

The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 33 – March 2005

St. Lawrence Division web site: www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld_index.htm

From the Superintendent's Desk

By Stanley Conley

January 29th found us again at Emmanuel United Church, and despite coinciding with the Amherst Railway Society show in West Springfield Mass., we managed to entice roughly 25 devotees to our get together. Business was limited to repeating the information on the NFR spring convention and reminding all that there were spots available at the clinic tables for the Kingston show in mid March.

We started the meet off with a tape from the NMRA library: Russell Straw's Modeling an Historic Site, 1995. Although slightly dated, with an interesting reference to a new but unused resource, computer networks, there is a solid set of useful information on locating historic reference material with emphasis on fire insurance maps.

The meet continued with a clinic presented by Peter Nesbitt on making trees which introduced several variations of armatures, infill material and foliage. Peter works in O scale and the size of some of his trees are impressive!

As always during our meets we went down the display table and encouraged members to expand upon the written display cards, and as usual we were not disappointed by the

variety and quality of the display items. Please see the extensive coverage of the display table later in this issue. Following in a similar vein, we were next entertained by Bob Farquhar as he provided a Power Point presentation of the current state of his just under construction layout in Kingston complete with colourful play by play and carefully drafted layout plans of the Italian version.

Peter Joyce presented a Power Point presentation put together by the group rebuilding Ottawa street car 696. Peter was looking for feedback on the presentation which is intended primarily as a promotion tool as they seek financial and in kind sponsors to continue their work. The presentation covers the historical background of the Ottawa Car Company, and the Ottawa Transit Commission as well as featuring the progress on car 696.

Finally I presented a short clinic on the upcoming rolling stock scratchbuilding workshop. The presentation covered choosing a project, photos and plans of the car, developing working drawings of the major parts of the car, tools required and optional and in progress photos of the pilot model.

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The NMRA video clinic 'Modeling an Historic Site by Russell Straw' holds the boys attention as he discusses the use of fire insurance maps as a modeling tool.

Photo by Stanley Conley

St. Lawrence Division

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Copy Deadlines

November Issue - October 15
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March Issue - February 15
May Issue - April 15
September Issue - August 15

Special thanks to Diane Dodds for proof-reading and general nit-picking

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We had two door prizes to give away, Pierre Bourgoyne took home a large colour print of a CN Locomotive and Bill Meridith has a new soldering iron!

Unfortunately we were unable to come up with a program of layout tours for the afternoon and so our meet drew to a close.

Coming up with great speed is the Kingston Rail-O-Rama train show. This year we have three tables to use to demonstrate model building in its many forms and as of this writing I have a few spots left for anyone who would like to join us for one of the days (Saturday March 19 from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sunday March 20 from 10:00 am to 4:00pm). Please contact myself to check for available space and sign up.

On Saturday February 19th we held the scratchbuilding workshop in a bright basement room at Emmanuel United Church. A total of 11 of us got together to work on models; six participants worked on the project flat car under the very loose direction of myself while the four others worked on projects of their own choosing. Working together in such an environment encourages participation with the sharing of ideas, methods and opinions; there is never a time when you get stuck for lack of help with a problem. As the 'teacher' in this case, I learned a number of things that I will incorporate into the next version of this workshop, some involving clarity in the instructions and diagrams, and some related to guidance of the 'students' and as always, there is nothing like students to find the typos and errors in the diagrams. The group arrived at 9:00 am and the last person was packed up at 4:30 pm with a stop for lunch, all seemed to enjoy the experience.

One of the interesting by products of a workshop session is that everyone brings out their favourite tools for their project and there is always someone with a tool you don't have, haven't seen or used. In that spirit I would like to encourage participants at the next session to bring out your favourite modelling tool; think of it as an addition to the display table that can start conversations and educate the rest of us!

Our next meet will of course be held on March 26th, 2005 and once again be held at Emmanuel United Church, 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa Ontario. As of this writing the content and schedule for the day has not been set but suffice to say that we will likely enjoy another day together. Remember to bring an item or two or three for the display table to share, encourage and educate all who come.

I will remind everyone again that the NFR spring convention will be held April 15, 16 and 17, 2005. The location is in Belleville which makes it an easy road trip for us in the Ottawa area and I know the organizers are working hard to provide an interesting weekend of clinics, layout tours and related activities for our enjoyment. If you have decided to go but not registered, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible, if for no other reason than to provide confidence to the organizers. If you are still sitting on the fence, I encourage you to come along, you will immerse yourself in model trains for a weekend, meet new people, renew old ones, make contacts, learn new things and enjoy yourself.

As always I seek persons willing to provide clinics, ideas for clinics and layout owners who are willing and interested in opening your homes for tours as well as written material for the pages of the Mail Car and now the Frontier Flimsy.

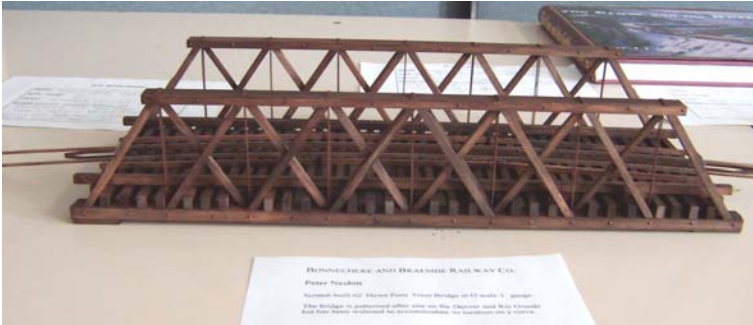
January Display Table

By Grant Knowles

The SLD Membership once again came out with a strong Display Table showing with a varied cross section of material. Despite this month's theme of "snow removal equipment", most members did not need a theme to decide on what to bring out.

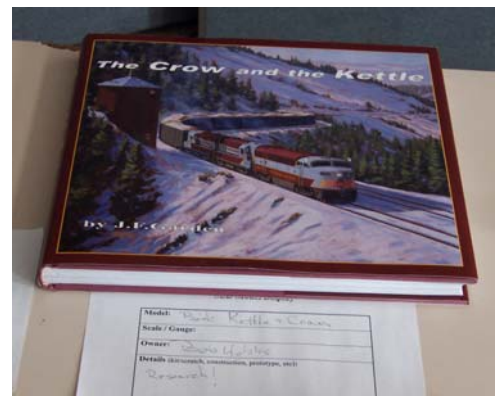


Jeff Hill (above) walked us through his layout planning process where he has used the PlanIt software package to layout the Grand Forks, B.C. empire that will soon occupy a portion of the rec room. The PlanIt tools also support 3 dimensional renditions which helps you to visualize the end design.



Peter Nesbitt brought out his recently scratch built timber through truss bridge for the Bonnechere and Braeside Railway Co. This On3 model is based on a design used by the D&RGW RR that Peter has widened to accommodate the curve in the track.

Bob Hobbs displayed his copy of "The Crow and The Kettle". This recent publication provides excellent photographs and operational details regarding railroading in the Kettle Valley area. Bob mentioned Chapters has the best price for the book.

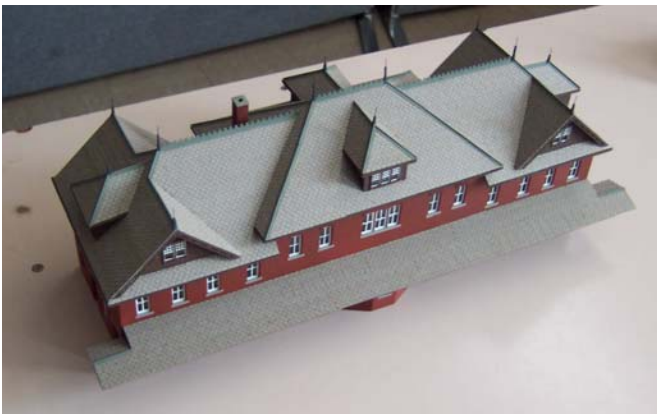


Stan Conley had his "work in progress" of the Sylvain CNR 1949 Double Door Boxcar. The car includes many details that Stan has added. A few more details are required before it's ready for the paint shop.

This year's SLD workshop will be on scratch building a styrene flat car. Stan brought out the prototype for all to review. The workshop will focus on building the core flatcar with underbody details. If one is inclined, you can also build the carpenter's superstructure.



The St. Johnsbury Station is now finished! Carl Swail, after two long years has completed his HO scale master piece. The workmanship is superb on this model which with it's interesting roof line and details will make this focal point of his railroad.



Normand Levert had "another" scratch built Heavy Duty Flat on display. This model has two three axle trucks at each end to a total of 12 axles! Normand will be building a total of 3 each with a ratchet or low brake wheel.

Normand also brought out the SLD Module's steel through girder bridge he is working on. The Central Valley kit is certainly looking great in a black coat of paint and initial lettering. We'll have more on this model and installation as time progresses.



And finally, Grant Knowles had a fully assembled station kit from Bar Mills up for sale in case anyone is interested.

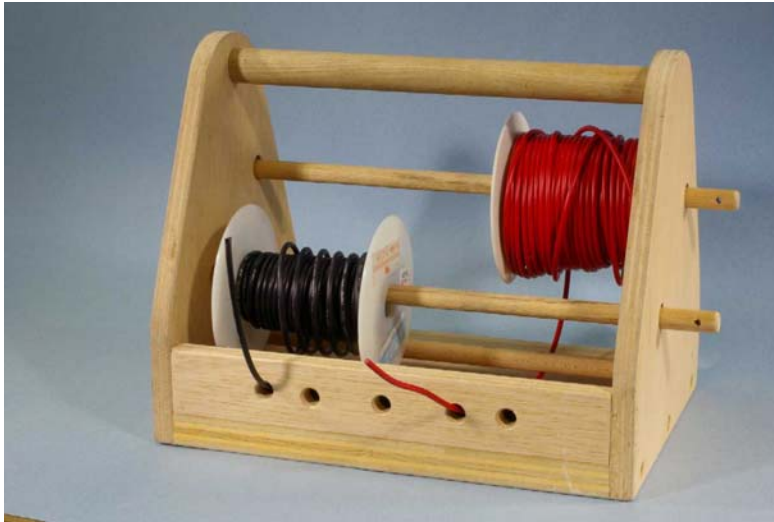
Additional photos are available on the SLD Web site at: http://members.fortunecity.com/gknowles/meets/jan_05/jan_05.htm

Wire Caddy

By Grant Knowles

My past layouts were largely built with wire I had scavenged from work and other places – the life of working with a skeleton hobby budget! I recently had the pleasure to build a layout for a good friend in which we had a budget to cover the cost of construction materials. A quick trip to the local Princess Auto Parts store when they had a generous sale on wire yielded an impressive supply of coloured spooled wire.

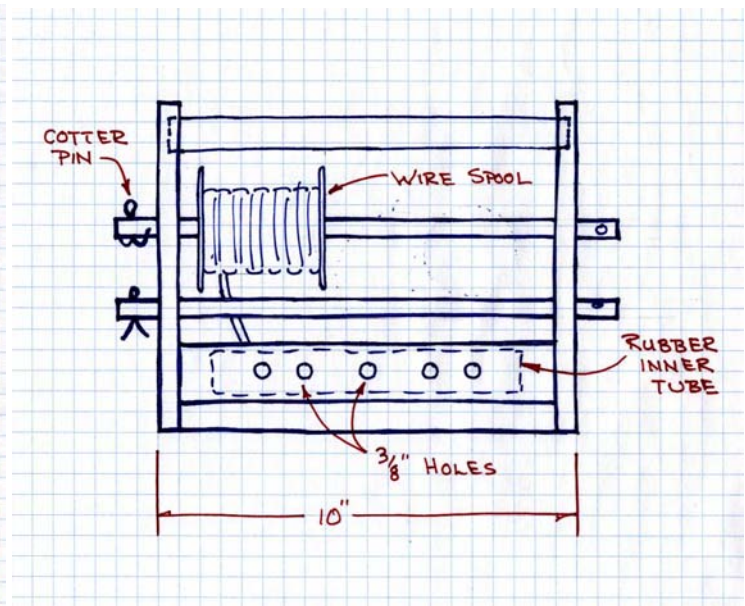
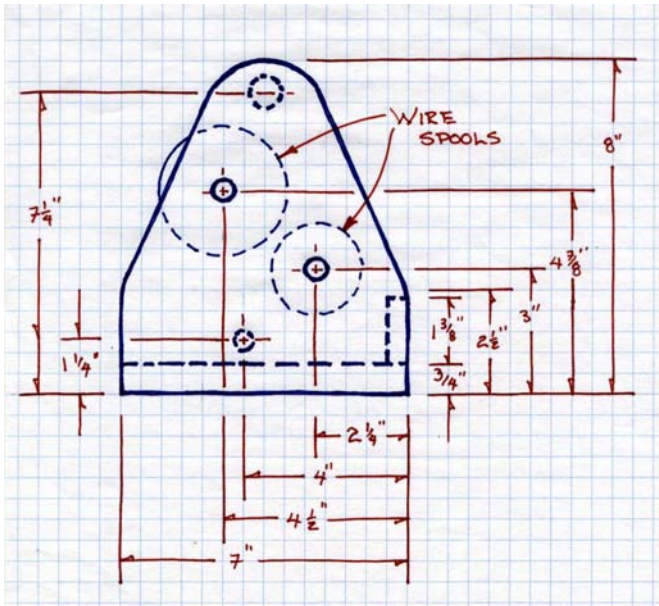
Though we would be using DCC for the layout, we had a fair number of “feeders” to install as we wanted to make sure the layout required minimal maintenance in the future so each rail received its own connection to the main power buss. Of course I had the pleasure of spending many an evening under the layout installing these feeders. It didn’t take me long to realize, as I chased the latest spool of wire rolling across the floor, that there must be a better way of working with the wire. This Wire Spool Caddy was the result of this learning experience.



This wire caddy was sized to hold the spools we had on hand and ended up approximately 10” x 7” x 8”. If I were to do this again, I’d make it about 20% bigger all round to handle larger wire spools.

The caddy consists of two ½” dowel rods which together hold about 6 spools. A ¾” dowel is used for the handle and another ½” dowel is used to direct the wire from the upper rod, under the lower and out the front. The front panel comprised of a ½” piece of plywood with a half dozen 3/8” holes. The wire leads from each spool pass through these holes. To ensure the wire doesn’t pull out of these holes, I stapled a piece of old bicycle inner tube to the plywood and cut small slits for the wire to feed through. In use, you simply pull the wire from the front and cut off what you need. The remaining portion will not recede back onto the spool as the rubber will act as a brake.





Construction is relatively straight forward following the diagrams above. All material for the prototype came from scraps in the workshop. The base is a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood and the uprights are $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood. Cut out all the pieces and drill all holes before assembly. Note that the two dowels that hold the wire spools pass through the side panels while the handle and lower dowel terminate inside the panels.

Attach one end panel to the base with some $1 \frac{1}{4}$ " wood screws and glue (don't forget to pre-drill). Now insert the handle and lower dowel into this first panel with some glue. Add the second panel, with glue in the two dowel holes. Screw and glue in place. Now add the front panel (after you have stapled the rubber to the inside) with glue and nails. All that is left is to cut the two $\frac{1}{2}$ " dowels for the wire and to drill holes at each end for the cotter pins.

Now install your wire spools on the dowel rods and feed the wire out through the front panel holes. Use a cotter pin at each end of the dowel rods to hold them in place.

You are done! Now you have the full compliment of wire spools at your disposal in an easily to move package and there will not longer be the need to chase way ward spools as they roll across the floor!

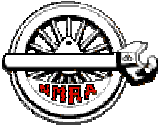
NMRA Dates

SLD Meetings

March 26, 2004 Emmanuel United Church
691 Smyth Road, Ottawa

May 28, 2004 Leslie Hall
St. James Anglican Church
Clothier St. W, Kemptville

NFR Spring Convention
Grand Junction
April 15,16 and 17
Belleville, Ontario



Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, March 26th, 2005

Where:

Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road,

Ottawa

East of CHEO at Dauphin Road

Doors open at 9:00am -- Admission \$5.00

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business

- Draft changes for the Code of Operating Rules

Clinic

- NMRA tape clinic
- Your name here

Display

- The Common Boxcar

Door Prizes

- You never know what to expect!

Afternoon:

- Layout tours

