



TOM BRUEGGEMAN EARNS MMR #460

Seventy-two years ago, I was introduced to the magnificent world of model railroading. On my first Christmas, I received a Milwaukee Road Hiawatha from Santa. That was the beginning of my involvement in the hobby. Before I was born, my dad belonged to The Model Railroad Club of Milwaukee. I can remember looking over my dad's shoulder watching him build models. He could never get anything accomplished while I was around. After I went to bed, he would go back to the basement and get a lot more done.

In 1953, my dad was transferred to Cincinnati. Moving into a smaller home, we did not have the room for our O gauge equipment. We had a large O gauge outside

third rail layout to coincide with The Model Railroad Club of Milwaukee. My dad and I made the decision to give up O gauge and go into HO.

When I was a young boy, you could always find me at The Milwaukee Road station in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, a Milwaukee suburb. Between trains, the station master gave me some odd jobs, mostly sweeping floors or putting carbon paper between train forms. I always got paid in candy bars. I also took the mail pouch to the doodlebug that was eastbound to downtown Milwaukee.

After college, I worked for a company that built hydraulic and pneumatic cylinders. I designed cylinders for the nuclear power station industry. I also hold several patents with this company. After 14 years, I made a change and worked as a designer for a medical company until retirement.

My wife of 47 years, Connie, and I have two daughters, Michelle, and Cara. Michelle is involved in the Indiana Transportation Museum. She does all the procurement and a lot of hands-on work on restoring the museum's Nickel Plate Mikado 587. Her son, Nathan, is ITM's gofer. He also enjoys railroading. It must be in the water, or maybe it's inbred.

In 1964, I joined The Cincinnati Railroad Club. I was vice president for 20 years. I now serve on the board of directors. During the time when we had steam excursions with Norfolk Southern, I was in charge of organizing all the car hosts and their duties. In 1992, we moved into Tower "A" at Cincinnati Union Terminal, which was the main control tower for the entire Union Terminal complex during the steam and early diesel era. I was involved in the restoration of the room, and thanks to our excursions and some outside help, we were able to do a first-class job on the project. The room and our library, plus other parts of our facilities were repainted in their original colors.

Soon after marriage, we bought a small house. I didn't have the room for a good-size layout, but I thought I would give it a go. After a few years of operating with large locomotives and 15-car trains, the layout didn't look right. A friend of mine knew I wasn't happy with the layout, and he suggested going into HON-3. I already had some locomotives and rolling stock, and after making several trips to Colorado, I was hooked again. I now have a HON-3 layout that I've been working on for the past several years — loving every minute of it. My 19x27 layout is based on Denver & Rio Grande Western's Marshall Pass. It has some logging at both the east and west ends, where the log cars are transferred to D&RGW motive power to be taken to the sawmill. I now have planted more than 1,000 trees and I've not even put a dent in it. I'm now in the final stage of detailing the scenery.

All but three structures on my layout are scratchbuilt. I followed either D&RGW or Colorado & Southern prototype, and have built more than 20 structures following this practice. I didn't want too many because I wanted the feeling of Colorado's wide-open spaces.

About 40 years ago, a friend painted a brass locomotive for me. As I watched him paint it, I was thinking, "Why can't I do this?" I purchased an airbrush and compressor, and from then on I turned my paint-

ing skills into a small business. With all the paint jobs, I don't have the time I would like to spend on my layout.

I also enjoy super-detailing locomotives and rolling stock. Even though ON-30 is not a prototype scale, I'm working on a Bachmann ON-30 2-6-0 to resemble a C&S Ten Wheeler. I also built a little critter entirely from scratch out of styrene.

I'm going to submit these two locomotives plus one for the Motive Power Achievement Program Certificate. I am also working on meeting the requirements for Prototype Scene and Author certificates.

For the MMR award, I have earned Master Builder-Scenery, Association Volunteer, Chief Dispatcher, Master Builder-Cars, Master Builder-Structures, Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical, and Model Railroad Engineer-Civil.

A couple years ago, I started to volunteer with the Boy Scouts so they may receive their railroad merit badge. The sessions are only three Saturdays a year, but very rewarding. It's good to see there are boys interested in the model railroad hobby.

The camaraderie with fellow NMRA members is priceless. Over the years, I have met many outstanding modelers who have become close friends. I feel honored to be in a fraternity with some of the greatest modelers in the hobby. For me, model railroading is the most relaxing and satisfying hobby; but at times it can be a little challenging. That's what makes model railroading so great!