

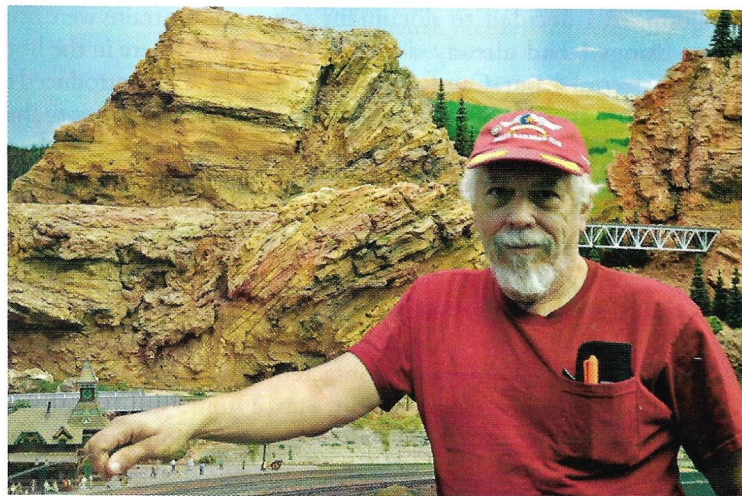
I was born March 30, 1947. I still remember steam engines on the Missouri Pacific from when I was three years old. My dad would take me down to the MP depot when he got off work, and we would watch the MP passenger train pull into the station in Fort Smith, Arkansas. A Pacific class locomotive would come across the Arkansas river bridge and pull around one leg of the wye and back down to the passenger station. The crew then uncoupled the locomotive from the train, and pulled back up to the water tank. I remember how “alive” the engine seemed to be as we gazed up at it, the roar of the fire and the steam coming out everywhere. On my third birthday, my grandfather gave me a Lionel train set with a Pacific type locomotive, and my lifelong hobby began.

Dad and I built several Lionel layouts in the garage. As I neared my teens, Dad started losing interest, probably because of his work. At age 12, I traded all the Lionel for HO equipment and built my first layout in the garage. It was quite small, a 1x8-foot board attached to the wall with a drop-down piece of plywood that had a return loop on it.

I remember my first HO scale locomotive. It was an Athearn Southern Pacific GP7 in the Black Widow scheme with the (rubber band) hi-fi drive.

As I got older, I became interested in cars, and my dad gave me my first car at the age of 16. Never satisfied with how fast it went, I started hopping it up. On that first car, I went through three engines, 22 transmissions, and two rear ends. Most of the time the car wasn't running because it was blown up, but if I had the money to repair it, I could fix it blind folded — I had done it so many times.

I got married two months after turning 19 and joined the navy reserves to keep from getting drafted. I went to US Navy Gun Fire Control “A” school, where I learned basic electronics. I was stationed in Japan and Okinawa after “A” school. My wife traveled with me, and we had a long honeymoon courtesy of Uncle Sam. After serving my time in the Navy, we moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma. We had two children there. I built three layouts while living in Tulsa, one N gauge and two HO. We did some missionary work for a year in Israel and South Africa and finally moved back to Fort Smith, Arkansas. I met



some really good modelers in Fort Smith and learned how to make scenery on the club layout. I started building an HOn3 layout in a spare bedroom, not knowing that my third son was on his way — I lost my layout room. This caused me to enclose my carport to start another layout. One of my first layouts to occupy this space was an On3 layout. I also used the utility room, which was connected to the carport, and added an additional 10x10-foot space to the layout area.

I really liked working in 1/48th scale, but at the time I wasn't making very much money — O scale was much more expensive than HO scale. I went back to HO scale and built a modern diesel era layout. I had this layout about 90 percent finished scenically

and it was fully operational. We had many operating sessions on this layout.

Sometime in the late 1970s, early 1980s, I got interested in Sn3 and sold my HO layout to a friend of mine and started building an Sn3 layout. I had only started to build a Sn3 layout when we moved to Fort Worth, Texas. I modeled the Colorado & Southern narrow gauge for 14 years in Sn3.

Somewhere during this time my sons got me interested in dirt bikes, and we spent a lot of time riding together. I met another friend who liked to ride, and we went to Colorado and rode in the mountains, which was really fun. I am still in love with Colorado.

In the mid-1990s I joined a model railroad club called the Mid City's Rail Barrons. After about two months with the Mid City's club, there was a reorganization with a new name, the Texas Western Model Railroad Club. I was voted in as the second president of the Texas Western and served three terms as president. I also served as vice president for several years. In 2006, we became a 100% NMRA club.

In 2009, one member, John T Bailey, got the club interested in the Achievement Program, so I decided to document the many things I had already done on the Texas Western Layout. Our fully scenicked layout covers about 3,500 square feet and is all DCC with detection on all mainline blocks for signaling. We have open house every Saturday during Model Railroad Month (November) for the public and have as many as 1,500 people visit to view the layout. After looking at what I had personally done and filling out the AP forms, I had enough for six AP Certificates. John Bailey contacted some NMRA members from the Lone Star Region to come over to our club and judge all my AP forms. When they left, I had earned all six AP Certificates. I then discovered that because our club is a 100% NMRA club, I earned points toward the Volunteer Certificate for all the open house showings we have had for the public and for NMRA op sessions. This gave me seven certificates, but I still needed one for cars or locomotives. About a year later, I had completed scratch-building my cars and had them judged for merit. This gave me eight Certificates and the title of MMR 475.

The AP program has made me a better modeler, and I am going to try to scratchbuild a Shay for the Master Builder Locomotives Certificate. Whether I can attain all 12 Certificates is unknown, but I am going to give it a try. 🚂