

could have a small layout even in the apartments we were living in at the time. I built a few small layouts. However, in the early 1970s, engine performance was miserable and things seemed to run reliably only at "Lionel speed." Even in graduate school, after Vietnam, I continued to tinker with N-scale. When I finally got my first professorship, I built a pretty decent operating layout with the first reliable Atlas engines. Remember all that old Lionel? I finally sold it to make the down payment on the house and build my first train room.



In 1955, my parents presented me with my own Lionel; this time in O-27 with a Hudson and about a dozen cars. I started the ritual of layout building, which I usually abandoned during the summer months when outside activities took precedence.

My parents and uncle presented me with more and more equipment as the years went by, and I converted to Super-O track and Gargraves track. By the time I got to high school, I was a subscriber to *Model Railroader* and heard of the NMRA but really didn't know what that meant. I was still an O gauge/scale fanatic (even after a local club member offered to buy all my Lionel for \$50 if I would switch to HO). I had an operating layout that used timetables and switchlists. Unfortunately, I couldn't get the adults to come over and "operate" because it wasn't HO and we were just a bunch of kids.

After high school, college, girls, and a few combat tours in Vietnam took up all my time. I do recall seeing Atlas N-scale kits (yes ... sort of like Athearn blue-box kits) in a local hobby shop and buying a couple just to see what this new scale was about. It hooked me, and I started armchair modeling an N-scale layout. I reckoned I

I think my entry into the Achievement Program came quite by accident. Considering that it took 17 years between the first and the second Certificate, apparently I was not impressed with my accomplishment.

I ultimately abandoned N-scale for the more diverse HO-scale world and immediately chose a prototype for which very little was made: the Spokane, Portland, & Seattle — I love a railroad that operated some 95 percent Alcos. I joined the SP&S Railway Historical Society and soon learned more than I ever wanted to know about the railroad that had few units still in original colors when Burlington Northern went through Missoula.

I have always had a fascination for maintenance-of-way equipment, so I decided I had to have an SP&S work train. Not surprisingly, I discovered that I had to scratchbuild every car. By then, I lived in Tennessee and found the Cumberland Division (SER). I started entering contests just to see how I would do. That work train gave me six scratchbuilt cars pretty quickly and, with the encouragement and support of George Gilbert and Larry Deagon, MMR (who chided me for having so many merit

## MMR EARNED

### JIM GORE EARNS MMR 525

**T**o tell the truth, I never expected to get to MMR. Now that I'm there, I have discovered that there is still so much more to learn that I really do consider myself to be a novice. To quote the Grateful Dead, "Lately it occurs to me, what a long, strange trip it's been!"

I've always had toy/model trains in my life. When I was very young, my father put up some part of his standard gauge Lionel around the Christmas tree every year, and Dad would attempt yet another layout in the spare room. About March, he would abandon the project only to start over again the following Christmas. I do remember seeing those giant engines and cars and the ever-present smell of ozone as they wound their ways around the track.

awards that I could wallpaper my house), I applied for the AP Certificate. I was really proud of that "Master Builder" designation but still wasn't attuned to the MMR part. Then, I moved to Georgia.

For some reason, except in Atlanta, there wasn't much NMRA action where I lived, and a 150-mile drive to the Piedmont Division didn't fit into the plans. I eventually lost interest in the NMRA and even let my membership lapse for a while. I was quite active in the SP&S and Northern Pacific historical societies. Building my layout in the loft over a two-car garage kept me quite happy for a decade. During that lapse in NMRA activity, I had the chance to spend a few weeks with Don Eastman, MMR, on a rail tour of New Zealand, and — although he may not know it — his enthusiasm and interest got me back to considering what the NMRA could do for me. It was during that time that I began to investigate scenery techniques, structure building, weathering, and all the other things that a good model railroader should have learned.

For the past decade, I have been modeling an imaginary branchline of Denver & Rio Grande Western's Santa Fe Division, and that adventure has been the pathway to Master Model Railroader. The journey began with a couple pictures of my layout posted on a website for On30 modelers. Allan Miller, editor of *O Gauge Railroading*, asked me to do a feature on my layout, and after a few more articles, as well as one in *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*, and a cover feature in *O Scale Trains*, I realized that I had enough for the Author Certificate. At about that time, I joined a local club in Bradenton, Florida, RealRail, and met my friend and mentor, the late Jim Beatty, MMR. Jim was the driving force behind my final push to become MMR. He encouraged me, criticized my work, but was always helpful and supportive. Along with the support and help of Bob Hamm, MMR, a part-time resident in Florida, I managed to complete all the requirements.

There have been others who have helped and inspired along the way, especially Jon Addison, who taught me how to make incredible water on my layout, and Lou Sassi, who offered much support and enthusiasm. Even Charlie Getz visited my layout, and I have fond memories of an afternoon talking trains. Of course, my constant supporter has been my wife, Sue, who graciously gave me three weekends off so I could dedicate my time to getting the layout ready for a Sunshine Region layout tour and

preparing for the final certificate in electrical work. If I were to examine the 11 AP Certificates and predict which ones I could most easily earn, I would still be trying to get there. Giving a try at building a small diesel from a bunch of sheet plastic was fun and exciting and earned me a certificate I never thought I would. Sometimes, we surprise ourselves!

As times and technology change, I have discovered a great number of friends and mentors on the Internet — although I have never met them. Thom and Dave Miecznikowski, of Clever Models fame, have supported and encouraged me to learn about cardstock modeling. Those skills gave me the knowledge to realize that scratchbuilding a critter or two out of sheet plastic to earn my AP Certificate in motive power was not different from cardstock. I have a great number of friends who have supported me through podcast interviews, especially my friends and associates at Model Rail Radio.

The most significant thing that I learned, as I worked toward achieving my

MMR, is that every model railroader, from novice to the most experienced professional, has something to teach me about this hobby; put another way, I learned that I don't know very much about model railroading and have so much left to learn.

As my skills have improved, and I have learned or developed new techniques (cardstock modeling or making adobe from balsa), I am now returning to some sections of my layout with better scenery and structures while I upgrade my rolling stock. I have discovered that every model railroader has his own unique way to approach the hobby, from weathering to scenery to rolling stock to operations. Each one will still be teaching me for years to come. I hope that I can return that service as well.

*Jim has earned the Golden Spike Award, and AP Certificates in Master Builder – Cars, Model Railroad Author, Master Builder-Structures, Master Builder – Scenery, Master Builder – Motive Power, Association Volunteer, and Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical.*

## NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

The following NMRA Officers and Board of Directors positions are open for election in 2015:

1. President
2. Vice President, Administration
3. Vice President, Special Projects
4. Eastern District Director
5. Pacific District Director, and
6. At-Large North America Director

All incumbents are eligible to be candidates for this election except for the Vice President Administration who is term limited and is therefore ineligible.

Please check Article III, paragraph 12, of the NMRA Executive Handbook (EHB) located at [http://www.nmra.org/national/organization/nmra\\_organization.html](http://www.nmra.org/national/organization/nmra_organization.html) for the extent of the districts affected. Qualifications for candidates are listed in the EHB.

All submissions of candidate's names for consideration by the Nominations Committee for all offices except Pacific District Director shall be submitted to Stephen Priest, Temporary Chairman of the Nominations Committee, [nmra@pairedrail.com](mailto:nmra@pairedrail.com), no later than June 15, 2014.

All submissions of candidate's names for consideration by the Pacific District Director Nominations Committee shall be submitted to Sam Mangion, Chairman of the Pacific District Director Nominations Committee, [mangion2@bigpond.com](mailto:mangion2@bigpond.com), no later than June 15, 2014.

Candidates may wish to run for these positions by petition and not be subjected to the decisions of the appropriate nominations committees. Requirements for submitting by petition are contained in the EHB. All submissions by petition shall be received by the Secretary NMRA no later than July 31, 2014.