



### JOEL GOLDBERG EARNS MMR #458

**I** am very pleased to join the group of Master Model Railroaders. Like so many others, started as a youngster with a Lionel layout on a couple of pieces of plywood. This “layout” was moved twice as the family relocated from Chicago to Detroit. Over the years, my interest in railroading never seemed to diminish. While the interest was present, education and then marriage took precedence.

Once the major issues of marriage and family were settled, I started on my HO scale layout. Using plans found in *Model Railroader*, I constructed my original version of the York Central Railroad. As an

avid reader and follower of the articles in the magazine, I began using L-girder construction techniques. I also built and used Lynn Wescott’s Twin T circuitry. I followed articles related to scenery, cars, and buildings. I also was fortunate to meet several of the members of the Detroit United Railways streetcar group. Their activities sparked further exploration into the construction of my own basement layout. I was not ready to construct overhead wiring, so I limited my interests to the steam era of the 1930s to 1950s.

I worked in the wholesale electronic parts field for more than nine years. After that period, I returned to university life and earned a teaching certificate. I was able to



obtain a position teaching electronics at Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan. During that period, I continued to work on my own layout. The York Central Railroad continued to grow and prosper. My experience with electronics aided my ability to incorporate many items seen on my present layout. I also joined the NMRA at that time.

I retired from the college about 16 years ago. This provided me with much more time to spend with the layout. A final move into a new home permitted me to rebuild and expand the YCRR. Thanks to a very understanding wife, it is currently housed in its own 12x24-foot room in what is currently identified as our lower level (formerly the basement).

After my retirement, I met some NCR Division 8 members. They invited me to attend their meetings. While there, I met some great modelers. I decided to join their Division. My personal experiences with Division 8 members encouraged me to enter one of my buildings in a regional model contest. What I had thought was a great model met with very disastrous evaluation by the judges. Instead of discouraging me, though, I made an appointment to see Dan Lewis, MMR 268. Dan critiqued my model and showed me where I had erred. Fortunately for me, I treated this as a positive learning experience. This effort also started me on the road to earning my own Master Model Railroader recognition.

One of the major influences in my modeling career was meeting Ed Black, MMR 38. Ed is one of the masters, excelling in scenery, buildings, cars, and overall details. When we met, I had introduced myself as having a background in electricity and electronics. Ed, in his typical way, invited me to visit and assist on his layout — he needed someone to “slay his electrical dragons.” I slew many of his dragons. While doing this, Ed and I would discuss some of the finer details of modeling in general. He became my railroading mentor, inspecting my work. This encouraged me to continue with my efforts to earn many of my current achievements. I also met the late Dick Dittus who, along with Ed, provided many excellent suggestions. As time progressed, Dick aided in work on the scenery for my layout. Ed and Dick both spent time helping me improve the York Central’s scenery.

My growth in NMRA activities continued. I took part in several Regional conventions. I entered models in most of

them and won many awards. This helped me earn the coveted and required Achievement Awards as I continued along the way toward MMR recognition. I was invited to judge models in a recent Regional convention. Afterwards, I volunteered to fill the position of the Region’s retiring Model Contest Chair. My thanks also go to Glenn Joppich, the former Model Contest Chair, for sharing his information and materials as I assumed this role. This has been a very enjoyable experience for me.

In addition, I have met and have been involved in conversations with Bob Hamm, MMR, and Pete Magoun, MMR, about the quality and consistency of model judging. Bob’s writings and his development of a rubrics for use in judging models have provided an avenue for consistency in this area. I hope to be able to provide similar input for evaluation in areas that do not use this system.

I want to both recognize and thank many of the local modelers I have met. Larry Wolohon, MMR, NCR Regional AP Chair, has been instrumental in judging my modeling efforts and in assisting me with my efforts as Model Contest Chair. Jim Zinser, MMR, provided excellent suggestions as he performed his judging duties. Dan Lewis, MMR, is one more of the “great guys” in our Division. Dan not only reviewed and evaluated my entries, he also offered many excellent suggestions about how the entries were evaluated and what could be done to make them better. I think the epitome of my efforts occurred when I brought a two-stall fully detailed engine house to one of our meetings for our “show and tell” and Dan commented, “You have come a long way with your modeling.” Since then, I have continued with this effort to produce excellent models. In addition, I feel very strongly about being able to share my knowledge and experiences with others who are on their way to achieving their personal modeling goals.

I want to recognize the other members of NCR’s Division 8 for their encouragement and suggestions as I earned the required Achievement Awards. These awards were for Cars, Structures, Scenery, Civil, Electrical, Official, Volunteer, and Author. All of this was accomplished within a six-year period.

I certainly could not have accomplished this goal without the support of my family. My wife, Elizabeth, is most supportive. My son, Michael, has established his own corner

of the York Central’s subdivision recognized as the York Lumber Company.

My present goals are to continue the construction of the York Central Railroad. Several of the remaining scenic areas need to be improved and eventually completed. I have the type of layout that is readily adaptable for operating sessions. This is another goal of mine — to invite fellow modelers to share an operating session. All in all, I am looking forward to spending many more years enjoying the fruits of this wonderful hobby.

Joel, Elizabeth, and his layout reside in West Bloomfield, Michigan. He and Elizabeth spend a good part of each year in northwestern Montana. In addition to his modeling efforts in Michigan, Joel is active in fundraising for the erection of a protective building for a fireless Porter locomotive that had been in use at the Somers, Montana, Lumber Company. (Somers Lumber was a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway, and its major purpose was to make crossties for the railroad.) The Porter, identified as S-2, is a static display in Somers at the end of a Rails-to-Trails path. Joel is presently gathering information and plans to model a portion of the lumber company and the town of Somers in a future layout.

*Joel holds the following certificates Master Builder—Cars, Master Builder—Structures, Master Builder—Scenery, Model Railroad Engineer—Civil, Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical, Association Volunteer, and Model Railroad Author.* 📄

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