

# ALL ABOARD FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

*How a childhood fascination with model train layouts revealed a career path. By Chip Sullivan*

**F**IRST STARTED THINKING about the relationship between model railroads and landscape design a number of years ago, after a discussion with Peter Walker, FASLA, about a survey AIA conducted in the late 1950s–early 1960s to discover what childhood toys might have influenced career choices. Considering that the field was male dominated back then, most of the professionals surveyed were men. The results showed that those children who played with Erector Sets became architects and those who played with model railroads became landscape architects.

Our conversation sparked fond childhood memories of the many model railroads I built with my father and grandfather, and the strong connection to the landscape that was an integral part of these layouts. Of course, in high school the layout went into boxes, but as soon as I had a studio large enough the trains came out of storage and today I'm proud to say that I probably have the largest Lionel train set in Berkeley, California. I can easily operate seven locomotives simultaneously from my wraparound, multicontrol panel!

Several years ago, Paul

Hellmund, my colleague at Colorado State University, proposed to write a book that would introduce children to the practice of landscape architecture, and he asked me to help with the illustrations. The concept was to express how the interests and experiences that landscape architects had as children influenced their decisions to become design professionals. It was a terrific idea that will hopefully go forward; until then, since I had produced preliminary pencil layouts for my contribution, I thought I should finish the inking and coloring and share it with *Landscape Architecture* magazine.

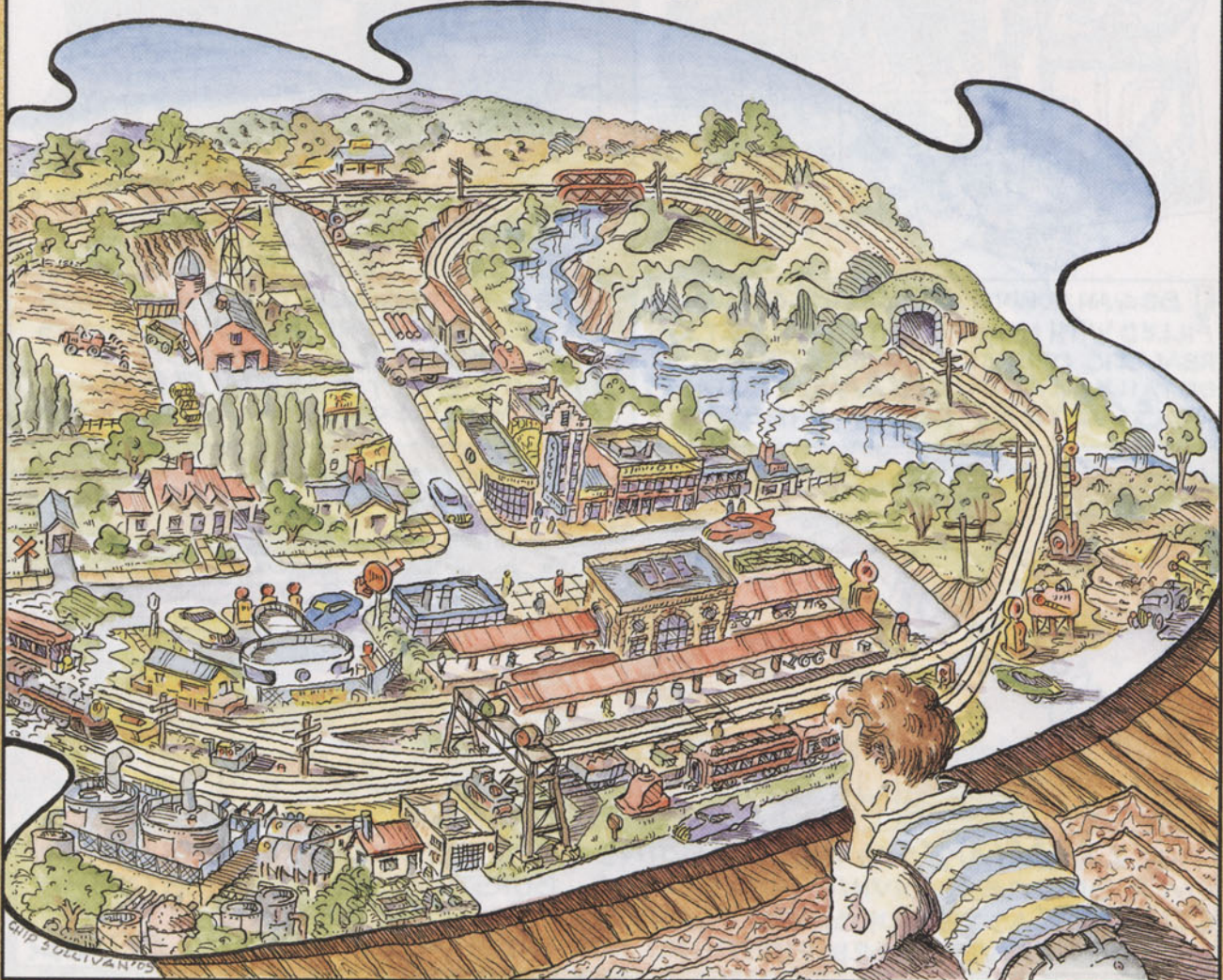
Marc Treib has always chided me for being a “cartoonist,” but when I realized that cartoonists were being awarded the Pulitzer Prize, exhibiting in national and international museums, publishing acclaimed graphic novels, and even designing buildings and landscapes, I thought, hey, it's not so bad to be a landscape cartoonist. Thus, I used the cartoon format of sequential pictures to relay these wonderful childhood memories of scenic landscapes.



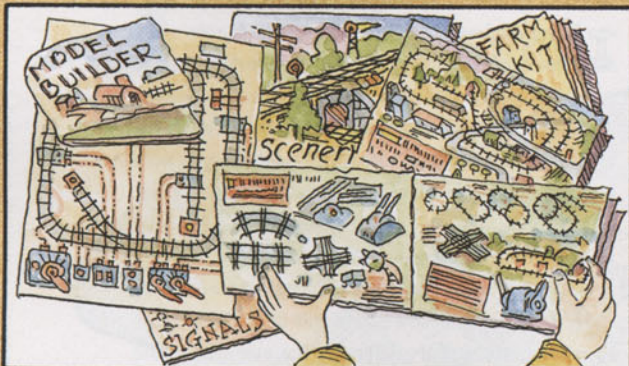
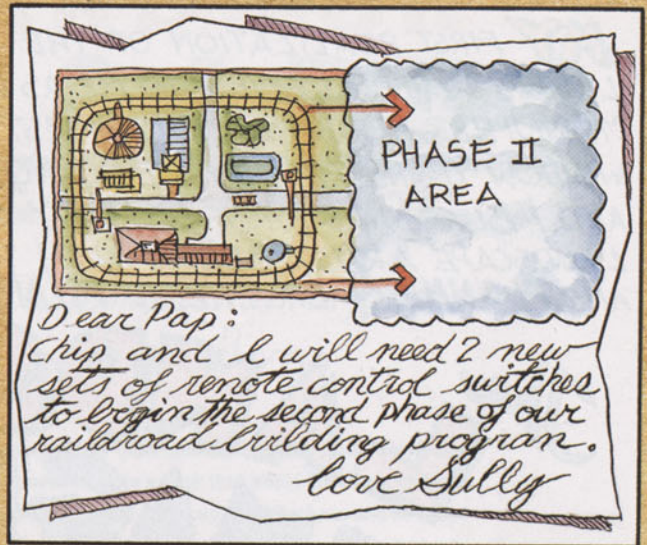
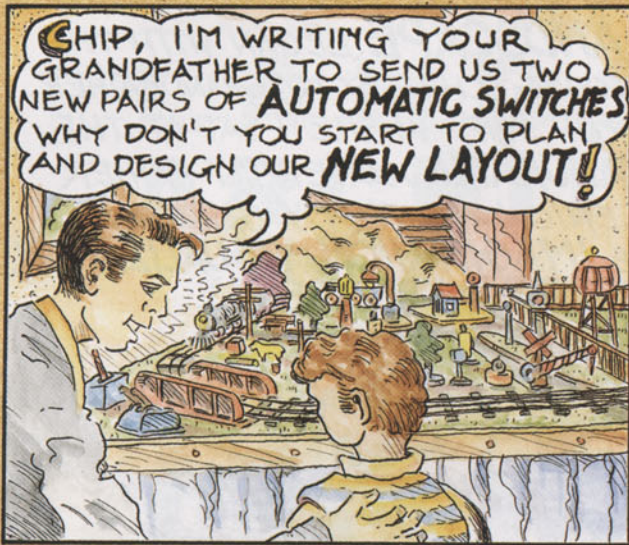


**MY** FIRST REALIZATION OF THE **LANDSCAPE** BEGAN WITH THE LIONEL TRAIN SET GIVEN TO ME AS A YOUNG CHILD BY MY GRANDFATHER. MY MOTHER TOOK ME ON MY FIRST TRAIN TRIP, WHERE I SAT AT THE WINDOW TRANSFIXED BY THE MOVING **PANORAMA**. LATER MY FATHER AND I BUILT THE FIRST OF MANY SCENIC LAYOUTS. MY CAREER AS A LANDSCAPE ARTIST BEGAN WITH THE **IMAGINATION, VISUALIZATION, AND PLANNING** OF THESE **MINIATURE WORLDS**.....

# The **LANDSCAPE** **IMAGINEER** *in* **THE DREAM LAYOUT**



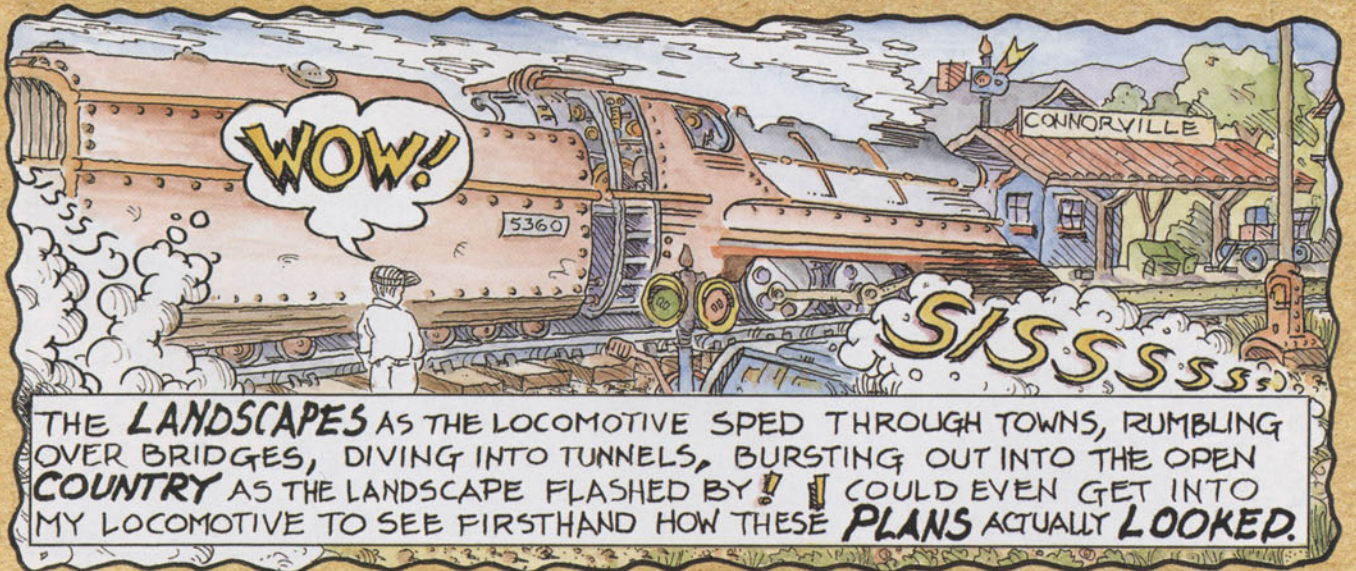




I BEGAN PORING OVER LIONEL CATALOGS FILLED WITH MAGNIFICENT TRAIN SETS, REALISTIC OPERATING ACCESSORIES, DETAILED **LAYOUT PLANS**, AND PAGES OF **SCENERY** DESIGN TIPS.

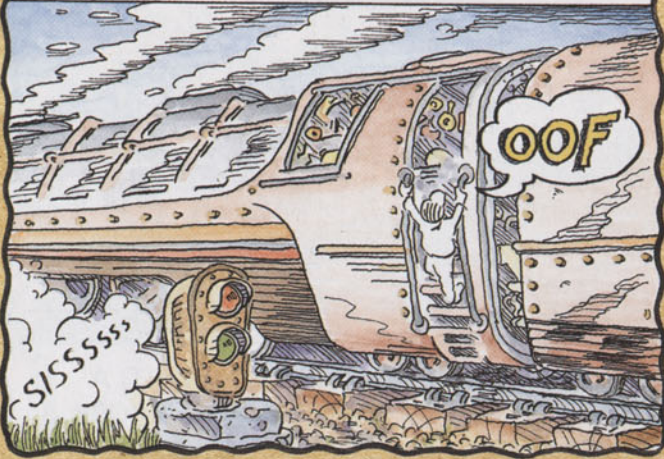


THE FIRST DRAWINGS THAT I REMEMBER SKETCHING WERE **LAYOUT** DESIGNS FOR OUR NEW R.R. I USED MY MIND'S EYE TO **VISUALIZE** HOW THEY WOULD LOOK. I WOULD **IMAGINE**

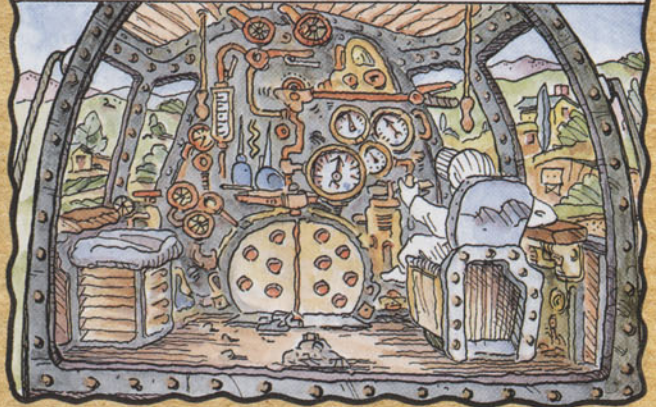




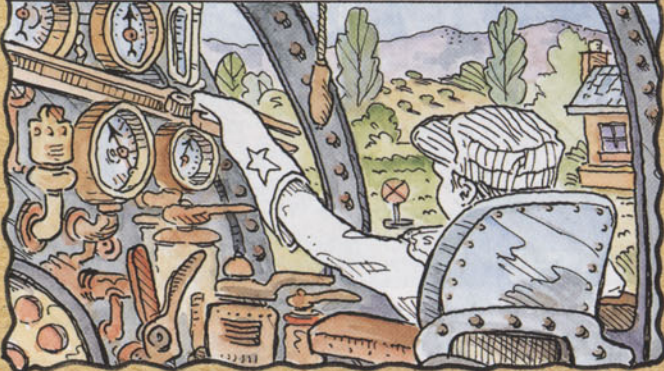
**IT** WAS QUITE A CLIMB,  
THOUGH, TO GET INTO THE  
**CAB...**



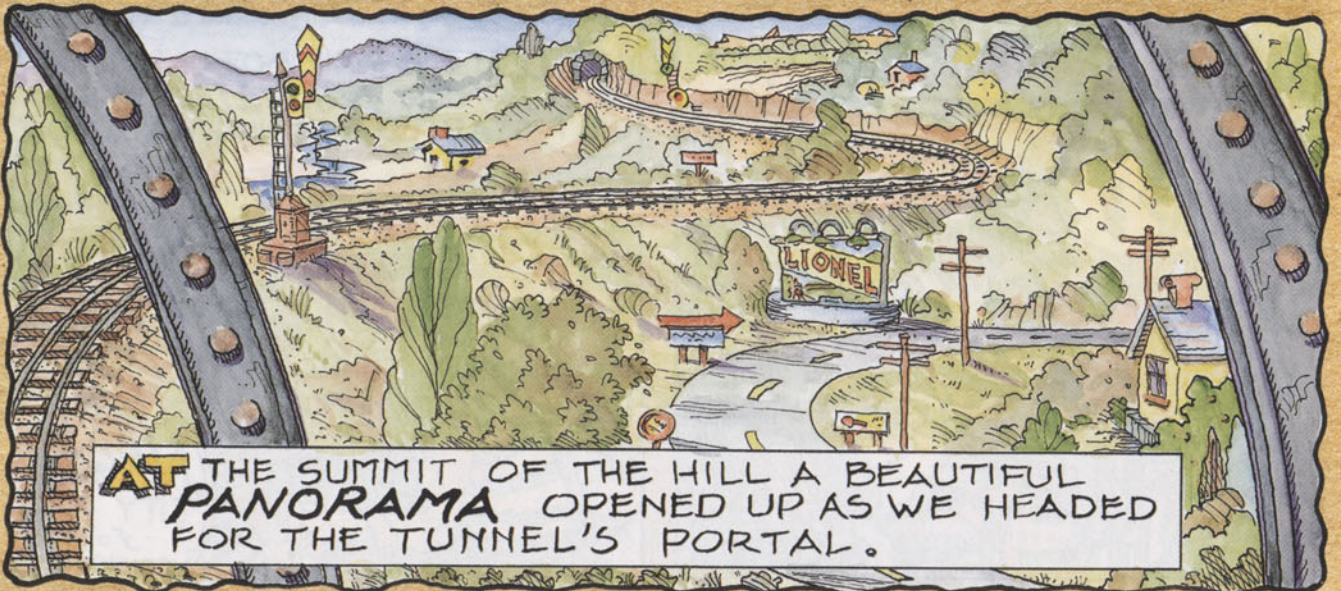
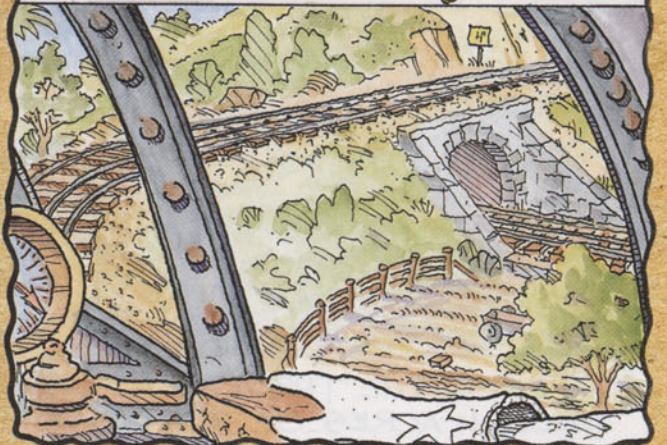
**I** WAS JUST TALL ENOUGH TO  
REACH THE THROTTLE, BUT I  
HAD A CLEAR VIEW OF THE  
TRACKS AND **SCENERY** FROM  
THE WINDOW....



**RELEASING** THE HAND BRAKE,  
AND SETTING THE AIR BRAKES,  
**I** EASED THE **THROTTLE** AND  
THE LOCOMOTIVE GENTLY PICKED  
UP STEAM....



**T**HE ENGINE EASILY **CLIMBED**  
THE FIRST GRADE!



**AT** THE SUMMIT OF THE HILL A BEAUTIFUL  
**PANORAMA** OPENED UP AS WE HEADED  
FOR THE TUNNEL'S PORTAL.



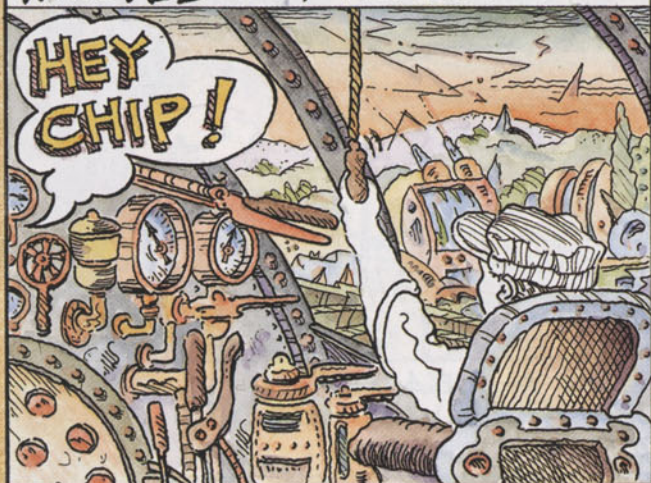


**BURSTING** OUT OF THE TUNNEL, EMERGING INTO THE SUNLIGHT, A FANTASTIC LANDSCAPE CAME INTO VIEW, THE LIKES OF WHICH I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE!



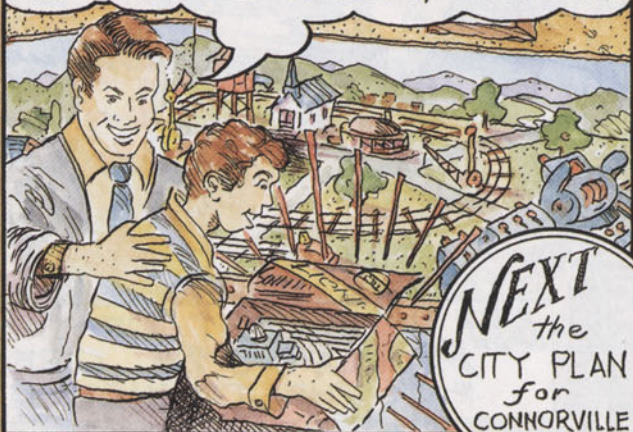
I OPENED THE THROTTLE AS WIDE AS IT WOULD GO, AND SPED THROUGH ACRES OF **STARTLING GARDENS**.

JUST AS I STARTED TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ... I HEARD .....



**HEY CHIP!**

**LOOK** AT THIS! THE BOX OF SWITCHES FROM PAP JUST ARRIVED, LET'S GET STARTED BUILDING THAT LAYOUT.



**NEXT**  
the  
CITY PLAN  
for  
CONNORVILLE