



The Mail Car

Issue no. 29 - May 2004

St. Lawrence Division web site: www.cyberus.ca/~g_knowles/sld/sld_main.htm



Participants sit in rapt attention as David Jeanes chronicles the development of cantilever bridges for us during the March SLD meet, the second of two presentations that day. Photo: Stan conley

From the Superintendent's Desk

By Stanley Conley

March's Meet seemed to get off to a slow start as participants wandered in but by the time we started the meeting 27 had come through the door. ALL were provided with a bountiful display table and two fine presentations, as well as two interesting layout tours in the afternoon.

Mike Hamer was press ganged to provide a short clinic on the bridge piers he has made for himself and a few others. He presented a pictorial tour of the many types and characteristics of bridge piers and then proceeded to demonstrate and how to cast, carve and finish a masonry pier made of hydrocal plaster.

David Jeanes wowed us with his presentation on the history and development of the cantilever bridge, an excellent example of which we have here, the Alexandria Bridge over the Ottawa River, and a design that reached its pinnacle with the construction of the Quebec Bridge over the St. Lawrence River.

Andreas Mank's N Scale layout represents the activity in the vicinity of Mexico, Missouri where the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy and the Wabash interact. The layout has been designed to facilitate the operations in the area modeled, with careful consideration to the physical inter-operations between the railroads. Andreas is beginning to make headway with his scenery and structures now that the trackwork is complete and operations are possible. Andreas also presented his next big project, an HO scale layout depicting an industrial switching area on the west side of Toronto.

Jacques Huppé invited us in to view the current state of the ONE, the Ontario North Eastern a busy bridge line from Ottawa Ontario to Portland Maine. Jacques' layout is a winding multi deck rail voyage complete with extensive staging, marshalling yards, interchanges with intersecting roads and even a working car ferry for dangerous or over sized loads that cannot travel through the under river tunnel.

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

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The progress made since the last tour is quite amazing, with extensive operation possible over most of the road although I get the feeling that if it were possible, Jacques would burrow out through the walls to get 'just a bit more'.

Jim McSherry won an Oregon Dwarf Signal from the SLD coffers and Ian Walker took home a copy of the annual *Layout Planning 2004* donated by Bill Wyman.

On Saturday April 3 Paul Bullock hosted and conducted a workshop on interfacing a PC to the real world. Paul took us through the digital world of the PC and its parallel port, and covered the basics of connecting this to simple circuits to sense a light beam and control a light or turnout motor. Paul extended this as he covered how to multiplex the available lines out to a much larger number of circuits. The group which had a variety of backgrounds was ably guided through both the construction of the various electrical circuits and the creation of the software to implement the control. All who attended came away with an appreciation of what could be accomplished and some I am sure, even the interest in pursuing this part of the hobby.

In late April I traveled to London Ontario and along with about 125 other NMRA members attended the Annual Convention of the Niagara Frontier Region, the region to which our Division belongs. Imagine a three day SLD meet and you begin to get an idea of what a convention is like. I attended several interesting clinics, took a ride on a train, visited the Elgin County Railway Museum in St. Thomas, visited about 10 layouts and took part in the model contest. Most importantly I enjoyed spending time with a whole lot of other model railroaders. From some attendees point of view, the most important part of the convention is of course the general annual meeting for the Region where the business of the region is discussed and hopefully direction is set for the next year. This year there was much discussion over the future of the conventions, the Region and the NMRA itself, as all of these are suffering from low participation as a result of many issues both inside and from outside the organization.

have come to realize that the overriding benefit of the NMRA and its various sub-organizations is the provision of venues in which to meet other modelers, exchange information and ideas and become acquainted with others who share similar ideas. At the local level this venue is the SLD meets held five times a year, one step up is the NFR Annual Convention, and then the NMRA National Convention such as the one held in Toronto last summer. Each venue provides a different level of interaction but they all serve the same purpose - to further the exchange of information and ideas. All of this is only possible if there are enough participants willing to support the organization, at the national level to support the overall structure and at the local level to facilitate the meets, provide clinics and lead workshops.

On a personal note, I took a model to London to enter into the judged category with the aim to have one of the eight cars required for the cars certificate in the Achievement Program. I planned to include it as one of the 4 non-merit award ones as the model was a relatively straight forward resin kit for which I included a simple scratch built load and I prepared what I considered a minimal set of documentation, all on the official form, no extra inclusions. I was most pleased to find that I had garnered 90 points and therefore a merit award for this car, illustrating to me that exceptional modeling and extensive documentation is not required to fulfill the requirements of the AP program. So, if I can do it all of you can as well!

March 2004 Display Table

By Grant Knowles
Photos Stan Conley

At this month's meet we followed a slightly different model and plumb forgot to formally present these wonderful models to the participants. Maybe we should follow that model in future as the table did attract attention all morning.

The theme for this month was "current projects on your bench" and I'm pleased to say every one aligned with theme this month (not that it really matters).



Peter Joyce showed us his O scale Rural Station that is nearing completion. This project was initiated at last year's Kingston Rail-O-Rama show and Peter used the time at this year's show to nearly complete the model. The building is actually the "Store & Warehouse" kit made by Gloor Craft Models which Peter has modified to represent a station on his MS&C railroad. Peter has added some interior details to make the building to represent active use.



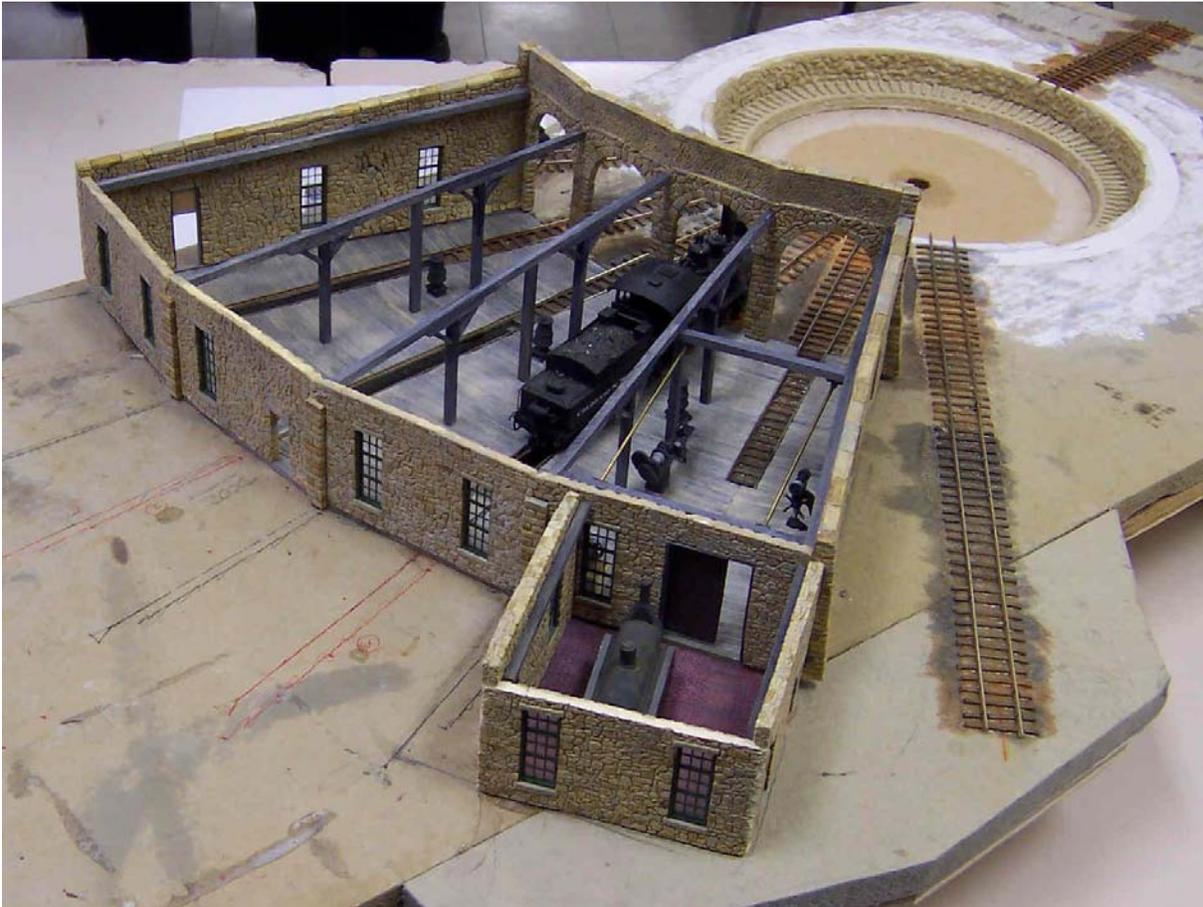
Paul Anderson also brought out his finished product from the Kingston Show. Paul has assembled a sharp looking string of Bowser Trailer Train cars. I gather they even track well on the railroad.

Stan Conley had a wonderfully detailed Fowler Box Car in the buff. This is an HO scale resin kit that is now awaiting a fine coat of paint and lettering. Stan also had a piece of rare Canadian heritage in the form of a long gondola resin kit made by the Westerfield. This car is also ready for the paint shop.

I gave Andrew Bachelor a challenge this month. Just a short while ago, Andrew let slip his talent for building structures with his Hamilton Model Works Coal Dealer. As this was just the business we needed for the SLD Module, we picked up the same kit and asked Andrew to build it for us. There was a twist, the building would have to be modified to fit the smaller space and we also required an open truck scale and associated scale house. Well Andrew came through in fine form with a beautifully built set of models. The scale house, even had a scratch built interior – scale, desk, chair, etc! Look for a future article by Andrew on how he did all this.

To show the diversity in the SLD railroad interests, David Steer brought out his Kingston Rail-O-Rama project. This time we have a On3 narrow gauge boxcar. This resin kit is made by Foothills Model Works and represents a Nevada County Narrow Gauge car. If you haven't had the pleasure of assembling a FMW kit, you don't know what you are missing. Their castings are top notch in detail and quality.

I don't know how I get myself into these situations, but I am now scratch building two Westside Lumber Company heavy duty flat cars. These On3 models are built from Mt. Albert strip wood, various detail castings and the usual assortment of wire and junk. The WSLCo had a handful of these home built cars that were used to move heavy equipment between the lumber camps. One car has an open deck with cross rails to allow machinery to slide the on and off in relative ease.



The final model on display is the Como Roundhouse that Grant has been slowly working away at. This Hon3 model is a plaster kit made by Model Masterpiece many years ago. I now have all the walls in place after carving the inside details. The floor is in and we are now tackling the overhead belt system for the shop machinery. A recent discussion on the DSP&P News Group identified that the RR had mounted locomotive head lights on the front wall of the building to light the turntable pit at night – very unusual. I'll keep you posted on my progress.

A new industry for the switching module

Andrew Batchelor

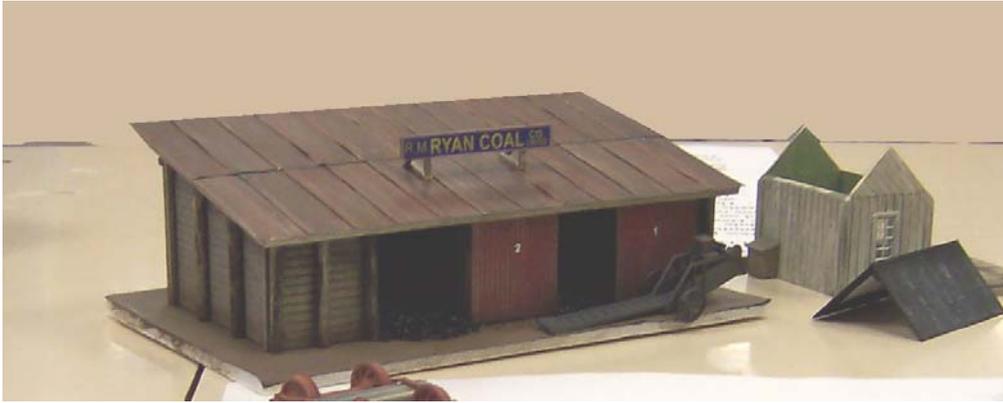


Photo: Stan Conley

After successfully assembling a coal shed and scale house (both from Hamilton Model Works), Grant Knowles “volunteered” me to complete a set for the SLD switching module. So when we finally got together to discuss location and available space, I discovered that although the division supplied the coal shed, the scale house “kit” was really a collection of parts and scribed wood from Grant’s scrap bin.

So here is what I did...

Coal Shed

The two-bay coal shed is adapted from a Hamilton Model Works kit. The original structure, with three bays had to be shortened to two in order fit the space available on the module. Basically a pole-barn, this building was straightforward to assemble as per the instructions. Shortening it simply involved leaving a door and wall section off each side.

The poles were given some additional “grain” by scratching them with an old razor saw before staining all parts with an alcohol and India ink stain. The scribed siding had to be weighted in order to dry flat. The doors were then dry-brushed red with acrylic craft paints, and dry transfer numbers applied. The numbers were pressed into place and cut through with a razor blade so an additional drop of India ink stain could weather the bright white look.

I pre-assembled the main wall components as per the instructions, dry-brushing Floquil Dirt along the bottom of all walls. Since the coal shed has no floor, I elected to glue the building to a small piece of foamcore board. This board will be incorporated into the “ground” on the module.

Before the roof went on, I filled one bay completely with coal and created a pile spilling out the second bay door. In order to keep the weight down, and to avoid buying a whole pile (literally) of coal, I cut some foam to shape to fill most of the bay. It was then painted black and the kit’s “medium” coal sprinkled into the wet paint. I added more when it was dry, and several soakings of thinned white glue with a few drops of alcohol cemented everything in place.

The roof is covered of 4x12 foot corrugated metal panels. These were stuck down to a strip of masking tape and painted with Model Master Rust. They were weathered with a combination of dry-brushed craft paint (black, burnt umber and burnt sienna) and washed in one direction with the India ink stain, and again with thinned Floquil Grimy Black. The metal sheets were then added to the styrene subroof in a random order, taking care to make sure the weathering ran down the roof. I used Walthers Goo - this is much better than the gel CA that I used on my own version of the kit. The roof assembly is Goo-ed to the shed at each corner.

The only modification I needed to make was to sand down the top of the low wall, along with the track for the door. This is necessary to make the roof sit properly.

Scale platform

The base of the platform is thick styrene left over from shortening the roof of the coal shed. The 1x8 boards around the outside, as well as the base were painted Floquil Aged Concrete. The inside edge of the concrete walls were capped with brass angle painted and weathered to an old rust look, similar to the roof of the coal shed. The 1x6 boards on the scale platform were cut to leave a gap to simulate depth beneath the deck. Everything was washed with the alcohol-india ink stain.

Scale house

The little scale house / office is scratch built from board and batten and scribed siding. It uses two Grandt line windows and a modified Kanamodels door. The walls were assembled flush against 4x4 corner posts, which makes construction easier while giving the appearance of trim boards. The gable ends were cut separately from scribed siding and attached with SuperJet Gel CA. The side walls were then sanded to match the angle of the roof. The size of the structure was determined by a scrap piece of scribed siding I used for the floor.

The roof is three scale foot wide strips of masking tape overlapped about 4 scale inches. It was painted with black craft paint, and given a whitish-grey wash to age it. The ridge of the roof is a scale 4x4.

The interior is painted a light green (craft paint) and the desk, chair, bulletin board, and scale apparatus are scratch built from a combination of styrene and bass wood, wire and masking tape. The clock on the wall and the notices on the board are cut from the Walthers catalogue.

I had originally intended this building to have a reasonably new appearance - I had painted it a nice creamy yellow with white trim. Then I went a little overboard on the weathering. Where I had intended just to bring out the details and highlight the board and baton siding, I got a greyish mess! So after it had dried, I took the same yellow and dry-brushed over the weathering. I added the little bin and the outside light from scraps in my own junk box.



Photo: Bob Farquhar

Things I learned....

Make accurate cuts, but when in doubt - go a little long. It is easier to sand away the excess, but hard to add more material.

I use water-based stains and paints (except the alcohol-India ink stain) and they will warp things like you would not believe. Weight all your pieces while they dry to ensure they stay flat. Painting both sides can also help - that is partly why the scale house is green inside.

Go very carefully when weathering light colours!

For metal parts like the corrugated roofing and the angle iron on the scale - you might try dullcoating before painting, to give the paint something to grip. I will protect the finished job with a spray of dullcoat, but I had to touch-up a couple of times when the paint came off. Be warned though - alcohol *over* dullcoat will make it turn whitish-grey.

You can scratch build small structures like the scale house from plans in your head, but more complicated buildings will need better planning... and plans! Here are a few links:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html>
<http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/abeng/plans/>

Hamilton Model Works - <http://www3.sympatico.ca/mvoogt001/>

I have also been informed (again by Grant...!) that I will install these buildings on the module, so I will have an article on that in a future edition.



Mike Hamer has everyone's attention as he works through the process of making a mold, casting a plaster blank, carving the masonry detail and applying colour and weathering to his bridge pier. Left photo Stan Conley, right photo Bob Farquhar

Modeling Tips from the machine shops of the

Bonnechere & Braeside Railway Company

Balsa wood is commonly used by the model airplane builder but its use is seldom mentioned in the model railroad magazines. I have found it very good for making tree trunks.

A plane or a coarse rasp will have a square piece turned into a slightly tapered sort of round "trunk" in no time. The softness of the balsa makes this so easy and quick. If a plane was used, then a rasp or a fine toothed saw blade drawn along the length will add some "bark". A little touch with sandpaper to remove the fuzz and you're done except for a bit of stain. Alcohol and shoe dye work and I suspect other staining processes will work on balsa as well.

A while ago I let the editor know that I would pass on the torch after the twentieth tips column. This is number twenty and time for me to retire. I know that many of you have good ideas that would be of interest and help to the rest of us. Don't be shy about coming forward.

Peter Nesbitt
General Manager

The layout room

By Bill Meredith

It's likely safe to say that many of us have spent many hours drawing track plans, and why not; it can be one of the truly enjoyable aspects of our little diversion. But how much thought goes into the layout room itself? After all, this will be the room that houses your creation and it should be as good as the layout at least. Proper layout room planning is as important as anything and a well designed layout room will bring out the best in your layout. It can't be overstated that good planning and execution of a well designed layout room will make a huge difference. This planning must start as soon as possible.

The first step to a well designed layout room is ensuring that you have enough electrical power. Building codes indicate that wall sockets must not be more than 8' apart along any wall. You also need to consider (and this is critical) how many lights you will need to effectively light the layout. Be generous and give yourself a margin. A single 15A circuit can provide enough power for as many as 45 40W florescent bulbs before blowing a breaker assuming zero line resistance. A better plan is to restrict the bulb count to 30 per circuit. Will there be any incandescent lighting for example on a dimmer switch? As it is not possible to operate both florescent and incandescent bulbs on a circuit controlled by a dimmer switch, you will need a dedicated circuit depending on the load. A 15A circuit will safely support 1600W, any more and you are running the risk of overloading the breaker. More on lighting later. Just make sure that you have enough safe power. Don't forget to factor in the actual layout power! You may need to add a pony panel to your breaker box for the additional required circuits.

The first step to layout room construction is the wiring. Building codes are fairly clear on acceptable practices. Treat yourself to a trip to your local library or book store for the latest rules and regulations. When you are ready, call your friendly electrician and get him/her to do the dangerous tasks and check out that what you may have done is safe.

A nice touch to the train room is a proper ceiling. They help keep dust off things and it can help things look neater. I installed a suspended drop ceiling. The key here is to run lighting circuits to the vicinity of where the lights will eventually be installed. Install the ceiling once the lighting power has been roughed in. I used twin 48" florescent fixtures that I attached to the suspended ceiling "T" bars with devices called "Caddy Clips". These clips were very difficult to find but are available in bulk from a lighting store off of Bayswater in Mechanicsville. Don't bother going to Home Depot or Rona; they don't have them.

The actual lighting is a science unto itself. One must be careful using cheap florescent bulbs as they will bathe the layout colours in a white blue light that will alter the colours of the layout itself. While these bulbs are cheap and easily found, they will affect the overall appearance of the layout and this must be avoided. A better solution is to use high Kelvin florescent bulbs with a high CRI (colour rendition index) with a high lumens value (dictates the brightness of the bulbs). I have in the past purchased high CRI bulbs of value 92 but with a low lumens value and the final affect was that of a hazy blue smoke in the layout room. I was informed by a friend of mine in the theatrical lighting industry that this was a classic case of "you gets whats you pay for" (sic) and that the specifications of the bulbs incite a phenomena with the human eye that gives everything a blue hue. After some calling around, I found that I could order appropriate bulbs through Litemor on Cyrville Road and these were made by Philips (ADVA Alto 5000K with 3000 lumens and a CRI of 85). I had to buy a case and I waited 2 months but the final affect made it all worthwhile.

The florescent bulbs give the layout a nice lighting fill and should provide adequate lighting for general purposes. I have separate incandescent lighting circuits installed that will feed halogen track lighting. These lights will target key structures and will create desired shadows from the structures. The desired shadows will defend against the "high noon" affect and give the scenes on the layout greater depth. The original intent was to have the entire layout lit with incandescent bulbs but the power draw to do this effectively given my space would have been absurd not to mention very costly. The plan is to at least have some form of control over the layout lighting so that night and evening running scenarios can be effectively recreated. I visited a layout in Vancouver a few years back that used incandescent bulbs on a dimmer circuit with black light bulbs on a separate circuit. The affect was amazing, and recreated a full moon wonderfully.

A key point is that the layout is only part of the scene. The setting and conditions in which the layout resides can make or break the final effect. It's important to create a sufficient infrastructure for your dream layout to ensure that the trains can be seen and appreciated. Although it may add months to the effort and a substantial amount of \$\$, the end result of a life long passion will make it all worthwhile.

SLD Election of Officers

In accordance with the Division's Code of Operating Rules I have been appointed as Election Steward for the upcoming election of officers at the annual general meeting to be held in conjunction with the meet on Saturday May 29th.

I will be nominating the following candidates.

Superintendent	Stan Conley
Assistant Superintendent	Peter Joyce
Paymaster	Gary Baillargeon
Clerk	Tom Badenoch
Dispatcher	Andreas Mank

At the annual general meeting, members may make other nominations. While not required, they may make their intention to do so known to me in advance. An Officer of the SLD must be a member of the NMRA and the NFR.

All SLD members (i.e. those who belong to the SLD and the NMRA) are eligible to vote in person at the annual general meeting.

Peter Nesbitt
May 2, 2004

From the SLD Code of Operating Rules

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 NMRA and the NFR.
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.



Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, May 29th, 2004

Where:

Pembroke Public Library
237 Victoria Street,
Pembroke

Doors open at 10:00am -- Admission \$5.00

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business

- Annual General Meeting
- Election of Officers

Clinic

- Turnout Construction

Display

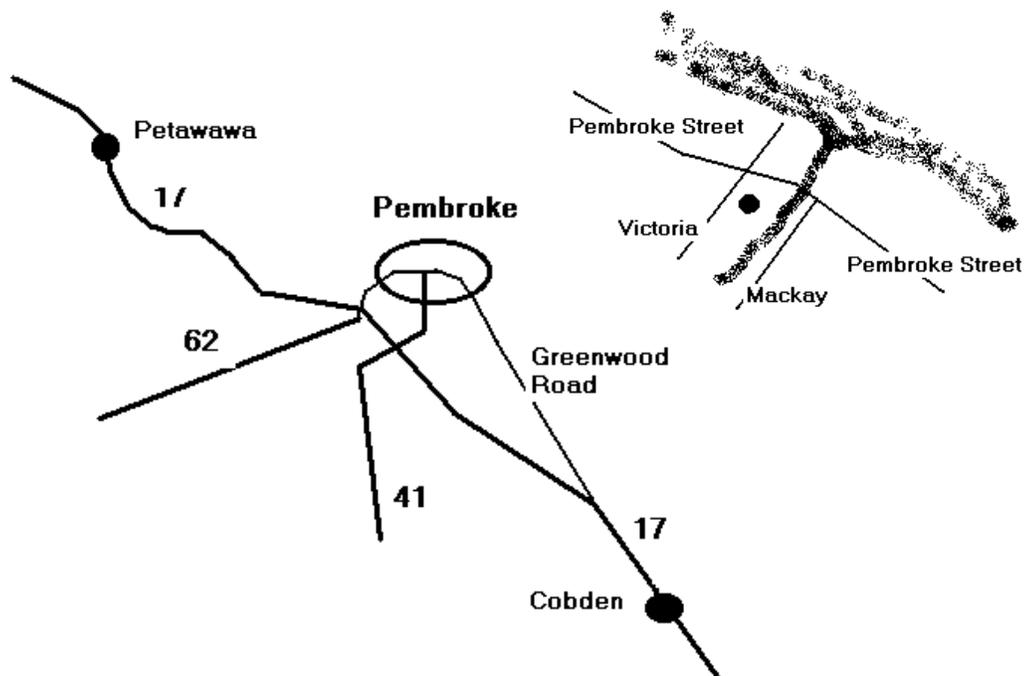
- Any items related to trackwork and its surroundings

Door Prizes

- You never know what to expect!

Afternoon:

- At least 4 layout tours
- 2 hobby shops to visit
- local model garage sale



Suggested Driving Instructions: Travel north on 17 from Cobden, take Greenwood road (exit is at top of hill after crossing CPR tracks) this is old highway 17 into the downtown area and begins somewhat south of town. This will eventually become Pembroke street. Follow this into the old business core and immediately after crossing water (Muskrat river) turn left onto Victoria street. Travel time from Ottawa to Pembroke will be at least two hours for most travelers, please plan accordingly to avoid disappointment.