

NMRA BULLETIN

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2023 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
Dallas, Texas August 20 – 26, 2023 (<https://www.2023texasexpress.com/>)
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org
• 2024—Long Beach, California • 2025 Novi, Michigan

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ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

JULY 2023

GOLDEN SPIKE

Mid-Eastern Region

Greg Cassidy, Silver Spring, Maryland
Brad Jones, Shelby, North Carolina
Stephen Richardson, Malvern, Pennsylvania
Steve Wysowski, Royersford, Pennsylvania

Northeastern Region

Michael Pyszczyk, LeRoy, New York

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Australasia Region

David Whibley, Lismurle, Western Australia, Australia

Mid-Eastern Region

Ed Smith, Taylorsville, North Carolina

Northeastern Region

Donald Fitzpatrick, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

Pacific Northwest Region

Bill Yancey, Boise, Idaho

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

Mid-Continent Region

Greg Gramlich, Wentzville, Missouri

Pacific Northwest Region

Bill Yancey, Boise, Idaho

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Mid-Central Region

Wil Davis, Dayton, Ohio

Mid-Continent Region

Greg Gramlich, Wentzville, Missouri

Mid-Eastern Region

Martin McGuirk, Gainesville, Virginia

Pacific Northwest Region

Bill Yancey, Boise, Idaho

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

Mid-Central Region

Donald Cipolla, Hurricane, West Virginia

Pacific Northwest Region

Daniel Figy, Spokane, Washington

Southeastern Region

Craig Gardner, Birmingham, Alabama

Sunshine Region

Richard Segall, Hawthorne, Florida

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Mid-Central Region

Donald Cipolla, Hurricane, West Virginia
Mark Pekelnicky, Parma Heights, Ohio

Mid-Eastern Region

Martin McGuirk, Gainesville, Virginia

Pacific Coast Region

Ron Chaffee, Livermore, California

Pacific Northwest Region

Michael Donnelly, Renton, Washington

Thousand Lakes Region

Brian Davis, Saint Paul, Minnesota

CHIEF DISPATCHER

Pacific Northwest Region

Bill Yancey, Boise, Idaho

Pacific Southwest Region

Gary Stenberg, Irvine, California

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

Rocky Mountain Region

Joseph Lemmo, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Southeastern Region

Murray Fancher, Birmingham, Alabama

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Gary Reynolds, East Amherst, New York

Pacific Northwest Region

Ben Amodeo, Richland, Washington
Carl Sonner, Kennewick, Washington

Southeastern Region

Gerald Mabry, Meridian, Mississippi

Sunshine Region

Andy Zimmerman, Tallahassee, Florida

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Northeastern Region

Victor Hand, Bar Harbor, Maine

Pacific Northwest Region

Rick Martin, MMR, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho
Bill Yancey, Boise, Idaho

Southeastern Region

Steven Folino, Afton, Tennessee

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #741 Steve Salotti, Colledgeville, Pennsylvania
MMR® #742 Ed Smith, Taylorsville, North Carolina

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 achiev@nmra.org.

Did you know?

The NMRA Video Library has over 150 videos of clinics that were presented at National Conventions from the last 30 years. Virtually every model railroading topic you can think of has been covered...from scenery to operations to prototypes to electronics. If you missed the last few decades of National Conventions, you can still see some of the best clinics around.

Just log into www.nmra.org as a member, click on "Membership / Member Home" and click on the big red box that says "Watch clinic videos" next to the photo... it's that easy!



JOHN ROBERT COY

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #730

Greetings, model railroading enthusiasts! What follows is an unusual tale involving the uncommon 3rd rail Master Model Railroader®. I am the third 3-railer to achieve MMR® (waiting for the collective gasp). The first 3-railer to accomplish MMR® was Ronald R. Rise, MMR® #167. John Siegel, MMR® #601, followed him. I'm a huge fan of the uncommon, where most people would categorize Mr. Rise, Mr. Siegel, and myself. I am delighted to report that I have been accepted and welcomed with open arms by NMRA 2-rail modelers!

Let's answer "the elephant in the room" question: Why did I use 3-rail track? Answer: I've always had the best time with two rails and figured adding another rail would increase my enjoyment! I enjoy the uncommon and wanted to create something you will rarely see anywhere else. From my viewpoint, I succeeded far beyond my expectations!

Connie Jones Coy (my wife) and I created the Glacier Line, which has appeared in several publications: *OGR Railroading* magazine, *Classic Toy Trains* magazine, the *Great Northern Railway Historical Modeler's Pages*, and the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. It has been featured online on many model railroading sites countless times.

The Glacier Line has also been professionally video-recorded by OGR Video Productions and TM Books & Video. Connie and I wish to express our most sincere gratitude to both companies. In addition, the Glacier Line has its own YouTube and Facebook pages and has become relatively well known in the O-scale community.

Assisting others is a primary responsibility for those participating and completing the Achievement Program categories, regardless of whether one earns Master Model Railroader®. After reading my story, I'm hoping that others, especially those with 3-rails, may feel inspired to start participating in the AP.

In the 1960s, my parents gifted me a wind-up toy train at Christmas. In 1972, I met my lifelong friend Scott Dombrosky. Scott's father bought him an HO train layout from a garage sale. I had never

seen a train layout mounted on a board in a home before. I was utterly captivated.

In addition to the layout, Scott had a collection of Atlas model railroading booklets and *Model Railroader* magazines. Within those publications, I read numerous inspiring articles by legendary hobby pioneers Linn Westcott, John Allen, John Armstrong, Frank Ellison, and Al Kalmbach.

I later discovered *Model Railroader* magazine video publications, where I was taken by the work of Bruce Chubb, Lorell Joiner, and finally, my greatest influence: David Barrow of the Cat Mountain & Santa Fe.

Model Railroader is also where I learned about the NMRA. I was intrigued and highly interested when I read about the NMRA's Achievement Program. However, it also intimidated me because I wrongly assumed you had to have the skills of John Allen or other museum-quality craftsmen to achieve MMR®. Boy, was I wrong! (Gerry Leone, MMR® #346, requested that I include the story of my wrong assumption in this bio to help others not jump to the same erroneous conclusion I did.)

At one point, NMRA was headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, where I grew up. Indianapolis was also home to my favorite train shop — Les Gordon's Trains. Les Gordon's carried a variety of scales. The O-scale trains intrigued me the most; I loved the size! However, as a teenager of exceptionally modest means, O-scale trains cost far more than I could



afford. I used to ask myself: Who has that much money? Who has that much space? The answer turned out to be me — about 35-plus years later.

Fast forward to 2010; Connie and I had just moved into a house with a big basement. My initial thought was to build my dream HO-scale layout (I'd been modeling HO-scale for about 38 years at this point). However, I first set up a 10 x 12-foot Lionel toy train layout in a corner as an enticement, hoping to get my son, Joseph, interested in model trains.

Shortly after constructing this Lionel layout, I walked into my basement and immediately noticed the large O-scale trains against a distant wall. I could actually see them easily. I felt moved to retrieve my largest piece of HO rolling stock and place it next to an O-scale car. I returned to my distant spot and looked across the room. At that moment, I knew beyond any doubt that I wanted an O-scale layout. Fortunately, when I shared my "Eureka!" moment with Connie, she was okay with the plan to go O!

Connie, also a model railroader, currently serves as the Midwest Region Secretary and holds six AP certificates. Connie will earn her seventh — Association Official — in May 2024. Connie will probably become the first female 3-rail MMR®. Further, there is a reasonable probability that Connie and I will become the first married couple 3-rail MMR®s.

My experience in model railroading has been that most people who live in the eastern United States model eastern railroads, and those who live in the western U.S. model western railroads. Of course, there are exceptions. Most people who model railroads use two-rail track. What could I do differently?

If I constructed the Great Northern Railway in 3-rail O-scale in a realistic setting, it would be highly unlikely someone else would be doing the same thing anywhere, especially in Avon, Indiana. Rich Melvin (former Publisher/CEO of *O-Scale Railroading* magazine) once commented in a video: “How does a guy who lives in Indiana model the Great Northern?”

The answer: Connie and I lived in Montana for 4.5 years. We both love history, railroads, and Glacier National Park. Therefore, our choice of location for our model railroad is Great Northern’s Marias Pass, which follows along the park’s southern boundary — one of our favorite places to be!

In 2016, I invited others, including my good friends Gregg Burks, Chris Toncheff, and Rod Weinschenk, to see the Glacier Line. Sometime later in 2017, Jan Burnside responded to one of my Facebook posts, simply stating, “My husband Phillip is a model railroader.” Jan didn’t know it then, nor did I, but her response was a world-changer that day. If Jan hadn’t responded to my post, I may never have joined the NMRA or become an MMR®.

Jan’s reply to my post turned out to be quite an understatement. Phillip had already been an NMRA member for several years. (I learned much later that Jan is also an NMRA member.) As of early 2023, Phillip holds six AP certificates. He is working on several others and is the Treasurer of the Central Indiana Division (CID) and a Director at Large in the Midwest Region (MWR).

Phillip visited us shortly after the Facebook introduction. The rest, as they say, is history. As unbelievable as it may

sound, Phillip was the very first NMRA member I had ever met. I may have encountered others at various points in my life, but I just never knew. The first time I met Phillip in person, he brought his dad (James) to the Glacier Line. James also was a big-time model railroader. I am proud to be a friend of Phillip. He is an honorable man and a fabulous modeler!

I asked Phillip if he had any AP certificates. At that time, Phillip informed me he only had the Golden Spike Award. “What’s that?” I asked. I requested to see it. Seeing Phillip’s award was another first for me. That was when the light came on — I decided to join the NMRA right then. I am, at best, a very average modeler, so how could I become an MMR®?

The answer: I have the willingness to listen and learn. Further, I am one of the most focused and determined people you will ever meet. When I decide to do something, I’ll do it, and if I fail at first, I shall try again. People have described me as “tenacious.”

After reviewing the AP requirements for the first time since I was a teenager, I made a plan in 2018 to complete the requirements to achieve MMR®. I asked for advice, assistance, and guidance to be successful. No one person knows everything. I’ve been a model railroader for 50-plus years, and I can tell you firsthand I’m always learning new things. In the NMRA, you meet model railroaders who possess a lot of knowledge that you never would have met if you didn’t join.

A very good friend of mine, Dr. Robert J. Perry, or as I call him, “Bob,” and I became acquainted solely because of the NMRA. We only live about three miles apart in the same town! Without the NMRA connection, we may have never known one another. Bob holds four AP certificates and is a Director at Large for the Midwest Region. Bob is focused and well on his way to three other AP certificates. He is a brilliant man and an outstanding modeler! Bob is also a turntable surgeon, but that’s a story for another day.

There are eight core Glacier Line (GL) Crew members, including Connie Coy, Phillip Burnside, and Robert (Bob) Perry. In the not-too-distant future, these three individuals will all become Master Model Railroaders®, meaning one-half of our core Glacier Line Crew will be MMR®s!

Other members of the Central Indiana Division (CID) hold six AP certificates. One day, very soon, the CID will have an impressive number of MMR®s! That means the CID will have many willing and highly experienced people to assist others in their quest for MMR®.

Thank you to our (CID) immediate past Superintendent Dan Hinel, who led the way by becoming MMR® #700! I want to personally thank Dan for everything he has done for me since the day I joined the NMRA. Dan has always been a great inspiration to me and is widely admired and respected.

I was appointed as a Voting Member of the CID Board in November 2018 by Dan Hinel, three months after joining the NMRA. Since that moment, I have served on either the CID Board or MWR Board continuously. I am currently the Assistant Superintendent of the CID and will be in that role at least until May 2024.

Former MWR President Steve Studley asked me to be a candidate for a Director at Large (DAL) position in late 2018. I accepted and was elected to office in May 2019. In May 2023, I will finish my second consecutive term, four years (term limits), as a Director at Large for the MWR Board. I want to take this opportunity to thank Steve! It was a great learning experience for me.

I also want to thank former MWR Secretary and current MWR President Bob McGeever, who welcomed me at my first Regional Board meeting in May 2019. I will never forget his kindness. Bob is very knowledgeable, supportive, and well-respected.

I am proud to be a member of the CID because this group is highly involved, engaged, and passionate about promoting the hobby. I will never forget their kindness from the first day I walked in the door, October 6, 2018, at a Modelers’ Meet — a show-and-tell of sorts for model railroaders.

Thomas Cain was the Modelers’ Meet event manager at that time. Tom was also the CID AP Chair. I’m confident I drove him crazy with all my questions. I was honored and pleased to become his Co-Chair for the Modelers’ Meets. These Modelers’ Meets are still my favorite events.

Tom coached me at the Tri-Regional Indy Junction Convention in 2022 concerning AP Judging. It was an eye-opening experience for me. I learned a lot from

Tom. I greatly appreciate his tutoring, advice, and counsel.

I highly recommend becoming an AP Judge to anyone participating in the AP. Get trained! Observe the AP judges in your Division when they judge models. It will give you a much better overall understanding of the process. It will help you to improve your modeling as well.

On the layout tour in Bloomington, Indiana, during the Indy 2022 Tri-Region Convention, Connie, Bob Perry, and I accidentally bumped into NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®. It was a moment that I'll never forget! How ironic is it that the first NMRA President I met face to face was the first NMRA President not from the continental U.S.? As most of us know, Gordy hails from the United Kingdom. What an AP journey it has been for me!

I earned my AP certificates in the following order: Author, Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, Scenery, Volunteer, Official, and Cars. The Author certificate was the easiest for me as I already was a multi-time published author, including two books. The "hardest," I probably should

say the most intimidating, was the Master Builder—Cars category. Like many, I put it off until very last.

My final model was a completely scratchbuilt passenger car. It had 561 individual scratchbuilt pieces. It is an amazing model. I'm thrilled to have it, and I still can't believe I constructed it! The really neat part about this car is that it was uncommon on the prototype. This prototype car was an "open-top" observation car built by the Great Northern Railway in the early 1900s.

Like the little engine that could, I think I can, I think I can, and I did! I became MMR® #730. Most importantly, you can too! Even if you have three rails like me. Some of the very best modeling I've ever seen has been done by 3-rail modelers.

Unfortunately, a perception exists that 3-rail modelers are not welcome in the NMRA — not true! That has not been my experience or observation. There are many 3-rail modelers in the NMRA.

In the NMRA, I am blessed, fortunate, and pleased to have had the opportunity to meet a multitude of model railroaders who had scales from T to G, including

narrow gauge, 3- and 2-rails, and even one with an operating overhead wire! We are all model railroaders, and our mission is to promote the hobby.

My Master Model Railroader® story is very much like *The Little Engine That Could*. It can be your story as well. Truly, if you can eliminate self-doubt and faithfully believe in yourself, you can be successful and accomplish what you never thought possible. These aren't merely words. It is the truth. Get involved in the AP. It's challenging and rewarding. It's a great way to improve your modeling skills. What are you waiting for?

Certificates Earned
John Robert Coy, MMR® #730

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

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We make it more fun.