

NMRA BULLETIN

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**Region Secretaries: send all
changes in Region officer infor-
mation to the NMRA Secretary:
secy@nmra.org.**

rev 7/14/20

2021 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
2021 Rails by the Bay • July 4 – 11, 2021 • Santa Clara, California • <https://www.nmra2021.com>
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
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• 2022—TBD •

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT JULY 2020

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MASTER MODEL RAILROADER

MMR® #658 Kenneth Farnham, Palm Bay, Florida

MMR® #659 Charles Rausch, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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. If you prefer to write, contact Frank at 4769 Silverwood Drive, Batavia, OH 45103.

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We make it more fun.

**GRAHAM MACDONALD EARNS
MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #651**

Arthur Ashe, Black American tennis great, said two things I think epitomize the NMRA Achievement Program:

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

“Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.”

My journey started in England. Born in a suburb of Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1938, a year before the outbreak of the Second World War, my early memories are of a life governed by rationing of food and most other commodities. The family car was on blocks in the garage because rubber tires were unavailable to civilians. Toys were often homemade, or certainly hand-me-downs from earlier generations. I had a Hornby O-gauge clockwork locomotive and an oval of track — where it came from, and whether it survived for long, I do not know. Journeys from home were few; one, more memorable, was the steam train that took my mother, myself, and my brother for precautionary evacuation from Newcastle, which was being heavily bombed — change trains at Haltwhistle, and on to Alston in the hilly rural interior of northern England for a stay of several months. I recall quickly learning that leaning out the window would result in soot smuts in the eyes!

After WWII ended, the family moved to Surrey, south of London, and life and travel and family holidays resumed — many by train and some by car across the English Channel to the Continent. I remember being very impressed by a French Railways switcher on the docks at Dieppe. This seemed to me to be a huge machine with shiny black paint, red spoked wheel centers, and red trim lines — steam coming from all the vents, compressors, and valves on the outside of the monster. In contrast, British steamers were very neat and tidy, with all these details hidden below cladding or inside the frame. These events have injected steam trains into my bloodstream.

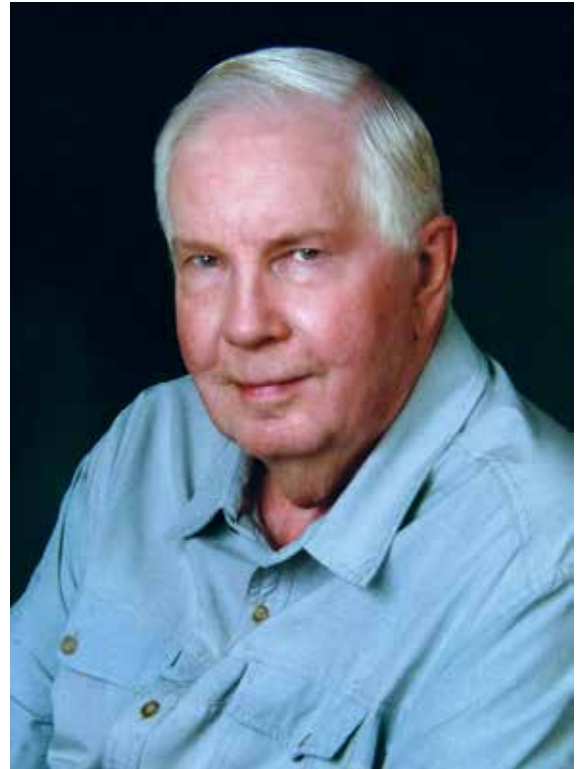
At this time, I received my first real train set: a Trix Twin OO-scale 3-rail electric set with some turnouts, crossings, and a station. It was second-hand, and I have no idea how my father found

this gem in the post-war years. It was not long before the snap track was set up on the floor and rearranged and added to for a time. I must have found some model railway magazines because I discovered shelf layouts, and flextrack, and realism, soon after. Dad helped me build a shelf (or was it the other way around?) and augmented my pocket money so I could buy supplies — my first layout was born, but never grew up, because by then I was getting into high school and education and teen years took over. My younger brother still has it and has added to the Trix set, which is now a collectible.

Dad was an electrical engineer and was always making things, from multimeters to gas-powered lawnmowers. To him, I must give credit, not just for the train set, but for passing on his curiosity about how things worked, how to use tools, how to fix things that broke, and how to use my hands and eyes. For as long as I can remember, I have made things — a rubber band-powered crawler from an empty thread spool, a piece of candle and a matchstick; powered model aircraft; catapult-launched gliders; and more. (Hence my first quote from Arthur Ashe, above.) Sadly, many creative manual skills and hobbies are in decline as children spend more and more time at a keyboard in front of a screen.

I recently watched a video presentation on the NMRAX YouTube channel, entitled “Is railway modeling art?” My answer is a definite “Yes!” For this, I must credit both my parents: Mum was a fairly accomplished sketch/watercolor artist, and Dad, a good amateur photographer. They must have passed on some of those genes to me since I have been able to paint respectable backdrops for my last layout and have done some pencil sketches sold in a garage sale! Art has also encompassed many of the scenes I have created on my layout and photographed for clinics and slideshows.

My working career was in mechanical engineering. An undergraduate apprenticeship in the UK aircraft industry led to me working in the test laboratories



for aircraft components and systems. After emigrating to Canada in 1964, I continued working in equipment testing, followed by a move into the design offices. There I settled into a 29-year employment in a division designing, selling, and installing electric-generating plants and other systems powered by large jet engines. Engineering training and broad design experience have served me well in my model railroading hobby.

I have three sons from a previous marriage. They have not followed in my hobby, but all are appreciative and creative in their own ways. My second marriage is in its 13th year. My wife, who is not at all handy with tools or gadgets, has been a great booster to me in reaching the stations on the journey to MMR®. She kept a list on the ‘fridge door of how many certificates I had, and how many points I still needed to finish my Author qualification. She was the helper who got this train up and over the pass.

I joined the NMRA sometime during my first marriage, but interest waned with lack of time and the pressures of family and work. I let my membership lapse and only rejoined after retiring in 1996. A year later, my wife and I moved to a newly built house in Ontario, and I at once started to plan the basement workshop and train room. My layout was inspired

by a book I found during summer camp holidays with my family decades before on the history of a railway built through the Canadian Shield country by a lumber baron during the last decade of the 19th century. I now had the time, money, and space to do the research and build the layout gestating in my head for some time. Building started in 2000 and soon drew the attention of a local club that runs a very extensive public layout tour every year in the region where I live. The first tour was two years after I started the layout — there was a lot of bare framing and only basic scenery and a few structures — but the feedback, suggestions, and encouragement I received during that tour, from both fellow modelers and members of the public, was extraordinary and unexpected. That tour became my annual progress milestone for 17 years.

The NMRA National Convention was held in Toronto in 2003, and I was persuaded to host two tours. It is no small effort for any owner to host an NMRA

convention tour, and I am now always very appreciative of those who host tours for NMRA or other events. I am very gratified my layout is now donated to and installed at the West Parry Sound District Museum, where it will be the core exhibit in a complete renovation of their main exhibit hall. The coronavirus pandemic has thrown a wrench into many plans and organizations, but it is hoped this exhibit will be completed and opened sometime next year.

During my journey, I have had to learn many things from many people; some things I have been able to share with others through clinics, seminars, and articles I have authored. I also wish to thank the many judges who have assessed my work both at model contests and at my home, often foregoing other activities to give of their time and knowledge. Without them, there would be no Merit Awards and no Achievement Program.

Every AP Certificate is a station along the way and should be celebrated as much

as the final *hurrah!* when MMR® status is announced in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Many fellow modelers achieve remarkable success in their modeling, yet never join the NMRA nor participate in the Achievement Program. I want to assure them their work is no less appreciated, but they have missed some of the scenery along their journey. That scenery is sometimes intangible and invisible, but it is the fellowship and enjoyment of others in celebrating a road well-traveled. I will continue to enjoy sharing my hobby with others in any way they wish.

Certificates Earned
Graham MacDonald, MMR® 651
Master Builder – Structures
Master Builder – Scenery
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Cars
Model Railroad Author

MMR® EARNED

LAWRENCE BURKHOLDER EARNS MMR® #655

Although I had no relatives involved with railroading, my railroad experience started very early. For eight years of my life before high school, I lived one block from the Norfolk & Western main line through Portsmouth, Ohio. I lived on the right side of the tracks, but I had to cross them to get to school and visit my friends. I can still feel the thunder of N&W coal drags being pulled by their various huge, articulated engines. Standing just a few feet beside the tracks as they passed by, the ground shook, and cinders rained down on my head. Railroading got into my blood.

My first model railroading started like many other youths, with a Lionel set. Although we didn't have a room for a layout, my mother was tolerant of me setting up my tracks in the dining room, which would last maybe a week before Mom would make me pick it up. Gathering everything took some time because I had many of the Lionel accessories available in the middle 1940s: log loader, milk can loader, cattle pen loader, crossing guard, and lots of track.



This cycle went on until I was in high school, and we moved to a house with a basement. Dad took an interest in model

railroading and, along with a neighbor father and son, we started a very small layout and bought an HO engine (Eric

Lackawanna diesel), a few cars, and track. The layout never quite took off, however, and everything went into a box.

After college and marriage, I carried the box with us for numerous moves and the birth of three daughters who had no interest in the hobby. My interest never faltered, and when I finally had space for a layout, I decided to switch to N scale and gave my much-traveled HO collection to a friend. Work transfers, business travels, and two years living in China kept me from getting very far on my first couple of layouts. Finally, I retired in 1998, moved to Tennessee, built a house with a layout room, and got back to the hobby in earnest.

Shortly after moving to Tennessee, I joined the Knoxville Area Model Railroaders club and became active there, serving as President for a number of years. The club was a modular

group with no headquarters. In 2001, the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge asked our club to build a "World of Trains" wing. I was project manager for converting a 3,500-square-foot area in the museum into several rooms for HO, N, and large scale layouts. Later, an outside garden railroad was constructed. The results of this project gave the Knoxville club a home. Following those efforts, I have worked to introduce the hobby to young children by organizing club members to conduct an annual Model Railroad Summer Camp at the museum for the last ten years.

One day, I got a call inviting me to provide layout scenery support for a model railroad TV production being made for the DIY network. That work got me my first Achievement Award for Scenery and got me interested in pursuing the Master Model Railroader® pro-

gram. Our Southeastern Region Smoky Mountain Division was essentially dormant, and some NMRA members in the Knoxville club encouraged me to become Superintendent and get the Division started again. I held that position for nine years. The Division now has about 65 members. Those years as Superintendent, chairing the 2012 SER Convention, and holding an SER Director's position gave me Volunteer credits. I am currently President of the Southeastern Region.

Certificates Earned
Lawrence Burkholder, MMR® 655
Master Builder - Scenery
Master Builder - Cars
Model Railroad Author
Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Engineer - Civil
Association Volunteer
Association Official

MMR® EARNED

DALE RIDGEWAY EARNS MMR® 657

Like many others before mine, this bio could begin with the train set under the Christmas trees of my childhood. However, I believe it started before those Christmas trains. I believe I was born with the love of trains, possibly a genetic thing since I come from a family of Baltimore & Ohio employees. One might say I am a "blue blood" because the blood running through my veins is B&O blue!

It started with my grandfather, who was a brakeman for the B&O in the early 1900s, working out of Brunswick, Maryland. The small farming town where he and the family grew up, Lovettsville, Virginia, is right across the Potomac River from Brunswick. Many in Lovettsville made the short commute to Brunswick to work on the railroad. Unfortunately, my grandfather had an accident while switching cars, which ended his railroad days. My father was hired years later for a yard job in Brunswick and Baltimore. He never really talked about it too much, but on his days off, he would take my two brothers and me over to the Brunswick yard and show us the locomotives he ran that week — so much more exciting than the train set under the Christmas tree!

I was about 12 when I started to get into building train layouts. I had two 4x



8-foot sheets of plyboard on saw horses set up in our family basement with track promptly nailed down to the wood. No cork roadbed for me! One was an oval with a small Plasticville town in the center, and the other was a figure 8 with a makeshift tunnel made out of a cardboard box. A desk sat in the center, which

held the power packs. It wasn't the greatest, but for me, it was everything! It kept me occupied for many hours.

I believe to this day the episode of "The Addams Family" where Gomez blew up his train set affected those brothers I mentioned earlier. I came home from a hobby store in Frederick,

Maryland, with a new Athearn boxcar I had saved up to buy. I was eager to get it on the rails and see it roll. But to my disbelief, my two brothers had tied firecrackers to the figure 8 bridge and blew it up when the train rolled across it. It was a devastating moment!

That event was the end of my modeling for awhile. I was young when my family split up, and I moved in with my grandparents. I loved trains, but there was not a place to build a layout. After high school, I took a job in Brunswick at the car yard. It was a dream job for me, even though it was the Chessie system then and not my beloved B&O. I loved being around all the trains. Fortune was not in my favor. After a short time, I got bumped, meaning someone with more seniority was returning to work. I was laid off with hopes of being called back, which didn't happen. So, I found a career in the building trade, which has proven to be most beneficial in the hobby of model railroading.

The lack of model trains in my life continued until the early 1990s. I was telling my wife about my childhood love for trains and layouts. She has a tender heart and a sense of humor. The following Christmas, she gave me an HO beginner train set, which was like lighting the fuse to happy land again. I quickly set it up and started running the train on its oval of track. I immediately wanted more

and started buying turnouts and more track with no more knowledge than I had when I was 12. I discovered how to create shorts in wiring, that model trains won't pull on 8 percent grades, and you can only bend flex track so far. With all this "knowledge" under my belt, I read and studied books on model railroading to increase my arsenal of know-how before attempting another layout. The investment in information paid off as I built a 12x 8-foot model railroad in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, which I enjoyed for years.

In 2000, we moved to the eastern shore of Maryland. I built a house with a basement. I deliberately chose property on which a basement could be dug. These properties are rare this close to the ocean because the water table is so high. We are not much above sea level.

I intended to build my masterpiece layout, this time with everything on my wish list included. I executed careful planning, room preparation, and layout design to ensure it was perfect with no regrets. I am proud to say it all paid off!

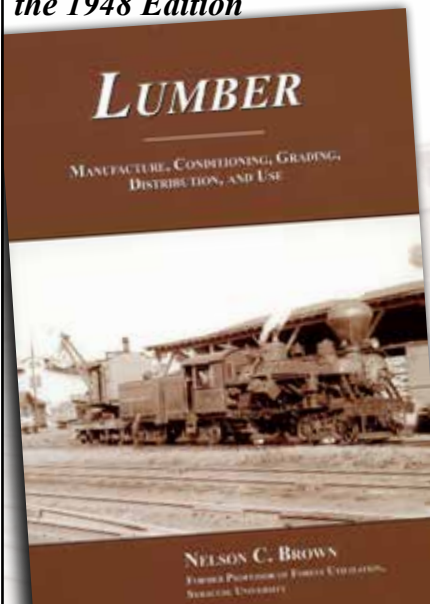
The B&O Ridgley Division in HO scale is a great railroad to run. It has attracted other model railroad fans over the years, which is how I met several members of the NMRA Tidewater Division. Four members called and asked me to open my layout for them to tour. I have always been glad to share my hobby and invited them over to view my layout. One

member, Bill Miller, suggested I join the NMRA. I was reluctant at first, mostly because of the distance from my home. After consideration, I couldn't resist the opportunity to meet more people who shared this passion. I became a member of the Tidewater Division.

The NMRA offered me a challenge, as well as an honor, if I could rise to the required level. I am referring to the opportunity to fulfill the requirements of becoming a Master Model Railroader®. Before joining the NMRA, I had proudly had my layout published in both major model railroad magazines, been photographed and written about in several local newspapers, and was filmed and interviewed for local television. I considered becoming a Master Model Railroader® an accomplishment surpassing all of this — something I knew would make me proud. So, I started the process, and after five years, I completed the many requirements and made my dream come true.

There have been people along the way who supported me through the journey. I am most grateful for their advice and guidance and would like to mention them. Thanks go to Stephen and Cinthia Priest for editing and publishing the many articles I submitted about model railroading. All the members in the Tidewater Division are appreciated for their friendship, shared passion, and acceptance. Thanks to John Johnson, who pushed me to be a better modeler and always let me know what was expected of me to earn my achievements. Big thanks to Bill Miller; if it weren't for him persuading me to join the NMRA, I would never have experienced the process and the sense of pride in this accomplishment. Finally, I offer thanks to my wife, Beth. She is always encouraging, has never blinked at the 1,000-square-foot of the house dedicated to trains and for buying me that first train set for Christmas.

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