

Father's gift gave hobby a start

Bob Wirthlin earns MMR No. 253

BY PETE MOFFETT, MMR

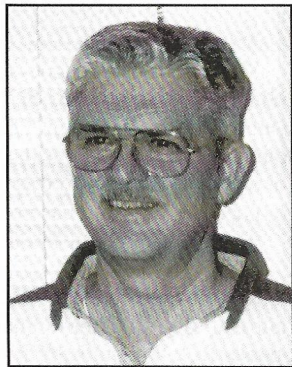
Milton Robert "Bob" Wirthlin, Jr. of Martinez, Calif., is a member of the Pacific Coast Region and has reached his goal of becoming a Master Model Railroader. Bob has earned certificates as Master Builder of Motive Power, Cars, Structures and Scenery. He has also earned recognition as a Model Railroad Engineer in the Civil and Electrical categories and has received the Model Railroad Author Certificate of Achievement.

Bob's model railroading interest started in 1939 when his father saw the Gilbert American Flyer Tru-Model train set at the World's Fair. Bob was six at the time but the HO-scale train set he received as a gift had a metal NYC Hudson, PFE reefer, LNE gondola, Texaco tank car and NYC caboose. Bob converted the loco from AC to DC and added a New Haven coach. There were many changes to the train over the years as new products became available like trucks and couplers. Bob's father was in the Navy and so moved often.

Many layouts were built, but none survived the moves.

Bob started modeling at nine years of age with Strombeck-Becker model airplane kits. Over the years his skills increased and he became interested in radio controlled boats, planes and cars but he never lost his interest in Dad's trains.

Bob started his own career in the Navy and completed college and in 1974. His father gave him all his HO models because Dad wanted to try N scale. This was when Bob joined the Fox Valley Division of the Mid West Region. Bob served a variety of positions in the division. He even had time to build a portable lay-



out which he named Midland, Rockies & Western. Bob started entering model contests and credits John Tesch, Steve King and Al Westerfield, MMR, for encouraging and challenging him.

In 1981 Bob and family moved to the East Bay area of California where he joined the Coast Division, Pacific Coast Region. While in PCR Bob continued to enter the model contests where he received

encouragement from Jim Tangney, MMR; Jack Burgess, MMR; Kermit Paul and Jim Vail, MMR. His portable layout earned a Golden Spike Award in 1992. Bob is currently serving as Coast Division Model Contest Chair where he is encouraging other modelers in the Achievement Program.

Congratulations Bob.