



Illinois resident Al Westerfield is Master Model Railroader No. 87. Al's is a familiar name to most readers of the *BULLETIN* and *Railroad Model Craftsman*. Al is Manager, Regulatory and Clinical Affairs, of the Amersham Corporation. He and his wife Patricia have two children, Diane and Steven. Al earned his MMR award with Achievement Certificates for Cars, Structures, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chief Dispatcher, Association Volunteer and Author.

Al, believe it or not, can remember the day he became a model railroader. He was 11 and visiting his grandparents in Riverdale, N.Y. At a nearby toy/hobby shop he noticed a Roundhouse all-metal ("metal's better") box car in the window. He thought: "Hey! That looks like a real box car." Until then, his only model railroading experience had been a Lionel set, some Strombecker models, and the *Model Builder* magazines his father brought home for several years. Later that year Al bought his first kit—a Roundhouse CB&Q outside-braced box car, and followed them up with Mantua, Athearn

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and JC Silversides kits. That Christmas his parents bought him an HO train set, and he was in business.

His first layout took shape when the family moved to suburban New Jersey and Al was allotted part of the basement. One of his early projects was a giant scratch-built balsa model of the Quebec Cantilever bridge. Returning to modeling after a four-year hiatus for college, Al rebuilt the bridge as a starter project. He joined the NMRA and the Garden State Division of the Northeastern Region, and at the first meeting he attended, won first prize in the model contest with that bridge.

Al's second layout occupied the entire living room of his first apartment. Despite this, Patricia married him, and Al takes the view that she certainly knew what she was getting into. Their first house, purchased in 1971, was the home of the first John Galt Line. Upon moving to Illinois, he started the second John Galt Line. Planned as a 15-20 year project, about 500 of the eventual 800-plus feet of track are in and control has been established for decent operating sessions. After four years of building, scenery has finally been started.

Al began writing for division and region publications in 1966, but by 1973 had honed his writing, drafting and photography skills and was ready for the commercial press. Since then, he has had about 25 articles published in *RMC*, including half a dozen chronological the philosophy and building of the John Galt Line. He has had three covers on the *BULLETIN* (including last month's) and two on *RMC*, and has put together two NMRA tape/slide clinics.

An NMRA member for 17 years, Al is a life member. The Garden State Division, "recognizing", as Al puts it, "a sucker when they saw one", elected him to the BOD where he served as treasurer. His contest efforts led to a three-year stint as NER Model Contest Chairman. He was also Nominating Chairman, and is an honorary life member of the NER. He now belongs to the Fox Valley Division of the Midwest Region and serves as Chief Clerk.

Soon after joining the NMRA, Al decided to try to become an MMR. He pursued the contest categories with vigor, and received his first AP award in 1966. However, he mellowed a bit with age and decided that MMR should be the result of pursuing the hobby rather than the *object*; that he should not receive the honor until he had truly earned it. Those of us with whom he shares his hobby efforts, through his writing and photography, know that he has indeed earned his MMR award.

As a final thought, Al says: "Model railroading has both group and individual functions. When it comes to my layout, I'm pretty much of a loner. But I find I need infusions of enthusiasm, new ideas and just *talking*. This is where the group comes in. I heartily endorse NMRA divisional and regional meets for this purpose, but even more important is to belong to a small group of modelers having similar interests and talents. I've been extremely lucky in belonging to two, one in New York and now in Illinois. So thank you Harold, Adolf, John and Frank; and Don, Don, Donn, John and Tom. I couldn't have done it without your help."