

NMRA BULLETIN

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**Have you changed your address or
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changes in Region officer infor-
mation to the NMRA Secretary:
secy@nmra.org.

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
• 2025 Novi, Michigan

rev 10/14/2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM NMRA HEADQUARTERS

2024 NMRA WINTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The 2024 NMRA Winter Board of Directors meeting will be held in Springfield, Massachusetts, on Friday, January 26, 2024, at:

Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel
One Monarch Place
Springfield, MA 01144

The meeting begins at 11:00 AM. All members are invited to attend.

Both submitted by:

Mike Cummings, Secretary, National Model Railroad Association

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

Voting in the 2024 Board of Directors Elections opens in February. The following positions are up for election:

President
Vice President
At-Large North American Director
Eastern District Director
Pacific District Director

All members worldwide will be voting for the President and Vice President. Some members will be voting for the Director for their district.

Ballot packages are being designed specifically for your district. Your ballot package will include candidate statements, the No Campaigning Policy, and the ballot. Candidate statements will be posted on the website no later than **January 10, 2024**.

Voting-eligible members with an email address on file will be sent a ballot package electronically through Electionbuddy, a secure online voting system. Your ballot package should arrive around **FEB 1** and voting will close on **MAR 1**. Voting-eligible members who do not have an email address on file will be sent a paper ballot package via postal mail sometime after JAN 15. Completed paper ballots must be postmarked no later than **MAR 1**.

Do not be alarmed if you learn that one of your friends has received their ballot package when you have not. Since the ballot packages are being distributed from different locations and in different manners, the ballots will most certainly arrive at their destinations at different times. Please take the time to vote and thank you for being a member of the NMRA.

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT OCTOBER 2023 GOLDEN SPIKE

Northeastern Region

Brian Scharfstein, E. Hanover, New Jersey

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

Thousand Lakes Region

Matthew Lentz, Fargo, North Dakota

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Northeastern Region

Phil Monat, Bronx, New York

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

Mid-Central Region

Robert Kress, Covington, Kentucky

Mid-Continent Region

Todd Summers, Marion, Iowa

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Lone Star Region

Mike Armstrong, Keller, Texas

Pacific Northwest Region

Bert Cripe, Port Orchard, Washington
Bill Smienk, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Southeastern Region

Roberta Dean, Crossville, Tennessee

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL Mid-Central Region

Harold Weinberg, Lexington, Kentucky

Pacific Northwest Region

Doug Hicks, Burnaby, British Columbia

Rocky Mountain Region

Cameron LaFleur, Clearfield, Utah

Southeastern Region

David Koch, Kennesaw, Georgia

CHIEF DISPATCHER

Lone Star Region

David Crumpton, Arlington, Texas

Mid-Central Region

Dexter Hill, Ashville, Ohio

Mid-Eastern Region

Joe Skorch, Kannapolis, North Carolina

Midwest Region

John Dramm, Waunakee, Wisconsin

Northeastern Region

Benjamin Maggi, Loudenville, New York

Thousand Lakes Region

Kenneth Zieska, Plymouth, Minnesota

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL Sunshine Region

Robert Feuerstein, Tallahassee, Florida

Thousand Lakes Region

Caleb VanDerBrink, Sioux Center, Iowa
Kenneth Zieska, Plymouth, Minnesota

ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

Lone Star Region

Chris Atkins, Argyle, Texas

Midwest Region

Arthus Dawson, Jr., Brooklyn, Wisconsin

North Central Region

Robert Crocker, Suttons Bay, Michigan

Pacific Northwest Region

Matt Frampton, Bremerton, Washington

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

Lone Star Region

Chris Atkins, Argyle, Texas

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #747 David Crumpton, Arlington, Texas

MMR® #748, Phil Monat, Bronx, New York

BRUCE J. VAN HUIS

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #746

My first train was a Lionel Scout set given to me by my parents for Christmas in 1949. I was five years old, but the next day was my birthday, so I guess I started running trains at six. My dad mounted the track on a 4x8 sheet of plywood, and the journey began. I sat and watched that little train for hours and hours and never really tired of it. This train set was purchased at Sears Roebuck's for \$9.95. I still have this amazing little train and the box it came in. I made a tunnel from a shoe box, and the depot was from a cigar box. Boy, my layout was coming to life. My friend Dave and I took the body off the little engine and abused it terribly. We would run it as fast as possible to see if it would stay on the track. Most times, it was off the track and onto the floor. Lionel sure did make some strong toys back then.

I was born in an area with a lot of blueberry farms, and later in life, I was allowed to ride my bike to the farms. I started to earn money by picking berries. Every cent I earned was put in a box, waiting for it to be enough to purchase more track and some turnouts. It was down to the hobby shop as soon as I had earned enough.

My love for 3-rail never wavered. As most people moved on to HO or N scale, I never did. I just kept on adding to and building my layout. While in the Boy Scouts, I had a chance to visit Frank Fabiano's home layout. He had added a complete extra basement to his house and filled it with Lionel trains. I never got over the thrill I received when he allowed me to see this incredible layout. I vowed right then that someday I would have something like this. Unlike most folks, I worked on my railroad all through high school. After graduation, I moved to Chicago to attend trade school. In 1962, the railroads were very busy in and around Chicago. I enjoyed every chance I had to watch trains. I graduated in 1964 and moved back home with my folks, but my girl and work took over for a time.

Fast-forward to the mid-1970s when our son came home and said the new neighbors had a train set, and it was great fun. I didn't need any more coaching. We returned to my parents' house and loaded the van with trains. We had just purchased a new

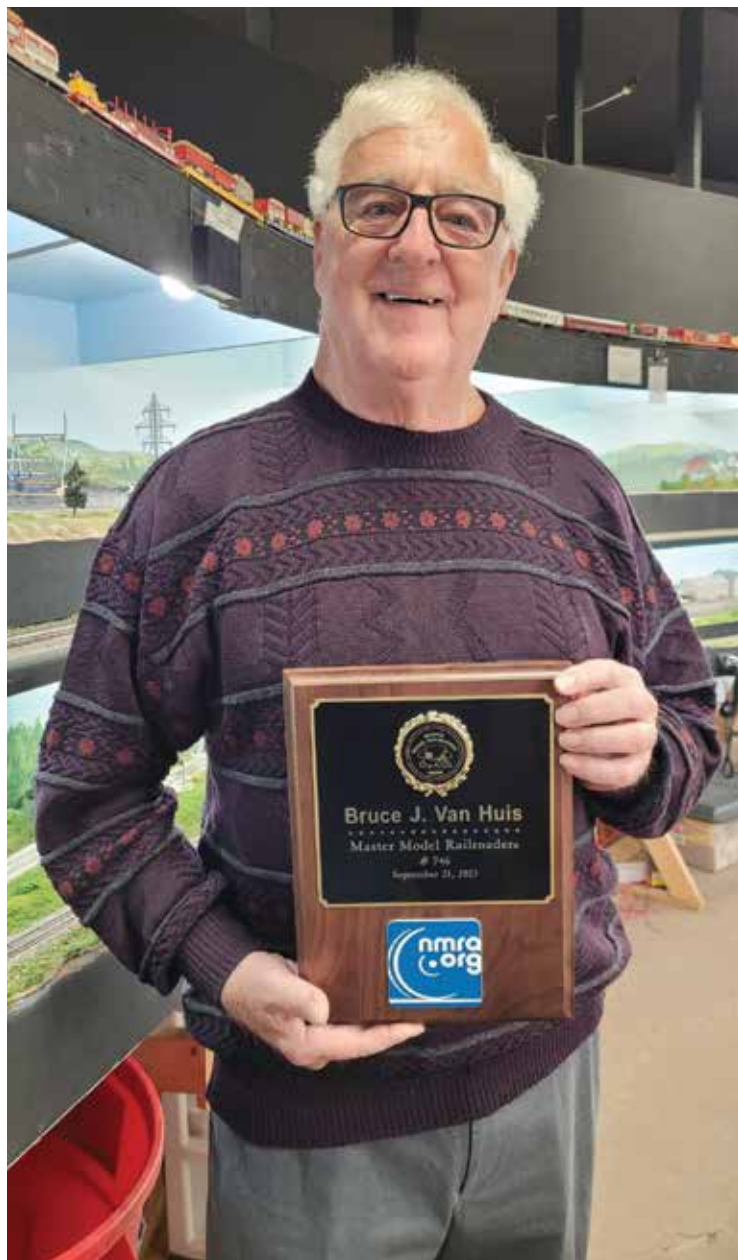
home, and the basement was calling for a train set. Back then with 3-rail, it was all the rage to have a very large control panel with multiple transformers and as many switches as you could fit. We did it right! Our son and I spent many happy hours going to train shows and finding what we could not live without. The railroad just kept getting larger and larger.

Later, our son graduated from high school and went to the University of Michigan. I took a new position at work that kept me on the road for days. The train set as I knew it was not as much fun anymore.

At a friend's wedding, I had the great pleasure of meeting Dr. Bruce Chubb, MMR®. Dr. Chubb invited me to visit his unbelievable Sunset Valley Oregon System when he discovered I was heavy into electronic repair. *Wow!* That layout's impact really changed how I looked at model railroading. With Dr. Chubb as my mentor, I disassembled the entire old layout and set out to make a realistic railroad.

During my complete changeover, Mike's Train House DCS became available, which changed everything. Instead of a large control panel, I went to no control panel and walk-around remote control.

Working with Dr. Chubb and meeting many of his friends, I got hooked on operations. Dr. Chubb gently pushed me to go for the MMR®. It took me 13 years and a real struggle with Parkinson's to complete

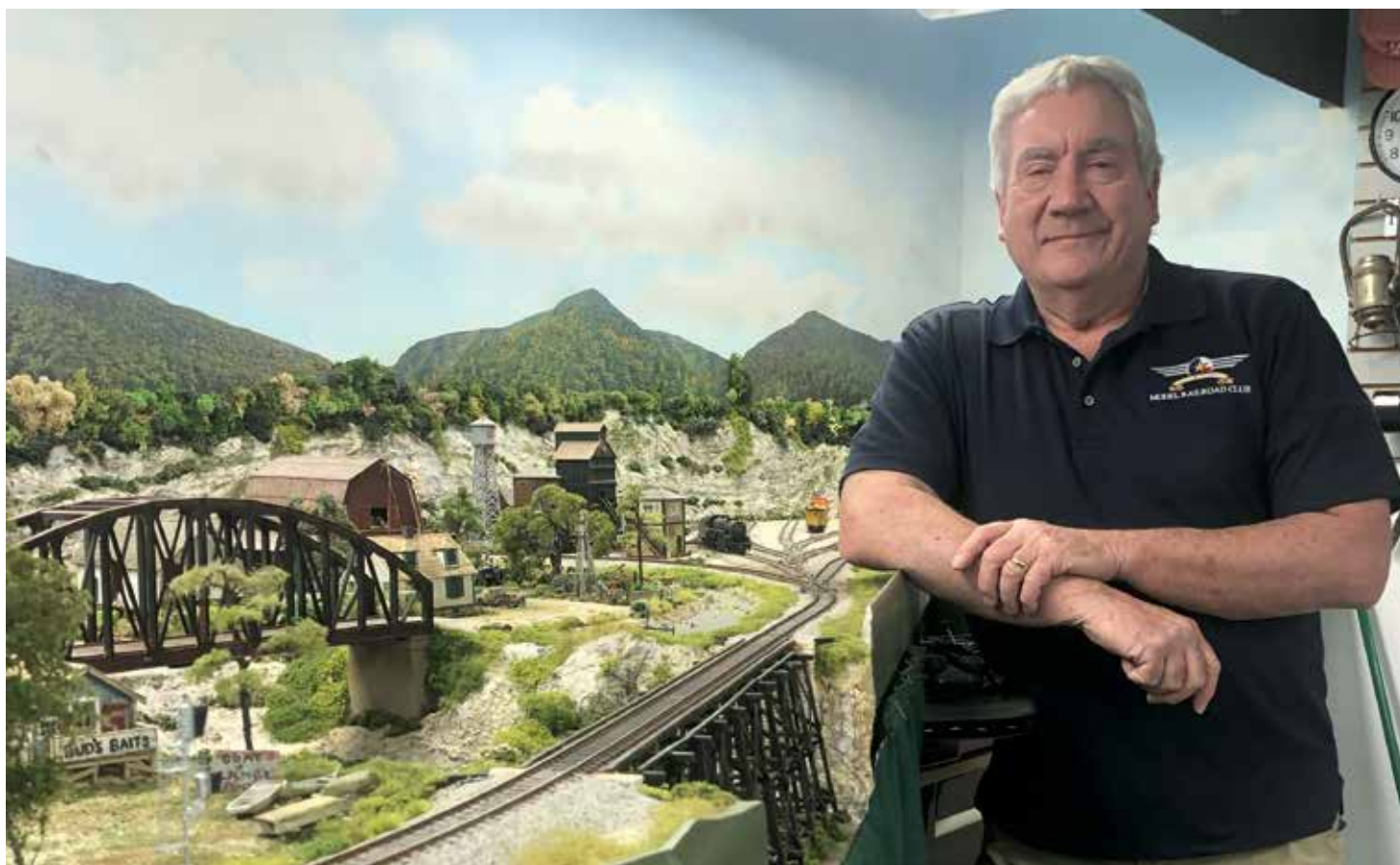


the journey, but with my wife's encouragement and help and guidance from my friend Thom Post, I managed to finish before my 80th birthday.

I have been awarded MMR® #746 — still a three-railer and proud of it.

Certificates Earned Bruce J Van Huis, MMR® #746

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



DAVID CRUMPTON

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #747

My journey into model railroading began like many others who have enjoyed this hobby. As an elementary-age boy, my Cub Scout Pack got the opportunity to take a passenger train from my hometown of Hillsboro, Texas, to Waco, Texas. It was only a 40-minute trip, but we had an awesome time and even flattened some pennies when the train pulled into the station to pick us up. For an 8-year-old boy, this was an incredible adventure! A few months later, one of my friends got a Lionel set for Christmas. It was a simple oval, but we enjoyed watching the steamer go around it as it puffed “smoke” from the smoke drops we dripped into the smoke-stack. These were early seeds, but they took root and fueled my love of railroading.

Many years later, some of my high school buddies and I were called by our football coach and informed that the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad was hiring summer help. So, the first summer after my high school graduation in 1969, my buddies and I found ourselves working with a gang

of a dozen or so “lifers,” as we called them. We were assigned to work on a section gang and spent the first summer replacing worn ties and rail between Hillsboro and Fort Worth, Texas. The money was good, and it kept us in shape, so the following summer after our first year of college in 1970, we “re-enlisted” to work on the section gang. We replaced worn ties and rail that summer between Hillsboro and Waxahachie, Texas. The work was very hard and embedded in me the incentive to finish college. My fondest memories of those two summers were seeing five or six locomotive units lashed together, pulling long trains. When trains would come through, we were told to spike up what was undone, and then we stood beside the tracks as the big locomotives slowly rumbled by and shook the ground. As we enjoyed a long break, the sounds, smells, and power of the locomotives stirred me up and gave me a real love and appreciation for railroading. Oddly enough, I still enjoy the smell of creosote; it makes me think about those long, hot days in the Texas summer on top of ties and ballast.

When our son Matt was born in 1981, I wanted to start building a simple layout he and I could play with in the garage. So, I

mounted a 4x8 sheet of plywood on heavy-duty hinges so that the plywood could be folded against the wall for storage. It was simple but was fun to build. This layout morphed into a full layout down the side of the garage wall. This stayed in place for a few years until I built a shop in my backyard and relocated the entire layout to its current location, a 14x16-foot space. As life moved on, I became involved with the Boy Scouts with my son, and the layout sat dormant under a sheet of plastic for several years and was seldom ever enjoyed.

In 2018, after a long absence from the hobby, I was watching YouTube one day and discovered that HO locomotives now had sound! Wow! This discovery caused my model railroad brain to wake from a deep slumber. I headed to a model train hobby store to buy a DCC locomotive and ask questions about an airbrush. I was having a discussion with a sales clerk but did not find what I wanted. A gentleman followed me out of the store and politely introduced himself as Mike Mackey, Division 1 Director of the NMRA. He gave his opinions on airbrush types and brands, then asked what scale I modeled, what was my favorite rail line, and what I enjoyed about

the hobby. After a few minutes of conversation, he asked if I needed help learning more about the skills and knowledge regarding model railroading. He then spoke of the NMRA, explained what it was, and invited me to the next Cowcatcher Division 1 meeting the following Saturday. Mike said the meeting was held monthly at the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, about 20 minutes from my home. I had no idea there was a club nearby and was unsure if I wanted to join a club or the NMRA. I felt content to work on my own layout and work by myself. But, after thinking about my lack of knowledge of DCC, current modeling techniques, and railroading in general, I decided to go check out the next meeting. After sitting through a meeting, I realized that I was in the company of skilled craftsmen, and I was astounded by their knowledge. I felt like I was in first grade, and these folks were in college! Obviously, there was a pool of talent that could really help me learn and grow. I took the opportunity to join the club and the NMRA within a week. It was one of the best decisions I ever made! I always asked a ton of questions, soaked up everything I could, and made some lifelong friends. Then, in 2021, I embarked on the road to MMR®. Along the way, I have learned about scenery, structures, electrical, engineering, scratch- and kitbuilding, and have taken many opportunities to volunteer at NMRA events. The catalog of information and experiences I have gained along the way is precious to me and essential as I endeavor to help others grow in the hobby.

Before discussing those who helped me in my achievement, I must give my deepest thanks, appreciation, and love to my sweet

wife of almost 49 years, Margreat. She may not have always understood exactly what I was doing on the kitchen table or my layout, but she knew it was important to me and has always supported and encouraged my model railroading efforts. She has given me good suggestions on structure colors, landscaping placement, and the structures' location. Margreat has always been agreeable to my wanting to add a new locomotive, car, or structure kit to my layout, and she always seems to be excited when I crank them up and we listen to sounds of the prototype. I treasure my sweetheart very much, and the years we have spent enjoying our family, friends, and time with each other.

The achievement of Master Model Railroader® cannot be made without help, coaching, mentoring, and sometimes some gentle prodding. I want to single out and give my deepest gratitude, respect, and thanks to MMR's Mike Mackey, now NMRA Western Director, and Duane Richardson, AP Manager. Mike and Duane are great teachers and coaches. They never quit trying to help others achieve their goals. I am always amazed at how much they give back to the hobby and the NMRA, as they inspire many model railroaders. They are two of the finest men and modelers I know. Mike has a heart and passion for model railroading as big as the state of Texas! At every Division 1 meeting, Duane urges involvement in the Achievement Program. He constantly says, "The Achievement Program will make you a better modeler." He is completely on target! In my case, my skills and knowledge have grown by leaps and bounds. Achieving an MMR can be frustrating, time-consuming, fun, exhilarating, and even mind-boggling at times.

But it has always been a journey that I am glad I took and would take again. I treasure what I have learned and cannot wait to help others in their journey. I feel I have much to pay back.

This article would not be complete without recognizing and praising John "Trapper" Kirkpatrick. I met him on my first visit to the Division 1 meeting and the Texas Western Model Railroad Club in August 2018. Trapper quickly extended his hand, gave me a warm smile, and welcomed me to the meeting. We became instant friends. When he saw my home layout, he urged and inspired me to add on to my existing layout so that I could have a nice yard, sidings, a crossover, and a wye. We worked for weeks and weeks on my layout. We have had countless hours of fun making plans, discussing the engineering, and building the additions and changes. We worked through construction problems and issues as we laid track, wired the track to the busses, installed signal panels, and then tediously added ballast. I consider him my best friend and have enjoyed working with him on many projects at the Texas Western. Trapper, a former Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific conductor, has vast knowledge of prototype railroads. His knowledge has been a tremendous asset to me and other club members.

These men have profoundly influenced my model railroading life, the Cowcatcher Division, and the Texas Western Model Railroad club. I am happy to have them as my friends. My main goal, going forward, is to be a friend and mentor to someone who takes those first unsure steps into the NMRA Achievement Program. As they begin their journey on the road to their Master Model Railroader®, I want to help them achieve their goals, become better modelers, and enjoy the hobby as much as I do.

Certificates Earned
David Crumpton, MMR® #747

Master Builder – Scenery
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Model Railroad Engineer–Civil
Master Builder – Structures
Association Volunteer
Master Builder – Cars
Chief Dispatcher

THREE BIG BENEFITS OF NMRA MEMBERSHIP!



Those are the discounts that manufacturers and hobby shops in our Partnership Program are giving us **right now**. Partners like Micro-Mark®, Model Rectifier Corporation®, Badger Airbrush®, Unreal Details®, Hot Wire Foam Factory®, Logic Rail™ Technologies. And over 30 more companies. It's savings that can actually pay for your membership!

And are you taking advantage of our **other** big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

If you haven't visited www.nmra.org lately, you're missing out on some really great stuff. Starting with a boatload of discounts!



PHIL MONAT

EARNS

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #748

Achieving MMR® status has been a wonderful and fulfilling journey. As I think back on my life in model railroading, the thing that sticks out the most is the people. Fellow modelers, acquaintances, and friends who helped, guided, encouraged, and, most importantly, participated in this love and appreciation of all things that roll on steel rails. To that end, the fellowship and life-long friendships have always been the most important thing to me in this hobby.

I started like many others — my dad was a modeler and steam fan who highly encouraged my rapidly expanding interest. It was not long before it turned into an absolute obsession. Building layouts right and left, the next one bigger, better, and more ambitious than the last, I barely slowed down in high school and paid almost no attention to the usual distractions (girls, sports, cars, etc.). But I clearly remember the other members of the St. Louis HO Gaugers — a club my dad was a founding member of — their kindness and support, the cigar smoke during the Friday night sessions (wow, we couldn't get away with that today!), and, of course, the non-stop chase of any train at any time. The photos and slides from this period clearly show the beginnings of a lasting obsession with trains, if not the most developed artistic skill in using a camera.

College was spent chasing the Rock Island and other lines in the Iowa area, occasionally interrupted with a casual interest in school and what turned out to be a career as a theatrical lighting designer. I moved east to New York to seek fame and fortune on Broadway, but 110 MPH Metroliners under catenary in the Corridor and the knot of Conrail lines in the area proved to be more than a distraction. I cleared out the basement of the house I was living in and started yet another layout. It wasn't long before I got involved in the NMRA and was traveling to conventions, meets, and, most importantly, operating sessions! I had always operated the layouts I built, but I was drawn to the area of prototype



operations, something that was then just getting started.

The Model Railroad Club in Union, New Jersey, caught my eye, and their eye-opening techniques in building and operating a model railroad were inspiring. Rich Laube, Steve Mallery, Ken Stiefel, Bill Jambor, and Paul Pruess were all members I met there, and they have all been helpful to me in my journey. Several of them are professional railroaders, which was extremely interesting as I started to learn more about operations. As much as my insistent traveling would allow, I would visit any layout in any city at any time to try and learn, appreciate

something new, or attend a session. It wasn't long before I realized that the current mess in my basement would never do. So, in 1988, I removed everything and remodeled the room. Thus started the current Delaware & Susquehanna.

As a regular at conventions and NMRA events and a member of both the Layout Design Special Interest Group (LDSIG) and the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG), I got a call to help lead the OPSIG after the untimely death of Bill Jewett in 2006. That led to six years of work with this wonderful group, where we upgraded the website, introduced full-color printing in our pub-

lication, a clothing line, a revitalized Call Board, the Bill Jewett Memorial Award, electronic memberships, as well as the critical 501(c)(3) status, all while tripling our membership. While editing their publication, *The Dispatcher's Office*, I met many other famous modelers whom I had long admired: Jack Ozanich, Dick Elwell, Allen McClelland, Tony Koester, Steve King, Bill Darnaby, Tony Thompson, Don Mitchell, Jim Providenza, Doug Tagsold, and Doug Taylor to only name a few. They all offered help and support — what a group we are!

I also served as Editor of the OPSIG's first book, the timetable and train order bible *19 East, Copy Three*. Working with authors Dave Sprau and Steve King was a delight, and their dedication of the proceeds from the book to the Bill Jewett Memorial Fund at the OPSIG put our organization on a solid financial footing. Such generosity of spirit is awe-inspiring and humbling.

While acting as Editor of the NER magazine, *The Coupler*, I ran a regional convention in Stamford, Connecticut, for several years. During this time, I became aware of the Master Model Railroader® program, but I didn't give it much thought then. I was too busy and did not feel I needed to pursue that to validate my interest in the hobby or operations. I also had a vague impression that the title was a bit elitist and snobby, and I thought it would take time away

from other aspects of the hobby that interested me more. But several of the folks suggested I look at the requirements, and when I did, I discovered I had six of the required seven certificates covered already! In short order, I had filed and received the Electrical, Civil, and Scenery certificates. The Dispatcher, Author, and Volunteer certificates were only a matter of filling out the paperwork on work I had already done. That left the granddaddy of certificates, either Motive Power or Cars — I chose Cars, and there it sat for ten years!

I was working full-time, traveling constantly, operating on a slew of layouts around the country, and trying to forge a career, so time was precious. I started gathering info on what I wanted to build, but I did not start. I could say I was so busy (true) or had more important things to do (not so true), but the real reason is I had no previous experience in scratchbuilding. I had built an Amtrak express boxcar off plans in *Model Railroader* magazine long ago, a process that left me less than pleased. So, I was apprehensive and more than a little afraid to tackle this.

Enter my good friend Doug Taylor, MMR®. Doug has all the certificates and I think his MMR® # is down in the single digits somewhere! To say he is a master craftsman and consummate builder would be an understatement. On top of that, he retired from a career as a Theatre

Technical Director, so we share an avid interest in the performing arts and can tell theatre stories until the cows come home. After I described my trepidation to this final hill I had to climb, he offered to help me over the hump. Shortly thereafter, whenever I visited Kansas City (where my mom and sister now live), I would spend a few days at Doug's working on my cars. His sage advice and extremely wide-ranging knowledge of all things in railroading and construction eased my apprehension, and soon, cars started to pour forth. Doug's generosity of spirit, extremely well-equipped shop, wide-ranging knowledge, and indefatigable attitude pushed me up and over the hill. He is the perfect example of what this hobby promotes — fellowship and selfless dedication to the hobby and its people.

And I discovered the most important thing about achieving the MMR® status — aside from the value of friends and the gift of helping others. And that is that the MMR® award really has nothing to do with elitism, and it isn't a snobby clique of people who think they are better than others. It is a great way to make you, the person on the journey, a better modeler. It forces you to learn new skills, new ways of seeing things, and new ways to appreciate the hobby. In the two years I was scratchbuilding cars, I noticed a strong shift in what my eye was picking up, what was acceptable, and what wasn't. Undoubtedly, it made me a better modeler, which is what it is supposed to do.

I encourage all who wish to become better modelers to enter the program. It is what the NMRA is all about, and it is by far — in my view — the most important teaching tool we have.

Certificates Earned
Phil Monat, MMR® #748

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

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

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, log in as a member, and click on "Model RR Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout



Join in the fun!

We make it more fun!