

Heart attack didn't slow modeler

Tom Troughton earns MMR #277

Tom Troughton, MMR #277, was born May 14, 1942 in Joliet, Ill., and like thousands of other modelers was introduced to trains when his father set a circle of track beneath the Christmas tree. His father was also a member of an "O" gauge train club in Joliet's Union Station. Tom remembers fondly the nights his father would accompany him and watch the members work on their scale models, being happily interrupted by either a Santa Fe, Rock Island or GM&O train as it traversed the 16 diamond crossing that was only a few of hundred feet from their 1:48 layout.

Tom and his Dad shared a home layout that was the typical American Flyer loop with a couple of sidings constructed on an old ping-pong table. His father taught him how to build open-frame bench work, hand-lay track, make plaster mountains and build electrical control panels.

After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1965 with a BS in Communications, Tom joined the Army as a Motion Picture Photographer and Photo Lab Technician. Two years of his three year tour took him to Ft. Richardson, AK, where he rode the Alaskan Railroad weekend train from Anchorage to Whittier whenever he could.

Tom became a cinematographer/editor with the McDonnell-Douglas Corp. in St. Louis after leaving the Army in 1968. When not pulling 6-G turns in F-4 Phantom II's while flying with the US Navy Blue Angels or floating around in "Zero G" environments documenting future Apollo moon landing missions, he was reintroduced to model railroading when he joined the HO scale "Gateway Western" club.

Tom moved to Jefferson City, MO in 1972 to become a Cinematographer for the Missouri Department of Conservation. For the next 24 years, he made motion pictures, recorded sound effects and took still pictures of the outdoor world for the Department's television shows and various publication.

He met and married Cheryl Horn of Jefferson City in 1973. She worked with the wife of D.L. Eichelberger, a long time NMRA model railroader. Through him, Tom became associated with the Capital City Model Railroaders, eventually becoming their president and now their treasurer.

Around Christmas in 1995 Tom switched scales from HO to

Sn3. The old layout came down and a new D&RGW system took its place. All Tom's layouts featured hand-laid track, custom built switches and home built throttles and power packs. He especially enjoys scratch building cars, buildings and eventually plans to complete the motive power requirement for the Master Builder - Motive Power certificate..

Tom had a heart attack and 8-way by-pass operation in January of 1989. The support of his wife and train club members really helped him get through that trying period. He also enjoyed not having to go to work during his recovery time. During his recovery, Tom and his wife were building a new home at the time and he was anxious to get started on the new layout. However, there were still a few storm clouds overhead. Cheryl was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1991 and even though it was a mild attack, Tom didn't like the fact that his job sometimes took him me out of town overnight. Tom is happy to report that he took full retirement in 1996 and can now stay home to help his wife and also put in an 8-hour day working on the layout.

In Tom's own words: "I became involved with the NMRA Achievement program in the mid 1970s and have earned the Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical, Model Railroad Engineer - Civil, Master Builder - Scenery, Master Builder - Structures, Master Builder - Cars, Association Volunteer and Model Railroad Author certificates".

"The enjoyable thing about this hobby is the opportunity to make life long friendships with individuals from across the country. The hobby has been good to us and I'm glad my Dad took the time to include me in his hobby. The memories of working with him are with me every day as I continue to develop my modeling skills and I'm sure glad he also enjoyed putting that loop of track under the Christmas tree."

