



Murray Kendall enjoys an after dinner cigar and his own railroad system in the comfort of his Farmington Hills home.



Kendall's trains circle the town, which includes a warehouse and a bar.

Iron horses lure Farmington hobbyists

For Farmington model railroad buffs, the childhood fascination with black, smoke-belching engines and the rhythmic clackety-clack of the tracks never died.

Haunting railway yards and hobby shops can become a way of life for members of the miniature railway brotherhood.

But the real thrill comes when a hobbyist recreates an entire era in miniature.

Among the Farmington Hills residents who are intent on recreating their own era and own railways are Ed Cummings and Murray Kendall.

While both men share the same fascination, each has taken a different route to creating his railway system.

Murray is the proud owner of an "N" scale system, which translates 30 feet into two and three-quarters inches.

Cummings' set is based on "HO" scale in which one foot of life-sized train is translated into one-eighth inch.

Give a model train buff 10 hours of free time a week, for four years and he might, like Cummings, build a table top turn-of-the-century company town in his basement.

"Between 1910-1915 was an outstanding period for the railroad," he said. "It was the prime transportation of the United States. It was a boom time for the railroads."

He owns 75 locomotives and 250 cars, which he has built from scratch.

MOST OF THE COLLECTION WAS BUILT by Cummings, a civil engineer, who is general manager of the engineering department of the Chessie System railroads.

He admits that once he became hooked on railroads, the feeling never left him.

"I like to build things," he said. "I build planes and boats but I never got tired of railroads."

Cummings is surrounded by railroads. He's worked 30 years on them. And his free time is spent building cars and homes and collecting plans for his miniature railway.

Although he has yet to finish the project, Cummings plans to have about 1,000 feet of track circling the room.

He's taken pains to make sure that the scenery the railroad circles is authentic to the pre-WWI period.

"I don't have any modern cars on the track. I only have steam locomotives," he explains.

"I have a modern diesel, but I use that for trying out new track. If it falls off the table, it's alright," he adds.

Cummings' Blackwater Valley Railway boasts all the amenities a bustling system would have.

The system is named after the one that employed his grandfather.

HE'S CAREFULLY ADDED a contingent of logging engines to his collection.

The engine's different in logging," he said. "They have to haul the logs out of the woods. They were wood burners. They were designed to go slower because they had a heavier load."

"The cylinders on these locomotives are higher than on a regular one. They had to go over rough track," he explained, pointing to a black locomotive on the track.

To add a touch of reality, the locomotive was painstakingly loaded with tiny logs.

Down the track from it was another special purpose train. This one was used to traverse mountains.

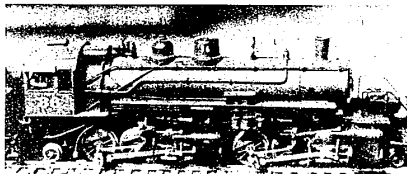
"The tracks are narrower," Cummings pointed out.

Narrow gauge trains are almost extinct now. They were used in the mountains because they cost less to build and could travel better there than the regular trains.

Like the railroad, the town that Cummings has depicted is patterned after a real company town.

"I lived in a New England textile company town," he said. "I build things that I remember from the country. But that's not saying I was born before WWI."

The row of company houses that look out on the tracks have curtains



in the windows and people on their porches.

Down the tiny street, a merry drunk leans against a post of the Grand Hotel.

The town hall, with its clock and steeple are around the corner and next to the unfinished church is the one-room school house.

The town saw mill is based upon three mills that Cummings knew.

"It took me a year to draw the plans," he said, surveying his work.

"I've made every building. It took

me one and a half weeks to build the row of seven company houses," he said.

Eventually, Cummings' town and railroad will have a mountain range and a coal mine. So far, it has its own cattle yard, logging operation and trolley system.

Another railroad buff reliving memories through the miniature system is Murray Kendall, 72, of Farmington Hills.

His table-top town is more modern than Cummings, although he admits

he likes the steam engines better than the diesels.

"You have to make the older trains, yourself. I'm 72. I don't have the time anymore," he said.

His diesels include copies of English trains, which he has picked up on his travels. An English passenger car sits on a side track.

Kendall's admiration for English trains includes an interest in the speed the real-life diesels can attain.

"They can get to 110 mph," he explained. "They begin to vibrate then. They have continuous rail, so there isn't any clackety-clack."

While visiting England last year, Kendall travelled on a train that went that fast.

"I almost saw the Queen's train," he said. "The train I was on was trying to set some kind of record. It stopped at this town, that no one would normally stop at. The town had a gas pump, a pub and two houses. They found out they had to take another route which added 50 miles to their path because Queen Elizabeth was returning from Balmoral Castle that night."

"And her train passed us. We were doing 110 mph. You can just imagine how fast her train was going," he said, shaking his head.

Kendall's fascination with trains began when he was growing up.

"My father had quite a bit of money, which we since have lost," he said, gesturing with his cigar.

"IN THE SUMMER we would travel by train to our home in Gloucester, Mass. We had our own private car which they put at the end of the train."

"That was living. That was always great fun," he remembered.

While in his teens, he and his brother began buying HO scale trains.

"We had quite a large set-up. But we moved and we had to dismantle it," he said.

He switched to N scale in 1962 because his apartment wasn't large enough to accommodate the larger size trains.

Although he collects modern trains, his heart remains with the steam engines.

"Now that was something to see," he said. "Now, those diesels look like street cars."

Photos
by
Cynthia
Abatt



TODAY, YOU'RE IN A TAILORED, WELL-BRED BUTTE KNIT TUNIC TRIO. LONGER. LEANER. SO WELL SUITED TO SPRING'S FICKLE WAYS.

Transitionalists in the newest tradition. Pantsuits with a whole new stance—a lengthened look at a shortened price. Here, a side slit tunic overtop is a flash of red over navy/red striped turtle, \$82. Just one from the collection in washable polyester, 8-16. Moderate Dresses.

hudson's



Ed Cummings surveys a project which has kept him busy for about four years. His train room is filled with material for potential bridges and mountains.



What early 20th century town is complete without its own trolley system? Cummings has provided his re-creation with a gold colored car and a circular track.