



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

AP Program Changes Announced

By Frank Koch

As the AP program has evolved, the requirements in several categories have been adjusted and changed, for example, Merit Award scoring was adjusted in 1995, and changes were made to the Author Certificate requirements in the late 1990s.

However, there has not been concerted effort to ensure that all forms are consistent with the requirements. As we've worked with the requirements and answered member questions, we've uncovered several areas that can benefit from clarification and improved consistency – three of them are discussed here.

The NMRA approved these modifications during the mid-year meeting in January 2006. We will now make the necessary modifications in the appropriate forms and add notations to the requirements.

1. The revised Author requirements allow Volunteer credits for additional presentations of a clinic after the first one is claimed for Author credit. The Volunteer requirements do not mention this option. The Volunteer requirements identify credits for open house and modular layout participation in NMRA events and the BSA merit badge program; however, the Record and Validation forms do not show these options. The "checklist" provided as a member service has not been updated to reflect changes in the requirements. The BOT has approved minor changes to the Volunteer requirements and forms to recognize these changes, and the "checklist" will be made internally consistent.

2. Clarification of "scratchbuilding." Some members and judges have incorrectly interpreted "scratchbuilt" as earning at least 13.5 out of the possible 15 points (90% of the available points). This is not consistent with the published Judging Guidelines. There are actually two separate and somewhat independent determinations that

must be made in assessing scratchbuilding during AP judging.

The first is the "yes/no" determination whether the model can be considered scratchbuilt. A model is considered scratchbuilt if at least 90% of the model's pieces/parts (other than those specifically exempted) are fabricated by the modeler. This is a quantitative assessment based on numbers of pieces.

The second aspect is the scratchbuilding score, according to the schedule contained in the Judging Guidelines. The scoring matrix shows that a simple model that is completely (100%) scratchbuilt can earn only 10 points. The scratchbuilding score is a combination of quantitative extent and qualitative difficulty and complexity. We should note that there can be additional "bonus" scratchbuilding points awarded (as long as the total scratchbuilding score does not exceed 15) if the modeler scratchbuilds any of the specifically exempted parts.

The appropriate changes and comments will be added to the judging guidelines and as notes in the requirements and Scoring Sheets.

3. The growth of DCC control systems confuses some members since the requirements were written in the context of DC and early command control systems. Only two sections in the Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical requirements (Section A, items #1 and #6) might be considered DC specific/limiting, and two minor additions make them compatible with both DC and DCC type systems while maintaining the intent of the requirements. The BOT has accepted these changes as noted below and we will make the appropriate changes to the requirements and forms.

Item #1 calls for "five electrical blocks" – a necessity in DC operation to meet the overall requirements for simultaneous and independent operation of two trains. DCC enables this, but separate blocks are generally used only for

troubleshooting. The following change in item #1 recognizes both types of control and keeps the spirit of the requirement:

Item #1 - For conventional DC wiring (non-command control), five electrical blocks that can be controlled independently. For command control wiring (DCC, TMCC, and others), sufficient gaps and switches to maintain polarity, phase if needed, and troubleshooting.

Item #6 calls for a power supply with voltmeters and ammeters. These are relevant in DC operation, but have limited application in DCC systems during operation. The following changes are made to reflect today's control systems which already contain built-in safety features. With more and more locomotives being sold only as DCC ready, it is not as practical to measure performance with meters. A sentence will be added to the comments area to reflect the desirability of using meters to assess the performance of locomotives and to help in troubleshooting the layout.

Item #6 - One power supply with protective devices (short indicator and/or circuit breaker) to ensure safe operation.

Overall, the conclusion is that the AP requirements are still appropriate and require no overall modification. We continue to stress that the AP program is designed to be inclusive and that most of the requirements are not restrictive, but the opposite. The requirements are generous in the options of "...OR..." and "...demonstrate only three from the following list of many options, including 'others.'" Our goal is to be even more inclusive for all members who have an interest in the AP program.

As always, if you have questions about the requirements, contact your division or region AP Manager, or send me a message. I will answer as soon as time permits. ■

TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

Decoder Features New NMRA Bi-Directional Technology

Lenz Elektronik's GmbH Gold-JST decoder recently earned a warrant for conformance with applicable NMRA standards.

The Gold-JST decoder is first in their Gold Series decoders. The Gold-JST is delivered with a choice of the NMRA Medium plug (MP), no harness (JST alone), or wire harness (WH). In addition, the Gold-

JST decoder includes RailCom, the new NMRA bi-directional technology, which is a method of the decoder communicating information back to the Command Station. Additional new features provide an interface to a S.U.S.I. sound module, Asymmetrical DCC and Uninterruptible Signal Processing, USP. By adding a USP module, your locomotive can be fully controlled – even over dirty track

or dead frogs. The energy storage device, called Power 1, is not included with this decoder and is installed separately in the vehicle. Asymmetrical DCC allows for location-specific commands, using the Block Management Series from Lenz. The Mini versions for the GOLD are delivered with hard wire option (Gold Mini-W) or with the small NMRA six-pin connectors (Gold Mini-D). ■

Dave Lynam Earns MMR 354

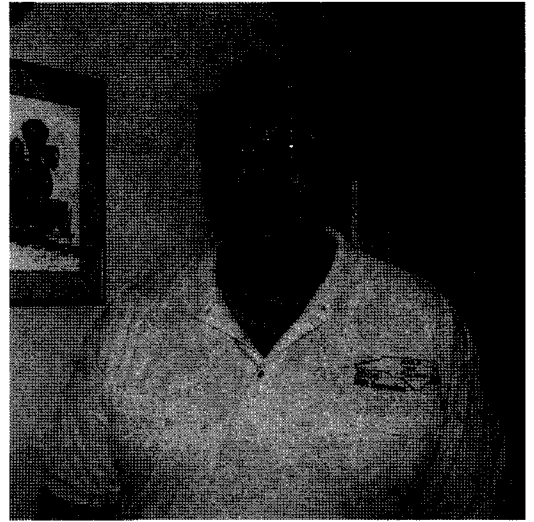
My entry into model railroading began as a young boy in Tampa, Florida. The garage in our back yard contained many items of interest. On the back wall of this garage were some old HO boxcars and refrigerated cars. They were quite beat up, some missing trucks, others missing wheel sets, but all sporting couplers that had a hook and a ring of metal. But most importantly, my family had a great deal to do with my entering the hobby.

My Uncle Bobby was a modeler. He became a deaf mute from a childhood illness and only my Dad and he could communicate with their own sign language. He would gladly show me his latest project and I would do my best to understand and share his enthusiasm. Although our conversations weren't totally clear, I conveyed my appreciation for his skills the best I knew how. And he always seemed to understand.

Then there was my Uncle Joe. He suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and was in pain all the time. However, he had a basement workshop full of HO trains. Knowing what a young boy liked, he would invite me down to the work-

shop and show off some of his past achievements from Bowser, Varney, and Penn-Line. Hundreds of parts separated into jars and boxes fueled my imagination. I'm sure if he had been able, he could have built a beautiful layout in that basement.

After visits like those, I was eager for my own HO trains. My first engine was a Christmas gift from Mom and Dad. It was a Santa Fe U25C by AHM with built-in sound! The sound was simply the gears and motor. I now needed a track, so Dad made a 4 x 6 table that hung on the wall and could be folded up when not in use. I wasn't into scenery, so this arrangement worked out fine. My brother, Bruce, was a modeler and taught me about airbrushing, detailing and scratchbuilding. Then came the discovery of a certain little hobby shop called Chester Holley's. There I saw my first brass engine, Marklin trains, Lionel, American Flyer, and tons of books, kits, and of course HO trains! I became acquainted with Dave Frary, John



Olsten, Malcolm Furlow, and of course John Allen, John Armstrong and Lynn Westcott.

All this fun was put on hold while I graduated from high school, did four and a half years in the Army, got married to my wonderful wife, Brenda, went into the family business, and dabbled in R/C airplanes. I later became a Registered Nurse. During school I learned

BULLETINBOARD

Achievement Program

NMRA AP Certificates

Report for April 2006

*Indicates first Certificate of Achievement

Golden Spike

Jack Metcalf, Chesterland, OH
 Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Edwin Locklin, Charlotte, NC
 Richard Perry, Collingswood, NJ
 Raymond Schumde, Durango, CO
 William Boyle, Jr., Tallahassee, FL
 Jeff Otto, Lakeville, MN
 Dennis Rogers, Blaine, MN
 Bill Schimmelman, Blaine, MN

Master Builder - Motive Power

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO*
 Alan Barnes, Gilbert, AZ

Master Builder - Cars

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Dave Roeder, Webster Groves, MO
 John MacGown, Valley Stream, NY

Master Builder - Structures

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Dave Roeder, Webster Groves, MO

Master Builder - Scenery

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Richard Newmiller, Dresher, PA
 Bill Griffith, Hendersonville, TN

Master Builder - Prototype Modeler

None this month

Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Dave Roeder, Webster Groves, MO
 Keith Shoneman, Acton, MA
 Bill Griffith, (Hendersonville, TN

Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical

Ivan Baugh, Louisville, KY
 Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Tom Fitzsimmons, Fishers, IN
 Bill Griffith, Hendersonville, TN

Chief Dispatcher

John Smith, Germantown, OH
 Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Dave Roeder, Webster Groves, MO

Association Official

Bob Johnson, Louisville, KY
 William Roberts, Carlsbad, NM*

Association Volunteer

Michael Berry, Louisville, KY
 Bob Johnson, Louisville, KY
 Linda Shaw, Omaha, NE
 Michael Thomas, St. Louis, MO
 Robert Price, Collingswood, NJ
 John Wallis, Apex, NC
 Richard Breton, Rochester, NH

Model Railroad Author

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO

Master Model Railroader

Jim EuDaly, Kansas City, MO
 Dave Roeder, Webster Groves, MO
 Richard Newmiller, Dresher, PA
 Alan Barnes, Gilbert, AZ
 Bill Griffith, Hendersonville, TN

Membership Thermometer

	Total	Count Change
Apr. 2005	19,284	.2
May 2005	19,404	.120
Jun. 2005	19,471	.67
Jul. 2005	19,389	.(82)
Aug. 2005	18,654	.(735)
Sep. 2005	19,298	.644
Oct. 2005	19,352	.54
Nov. 2005	19,399	.47
Dec. 2005	19,337	.(62)
Jan. 2006	19,579	.242
Feb. 2006	19,430	.(149)
Mar. 2006	19,442	.12
Apr. 2006	19,511	.69

about the dangers of skin cancer and how I was a perfect candidate. So, the planes were sold and trains again came back into the picture. I learned about the NMRA, and the Achievement Program. I discovered the Sunshine Region and got involved for the first time in a regional convention as model contest entrant. The people were great! Bill Porter showed me the ropes of filling out the forms. I made a lot of new friends and saw some awesome models.

When we moved to North Carolina, I checked on the NMRA Web site for a division in the

Raleigh area and discovered the Carolina Piedmont Division of the MER. The Division Superintendent was Dick Genthner, and he invited me to his operating group and the division meeting. Through this group of folks, I made many life-long friendships and was inspired to continue in the AP program. Three years ago, I was elected superintendent of the division. Last year, our division sponsored our first MER regional convention called "Rails to Raleigh."

All along the way were family, friends and mentors helping me improve my skills and

helping me to achieve my goal of MMR. A big thanks to my wife, Brenda, for her critical eye and support. And to all my buddies in the CPD13, thanks for all your support and encouragement. This hobby is fun, but sharing the hobby with others makes lifelong friendships and memories. Give it a try! You'll be a better modeler and gain friendships for a lifetime. I hold the following AP Certificates: Master Builder Cars, Master Builder Structures, Model Railroad Engineering-Civil and Electrical, Association Volunteer, Chief Dispatcher, and Model Railroad Author. 📖

Marlin Costello Earns MMR 368

Marlin Costello is a 61-year-old practicing trial lawyer and HO train hobbyist. As usual, career preempted his hobby for some years. Most notoriously in January 2006 his client, Clarence Ray Allen, made the national news by being executed for murder in California. Marlin Costello changed his practice to civil cases where he earned his first million-dollar verdict in the late 1980s. He continues a thriving practice to this day. He has taught trial practice to graduate attorneys at University of California, been president of the Fresno County Trial Lawyers and director of California Trial Lawyers.

As a youth, Marlin was a champion figure skater and then a skating instructor during college and law school. In middle age he became ski racer, competing with world-cup racers in slalom, giant slalom and downhill. He qualified as a US ski team level-3 coach and coached the Fresno State University's racing team. After a knee injury, he went into local theater performing on stage as actor, singer, magician and tap dancer.

Having left many of these high-energy pursuits behind, he returned to an age-appropriate activity (as we tell our grandchildren), the hobby of trains. He started in the mid 1950s with an American Flyer steam set. He learned early how to upgrade the couplers and change from hooks to knuckles. After a period of raising children and crashing airplane models, trains were rediscovered at a 1980s garage sale with a 4 x 8 plywood layout purchase.

From this he learned the folly of a 20% grade, overweathering and brass track. He next

suffered the slings and arrows of a daughter returning from college "What did you do to my room?" and a handy 12 x 12 experiment with the dreaded duckunder. Later, was a small apartment layout on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, and good practice in scenery and operations. In the early 90's he designed a couple of club layouts each at local museums, then another home bedroom layout.

The piece de resistance in 1999 was a 40 x 40 3-level, 1200-foot staging, operations-oriented layout for himself and many of his helpful and talented friends. The emphasis is on computer dispatching, DCC and switch list operation with 50-car trains along a Tehachapi loop.

He now enjoys monthly operations at home and at a couple of friends' layouts, and he hosts educational (work) sessions twice a week. His wife, Patricia's, excellent cooking keeps them returning.

He has multiple awards in photography at the national convention level and one photo is currently on the NMRA website. His photography also appeared in the August 2004 *Model Railroader*. He produced a 45-minute video on



yard design from single siding to 15-track ladders, which is available at the NMRA library. He was Daylight Division Member of the Year 2005, as all the really good modelers had already received the award years before.

Currently Marlin enjoys the final scenicking of his extensive layout. He is working on a "John Ford Movie Set" of Monument Valley, and a local feed mill in tight detail. Completed areas are Tehachapi Loop and Caliente Loop with photographic placement of colors, trees and bushes.

He has awards in Motive Power, Scenery, Civil and Electrical Engineering, Dispatcher, Volunteer and Author. 📖