



NMRA BULLETIN

DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM MANAGERS

Executive Department
Executive Director—Vacant

Administrative Department Manager —
Jenny Hendricks
4121 Cromwell Rd
Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119
O: 423-892-2846 Fax: 423-899-4869
e-mail: hq@hq.nmra.org

Fund Raising Department Manager —
Roger L. Cason, MMR (HO)
1125 Grinnell Road
Wilmington, DE 19803-5125
H: 302-478-2550 F: 302-478-3556
e-mail: develop@hq.nmra.org

Education Department Manager —
John M. Lowrance, MMR
8611 Norwich Dr.
San Antonio Texas 78217
(210) 822-2628
e-mail: educate@hq.nmra.org

Education Department Assistant Manager —
Fred Bock, MMR
5923 Windhaven Dr.
San Antonio, Texas 78234-2132
(210) 653-5947 e-mail: fbock4@aol.com

Howell Day Museum Manager —
John E. Roberts, MMR (O)
104 Heritage Pointe
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894
H: 757-345-3797 O: 757-345-3118
Fax: 757-345-6944
e-mail: museum@hq.nmra.org

Kalmbach Memorial Library Manager —
Brent Lambert
4121 Cromwell Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37421
O: 423-894-8144 Fax: 423-899-4869
e-mail: lib@hq.nmra.org

MAP Department (Marketing, Advertising,
Promotion) Manager — John E. Roberts, MMR
104 Heritage Pointe Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894
H: 757-345-3797 O: 757-345-3118
Fax: 757-345-6944
e-mail: map@hq.nmra.org

Meetings and Trade Show Department Manager —
Henry Jordan, HLM (N)
3200 N. Leisure World Blvd #116
Silver Spring, MD 20906
O:(301) 598-0175 F:(301) 598-0176
e-mail: conv@hq.nmra.org

Member Services Department Manager —
Jan Wescott
180 W Middleton Dr
Henderson, NV 89015
e-mail: mbrservices@hq.nmra.org

Publications Department Manager —
Larry DeYoung (HO, O)
54 Waterloo Rd
Devon, PA 19333-1458
H: 610-293-9098 Fax: 610-293-1715
e-mail: pubs@hq.nmra.org

Standards and Conformance Department
Manager—Didrik A. Voss, MMR (HO)
15226 12th Dr SE
Mill Creek, WA 98012-3082
O: 425-337-5222 F: 425-337-6084
e-mail: tech-chair@hq.nmra.org

REGION PRESIDENTS

Australasian Region—Sowerby Smith
174 Fuller Road, Chatswood, NSW 2067 Australia
H: 61 2 9411 5726 W: 61 2 9460 7600
e-mail: president@nmra.org.au

British Region—Tim Rudge
Marsh House, 318 Marsh Road, Hilperton Marsh
Wiltshire, England BA14 7PL
H:(01225) 340993 e-mail: brprez@hq.nmra.org

Lone Star Region—Jerry Schoenberg, MMR
1039 Clinton St., Carrollton, TX 75007-4828
H: (972) 242-9053
e-mail: lsrprez@hq.nmra.org

Mid-Central Region—Richard A. Briggs, MMR
4397 Hidden St Grove City, OH 43123
e-mail: mcrprez@hq.nmra.org

Mid-Continent Region—Larry Alfred, MMR
14633 South Chalet Drive,
Olathe, KS 66062-2527 H (913) 782-6584
e-mail: mcoprez@hq.nmra.org

Mid-Eastern Region—Roger Cason, MMR
1125 Grinnel Road, Wilmington DE 19803-5125
H: (302) 478-2550 e-mail: merprez@hq.nmra.org

Midwest Region—Gary Children
2135 S 95th St., West Allis, WI 53227
H: (414) 327-1666 e-mail: mwrprez@hq.nmra.org

Niagara Frontier Region—Neville Meads
26 Russell Hill Road, RR #1, Bobcaygeon, Ontario,
Canada K0M 1A0
(705)-731-0893 e-mail: nfrprez@hq.nmra.org

North Central Region—Jack Watson
31683 Hiddenbrook Drive
Chesterfield Twp., MI 48087
H: (586) 598-7407 e-mail: ncrprez@hq.nmra.org

Northeastern Region—Kenneth May
71 Buff Cap Road, Tolland, CT 06084
H: (860) 872-3441 e-mail: nerprez@hq.nmra.org

Pacific Coast Region—Ron Plies, MMR
921 11th St., P.O. Box 950, Fortuna, CA 95540
H: (707) 725-9063 e-mail: pcrprez@hq.nmra.org

Pacific Northwest Region—Jack Hamilton, MMR
10731 Warren Rd. NW Silverdale, WA 98383
H: (360)-308-9845 e-mail: pnrprez@hq.nmra.org

Pacific Southwest Region—Ben Sevier
12793 War Horse Street, San Diego, CA 92129
H: (858) 538-9863 e-mail: psrprez@hq.nmra.org

Rocky Mountain Region—Harold S. Huber Jr.
1405 Dana Ave., Sheridan, WY 82801-2405
H: (307) 672-8471 e-mail: rnrprez@hq.nmra.org

Southeastern Region—Bob Beaty, MMR
741 Dividing Ridge Rd., Birmingham, AL 35244
H: (205) 987-2385 e-mail: serprez@hq.nmra.org

Sunshine Region—Stan Seeds, MMR
14610 Highland Harbor Ct. Ft. Myers, FL 33908-
4938 (239)454-0972
e-mail: ssrprez@hq.nmra.org

Thousand Lakes Region—Alan Saatkamp
902 Chestnut St., Harrisburg, SD 57032
(605) 767-9743
e-mail: tlrprez@hq.nmra.org

rev 1-1-09

2009 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
Hartford, Connecticut • July 5 – 11, 2009 • Info: • <http://www.HN2009.org>
Train Show Booth Reservations—Debbie Draper, HLM, Registrar • 10837 N. 34th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85028-3310 • (602) 569-9072 • natltrainshow@aol.com
2010—Milwaukee, WI • 2011—Sacramento, CA • 2012—Grand Rapids, MI • 2013—Atlanta, GA

HEADQUARTERS

ADDRESS CHANGE? BACK ISSUES OR REPLACEMENT ISSUES OF *SCALE RAILS*?

Members needing to make address changes, request back issues, or replacement issues of *SCALE RAILS* should contact the staff at the national headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at (423) 892-2846 or by email at nmrahq@aol.com.

MID-YEAR BOD MEETING

COST CONTROL IS FOCUS OF MID-YEAR BOD MEETING

The Officers, Board of Directors, Department Heads, and Headquarters management met in Orlando, Florida, on February 20–21 for the annual mid-year BOD meeting. Despite ongoing, serious concerns about reducing costs at a time when the economy is uppermost in everyone's mind, the leadership team identified innovative ways to increase the value of NMRA membership while enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of the organization.

Curtailing costs

One of the most challenging concerns is to reduce the cost of attending our National Conventions in the near term. This is a classic case of nothing being as easy as it first appears.

The best rates for hotel rooms and convention centers are available to organizations that sign contracts many years in advance. The Fourth of July weekend is also a relatively inexpensive time in most locations. To take advantage of the reduced costs, we have signed contracts for hotel rooms and convention centers through 2013 (Atlanta).

But times have changed. Some members tell us they can no longer afford a week-long convention. Others feel the July Fourth holiday should be reserved for family get-togethers. Yet a shortened convention, or one where many attendees stay in several outlying and hence more economical hotels, means that fewer room-nights are sold in the main hotel, which dramatically affects the cost of clinic and display rooms, and hence registration fees.

The convention department is therefore going to work with host groups to see

whether we can create a “core” convention format that starts Wednesday morning and ends on Friday or Saturday. For those who have more time and funds, there will be early-bird events such as fan trips and industrial tours as well as extra-fare programs such as Modeling With The Masters. Following the core convention will be the National Train Show.

There is also a sense that National Conventions have become too predictable. Innovation is the province of the entrepreneur, not a governing body. The leadership team therefore sees advantages accruing from returning more control of convention events to the local host group. Clinic “tracks” embracing a central theme such as layout design or structure scratchbuilding or DCC would receive more emphasis, but they would be scheduled so that attendees could still enjoy layout or prototype tours on any given day. We are also working with other rail groups in an effort to arrange joint conventions, even if this means shifting our convention away from a mid-summer time frame.

We are investigating the adoption of highly popular features of prototype modeling meets such as model displays in lieu of or in addition to judged contests; modelers would be able to sit with their models to discuss them with interested onlookers. Highly trained judges would be available for those desiring points toward Achievement Program certificates.

Special Interest Groups

A post-Anaheim-convention survey garnering more than 1,800 responses indicates that many members attend our National Convention to participate in Special Interest Group (SIG) activities such as those of the Layout Design and Operations SIGs. It's also clear that we need to work more closely with such groups to ensure that they are able to attract SIG members to our National Convention and, at the same time, demonstrate to convention attendees the value they offer to the average modeler.

We are therefore working with SIG coordinator Marlin MacLaughlin to rewrite the SIG section of our nmra.org Web site. Our goal is to make it more welcoming to Special Interest Group leaders who may find value in partnering with the NMRA on national and regional conventions. Free liability insurance for joint SIG–NMRA meets is one obvious advantage.

Standards & Conformance

The Standards & Conformance Department is taking a different direction on checking products for conformance to NMRA Standards and Recommended Practices. Rather than depending on whatever sample products happen to be sent in for testing, the department is planning to purchase products through normal retail channels to ensure random samples that can be checked in a timely manner. These tests have two purposes: to provide feedback and guidance to manufacturers and importers on how their products match up to applicable Standards and RPs and therefore how they can be improved; and to share this information with NMRA members as purchasers and users of these products.

The Officers and Directors recognize that such reviews could have an adverse impact on advertising revenue for *SCALE RAILS*, but we feel that setting standards and RPs and checking products for conformance to ensure interoperability is the Association's primary mission.

This department is also looking into the establishment of standards for magnetic knuckle couplers so that there will be a well-defined benchmark for all such couplers to meet to ensure interoperability.

Library and museum

Because of California's pressing fiscal concerns, there has been little progress in our ongoing efforts to move the Howell Day Model Railroad Museum and Kalmbach Memorial Library (but not the headquarters office or staff) to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, California. That remains a major goal of your Officers and Directors, as NMRA members would gain access to the impressive library adjacent to the railroad museum. Our library would remain intact. Moreover, the proposal being negotiated calls for the Howell Day Museum to be temporarily set up on the mezzanine of the railroad museum, which is one of the West Coast's top tourist attractions.

SCALE RAILS

Because of rising costs, especially those associated with distributing *SCALE RAILS*, regular issues of the magazine are being held to 64 pages. The Board asked that publisher Larry DeYoung work with contractor White River Productions to investigate and report back on ways, including electronic publication of some issues, to make further cost

reductions while actually enhancing the ability of the periodical to members.

The first two of a series of new and upgraded Data Sheets are almost ready to turn over to the *SR* staff for production. Most new or revised Data Sheets will first appear in the pages of *SR* and then migrate to a members-only section of our Web site, nmra.org. Lengthy, more technical Data Sheets will probably appear in *SR* in summary form, with the complete Data Sheets available on the Web site.

Future conventions

Now that we have identified promising ways to reduce the cost of attending a core National Convention, the moratorium on convention bids after Atlanta in 2013 has been lifted. Our rotation schedule for 2014 points to a central North American location, and host groups who would like to bid for 2014 should be prepared to embrace the more economical core-convention concept as well as consider early summer through early fall dates.

(Other bids already accepted for future National Conventions include our 75th anniversary convention in Milwaukee in 2010, Sacramento, California, in 2011, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 2012.)

Treasurer Tom Draper and his son honored

The meeting was adjourned in honor of Tom Draper, Honorary Life Member, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, and NMRA Treasurer for 27 years, and in memory of Tom's son, Brad.

Bids for the NMRA National Convention

The NMRA Meetings & Trade Show Department is requesting bids from potential Host Groups for the 2014 NMRA National Convention.

The convention area for 2014 is the central area of North America. The central area is roughly defined as west of a line from the western border of Pennsylvania and the Quebec/Ontario border to states and provinces east of the Rocky Mountains.

If a group desires to host the NMRA National Convention, a letter of intent must be sent to the Meeting & Trade Show Department no later than January 1, 2010.

If interested in hosting the NMRA National Convention, please contact Henry Jordan - 301-598-0175 (E-mail conv@hq.nmra.org) for additional information.

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

*Indicates first Certificate of Achievement

FEBRUARY 2009

GOLDEN SPIKE

Lone Star Region

Roddy Wilder, Georgetown, Texas

Mid-Eastern Region

Seth Gartner, Charlotte, North Carolina
David Ward, Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina

Northeastern Region

Robert Seckler, Poughquag, New York

Pacific Northwest Region

Al Babinsky, Gig Harbor, Washington
William Baker, Port Orchard, Washington
Tom Buckingham, Camano Island, Washington
Scott Buckley, Olympia, Washington
George Carr, Bainbridge Island, Washington
Lawrence Fink, Renton, Washington
Mike McCracken, Seattle, Washington
Wain Miller, Tacoma, Washington
John Morrison, Redmond, Washington
Nicholas Muff, Sedro Wooley, Washington
James Murrie, Lakewood, Washington
Edwin Pennington, Spanaway, Washington
Glenn Shadduck, Lynwood, Washington
William Spaulding, Bothell, Washington
Scott Taylor, Auburn, Washington
Jack Tingstad, Coupeville, Washington
Louis Toppiano, Jr, Kent, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Robert Charles, Ranchester, Wyoming

Southeastern Region

Joseph Norris, Bakersville, North Carolina

MASTER BUILDER — CARS

Rocky Mountain Region

Donald Bailey, Colorado Springs, Colorado

MASTER BUILDER — STRUCTURES

Northeastern Region

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North Central Region

Bill Moore, Grosse Point, Michigan

Pacific Northwest Region

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Allen Evans, Federal Way, Washington
Susan Evans, Federal Way, Washington
Tom Gilchrist, Renton, Washington
Al Lowe, Bellevue, Washington
Jim Merriam, Marysville, Washington
Al Turnbull, Monroe, Washington
Jim Younkens, Olympia, Washington

Southeastern Region

George Butler, Atlanta, Georgia
Joseph Norris, Bakersville, North Carolina

MASTER BUILDER — PROTOTYPE MODELS

Mid-Central Region

Richard Briggs, MMR, Grove City, Ohio

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — CIVIL

Rocky Mountain Region

Richard Sons, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Southeastern Region

Howard Goodwin, Acworth, Georgia

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER — ELECTRICAL

Lone Star Region

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Pacific Northwest Region

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Bruce McCosh, Boise, Idaho
Jim Younkens, Olympia, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Irving Johnson, Divide, Colorado

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Howard Goodwin, Acworth, Georgia
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Bruce Bowie, Milan, Ohio

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Carl Heimberger, Anaheim, California

Southeastern Region

David Gelmini, Hampton, Georgia
Charles Millar, Buford, Georgia

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

Mid-Continent Region

Mike Armstrong, Davenport, Iowa

Mid-Central Region

Karen Parker, Pickerington, Ohio

MMR EARNED



**TOM PICCIRILLO EARNS
MMR #418**

My story begins like many of you who enjoy the art of model railroading. My parents gave me a set of Lionel trains in 1955 when I was just three years old. I switched to HO scale in 1964 after discovering a *Model Railroader* magazine with a John Allen cover at the corner store. I learned a lot about mechanics and electronics by reading *Model Railroader* over the ensuing years, and I have since collected every issue published. I promised myself that someday my model railroad would be featured within its pages. That promise was filled in the April 1996 issue, and my latest railroad is featured in *Great Model Railroads 2009*.

As a teenager, I used to ride my bike to see the annual exhibition put on by the Westfield, New Jersey, O scale model railroad club. I had become fascinated by the model traction equipment that ran on that line...that it received power from the overhead wire was of particular interest. In those days, you had to be at least 21 years old to

join the club, and I did just that as soon as I was old enough. Some members of the club had roots that went all the way back to the 1930s, and I was fortunate to apprentice with some of the finest traction modelers in the country: Jack Shawde, Gene Stains and Bill Bolmer.

My O scale Somerset County Traction System was developed in stages, starting in a small apartment in 1977, very soon after the Westfield Club had lost its layout space. In 1981, I bought my first house, and the layout was enlarged. Another move in 1987 allowed further expansion, and, in 2000, I moved to my current home and built the layout shown in *GMR 2009*.

After being graduated from Newark (New Jersey) College of Engineering in 1974 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, I worked for various industrial firms in New Jersey, holding various R&D and managerial positions in all departments. In 1992, I joined Micro-Mark, a manufacturer and distributor of tools and supplies for model builders, and followed a career path that led to the position of president.

Since all the trackwork on my model railroad is complete, my operating crew gathers twice a month to run the railroad. I have reached what many call the "fun stage" of model railroading and can pick and choose the projects I care to work on, anything from building a locomotive to rolling stock to scenery to structures, sound systems, and animation. I also own and operate a 1-inch scale live-steam locomotive, and have had the honor of serving as the president and secretary of The New Jersey Live Steamers. I've taken particular pleasure in the instruction and development of my young son, Joey, as a model steam locomotive engineer.

After 44 years of preparation, I entered the NMRA's Achievement Program in May 2008 and was pleased to complete the requirements for Master Model Railroader in February 2009. The AP showed me that you can, indeed, show an old dog some new tricks, and I learned plenty during this program. It's a great way to make new friends, improve your model building abilities, and enjoy some recognition of your accomplishments.

Tom holds the following Achievement Awards: Master Builder – Motive Power, Master Builder – Scenery, Master Builder – Structures, Model Railroad Engineer - Civil, Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, and Model Railroad Author.



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