

Hip roofs

RAILROAD MODEL

CRAFTSMAN®



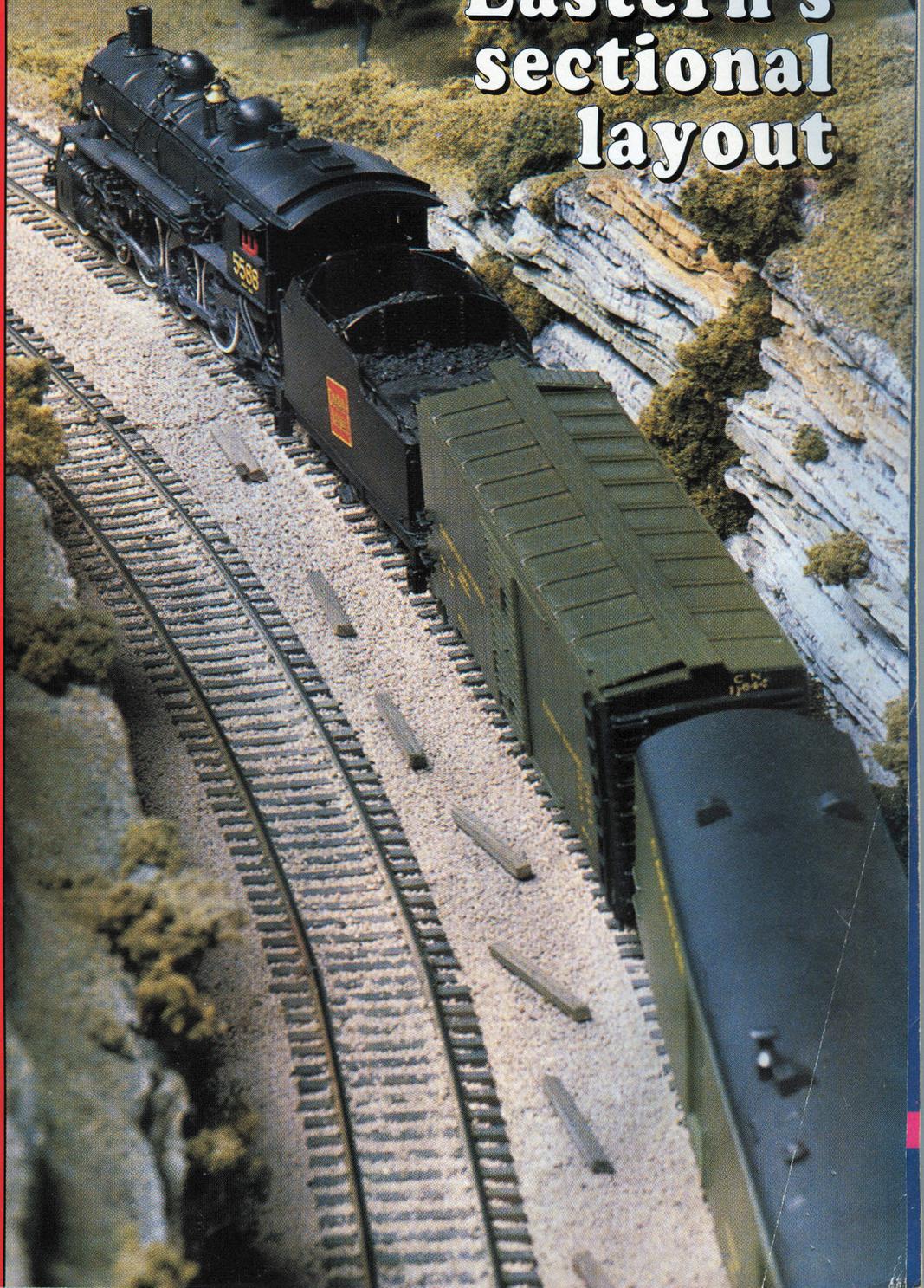
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Visit the
Ontario &
Eastern's
sectional
layout

William
Middleton
on steam
servicing

Nevada
Northern
Ely yard

WP and
MEC
diesel
modeling



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Visiting the Ontario & Eastern R.R.

An exceptional HO sectional layout/**Brian Dickey**

The Ontario & Eastern group consists of six model railroaders, including myself, who have constructed a sectional HO scale display layout which depicts the railway scene in Southern Ontario between 1949 and 1959. One of the primary goals of the group was to bring a high standard of detail and realism to this portable layout concept.

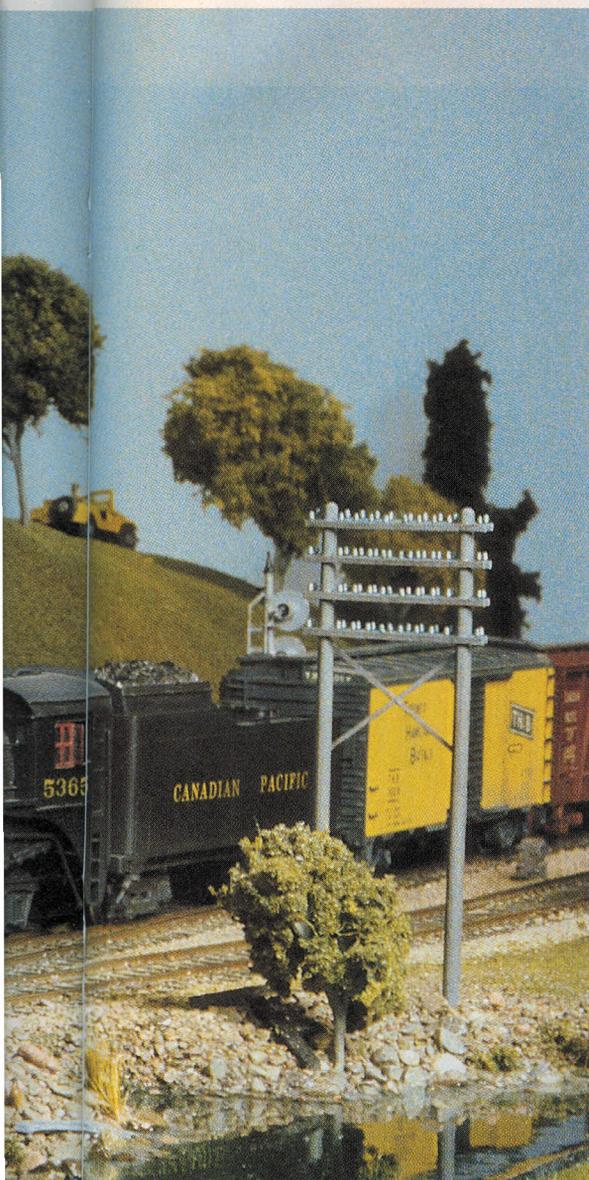
History

The idea for this layout took flight when I used to help the late Bill Miller of Toronto, Ontario, with a small shelf

layout at public shows in the mid 1980's. He used his small layout to showcase his outstanding collection of kitbashed Mantua locomotives. Having a portable layout to take to shows really intrigued me, and I started to discuss this with John Spring, a Hamilton-area modeler who had just dismantled a large home layout because of a move. So, late in 1987 John and I started on the benchwork for the present layout. Once we got this finished, we knew we'd need more help with the project, so we brought John Mellow of Toronto and Jim Ellis of

Beamsville aboard. It was actually John Mellow's two straight sections with the Napanee Station area that were built first and started off our public displays in 1990. Several sections were added each year, until we had completed the "loop" in the spring of 1994.

Our policy has been to display only layout sections which have completed scenery (even if it's a grassy field which eventually turns into a business district or some houses), so it took a while to get the whole layout together. Along the way, we picked up another

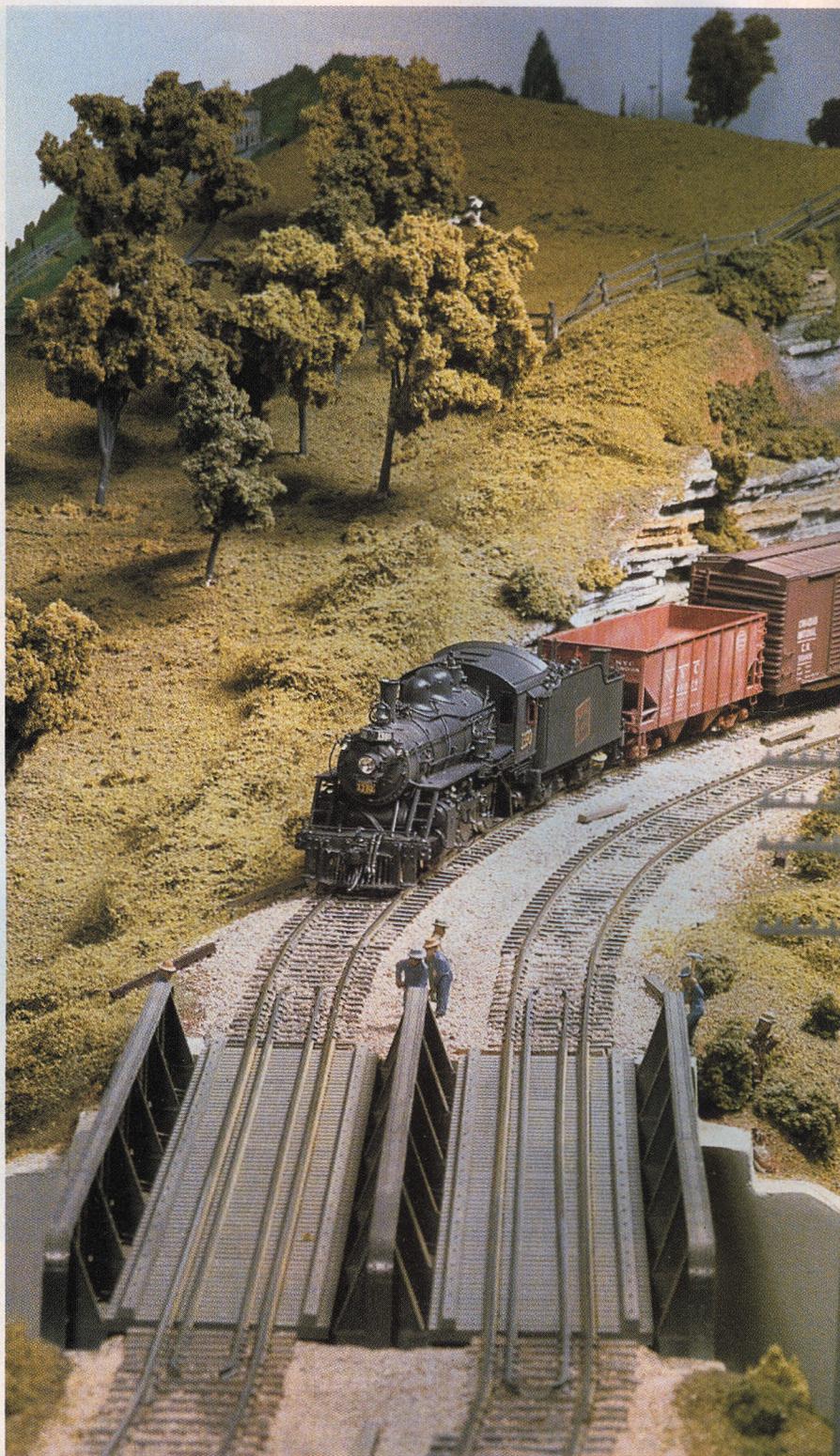


The Ontario & Eastern is a sectional railroad that represents familiar scenes in Southern Ontario. The interlocking tower is a model of CPR's Milton Tower, while the bridge at right is typical of the sights in the region. Only completed sections of the layout are shown at public exhibitions.

two members (or "stakeholders" as we call them), Tony Van Klink of Georgetown and Richard Chrysler of Hamilton.

Our group may be somewhat unusual in that there is currently almost no club or jointly owned material. The layout sections are individually owned, and in the case of three of us, our sections are our only home layouts. All motive power and rolling stock are individually owned as well. It wasn't until 1997 that we opened a bank account (a consequence of the first public show we ran ourselves).

Due to the wide geographic area we are spread over, the layout only gets set up three to four times a year (one RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN



set up is for group maintenance). Most of the members are long time or acquaintances, but as a group we had similar ideas of what we wanted to model. That, combined with the small size of our group, helps to keep politics to a minimum.

It must also be noted that although our core set of stakeholders is small, we could not begin to put on an ade-

quate display without the group of friends which volunteer to help us at the shows. They perform as crew for operating sessions and provide specific rolling stock for some of the trains we want to run.

Design and operation concepts

We believe that an essential component of a good model railway is a

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strong focus on a particular time and a place. We have chosen the steam to diesel transition era, 1949 to 1959, and the location is Southern Ontario. These criteria have proven to be flexible enough to accommodate the varied interests of our members. From an operational standpoint, we have decided to work towards recreating some of the train movements which once occurred on the CNR's Oakville Subdivision. This stretch of track (from Hamilton to Toronto) hosted trains and equipment from the CNR, CPR, TH&B and NYC in the 1950's. It is a good place and time for our group's interests since we were modeling these roads before the group started. Although in theory we

cover the beginnings of the diesel era in Canada, in practice our operating sessions have developed a definite bias towards steam. This has come about in part from strong lobbying by some of our younger helpers!

The buildings and locales depicted on our layout are more diverse. There are accurate, scratchbuilt replicas of the CNR's Napanee Station, express building and freight shed, the CPR's Milton leverman's tower, a CNR wooden road overpass and a cut stone CNR viaduct. There's also a condensed version of CNR's Palmerston Roundhouse, and of the Bridge/Viaduct which carries the CNR over the Napanee River. To help viewers better appreciate the

layout, we mounted signs near some structures which provide a history of the prototype and a few comments on the model itself.

Although a sectional layout imposes strict space limitations on design, a bit of creativity can often recreate the feel of a particular prototype area. It's proven to be a pleasant challenge. We've worked to ensure that our scenery blends well from section to section as each one's been added, so that the layout has a consistent appearance.

The basic benchwork consists of 1" x 4" pine framing with 1/2" plywood decking (a "soft" plywood, such as spruce or poplar is recommended—fir is just too hard for track spikes). The

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A coal yard, boiler house, scrap dealer and other industries are located at Port Junction (above and right). NYC passenger trains come through here, sharing the tracks with an occasional CNR class P-5c 0-8-0 switcher. Steam is serviced alongside diesels at the Palmerville engine terminal; a class H-6g Ten Wheeler and an aging E-10a Mogul are under the coaling dock.

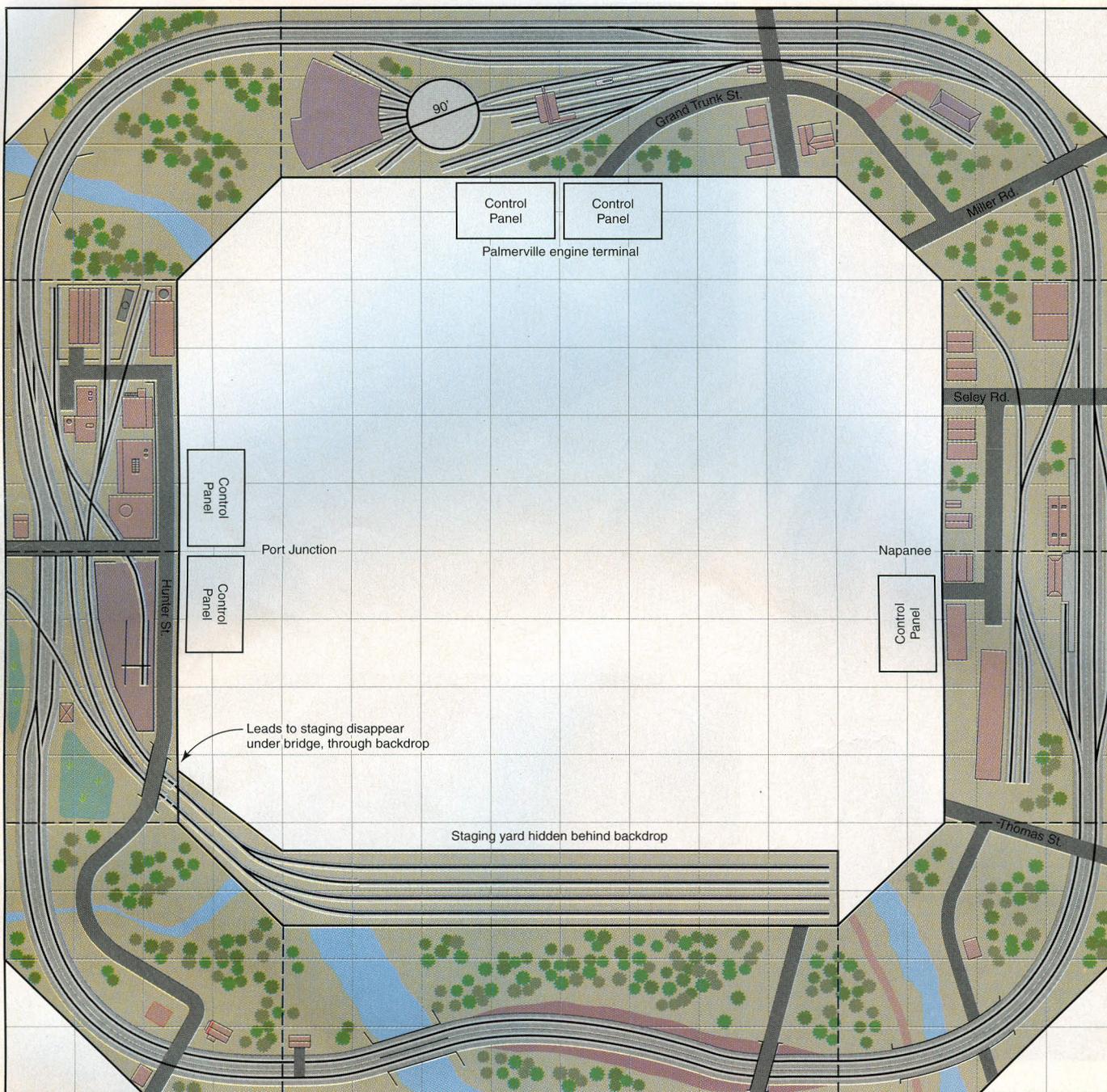
“straight” sections are 48” long by 30” deep and the corners are approximately 72” long by 36”. Track height from the floor is 40”. Three of the sections (two corners and a straight) have higher end framing, which drops the scenery base about four inches lower and permits a lot of scenery relief.

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Our backdrops, or skyboards, are fairly tall at 14” above grade. These consist of 1/8” thick fiberboard panels with a strong wooden framework, to support the inevitable leaning on and over by the operators. The artwork on all of the backdrops was done by one of our helpers, Dan Notley, of St. Catharines.

Most of the sections are self supporting with a folding leg assembly, which helps to reduce the number of pieces we have to haul around. Transportation of the layout is one of our major challenges. Over the years we’ve used an assortment of minivans, pickup trucks and rented trailers. Since the different parts of the layout are spread

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**The Ontario & Eastern Railway
Not to scale**

over such a large amount of country, using a single truck or large trailer for the whole thing would take a very long time to load.

After a couple of false starts with carriage bolts, then "C" clamps to join the sections together, we are now using three standard door hinges per joint to hold the layout together (one vertical on each side and one mounted horizontally, centered on the underside of the joint).

The hills and valleys are built up us-

ing a glued matrix of corrugated cardboard strips. This is covered with paper towels (the heavy duty kind with a grid of reinforcing threads) soaked in Hydrocal. Since it is a portable layout, we add extra layers of the towels and plaster for additional strength. Basic ground cover consists of various colors and textures of Woodland Scenics products over earth colored latex paint. The trees are a mixture of homemade and built up kits. The water on the layout is either Envirotex resin, or multi-

ple coats (seven or eight minimum) of high gloss varnish, over paint.

Trackwork and control

Roadbed is $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick cork strips glued to the plywood. The track is almost all made by Shinohara. This was chosen because at the time we started, they offered the widest selection of turnouts for code 83, which is our mainline standard (this scales out very closely to the prototype rail size we wanted). There is some code 70 on back

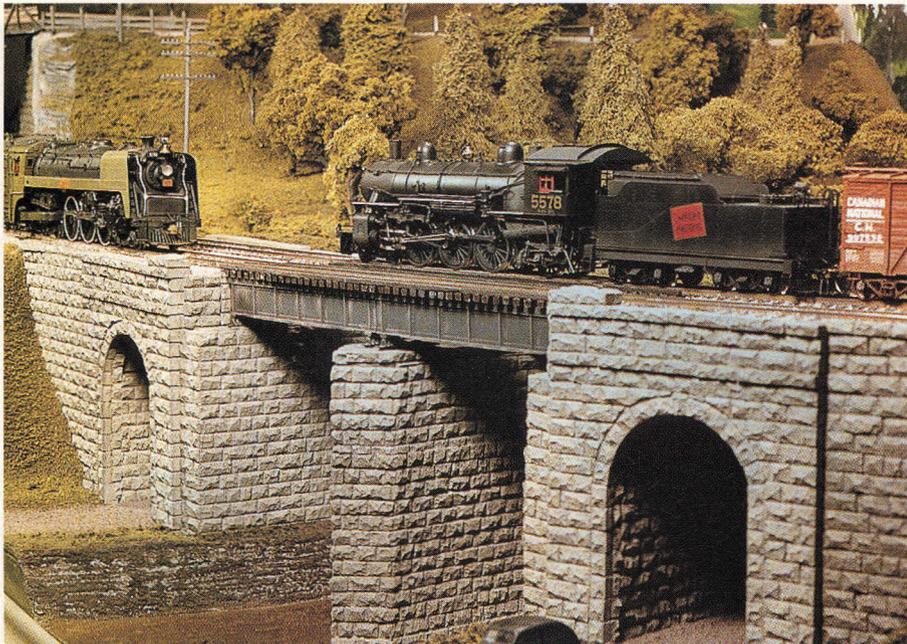


PHOTO BY KEN GOSLETT



The stone arch bridge shows the substantial construction sometimes found on railways in eastern Canada. This one is near Fredericksburg on the layout, "railroad west" of the small flagstop shelter. CNR 5578 is a class K-3b Pacific and it is meeting K-5a Hudson 5702; all of the steam power on the layout and many diesels have been reworked to follow actual prototypes. The layout portrays the transition era of Canadian railroad history well.

tracks. Properly painted, the flexible track available today (with the small spikeheads and tie plates) provides very realistic appearing trackwork. All mainline crossover turnouts are No. 8, as are many of the turnouts off of the main tracks.

The minimum (inside or eastward) mainline corner radius is 36".

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Most of the switch machines are Tor-toise, but there are a few older solenoid types on a couple of sections; these older-type switch machines will be replaced in the future.

One of the features that we're proud of is that all tracks and turnouts on the layout are powered. There are two mainline cabs (GML Enterprises

walkaround units, which perform very well), plus three local cabs which operate in their yard areas only. Virtually every block on the layout is equipped with a rotary selection switch which can bring in power from either of the two mainline cabs or a local cab. Having this kind of capability required one heck of a lot of wiring work originally, but it's paying big dividends now in operational flexibility.

If we were starting out with a new layout now, we'd seriously consider digital command control (DCC), which probably would give us greater flexibility with a lot less wire. However, we've got a good block system in operation now, so we won't be changing it on this layout.

The future

We have started work on two new straight sections which will bring the overall layout size to 16 x 20 feet. One of the new sections will feature a second major passenger station, something we've recognized will enhance our operating sessions. With any amount of luck, they should be in service by the end of 1998.

We're still experimenting with methods of operating the layout at shows. There is a lot of very high quality motive power and rolling stock in our collective possession, and it's quite a challenge to give everyone a fair chance at running their favorite equipment.

Talk has started within the group about the possibility of starting another layout in a few years (there are a number of things that could be improved on if we were starting over). In the meantime, the existing layout will be continuously improved; there's always some new buildings and other details, not to mention rolling stock, at each showing. We continue to and display to the public several times a year.

The past ten years with this layout have been very enjoyable. It is very gratifying to get the appreciative feedback from other modelers and the general public that we have received. Our attempts to bring a high standard of modeling to our portable layout appear to be successful, and we are all learning from each other's particular area of expertise; there's a lot of talent in our group. I think most of us are also finding out how addictive historical prototype model railroading is. In the world we've created, CNR's Montreal to Chicago Train No. 5, the LaSalle, with a U2 class 4-8-4 and a green consist, still makes a stop at Napanee station, and CPR's Toronto to Hamilton freights run with 2-8-2's and wooden vans (caboose). This is, after all, railroading as it should be.

