

MMR_0559 Ross L. Ames

Ross Ames' HOn3 Pacific City and Northern Ry.



MMR ROSS AMES

My first memories of a train is probably from watching Petticoat Junction on TV. That steam engine was just fascinating!

Around that same time, my Uncle built my cousins a small 4x6 HO layout that pulled out from under the eaves of their attic bedrooms. That was the coolest thing I had ever seen. It was that next Christmas I asked for a HO train set of my very own.

I did get my very first train that year. It was an 0-27 Lionel three-rail set. While fun to run around like Gomez Addams, it just wasn't as realistic as my cousins' HO trains.

That led to many years of wandering the model wilderness of building WWII tanks, ships and planes. This did however teach me how to build and paint plastic models.

Then one year the Sears wish book had a Tyco HO set with a 4-6-2 steam locomotive on the head end. I wore out that catalog while I slowly saved up my own money and purchased it myself.

I was in junior high when I started a 4x8 layout and managed to get most of the track down and kind of running. By this time, I had been able to get a few RR magazines and the articles on switching layouts were starting to become interesting. So the 4x8 was abandoned and a

small switching layout begun.

High School brought about a part time job and disposable income and the layout was moving along better than the first.

One fateful day I picked up a magazine that had a big article on the EBT and something called narrow gauge. I was now hooked.

I managed to get a start in HOn3 but soon the age old story of dating, working and starting a family relegated railroading to mostly the armchair for the next couple of decades, although I was able to start a small section of a HOn3 layout that would very occasionally see some progress. It eventually became Pacific City on my current layout.

I remember the first MMR I had the opportunity to meet in person, Paul Scoles. My wife had purchased his DVD's for me as a Christmas gift and when I sent him an email to share how much I enjoyed them, he answered back and invited us to stop by and tour his PBR&N if we were ever in the area!

We made the 4 hour drive that next Saturday and Paul gave us a private tour (He even let me run a passenger train over the entire layout!). What I remember most is Paul was such a kind and gentle man and was eager to share his hobby with a total stranger.

Next, I met Laurie McLean MMR at the 2012 NNGC in Seattle. Laurie was a lot like Paul. He had an obvious love for the hobby and was also wanting to share it with as many people as possible. It was Laurie who encouraged me to join the NMRA and to start working on my MMR.

I also met our own Dr. Geoff Bunza at that NNGC and when I found out he lived in Portland that was enough for me to decide it was time to check out my local NMRA.

So I signed up for a \$10 rail pass and went to my first meeting where Jack Hamilton MMR, who just happened to talk about the AP/MMR program. (Jack is also a great guy!)

So began my journey to MMR. I went home and started discovering all the things that most people complain about with the program.

I decided I would work through all the obsolete things and paperwork and laid out a plan to achieve 7 of the 11 possible AP's. I earned MMR #559 in June of 2015.

In the end, it wasn't about whether this or that thing was still relevant today, it was about getting engaged with my local NMRA group, meeting new people (it is because of this MMR journey I met Charlie Comstock and now also get to help operate his BC&SJ RR as well) and having the opportunity to do what these other MMR's taught me.

It is also to help share our great hobby with others and help them on their journey. The paperwork you have to sign states that you will agree to help others. To me that is what being an MMR is really all about.

Ross L. Ames MMR #559

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