

Beach railroad inspired hobby

Craig Webb earns MMR No. 254

Craig's interest in railways developed very early. As a youngster, he spent summers with his Grandparents who had a cottage on the beach strip separating Lake Ontario from Hamilton Harbor. Canadian National had a secondary main line across the beach, so there was a parade of steam-powered freights, often stopping to add a helper for the push to Burlington Station, not more than 30 feet from the cottage door.

Model railroading got started when he received Hornby tinplate trains. By his mid-teens he had discovered scale modeling at the O-gauge Club in Hamilton, Ont. He soon became a junior member. He joined the NMRA about the same time, although membership lapsed for a few years when he was getting established in a teaching career. He rejoined in 1971, and has been a member ever since.

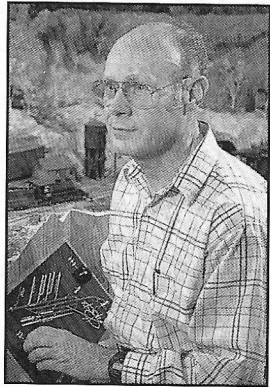
In 1975, Craig met Frank Dubery, MMR, who was developing an O-scale layout called Aberfoyle Junction, just north of Hamilton, in the village of Aberfoyle, Ont. Frank's idea was to build a layout depicting railroading in Southern Ontario in the 1950s, which would be fun to operate from the model railroader's point of view, but also be a display that would be regularly open to introduce the hobby to the general public.

"I fell in with his group, and a few years later we dismantled the

original layout and started a much larger one, filling half the space in a 40' x 80' room, with the same goals in mind," Craig said. The Union Station area was displayed on the cover of the August 1996 *Bulletin*.

From the late '70s to the early '90s, Craig ran a model train club as an extra-curricular activity at his school. This introduced a number of young people to the hobby. Each year the kids would build a small, HO layout at the back of the classroom. They used L-girder framing, and standard hardshell scenery. They were introduced to car and structure building with the easier plastic kits. During the school's open house, held each May, they ran their project for the public.

Somehow, in the early '70s, the narrow-gauge bug also bit, and so,



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while working in O standard-gauge with Frank's group, Craig also developed a fictional On3 line in his own basement. It is based loosely on the East Broad Top, but set somewhere in Northern Ontario in the 1920s.

Craig used work on both of the above layouts to work through the Achievement Program. Frank has obviously been a great mentor and

inspiration. Craig received certificates in Rolling Stock, Motive Power, Structures, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Dispatcher, and Author. He says that the program has certainly helped in developing modeling skills and expertise in various aspects of the hobby. He also enjoys Model Railroading's social activities. Besides working with the Club groups, he regularly attends NMRA events, mostly at the regional or divisional level, though he has been to a number of the national conventions, also. Craig believes the NMRA is a great organization for developing friendships.