

Paul Wussow

Introduction:

Past positions:

Member of the Du Page division from back in the mid 1980s at the Holiday Inn

Midwest Region Committee Chair as Photographer and a Contest Chair

Du Page Division AP Chair and Trainmaster

Du Page Division All American Railroad Show Lunch Chair for about 18 years till 2004

Current:

President of the Three Lakes Model Railroad Club, WI only 100%NMRA Club

Midwest Region Director at Large

Midwest Region Clinic Clearing House Committee Chair

In the Achievement Program he holds:

Golden Spike Award

Model Railroad Author Certificate

Model Railroad Engineer- Civil Certificate

Chief Dispatcher Certificate

Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical Certificate

Association Volunteer Certificate

He has given numerous clinics in many of our divisions covering Civil, Electrical + (DCC), and Photography.

The Midwest Region, one of 18 regions of the NMRA. The region currently has 10 Division and covers a major portion of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana as well as two counties in Lower Michigan, 11 counties in Upper Michigan and about 26 counties in Kentucky. This means we cover an area north and south from the Tennessee border in the south to the Canadian border in the north.

When the NMRA was formed as a national organization it found that it could not manage the size and number of people joining with the national staff. They formed Regions with the responsibility for the administration of the NMRA membership structure. As such, we are considered responsible to make sure that all members are able to enjoy the benefits of membership in the NMRA. In order to achieve this, regions were given the responsibility to charter divisions and so this connection still goes like this today. The region also acts as co-sponsors of a convention each year within their area.

“Regions are expected to promote, stimulate, foster and encourage by all means and manner the art and craft of model railroading as well as the preservation of the history of the hobby it’s science and technology.”

To accomplish these goals the region works through divisions, its publication (the Waybill), the Achievement Program and a convention each year.

Regions are charged with verification of NMRA membership of all the leaders in the region and in each division. This is done to make sure that with 100% certification we qualify for the NMRA insurance.

In addition the region represents the membership to national in matters pertaining to issues of division organization and location.

The Midwest Region has a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, an Immediate Past President as officers along with the 7 Directors at-Large and 10 Division Directors.

The President also serves on national’s Regional Advisory Council.

The Officers and Directors-at-Large are elected by the membership of the Region.

The Division Directors are designated by their Divisions. Although there are exceptions, most Division Directors are also Division Superintendents. If a Division Superintendent is also a Region Officer or Director-at-Large and a Division Director will be appointed by the division.

The Region also has 16 Committee Chairmen to handle the many responsibilities of the region. These committees assist the Region and divisions with the support of events and compliance with the national organization.

Examples of this:

- Achievement Program

- Clinic Clearing House

- Conventions

- Elections

- Membership

- Publication

- Youth

Du Page division has 2 members serving as Committee Chairs,

Ron Sharping as Membership Chair and I am Clinic Clearing House Chair.

In regard to the Clinic Clearing House after numerous requests to Division Directors only Michiana, Winnebagoland, and an individual from Illinois Valley Division have replied to the Region with Clinic information.

Half of our divisions are small enough to hold monthly meetings however the remapping of divisions have created long distance travel for many members. In the divisions that cover large geographical areas meetings are held once or twice a year as conventions or in conjunction with local Railroad shows or historical societies. These events are aimed at attracting members to travel and stay overnight by having clinics, contests and displays.

Current topics in the Region included a division border question and the AP program.

The division border was a simple problem brought to the board to move one member, who by zip code was much farther away from their assigned division than the division that they attended. Without the change by Region this member could not vote or hold office in the division they attended. They petitioned the Region and the change was approved.

AP is another topic that was brought up by a number of division directors. It also was announced that Marvin Preussler was resigning from his Regional and WLD position of AP Chairman.

Jim Landwehr, a Region DAL and AP chair of Fox Valley Division was selected and approved as the Region AP Chairman at the fall board meeting.

The Division chairs were expressing concern that AP paperwork was not being processed in a timely manner. After a discussion that determined the problem seemed to be beyond the region, as Marvin has been known to turn around the SOQs quickly. I was assigned the task to address this issue with the national AP team.

AP Issues Status Report

The question of turnaround time comes up frequently. Some folks are expect instant turnaround and that is just not practical, given that Divisions, Regions, and National all have volunteers who also have other roles in life.

At National, a monthly report is prepared every single month, near the end of the month, without fail. Nothing received before the 28th of the month gets carried over unless there is an issue with the SOQ and all SOQs are reported every month.

The report goes to Paul Richardson for preparation of the certificates.

There is a 4-6 week delay for each batch of certificates as he fits them into his schedule in which he depends on other volunteers for pieces of the process.

This tells us that it could take 9 to 10 weeks after the Region AP Chair approves and sends in a qualified SOQ to national depending when it is sent.

Publication in the NMRA Magazine will lag at least two months due to publishing deadlines.

There is **no** shut-down of the National AP program for the three months around the convention.

Midwest 2014 example:

June, MWR had one Volunteer award only;

July - nothing;

August - 2 Golden Spikes managed locally, 1 Electrical, and 2 Dispatcher awards;

September - 1 Volunteer

As of last week, all the certificates through September's report have been distributed to the Region AP managers. (Which Marvin reports he received and sent to James for recording and distribution) There are no SOQs pending approval and the certificate printing and distribution process proceeds as quickly as the working volunteer can manage it.

Midwest Region has 3 SOQs sent in Sept/ Oct approved and the Certificates are in the process of having the calligraphy done. Two are for a Winnebago member and one for Illinois Valley member.

Frank Koch, the Executive Assistant Manager of AP, took his role at national in 2003 and there has been an AP report every single month without fail. He has said, "I cannot speak for Paul Richardson and his time to produce the certificates, but I do know that my time, at times, to do this volunteer job makes for some tough decisions on when something does get done. One task is inviolate - every SOQ is processed by the last day of every month and the monthly report is prepared and submitted -no excuses or obstacles prevent this. The AP program takes a very high priority with me and I do whatever is necessary each month to process everything in a timely manner before the end of the month. When I get the certificates back from Paul, they go into the next day's mail."

Division AP managers and Region AP managers should never hold any SOQs across a month and they are expected to process them promptly and forward them quickly so they can move along.

The National guideline is 3 days should be long enough if there are no questions or issues. If there are questions they should be addressed in this amount of time.

It then becomes a member's responsibility to reply.

There are some Region AP managers who send everything "every day" and others who religiously send it on the 20th or so of every month, and then follow up if they get some more at the end of the month.

Bottom line is if it does not get to the National level by the 28th of any month, it will be one more month before it is officially processed.

Communication at all levels is extremely important. Our Three lakes club has processed 12 certificates thru the Winnebago Division and Midwest Region, in the last few years, with little or no problems. Communications between the member, Division AP Chair, Region AP Chair and National is the key to having the process run smoothly. There are many aspects to finishing a SOQ that will pass through the system quickly. Communications **between members and AP staff in a timely manner** is the easiest way to speed the process. Even if you are just thinking about trying for a certificate, communicate and you should find help every step of the way.

National reminds us that: Region and Division officers and members should understand that they do need to follow-up if there seems to be a delay. **Remember, both the Region AP manager and National are available to help resolve issues and/or answer questions.**

Not part of the Division report:

Lost Boys and the Division structure Paul Wussow' OP Ed (our underserved members who live in divisions that cover large areas and have two lane roads with deer and weather issues) How do we serve the members who are brought into divisions 2.5 to 5 hours drive from the central meeting point of a division?

5 of our divisions in the Midwest Region have this issue and many members see the division meeting once every 5 years when the division meets is in their area. Even in the Du Page Division, where we all had about 30 minute drive time to the monthly meeting, the new areas added to our division place the new division members in a situation of having more drive time then meeting time. This does not encourage these folks to come to every month. I know Ron Scharping, our membership chair, has been looking into this for Du Page. In other divisions there are much greater distances between members and meetings. Our club has had members drive 1.5 hours in freezing rain to a meeting in the dark on 2 lane roads in order to participate in an on-line clinic and program stationary DCC boards. (He was safe and the programming worked, the clinic came from a member who was in Las Vegas)

We continue to look for solutions but the best we can do is work locally with our school system and library each of which has invited the Three Lakes Club to participate in afterschool activities at their locations. In the school it is in the Fab Lab creating things using cad, laser and 3D printing. The Library wants us to host an after school program on model railroading. I am sure we will tie the two together when we build structures drawn on computer and cut out in the Fab Lab for use on the library modules.