

# NMRA BULLETIN

## DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM MANAGERS

Chief Administrative Officer —  
Jenny Hendricks  
P.O. Box 1328  
Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328  
O: (423) 892-2846 Fax: (423) 899-4869  
e-mail: [hq@nmra.org](mailto:hq@nmra.org)

Library -  
423-892-2846 or [adminrep@nmra.org](mailto:adminrep@nmra.org)

Education Department Manager —  
Michael Hohn, MMR®  
Morgantown, WV 26501-4535  
(304) 296-6303  
e-mail: [educate@nmra.org](mailto:educate@nmra.org)

Howell Day Museum Committee Chair —  
John Stevens  
Tyrone, GA 30290  
H: (770) 632-0753  
e-mail: [museum@nmra.org](mailto:museum@nmra.org)

Information Technology Department  
Manager —  
Gert "Speed" Muller  
Murphy, TX 75094-3524  
(469) 345-0022  
e-mail: [itmanager@nmra.org](mailto:itmanager@nmra.org)

Development & Fund Raising Department  
Manager — Alan Anderson  
West Jordan, UT 84088 H: (801) 613-0801  
e-mail: [fund@nmra.org](mailto:fund@nmra.org)

Marketing Consultant  
VACANT  
e-mail: [marketing@nmra.org](mailto:marketing@nmra.org)

Meetings & Trade Show Department  
Manager — Jenny Hendricks  
e-mail: [mts@nmra.org](mailto:mts@nmra.org)

Publications Department Manager —  
Riley Triggs  
Austin, TX 78704 H: (512) 636-3521  
e-mail: [pubs@nmra.org](mailto:pubs@nmra.org)

Standards & Conformance Department  
Manager — Andy Zimmerman  
Tallahassee, FL 32309  
C: 850-524-4399  
e-mail: [tech-chair@nmra.org](mailto:tech-chair@nmra.org)

**Have you changed your address or  
other membership information?**

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**e-mail: [hq@nmra.org](mailto:hq@nmra.org)  
Phone: 423-892-2846 (8am-4pm ET)  
Mail: P.O. Box 1328  
Soddy Daisy TN 37384-1328**

## REGION PRESIDENTS

Australasian Region—Duncan Cabassi  
Sinnamon Park, QLD, Australia  
M: +61 0424 844 807  
e-mail [president@nmra.org.au](mailto:president@nmra.org.au)

British Region—Peter Borcherds  
Cookham Dean  
United Kingdom  
e-mail: [brprez@nmra.org](mailto:brprez@nmra.org)

Lone Star Region—Donna Orr  
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.  
Rockwall, TX 75087  
e-mail: [lsrprez@nmra.org](mailto:lsrprez@nmra.org)  
H: (972) 342-8598

Mid-Central Region—Jerry Doyle  
56 Justin Court  
Huntington, WV 25705  
H: (304) 638-2826 e-mail: [mcrprez@nmra.org](mailto:mcrprez@nmra.org)

Mid-Continent Region — Larry Diehl  
7008 Millridge St  
Shawnee, KS 66218-9608  
(C) 913-441-1605  
e-mail: [mcorprez@nmra.org](mailto:mcorprez@nmra.org)

Mid-Eastern Region—Scott Unger  
115 S 22nd Street  
Allentown, PA 18104-6400  
C: (610) 462-0756  
e-mail: [merprez@nmra.org](mailto:merprez@nmra.org)

Midwest Region—John Coy, MMR  
6409 Woodhaven Court  
Avon, IN 46123  
H: (317) 294 4675  
e-mail: [mwrprez@nmra.org](mailto:mwrprez@nmra.org)

Niagara Frontier Region—Gerald Arends  
165 Eighth Ave  
Kitchener, ON, N2C1S5, Canada  
(226) 476-1801 e-mail: [nfrprez@nmra.org](mailto:nfrprez@nmra.org)

North Central Region—Richard (Rich)  
Mahaney; 316 Arnstrom Drive  
PO Box 265, Gobles, MI 49055  
H: (269) 214-4221 e-mail: [ncrprez@nmra.org](mailto:ncrprez@nmra.org)

Northeastern Region—Ed O'Rourke, MMR®  
5193 Pointe East Drive  
Jamesville, NY 13078  
H: (315) 247-0494 e-mail: [nerprez@nmra.org](mailto:nerprez@nmra.org)

Pacific Coast Region—Chip Meriam  
2260 Cherry Glenn Court  
Chico, CA 95926  
H: (530) 228 1544 e-mail: [pcrprez@nmra.org](mailto:pcrprez@nmra.org)

Pacific Northwest Region—Jeff Herrmann  
PO Box 1012  
Rathdrum, ID 83858  
H: (714) 651-3903 e-mail: [pnrprez@nmra.org](mailto:pnrprez@nmra.org)

Pacific Southwest Region—Joel Morse  
11891 Tunstall Street  
Garden Grove, CA 92845  
H: (714) 614-5401 e-mail: [psrprez@nmra.org](mailto:psrprez@nmra.org)

Rocky Mountain Region—Gary Myers  
e-mail: [rnrprez@nmra.org](mailto:rnrprez@nmra.org)

Southeastern Region—Roy Masterson  
3502 Glendon Dr.  
Chattanooga, TN 37411-4114  
H: (423) 227-0334 e-mail: [serprez@nmra.org](mailto:serprez@nmra.org)

Sunshine Region—Andy Zimmerman  
Tallahassee, FL 32309  
C: 850-524-4399  
e-mail: [ssrprez@nmra.org](mailto:ssrprez@nmra.org)

Thousand Lakes Region— Art Suel  
14500 Alabama Ave  
Savage, MN 55378  
e-mail: [tlrprez@nmra.org](mailto:tlrprez@nmra.org)

NMRA Canada President—Ed Molenkamp  
Edmonton Alberta T5M 2M9  
e-mail: [presca@nmra.org](mailto:presca@nmra.org)

Region Secretaries: send all  
changes in Region officer infor-  
mation to the NMRA Secretary:  
[secy@nmra.org](mailto:secy@nmra.org)

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  
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• 2026 Chattanooga, Tennessee • 2027 Tacoma, Washington

rev 5/27/25

# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

## NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

APRIL 2025

### GOLDEN SPIKE

#### Northeastern Region

Richard Fifield, Epsom, New Hampshire

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Landers, Edmonds, Washington

### MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

#### Australasian Region

Ian Barnes, MMR, Batemans Bay, New South Wales, Australia

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

### MASTER BUILDER - CARS

#### Mid-Central Region

Robert Belt, Lexington, Kentucky

#### Pacific Northwest Region

James Lee Keena, Nampa, Idaho

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Landers, Edmonds, Washington  
Mike Bennette, Nine Mile Falls, Washington

### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

#### Midwest Region

Daniel Brewer, Granger, Indiana

#### North Central Region

Stephen Kellogg, Toledo, Ohio

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Landers, Edmonds, Washington

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

### MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

#### Mid-Eastern Region

John Pursell, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

#### Mid-Central Region

James R. Kehn, Pickerington, Ohio

#### Midwest Region

Daniel Brewer, Granger, Indiana

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Doug Hicks, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Trevor Dring, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

### MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

#### Mid-Eastern Region

Eric Dervinis, Downingtown, Pennsylvania  
James Hellwege, Alexandria, Virginia

#### Midwest Region

Daniel Brewer, Granger, Indiana  
Mark Willmering, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

#### North Central Region

Gary Hunter, Dexter, Michigan

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Landers, Edmonds, Washington  
Trevor Dring, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

#### Thousand Lakes Region

Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

### CHIEF DISPATCHER

#### Northeastern Region

Steve McMullin, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

#### North Central Region

Philip Doolittle, Rochester Hill, Michigan

#### Pacific Coast Region

Phil Edholm, Pleasanton, California

### ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

#### Australasian Region

Frank Godde, MMR, Kalamunda, Washington, Australia

#### Mid-Central Region

Keith Devault, Morgantown, West Virginia

#### Northeastern Region

Glenn Mitchell, Concord, New Hampshire

#### Pacific Coast Region

Phil Edholm, Pleasanton, California

### ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

#### Australasian Region

Les Ellen, Bellbowrie, Queensland, Australia

#### Lone Star Region

Vic McTee, Van Alstyne, Texas

#### Pacific Coast Region

Phil Edholm, Pleasanton, California

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Dennis Terpstra, Shoreline, Washington  
John Green, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Russell Kerr, Milton, Washington  
Bruce Oberleitner, Boise, Idaho

#### Southeastern Region

David Godwin, Canton, Georgia

### MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

#### British Region

Erik Wierenga, Veendam, Gronigen, Netherlands

#### Pacific Coast Region

Phil Edholm, Pleasanton, California

#### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Landers, Edmonds, Washington

#### Rocky Mountain Region

Bruce Evans, Durango, Colorado

### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #793 James R. Kehn, Pickerington, Ohio

MMR® #794 Damian Kostron, Woodbury, Minnesota

MMR® #795 Robert Belt, Lexington, Kentucky

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](mailto:achiev@nmra.org)

**Not getting the  
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## RICHARD SPARROW

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #788

Like many model railroaders, my journey started with a Christmas train set when I was about 8. Living in England, my train set was a Hornby clockwork 0-4-0 with a couple of wagons (cars), a guard's van (caboose), and a circle of tinplate track about three feet in diameter. As far as I remember, the set's scale was about O scale.

I was right into operations with that first train set — sort of! One of the wagons was open-topped, and my younger brother's and my toy soldiers, who were about G+ scale, rode in the wagon. Starting at one side of the track circle, they traveled several circuits, or until the clockwork spring started to wind down, then arrived and disembarked miles away at the other side of the circle.

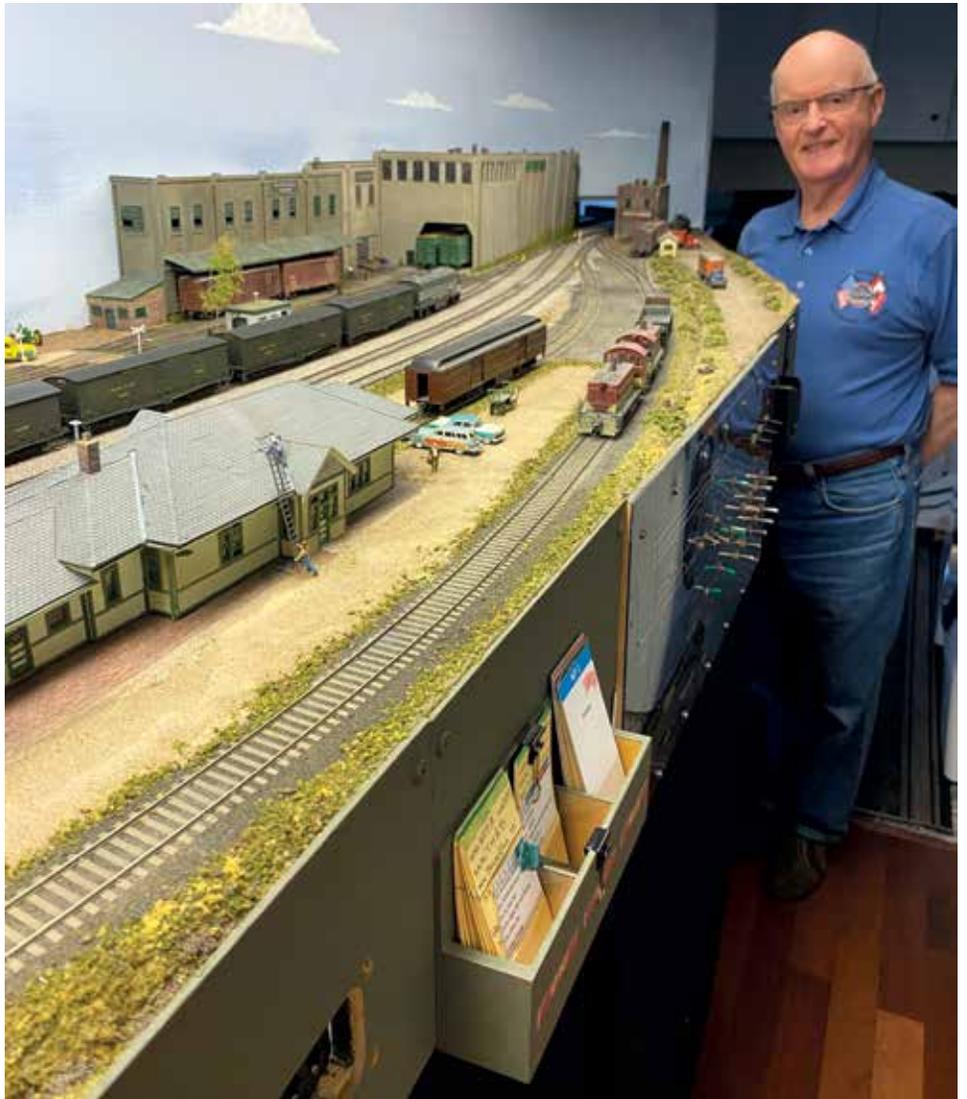
We built a few more British-type layouts over the next 15 years or so.

In the mid-1980s, now living in Canada, I joined the H.O.M.E.S. model railroad club in Hamilton, Ontario. The club members were very welcoming and got me involved in helping to build the club layout right away. I learned many new model railroad skills from the members, including hand-laying track, scratchbuilding structures, turnouts, wiring, etc. The club layout used a diode matrix to control turnouts and set specific routes, which fascinated me. So, I built a small layout in my basement, including hand-laid track and turnouts and diode matrix turnout/route controls. The layout worked well, even if somewhat limited in operation — at least the toy soldiers were gone!

When we moved to another house, the layout came with us as one piece, but other life priorities like work and family used up most of my time, and the layout lived in the basement, leaning up against the wall until it was scrapped when we made our next house move.

Encouraged by the members of the H.O.M.E.S. club, I joined the NMRA in 1985: the International Division (ID) of the Niagara Frontier Region. I attended meetings but was not a very active member.

I retired at the end of 2004, and we moved to our current location in the fall of 2005. Layout planning started after the typical house move settling-in period,



with construction beginning in early 2006, and this is my current layout. It represents the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway in 1959 with interchanges with the New York Central. It is about 12x25-feet. All visible track and turnouts are hand-laid with several routes programmed using NEC “Switch-8” decoders — much less work than a diode matrix!

I became interested in the Achievement Program at the January 2009 International Division meeting. MMRs Ron Tuff, Dave Paterson, and Craig Webb all gave clinics on improving modeling skills via the AP in various areas of the hobby. This theme really struck a chord with me, and I felt that was exactly what I wanted to do in the hobby. The work I had already done on the layout was sufficient to get the Golden Spike award to get me started.

Following these presentations, Chuck Faist, Past Superintendent of the ID, dis-

cussed establishing a support program for those interested in the AP. I was hooked!

After the meeting, I asked Harvey McIntyre, then ID Superintendent, if I could become more involved in the Division. The Clerk position was open at the time, and he invited me to take it, which I did. This position increased my contribution to the Division, and I also started earning points for the Volunteer certificate.

I served as Clerk for three years. Then, in January 2012, Harvey wanted to step down as Super and suggested I put my name down, which I did, and I was elected Superintendent of the ID. After holding this position for three years, I qualified for the AP “Official” certificate, which I received in 2015. During these first three years as Super, I was on the committee for the ID hosting the 2014 NFR three-day Region convention, the Grapevine Express at Niagara-on-the-Lake. I carried

on as Super for an additional three years when our current Super, Ron Johnson, was elected at the March 2018 ID meeting.

I wrote several articles that were published in the Region and Division newsletters. I also presented a clinic at the 2012 NMRA National Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on using Microsoft Excel to make control panel graphics. This activity was enough to qualify for the Author certificate. By the end of 2015, I had earned four certificates: Volunteer, Association Official, Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical, and Model Railroad Author.

I “rested” at four for a little while, not intentionally, just because other priorities came up. I worked on several detailed structures, converted my car handling system to Car Card & Waybill, and completed a few other projects.

In 2023, I started to focus on finishing the AP project, which required three more certificates, including either Cars or Locomotives! I worked on the Scenery and Model Railroad Engineer – Civil requirements and qualified for these two certificates by July 2024.

I chose Cars for my seventh certificate. I scratchbuilt four express reefers, which

covered the scratchbuilt and the “passenger-train-capable” requirements. And while at it, I made an extra one to serve as one of the four required superdetailed cars. The other three superdetailed cars were a craftsman “box of sticks” kit of a PRR open hopper, a resin kit NYC gondola, and an Athearn boxcar converted to a wood chip car and superdetailed.

I was quite apprehensive about scratchbuilding rolling stock, but with the encouragement and help from fellow modelers, the cars all received merit awards.

The journey to MMR is not one to travel solo, and I had lots of help, advice, and encouragement along the way. During my term as division superintendent, I received great support from the other Division executive members, especially when the ID hosted a Region convention in 2014.

Ron Tuff, MMR, the ID Achievement Program Manager, was always available to advise and give ideas, promptly reply to my many emails, and encourage me to keep motivated and moving forward.

Dave Paterson, MMR, was a great help in interpreting the express reefer prototype drawings and gave me a copy of his very detailed construction notes. During an ID

clinic presentation, Dave said that when scratchbuilding something to replicate a prototype, like cars or structures, to get the details right and ask yourself, “How can I make it look like that?” I have this quote printed and pinned to my workshop wall, facing me as I sit at my workbench.

Many other NMRA members have encouraged me and been interested in my success throughout this journey. A big thank you goes to all of them.

And, of course, many thanks to my wife, Susan, for her patience, advice, and encouragement all along the way.

Working through the NMRA Achievement Program has definitely improved my modeling skills, and I look forward to helping and encouraging others to participate.

**Certificates Earned**  
**Richard Sparrow, MMR® #788**

**Association Volunteer**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Association Official**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Civil**  
**Master Builder – Cars**

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