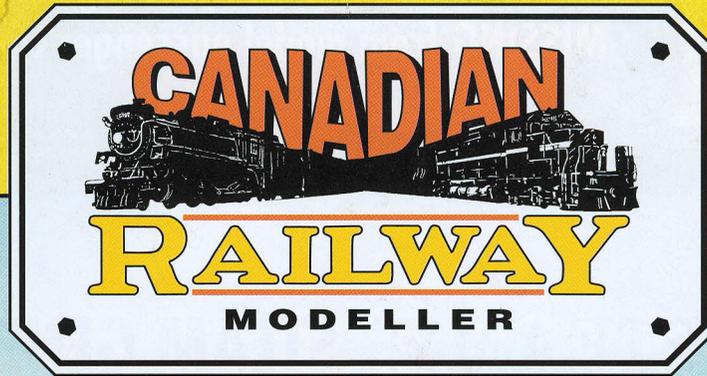


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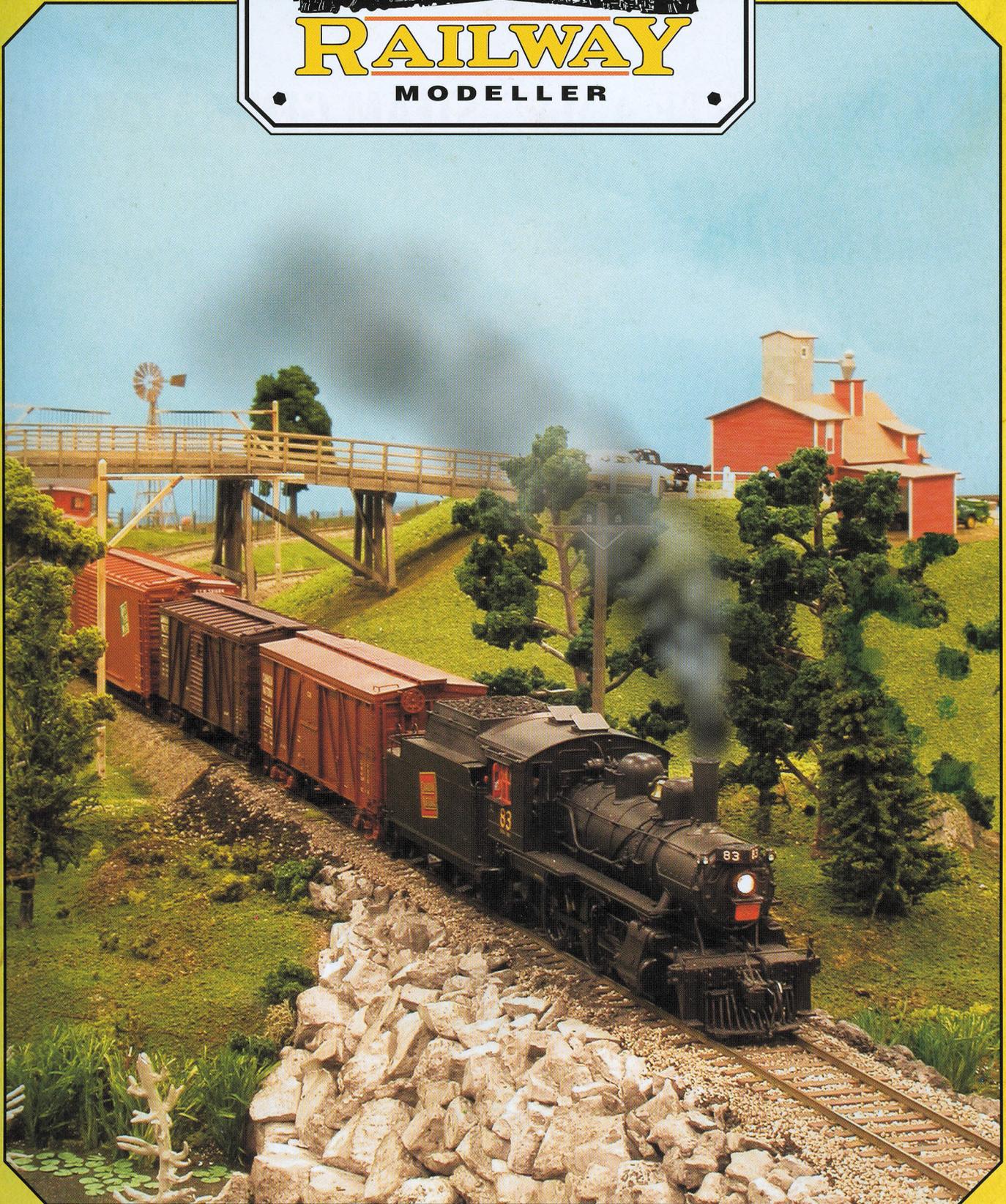


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S SCALE FREE-MO ❖ OPERATIONAL SWITCH STANDS  
SW&N GARDEN LAYOUT PART 2 ❖ DISPATCHER'S PANEL

MAY - JUNE 2008

# S SCALE **FREE-MO** STYLE

Article by the S Scale Workshop.

*Steel tires trump rubber tires in this scene on Pete Moffett's Muskoka module. The CN Mogul was designed and built by another group member, Simon Parent of Montreal. The Fowler box car is a Ridgehill Scale Models kit marketed by group member Oliver Clubine.*

PETE MOFFETT PHOTO.



*Group member Jim Martin's Port Dover module features this turntable scene as part of the S Scale Workshop Free-mo layout. The turntable is a modified HO scale Heljan kit. Jim paints his own backdrops.*

JIM MARTIN PHOTO.



But other scales can use the Free-mo design, too. And that's where the S Scale Workshop comes in.

But first, a bit about Free-mo. Modules are usually a collection of two-foot deep dioramas which are modelled with a high degree of prototypical accuracy with a single track mainline, although there are provisions for double tracks as well. The track is centred at each module interface. Because Free-mo encourages point-to-point operation, instead of a continuous loop, participants have a much freer choice in the design of their modules – the modules can be of any length,

**F**ree-mo stands for “free modular,” and is a relatively new modular standard in the hobby of model railroading. Free-mo is normally thought of as something done only in HO scale. Indeed, Free-mo's own web site ([www.free-mo.org](http://www.free-mo.org)) calls it “the latest in HO scale modular railroading.”

and they don't have to meet the geometric requirements of closing a four cornered circle that is the hallmark of continuous run modular designs. This is an important benefit of Free-mo; the absence of any group member from a show doesn't hamper the ability to have a fully

operational set up. Most Free-mo set-ups, ours included, use DCC for maximum operational flexibility.

### S SCALE WORKSHOP FREE-MO

The S Scale Workshop is an informal group of modelling friends: Eight from around Ontario and one from Montreal: Chris Abbott, David Clubine, Oliver Clubine, Andy Malette, Trevor Marshall, Jim Martin, Pete

or 3/16ths of-an-inch per scale foot, we think it's the ideal size for modelling. It's a little heftier than HO, but without the space requirements of O scale. If you are still having trouble visualizing the size, just think of the old American Flyer electric trains. They were built to the same scale, but with toy-like track, wheel flanges and cumbersome couplers. American Flyer collectors and operators are still a significant part of the S scale hobby, but there's a wide and growing variety of scale equipment that rivals the appearance and quality of that offered in other more popular sizes.

### S SCALE FLEXIBILITY

It wasn't that long ago that S scale enthusiasts had to be pretty good scratch-builders just to come up with enough equipment to run, but scratchbuilding these days is by choice, not necessity. Just as in other scales, there are mass produced ready-to-run locomotives and rolling stock items to choose from, along with quality resin kits and imported brass models. And, thanks to the proliferation of laser cut kit manufacturers out there, there are also all sorts of neat and good looking S scale structures from which to choose. Snap track and flex track are also available in a variety of rail sizes, although most in our group still prefer to lay our track one spike at a



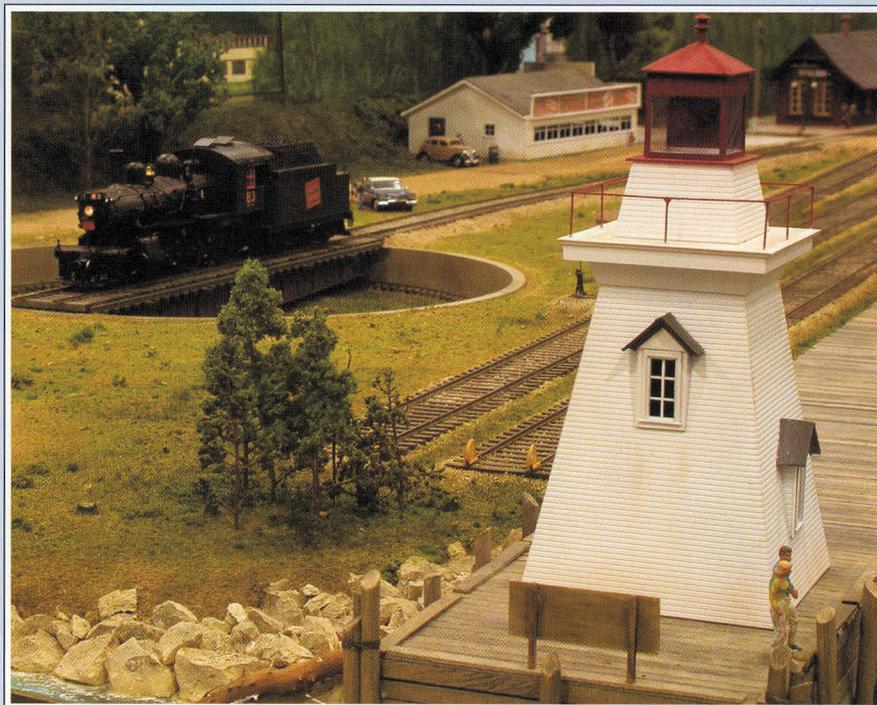
*This waterfront scene, which is part of Jim Martin's Port Dover module, exhibits a brass 44-tonner by River Raisin imports. Jim scratchbuilt the net dryer. His 'water' is simply water-based craft paint and varnish on sheet styrene.*

PETE MOFFETT PHOTO.

Moffett, Simon Parent and Ian Wilson. A few years back, we decided to dismantle our original portable layout, the Ridgehill Central, and start over. The layout was sectional, not modular; because it could be assembled only one way, it was necessary to store and transport all of the layout sections together. After ten years, it was starting to feel more like work than fun.

While it's hard to take apart a layout that still looks good, it's also a liberating feeling to grab a wrecking bar and go for it. It took us the better part of a year after that to figure out how we wanted to proceed. Once the creative juices were uncorked, the new modular layout came together fast. In little more than two months we were able to display 92 lineal feet of S scale Free-mo at the 2006 Copetown, Ontario train show.

Our group enjoys demonstrating the potential of S scale. At 1/64th full size,



*Here is another view of Jim Martin's Port Dover module, which shows his lighthouse and Arbor snack bar in the background. These are local landmarks in the Lake Erie community of Port Dover in real life. Jim scratchbuilt both structures from styrene.*

PETE MOFFETT PHOTO.



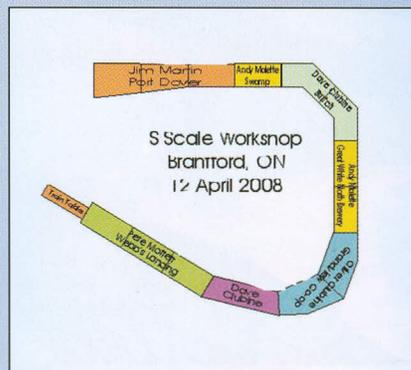
Trackside on group member Simon Parent's module pictures a ten wheeler that was scratchbuilt by Simon.

time. We use code 83 rail, just about right for a branch line railroad in S. Some sidings are code 70.

Our continuing passion is to show other modellers, and the public at large, the kind of results that are possible in this seldom seen scale. Our Free-mo layout was at the May 16-18 Canadian Association of Railway Modellers (CARM) convention in Hamilton, Ontario. We provided

many attendees with perhaps their first glimpse of 3/16ths scale, and of the newly emerging Free-mo concept of modular layout construction.

For more information about CARM conventions, visit [www.caorm.org](http://www.caorm.org) To learn more about Free-mo, visit [www.freemo.org](http://www.freemo.org) If you want to get acquainted with S scale, visit the National Association of S Gaugers web site at [www.nasg.org](http://www.nasg.org) It's a good



A typical set-up for the S Scale Workshop Group at a train show.



place to learn more about S and its many suppliers. Sadly, since not many hobby shops stock this scale, most S scalers have to mail order. One good source is Ridgehill Scale Models in Brantford, Ontario. They are on the net at <http://www3.sympatico.ca/bobcatt/ssw/ridgehill.html> ✕

S Scale Workshop members talk it up with other enthusiasts at a local train show.

<http://www.cdnrwymod.com>

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