

MMR EARNED

JIM REARDON EARNS MMR #519

Credit photo to M.C. Reardon

Sixty years have come and gone since that dreary, Oregon Christmas dawn when I pulled the wrapping from a large package and spotted the big Lionel 'L'. As I reflect these long years since, on the parental love that offered nearly a week's wages to provide such a gift, I still appreciate their sacrifice. While no longer with us to share my work, Mom and Dad's love and support are reflected in each model I build today.

The NMRA recently recognized some of my work with awards for Structures, Electrical Engineering, Scenery, Motive Power, Civil Engineering, Cars, and Prototype models. I received Golden Spike and Association Volunteer Awards in the mid-1990s.

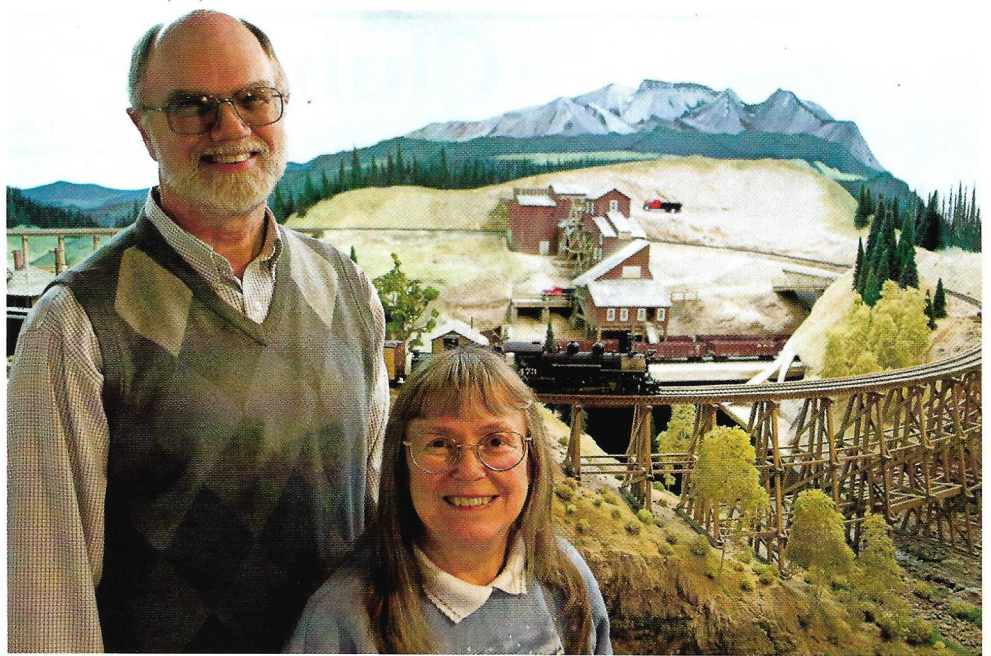
While recognition of one's modeling skills is always appreciated, there is much more to the story.

Let me begin with a plug for Charlie Comstock and the online magazine that he and Joe Fugate created. Charlie convinced me that others might enjoy seeing my work and filmed the railroad. (It's easiest to use "Jim Reardon's On3" to see the video, but it's on the modelrailroadhobbyist.com site; altogether quite a nice online magazine.)

It was Charlie who encouraged me to apply for the MMR program.

While model railroading has certainly offered a respite from the madness of the workday world, my wife, Rose, and I count as blessings the numerous model railroaders who have become our friends. The skills developed in a variety of disciplines while building models have allowed me opportunities to also help others outside the hobby. Many Jobs' Daughters, DeMolay Sweethearts, or Rainbow Girls have brought damaged crowns or tiaras to be re-soldered. Our church called upon us to construct a model of the 1851 Pioneer Church that once occupied its current site. At a scale of 2.5 inches to the foot, it is still the largest model project we've created.

Recently, a youngster from our church visited our railroad with his father. As young Jeremy dashed elatedly from scene to scene with unabashed excitement, I could not help but remember a renewed friendship and a conversation back in 1987 between Arnold, the onetime owner of our local hobby shop, and myself. Arnold had stopped by to visit and was admiring my recent NMRA National-winning D&RGW short caboose.



While being, in my opinion, a fine modeler himself, Arnold said, "Jim, your models make mine look like something a kid built." I answered, "Arnold, let me tell you a story about a little kid who walked into your hobby shop years ago. He heard you and some friends talking about a derailment that occurred on your railroad at a recent operating session. You spoke of 40-plus freight cars and multiple locomotives daisy chained through

tunnels and across scenery and yards." Arnold chuckled as he recalled the mess.

"Well, anyway, that little kid stood there captivated as he listened to the tale of laughter and frustration as you and your friends spent another hour putting it all back. It was then that little kid wished to himself that some day he might be as good a modeler as you and your friends. I know this to be true, Arnold, because that little kid was me."

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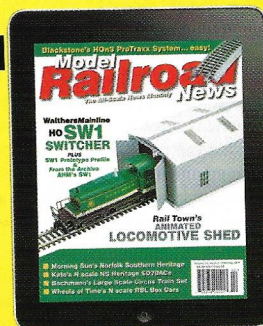
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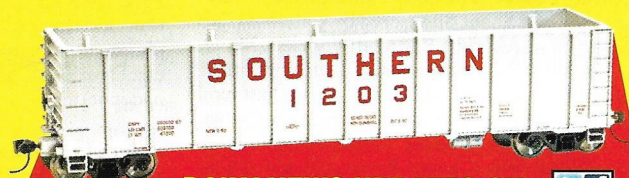
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