



The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue No. 98– March 2018

St. Lawrence Division web site: www.sld-nmra.ca

Special Announcement:

Editor Needed

The September issue of **The Mail Car** will be issue No. 100. More than half of these issues have been edited by yours truly. We did special issues for the 50th and 75th. I think we should do a special issue for the 100th, but I am out of ideas.

This is just a sign of a larger problem: I am burned out and need to step back from this role.

I am hoping that someone in the readership with fresh ideas will step forward and take over. It does not matter if you are not familiar with the tools of publishing **The Mail Car**. As long as you have a computer I can train you in the mechanics and the software is free. The other key ingredient is a good proof reader, a job that my wife has done for many years. (Automated spell checking can only do so much)

If you are interested we can get together and chat about it (though not at the March Meeting as I will be in Germany at that time) or you can discuss it with the other members of the executive.

Inside this issue:

Election Call

The GVSD Rises

DCC friendly Double Slip

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

Details of May 2018 Election of Officers for the St. Lawrence Division

By Tom Badenoch, 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. The maximum number of terms is two within the same office and three overall.

For the May election, the following vacancies need to be filled:
Dispatcher

(Here is my bit. We have had some people step up to run a few positions, but what we really want is more. As you see we are doing almost a complete changing of the guard, and that is not a bad thing. No experience? Do not know what to do? Do not worry. I can tell you from personal experience that the people supporting you are awesome and open to sharing their knowledge and advice. Really this is about model trains and helping us all become better modellers. The best way for that to happen is if we all share our thoughts and ideas. Thinking that no one is asking you? Well here I am asking you. In this case it is better to have too many people running over not enough. Reach out with any questions.)

Continued on page 3

Cover:

By your editor

As you can see the cover page is mostly blank this time. I can only publish what is submitted to me – and this time there was no photo that was suitable based on format, composition and resolution.

Please send me your shots. Chris did a splendid clinic on how to set up pictures for cover shots – maybe he needs to repeat it.

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 Mail Car Editor and Inspector are appointed by the standing Superintendent and do not have the same term of office restrictions.

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.

Superintendent's Report

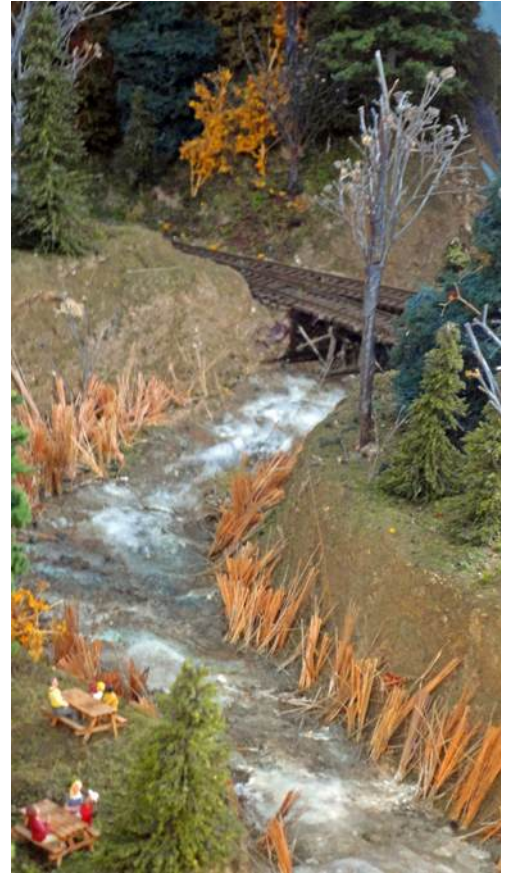
By Chris Lyon

It is funny how it just happens but we are into the winter months and soon it will be spring. SLD folks are taking part in a Kitbuster session in February and there will be presentations at the end of March about Helix construction and machine shops in the steam era. The SLD scratch built turnout program has been a great success as we learned about Fast Tracks turnouts as well as custom build ones and stub switches. The executive officers have been a great help and Malcolm Vant has really stepped forward in his role as Assistant Superintendent.

The financial management is solid and we were so pleased to be able to help fund the CARM folks with their fall layout tour in the Ottawa Area. We firmly believe that the NMRA should do as much as it can to support model railroading promotion initiatives.

It was a success in its first year and we are hoping for newer and better things in the future. Myself I have been busy painting backdrops and detail parts for folks. I have started a couple of structures and I hope to progress them in the next few months. One of the new things I have been working on is modelling moving water using acrylics and cotton...something I learned from the ship diorama modellers (see photos). The CNLVN YouTube channel has lots of new videos and the views are now well over 2 million suggesting model railroading is alive and well.

And always: Every Day is Train Day

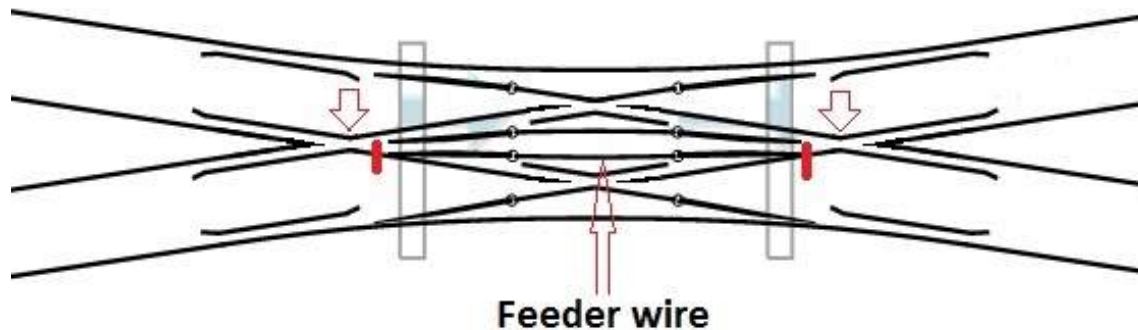


Making a Double Slip Switch DCC Friendly while installed

by Normand Levert

I used a commercial double slip switch in my Montawa yard ladder. I do not remember the make, but essentially it is an insulfrog type construction. The switch is symmetrical in the long axis, and each half is of one polarity. The frogs insulate the two rails coming together with a thin plastic insulation. This worked well in DC. But as many of us have experienced in DCC, when a metal wheel bridges the insulation, the fast acting electronics immediately shut down power. This is easily resolved by painting the rails in the frog. Some modellers have used clear nail polish. I use rust or rail brown so that I can detect if the paint has worn down.

Still, we were getting shorts with some cars travelling through the double slip. What could be the source? I eventually deduced that some wheels would contact both rails just ahead of the frog, where they are one flangeway apart, as pointed out by arrows in the diagram. Painting the inside of the rails would not resolve the problem reliably.



The double slip was already in place, could I solve the problem without isolating the frogs? Yes, by cutting the rail on one side only, we would create frogs with one dead wing rail and eliminate shorts. There is no need to make the entire frog dead because of its insulated construction.

I cut the wing rails of both frogs, on the same side of the double slip. I then discovered the switch relied on point contact to provide power to the inner rails. One point worked well, the other did not. I added a feeder wire to ensure power to the inner rails of that side of the double slip.

The same trick could be used to prepare a commercial double slip switch before installation. With one wing rail dead, metal wheels cannot short across the flangeway. I would also very gently saw a rail wide kerf in the point of the frogs, fill it with styrene strip, and trim to shape. This way metal wheels running across the frogs would not bridge two rails.

Of course, one could build a double slip with isolated solid frogs powered by frog juicers.

TimeTable

Date	Meetings / Shows	SLD Workshops
March 24, 2018	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road Ottawa, ON	
April 28, 2018		Emmanuel United Church
May 26, 2018	Emmanuel United Church	
September 29, 2018	TBA	

The Greater Vancouver Switching District Rises

by Geoff Chase and Tom Badenoch

This is a story of the rebuilding of a layout. You may have had the opportunity to do so yourself, and there are many reasons to do so. Perhaps you have become tired of your track plan, or you want to model a different era, or you want to try a different scale, or (somehow) you got more space, or you have to move. In the case of our friend Chuck (Charles Larabie) it was this last reason. Chuck is a part of our regular operating group, S.N.O.B. (the South Nepean Operating Bunch).

As part of Chuck's job at the time, he would get posted out of the country for three year stretches. In 2008 another posting was announced and they would be renting out the house, and finding a tenant with similar tastes in hobbies would have been tough to get into the rental agreement. Chuck had been running his Canadian

Pacific-inspired *Port Moody and Pitt Meadows* layout since about 2002, focusing on the traffic in and around Vancouver. And so, the tearing down process began in May 2008.

When Chuck returned in the fall of 2011, circumstances determined that apartment living was the way to go. As a result, since he still wanted to run his railway, he opened negotiations with his daughter and son-in-law to use their basement storage room. He asked for some consultative assistance, and Tom Badenoch and I offered to help him in getting something up and running.

The Plan: Chuck had kept all his benchwork modules (good planning!), and they still had all of the track attached. His old layout was about 14 feet by 30 feet, plus the trackage through the furnace room, as well as a storage area about 7 by 9 used for staging. In contrast, the new space is 9 feet wide (narrowing to 7-1/2 feet) and about 29-1/2 feet long. It also provides some design challenges as it hosts the furnace, water heater, a laundry tub, and an electrical panel. Being a



Figure 1: (Top) Dave Copeland, Geoff Chase and Denis Rule consider the full yard in Vancouver, while Tom Badenoch is oblivious over in Coquitlam.

Figure 2: (Left) A colourful collection at the Vancouver Engine House.”

Figure 3: (Right) A pair of SD-40's head into Pitt Meadows.”



storage room it was also blessed with a ton of stuff (toys, suitcases, etc.). Chuck definitely had his work cut out for him.

Here are some of the challenges facing Chuck as he started his planning:

1. Since it is a storage room off a finished recreation room, it has a door that swings into the room, and is about a quarter of the way down the long wall. (about 6 feet remained in the corner).
2. Chuck wanted to retain the operational flavour of his old layout (CP around Vancouver), in fact his initial thought was to just re-connect the old modules (still had the track on them), and get down to operating.
3. The physical constraints of the furnace (36 by 42 inches, in the middle of the 9 foot space at the end of the room) and water heater would restrict town location, track placement, layout height, and the mobility of operators.
4. The narrowing of the room to 7 feet, 6 inches would mean a long narrow center aisle where two operators would likely have to operate back-to-back, with a third operator slipping by as required.

The Build: In early 2013 we had measured the room, noted and located all the obstructions, and we discussed with Chuck what we thought as the first major hurdle – his plan to use the old modules as is, and trying to fit the



Figure 4: An overview of Coquitlam, with Hoffa Cement and a fuel dealer up front of the paper mill.



Figure 5: Overview of Vancouver

trackwork into the new space. We convinced him that to re-use the bench work modules was a good time saver, but first he should take off all of the track, and start with a new track plan. Then we did not see him again for 6 months. Did he not like us anymore for suggesting he re-lay his track?

Eventually, by the fall of 2013 he had cleaned out (or at least relocated) enough of the “stuff” to begin setting up some modules while he worked on his track plan. His construction and track laying proceeded in stages with the first bit being Vancouver yard (to the left of the door) with a few industries, track to Port Moody (around the water heater and beyond the furnace), and around to Coquitlam (on the long wall opposite to Vancouver).

The next step pushed track under the electrical panel and over the back of the laundry tub to the corner of the room. This now fed Pitt Meadows. At this point there was still a lot of stuff piled between the door and the short wall to the corner of the room. In order to consider the possibility of continuous running, Chuck reopened negotiations with the “landlords” to gain access to the corner which would also allow an area to stage



Figure 6: A highway overpass and the water heater separate Port Moody (to the right) from Vancouver.



Figure 7: Plastic pellets and furniture dealers behind the Pitt Meadows engine terminal. The track at right leads to the staging tracks for Seattle and Calgary traffic.

trains for Calgary and Seattle. This of course would require the use of a removable duck-under section across the door.

The third stage added a single-track lift-out bridge across the door, which could allow continuous running, entry of traffic from staging, and act as a year lead for Vancouver. At this point, a first test operating session was held. Tom and I went over to help Chuck run some trains, and some suggestions were made. Chuck followed up with some adjustments to industry locations and tweaked some trackwork before scheduling a second trial session. These sessions confirmed that three operators would be the maximum, given the narrowness of the center aisle. At this point, Chuck decided that all this effort should have a name, and so the new layout was christened the *Greater Vancouver Switching District*, or GVSD.

Stage four, where the layout is now, includes a five track lift out across the doorway holding: Vancouver drill track and departure make-up track; two staging tracks for Calgary; and two tracks representing Seattle. Chuck has also added backdrop (sky-blue card stock panels), and placed most of the buildings needed for his industries, enhancing the overall appearance of the room. He has a general operating scheme that sees trains arrive from Calgary and Seattle into Vancouver, and local trains go out and back to Port Moody, and to Coquitlam and Pitt Meadows. And of course there is a commuter run to generally muck up the freight movements.

We just had our third operating session, the first with the larger lift-out, and it went well. There were more comments and suggestions, but that was one of the things that made it enjoyable – the operating plan is evolving and getting smoother, and we are all having a great time – as long as we remember to get our bathroom breaks in before the session starts and Chuck locks the lift-out in place across the door.

Display Table Report

by Grant Knowles, MMR

We started the new year off on a strong footing with a full house of railroad enthusiasts along with a full Display Table. This month theme was "What makes your heart throb" which was an opportunity for you to share with us something in the hobby which makes you feel good.

As you know, Peter Nesbitt models a free lanced On3 railroad that is loosely based on the logging/lumber industry in the Ottawa Valley. This railroad is affectionately known as the Bonnechere & Braeside. Peter surprised us today by bringing out a very old Athearn HO scale steel coach lettered for the B&B, the Strathcona also sported a fully detailed interior. No doubt Peter has some personal sentiments attached to this model.

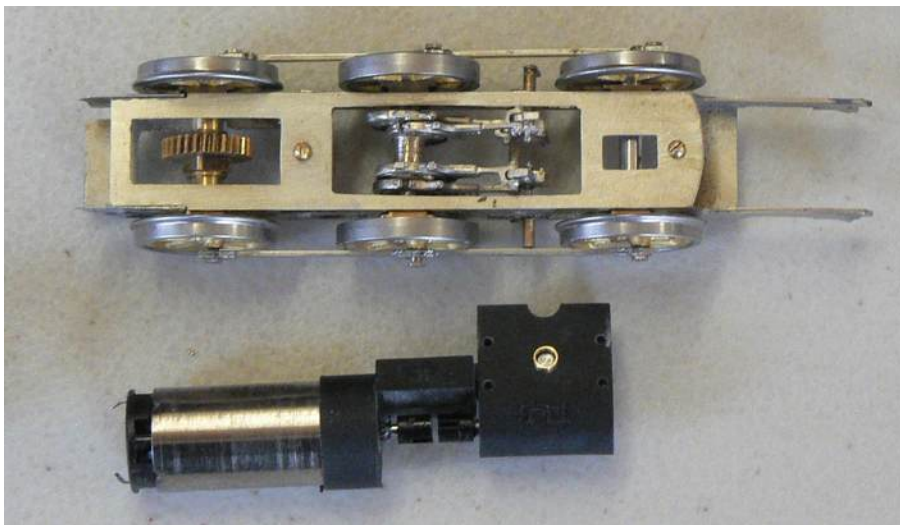
Normand Levert brought out four flats and gondolas. Always one to build interesting models, Normand displayed an Athearn bulkhead gondola, a heavy duty flat (still under construction), a kit bashed depressed centre flatcar (with an interesting load) and a kit bashed artillery tank on a flatcar.

Doug Cushman brought out a fine collection of HO scale "six coupled" motive power. This included three E-10-a moguls made by Van Hobbies, a K-5-a Hudson by Broadway, a J-4-d Pacific by Van Hobbies, a J-7-b Pacific by Division Point and an O-18-a switcher by Van Hobbies. All locomotives sported great paint schemes and were beautifully weathered.



One of Bill Meredith' clients asked him to build a Sn3 model of the Colorado & Southern #537 as no commercial model was available and this was a rather unique prototype. Bill started with a PBL C21 2-8-0 outside framed locomotive and proceeded to remove all the details leaving behind the frame and boiler. Bill

made a few boiler modifications then proceeded to add homemade and commercial castings along with his own etched tender shell. Bill is just about finished after investing 105+ hours effort. The model was built through referencing scale drawing and prototype photos. I brought out my "simpler" HO_{n3} C&S #537 which was kitbashed from a Roundhouse kit.



Bill has essentially finished his N scale Norfolk & Western K2a 4-8-2. As you recall, Bill had created the drawings and had the boiler and tender 3D printed. All that is left to do is install the Tsunami DCC & sound then it is off to the client. Bill also showed us a lost wax copy of the boiler that was based on the 3D printed version, further refinement of the process is required before it can be viable.

Bill has a number of long term projects on the go as they each require creation of drawings which then go to manufactures for parts to be produced (3D printing, etching, etc), then these are evaluated, often necessitating drawing updates and then another round of producing parts. Eventually there is an Eureka moment when everything comes together. One such project is the quest to build a working Stephenson Valve gear in O scale. Bill brought out his working model. The parts were first designed in CAD, printed in 3D then through a lost wax process, cast in white bronze. This is part of a steam engine that is rarely modelled as it is located between the loco frame rails thus hard to see. It is quite impressive to see it in motion.

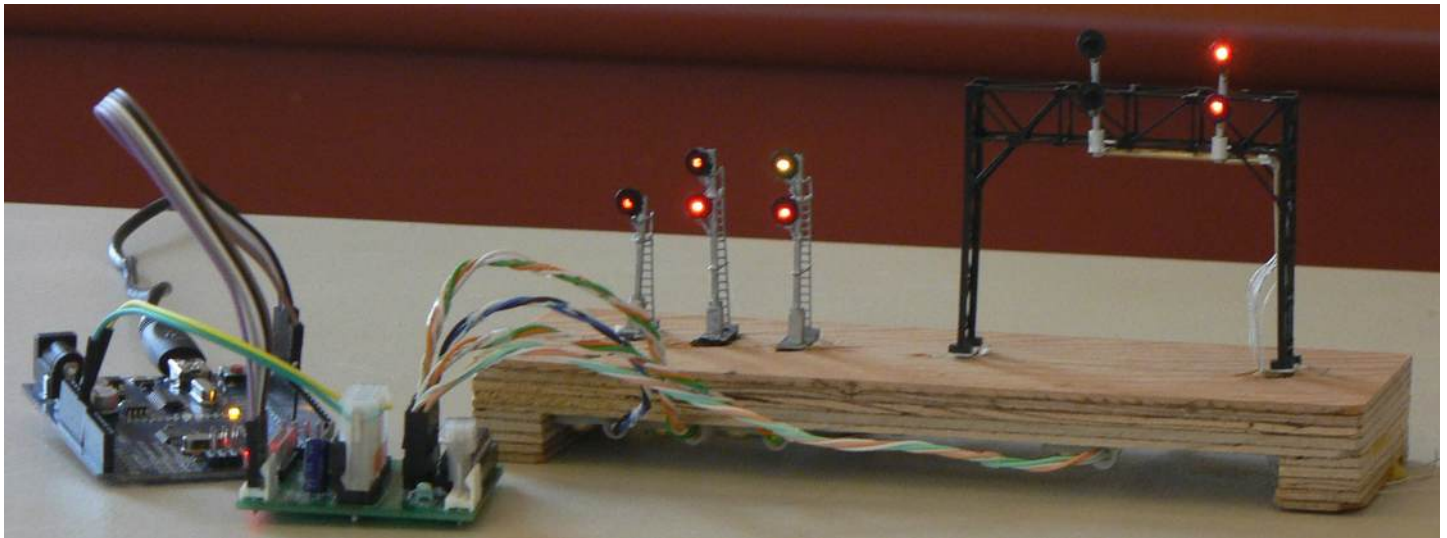


Sometimes you need to build a jig or tool in order to complete a task. Bill had build his own jig to press a driver wheel onto an axle while ensuring it is precisely quartered.

Back in my teenage years I had built the Timber City Depot based on an article by Ben King in the Model Railroader Magazine. This was my first attempt at scratch building and was the inspiration for my lifelong passion for scratch building. The model you see today is my second Timber City Depot which was constructed with Northeastern milled strip wood moldings and sheet stock. There are about 4,000 shingles on the roof! (see bottom of preceding page)

Chris Butler has been scratch building a back wood water tank for his future On3 logging railroad. The water tank was made with a card stock core which was wrapped in 3" x 6" staves (qty. 60) which Chris had to pay particular attention to ensure they were all vertical and the joints tight. The model also includes Grandt Line NBW and styrene hand crafted parts. Chris has yet to add a spout, tank hoops & rigging before it hits the paint/weathering shop. We hope to see the finished product soon.

And to wrap up the Display table, Dave Bullis had a set of his N scale scratch built train signals. These working LED signals were built from brass and plastic stock. These are controlled via a home built controller and Arduiro processor.



That sums up the January Display Table. Thank you to everyone who brought out their pride and joy for us to examine. Additional photos are available on the SLD January meet web page: http://sld-nmra.ca/meets/jan_18/jan_18.htm.

Just to give you advance warning, the theme for the March meet is "Transition Era". So bring out your favourite model, project, picture, etc which reflects the industry transition from steam to diesel.



Next Division Meet

St. Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, March 24, 2018

Where:

Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road

Ottawa, ON

Door Open at 9:00 am -- Admission \$7.00

What's on:

Morning:

Clinics by:

Steve Watson leads a panel on:

Helix construction

Mike Hamer and Doug Matheson:

Steam Era Machine Shops

Display Table:

"Transition Era"

Afternoon:

Layout Tours:

Normand Levert

Ron Newby

