

Clear The Track For Model Railroading

These Trains Keep Chuggin' Along

by JEFF MOUCKLEY
Herald Staff

If the thought of a roaring locomotive barreling down the tracks to the click-clack of the wheels and the scream of the whistle sends electric charges through your body, welcome to the group of Georgetown model railroaders who like to don their engineers caps and spend painstaking hours erecting and designing railroad structures and tracks.

Georgetown's many model railroaders are the first to admit that their hobby is not for children but for serious and dedicated persons willing to spend quite a lot of time and usually money to develop replica railroads. With some brass engines that cost as much as \$300 and track that costs \$1.50 for an eight inch stretch, it is clear that model railroading demands as much an investment in time as in funds.

The Georgetown model railroad club which began in 1972, rents the third floor of the Hobby and Craft shop on Main St. where it is working on a major project of rail design and construction. The club's 21 members each contribute their own special skill to lay track, construct and paint plastic or wood structures or manipulate the actual train movement around the yard.

TECHNIQUE

"It's a real technique to putting the whole thing together," said president John Willis. The members who work on the project two nights a week are preparing themselves for a railroad structures contest to be held in September.

Dean Beech of Pennington Crescent is Georgetown's most prolific model railroader. Half way through his ten year building program Mr. Beech has literally converted his basement into a huge railway built on an elevated five foot platform.

His "HO" scale track runs over and through mountains, past grazing cattle and into industrial areas where boxcars load and unload merchandise to canneries and warehouses. "I just like to build and operate," said Mr. Beech. "I try to get everything as close to reality as possible," he continued.

From the various control panels Mr. Beech can control the movements of his 570 pieces of equipment as the world's greatest rail lines of Great Northern, Santa Fe, Burlington, Peabody Short Line and Canadian National.

REAL ARTIST

"You have to be an architect, an artist, an engineer and a carpenter all in one," said Mr. Beech as he pulled out his two engineer caps from a closet.

Great plans are in store for the Beech model railroad which hopes to have an elevated control panel.

Bill McDonald of Guelph Street started collecting model trains three years ago when neighbors cast away their old Lionel trains. Mr. McDonald gathered the Lionel trains which were prototypes in the 1950's and designed a yard in his basement that stretches and winds for about 300 feet of track.

From the Lionelville dispatching station station the heavy locomotives pulling the flat cars and Baby Ruth box cars wind through hills and over trestles in a romantic re-enactment of the old fashioned steam engine days. The whistles still blow, the lights still flash and the passenger cars still illuminate for Mr. McDonald who considers his model railroad hobby as "something to do all the time."

CHILDHOOD INTEREST

Brian Robinson of Chelvin Drive has been interested in trains since he was a youngster. For two years he has been working at his own railway in his basement where he has laid out about 120 feet of "N" scale track.

Mr. Robinson builds his own structures with plaster of paris and papier mache so that his engines can travel through

mountains, valleys and developed factory areas.

Mr. Robinson believes that he owns the only transistor power and throttle control in Georgetown. With this gadget he can simulate actual stops and starts.

Jim Colter of McIntyre Crescent is probably the finest craftsman of small buildings and houses in Georgetown. Mr. Colter spent 100 hours to build a station house that has a removable roof to permit manipulation of windows which slide and doors that open. The detail is exacting and the minutia is precise.

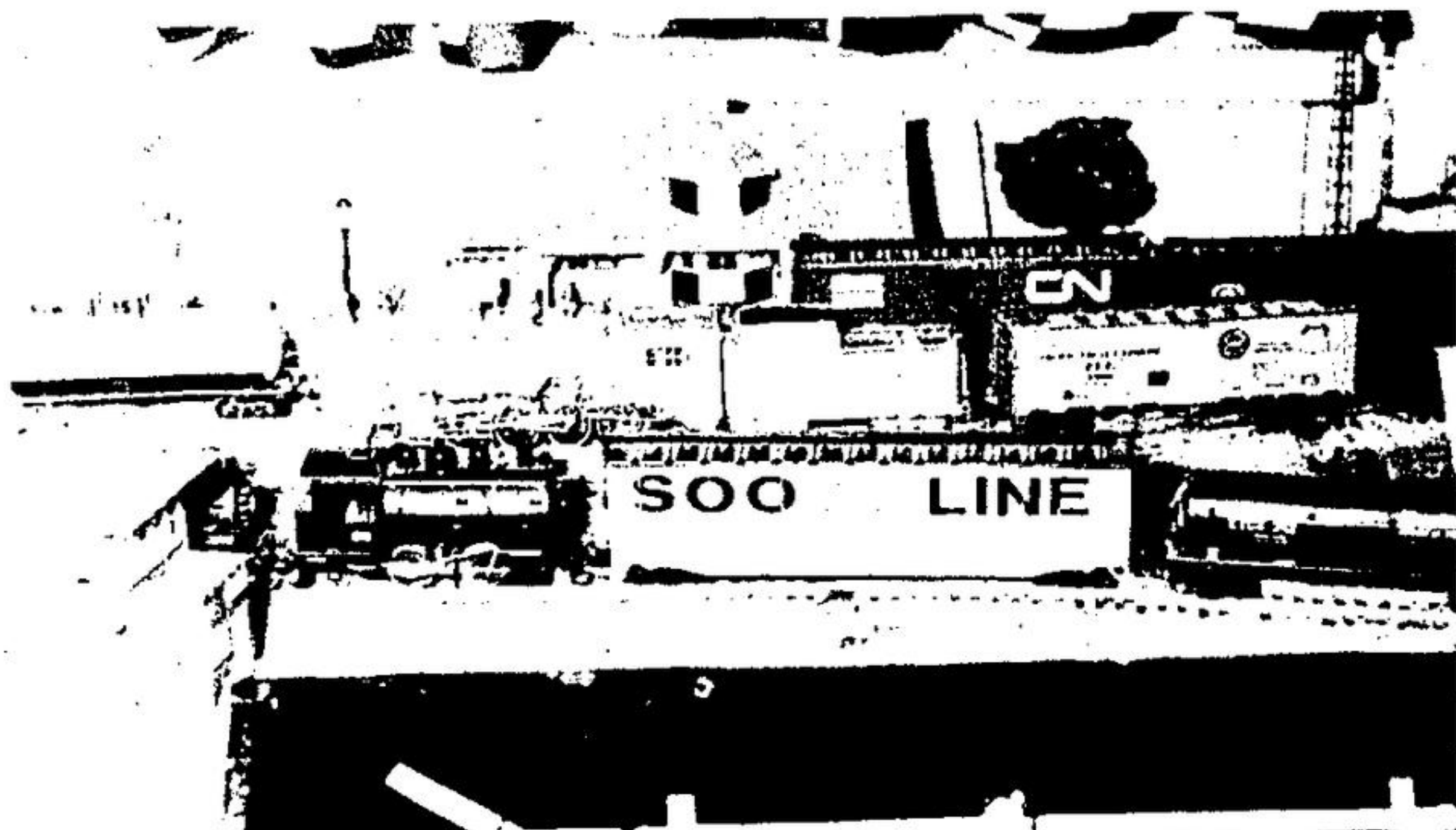
Mr. Colter has also built a signal tower and an engine house and appears to be an easy winner for the structures contest to be run by the Georgetown model railroad club.

To the operators, engineers and builders of model railroads, the hobby is considered a serious one that provides tremendous pleasure and satisfaction. Building them up and tearing them down is the cycle since "you're never satisfied with one layout" as Mr. Colter said.

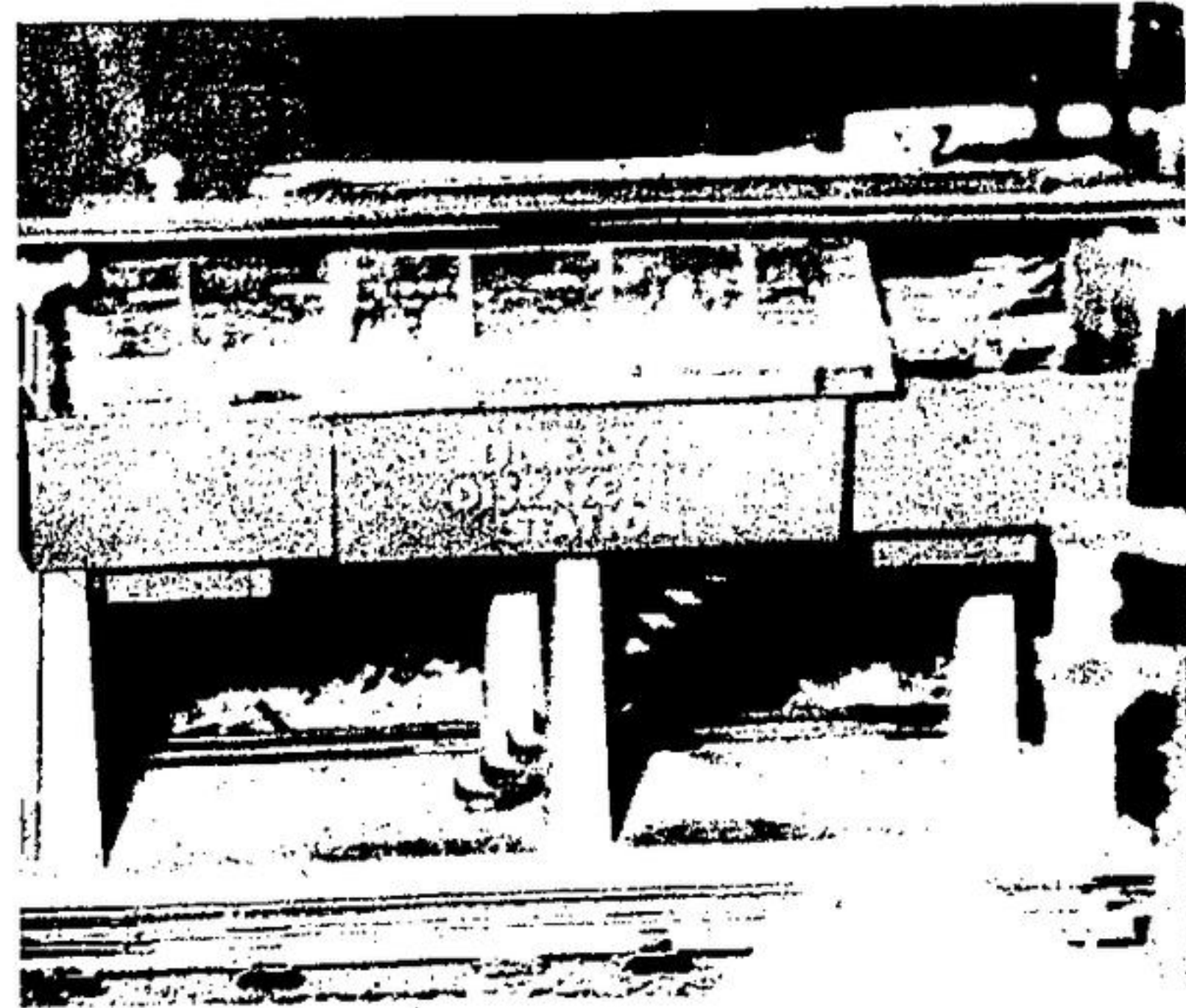
The fact that the Georgetown model railroading club is only one of the hundreds of clubs in the National Model Railroad Association is testimony to this serious hobby's popularity.



This Georgetown depot is a real collector's item owned by Mr. Bill McDonald. It is from the old Lionel train sets. Mr. McDonald has a basement set-up of "O" scale track.



Roger Heed's train set-up in his house on Park Ave. extends around his entire bedroom, behind his bed and into the corners. His collection which he has been working on for more than a year includes four brass locomotives and many freight cars.



Mr. Bill McDonald's Lionel train collection was accumulated from old cast-offs that no one wanted. Now the fully operational trains speed through tunnels and across

bridges tooting their horns and blasting their whistles. Notice the operator figures painted in the dispatching station window.



Wearing one of his authentic railroad caps, Dean Beech of Pennington Cres. beams with pride at his superior model railroad collection. A member of the Georgetown

Model Railroad club, Mr. Beech devotes his free time to a serious hobby that is shared by many others in the area.



Painstaking hours of steady work and exacting designs and plans combine to ensure a precise model train layout

that many enthusiasts strive to attain. A serious hobby that is not considered "children's play"

Georgetown's model railroaders travel to purchase equipment, meet to

discuss ideas and operate each other's valuable train sets.

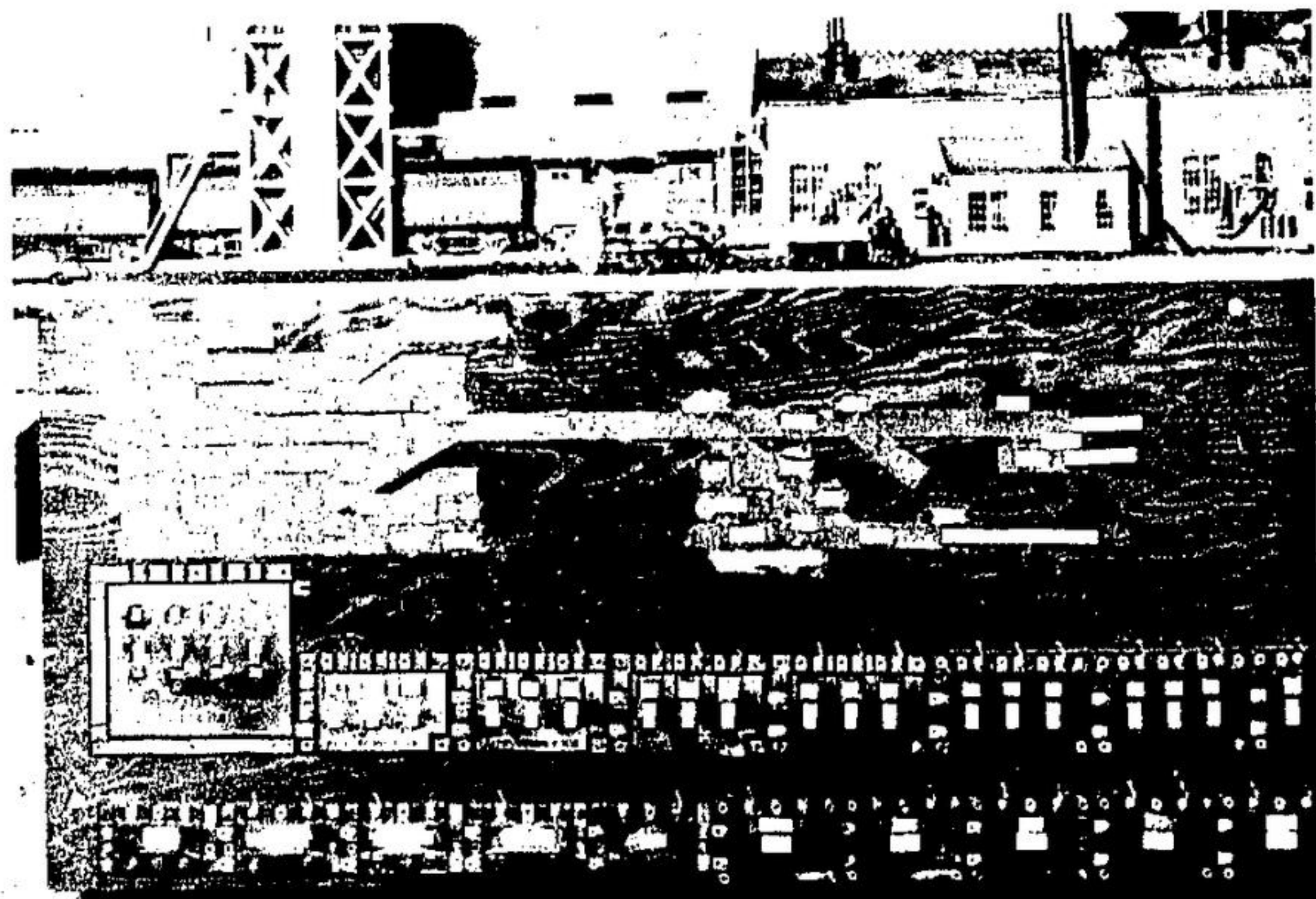


Mr. Brian Robinson's yard of "N" scale trains is full with

locomotives, diesels, coach and freight cars. A relatively

new model train enthusiast, Mr. Robinson finds the hobby

relaxing.

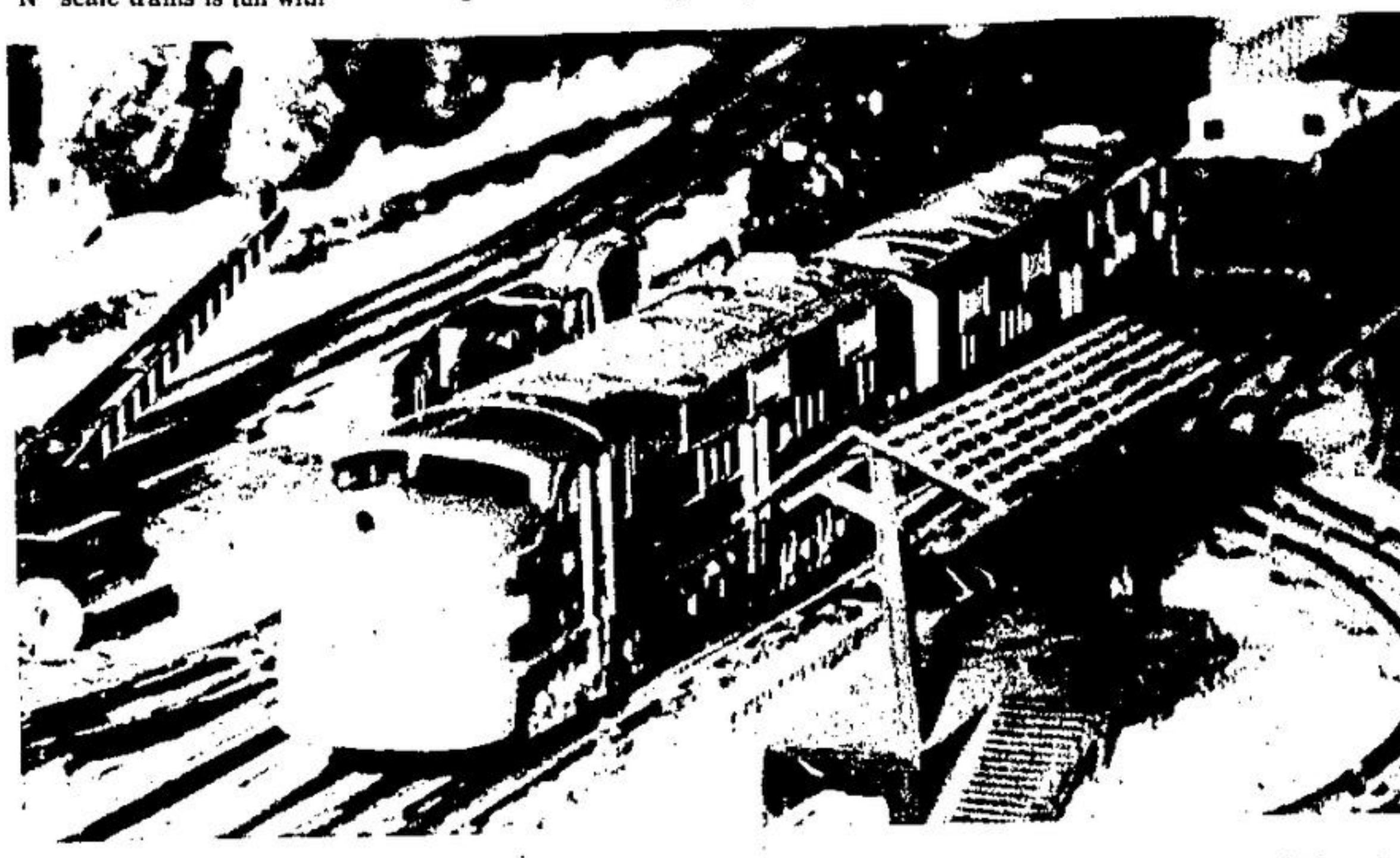


Train movement and track switching can be monitored and controlled from home-

made panels such as this one. All the wiring and electrical connections are done

meticulously to create a maze of flashing lights and buzzing sounds.

Photos By
The Herald



Chugging along in grand old style is this Lionel locomotive on the train lay-

out belonging to Mr. Bill McDonald. These locomotives were real

workhorses as they pulled coal cars, milk cars and

plenty of freight and box cars.