COMPACT END MODULES

By Ted Larson

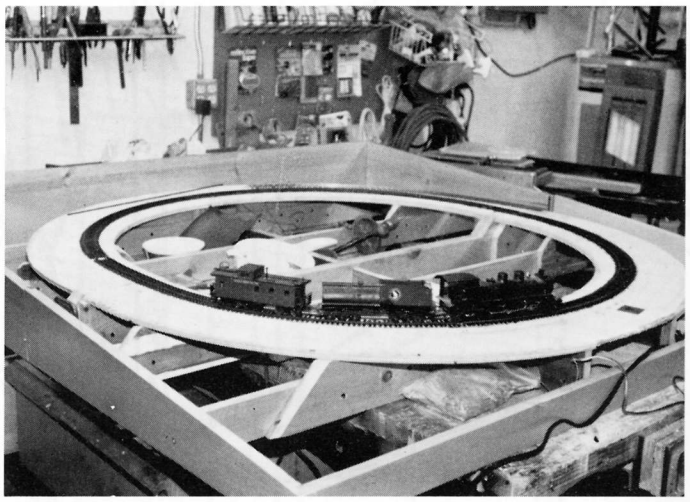
A Compact End Module

One of my favorite activities as a member of Minnesota's "Pines & Prairies S Scale Workshop" was operating Earl Larson's modular layout at shopping mall train shows. I looked forward to finding similar activity when I moved to Rochester, NY but found no other local S gaugers. Since I did not care to transport and set up a full size modular layout by myself for local train shows, I decided to set up 2 concentric loops of AF track on folding tables. I ran AF on one loop and fine-scale equipment on the other. I was amazed at the number of people who stopped to ask what it was, or to ask if AF parts were still available. The small loop of track did NOT prevent their enjoyment of the trains, or mine! A photo of kids watching a smoking AF steamer even made it into the local newspaper.

This success set me to thinking about building a portable layout small enough for easy transportation and set up, and reminded me of a 1970's article which described "a portable exhibit layout built by a real live-wire named Ed Loizeaux, a member of the Bay Area S Gaugers of San Francisco." His 4' x 6' exhibit layout necessarily had tight radius curves, but it sure looked a lot better than my AF track on table. See Fig. 1.

I thought about copying Ed's design, but another issue to consider was storage of an exhibit layout when it was not in use. Meanwhile, I was pondering how to build a modular layout in my basement without the corner modules using half the available space. Then, eureka! If small radius curves were functional on an exhibit layout, why not also at home? Hence the idea to build "compact" end modules for use at home and at shows.

The pair of end modules shown in the photo and in Figure 2 are each 2-1/2' x 5', small enough to easily fit in a station wagon, and easy to set up without help. Because the spacing and setback distance of the tracks match the



A pair of end modules are shown here. They are small enough to fit in a station wagon. *Photo by Ted Larson.*

NASG module standards at the joint, straight modules can be placed between the end modules for home use (Figure 3) or show use (Figure 4). I built the modules with code 148 track on the inner loop, and code 100 on the outer loop. The inner loop's radius is 22-1/2 inches, and the radius on the outer loop is 24-1/2 inches. *Center-to-center on double track should be about 3-3/4 inches depending on sharpness of curve.*

These modules are working well with one exception. One AF engine has a very wide front which overhangs so far on curves that it knocks into rolling stock on the outer loop. It was embarrassing to make that discovery while running the trains at a show. The plans for these end modules will be available for a future issue of the *Dispatch* (with the track spacing increased to avoid the AF overhang problem).

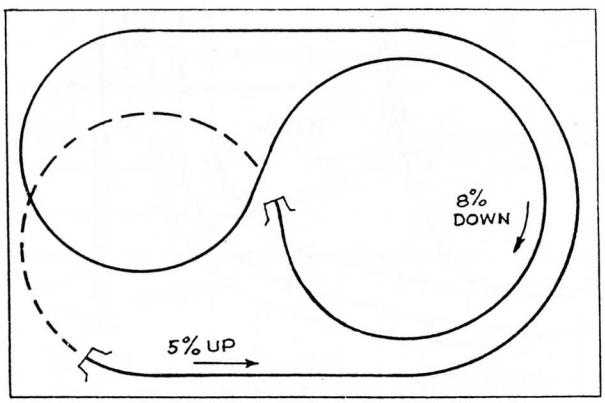


FIG. 1

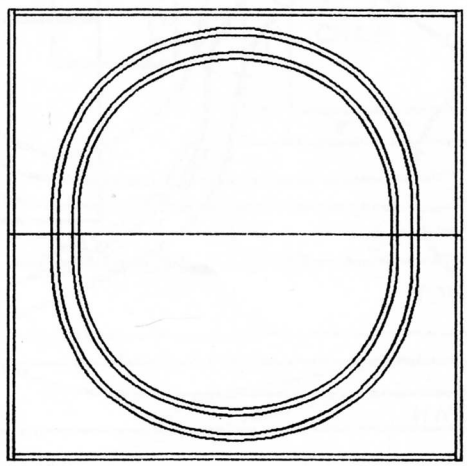


FIG. 2

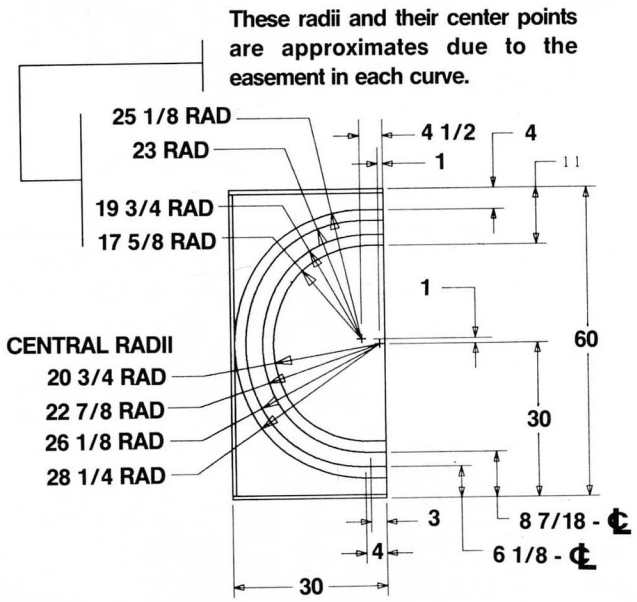


FIG. 5

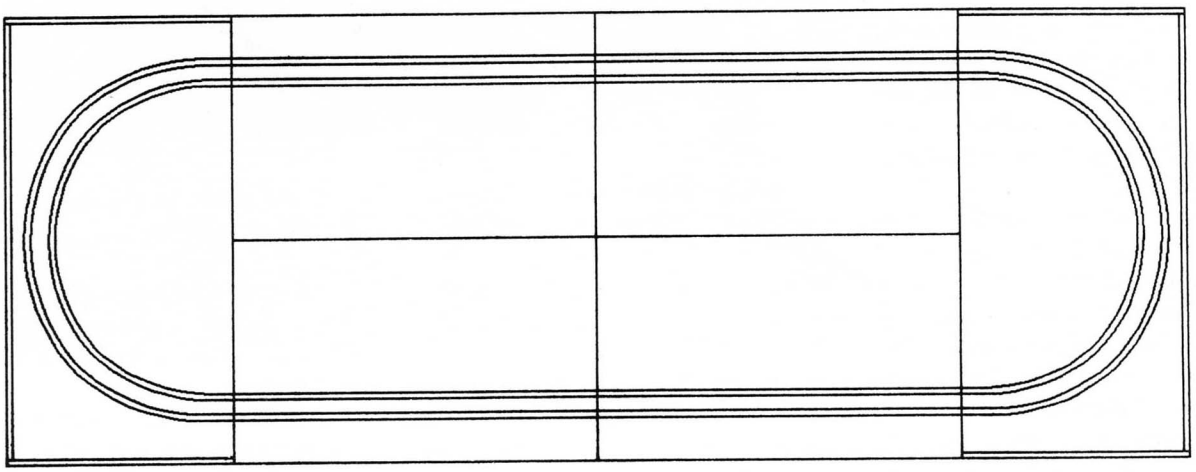


FIG. 3

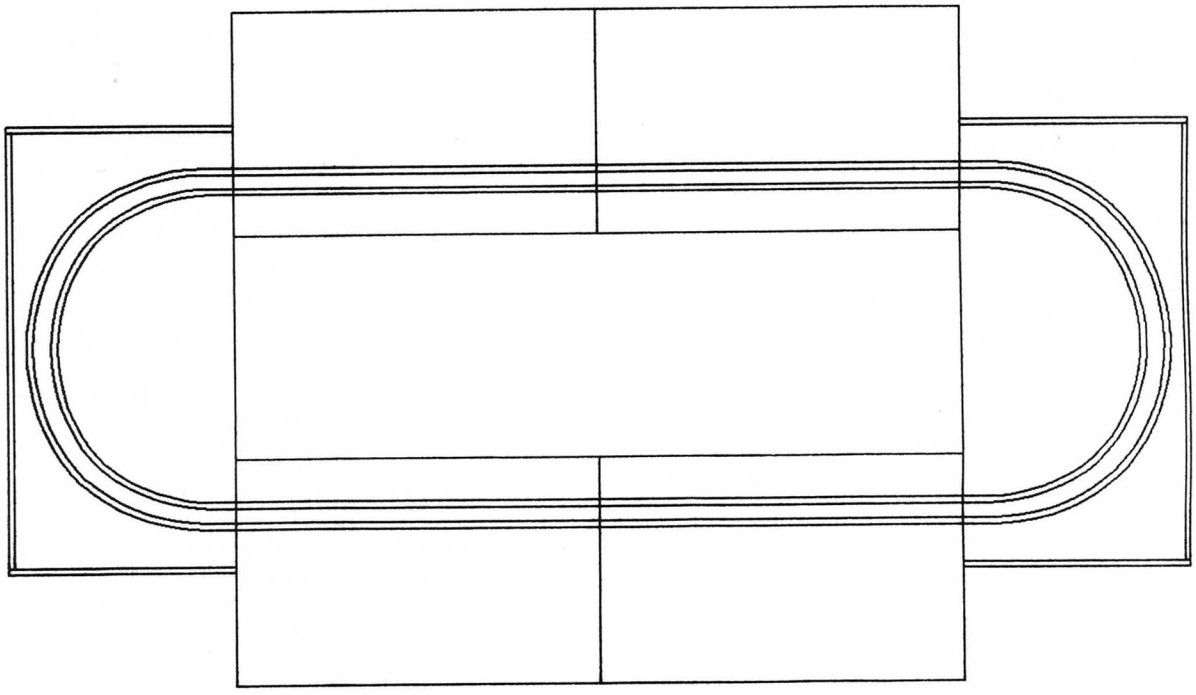


FIG. 4