

# NMRA BULLETIN

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changes in Region officer infor-  
mation to the NMRA Secretary:  
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rev 1/31/21

2022 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:  
St. Louis, Missouri August 7 – 14, 2022  
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)  
• 2023—Dallas, Texas

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT FEBRUARY 2021 GOLDEN SPIKE

#### Lone Star Region

David Crumpton, Arlington, Texas

#### Mid-Eastern Region

Shannon Crabtree, Fredericksburg, Virginia  
Jack Dziadul, Sanford, North Carolina  
Michael Sabia, Brick New Jersey

#### Pacific Coast Region

Stephen Lowe, Fresno, California

#### MASTER BUILDER - CARS

##### British Region

David Nicholson, Nr. Glastonbury,  
Somerset, UK

##### North Central Region

David Zoinierek, Presque Isle, Michigan

##### Pacific Southwest Region

Harold Helland, Rancho Mission Viejo,  
California

#### MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

##### Lone Star Region

Marc LaChey, Richardson, Texas

##### Mid-Eastern Region

David Albertson, Forked River, New  
Jersey

##### Southeastern Region

Roberta Dean, Crossville, Tennessee

#### MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

##### Lone Star Region

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##### Mid-Central Region

Joe D. Fields, Louisville, Kentucky

#### MASTER BUILDER - PROTOTYPE MODELS

##### Pacific Southwest Region

Paul Buhrke, Tucson, Arizona

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##### Mid-Eastern Region

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##### Pacific Southwest Region

Bob Ginger, Phoenix, Arizona

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##### Lone Star Region

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##### Northeastern Region

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##### Pacific Coast Region

Bernhard Beck, San Jose, California

#### MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #674 Joe D. Fields, Louisville,  
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AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the Achievement 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.



# DISPATCH

2021 #01

## Announcing NMRA Dispatch

**NMRA Dispatch** emails will be short announcements of important and time-sensitive information that cannot wait for publication in the *NMRA Magazine* or *eBulletin*.

### Spam button misuse

It has come to the attention of the IT department that many NMRA members do not receive NMRA email publications (*Turntable*, *eBulletin*, *Dispatch*) because **other** members use the Spam button.

If the publication is not of interest, simply delete it. If you no longer want to receive **any** NMRA email publication, please use the Unsubscribe link (below), which is safe and secure. Never use the Spam or Junk button. If too many people do this, service providers such as Yahoo will block all people from ever seeing the emails. Most NMRA members want to keep in touch. Don't ruin it for them.

Please note that Unsubscribe will apply to all NMRA email publications, including the *Turntable*, *eBulletin*, special *eBulletins*, and *Dispatch*.

Missed a Dispatch? There will be a link to an archive of all old dispatches here, in future dispatches.



NEIL MALDEIS EARNS  
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #670

**M**odel railroading has been a lifelong hobby. It started with my father during the late 1950s. We had a typical Lionel layout set up in the basement on a 4x8-foot plywood table. I recall we didn't have much more than a circle of track down with a few of the Lionel operating accessories and called it a layout. I think we added a second loop at some point. However, that didn't matter, because my memories are that we had fun running the trains. I was immediately hooked and have been a model railroader my entire life!

During my early teens, I was interested in realistic scale models as opposed to toy-like models. Soon, I started looking at anything that was scale models, including plastic model kits and military vehicles from Roco Minitanks (I remember collecting a whole bunch of these!) along with building a small HO model railroad. My early attempts were based on Atlas track plan books that used sectional track. I built many different layouts and typically would end up taking them apart as I would find something I didn't like. I don't think I ever got a layout complete enough to call it finished.

My family moved a few times as I was growing up, and some of my fondest railroad memories are when we lived in the Chicago area. We lived in a town along the main Burlington line that provided lots of passenger and freight train traffic that only further cemented my interest in railroading for life.

I joined the NMRA for a few years as a teen, and then tragedy struck when I lost all my hobby projects in a fire we had in our workshop building. I kept all my models, tools, supplies, and model railroad set up and stored in that workshop. The trauma was short-lived, however. I soon got over the loss as the timing was at a point in my life for me to move on to regular teenage interests such as cars, sports, and socializing with friends. It wasn't until about 15 years later when I started to rekindle my interest in scale modeling and model railroading again. Life had settled down; I was older, married, had a family, and more time to pursue my hobby interests.



In the 1980s, I moved with my family to Rochester, Minnesota, and I was looking to get back into model railroading. I now had a steady job and potentially money to spend on model railroading supplies. I began asking around and checking out Moon's, the local hobby shop, and found out about several groups in the area with modular club layouts. I contacted the Rochester group and attended one of their Saturday work sessions and have been actively involved in model railroading ever since. Although the group had a space at the time to set up the layout, the club was primarily organized to show the layout at model railroad events throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

I have many fond memories and stories of the trials and tribulations of hauling the layout around and setting it up to share with other model railroaders. Over the course of several years, we set up at a couple dozen train shows. Unfortunately, we lost our space to setup/store the layout, and the group disbanded. Luckily, a few of us stayed together and started a new modular layout based on a logging railroad theme.

The start of my next phase began with creating the Westside Logging Model Railroad Club, which lasted for more than a decade. The previous club modeled typical main line railroading, but every module had a different modeling theme. However, a few of us wanted a layout with one continuous theme and modules that seamlessly connected with

each other. This is where I developed several close friendships and my special interest in detailed model railroading. Jeff Liedl, "Mister Details" and club layout designer, lives in Arizona, and Roy Sugden, "Mister Hand Laid Track" and our club PR director (Roy always has an opinion!), lives in Wisconsin. I am grateful we can stay in touch despite living in different parts of the country.

Life was pretty busy back then, and it was a challenge at times to get the whole group together to travel to shows. Since we didn't have a place to store the layout, we bought a covered trailer that served as storage and a way to haul the layout around to train shows. We were always on a tight budget, pooling money for gas, food, and lodging. At times, I think back at how incredibly cheap we really were with four or five grown men sharing one motel room!

Throughout the 1990s, we took Westside Logging to at least 50 shows, with Trainfest in Milwaukee being one of our favorites. We also went large and took the Westside Logging layout to the NMRA National Train Shows in Madison 1997, Kansas City 1998, and Minneapolis/St. Paul 1999.

The Westside logging layout era ended in 1999, as we received an offer we couldn't refuse and sold it after the NMRA Convention. After selling the Westside Logging, a few of us loosely created a club, Midwest Shortline Modelers, where we each had our individual layouts. We hauled these ourselves and displayed

at train shows. This allowed us a lot of flexibility if one or more of us couldn't make a show. Most of us at this time in our modeling careers also switched to narrow gauge. I made the shift during this time because I fancied the Colorado scenery and the railroads in that part of the country. We continued to display at shows for the next ten years or so. Unfortunately, aging, logistics, and health issues brought an end to us traveling to shows as a group.

I went through three versions of portable layouts as a member of the Midwest Shortline Modelers. I converted the last version to my main home layout, which I still work on today. I also realized I couldn't stand not having a portable layout that I could take to train shows, so I built a small logging modular layout. I was fortunate to be able to display it at the 2018 National Narrow Gauge Convention in Minneapolis/St Paul. Both layouts connect together and make up my current home layout and are a work in progress.

Until 1999, I was moderately interested in the Achievement Program and had many excuses not to pursue it until

John Hotvet, MMR®, TLR AP Chairman, piqued my interest. Along with the Westside Logging traveling layout, I still found time to build a small home layout, which I was fortunate to show on a layout tour during the NMRA National Convention in Minneapolis/St Paul in 1999. It was then that John casually mentioned, "You know, your layout might qualify for the Scenery Certificate; are you interested?" I immediately filled out the paperwork and started my journey toward MMR®.

During the early 2000s, I became an empty-nester and started to engage in more NMRA activities since I had more time. Additionally, the Midwest Shortline Modelers were attending fewer shows. For several years, I was the layout tour coordinator for the Twin Cities Division (TLR), responsible for contacting and setting up tours of home layouts in the area for the Division members to visit. I also met and worked with Gerry Leone, MMR®, as the editor of the Division newsletter to get layout pictures and descriptions for the newsletter and out to our members. Gerry and John have provided me with a tremendous amount

of encouragement and support over the years with my journey to MMR®. I can't thank them enough as they have been there with me over the past 20 years.

Over the next couple of decades, I completed AP certificates in spurts. I received the Scenery certificate in 2000 and Cars and Electrical a few years later in 2004. Time flew by, and it wasn't until 2017 before I got my fourth Certificate in Structures. For most of the last two decades, I have had job positions that required a lot of travel, and although I never stopped modeling, it took a backseat to other responsibilities. That all changed a few years ago when I was offered a part-time position at my company with no travel.

In 2016, I was offered an opportunity with the 2018 National Narrow Gauge Convention as vendor director. The next two years flew by, giving me one of the best experiences of my life working with the planning committee to put on this great convention. Despite the immense amount of work, it was a lot of fun, and I enjoyed every minute of it. I gained a much greater appreciation of what it means to serve the hobby. (A big thanks



## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

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to the committee members: Mike Engler MMR®, Dave Hamilton, Gary Hanson, Jeff Otto, and Art VanDeWater.)

The list is long as to who has helped me with the journey, as I got deeper into working on certificates, Jeff Liedl, Dave Hamilton, Les Breuer MMR®, Scott McLoed, the Twin Cities Narrow Gauge Club (TCNG), and many, many more have helped me in some fashion with modeling tips and encouragement.

The final effort started in 2017. I had been building structures over the past ten years to qualify for merit judging, and in 2017, I finally had the last one completed to get the Structure certificate. After some procrastination with the paperwork, I followed that up in 2019 with the Volunteer certificate.

I also had most of the requirements completed for the Civil certificate; I just needed to build the scratchbuilt trackwork. I'll admit, trackwork is not my favorite thing, I borrowed some Fast Tracks jigs from my friend Jeff Liedl, which was a big help getting the trackwork done. Without any trouble, I received the Civil Certificate in 2020. I only had one certificate left! From here, I could see the finish line. I had considered doing the Author certificate (I have about half the credits needed), then COVID-19 came along, and all the events where I wanted to do clinics were canceled. I like doing clinics and plan on continuing to do more into my retirement.

My wife, Sue, who knows me better than I do, offered, "You like building and modeling best, do something with that!" She was right, and I realized I should be able to complete the requirements for the Prototype Model certificate much faster than I could for the Author certificate. Off and running, I was able to find a narrow gauge scene on the Rio Grande Southern that was well-documented with pictures and an era that would work well for my interests. One of the few positive aspects of the COVID-19 environment was plenty of time to work on a prototype scene. I spent most of my free time during the fall of 2020 constructing a Prototype Module.

This was one of the few times I didn't procrastinate on getting the work done. The prototype scene came together quickly because I used a few commercially available kits and only had to scratchbuild a couple of structures. The scratchbuilt cars I had made for the

Cars certificate were perfect for the scene, which saved me some building time. Within about two months, I was done and had the scene ready to be judged. I anxiously pulled all the documentation together, knowing it was now or never! In December 2020, COVID-19 was hitting hard, so I discussed with MMR® John Hotvet how we could get judging done without him visiting me or bringing the module to him since I live about 250 miles from the Twin Cities. John enlisted the help of Dave Hamilton, and between the two of them, they did the judging virtually. Along with the documentation package, I sent them a USB drive with many close-up still pictures of the module and a video tour that I narrated, explaining how the module was planned and constructed.

After waiting patiently for their response, I got a brief email congratulating me (*whoo-hoo!*). John also had me send in the MMR® paperwork at the same time since this was the last certificate required. The rest, as they say, is history, and my 20-year MMR® journey was complete!

I can't say enough great things about the Achievement Program. The challenge provided by working on the AP certificate requirements is an excellent way to grow proficient in the hobby and to vastly improve your modeling skills. Most of the models on the original layout (many older than 20 years) just don't meet my standards anymore and

are being replaced. One of the dangers of the AP is your modeling skills really do improve, and the models you did in the past are just average now. You can't really grow unless you push yourself out of your comfort zone, and the AP is a perfect way to do that. The friendships you make are special, and many become lifetime, which is rare these days in our fast-paced world. I'm truly grateful to everyone who has supported or helped me with my journey to MMR®!

**Certificates Earned**  
**Neil Maldeis, MMR® 670**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Master Builder – Cars**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Master Builder – Structures**  
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The new **NMRA eBulletin** comes out every other month near the 1st of the month. Either your SPAM filter is blocking it, or you need to update your email address with us. Have HQ update your email address at <http://www.nmra.org/customer-service-request>

**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!**

