

# 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](mailto:ntsreg@nmra.org)  
• 2021—Santa Clara, CA • 2022—Birmingham, England

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

OCTOBER 2019

GOLDEN SPIKE

#### Australasian Region

Ray Applebee, Salisbury, South Australia, Australia

Mark Bean, Glen Iris, Victoria, Australia  
Ray Brownbill, Forresteron, South Australia, Australia

Darren Lee, Jimboomba, Queensland, Australia

Neil Tonklin, Kingsley, Western Australia, Australia

#### Mid-Central Region

Bryan Persing, Willoughby Hills, Ohio

#### North Central Region

John Jackson, Birmingham, Michigan

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jerry Barsness, Spokane, Washington  
Richard Bide, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

Lee Chessman, Spokane, Washington  
Peter Heppler, Spokane, Washington  
Michael Murphy, Hyden Lake, Idaho  
Burr Stewart, Seattle, Washington  
Bill Voogd, Spokane, Washington  
Frank Wilhelm, Moscow, Idaho  
Daniel Wise, Lewiston, Idaho

#### Southeastern Region

Russell Bundy, Marietta, Georgia  
Roberta Dean, Crossville, Tennessee

#### MASTER BUILDER - CARS

##### Australasian Region

Mike Bartlett, Black Head, New South Wales

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Ernest Little, Manassas, Virginia

#### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

##### Australasian Region

Merv Bagnell, Hervey Bay, Queensland, Australia

Robert Harding, Kuraby, Queensland, Australia

#### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

##### Australasian Region

Merv Bagnell, Hervey Bay, Queensland, Australia

Duncan Cabassi, Sinnamon Park, Queensland, Australia

Robert Harding, Kuraby, Queensland, Australia

David O'Hearn, Belmont, New South Wales, Australia

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Pete LaGuardia, Haymarket, Virginia

Pat Mulrooney, New Holland, Pennsylvania

Joe Skorch, Kannapolis, North Carolina

##### Northeastern Region

Stanley Ames, Jr., Chelmsford, Massachusetts

##### Pacific Northwest Region

Burr Stewart, Seattle, Washington

##### Rocky Mountain Region

Stewart Jones, Denver, Colorado

Joseph Lemmo, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

#### MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

##### Australasian Region

David Howarth, MMR®, West Pymble, New South Wales, Australia

#### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

##### Australasian Region

Merv Bagnell, Hervey Bay, Queensland, Australia

#### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

##### Australasian Region

Merv Bagnell, Hervey Bay, Queensland, Australia

Duncan Cabassi, Sinnamon Park, Queensland, Australia

##### North Central Region

Jim Macino, Columbia City, Indiana

##### Pacific Northwest Region

Burr Stewart, Seattle, Washington

#### CHIEF DISPATCHER

##### Mid-Central Region

Joe Fields, Louisville, Kentucky

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Andrew Sadler, Charlotte, North Carolina

#### ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

##### Australasian Region

Charles Clarke, Little Mountain, Queensland, Australia

John Gillies, Lyneham, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

Allen Ogden, Seaholme, Victoria, Australia

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Jack Dziadul, Sanford, North Carolina

#### ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

##### Australasian Region

Rev. Dr. Vern Cracknell, Lower Mitcham, South Australia, Australia

Arthur Hayes, MMR®, Sunny Bank Hills, Queensland, Australia

Brian Hutchinson, Prospect, South Australia, Australia

David Orr, Modbury North, South Australia, Australia

Jane Robinson, Flagstaff Hill, South Australia, Australia

##### Mid-Central Region

Richard Turton, Morgantown, West Virginia

##### North Central Region

William Wemhoff, Decatur, Indiana

Chuck White, Van Vert, Ohio

##### Northeastern Region

Andy Clermont, Albany, New York

##### Rocky Mountain Region

Stewart Jones, Denver, Colorado

#### MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

##### Mid-Eastern Region

Pete LaGuardia, Haymarket, Virginia

##### Midwest Region

Emil Mosny, Jr., Rockford, Illinois

#### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

Mike Bartlett, Black Head, New South Wales, MMR® #646

Ernest Little, Manassas, Virginia, MMR® #647

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](mailto:fjkoch@hotmail.com)

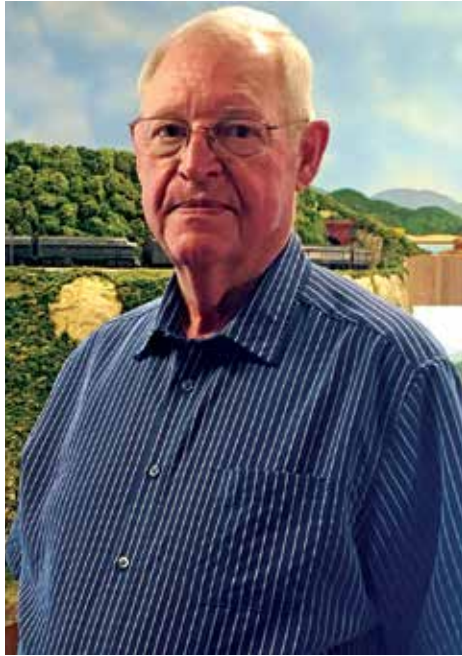
If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

**W.J. SCHEERER**  
**EARNs MMR® 631**

I have been a model railroader for as long as I can remember. Like many of my generation, I got my start in the hobby courtesy of Lionel Trains. Unlike many in my generation, my childhood interests in trains, both miniature and full size, ultimately defined my life as it led me down a path to both a lifelong hobby and a railroad career.

My dad had an interest in trains, but my mother and my grandfather were the real enablers of my passion. My mother purchased a Lionel train set (Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 and three Tuscan red PRR passenger cars) at Higbee's department store in Cleveland, Ohio, for my third Christmas. That was soon followed by a steam-powered freight train and other accessories. My collection grew thanks to my grandfather, who always indulged my love for trains at Christmas. I still remember looking under the tree for the telltale shape of those wonderful orange boxes that said Lionel in that splendid white and blue. Dad and I, mostly Dad, built a nice Lionel layout in the basement that was operational during the winter months but was folded up against the wall for most of the year. I remember Dad taking me to a railroad exhibition that featured the New York Central 999 and a visit to the cab of a large Nickel Plate steam engine. I recall Dad picking me up to reach the whistle cord, which, when I pulled it, produced a result that scared me to death.

After my parents moved to a new basement, I mean home, when I was 15 years old, I drifted away from my Lionel trains and began construction of an O-scale layout with hand-laid track and turnouts. Hand-laid track was a necessity on a 15-year-old's budget, and the cost of rolling stock and motive power was dear. My parents continued to indulge my hobby interests with a number of All Nation Hobby car kits and an EMD switcher kit. While in high school, I saved and saved to purchase a Kemtron brass GP9 kit and a Central Locomotive Works drive, which I built and still have today. Baltimore & Ohio 6599 is proudly displayed along with a scratchbuilt B&O caboose that I constructed shortly thereafter.



By the time I reached junior high school, I knew that I wanted to be an engineer (not the locomotive engineer kind) and was admitted to Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland after graduating from high school. My chosen major was Chemical Engineering. By the end of my freshman year, two life-changing events occurred. First, I had learned that while high school chemistry was my all-time favorite subject, college chemistry was absolutely positively not. This revelation resulted in changing my major to Electrical Engineering — the choice being related to enjoying and learning more about wiring my model railroad. Also during my freshman year in college, I got a job during the Christmas holiday season at Blum's Hobby House in Cleveland (Leonard M. Blum, or LMB, may be a name some of you remember) and became interested in HO scale.

The second event was my need to find a job for the summer of 1966. I learned through high school model railroad friend Roger Pinta that the B&O was hiring summer help, and I was hired as a Locomotive Fireman on the Akron Chicago Division working out of Deforest Jct., Ohio. This opportunity led to a lifelong love of the B&O Railroad. I joined the NMRA in 1964 and read about the Achievement Program, which was fairly new at the time, in the *BULLETIN*, but I allowed my NMRA membership to lapse during my college years.

In 1970, I married my wife Nancy, and we moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where I had accepted a position as Associate Engineer Communications & Signals at Penn Central's system office. I rejoined the NMRA in 1972 but was one of those people who did not participate in many activities. After a stint in the railroad signal supply industry, I joined the Chessie System Railroads in July 1976, headquartered in Huntington, West Virginia. In 1986 I became CSX Transportation's first Chief Engineer Communications & Signals and moved to Jacksonville, Florida (a place without basements).

Throughout these years, my interest in model railroading never subsided. I built models in our apartment in Philadelphia, started a layout in Kansas City, constructed a layout in Huntington that never got all the track laid, and built yet another unfinished layout in Jacksonville (located in a room we built onto our house for that purpose — thank you, Nancy!). In 1994, I accepted an opportunity to rejoin the railroad signal supply industry in the Kansas City, Missouri, area. Even before moving into our new home, I reconfigured the Jacksonville track plan to fit my new "glorious" finished basement with the intent of building a railroad suitable for regular operations.

By the time I retired for real in 2009, benchwork, track, and wiring was about 50 percent finished. Retirement provided the opportunity to get construction moving, and my long-suppressed interest in the Achievement Program began to make itself known. One of my Chessie/CSX friends and colleague, NMRA member Eric Peterson, talked about the AP, and he encouraged me to get involved. I decided to test the waters with the Golden Spike Award and was amazed to find that I had already met almost all the requirements. I received that recognition in October 2010 and began the nine-year journey to Master Model Railroader®.

At this time, I began attending the Mid-Continent Region Turkey Creek Division meetings. I immediately wished that I had done that many years before because the people I met and the things I learned changed my entire outlook on the hobby. The next step was thinking about which certificates I was interested in, and

I made a spreadsheet that included each requirement and how I planned to fulfill it. Again, I was amazed at how many things I had already done toward meeting the requirements. When I had the fulfillment of a requirement started or already partially done, I highlighted the requirement in yellow. When I had a requirement completed, I entered the date complete and changed the highlight color to green. This spreadsheet allowed me to keep track of my progress on multiple certificates as railroad construction progressed.

As I built my railroad, I always made certain the things I needed to do to meet unfinished AP requirements were also things that were a part of the plan I had for my B&O Monongah Division, which finally held its first operating session in March 2016, a mere 22 years after construction began. Furthermore, as my railroad progressed at a heightened pace while working on my AP certificates, my grandson took an interest in the hobby. He is now 11 years old, has built several

structures, has participated in several operating sessions around town, and loves working on scenery. While I can't predict the future, I am hopeful he will find model railroading to be the same wonderful life-long hobby that I have found it to be. If he does, I will have given him the same priceless gift that my parents and grandfather gave to me.

The AP was always a topic that was discussed at our monthly Turkey Creek Division meetings, and I received encouragement from other members, especially the MMR<sup>®</sup>s, as well as from watching others receive recognition as they were presented with the Merit and AP certificates they had earned. I especially wish to thank Joe Robertson, Larry Diehl, Jim EuDaly, Doug Taylor, Miles and Fran Hale, Larry Alfred, and many others for their continual help, encouragement, and the trips to my B&O Monongah Division to judge the "immovable objects."

I must admit that I was intimidated by several of the requirements and certificates

(especially cars) but found that achieving them raised my modeling ability to a level I did not think I would ever reach. As is the case in many things in life, you just need to stop thinking about it and try. I encourage those of you who would aspire to MMR<sup>®</sup> to take a look around your railroad and be amazed, as I was, at all the AP requirements you have already met.

Finally, I am exceedingly grateful for the unending support for both my hobby and career by my wife Nancy, who says, "railroading is not a career; it is a disease!"

**Certificates Earned**  
**W.J. Sheerer, MMR<sup>®</sup> 631**  
**Model Railroad Engineer –**  
**Electrical**  
**Model Railroad Engineer - Civil**  
**Master Builder - Scenery**  
**Master Builder - Motive Power**  
**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Association Volunteer**

## FROM NMRA HEADQUARTERS

# Did you know?

**The NMRA has a complete set of model railroading publications from the very earliest days and a complete collection of NMRA publications from 1947 to the present. However, our collection of NMRA publications for the period 1935–1946 is incomplete. We are seeking donated materials from members who might still have NMRA publications from this period. Send them to NMRA Headquarters and an acknowledgement letter will be sent to you.**

**We need your 1935–1946 NMRA publications.**

