

NMRA BULLETIN

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

Notify NMRA Headquarters

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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

rev3/29/2023

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT MAY 2023

GOLDEN SPIKE

Mid-Central Region

Kevin Squire, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Mid-Eastern Region

Philip Dechene, Graham, North Carolina

Southeastern Region

Edward Potts, Crossville, Tennessee

Pacific Northwest Region

William Ash, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada

Rupert James, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Ron Symes, Stettler, Alberta, Canada

Sunshine Region

Eric Boone, Naples, Florida

Frank Broderick, Cape Coral, Florida

John Cafaro, Ft. Myers, Florida

Ken Carpenter, Ft. Myers, Florida

Hunter Culbertson, N. Ft. Myers, Florida

Tom Dahlheimer, Lehigh Acres, Florida

Dave Doty, Ft. Myers, Florida

David Fender, Ft. Myers, Florida

Tim Huitema, Ft. Myers, Florida

Keith Kramer, Cape Coral, Florida

Ryan Liker, Cape Coral, Florida

Jim Meehan, Cape Coral, Florida

Richard Pollina, Bonita Springs, Florida

Robert Salem, Ft. Myers, Florida

John Seaman, Sanibel, Florida

Robert Slusser, Cape Coral, Florida

Robert Watson, Cape Coral, Florida

Thousand Lakes Region

John Zacharis, Shakopee, Minnesota

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Niagara Frontier Region

Keith Stamper, Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Mid-Central Region

Michael DeSensi, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Pacific Northwest Region

Rupert James, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Sunshine Region

Thomas Wilson, Davenport, Florida

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

Mid-Eastern Region

Charlie Rausch, MMR, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Pacific Northwest Region

Rupert James, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Pacific Northwest Region

Rupert James, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Southeastern Region

Craig Gardner, Birmingham, Alabama

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

Mid-Centiment Region

John Fales, Olathe, Kansas

Southeastern Region

Steven Flowers, Southaven, Mississippi

Sunshine Region

Beverly Farnham, Palm Bay, Florida

ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

Australasia Region

Alan Burrough, Ardross, Western Australia, Australia

Mid-Central Region

Bradley White, Lake City, Pennsylvania

Northeastern Region

David Kiley, Swansea, Massachusetts

Southeastern Region

Richard Morris, Byrdstown, Tennessee

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

Australasia Region

David Whibley, Lismurde, Western Australia, Australia

Sunshine Region

Thomas Wilson, Davenport, Florida

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.

Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's exactly what happens when you participate in the National Model Railroad Association's Achievement Program. One Merit Award here, another there, and pretty soon you're on your way to becoming a Master Model Railroader. All the while learning and having a ton of fun.

The Achievement Program is modelers helping modelers become better modelers and get the most out of their hobby. And it's yet another benefit of NMRA membership.

Visit www.nmra.org. Then improve your skills. And your hobby.



We make it even more fun.

www.nmra.org
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2023 PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR SERVICE FOR DIVISION

Rick Coble
NMRA Vice President

The NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division is awarded by the NMRA President to one individual in a Division in each Region per year, who has done outstanding work to make his or her local Division effective, engaging, and welcoming to members. Individuals are recommended to the NMRA President by the NMRA National Board of Directors, National Officers, or Region Presidents, as appropriate, and preferably always with the guidance of the Region Officials.

2023 Honorees

Australasian Region
British Region
Lone Star Region
Mid-Continent Region
Midwest Region
North Central Region
Northeastern Region
Pacific Coast Region
Pacific Northwest Region
Pacific Southwest Region
Rocky Mountain Region
Southeastern Region
Sunshine Region
Thousand Lakes Region

Wayne Eagle
Mike Arnold
Betty Mitchell
Ryan Moats, MMR®
Jim Osborn
Marshall Stull
Harold Russell, MMR®
Dave Putnam
Russ Segner
Kevin Spady
Al Hovey
Sally Bando
Bob Leonard
Marion Manning

MMR EARNED

JAMES FAIRBANKS

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #736

I am pretty confident I have been a railroad fan my whole life. I received my first American Flyer train for Christmas at three. Dad had set a loop of track to start running around the Christmas tree when a wall switch turned on the tree lights. Needless to say, it was a hit. For several years after that, the American Flyer set was added onto with three or four cars, another train set, turnouts, and track, year after year, for several years..

Dad set it all up in a spare room, as he had set up his HO-scale layout in the available space in the basement. His was a long loop that only occasionally ran. He had been a modeler in the 1940s in Michigan, and after moving to Western New York, he still had a collection of track and equipment from that time. He was building our house, and in his spare time, he had put together a long loop of track occupying that space in the basement. He didn't let me "play" with his trains, but then he didn't either, as his interests had moved on.

My American Flyer setup became a diversion for him, and when he assembled the railroad, he built it low enough that a young lad could play with it. As I grew and the railroad grew, Dad took down the HO loop and built a new AF railroad in the basement. Dad was an



electrical engineer, and around age 10 or 11, he taught me how to solder wires to each other and onto the brass track that was beginning to replace the AF sectional track. I lost my dad at age 13, and my railroading started to slide a little, though, at one point, I doubled the size of my layout to fill the available space. But then, life intervened.

I went to college in Tucson, Arizona, where I discovered other guys in the dorm were "train freaks," and there was a 100% NMRA club in town to go visit. We spent many an enjoyable afternoon watching Southern Pacific trains at the yard in town and visiting the Southern Arizona Society of Model

Engineers (SASME). At SASME, I met Ron Kuykendall, who cheerfully introduced me to the narrow-gauge portion of the layout. That ignited my love for HO_{n3} and narrow-gauge railroading in general. I sold off most of my American Flyer equipment and track, and, for many years, I collected and focused my building on narrow-gauge subjects. I joined SASME in 1970 and, with encouragement from the members there, joined the NMRA in 1972. I became a Life member around 1974, and in 2022 received recognition for 50 years in the NMRA.

While in college, I continued to build models to fill an HO and HO_{n3} railroad and began to improve my model-

ing skills. I also spent a lot of money at Frank Townsend's Hobby Shop. Frank introduced me to the world of brass locomotives and the various manufacturers' detail parts to improve my models. At this time, I was also introduced to the NMRA Achievement Program through judged contests at the Arizona Division meets. I have to say, that was a real learning experience. The first model I entered, which I thought was pretty good, garnered 36 points. I asked the judge, Leroy Thompson, MMR®, how to improve my score. He was very kind and helpful and pointed out various things I could add and improve. The next time, I got a score in the 50s. I kept asking questions and kept improving. One of the next models was a used Mantua NYC locomotive that I reworked and added a ton of details to, and *WOW*, I got 92 points and my first Merit Award! Then life got in the way. I got married, had kids, had to work, bought a house (with no train space), and only occasionally was able to build a model or two. I continued to participate in SASME for many years. Then family intervened, and we decided to move to upstate New York.

Starting over, making friends, getting involved in the Rochester Model Railroad Club in Rochester, New York, and connecting with the Lakeshores Division of the Niagara Frontier Region (the Division has since moved to the Northeast Region), I kept my fingers in model railroading. I developed a New York Central-themed railroad and pulled together several like-minded people into a monthly Round Robin group. I finally retired in 2014, and now I needed something more to do. Model railroading sang her siren song, and it was full speed ahead. My wife retired in 2015, and we returned to Tucson to spend our winter months as migratory Snowbirds. I rejoined SASME just in time to help them rebuild their railroad. We bought a house in Tucson, and after two winters of fixing the house up, there was time for a new railroad. I became interested in the Southern Pacific while I was in college. However, I didn't have room enough for anything large, so I looked around and discovered the Arizona Eastern Railway — a branch line that ran off the SP and served communities in the Gila River valley and a large copper mine in Miami, Arizona. The railroad was owned by SP for many years (no longer), and if I chose

a time period while SP owned it, I could run first-generation SP diesels. So, for four months a year, I run the Arizona Eastern in Tucson and, for eight months, the New York Central in upstate New York. Yup, I have two railroads. In hindsight, I wouldn't recommend it.

Back home in New York, I had gotten away from narrow gauge modeling and was now deep into New York Central, and had a large railroad in a 24x24-foot room in our basement, but it wasn't satisfying. I had been introduced to railroad operations from Paul Chandler, MMR®, in Tucson, and SASME. I had about decided to tear down and rework my railroad for operations, but then the other shoe dropped. We decided to sell our house and move into a townhouse — time to tear down the railroad and start over. I had learned a great deal over the time I had built that layout (and previous railroads), and having also been introduced to operations, it was time for a new kind of plan. We moved into our townhouse, and I carved out a 12.5x37-foot space in the basement for a new railroad. With this space, I could build a 130-foot switching layout representing the New York Central branch that ran through the town where I grew up and did my first railfanning. I had now come full circle.

I looked for a computerized railroad planning tool and found RailModeler Pro. I worked on this program and developed the railroad I wanted. It is a very handy tool, and I highly recommend it. I also had been looking anew at the NMRA Achievement Program, as it had always been a lifelong dream to become a good enough modeler to earn the Master Model Railroader® title.

I had many of the Merit Awards needed and gradually worked to accumulate more. I received Master Builder-Cars in 2019 and the Master Builder-Structures Certificate in 2020. I also got busy helping more with the Lakeshores Division, but since I was a Snowbird, I needed something I could do while I was out of New York. When they said they needed a Membership Chair to handle the computerized roster, I knew I could do that online from Arizona. So, I volunteered in 2017 and am still handling those duties, but with that work, in 2020, I earned my AP Volunteer Certificate. I knew I wanted to build a railroad to stand up to the judgment for the Engineering

certificates. I focused on the requirements and began construction. In 2021, I received the AP certificates for Civil and Electrical, and in 2022, I earned the AP Scenery Certificate.

Next, I needed to tackle an additional certificate. I decided to focus on either Motive Power or Author. I had been writing articles for my Division, and I tried an article for the NER. I wanted to try my hand at making it into a national publication. I wrote an article for the *NMRA MAGAZINE*, which is still in the works, that would give me enough points to gain the AP Author certificate. I also got busy with a couple of locomotive models. I rebuilt a Roundhouse Boxcab into a yard slug and modified a second, according to photos of Erie Boxcab locomotives. I received a Merit Award for my efforts, and along with the New York Central locomotive I had built in college, I had two-thirds of the AP Motive Power. What to do next? I dug out a NorthWest Short Line "Flea" power truck I had been holding onto since my college days, and amazingly, it still ran. I also have developed an interest in and have been collecting photos of small industrial locomotives from the internet. I put two and two together, constructed a 20-ton Plymouth locomotive from scratch, and successfully picked up my last Motive Power Merit Award. With this, I earned the AP Motive Power certificate and submitted the paperwork for the MMR®, which I received in April 2023.

I'm glad that the NMRA has the Achievement Program since, by entering contests and listening to the judges' remarks, I have become a much better modeler. The NMRA also has given me a way to crawl out of my shell, and I look forward to being able to help other modelers improve their modeling in the future. It took me 50 years to achieve Master Model Railroader®, but I'm very glad I did.

Certificates Earned James Fairbanks, MMR® #736

Master Builder – Cars
Master Builder – Structures
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Scenery
Master Builder – Motive Power