

MODEL: ATSF BOXCAR • A LEAD & ZINC MINE

RAILROAD MODEL



CRAFTSMAN®

FEBRUARY 2013

\$5.95/47803



**Last run:
Toronto's O scale club
loses its lease**

\$5.95



029

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

0 71896 47803 7

The end of the line for one of Canada's oldest clubs

Redevelopment forces Toronto's famous O scale club to move/**David MacLean**



PHOTOS BY CHRIS D'AMATO UNLESS NOTED

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Model Railroad Club of Toronto. It also marks the end of the club's famous O scale layout. The never ending pace of redevelopment in Toronto's downtown area has finally caught up with the club and its members have been asked to vacate the premises.

By the time this article goes to press, arrangements should be in place to secure new space in the city. One might imagine the needs of a large O scale club—5,000 to 7,000 square feet, easy access, and, perhaps, another benevolent landlord who might find the prospect of having a unique tenant complete with a gigantic model railroad tantalizing enough to offer them a long-

term lease. Certainly it's not an impossible task, but challenging none the less.

In between planning to dismantle the layout and move, the Model Railroad Club of Toronto is also celebrating its anniversary with a series of public shows—last runs, you might call them. So, join us for a visit to the Central Ontario Railway and a look back at 75 years of model railroading in an organization where second generation members are not uncommon.

The present O scale Central Ontario Railway (CORY) represents a mostly fictitious railway—having borrowed in name only from the real railway. It models what might have existed in the industrial Ontario region in late 1950's.

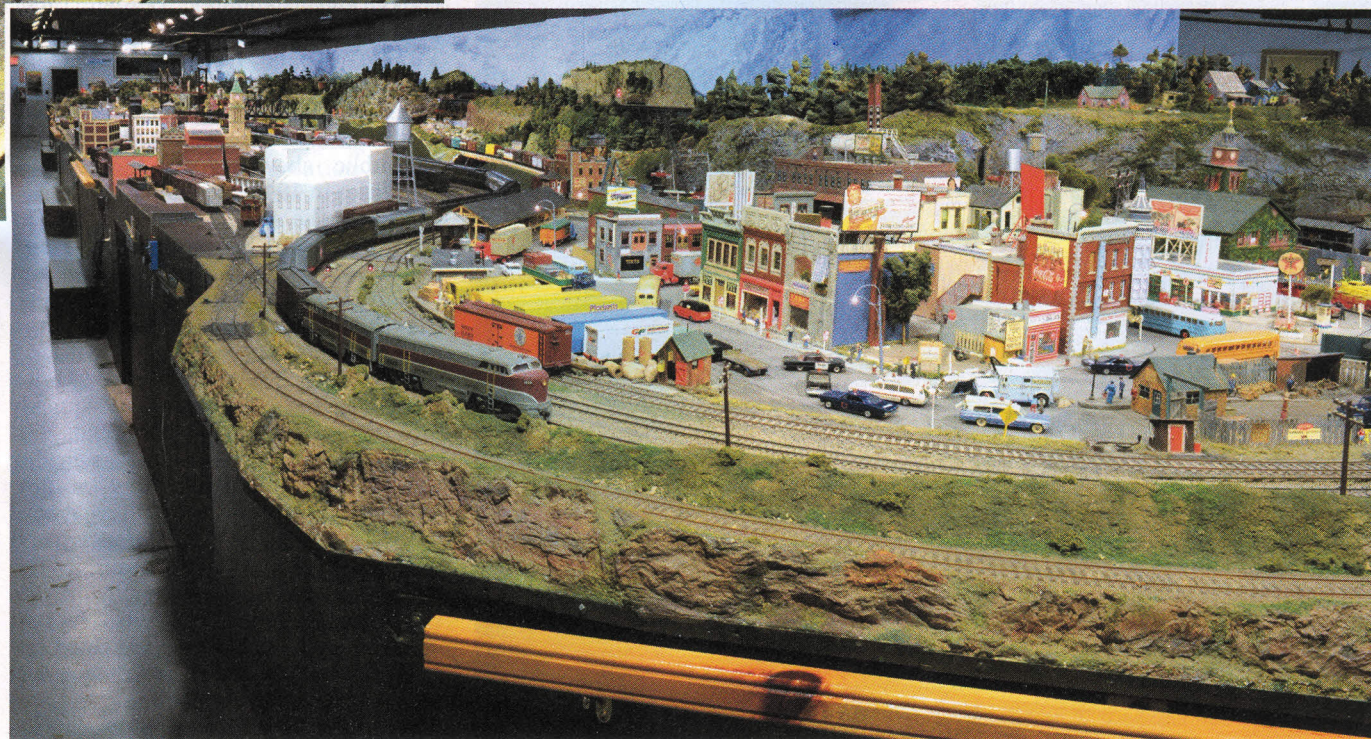
The 1:1 version of the Central Ontario Railway ran from the shores of Lake Ontario, near Trenton, north into the iron mining district near Bancroft. In 1911 it was acquired by the Canadian Northern, which became part of the Canadian National in 1918. In the mid-1980's most of the route was abandoned. However, in the 1:48 version, the CORY thrived and became the third major railroad in Ontario, after the mighty Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. Fast and sleek passenger service continues, as well as frequent freights to serve the many customers.

In 1938 the club had an inauspicious start in co-founder Harry Ebert's basement. Outgrowing this space quickly,

CN 4-8-4 No. 6227 waits for its next assignment at Central Ontario Rwy.'s main southern terminus, the busy Lilleyburg engine terminal (below). A lonely CP boxcar is spotted at the expansive O&S Paper Co. in Parkers Falls (right). This is a major online shipper. Train No. 1, the overnight to the northern terminus of Ebertville, has just departed Lilleyburg (bottom right) with a good amount of head end traffic. This view shows 50% of the layout. During WWII, the two 120' long rooms served as a machine gun test firing range.



DAVID MACLEAN



RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

The end of the line for one of Canada's oldest clubs



TWO PHOTOS: DAVID MACLEAN

Headed for Toronto, train No. 70 departs southbound from Lilleyburg behind Canadian National Railway No. 6401, a semi-streamlined U4a class Northern (above). It is about to pass a Central Ontario freight led by an FA and FB's, which is awaiting

clearance. Working deep within the East Davidson yard (below) is a CORY switcher. East Davidson is the largest facility on the system with a capacity of over 300 cars. In the background can be seen the coach yard for the Ebertville passenger station.



Harry and co-founder Borden Lilley then secured much larger space in the Toronto's Union Station. During the years 1939-1945, the MRCT built a fairly decent outside third rail O scale railroad and had commenced regular annual public shows. With the end of hostilities in 1945, more office space was needed in the station and the club was forced to vacate. Space was then found in the factory district in a former gun test firing range. January, 1946, found the club in two long rooms with a 40'x120' total space. It was ideal for a new railroad. Many parts of the Union Station layout were saved and quickly incorporated into the new railroad.

Fast forward 67 years to present day and the old factory district is now Toronto's trendy Liberty Village, dotted with upscale shops, restaurants, and massive high rise developments. The club remained. However, the layout, like the area around it, has also seen its share of changes. The outside third rail is 50 years gone. Handlaid track is still the rule, with four spikes to the tie in most areas, but the original monstrous



The Lilleyburg passenger station (above) is a replica of CPR's North Toronto station, which is still in existence although it has been converted into an upscale provincial liquor store. The Borden Street underpass features a mirror to give the illusion of a full underpass. In the foreground is parked the CORY business car *Hanna*, named after the club's street address, which in turn was named after CNR's first president. A CNR switcher works the MacLean Common industrial area in Lilleyburg (right). Congested, complex trackwork and numerous industries, combined with numerous grade crossings make the "Common Job" a challenging yet popular job for crews. The CNR "van" (caboose) is the oldest piece of rolling stock on the layout, built by club co-founder Harry Ebert in 1934, with a finish and detail level appreciated even today.



code 172 rail has been replaced by more accurate codes 148, 125 and 100. Over 400 switches have been built and powered by old, surplus, yet ultra-reliable twin coil relays. Track laying standards are extremely rigorous, making for virtual derailment-free operation and allowing reliable operation of realistic long, heavy trains. The original paper maché scenery was removed or covered over—replaced by modern scenic materials and techniques. Every major terminal has been rebuilt and upgraded to handle 15 car passenger trains and 40 car freights—long and heavy trains even in O scale! The enginehouses are full of detailed, functional brass locomotives ready for service. The mainline is fully signaled end-to-end according to Canadian Railway Operating Rules. Controlled via CTC, this requires engineers to pay attention to both the signals and to the fast clock system. Rectifiers, rheostats, rotary switches, old tower style controls and miles of wire have given way to computer-based serial interfaces using JMRI/CMRI for signals and dispatcher power routing.

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

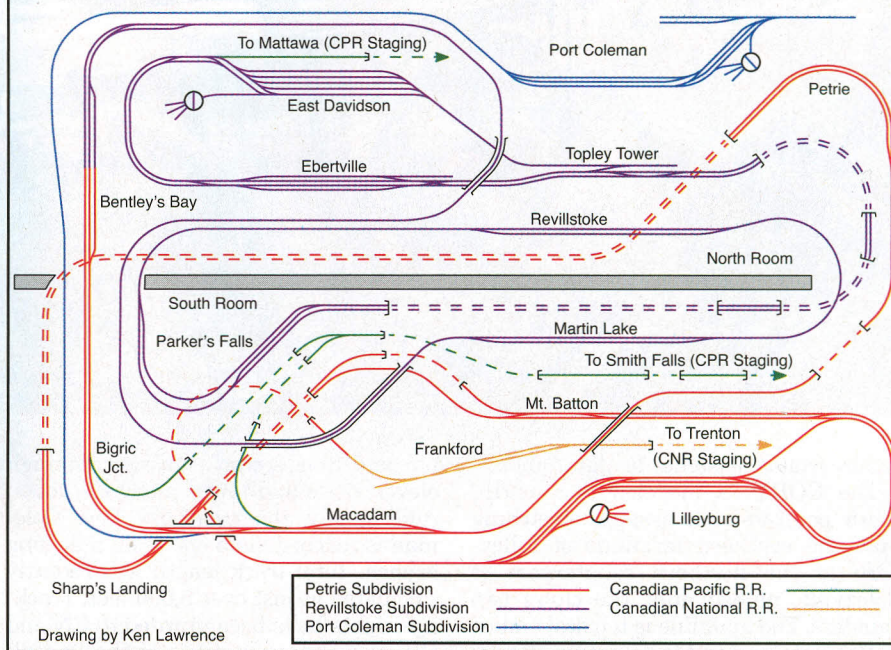
Plug-in style walkaround control, introduced over 30 years ago, has been replaced with radio control systems.

The layout does retain some original features, as some bridges, buildings, and even a few pieces of rolling stock remain in service 60-plus years after they were built. As an organization, the club remains very dynamic. Members continuously strive to incorporate modern technology and modern scenery techniques, and continually update older scenes to better modeling standards.

Currently, the roster shows that there are over 800 freight cars, better than 100 passenger cars and 80-plus locomotives, with all equipment being privately owned by members. The MRCT is quite diligent in not allowing any post-1960 "modern" rolling stock on the layout to

Model Railroad Club of Toronto

Room size: 40' x 120'



The end of the line for one of Canada's oldest clubs



ensure that consistency is maintained.

The CORY as modeled is a north/south point-to-point system, stretching from the southern terminus of Lilleyburg to the northern counterpart of Ebertville, named after the club's two founders. The mainline is ten scale miles (1,100 feet) long and is a mixture of dou-

ble and single track, passing through eleven cities and towns along the route. Additionally, the ever-busy Port Coleman is reached via a one scale mile long branch. Total track length was recently calculated at just over 6,000 feet. Trackage rights have been granted to CN and CP over certain sections of the line al-

The large concrete arch bridge at Bigric Jct. is one of the scenic highlights of the railway. The 15' long suspension bridge and cantilever arch bridge behind it were both built in the early 1940's and served on the Union Station layout. Here (above and left) a CPR passenger train passes overhead, while a CORY freight lumbers over the steel truss bridge beneath it. CORY No. 25, a USRA heavy 2-8-2, is just about to knock down the approach medium signal at Bigric Jct as it passes southbound train No. 10 (page 65, top). The CORY is fully signaled according to Canadian Railway Operating Rules and features a functional CTC machine.

lowing for the regular sight of their trains over the CORY mainline. With the recent availability of accurate O scale Canadian locomotives, this has provided the club with an even greater Canadian flavor. All foreign road freight cars enter and exit the CORY mainline via the interchanges with the CN and CP, both of which have large hidden storage yards. Car forwarding is handled by time tested and familiar paper waybills, allowing for realistic traffic to incorporate any of the over 100 on-line industries and interchanges.

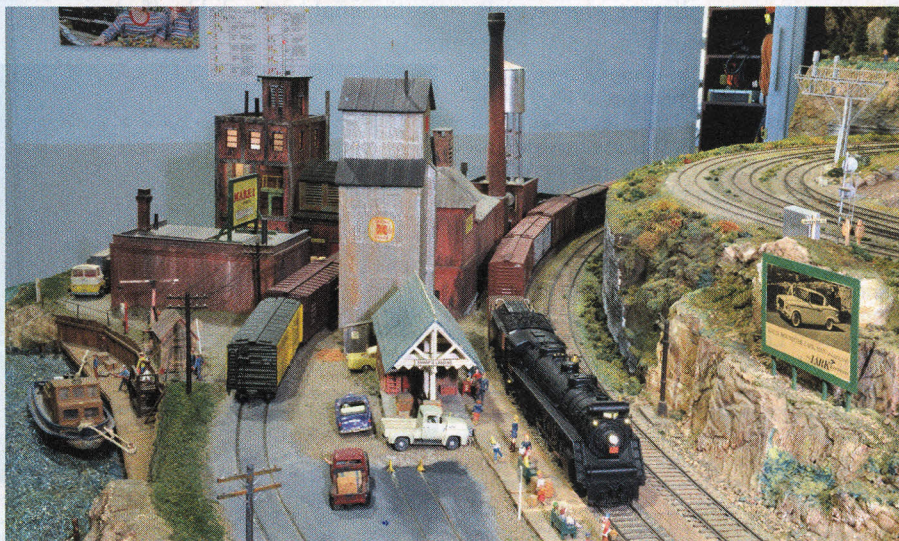
Passenger trains are run by printed schedule according to a 10:1 fast clock. During a standard scale 24 hours ses-



DAVID MACLEAN

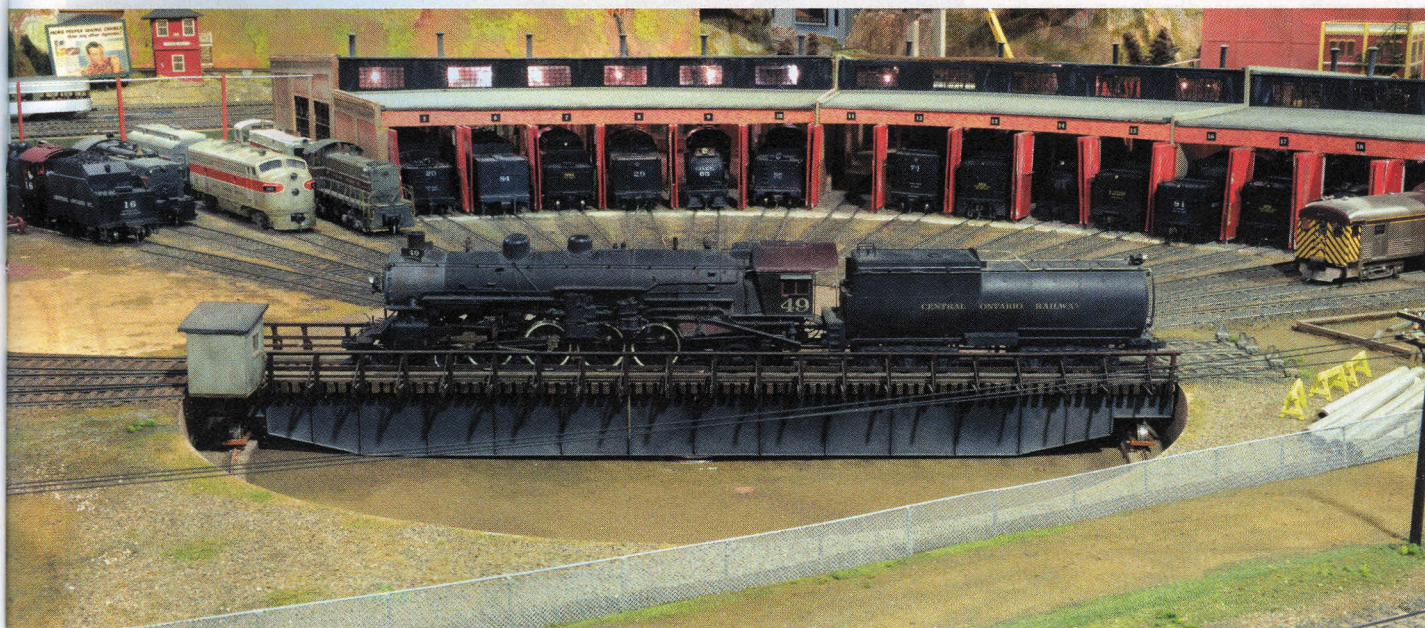
sion, the railroad will see no fewer than 17 scheduled passenger trains. Passenger trains also carry express traffic, which will need to be picked up or set out along the route as warranted. Some trains have complex switching moves with passenger cars being transferred to other trains or set out/picked up at a local station. It's a busy time for the opera-

Passengers at Sharps Landing (right) waiting for a CORY passenger train are frustrated by yet another CNR freight utilizing trackage rights over the CORY main. Sharps Landing is home to the Mark One Brewery, a popular place for crews to visit. The Central Ontario Railway has a full roster and much of the power is serviced in the East Davidson roundhouse (below). CORY No. 49, a 4-8-2 purchased secondhand from the SP, takes a spin on the 120-foot turntable bridge.



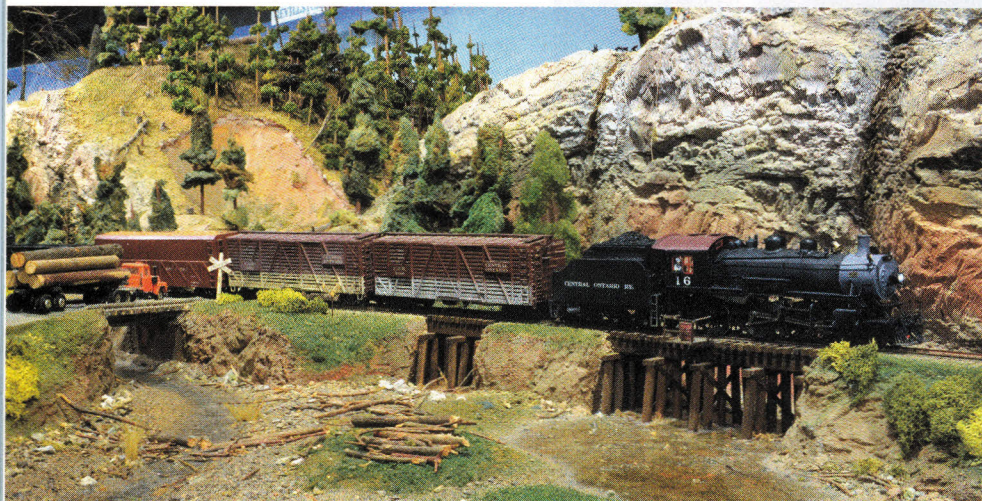
tors and the dispatcher to get the moves right and stay on schedule. A firm understanding of railway rules, train handling, lineside signals, and railway operational protocol is needed. Of course, mistakes do happen, some of which can provide great comic relief. "Must pretend correctly," as we like to joke.

Freight traffic is handled by three main classes: through, drag and local. Through freights run non-stop between Lilleyburg and East Davidson, or to or from interchanges and can stretch up to 40 cars in length (making them over 40-feet long). Drags drop off or pick up cuts at strategic locations along the line and, finally, the locals switch the many lineside industries. In true Canadian tradition, with all freights running as extras, attention must be paid to the scheduled and ever present passenger traffic while begging the dispatcher for track time.



RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

The end of the line for one of Canada's oldest clubs



The goal of the MRCT has simply been to build an accurate model of a big time railroad and to have it seem realistic both cosmetically and operationally. It was quite a compliment when a visit-

ing official from Conrail commented while observing an operating session that it, "looked, sounded and felt like a real railroad." It was, perhaps, the best testimonial to the club's efforts.

Over the many years, the MRCT has built what is arguably Canada's most famous model railroad. It has hosted shows for over 70 years, having attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors from every continent. Sadly, and most regrettably, however, the days are all too soon to end for this version of the CORY. Dismantling will commence in the spring of 2013 after the final shows in February. Yes, plans are underway to rebuild. However, the magic and mystic of this particular model railway will be forever lost. Lost will be the link into Toronto's post-war heritage, when model trains were the original high tech toy.

There is still time however to see the layout and the public is invited to make a trip to see the *Romance of the Rails, Final Run*, in Liberty Village and to help celebrate fully the club's 75th Anniversary. The final shows will be on weekends in February. Check out the website (www.modelrailroadclub.com) for dates and times.

A Central Ontario Ten-wheeler heads its train along the branchline from Port Coleman towards the mainline connection at Bentley's Bay (above). The scenery is typical of the central Ontario region where swamps and creeks abound. A GP20, one of the newest locomotives on the CORY roster, has shown up in Port Coleman at the engine terminal. A CNR Northern is simmering away nearby. This is another sign that the CN is utilizing its trackage rights from Lilleyburg to Port Coleman. The lake freighter *Coleman Carrier* is a ship seen on Lake Ontario in the late 1950's. Here it is berthed at Port Coleman being unloaded of its coal load. The ship itself was built by club co-founder Borden Lilley. Behind the ship, train No. 10, featuring streamlined equipment, is running south through the Topley Tower interlocking having just departed Ebertville.

