional and Division newsletters, helped me earn my Author AP Certificate.

I was all prepared to go after the next Certificate, but two things put that on hold. I realized I had not completed any certificates in the Settings area. To earn the MMR Certificate, you must earn at least one certificate from all four areas. In all my years of building models, trains, and layouts, I had never attempted scenery. I had built a few roads and a building or two, but nothing like I had seen in magazines. I asked my fellow NMRA members and some MMR's from our Region about tree-making, rocks, water choices, and other details that would bring my north woods rail line to life. Using modern electronics, I added the sound of birds, bugs, and loon calls.

The other event that put a hold on my time was that my father-in-law, who was so proud of my skills that he brought anyone he could down to the basement to show off the layout, was diagnosed with cancer. He lived with us and was an amazing person to anyone who knew him. Family comes first, and my wife and I poured our energy into his well-being.

My therapy sessions after losing my father were found in the layout room. I redoubled my effort into making birch and pine trees by the hundreds. I created lakes and ponds with wildlife and foliage that fit the area. I added everything the north woods had to offer except mosquitoes. I wrote up my descriptions and had prototype photos printed that matched various locations. I wanted to make sure I could merit; I did not want to redo my scenes.

The judges visited and liked what they saw, and now it was time to celebrate. I have enjoyed the journey so far and plan to continue working to earn all 11 Certificates. I am also working with the National Social Media team and helping build our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other accounts. I hope to work on more content for the NMRA webpage and help create an NMRA podcast.

I want to thank John Hotvet, MMR®, who is the Thousand Lakes Region AP Chair for amazing advice and guidance.

Others who assisted me greatly were Dave Hamilton, Divisional AP Chair; Clark Kooning, MMR®; Fred Headon, MMR®; Craig Symington, MMR®; Dan Dossa; Greg Dahl; Bruce Wilson, HLM; and Tom Johnson, DCC expert extraordinaire.

Thomas currently works as a locomotive engineer for Union Pacific. He lives in a suburb of Minneapolis with his wife Diana. He

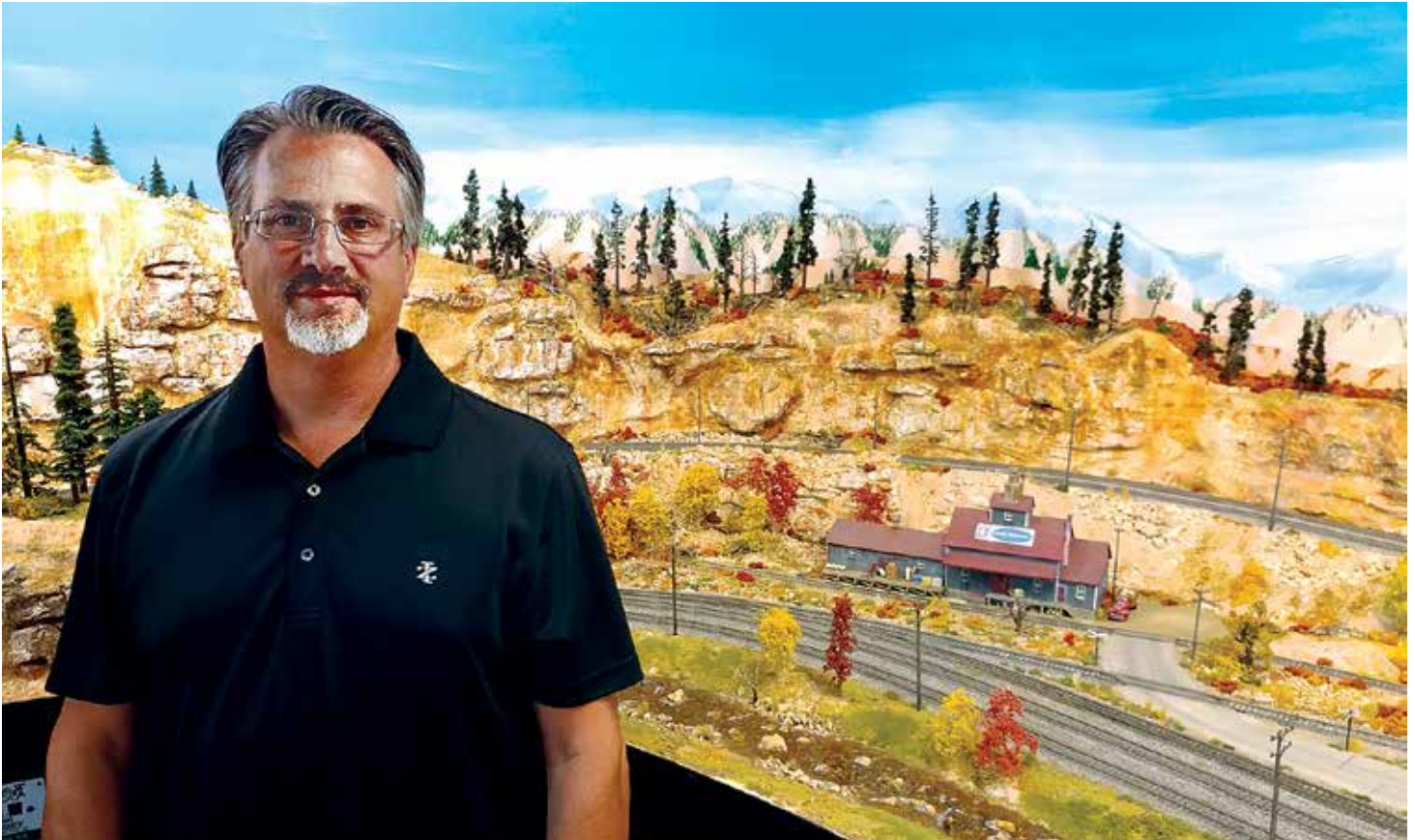
has two kids and four grandchildren. Travel and photography are his other passions.

Certificates Earned
Thomas Gasior, MMR® 637

Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Engineer –
Electrical
Association Volunteer

Master Builder - Cars
Model railroad Engineer - Civil
Model railroad Author
Master Builder Scenery.

MMR® EARNED



JOHN FERACA EARNS MMR® 643

My model railroading story does not have the typical beginnings with Lionel trains running around the Christmas tree. Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, I just missed the peak of the Lionel era and spent a lot of my time building models: rockets from the space race era, cars, planes, etc.

One day, while in the hobby store, I picked up an issue of *Model Railroader* magazine and was enthralled by the photos of trains, track, buildings, and scenery, especially the dioramas in the Campbell Scale Model ads. I quickly convinced my parents to let me build a 4x8-foot HO layout in the family room. With my dad's help, I built an oval with a few sidings and ran some Tyco trains. Scenery consisted of paper mâché' mountains and some grass mats. I scratch-built structures from cardboard and finished

them with paint I found on my dad's workbench. Without realizing it, this hobby was fulfilling my artistic needs and kept me busy for about a year until my parents took back the family room.

My next endeavor was a small N-scale layout I built in my bedroom. Around this time, my interest switched to music. I received a drum set for Christmas when I was 12 and immersed myself in music. As a self-taught musician, I pursued music from my early teens to late twenties and played drums and guitar in several bands, writing music and playing in clubs. During this time, I married, started a family, moved into a new house, and pursued a career in mechanical engineering.

Fast-forward to 2001, my wife Denise and I had three boys under the age of 10: Nicholas, Christian, and Alec. I decided it would be fun to get back into the hobby and

build a small layout together. I took all three boys to a local hobby shop where I purchased some plastic structure kits and a couple of issues of *Model Railroader*. I was amazed at how far the hobby had progressed, especially with DCC. I used CAD to design a small HO-scale L-shaped layout, purchased lumber, track, turnouts, structures, and a DCC system. Over two-years, I built an operating layout. During this time, I read many books on benchwork, track laying, scenery, etc. and honed my modeling skills. In 2003, I started designing my dream layout: the Stone Canyon Railroad (SCRR). This current layout fills my basement.

I designed the initial SCRR over six-months in 2003. My goal from day one was to take my time and build the best layout possible. I chose a single deck, freelance design based in the mountainous western United States in the 1950s steam/diesel transition

era. Union Pacific and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe are the predominate roads. The overall layout size is 28x39 feet, including staging. The double-track east/west main line is a 400-foot closed loop. There are 120 feet of hidden staging track that can accommodate 12 trains. Maximum grade is 2 percent. I also designed in a full-service steam/diesel engine facility that includes a 130-foot turntable, 12-stall roundhouse, and diesel shop. The freight yard has classification tracks for about 50 cars.

Motive power includes a variety of steam engines as large as 4-8-8-4 Big Boys. Diesels include switcher and road units, along with E- and F-units for passenger operation. All visible track is Code 83 flex on cork roadbed; hidden staging is Code 100. Altogether over 1,000 feet of track is used on the layout.

Turnouts are a mix of Walthers, Peco, and MicroEngineering. There are 36 industries on the layout, including coal, lumber, paper, food distribution, and fuel, among others. A 10-foot long by 1-foot deep city scene, complete with building and street lighting in over 25 buildings, occupies space behind the engine service facility.

The track plan was drawn in CAD, which enabled me to design the track plan, sub-roadbed, and benchwork together. I designed the benchwork using the L-girder system, which allowed me to easily incorporate free-flowing curves in lieu of sharp corners. I created working drawings in CAD of the five freestanding L-girder frames required for the layout and built them over a two-week period in January 2004.

A large-scale plotter at work enabled me to print full-scale plots of the sub-roadbed. These plots were efficiently arranged and adhered to a 4x8 sheet of 3/4-inch plywood. Using a jigsaw, I cut all the sub-roadbed pieces and numbered them so they would join together based on the track plan. Flat areas of the layout, such as the yard and engine service facility, were simply cut from full sheets of plywood. Prior to benchwork construction, I added fluorescent lighting in pre-planned locations where the benchwork would be located. All the benchwork was complete by early 2004.

Next, I started installing the 100 feet of backdrop. I used 1/8-inch tempered hardboard both freestanding (attached to the benchwork) and attached to the walls. After all seams were sealed, I primed the surface. Flat blue latex sky color was rolled on the top two-thirds and white for the bottom third. These colors were then blended while still wet to create deep blue to near white at the horizon.

I then installed a light valence suspended from the ceiling that follows the contours of the layout. The valence is made from 1/8-inch tempered hardboard with a gloss white coating on one side. With the backdrops and valence complete, I focused on sub-roadbed construction and trackwork. I installed a Digitrax Super Chief DCC system and began testing track and turnout alignments. I worked in sections, and once trackwork and wiring were completed and tested, I would then work on scenery.

I consider model railroading an art form and as a self-professed “scenery guy,” I focused on creating highly realistic scenery. I used many techniques from Dave Frary’s book, *How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery*. Mountainous areas were constructed from cardboard webbing, plaster gauze, and plaster rocks from molds. Sculptamold was used for terrain. Coloring was achieved using acrylic washes and flat latex paint. I also hand-carved rock strata into plaster on a 12-foot long section. The 800-plus trees on the layout are a mix of Woodland Scenics SuperTrees, commercial and scratchbuilt. I scratchbuilt more than 80 highly detailed conifer trees. There are more than 100 structures on the layout, which are a mix of plastic, wood craftsman, plaster, and scratchbuilt. I continued this construction method for the next eight years, slowly adding scenic elements, roads, trees, structure, and the like. Over the years, I upgraded my DCC system to Digitrax Super Chief radio duplex with four power districts.

In 2015, I added a major expansion to enhance operations. The 6x12-foot peninsula extended the main line by 60 feet and added two towns, 14 industries, and an additional 90 feet of sidings and spurs. In 2018, I added the final expansion to the layout: the Beaver Creek branch line. This 14x2-foot addition centers around a lumber operation that serves four industries on the layout. As of 2019, I consider the layout “finished.” I plan on spending many more years super-detailing it, as well as upgrading some structures and scenes built in the early years.

In late 2012, I received a phone call from Sunrise Trail Division board member Steve Perry. He had noticed that I was an NMRA member but had not attended any of the Sunrise Trail meets. He also enlightened me on the NMRA Achievement Program and encouraged me to participate. After investigating this on the NMRA website, I felt I could qualify for at least the Golden Spike, Scenery, and Electrical Certificates. Sunrise Trail Division AP Chair Mike Siegel and

Steve Perry visited in early 2013 and judged my layout for scenery. They gave me advice on how to get started with all the required paperwork. I received Scenery, Electrical, and Civil Certificates, plus a Golden Spike in 2013.

During the same time period, I met fellow modeler Howard Dwyer at the 2013 Spring Meet. He invited me to see his Island Central layout during one of his ops sessions. I ended up as a stand-in operator and became fascinated with operations. The SCRR began monthly operations in 2013 and has hosted more than 75 sessions since, including all the yearly IslandOps sessions starting in 2014. I belong to an operations group that meets weekly and operates across six layouts. The car card and waybill system are used for freight forwarding. Operations added the finishing touch to my layout.

I want to thank fellow modelers and operators Howard, Mike, Ron, Ward, John, Dave, Jeff, Stephen, Byron, Joe, Ben, and the late Carl Rotolo for their friendship, advice, and camaraderie.

Between 2014 and 2019, I received the remaining four Certificates: Chief Dispatcher, Author, Structures, and Cars. In July 2019, I was awarded MMR #643. The Achievement Program pushed me into areas I probably would not have gone, such as hand-laying track and scratchbuilding structures and cars. My modeling skills improved dramatically, as did my enjoyment of our great hobby. I’ve presented clinics on weathering and scenery at NMRA Division meets and have had several “how-to” articles published in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*.

I enjoy helping others and look forward to assisting modelers in the Achievement Program. I want to thank AP Chair Mike Siegel and Steve Perry for all their help in achieving this honor. Building the SCRR is my highest artistic achievement. Last but not least, I want to thank my wife Denise, who allowed me to take over the basement of our house and build my dream layout.

Certificates Earned
John Feraca, MMR® 643
Master Builder – Scenery
Master Builder – Structures
Master Builder – Cars
Model Railroad Author
Model Railroad Engineer -
Electrical
Model Railroad Engineer - Civil
Chief Dispatcher