



The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 59 – May 2010

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

Superintendent's Report

By Peter Joyce

On Saturday April 25th almost 25 happy and eager members attended our bi-monthly KitBusters session. Some members worked on their KitBusters project; others toiled away on various other kits. Also, a good deal of discussion took place over coffee, tea, cookies and models. Andreas brought the Railfair 2010 layout; he and a few helpers progressed it to the point that most rail was laid, wiring was installed and a few trial runs were taken. As well, a few donated cars and structures appeared. Great progress! Scenery is next. Read other columns and stay tuned to our web site for future times and places. My personal thanks go to Grant for building the layout tables; Andreas for the track work design, installation and wiring; and all those others who have helped to date.

Our May meeting will be held in Brockville: we will have elections, a Power Point presentation on trains in Portugal, two layout visits, and great train watching. Let us hope the weather is summer like.

Continued on Page 2

Spanning the Gap

By Grant Knowles

Since our last article on Doug's Dream, the construction crew has been very busy installing more track, adding the supporting wiring and painting backdrops. Sounds like a short list, but one must remember there is a lot of design and implementation effort behind each one of these! The most visible change is the installation of an impressive three span bridge sequence that greets the visitors as they first enter the room. This forms one of the key focal points of the layout as well as sets the stage for the railroad.

Since the earliest renditions of the track plan, Doug has always included a single string of three bridges across a wide expanse of water. In HO scale, this amounted to the better part of four feet in length. In the final design, the bridges are located on the lower half of the peninsula loop of track, right opposite the doorway. As soon as the track roadbed was in place, Doug proudly produced three gorgeous brass models of a through truss bridge

Continued on page 4



Chris Lyon brought some of his highly detailed structure kits to the Rail-O-Rama show in Kingston. He used the models to explain the methods employed to achieve these beautiful results.

Photo: Andreas Mank

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Copy Deadlines

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

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

Continued from page 1 "The Superintendents Report"

This is my last column as Superintendent. Despite my frequent offerings, I made it to the end of my tour without being impeached! Seriously, I want to genuinely thank my executive cohorts and the membership at large for living with me through my fight (successfully, thankfully) with prostate cancer and my two complete knee replacements – I managed one medical event per year, and the continuing support I received was fantastic and truly appreciated. If I had a dollar for every box that was lifted and carried for me I would be a rich man.

The future is looking great! We are embarking on an ambitious program - Model Railroading 101 – (MR 101) that will introduce new blood into the hobby and hopefully into the SLD. Your new Executive and the MR 101 Committee will need everyone's enthusiastic support. I know it will be forthcoming; the first public contact will occur during Railfair this Fall. Additionally, OVAR is celebrating its 50th year (it started this month) and I know all SLD members will take part in anniversary special events as they arise. Finally, CARM's Annual Meeting is coming up and many members will be supporting the Group through their attendance.

Remember, the World's Greatest Hobby – Model Railroading – is FUN!

Kingston Rail-O-Rama

By Andreas Mank

The Kingston train show was held on March 20 and 21 this year. On Saturday, the SLD was represented by Paul Anderson, Gary Baillargeon, Michael Rozeboom, Chris & Lela Lyon, and Bob Farquhar. On Sunday, Grant Knowles, David Steer, Don Leger, Bruce Leckie, Gilbert Lacroix and Bob Farquhar manned the table.

SLD executive would like to express their thanks to these members for stepping up and representing the SLD to the public. A special thanks goes to Bob Farquhar, who organised the representation.



Update: 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.

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.

Since writing to you in the last Mail Car, Paul Bullock has informed me that he will not be standing for office due to personal commitments. This means that we are looking to replace the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Clerk, Paymaster and Dispatcher.

As of this writing I have had four members step forward indicating their willingness to stand for election for the next term. Greg Montague has indicated that he would stand for a second term at Paymaster; I have one name for the position of Assistant Superintendent, and two members willing to take on any position. This leaves us one member short to add to the mix.

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.

Extracted from our 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 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.

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and two through plate girder bridges that were acquired on eBay and made by an unknown Chinese firm. Bill Scobie enthusiastically took on the challenge to finish off the models and complete their installation on the layout.



Bill and Doug carefully consider where to cut the first rail after detailed measuring and head scratching.



Doug brandished the hand saw to complete trimming of the plywood roadbed.

The following are Bill's words on how he finished off the models:

The first thing was to clean the three bridges. These were placed in the bath tub and given a careful scrub with warm/hot water and laundry detergent followed by a good wash rinse with hot water and allowed to air dry overnight.

Bill then placed (not fastened) the three bridges on a straight board so they can be aligned and levelled. Micro Engineering Bridge flex track was used for the road bed. Since the length of the three bridges was greater than 3 feet, Bill centered the first piece of track in the middle of the bridges so that it spanned the seams between the bridges. You do not want the track rail joiners to align with the bridge joints. Shorter lengths of track were then attached at both ends to complete the length.

The next step saw the removal of the ties that conflict with the bridge cross members. Bill used silver paint (easier to see on the dark ties) to mark the ties destined for removal and carefully pulled them off the flex track.

With the ties removed and the track test fitted on the bridges it was time to paint! It took one half a bottle of SCALECOAT LOCO BLACK to paint the bridges! The rails were air brushed with FLOQUIL RAIL BROWN and the whole lot was over sprayed with a 50/50 mix of TESTERS DULLCOTE & GLOSSCOTE which makes for a nice finish! A little air brush weathering and we were good to go. Well all most! Do not forget to clean the track before you install it. You will be sorry if you do not before the track is installed!

The under side of the rail over the bridges cross members required a small piece of electrical tape to prevent shorting with the brass bridge. Failure to do

this will result in a short on your layout at a later date that you will never find!

To move the bridges to Doug's home Bill placed paper over the three bridges and taped them to the board that they were sitting on. This worked perfectly as they did not move in transit.

The best way to install the bridges was to place a long straight board on the track and tie the track and bridges to the board. Set the works into the opening in the layout and clamp the board to the road bed track that is part of the layout. Now you can install the piers and level the works. With this done remove the board from the track! Bill stated the method worked well and he would use it again!

When building the layout we took the approach where we continued the plywood / cork roadbed throughout the layout including where the bridges will ultimately be located. This will then ensure the track flows through the space smoothly and correctly. Afterwards we came back and cut out the roadbed to permit installation of the bridge. With the three bridge assembly completed, Bill measured the length of road bed to be cut out



Bill carefully aligns the bridges on the layout while Doug provides "guidance".



A "special" takes a test run across the bridges - smooth as silk due to the time spent aligning the bridges!

in saying it looks like we will not quite achieve that lofty goal. We will have at least the mainline completed around the room which will enable Doug to run trains continuously around the room. We will also have a few passing sidings in place and a functional staging yard that will allow multiple trains to be operated. Did I underestimate the scope of work? Yes of course I did and subconsciously I knew I had, yet the thrill of completing the track was invigorating.

We did encounter a few obstacles that did slow us down: the occasional break to have an operating session on my layout, sorting out the staging track wiring took a few weeks to finalize, had to build power supplies for the tortoises and uncoupling ramps, a few bridges were built and installed, etc.

On the plus side, we have built all of the bench work and sub road bed, ran bus wires around the layout and built a number of temporary control panels, installed countless miles (scale albeit) of cork roadbed and track, installed and painted a backdrop.

Overall I believe we have far exceeded Doug's expectations and all of this would not have been possible without the dedicated and enthusiastic efforts by David Steer, Bill Scobie and of course the owner, Doug Pelkola (who diligently addressed the homework list I gave him each week!). Next season we plan to complete the track work (the main yard will keep us busy for a long time), finish knitting wires under the scene and throw some scenery together.

allowing for the length of the bridges and the bridge abutments at each end. As luck would have it, the ends of the bridges conflicted with the roadbed risers so they had to be relocated further back from the opening. Bill then proceeded to dry fit the bridges in place with the end abutments and two piers. A lot of time was spent here ensuring the pier heights were correct (through use of shims) and in line (as you look along the track). With Doug's assistance and lively vocal encouragement, Bill was able to complete the adjustments and glued the piers in place with Liquid nails. The bridges themselves remain removable as the scenery has yet to be built. As the photos indicate, the bridge scene has more than met Doug's expectations!

End of Season Status:

So how did we fare against our objectives set early last fall? As you may recall, without any detailed planning and estimating taking place, we thought it would be great to have all the track laid and operational before we took our summer break come the end of June. Though at this writing it is only mid April, I think I am speaking on behalf of the team

The Railfair Raffle layout – A Progress Report

By Andreas Mank

As mentioned in the last issue of the **Mail Car**, the SLD has taken on the task of building the 2010 Railfair Raffle layout. Michael Rozeboom has volunteered to organise our efforts, thus ensuring that we will succeed in finishing the layout in time for Railfair. Even before we had volunteered the SLD to take on this task, the Executive had discussions on the form of the layout. As most Raffle layouts had been designed as a 4ftx8ft in HO scale or the N-scale equivalent of 2.5 – 3ft x 5 – 6ft, our discussions centered on the following issues:

1. Size: the 4ftx8ft fills an entire room due to the space required to walk around it. Few people will have the room to spare for a 4ftx8ft.
2. Transportation: Is related to size, there are very few vehicles that can transport a 4ftx8ft
3. Theme: The continuous run option embodied in most 4ftx8ft plans has some advantages for the presentation at Railfair. It is also good for a beginners layout, but of limited attraction to an advanced modeller.

Taking those issues into account, we discussed the following concepts:

Adopt the modular approach, ideally with end piece configurations suitable to mate with the local modular standard. Continuous run can be provided by additional pieces in bare plywood for the show at Railfair or if enough space is available. The track plan on the module should be such that it could be used as a stand-alone switching layout. And here lies the difficulty with this idea: In order to provide even a modest amount of switching, for example the John Allen Timesaver plan, the module needs to be at least 6ft in length. Adding the curves required for continuous run would bring the overall size to at least 9.5 ft. We discussed some variations of this basic idea, but in the end decided against this approach for this year.

If we build the layout in N-scale, a few more options appear. The equivalent of the HO scale 4x8 is the 2.5ft x 5ft in N-scale. Transportation should not be too difficult and the space requirements are more manageable, particularly if it is designed such that access is required only from 2 of the 4 sides.

Personally, I am working in both HO-scale and N-scale. While N-scale has certain advantages over HO-scale, I am very sceptical about starting out in N-scale without some experience in MRing in general. HO-scale is more forgiving and particularly for younger children better to handle. Reliable switching operations in N-scale require much more effort in building and maintaining track work and rolling stock. Therefore, the decision was made to stick with HO-scale.

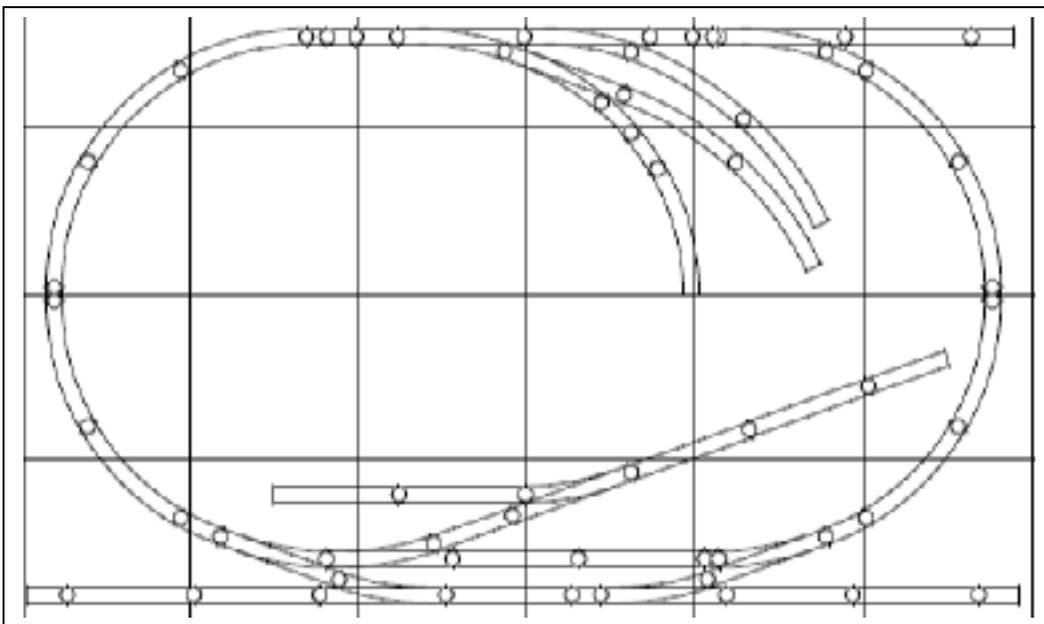


Figure 1: The Raffle layout in continuous run configuration. (12" squares) The layout is in HO-scale and uses Atlas snap track

As mentioned before, the Timesaver requires 6ft in length, either linear or by taking the curves into account. The minimum width allowing continuous run is 3.5ft. With those dimensions, we came up with the plan shown on the left, which can be reconfigured in several ways.

The front of the layout is the Timesaver plan with one additional turnout at the front, leading to the right edge. The back of the layout is another basic switching plan, called the Inglenook and could be scened as a yard or larger industry.

The two pieces can be attached in various ways:

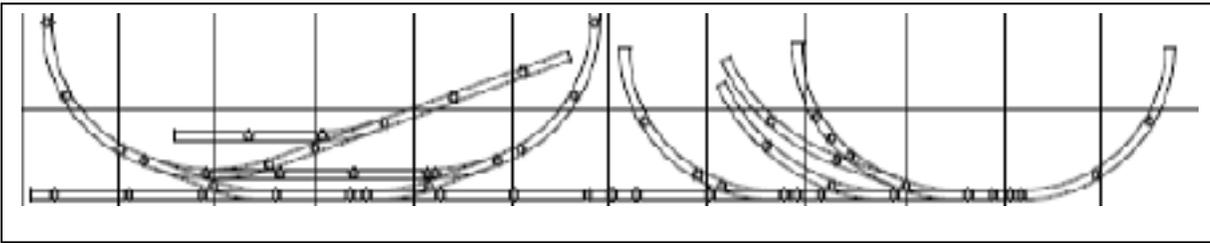


Figure 2:
Linear
arrangement
(Footprint:
12ft x 2ft)

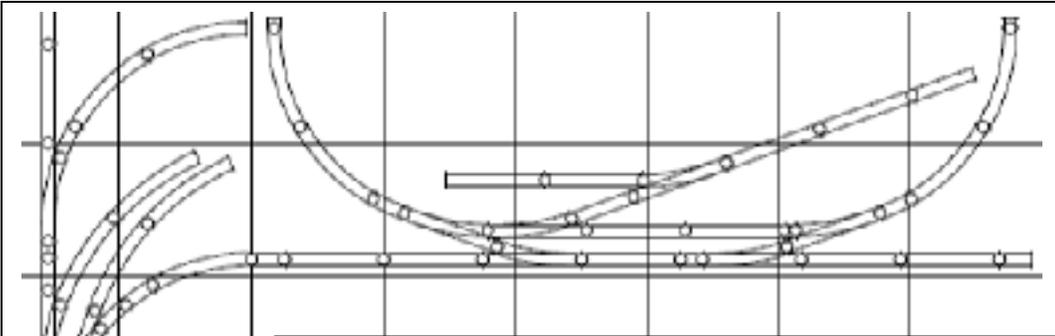


Figure 3:
Re-arrange over the corner
(Footprint: 6ft x 8ft)

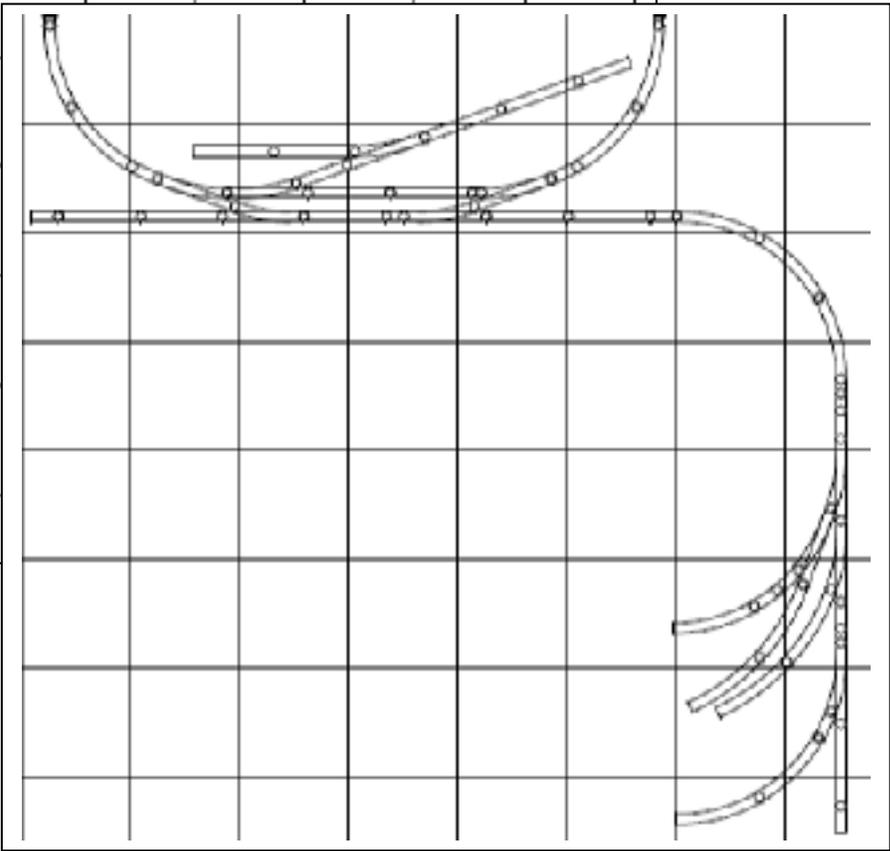
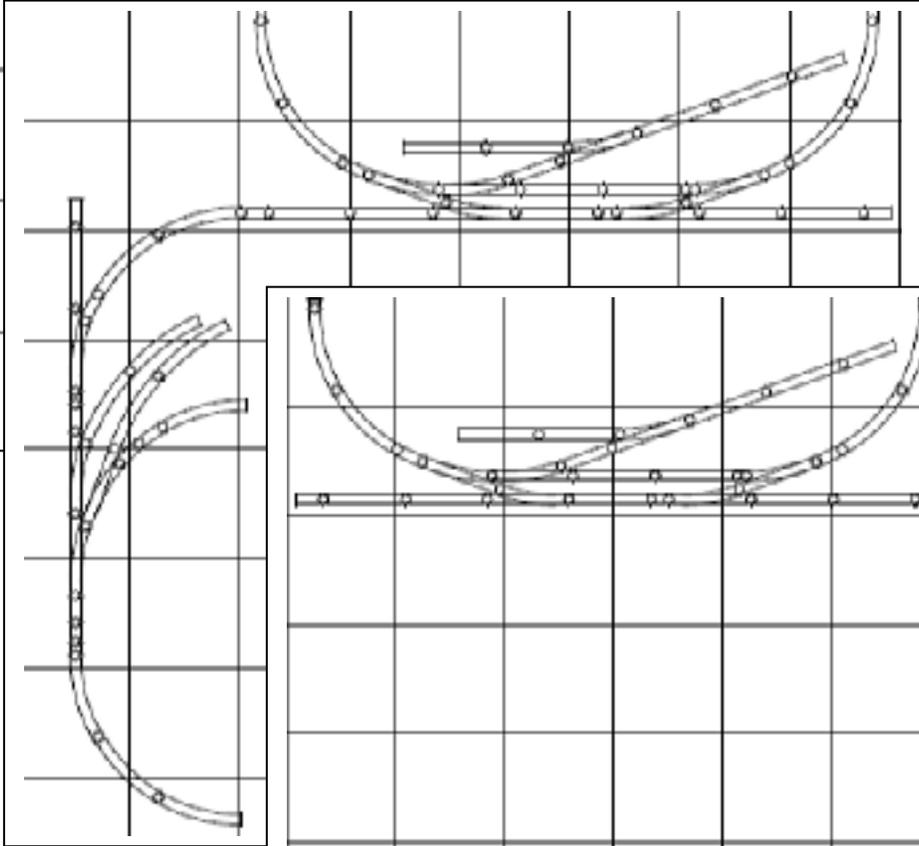
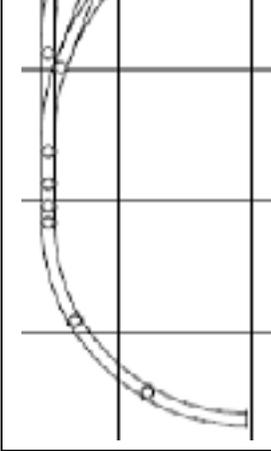


Figure 4 and 5: Two more corner
options (Footprint 8ft x 8ft)

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Grant shows off the bench work for the Railfair Raffle Layout



Preparing to lay track on the Railfair Raffle Layout at the recent KitBuster meeting

The continuous loop has 18" radius, the components are Atlas snap track with snap track turnouts. The snap track turnouts also use the 18" radius for the diverging track and thus are great space savers. The layout consists of two pieces, each 6ft by 2ft. In principle, it is possible to reduce the width by a few inches, but we decided against it. A backdrop will separate the two scenes.

Finally, both pieces can be used independently if so desired and still provide play value, as both halves provide switching puzzles.

Grant Knowles volunteered to build the two bench work halves. The frame was constructed from dimensional lumber, the cross members provide the support for a 2in thick piece of foam used as the scenery base. Each section is supported by its own sets of legs. The vertical alignment between the sections is achieved through a dado cut in all sides of both sections. A removable strip of wood is inserted into the dado to ensure reproducible vertical alignment. The horizontal alignment is fixed by the hole pattern for the bolts used to fasten the two sections to each other.

A trip to Jeff's store in Merrickville scored most of the required track components from the used components bin and Jeff was nice enough to support the cause by applying a discount. Other material, including two engines, a power pack and several cars have been donated by SLD members. The sidebar has a list of items that we are still looking for.

Grant brought both sections to the recent KitBuster session and track laying commenced. The first step was to lay out the track to ensure



Test fitting the track connections for the linear arrangement (see also figure 2)



Test fitting the track connections for one of the L-shaped arrangements. Lorne is observing the donated Boston & Maine 44-ton switcher on the maiden voyage down the track.

that everything actually fits as planned. As the sections can be combined in several different ways, particular care was given to the alignment of the connecting track pieces for the various combinations. During this exercise, the layout was re-arranged several times into the main configurations.

Once everything fit as desired, the track outline was marked on the Styrofoam. No cork roadbed was used, instead the Styrofoam will be shaped into a roadbed profile. The Styrofoam is raised by 1/4in above the height of the frame. Short pieces of Balsawood, shaped into the correct roadbed profile, were prepared to be glued in place at the locations where tracks cross over the outer frame.

With the track pre-fitted, the layout was wired up for a test run. The layout will be wired as a single circuit for Railfair, but several sections have been isolated by inserting plastic rail joiners. In the future, the new owner could wire these sections through switches to allow operation with more than one engine. Also, both sections were wired independently, allowing for the possibility of trains being controlled separately on each section. The wiring is also compatible with DCC operation, if the new owner so desires.

After testing, the track was removed and all the used turnouts were cleaned from debris and adhesive. Openings for the throw bars were cut into the Styrofoam to prevent errand glue from gumming up the mechanics.

The track was glued down using "Liquid Nails" adhesive formulated for Styrofoam. A bead of adhesive is laid down using a caulking gun. After spreading it between the track outlines, the track was pressed in place and secured with tack pins. The turnouts float on the road bed, only the track pieces in between turnouts were glued

down. The track is held securely in place after about 30 minutes and the tack pins were removed.

A few pieces of track have yet to be laid down. All the industry tracks were left off, as we need to see which structures will go next to the tracks to ensure that it all fits. Also, one of the curved sections has not been glued down, as we plan to install a bridge over some water feature in that corner.

The next step is to select and assemble the structures. Several members have volunteered to build structures. At this time, we are looking for donations of structures and scenery material.



The track has been glued down and secured with tack pins. The industrial spurs have not been fixed to allow adjustments depending on the structures selected.

Material required for the Railfair Raffle Layout:

Track pieces:

- Atlas Code 100 track bumpers
- Atlas Code 100 18" radius 1/3 curve (1)
- Atlas Code 100 6" straight sections (2)
- Atlas Code 100 3" straight sections (3)

Buildings:

All sorts of small plastic kits, for example:

- Small passenger shelter
- Small freight house
- Small town feel residential and commercial buildings
- Parts for a team track scene

Scenery:

- Small bridge, suitable for curved track, for example pile trestle or deck bridge
- Trees
- Ground cover

NMRA Dates

SLD Meetings			MR 101
May 29, 2010	Wall Street United Church Brockville, Ontario		November 6, 2010
			February 5, 2010
September 25, 2010	TBD		SLD Workshops
			October 23, 2010
November 27, 2010	Kitchissippi United Church		
January 22, 2011	Kitchissippi United Church		

Display Table

By Grant Knowles

As usual, we had a great selection of “railroad” items on display at the March meet. I say “items” as the collection included models as well as photos and publications. The March Display Table theme was Railroad Photos – Prototype & Model.

To start of with, Bob Farquhar brought out a photo of a VIA F unit that was presented to him. Bob aptly describes the photos as “yellow & blue engine, all wheel drive, self powered”.



Gilbert Lacroix presented this model of a typical Quebec sugar shack – very appropriate for the time of the year.

West Virginia and number of years back. This has got to be the Mecca for Shay lovers and the May Long Weekend is when they hold a special weekend to railroad enthusiasts involving quadruple shay line ups and special trips up the mountain. Even after being there three times I still cannot get enough of them and strongly suggest to the SLD Executive that we book a trip down there really soon!

The second photo is of the narrow gauge Eureka & Palisades 1878 Baldwin. This 4-4-0 was restored by a private individual and makes annual pilgrimages around the narrow gauge railroads hosting fan trips and delighting all. It is a wood fired engine and is dwarfed by all other operational narrow gauge engines. It is a masterpiece of metal and wood. The picture was taken by David Steer a few years back when the engine was on the Cumbres & Toltec railroad.

Next up is another unique project by David Steer. David has undertaken the building of another Garratt, in this case, a HOn2 (9mm gauge) kit by Backwoods Miniature. The prototype is the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway. I cannot wait to see the finished product, assuming my eyesight will be good enough to see such a small model!

We had a number of other models and photos on display but unfortunately there were no Display Cards left for me to present a review on them. I did take some photos of these that can be found on the SLD web page. Please leave your display cards behind at the end of the meet if you wish to have the models written up in the **Mail Car**.

Thank you to everyone who brought out their pride and joy for us to examine. Additional photos are available on the March Meet web page: http://members.fortunecity.com/gknowles/meets/mar_10/mar_10.htm

Continued from page 3 “Election Update”

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.

My contact information is:

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Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, May 29, 2010

Where:

Wall Street United Church
5 Wall Street
Brockville, Ontario

Doors open at 9:30 am -- Admission \$5.00

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business

Clinic

- Chris Lyon
Create a diorama from your plaster kit
- tbd

Display

- Plaster Kits and all things brass

Door Prizes

- You never know what to expect!

Afternoon:

- Layout Tours and Railfanning

