



# NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

The NMRA advances the worldwide scale model railroading community through education and standards as well as advocacy and fellowship.

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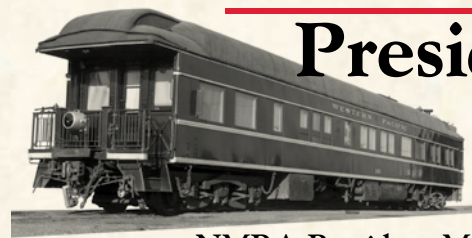
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## President's Car

NMRA President Mike Brestel

## A Bit More on Awards

Last month, my whole column was taken up with a report on the awards that were presented at the Hartford National convention. Having the opportunity to thank some of our members for work well done is the part of my job that I enjoy the most. I know that these individuals are but a few of our many members who have learned what I learned a long time ago: when you're involved in a volunteer organization, what you get back is in direct proportion to what you give.

Most of the awards presented at the banquet each year are a surprise to the recipients, and it is fun to see the look on their faces when they suddenly realize that the guy at the podium is talking about them. But some of some of the recipients, naturally enough, are not present at the banquet, or even at the convention, and then we try to find a suitable way to get their awards to them.

When that happens, I usually get an email in return, thanking me for the thanks they have received. I always get a kick out of that, someone thanking *me* when *they're* the one who did the work! This month I want to share with you a particularly gracious note I received from Jim McClain, the patent attorney who oversees all our intellectual property, and who over the past several years supervised our successful challenge of the Real Rail Effects DCC-sound patent:

*Dear Mike:*

*Wow! What can I say? "Thank you" seems pretty inadequate!*

*To arrive home from several weeks overseas and a few hours later have the envelope with the President's Award plaque and pin delivered was an astonishing surprise! I had thought of the work I've been doing as simply being just using my background experience to help out NMRA in the way one would expect any member to do. To have the Board of Directors consider that this was worthy of such a high award is completely unexpected but also very deeply appreciated. It is an award that I will treasure, and I thank the Board very much.*

*To whoever nominated me, please pass on my sincere thanks. (Bob Amsler, if it was you (it was – Ed.), thanks very much. You've been a great person to work with.)*

*I regret that I was not able to be at the Hartford Convention for the award presentation. My wife sings in (and is the immediate past president of) a large church choir. For the past year they have been preparing for a concert tour of Spain and Portugal, and the performance schedule unfortunately completely bracketed the dates of the Convention. While I don't sing (to everyone's relief) I'm one of the non-singing spouses that do the peripheral chores – in my case I'm one of the two who make the videos of the performances. I am hoping to avoid any similar travel conflicts next year so I can be in Milwaukee.*

*Once again, thanks very much to you and the Board. If anyone gets out to San Diego, come by and say hello at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. I'm usually there a couple of days a week as one of the volunteers who run the Museum's extensive research library.*

*Best regards to everyone,*

*Jim McClain*

Jim, thanks for the thanks. And thanks for giving us all the benefit of your talent, knowledge, and grace.

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**Membership:** NMRA membership dues are \$58 (U.S. currency) per year, of which \$19 covers subscription to the official publication, *SCALE RAILS* and *NMRA BULLETIN*<sup>®</sup>. Address all membership applications, renewals, notices of non-receipt (issues that have been lost or delayed in the mail), or other business matters to the headquarters office. Back issues of *SCALE RAILS* are available while supplies last from the Kalmbach Memorial Library at Chattanooga — contact the library regarding availability and pricing.

## Introducing our new CFO, Kevin Feeney

The closing banquet at the Hartford National also served as our official annual meeting. At that meeting, the NMRA's officers began their new term of office. This year we welcomed a new officer, Kevin Feeney, as our Treasurer. Kevin was appointed to replace Tom Draper, HLM, who had served as NMRA Treasurer for 27 years.

Kevin just completed two terms on the Board of Directors as the Eastern District Director. While on the BOD, he served as its representative to the Budget Committee.

Kevin actually lives in Connecticut, so he was right at home at the Hartford National (HN). He's been an NMRA member since 1985 and founded the Metro North Division of the Northeastern Region (one of hosts for HN) back in the 1990s. He served as Division Superintendent for several years and co-chaired two successful NER conventions.

Kevin has a second home in Center City Philadelphia, and has long been active in the Mid-Eastern Region's New Jersey and Philadelphia Divisions as well. He was a department head for Valley Forge Express (1993), had a home layout on the tour for Independence Junction (2006), and helped out in several ways for Hartford.

Kevin models Illinois Central; Gulf, Mobile & Ohio; and Chicago & Eastern Illinois in HO and belongs to these and several other railroad historical societies. He holds AP Certificates as Author, Volunteer, and Official. He has traveled extensively, attending each national convention since 1985 and scores of division and regional events across North America and in the British Region.

Professionally, Kevin has been a CPA since 1977 and holds additional certification in management accounting and financial management. He received an MBA in accounting from the University of Rochester and an MS in Information Systems from Pace University. He also received a Doctorate in Accounting from Pace University after completing his dissertation on changes in railroad annual reports after World War II.

Kevin has been an auditor, manager of accounting, analyst, assistant controller, controller, CFO, and even spent seven years teaching accounting full time. Since 1997, he has worked for Gartner, an Information Technology research and advisory firm, in Stamford, Connecticut. He's current a Vice President in their Treasury Department.

Currently, the NMRA uses a mix of several accounting systems and manual effort, and Kevin's initial goal as NMRA CFO is to automate our accounting procedures. He then looks to improve the timeliness of our financial reporting.

Kevin is looking for two members with an accounting background to assist in this effort. Anyone who interested should contact him directly.

## Can't we all just get along?

The other day I was reading a series of emails about some vitally important model railroading matter. It was the equivalent of the old bull sessions that used to take place while we huddled around a hot stove, but now occur on chat lists while we huddle in front of our computers. As proof that such discussions often still generate more heat than light, someone had just made a statement that anyone who didn't do things a certain way (use styrene, use brass, use DCC, use DC, scratchbuild switches, use commercial track — whatever) just wasn't a Real Model Railroader.

Well, as you can imagine, that brought proceedings to a halt for a bit. Then Andy Romano of Crestline, California, offered the following note. I was impressed with the wisdom of a modeler of 62 years, and as I leave you this month, I reprint Andy's comments here, with his permission, for your consideration:

*I have probably been at model railroading for longer than most - started in about 1946.*

*The biggest mistake I have seen made over and over in this hobby is for one modeler to assume that every other modeler aspires to the same goals.*

*I made this mistake in my earlier years. And I am embarrassed to admit I lost a couple of good train buddies because of it. We were in the same hobby, the same scale, but on diverg-*

*ing tracks. Every model railroader has his/her own idea of what constitutes happiness in the hobby. Who am I to deride someone else's vision? As if there is some hierarchy of modeling visions, with tinplate at the bottom and "fine scale" at the top. This is elitism.*

*If a modeler creates highly detailed, "realistic" track, rails, ties, fishplates, scale ballast, and all the rest, should everyone be obliged to do the same? Or does the fact that he didn't spike down the rails on every tie make his trackwork "unrealistic?" Or is flex-track with plastic ties that have tie plates and spikes in every tie more "realistic?"*

*The same questions can be asked about scratchbuilding, soldering, painting, electronics, weathering, landscaping, and the entire wonderful spectrum of things we model railroaders do. None of us is good at all these things. But I am for anyone who loves real trains or model trains, however they decide to do it!*

*The point is, I think, most of us have our own special vision of model railroading nirvana. But they are all different visions. And if not everybody is as impressed with our vision as we ourselves are, well...so be it. That's why HoJo offers so many different flavors of ice cream.*

*If each of us had unlimited space, unlimited funds and unlimited time, do you suppose every one of our layouts would end up being the same exact "paradise" layout? I doubt it (but boy, wouldn't it be swell to find out?).*

*- Andy*

