

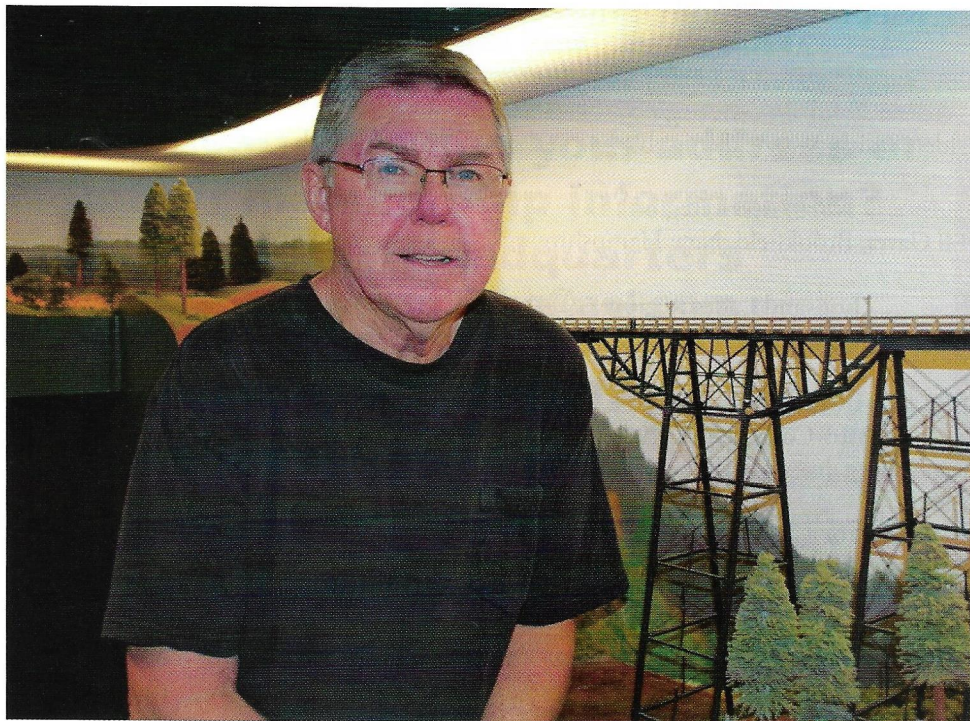
DICK ROBERTS EARNS MMR # 522

**It's All About Teamwork!**

When I was presented with my MMR certificate, I told the audience that this might be a personal award, but it was definitely a team effort; a team that stretched over many years and many miles. My journey to MMR was prolonged, but rewarding, and along the way I made many great friends and was inspired by their efforts.

I was a “lone wolf” modeler for many years, building layouts based on my model collection rather than any particular prototype or location. However, that all changed in 1978, when I was given a copy of Gerald Best’s book, *Nevada County Narrow Gauge*. As I read it I realized that this was the perfect combination of all of my modeling interests wrapped up in one prototype, thus began a 40-year journey of designing and building various iterations of this railroad. While the original Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad was indeed narrow gauge, I chose to model it as a standard gauge road in HO scale to accommodate the interchange traffic.

Early on, while planning my new layout, I was introduced to Jack Burgess and was given a tour of his famous Yosemite Valley Railroad. That meeting and experience opened my eyes to the efficiency of a multi-level layout. About this same time, I was also introduced to Jim Providenza, who lived close to me and was part of a round-robin group building and operating layouts. The other key members were Dave Biondi, John Blunden, Steve Cavanaugh, and Jim Dias. We would meet on Thursday nights and work on each other’s layouts. We shared a good synergy, and each contributed their skills to the projects at hand. My layout made much progress with the encouragement of these fellow modelers,



and my modeling skills were enhanced by their helpful guidance. At this time, I was living in Northern California and had given no thought to having to move, but...

In 1997, due to work changes, my wife and I relocated to Southern California — a move that required the dismantling of my existing layout. This relocation proved to be a blessing in disguise. My wife insisted that we find a house with room for the trains. This led us to design and build our current home with a dedicated “train room.” Having the space available for a new layout, and having to wait nine months to complete construction, I had time to ponder my “ultimate” layout. I established several criteria based on my experience with the round-robin group and designed a “mushroom-style” layout that met all of my criteria for operations and access.

The new Nevada County Railroad is a good example of “if you build it, they will come”. As I was working on the new layout, I met several modelers in the San Diego area, the first was Jim Hanna. He had an operating layout in a purpose-built room and was conducting regular operating sessions. Jim had a small crew, including Don Mitchell, Dick Trotter, and Robin Becker, all of whom have influenced my modeling skills and the development of the new Nevada County Railroad. At a layout open house, I met Ben Sevier, an officer in the PSR, who encouraged me to open the layout for operating sessions. We have been

conducting monthly operating sessions for several years now and have enjoyed the camaraderie associated with operations. The layout has gradually improved with the help and influence of these members, as have my modeling efforts.

Throughout this journey I have succeeded in completing seven AP Certificates: Author, Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Scenery, Structures, Dispatcher, and Motive Power. This is a task I would never have undertaken or completed if not for the encouragement of many of the PSR members, including MMR’s Rodger Gredvig, Paul Schmidt, and Don Ham, with a special thanks to Gordon Miller for giving me a kick start. It was definitely a team effort!

And it would have been impossible without the encouragement and support of my wife, Pat. While she doesn’t share my love for trains per se, she is usually the first one to usher visitors out to the train room for a tour. I’m looking forward to enjoying my hobby even more and being able to help others on their way to MMR!

**AP Certificates**

**Model Railroad Author**  
**Model Railroad Engineer—Civil**  
**Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical**  
**Master Builder—Scenery**  
**Master Builder—Structures**  
**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Master Builder—Motive Power**

**Not getting the  
 NMRA  
 eBULLETIN?**

Update your email address at  
[http://www.nmra.org/  
 member/content/  
 member-info-update](http://www.nmra.org/member/content/member-info-update)