

# NMRA BULLETIN

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rev 9/24/25

# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

## NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

**AUGUST 2025**

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### Australasian Region

Dale Richards, Ngunnawal, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

### Mid-Eastern Region

Dylan Petro, Fort Mill, South Carolina

### Southeastern Region

Richard Gross, Marietta, Georgia

## MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

### Australasian Region

Craig Veitch, Bemboka, New South Wales, Australia

### Lone Star Region

Steve Jackobs, Austin, Texas  
Cowles Darrell, Watauga, Texas  
John Garfield, Burleson, Texas

## MASTER BUILDER - CARS

### Lone Star Region

Steve Jackobs, Austin, Texas

### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

## MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### Pacific Northwest Region

Charles Lee, Puyallup, Washington

## MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

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Jim Archer, Lewisville, Texas  
Steve Jackobs, Austin, Texas

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### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### North Central Region

John A. Campbell, MD, Traverse City, Michigan

### Pacific Northwest Region

Charles Lee, Puyallup, Washington

### Pacific Southwest Region

Joel Morse, Garden Grove, California

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### Niagara Frontier Region

William H. Sharpe, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### Northeastern Region

Mark W. Moritz, MD, Morristown, New Jersey

### Pacific Northwest Region

Charles Lee, Puyallup, Washington

## MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### Pacific Northwest Region

Charles Lee, Puyallup, Washington

### Rocky Mountain Region

Doug Jolley, Riverton, Utah

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### Lone Star Region

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John Garfield, Burleson, Texas

### Mid-Central Region

Dave Wetterstroem, Galena, Ohio  
Tom McInerney, Avon Lake, Ohio

### Pacific Northwest Region

Lee Calkins, Post Falls, Idaho

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Eric Zimmerman, Dayton, Ohio

### Niagara Frontier Region

Ronald Johnson, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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John Kathage, Ebbw Vale, Queensland, Australia

Luke Kathage, Ebbw Vale, Queensland, Australia

### Mid-Eastern Region

Thom Radice, Long Branch, New Jersey

### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### Pacific Northwest Region

Jim Elder, Olympia, Washington

## MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

### Mid-Central Region

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### Mid-Eastern Region

Mark Neiting, Chesapeake, Virginia

### Niagara Frontier Region

Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

### Rocky Mountain Region

Doug Jolley, Riverton, Utah

### Southeastern Region

Kinzer Hurt, Greenville, South Carolina

## MASTER MODEL RAILROADER

MMR® #802 Darrell Cowles, Watauga, Texas

MMR® #803 William H. Sharpe, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

MMR® #804 Tom McInerney, Avon Lake, Ohio

MMR® #805 Patrick Rivard, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

MMR® #806 John Garfield, Burleson, Texas

MMR® #807 Steve Jackobs, Austin, Texas

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 Ray Persing at [achiev@nmra.org](mailto:achiev@nmra.org).

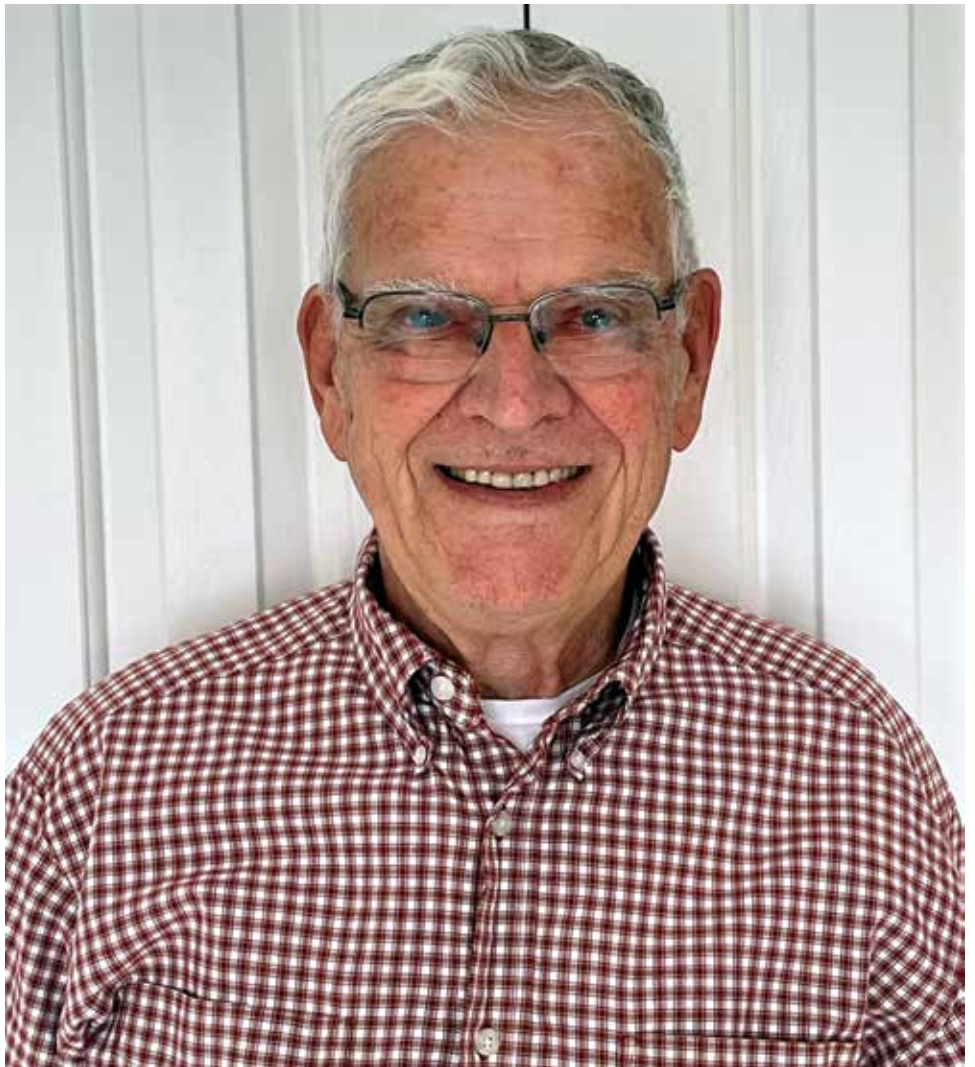
## ROBERT BELT

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #795

**M**y first exposure to trains was growing up in Red Oak, Iowa, along the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy main line running between Council Bluffs and Corning, Iowa. I fondly remember the sound and look of steam in the winter months. I vividly remember Dad taking me to the railroad station and watching the *Burlington Zephyr* fly by. Another memory in Red Oak was of visiting Bernard Corbin's basement, where he displayed many of his scratchbuilt O-gauge CB&Q engines. Unfortunately, I was more interested in model airplanes at an early age and didn't have any model trains. That was until the mid-1960s, when I browsed in a hobby shop in Redwood City, California, and found a Canadian National reefer kit that caught my eye. A year later, in our Palo Alto rental house, I began the first layout of the Belton & Hurlee Railroad, featuring the theme of the California foothills in the mid-1950s era. A few years later, in San Pedro, California, I built the second version. It was then that I joined a railroad club in Lynwood, California, at Bill Webb's home, and joined the NMRA for the first time. Together with another friend, a Central Railroad of New Jersey enthusiast, we embarked on a joint scratch-built project — Raritan & Atlantic reefers. These were built up with a wood interior frame, scribed wood siding, and many Cal Scale and other parts. All lettering was individual dry transfers. This same friend was a regular operator on Whit Tower's layout, which I had the great privilege of visiting. The NMRA was starting to really get my attention. I did attend a Pacific Coast Region convention in Los Angeles, where the original "time saver" layout was featured. Our Lynwood group also visited the Pasadena Model Railroad club, where I learned about the standards that the club applied to every piece of rolling stock before it was allowed on their layout.

With another military move to Fairfax, Virginia, my interest in model railroading waned somewhat. However, I did have a modest layout in the crawl space (really, the "crawl") of our home. I did get a chance to visit John Armstrong's home before my



NMRA membership lapsed. Yet another military move to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio happened in the mid-1970s. The leftover passenger yard of the Fairfax, Virginia, layout occupied a space in the lower level of a split-level home, but was never fully operational. However, interest was building, and I had the opportunity to visit several outstanding layouts in the Dayton, Ohio, area, including Allen McClelland's Virginian & Ohio layout in Miamisburg.

After retiring from the Air Force, our family moved to Lexington, Kentucky, where I started a third version of the B&H — but this time, a layout suspended from the garage ceiling. I couldn't stand the four feet of "empty" space above the garage door — a 12-foot ceiling in the garage. At about the same time, I renewed my NMRA membership and joined Division 10 of the Mid-Central Region. I had the privilege of serving that club as Assistant Super

and Superintendent along with chairing the Clinic Committee for the 2015 MCR Convention in Lexington. The B&H was also featured as one of the layout tours for the event.

Another highlight of activities in Division 10 was the development of T-TRAK modules and displays. Together with Bruce DeMaeyer and others, we organized a "Trains Day at the Library" in Lexington (pre-COVID) as part of our non-profit status. That has grown to an annual event and has been featured at several local area libraries in surrounding counties. We added "Junior Engineer" certificates for kids operating on the layout.

All this rambling is really meant to feature those who inspired me early on. Joe Nichols, Sr., at the Memphis SER convention really sparked my interest. My mentors were MMRs Pete Birdsong and Larry Smith, members of Division 10 MCR. Both introduced me to the Achievement



Program and helped me achieve my first AP in Civil. The Cars Merit from the RARX reefers mentioned above was joined by a Structures Merit, both from evaluations at the 2015 Convention. The Structure Merit was a 1st place tie with Larry Smith, MMR — an absolute honor for a beginner. Along the way, I've added Merits in Motive Power (2) for a scratch-built brass McKeen car and a kitbashed Yakima Valley Transit Co. traction motor. Both have garnered MCR Convention 1st Place awards. The YVTCO was featured in

a construction article in the October 2022 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

What I'm really trying to convey is that model railroading is fun and that the Achievement Program has been my challenge to learn and apply new techniques and improve my modeling skills. Not only that, but the construction efforts have been relaxing and provided many hours of quiet, stress-relieving time in the workshop. A final note about NMRA membership — the friends and fellowship developed over the years have been incredible.

**Certificates Earned**  
**Robert Belt, MMR® #795**

**Model Railroad Engineer – Civil**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Association Official**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Master Builder – Cars**

## MMR EARNED

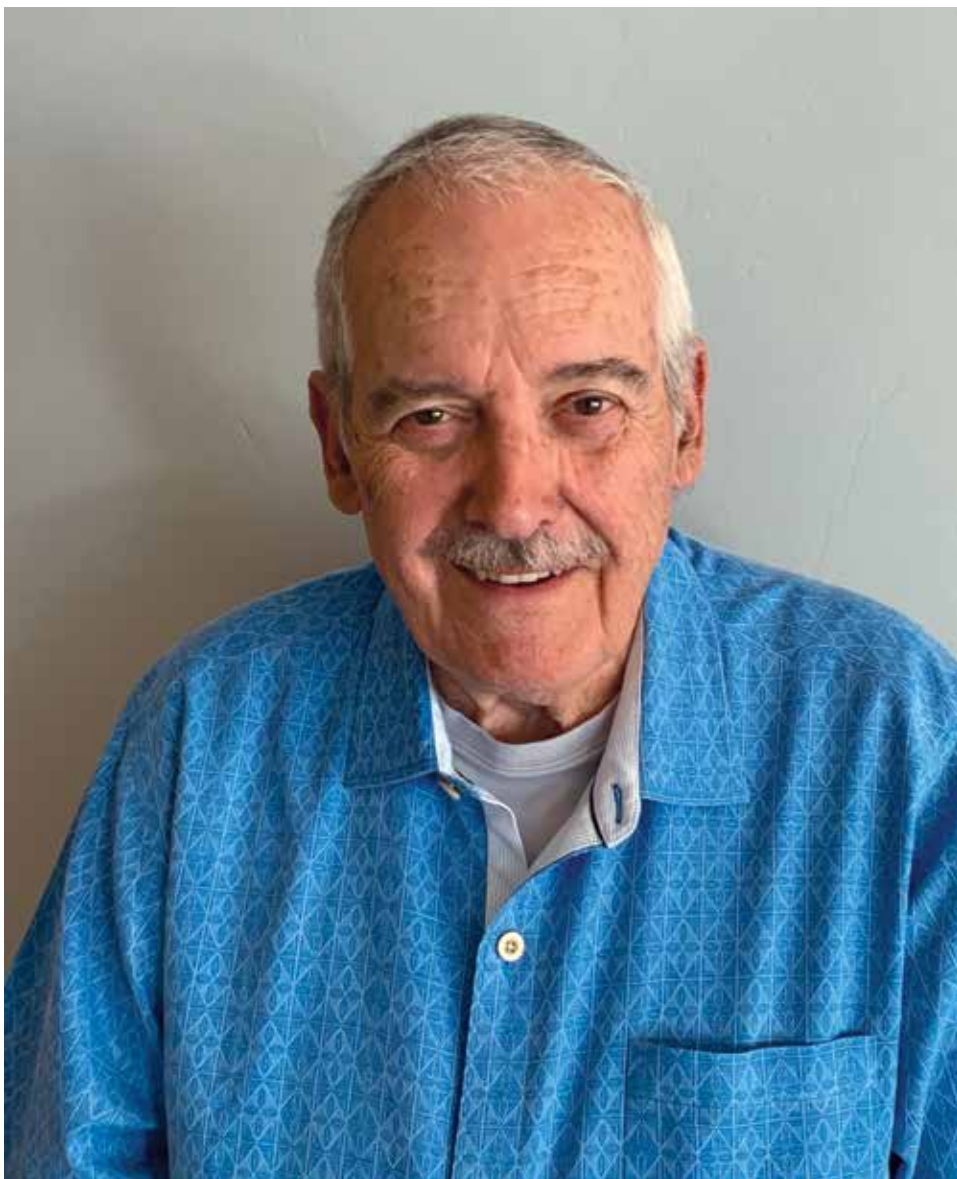
### LEE CHESSMAN

EARNs

**MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #789**

**L**ike many of our fellow modelers, I began to appreciate trains at an early age when I received a model train set under the Christmas tree. My modeling in HO scale came several years later when I constructed a modest layout in the attic of my parents' home. Life, school, and marriage delayed my full-throttle entry into the hobby. However, I finally built a decent-sized layout when we bought a house with a basement. That layout lasted until I moved to an area with 25 acres of outdoor space, where I built a railroad in 1½-inch scale. I'd also moved into a city with a model railroad club, so I joined the club and enjoyed both aspects of this hobby. Several years later, I expanded my repertoire by joining a newly formed group called Free-Mo, which was also in HO scale. Since then, I've participated in many Free-Mo events.

During this time, I was also an NMRA member, and I had recently focused my efforts on attaining the coveted Master Model Railroader designation with the help of fellow club members and other MMRs. Achieving this designation



**Certificates Earned**  
**Lee Chessman, MMR® #789**

**Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**  
**Model Railroad Engineer – Civil**  
**Master Builder – Structures**  
**Master Builder – Cars**  
**Master Builder – Scenery**  
**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Association Volunteer**

at such a late stage in my life has been a long-time goal. I am grateful for the encouragement and support received from my fellow modelers. This award represents the value of participation and en-

gagement among like-minded modelers. I am honored and thankful for NMRA's Achievement Program.

## PATRICK FLASH

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #809

**L**ike most model railroaders my age, I started with Lionel O27. I received my first set when I was about 10 or 11 years old. Later, I traded my O27 stuff for some HO-scale equipment at a local train store. My dad built a 4x8 table for me, and with the help of a neighbor, he used a giant rectifier and an old AC transformer to create a DC power supply with a huge rheostat for speed control and a DPDT switch for direction. The layout I tackled was from a *Boy's Life* article, possibly from December 1958. Since my dad would not let me cut the expensive plywood cookie-cutter style to make the grades, I had to make them from cardboard salvaged from a refrigerator box.

During my first two years of high school, I was away at a seminary, and not much progress was made on the layout. However, when I returned home for my junior year, I began working on the layout again. By the time I left for graduate school, I actually had a few trains running, some buildings, and dyed green sawdust for scenery.

Graduate school in chemistry led to a complete cessation of model railroading activity until my last year. I had just married my wife, Sally, and on our honeymoon, we visited the Hobby House in my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. I was looking at an N-scale Rapido set of "old-time" trains, and my new wife encouraged me to buy it. My efforts at building an N-scale layout during that last year went nowhere. I still have that N-scale engine and old-time cars. The engine has two speeds: off and 300 mph.

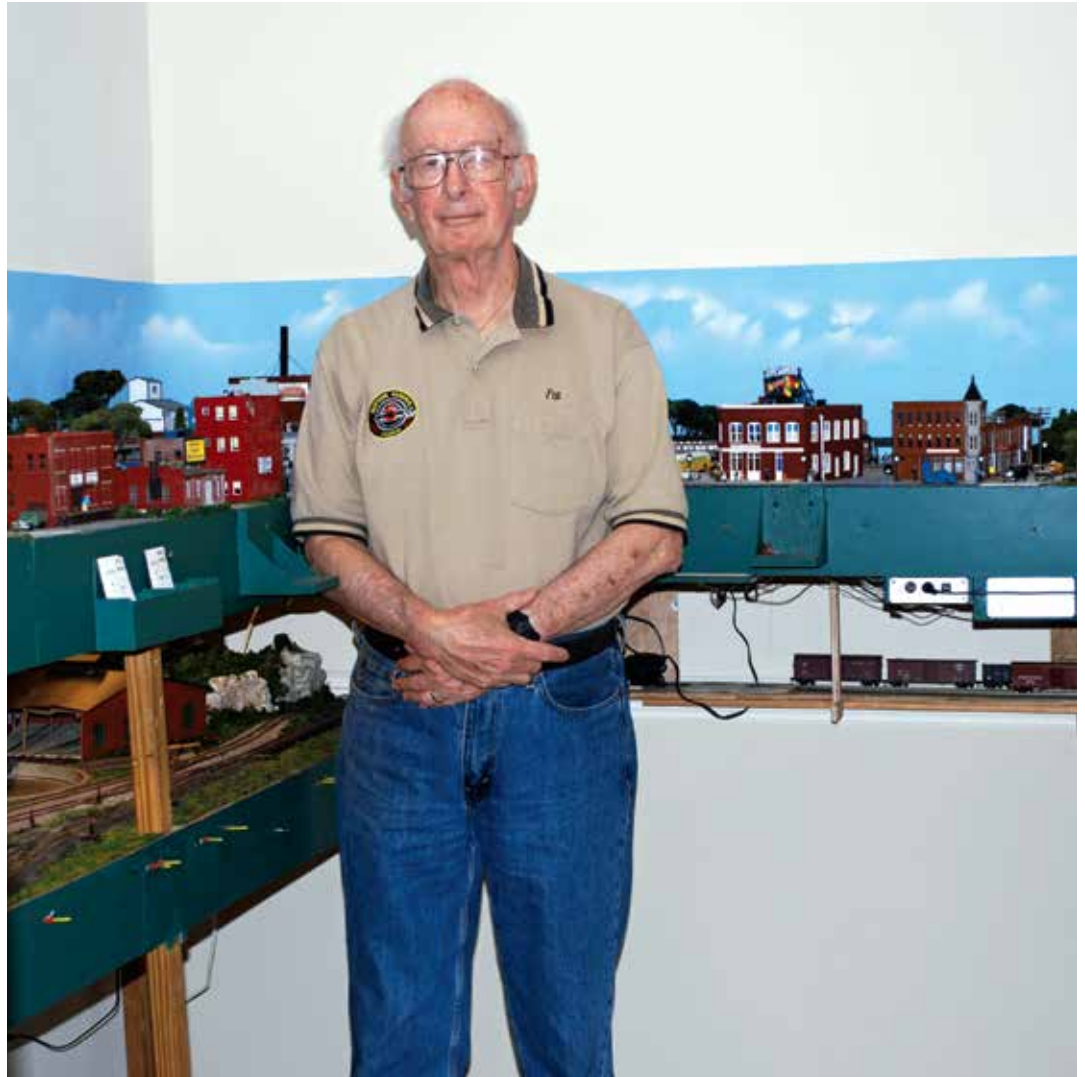
Next, I made some half-hearted efforts to build a small switching layout in a spare bedroom in the 1980s, but I had to

dismantle the layout each time we hosted a foreign exchange student. Not much was accomplished.

Then, in 1990, we finally water-proofed our 1880s basement, and I began my first real HO layout. It was also in that year that I joined the Tuesday Night Trains group (TNT) in Ashtabula County, Ohio. The group had over 20 guys interested in model trains and four

18 months, we were operating a DC block system with two plug-in throttles built from an article in *Model Railroader* and two Aristo Craft walk-around throttles. The layout even had some buildings and scenery.

Then, in 2001, we moved 15 miles to a ranch house with a real basement. Again, with the help of the TNT guys, we built stud walls, insulated, wired, and



layouts doing operations nights. What a fabulously supportive group of guys.

With TNT support and labor, my layout construction on the new Johnstown and Crystal Lake Railroad progressed rapidly. Fluorescent lighting was installed, and I built four 8-foot x 24-inch sections of L-girder tables, connecting them to a staging yard and a peninsula with a 180-degree loop. The benchwork was built with the idea that it would be movable, if and when the time came. Within

drywalled along two walls of the basement. We reconfigured the L-girder sections, added a longish double-sided peninsula with four hidden staging tracks in the middle, and constructed a helix to connect the two levels of trackwork. Unfortunately, the turnback peninsula on the old layout wouldn't make it up the narrow stairs of the old house and was demolished. And it had the most completed scenery!



I planned to go with DCC on the new layout and opted for a Lenz system because their phone-based walk-around throttles were more affordable. In retrospect, the beeps from the phone throttles drove the guys up the wall. However, in short order, we were back into operations and continued to work on the scenery.

A final move to a condo in Maryland in 2016 saw that layout dismantled. Four sections were relocated to Maryland and reconfigured in our condo dining room, utilizing a helix to connect the now double-decked layout pieces. At Christmas time, visitors ask, "Does the train garden come down after the holidays?" Nope! And my wife brags that we are the only condo of 200-plus in our complex with a train layout in the dining room. Now she realizes what she inadvertently started with her suggestion to buy that train set on our honeymoon.

When I retired in 2004, I started spending the long winters in a small condo in Florida. Bored, I decided I needed an N-scale layout for winter enjoyment. What began as a small N-scale layout on

a 36-inch hollow-core door expanded to an 11-foot-long "monster."

My journey to MMR began serendipitously when I joined Scale Rails of Southwest Florida in 2010. A few years later, some of the members were working toward their AP certificates for Dispatcher. I mentioned that I had many hours of operations documented from the TNT group, had also drawn my track plan, and developed a schedule and string diagram. Wow! My documents were submitted, and I received my first (and what I thought would probably be the last) certificate.

Then the two MMRs in the Scale Rails group began to encourage me to pursue the electrical and civil certificates. I haltingly started scratchbuilding my three-track arrangements and began to focus my work on the condo layout to fulfill requirements in those two areas. In 2022, the MER evaluators visited and approved my Civil and Electrical, and I wound up earning Scenery on the same evening. I was stunned!

Documenting many volunteer hours back in Div 5 of the MCR seemed to take forever, but Volunteer and then Author followed. Cars was really a challenge, but persistence paid off, and I'm finally there.

I want to thank Gary Shaffer, MMR of TNT and Div 5 MCR, for his inspiration. I also appreciate Kurt Thompson, MMR of the MER, for his strong encouragement along the way. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to all the TNT guys and spouses for over 25 years of camaraderie.

You can explore more on my layouts at my webpage: <http://www.jclrr.42web.io/?i=2>

**Certificates Earned**  
**Patrick Flash, MMR® #809**

**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical**  
**Model Railroad Engineer-Civil**  
**Master Builder-Scenery**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Model Railroad Author**  
**Master Builder-Cars**

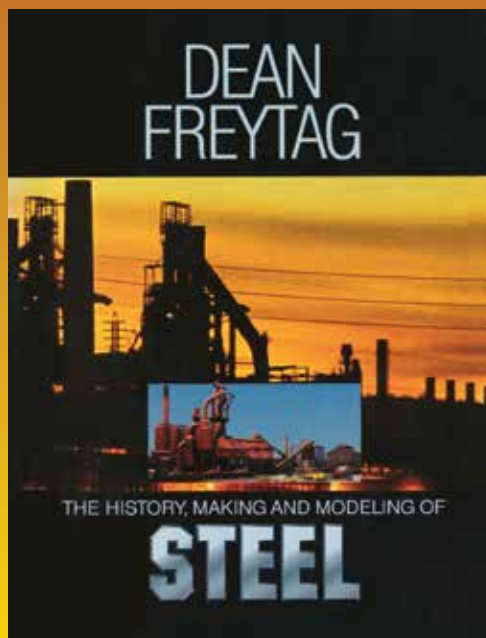
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