

Seventh Division Bulletin Board



Upcoming Events this Winter and Spring

Lions Club Train Show - February 18

Western Rails - March 17

Revelstoke Spring Meet - April 5 to 7

Nanaimo Train Show - April 28

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Seventh Division Bulletin Board

Volume 10, Number 1

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Mar. 15	April 15	May
May 15	June 15	July
July 15	Aug. 15	September
Sept. 15	Oct. 15	November

The *Bulletin Board* is distributed to all Seventh Division Members in good standing. Editorial and article opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Seventh Division Standing Committee.

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The National Model Railroad Association (Canada) is a separately incorporated section of the National Model Railroad Association Inc. headquartered in Chattanooga, TN. NMRA (Canada) is presently a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving our railroad heritage through the promotion of model railroading, and by promoting and recognizing craftsmanship and service to others within the hobby.

President, NMRA Canada: Steve Stark (Vancouver, B.C.)

On The Cover and Inside

by John Zuk

Our winter cover scene, the work of railfan Kevin Dunk, shows VIA #2, the *Canadian* at Lake Louise in December of 1986. This issue contains a retrospective look at Trains 95, the Interior Report, an article on IRDCC, and information on events in 1996 such as the upcoming Revelstoke Spring Meet (send in your registration before the end of the year), and the Nanaimo Train Show. Thanks to John Green for providing the Trains 95 photographs.

I appreciate the support Dick and the Executive Committee have given me to continue producing this newsletter. I truly enjoy putting the *Bulletin Board* together, and am willing to continue through 1996, now sticking to the deadlines. Arrangements have been made to get help stuffing and mailing the envelopes so you will receive them on time. The next issue's submission deadline is January 15, 1996, so please send in your articles before then.

The primary purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with 7th Division business and information about upcoming events. All members like the extra articles and photographs, so please keep sending material and photographs about modelling, layouts, restoration projects, or other railway items of interest in your area. There are some interesting articles in hand for future issues. I would like to list clubs in the Timetable section, so if you would like visitors or need new members for your club, please send in the information. You can now send submissions by E-Mail (note the address in the masthead).

We wish you and your families have a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

Superintendent's Report:

by Dick Sutcliffe

The deadline for these columns seem to be getting closer together, or is there is so much happening it just seems that way. This issue of the BB is certainly closer to the scheduled publishing date than the last one.

A number of you have expressed concern that the BB is often late, I have also. I went to Trains prepared to ask the 7th Division executive committee to give me permission to ask John for his resignation. I received the last issue the day before the show, almost a month late. Fortunately I had a chance to talk with John before the meeting. As most of you know, John is an outgoing, friendly and generous, 'do anything-for-you' type of guy. If you call him and ask for another week to get your material in, he couldn't say no (note the past tense). What some of you may not know is John has other responsibilities, like a job, a very understanding and tolerant wife, a young daughter who needs to see her dad once in a while, even other railroad interests besides the BB. Compiling the newsletter takes some time; assembling and mailing nearly 300 copies takes a lot more, (even with generous help of the Nor-Wes Club on many occasions). The point is, John is publishing this as a volunteer, and should be able to schedule the time at his convenience.

The upshot is that, with John's hesitant agreement, the Executive has directed him to publish

on the dates in the masthead, and not to accept material after the published deadlines. Even if this means only the cover, masthead and schedule go in the issue. Please submit your material on time, or it will not appear until the following issue if it not time sensitive. OK?

There is a summary on Trains 95, but from my biased view, the meet and show went well, with 136 registered for the meet and close to 3000 at the public show. Some registrants were very dedicated, Gary Hazell spent 1½ hours digging out his driveway Saturday morning, after turning back after 50 km on Friday night. Really shows the PNR MOY awarded to Gary at Saskatoon was well deserved. At-a-boy, Gary!

Brian Pate and Pat Lawson, between them have listed about half of the material in the Jim Ferrier Collection. I can make copies of the lists and will send them to those interested, at cost (\$2), 11 pages, envelope and postage. However we do not have any way of reproducing the collection as yet. The collection consists of anything from 8½ by 11 inch sheets to 3 feet by 30 feet plus, of blue or white prints, so you can see the problem. The B.C. Archives and The B.C. Maritime Museum are not interested, (monetary restraints), But Pat has made some connections we are following up. Give me any suggestions you may have on archiving, storage or reproduction.

All the best for the festive season, see you in Revelstoke, if not before.

Letter to the Editor:

Early Saturday, November 11, members of our group met a young teenager who told us a story about being told to meet some model railroaders prior to the opening of Trains 95, and discovering no one at the meeting place. This can happen through missed communications, however, when the same situation occurred the next morning, I find that inexcusable. This looks like young people are simply not being made welcome to our hobby. The hobby of model railroading will only survive if young people are allowed to participate. A hobby that only caters to older folk will become a dinosaur and disappear, a fate all of us would abhor. Our patience may be put to the test when dealing with pre-teen and teenage model railroaders, but, never-the-less patience and understanding must be shown if they are to grow up to be interested in the hobby. Remember, we were young once ourselves and wanted to be treated with respect. A 14 year old joined our local group several years ago, attended our meetings, and accompanied us to

Trains shows. He now live in Burnaby while attending BCIT. We are proud to have had his company over the years. We now have a 10 year old who has helped with local events and shows promise as a future model railroader.

Sincerely, Bill Van Bergen, Campbell River, B.C.

In Memorium:

I am sad to report that Gerry Steneker, of Maple Ridge, passed away on November 21, 1995, at age 71. Gerry was a long time member of the NMRA, and was active in the hobby since the early '60s. His passion was travel and building craftsman cars and structures, his pride an Ambroid Poultry car in HO scale. Gerry was a member of the original Maple Ridge Model Railway Club. Born in Indonesia, Gerry moved to Holland after WW II, then to Edmonton, before settling in Haney, where he operated a travel agency for many years. Gerry's health had suffered in the last few years. He will be missed by his friends and large family. (Dick Sutcliffe)

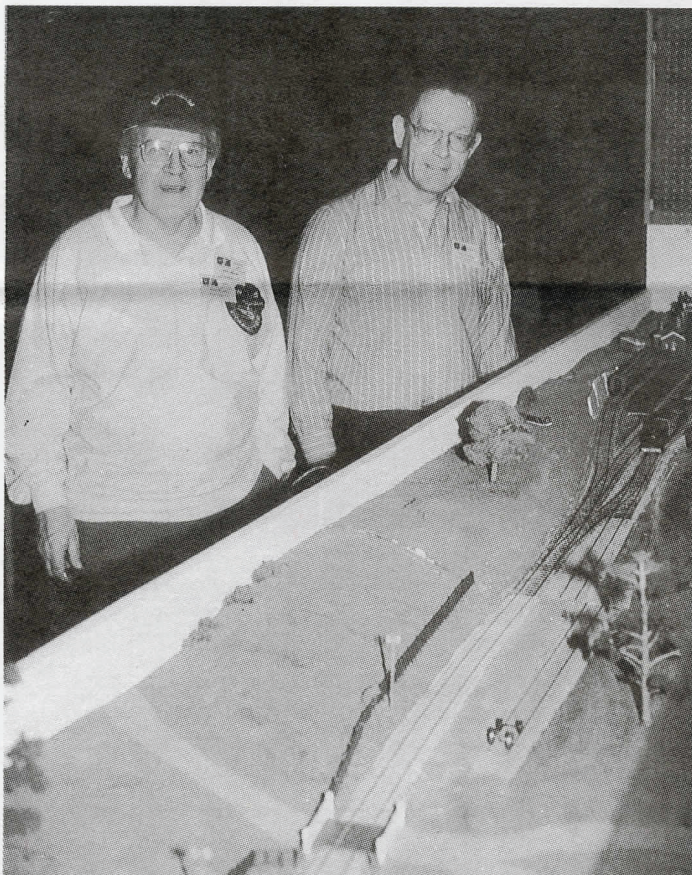
Trains 95 Retrospective

by René Gourley

Well, now that the dust has settled it's time for the Trains committee to get back to modelling. But first, I thought you might all like to know how Trains went this year. Here are a few statistics that sum it all up.

- Number of registrants in the meet: 136
- Number of people on the Saturday evening Surrey layout tour: 81
- Number of people who heard Don Bower of CP Rail System speak at the Sunday evening banquet: 80
- Number of enthusiasts that crammed the display hall on Sunday: 2883 (down very slightly from last year, but still respectable)
- Number of operating layouts in the display hall: 10 (same as last year)
- Number of tables rented for displays: 140 (slightly more than last year)
- Number of TV crews that took footage of the public show: 3

Many thanks to all who participated to make Trains 95 a roaring success. Special thanks go out also to the many volunteers who helped by taking money and giving tickets, without whom Trains could not go on, and also to the people who



stepped in at the eleventh hour to help Bob Chapman run his layout. Finally, I should tell you that some members of the Trains committee are stepping down this year or at the end of 1996, and we will need replacements. While it sounds like a lot of work, the Trains committee and in particular the committee members themselves are also a lot of fun. If you think you might like to get involved, please give me a call at 421-4842.

Popular Vote Contest

by Darren Bkrich

On behalf of the Trains 95 Committee I would like to thank all of those who entered in year's Popular Vote Contest, especially those who were entering a contest for the first time. There were excellent entries in all of the categories. In fact, the voting was so close in some categories that there was only a couple of votes separating 1st place from 3rd.

I would also like to thank John Moore for helping me get everything set up, as this was my first time looking after such a contest, and MMR Gordon Varney for making the beautiful plaques that were presented to the winners during the banquet.

In talking to the public during the show, I found it interesting that quite a few of them had no idea that there was more to the hobby than just operating trains around a layout. I hope this new knowledge will help inspire them to become more involved in the hobby. I also hope that all of you were inspired by the entries and now plan to go and work on your own projects.

When you are finished, I encourage you to bring it along to the next competition. You can take pride in knowing that you are helping to inform the public about the hobby and inspire fellow model railroaders. And who knows, you might just win!

John Moore (left) of the Scalefour Society and John Preston of the Top Link Model Railway Association are displaying John Moore's Scalefour layout 'Oxenhope'. Modellers of both groups have faithfully participated in the Trains shows for a number of years displaying their British railway modelling. (John Green photo)

Trains 95 Popular Vote Contest Results

Photograph:

- 1st:** Patrick Lawson,
'CP Rail sulphur train'
2nd: Dave Nickerson, 'BC Rail
C-630 #712 at Lions Bay, B.C.'
3rd (tie): Dave Nickerson, 'UP
City of Portland Excursion Trip'
3rd (tie): Dave Nickerson,
'Waiting on main at Chilliwack'

Train:

- 1st:** John Ostler, CNR
freight train from 1945
2nd: Len Androsky, CN & DWP
SD's with grain cars
3rd: Doug Mayer, Illecillewaet
Valley Railroad freight train

Locomotive:

- 1st:** Patrick Lawson,
CP Rail 5744
2nd (tie): Dave Nickerson,
BC Rail RS-11/10 chop nose
2nd (tie): Chris Cullen,
Canadian Pacific C-Liner
3rd: Dave Nickerson, British
Columbia Railway RS-3

Operating Layout:

- 1st:** Nor-Wes Club
2nd: North Island
Model Railroaders
3rd: Coquitlam 'N' Scalpers

Modules:

- 1st:** Carlo Schmidt, TraiNgang,
Port Container dock
with working crane
2nd: Bob Lynch Memorium,
North Island Model Railroaders
3rd: TraiNgang, Tee Yard
and new entrance

Diorama:

- 1st:** Scott, Christopher and
Daryl Calvert, CPR right-of-way
display with loading dock spur
2nd: Bill Van Bergen,
Mobil Gas fuel depot
3rd: Ernie & Clarke, Z scale
display on G scale flat car

Rolling Stock:

- 1st:** Brian Pate,
Great Northern wood caboose
2nd: Jim Singbell, O scale and
plank open coal wagon
3rd: René Gourley, Vermont &
Providence Line 34' boxcars

Structures:

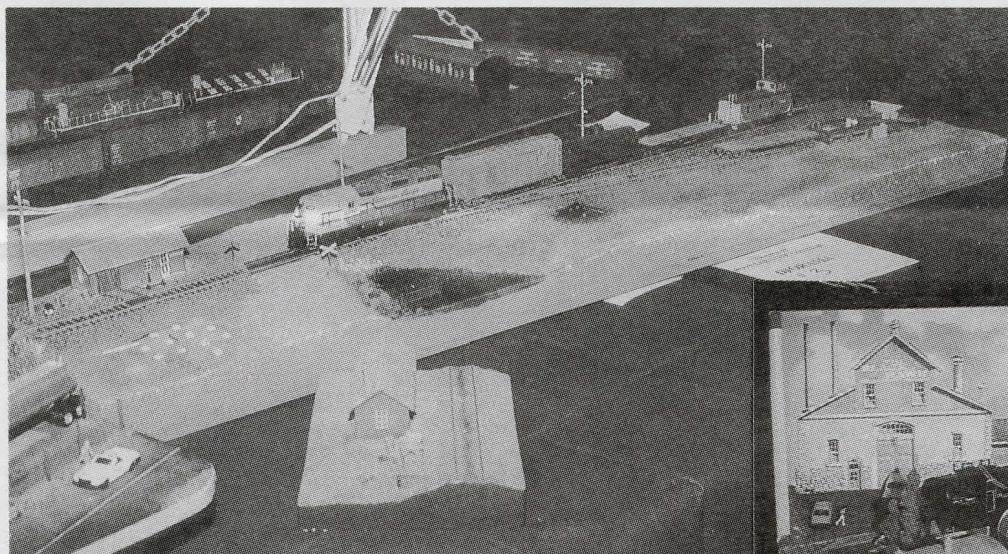
- 1st:** Bill Vessio, 300 ton
coaling tower
2nd: Ian Castle, Southern
Railway signal cabin

Novice:

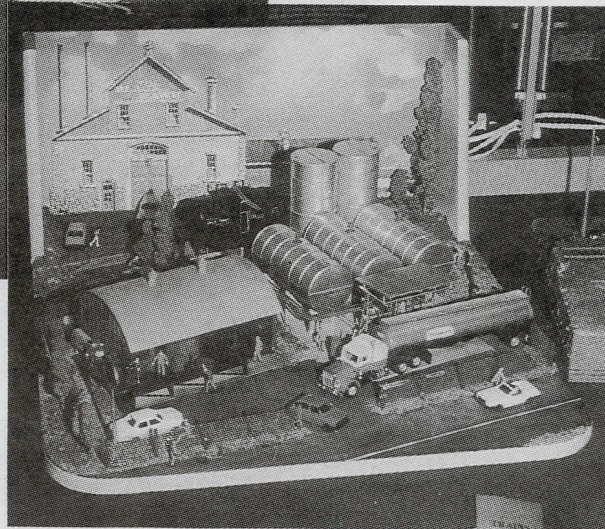
- 1st:** Carlo Schmidt, N scale
module of Port container dock
with working crane

Novice Runners-up:

- Ian Castle, Structure
Len Androsky, Train
Rick Ruegg, Layout
Walter Menzel, Layout
Jim Singbell, Rolling Stock
Ian Castle, Rolling Stock
Chris Cullen, Locomotive



First place in the diorama category was won by Christopher, Daryl and Scott Calvert for their HO scale CPR right of way display and loading dock spur. Scott also featured this diorama in his clinic on detailing the right-of-way. Bill Van Bergen of Campbell River picked up second place for his HO scale Mobil Gas fuel depot. (John Green photos)



Interior Report:

by Gary Hazell

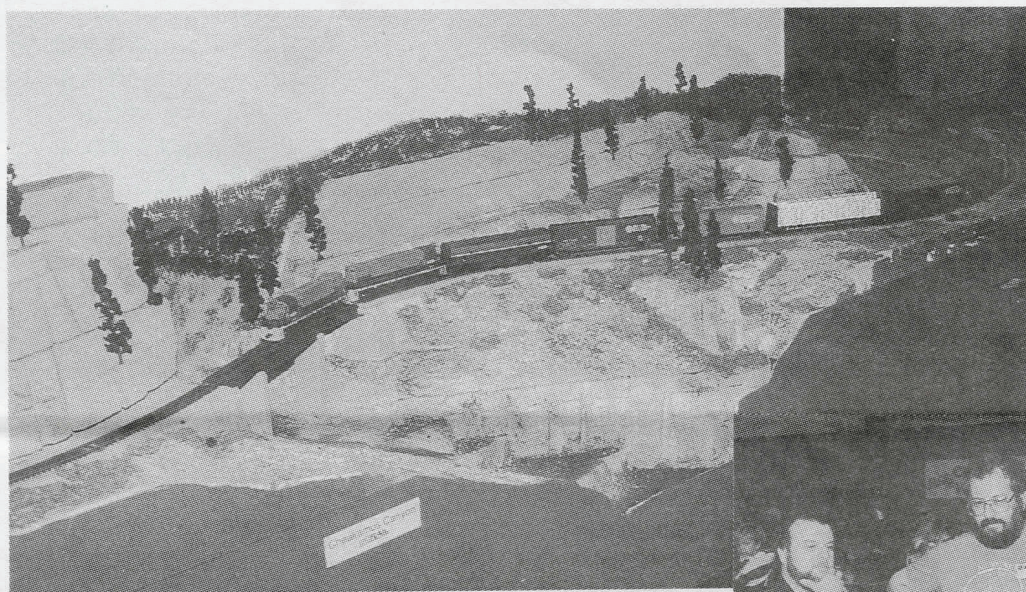
Kamloops reports that the 2141 has been moved indoors thanks to the city which provided a building they could use. The club lost their space in the mall, but still meets every Tuesday at 1900 hours. If you are in the area and would like to visit, please call Gerry O'Brien at 604-554-3545. If anyone is visiting Kamloops for Christmas, the layout will be on display in the Museum over the holidays.

Vernon displayed its layout in the mall earlier in November, and reports that the display and raffle ticket sales went well. They still meet on Wednesdays at 1900 hours at the O'Keefe Ranch. You can always contact Rick Marsh at Trackside Trains at 604-545-4500 for more information. I am sad to report that they lost two long-time members. Gus Trembley died in a car accident on Vancouver Island, and Lloyd Brown passed away in hospital while we were at Trains 95.

Salmon Arm was in the Piccadilly Mall over the first weekend in December. For the first time in many years there were no raffle ticket sales, and I must say it was sure a pleasure just talking to people, rather than always having to ask them to buy a ticket. Unfortunately this doesn't help raise funds, but I am sure we can find new innovative methods to raise the necessary operating money.

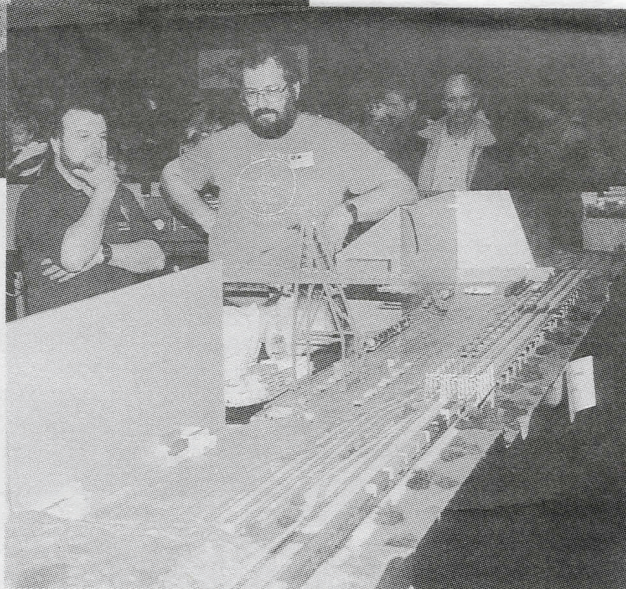
The Revelstoke fellows have been working very hard putting together their first Interior Spring Meet, and it promises to be a good one. Registration is at 35, and 22 have registered for the trip to Golden. They still require a minimum of 35 people before the end of the year for the Golden trip. Remember registration goes up to \$50 in January, so please mail in the enclosed registration form before the end of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone the very best for this festive season, and I hope Santa Claus leaves you brass under the Christmas tree.



This year we had a foreign display at Trains 95. The HO scale BC Rail portable layout shown above, is the work of Bob Chapman and Richard MacLean of Federal Way Washington. This scene above shows a freight train in the Cheakamus Canyon. The scenery is of foam board construction.

Carlos Schmitt (left) and Abe Giesbrecht of the TraiNgang, are shown here with Carlos' N scale Port container dock with working crane. Carlos won first place in the Novice category of the Popular Vote Contest for this excellent work. (John Green photos)



Infra-red Digital Command Control - Part I

by Brian Pate

The excellent discussion of DCC by Russ Watson that has appeared in the Bulletin Board is not complete without a discussion of IRDCC. This means of locomotive control is not to be confused with Catnip and other systems that use infra-red to communicate with a conventional DC block control set-up. These are not digital command control systems in any sense and have all the problems of block control. IRDCC marketed by Rail-Lynx, on the other hand, meets all of the NMRA recommendations for digital command control, with only one exception: The control commands are sent to the locomotive by coded infra-red signals, somewhat like those that control a TV, but more complex.

This means of transmitting the commands has advantages and disadvantages. First the good news:

- ◆ **Simplicity and lower cost.** Since no signals are sent through the rails, there is no need for expensive command stations and the other stuff which DCC needs to put them there. All that is needed for a starter set is a transmitter at \$159.95(US) and a receiver in (say) two locomotives at \$59.95(US) each, for a total of \$279.85(US), much less than any DCC system of comparable performance. Then is no need to rewire the layout; just switch all of the blocks to one cab, turn that throttle up to between 12 and 14 volts and forget it; place the two locomotives (or for that matter up to 255 - see later) on the track and start operating.
- ◆ **Convenience.** The Rail-Lynx transmitters are self contained and battery operated. So there are no tethers to the layout, and you are free to walk with your train, without tripping over another operator's cable, or frantically searching for the next plug-in point as your train rolls along out of control. One battery charge seems to last several months.
- ◆ **Compatibility.** Rail-Lynx does not care what else is on the rails providing there is half-decent quality DC at the above voltage. So it is compatible with other command control systems. People who have installed Dynatrol or CTC-16 and have run out of channels (ie. they have more than 16 locos) can superimpose Rail-Lynx on top and control 255 more. If you have PFM sound, that still works while Rail-Lynx provides vastly superior train control. None of this is possible with DCC.

Then the less-good news:

- ◆ As part of the receiver installation in the locomotive, which is about the same in complexity as

conventional DCC (ie. not hard), you need to mount the IR sensor somewhere where it can see the IR signals. The sensor is 3/16" (5 mm) square, 1/16" (1.5 mm) thick, with a domed circle 3/16" (5 mm) diameter on one face, which is the active area, the whole having 3 leads and is shiny black in colour. On coal-burning steam locomotives, I have achieved an inconspicuous mounting at the top of the tender coal-pile (see photo). On oil-burners, I have been drilling a 1/4" hole in the tender top, offering the sensor up from below, and disguising it in a pool of spilled Bunker C. On diesels, I have seen similar neat installations through the roof of the diesel body. It's all a matter of taste. Some people put coloured dots on top of freight cars to indicate switching destinations, and I don't notice them either in an operating session.

- ◆ Since the intensity of the IR signal falls off with distance from the transmitter, it follows that there will be some limit of range beyond which you cannot control the locomotive. For me that has been about 15 feet (5 metres), with the best results from bouncing the IR from the ceiling or off the backdrop. If you want to control a locomotive 100 feet away at the other side of a supermarket, then IRDCC may not be the system for you. However, Rail-Lynx will sell you a fix even for that situation, namely a repeater. You have a sensor mounted somewhere on the ceiling or a benchwork leg, etc, and the repeater feeds the signals it picks up to 10 - 30 IR-transmitting diodes, which you can spread over the rest of the ceiling, for example. But really, Rail-Lynx is intended as a walk-around control when you would be typically 6 feet or so from your train.

- ◆ Since the locomotive can only be controlled if it can 'see' the transmitter, it follows there is a potential problem in tunnels or staging yards. Short tunnels are not really a problem, since if you squirt IR into the tunnel mouth, it will rattle around inside, and the loco sees it OK. In longer tunnels, the locomotive will continue at the same speed until it emerges out the other end. That is, provided it does not lose track power for some reason. If it does, it will stay stopped, unless you can get it a start signal somehow. So a layout which is all tunnels is probably not a prime candidate for Rail-Lynx, but for less extreme situations the repeater unit is a fix. The sensor is mounted, say, on the tunnel portal, and the IR diodes are mounted on the tunnel ceiling, perhaps 12" (30 cm) apart. I have had excellent operation with such an installation.

In the conclusion of this article in next issue, the features which make the Rail-Lynx system attractive will be discussed.