



# The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 58 – March 2010

St. Lawrence Division web site: [www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld\\_index.htm](http://www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld_index.htm)

## *Model Railroading 101 and the Railfair Raffle layout*

By Andreas Mank

Over the past few months, there have been several discussions on the idea of a Model Railroading 101 program to introduce the interested public to the hobby and to the SLD. The basic concept is to provide an introductory program that will lower the barriers to entry into the hobby and hopefully result in some recruits for the SLD.

Recently, the executive held a brainstorming session to address this idea. We developed a concept where we would use Railfair and other suitable venues to promote the SLD and the concept of MR 101. The program itself would consist of two day long sessions, one at the end of November and the other in January.

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## *The Move of the Bonnechere and Braeside Railway*

By Peter Nesbitt

In the May 2009 issue of the **Mail Car**, Andreas wrote an article about the last run and pending move of the Bonnechere and Braeside Railway. The move happened in June and with the assistance of a few friends was successful.

The layout was not designed to be moved, but one of the railway's construction criteria was that it did not damage the paneled walls of what had been the family room. It turned out that the construction method used to meet this goal was a good system for a double deck layout and facilitated the dismantling of the railway for its move.

So perhaps this is where I should start. The family

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Lorne Munro's fully scratchbuild model of the Fenelon Falls Station. More details on the model can be found in the Display Table report on Page 3.

Photo: Grant Knowles

# St. Lawrence Division

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### Copy Deadlines

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

Special thanks to Beate Herzig for proof-reading and general nit-picking

The first session before Christmas would be geared towards choices for entry into the hobby, preparing folks for their Christmas purchases, and the second session in January will cover practical approaches to get more out of the Christmas presents. These sessions would be followed by a continuing program to provide hands on learning experience to interested new-comers by building the 2011 Railfair Raffle layout under the tutelage of more experienced SLD members.

Just before our brainstorming session it was brought to our attention that the Railfair committee was still looking for a group to take on this year's Raffle layout build. As we felt that the raffle layout could be a good promotional tool to start into the MR 101 program, it was decided to approach the Railfair committee with an offer for a 2 year commitment to build the raffle layout – which the Railfair committee gladly accepted.

During the brainstorming session, a number of detailed ideas were discussed for the program of the MR 101 session, which will need some further fleshing out by the organization.

Meanwhile, we need to get going with the implementation of these plans. The first priority is to find a champion for the 2010 Railfair raffle layout.

The person we are looking for will organize the work sessions, divide tasks into manageable packages and ensure nothing is overlooked. It is not necessary that the champion is an accomplished modeller, as it is not expected that he or she be doing the bulk of the work. In fact, the person will be more "coordinating" the work, as we are sure that the membership will step up and contribute to the success of the project, in particular when it is planned in such a way that nobody gets stuck with a big pile of work.

If you are interested in driving this activity, or want to suggest somebody who could, please contact any member of the Executive. Due to the late start with the project, we need to move quickly with assembling the team and commencing the build. We are discussing various concepts for the layout and are preparing a budget, as we intend to stay within the means provided by the Railfair committee. Two offers of space for working on the layout and one offer for the donation of some rolling stock have already been received.

Our second priority is to find a champion and a small group of volunteers to plan the activities for the MR 101 program. As with the layout, we anticipate to draw from the membership at large for help in the form of short clinics and other activities. The committee would work out all the details and recruit the required help to make this program a success.

Please bring your ideas and suggestions to the attention of the Executive before the March meeting, as we would like to present a more substantial plan at the meeting. We have 4 months until summer when we will see a drop in the overall activity in a lot of our membership and slightly more than 6 months to finish the layout, so let us do our best to make this a success!

# Display Table

By Grant Knowles

Well it looks like Peter Joyce was the only one who took the January Display theme of “Santa Gifts and things that are red” literally! Peter had brought out a pair of Sand Springs RR (Oklahoma) outside braced box cars fresh out of the box – painted in a very bright red colour. Peter also brought out a neat Christmas mountain table decoration that was made in Germany.

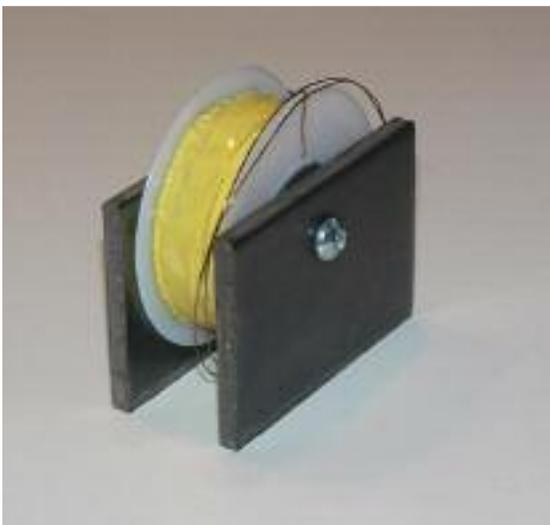


The star of the Display Table was the Fenlon Falls Station that was built by Lorne Munro. The front of the station is shown in the picture on the front page of this issue of the **Mail Car**, the back is shown on the left. Lorne has brought out this project at each meet to illustrate the construction progress on this plaster scratch built model that is based on the prototype. The model featured modified Tichy Train Group windows, hand cut veneer shingles and CAD generated signs. The building is even lighted with the switch hidden as the chimney pipe. Lorne has suggested he will provide a clinic on how he built this model.

Grant Knowles brought out his completed Alamosa Oil House. This is a Cibolo Crossing plaster kit that was coloured as per Chris Lyon’s clinic. The building was targeted for the town of Como on Grant’s layout but since it turned out too big for the desired location, a new site will have to be identified.

In less than four weeks, Alex Binkley was able to assemble his Christmas present of a very smart looking S scale double door garage. This is laser cut wood kit made by Grand River Models – a Canadian company. Not to be left out of the Plaster Structures 101 excitement, Alex was engaged by Peter Nesbitt to build his O scale Downtown Deco Pawn Shop. The nicely coloured and weathered plaster model is now ready for installation on Peter’s pending railroad.

Normand Levert surprised us all by modifying a Design Preservation Models “training kit” into something different. Normand replaced the traditional flat roof with a peaked roof that was scratch built using a Volmer tile roof sheet. The security screen on a window was made from a piece of sheet rock tape.



I find there is never a shortage of talent and ingenuity in the club’s ranks, James VanBlitterswyk is no exception. James had his home made under the track electromagnetic uncouplers on display. These were really neat looking and performed wonderfully on the display track. James has these for sale at a very attractive price, so contact him directly if you need some for your layout.

And to wrap up the display table, we have another outstanding HO scale wood structure built by Mike Hamer. The original building for Berrigan’s Boat Works is a Foscale laser kit to which Mike has added a wall section from Full Steam Ahead (a Canadian company), a roof from Bar Mills and a plaster platform from Ed Fulasz. Mike has built so many laser kits for his “future” layout extension I am starting to wonder if he is building a larger basement to house all of these structures!

Thank you to everyone who brought out their pride and joy for us to examine. Additional photos are available on the

November Meet web page: [http://members.fortunecity.com/gknowles/meets/jan\\_10/jan\\_10.htm](http://members.fortunecity.com/gknowles/meets/jan_10/jan_10.htm)

room had paneled walls over 2x4 studs with a drop ceiling. Lee Valley (I wish I had stock in this company then at least my purchases would increase my investment values) sells a heavy duty shelving system. The vertical standards have an optional bracket that allows the standard to be attached to the top plate of the wall. In my case that meant cutting a small notch in the ceiling tile and L- support that ran around the wall at each location of a vertical standard. Since each of these standards support up to 600 lbs, I did not need many of them.

The system has two types of support brackets. The shorter, 10" or 14" double brackets support up to 150 lbs and these were used for the upper level. The regular 1x4 grid benchwork was bolted to these brackets. Short risers and subroadbed were added and the resulting depth of the upper level was as little as 6".

For the lower level, some of the longer brackets with triangular supports were used. These are good for up to 300 lbs each. Conventional L girder layout construction was used with the L girders resting on these brackets. A short screw went up through the bracket into the L girder just to ensure that it did not slide off the bracket.

As long as you do not get carried away with huge amounts of plaster mountains, the load capacity of this system is more than sufficient.

A bonus of this system was that the hardboard for the backdrop was away from the wall by the inch or so depth of the vertical standards. This meant that it was easy to conceal the wiring going to the upper level.

When it came time to dismantle the layout for the move I was fortunate in that the stairway out of the basement was straight, fairly open, and led directly to the back door of the house. For the narrow part of the layout, an 11'6" long section could be taken out. Thus the town of Deacon came out in one piece. For the wider part, weight became the constraint and Braeside had to be cut in half.

For cutting the layout into sections, I looked at a few options both hand and power. I ended up, you guessed it, at Lee Valley and bought what they call a Japanese Plywood Saw. The



Pete Joyce and Bill Scobie moving a part of the layout from the old location.



Grant Knowles supervising some of the loading.



A few of the layout pieces in their new home.



The family room in the old house. This is in fact an “after” photograph showing the pristine condition of the room after the removal of the layout.

teeth are specially hardened to deal with plywood and are very sharp making short work of cutting through plywood, pine, Homasote, Duro bond and so on. Not cheap but it worked well.

The fact that I use DCC meant that there were not a whole lot of wires to be marked and cut. But never as easy as just 2! Once the upper level was cut into sections and the backdrop removed, each section, with a tap of a rubber mallet on the underneath of the bracket, could be lifted off of the vertical standard. For the lower level, once the short screw from the bracket to the L girder was removed, the railway sections just lifted off of the brackets. To be on the safe side, before I did this, I did screw a 1x2 across the bottom of the L girders in the wide Braeside section just to ensure they did not try to separate.

Given its size, the helix could not be removed in one piece and had to be dismantled. It would be nice if I could avoid one in the new layout – time will tell.

In our new house, moving the layout in was facilitated by having a 50” wide basement sliding window where both panes were easily removable. Lots of help from friends and the job was done and it was time for Pizza and beer.

The new layout room is shaped differently than the old one and about 50 per cent larger. It is sort of L shaped instead of rectangular. The plan is to use the four towns from the prior layout and rebuild the connecting trackage. Some preliminary sketch work has been done but not near a final plan yet.

The workshop has to be built first and then the layout room. With some help from Grant Knowles, the rate of progress has picked up. Stay tuned for future progress reports.

# ***Details of May 2010 Election of Officers for the St. Lawrence Division***

**By Stan Conley, Election Steward**

In May, at the annual general meeting an election of officers is required for the Division. The following extract from the current St. Lawrence Division (SLD) Code of Operating Rules covers the description of the executive officers, the terms of office and their areas of responsibility. In particular please note that in order to prevent the abuse of volunteer goodwill, and the potential abuse of office there are strict limits on terms of office, and several members of our current executive have reached their term limits.

## **Officers and their Duties**

14. The officers of the SLD shall be superintendent, assistant superintendent, clerk, paymaster and dispatcher. The officers shall form the executive of the SLD. At its discretion, the executive may increase the number of officers or change their duties. Two offices may be held by the same person except that a person may not be both clerk and paymaster at the same time. An officer must be a member of the SLD.
15. Officers shall hold office for two years from the date of their election, or if appointed, until the next election, or until their successors are elected or appointed in their stead. Officers shall be subject to removal by simple majority vote at a general meeting of members. The maximum number of consecutive full terms that a person may be an officer is three and he may only hold the same office for two of them.
16. Officers shall be elected at the annual general meeting of members held in an even numbered year. The election portion of the meeting will be chaired by the election steward. If for any reason, an officer is unable to complete his term of office, the executive may appoint a replacement.
17. The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the SLD and chair all meets and meetings. He is also the division's representative to the NFR and the NMRA.

The assistant superintendent shall promote the NMRA and the SLD to others, arrange the program for meets, perform such other duties assigned to him by the superintendent, and in the absence or disability of the superintendent, perform the duties of the superintendent,

The clerk shall serve as the division's secretary performing the normal duties of such position including, maintaining the list of members and supporters issuing membership cards, keeping proper minutes of special and annual general meetings of members, ensuring such meetings are properly announced to members, keeping count of votes, and preparing proxies.

The paymaster is the division's treasurer and will perform the normal duties of such position, including the presentation of a financial statement at each annual general meeting of members.

The dispatcher will be responsible for preparing and distributing the Mail Car, as well as announcing meets and other events.

It should be noted that as a practical matter the Editor of the Mail Car is now appointed by the superintendent and does not have to be the same person as the Dispatcher whose principle responsibilities are distribution of the Mail Car, and other announcements to the membership.

The following table details the history of officers for the division. The first five positions are elected by the membership. The Mail Car Editor and Inspector are appointed by the standing Superintendent and do not have the same term of office restrictions. Inspection of the table will show that Peter Joyce and Paul Bullock have reached the term limit for their standing office and so these positions are required to have new officers elected.

Peter Joyce and Andreas Mank have also reached the limit for continuous elected offices and so cannot stand for office in this election, thank you for your time and efforts gentlemen. Paul Bullock can stand for election in another office should he so desire.

	<b>Fall 1998 to May 2000</b>	<b>June 2000 to May 2004</b>	<b>June 2002 to May 2004</b>	<b>June 2004 to May 2006</b>	<b>June 2006 to May 2008</b>	<b>June 2008 to May 2010</b>
<b>Superintendent</b>	Peter Nesbitt	Peter Nesbitt	Stanley Conley	Stanley Conley	Peter Joyce	Peter Joyce
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b>			Grant Knowles	Peter Joyce	Paul Bullock	Paul Bullock
<b>Clerk</b>	Richard Dickinson	Alex Binkley	Alex Binkley	Tom Badenoch	Tom Badenoch	Andreas Mank
<b>Paymaster</b>	John Mitchell	John Mitchell	Doug Cushman Gary Baillargeon (Jan 2004)	Gary Baillargeon	Gary Baillargeon	Greg Montague
<b>Dispatcher</b>		Stanley Conley	David Steer	Andreas Mank	Andreas Mank	Andrew Chisholm
<b>Mail Car Editor</b>	Mike Pasch	Stanley Conley	Stanley Conley	Stanley Conley Andreas Mank (Sept 2005)	Andreas Mank	Andreas Mank
<b>Inspector</b>	Grant Knowles	Grant Knowles	Grant Knowles	Grant Knowles	Grant Knowles	Grant Knowles

The Division only works if there are active participants in the functioning of the Division and this means that we need an influx of new volunteers to help organize and guide the Division for the next two years.

Anyone willing and interested in volunteering for any of the positions should contact me before the May meet (particularly if you cannot attend in person), or make your intentions known during the election portion of the meeting.

Closer to the May meet, up to date information will be available on the division web site. In particular, in the event of multiple members vying for a position, information on proxy voting will be provided for members who cannot attend the meet.

My contact information is:

Email: Stanley\_conley@carleton.ca

Phone: 613-523-8237

## ***Layout Tour Report***

**By Andreas Mank**

Michel Boucher and Bill Scobie opened their homes to show their layouts as part of the January 2010 meeting. I would like to thank both Michel and Bill for their invitation. Unfortunately, your editor forgot his camera and has no pictures to present. If you are interested in the latest progress on these layouts, please view them on-line at:

Michel Boucher: <http://delaware-hudson.ca/>

and Bill Scobie: [http://www.ovar.ca/MemberLayouts/Bill%20Scobie/bill\\_scobie.htm](http://www.ovar.ca/MemberLayouts/Bill%20Scobie/bill_scobie.htm)

# Turnout Power Routing – A New Perspective

By Grant Knowles

In the last issue of the Mail Car, we took a look at Doug Pelkola's new CN empire as a diligent crew of individuals assisted Doug in building his first serious model railroad. As of this writing, we now have most of the sub roadbed and cork in place except for the main yard which will be installed after the rear hidden staging track is completed. We also have over 80 feet of the main line installed and Doug has been continuously running trains back and forth while we were not looking!

With this great progress on the track installation we can now start thinking about the track wiring and turnout controls. Our basic wiring philosophy is to install a track feeder on each and every rail independent of how long or short it might be. We do not solder the rail joiners, but instead allow them float to accommodate the seasonal expansion/contraction layouts experience. By installing this many feeders, we minimize the opportunity for power loss along a run of track and any potential maintenance issues in the future.

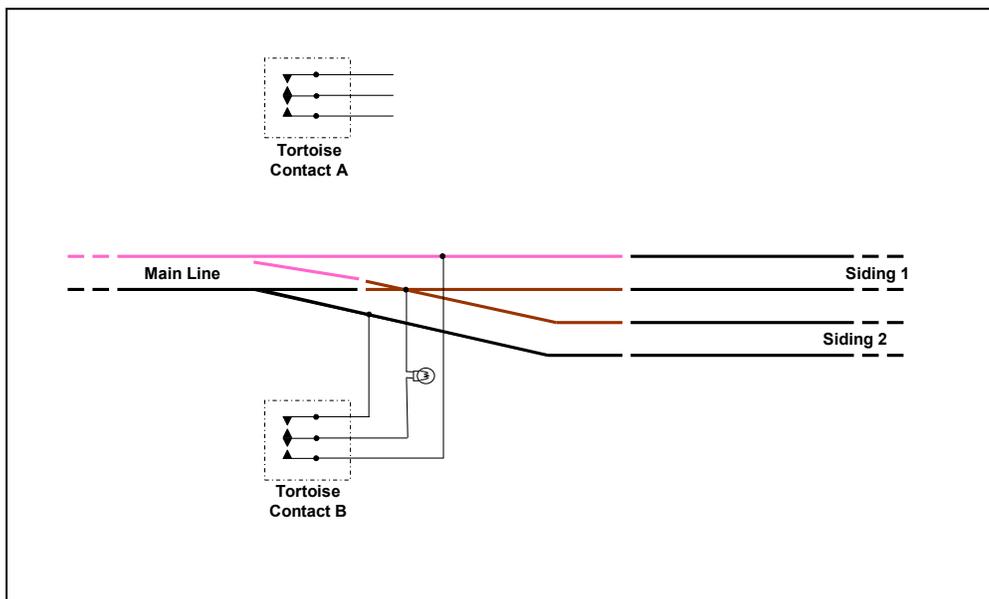


Diagram 1: Turnout frog wiring

Early on we choose to go with the infamous green tortoise switch machines made by Circuitron as these units have performed flawlessly in the past and are relatively easy to install. We installed the tortoises under the sub roadbed as per the instructions and powered the frog via one set of contacts, see Diagram 1. You will note we include a 12v automobile light bulb in the frog lead as this will act as a ballast should a locomotive approach the turnout while the turnout is thrown against it. Normally a short like this will cause the DCC power supply to shut down immediately impacting all other trains in the same power section. The light bulb will serve to reduce this impact and

will also minimize possible damage to the loco's interior wiring. This is something we learned first hand!

You may recall last month we talked about installing a three track hidden staging yard. The challenge all hidden tracks face is ensuring the trains do not foul the leads when they are stored there. We considered installing photocells, and other exotic control devices and may still do that, but as a precautionary measure we also wanted to include some track power controls to help minimize user error issues (truth be known, it was David Steer who was pushing for it!).

After some head scratching and a series of circuit designs we came up with the schematic shown in Diagram 2 that utilizes the minimal amount of parts (tortoise and one double pole, single throw relay). Let me explain how this works.

We have created a "dead section" on the right hand rail (as you head towards the turnout) of the siding whose power is fed through a relay that is controlled by the turnout. The dead section is as long as the longest engine (this could be your longest steam engine or if you are running diesels – you longest MU combination) and ends before the fouling point of the turnout. Thus when a train approaches the turnout, while it is switched against them, the dead section rail will not be powered and the engine (MU set) will grind to a halt as soon as the last set of pickup wheels loose power. If the turnout is set for the approaching train, the dead section rail will be powered via the siding power feed and the train will proceed as per normal.

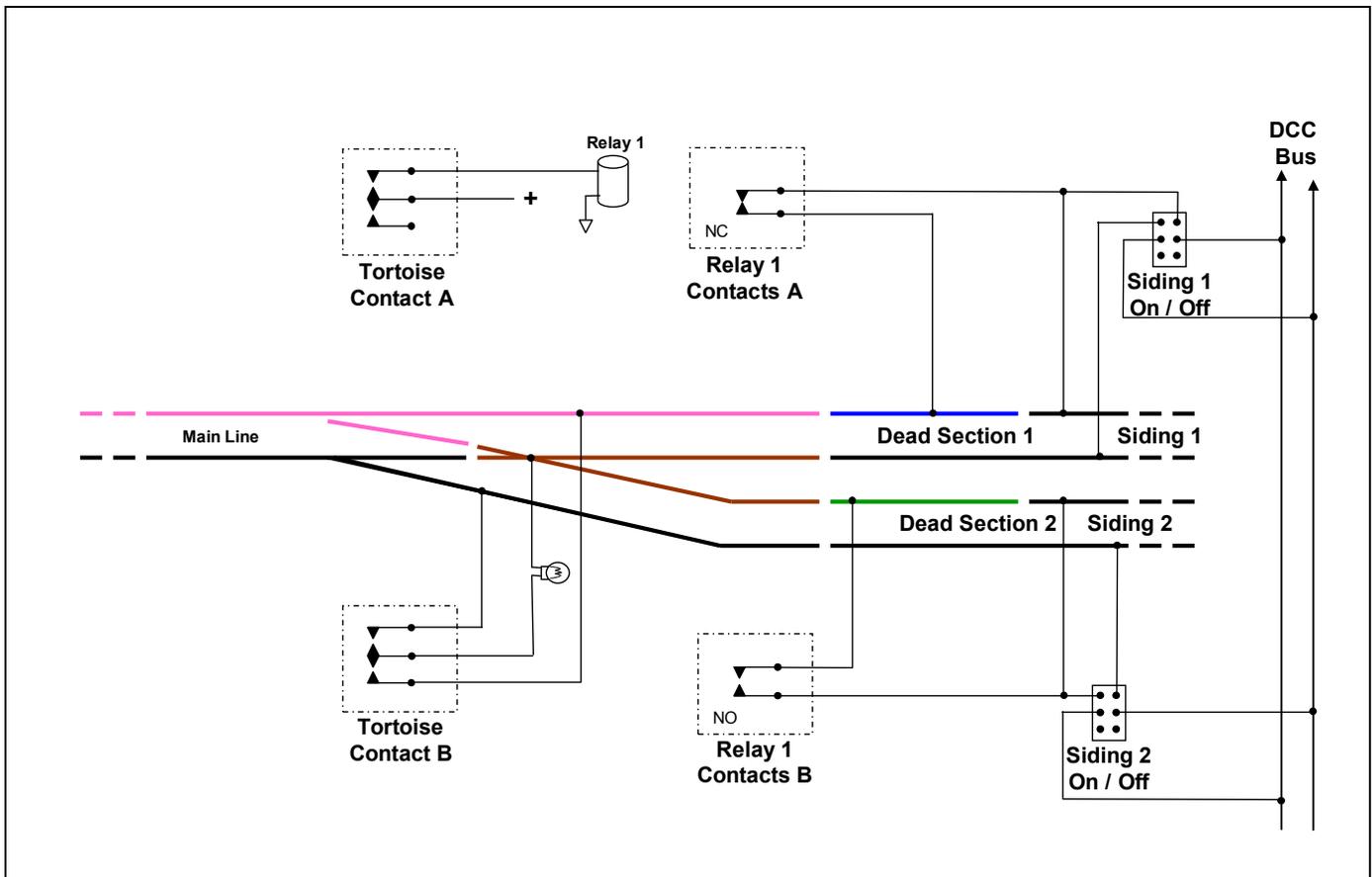


Diagram 2: Staging Track Power Control

We have also chosen to install On/Off toggle switches on each staging track thus allowing us to totally kill the power to that stretch of track – a safety precaution. Note Relay 1 is powered using the remaining set of contacts on the tortoise.

So there you have it, a slight twist to the standard turnout wiring approach that will provide us with an added level of security with the hidden staging tracks.

### NMRA Dates

SLD Meetings		NFR-NMRA Convention	
March 27, 2010	Emmanuel United Church	TBD	
		<b>SLD Workshops</b>	
		April 24, 2010	
May 29, 2010	TBD		
September 25, 2010	TBD		



# Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

**When:**

**Saturday, March 27, 2010**

**Where:**

**Emmanuel United Church**

691 Smyth Road,  
Ottawa

East of CHEO at Dauphin Road

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

**What's on:**

**Morning:**

**Division Business**

**Clinic**

- Peter Nesbitt:  
*Scenery Certificate*
- Ron Newby:  
*Canada & Atlantic*

**Display**

- Photographs of Model and Prototype

**Door Prizes**

- You never know what to expect!

**Afternoon:**

- Layout Tours

