

First layout built at age 14

Charles Goodrich earns MMR 229

I received my first train set (Lionel) at the age of six. This along with another set received a couple of years later were favorite toys. At the age of 12, interest was diverted to HO after observing the Kansas City Southern Railroad exhibit at the Louisiana State Fair. The two rails with correctly spaced ties made HO irresistible.

At the age of 14 my first HO layout was built using Atlas flex track, an Athearn F7 and a few freight cars. The layout was designed with casters to roll under the bed. It had terrain made from Celetext panels laminated to form hills and valleys. During my high school years this was put away and nearly forgotten.

Interest was revived in the last year of college when a 4'x8' layout was built. This layout was completed, then sold after graduation. For a while there was no space for a layout, however, modeling interest continued to increase. Locomotives and rolling stock were collected and many craftsmen type structures built.

In 1976, at age 32, a home was built featuring a large (21.5'x17.5') train room. A large, HO layout was built, filling the room. Though track work was completed, the scenery was minimal.

Commercial custom painting became an important part of modeling during this period. This led to being the "talent" for the program on painting in the *All About Trains* series originally made for Louisiana Public Broadcasting. This series is now owned by the NMRA.

Interest continued in HO until 1989 when a long-standing desire for something larger prompted a move to O scale (actually On3). The HO collection was sold and replaced with D&RGW narrow-gauge equipment in On3. This scale allowed opportunity for scratch-building to a level of detail unthought of in the smaller scale. The Chama Division of the D&RGW was built in the same 21.5'x17.5' room that housed the previous HO layout. It featured a folded dog-bone track plan with about 150 feet of mainline. About 80 percent of the scenery was completed. The layout featured PFM sound with SDS radio control, piped in sounds of crickets for wooded scenes and track lighting controlled by dimmer switches so that any time of

day can be simulated. This layout was featured in the March-April 1995 issue of the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette* and in the 1995 NMRA calendar (August) published in *The Bulletin*.

Unfortunately a job-related move forced the layout to be dismantled, but not before all of the required certificates for MMR were completed. Eight certificates were earned including Master Builder, Cars, Structures, Scenery, Prototype Modeler, Electrical and Civil Engineering, Author and Association Volunteer.

The best part of Model Railroading is the friends that you meet through the hobby. You can pick up a wealth of information through these friends who generally enjoy sharing details on how to construct better models. The clinics at the various conventions also provide a wealth of information. Also it is rewarding to compete with other modelers at regional contests. It is in building a contest model that you really sharpen your modeling skills.

In considering the accomplishment of the Master Model Railroader title, several people come to mind that without their help and inspiration the journey could not have not been completed. Among these are Clay Gunter, who as Achievement Chairman of Division 7, Lone Star Region, challenged me to reach for the MMR goal; to Phil Stewart who as LSR Achievement Chairman gave invaluable guidance in preparing the documentation for the MMR certificates; to Randy James whose friendship and friendly competition and support provided continued motivation; and most important to my wife Jeanne whose infinite patience, love and encouragement allowed me to achieve this title. •

