The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA Issue no. 69 – May 2012

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

Superintendent's Report

By Ron Newby

Hard to believe that another season is just about done. We started out with a bang with our trip to Montreal to see four fantastic layouts and we plan to finish with a bang with an outing to Pembroke to finish the season, but more on that later.

As I write this the "Sudbury Saturday Night Express" convention is a week away but by the time you read this it will be over and hopefully a great time was had by all. Seeing as this is the first convention in three years, I am looking forward to meeting old friends and making new ones. I know our support

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Slag dumping at Vale industries in Sudbury. A tour of the Vale operations (formerly INCO) in Sudbury was part of the events at the NFR convention in Sudbury from April 27 to April 29. Please see the article on page 3 for a more detailed report.
Photos: Andreas Mank

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of the convention is there as a number of us went and Chris Lyon, Peter Grey and myself gave clinics. I know that the NFR executive is working on a plan so that the next convention will be a lot sooner than three years from now.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Ottawa Train Expo (which I am assuming will also be over by the time you read this). I will give you my views on our participation and feeling about the show in my next report.

As said earlier our last meeting of the season will be at the Champlain Trail Museum in Pembroke, the address and direction are on the last page of the **Mail Car**. While at the museum we will be treated to two clinics, the first one presented by Gilbert Lacroix on using LEDs in model railroading. Anyone who has seen Gilbert's modules knows that he is the king of using LEDs. The second clinic will be presented by Steve Handke showing us pictures of the CPR in the Pembroke area. I know I am looking forward to both clinics. After lunch there will be local layouts to visit.

Do not forget that this May is also election time so if you have received a lot from the SLD and are looking for a way to give back consider running for office. If you are interested e-mail Peter Joyce (gailandpeter.joyce@sympatico.ca) or myself (ron@cvry.ca). Who knows if we get enough volunteers we just might have an election this year.

Well that is all for now so till next time may your train stay on the track and may you never run out of rail.

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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

Election Update

By Peter Joyce, Election Steward

Further to my notice in the March **Mail Car**, I am pleased to announce that Peter Grey and the Stewarts (Debbie, assisted by John) have volunteered to serve as Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster respectively. As I write this I have not received any nominations for any position from the membership at large. So there is no reason for anyone to avoid the May meeting unless they fear a nomination from the floor!

My thanks to Peter, Deb and John for making my task an enjoyable one.

NMRA Regional Convention in Sudbury

By Andreas Mank

After a 3 year hiatus, the NFR gathered for the annual spring convention from April 27 to 29. This year's event was put on by the NOD in Sudbury, Ontario. The Sudbury Saturday Night Express proved to be a wonderful convention.

U1f CN 6077 is displayed at the Northern Ontario Railway Museum together with other artefacts.

The convention had the usual attractions, such as clinics, layout tours, modelling contest (both judged and popular choice), raffle, and a Saturday evening banquet. Additionally, the convention also included an amazing prototype tour through the Vale (former Inco) operations in Sudbury and a visit to the Northern Ontario Railway Museum (NORM) in Capreol, right next to the CN yard. The NORM also is the home of CN 6077 an U1f 4-8-2 steam locomotive and a few other interesting pieces of railroad history.

Sudbury also has ample opportunities for rail fanning and as the weather was bright and sunny, I am sure everybody had a good time. The convention organisers even provided a map with the best rail fanning spots in their convention booklet.

The clinics covered a wide range of topics. Our local boys presented on such topics as "Model Railroading as an Art Form" (Chris Lyon), "Using Wood for Model Building" (Ron Newby) and "Freight Train Graffiti" (Peter Gray, who actually presented two clinics, one on the historical aspects and another one a modelling "How To"). Other clinicians presented an in depth review of the proper use of the various adhesives, Scenery techniques, Prototype research techniques and their application

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Top: SOO Line Hopper captured on the CP. A beautiful example of natural weathering.

Left: John Steward enjoys running a train on Brian Buss' HO scale switching layout.
Photo: Peter Nesbitt

Bridging the Gap – A Different Approach

By Grant Knowles

Over the past season, David and I have been very busy installing and wiring the track on Doug's new railroad empire (see past **Mail Car** articles - Jan, Mar, May, September 2010). We are now at the point of finishing off the Engine Facilities along with tackling a challenging railroad over pass.

Photo 1: Here you can see how the original plywood bridge had warped. The caboose was the tallest piece of rolling stock Doug has and would still clear the bridge despite being lower than the NMRA standard.

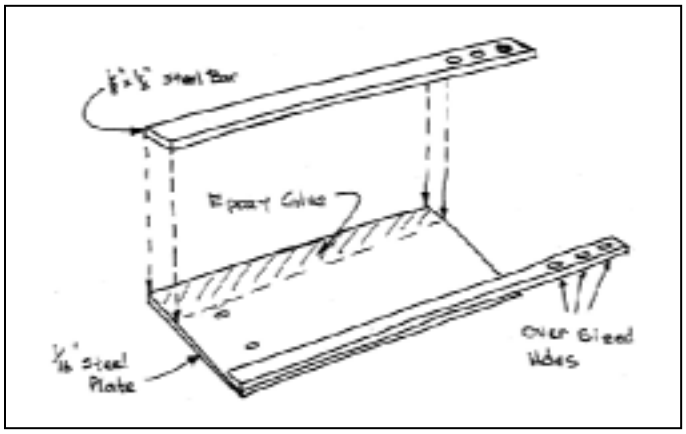

Diagram 1: The bridge is comprised of a 1/16" steel deck with two 1/8" x ½" steel bar stock glued on.

Photo 2: Here is the painted steel deck with the 1/16" base plate and two 1/8" edge pieces glued in place.

Despite the large size of the layout room (18ft x 18ft), broad curves (48" radius) and gentle grades (<2%), we still ended up with one track passing over a lower yard with less than desired height clearance. To further compound the situation there was insufficient runway to improve the spacing without impacting the gradient of the upper track. In the end we decided to make a few compromises while implementing a bridge design that had a nearly zero height profile.

The clearance between the two track levels was about 3/8" less than the height of the NMRA Standards gauge so we concluded through reviewing Doug's rolling stock collection (Photo 1) that we can make do with the reduced clearance provided the bridge deck was no more than 1/8" thick. To further reduce the gradient for the upper track, we would not include the cork roadbed across the deck, thus the track would be laid directly onto the deck of the bridge.

Since this cross over was not part of the visible part of the layout, we were not restricted to installing a prototypical bridge thus Doug initially installed a 1/32" thick piece of plywood across the gap. That worked fine until the Canadian seasonal changes took place after which the plywood took on a roller coaster appearance as the two ends of the gap moved closer together. So back to the drawing board.

What we came up with will certainly handle the weight of Doug's full railroad collection at once, but more importantly, the steel design will handle the climatic dimensional shifts brought upon by the bench work! We fashioned the new bridge deck is made from 1/16" steel plate then added two strips of 1/8" x ½" steel bar stock placed along the edges.

To build the bridge, we first cut the steel deck to size then cut the 1/8" stock length accordingly. When installed, the left end of the plate will be firmly held in place with a couple of wood screws. The other end will be allowed to slide back-and-forth with wood screws in oversized holes to accommodate the

Photo 3: The right hand end of the bridge is held on place with #6 screws and washers through over sized holes.

seasonal changes, e.g. will be allowed to move. See Diagram 1.

All the metal parts were cleaned with steel wool then lacquer thinners to ensure all dirt and oils were removed. The two steel bars were then glued to the steel deck with epoxy. The complete assembly then received a coat of black paint (Photo 2).

Installation involved notching the wood abutments at each end to accommodate the thickness of the steel deck (Diagram 2). The left end of the deck was firmly held in place with two #4 wood screws into the wood riser/abutment. The right had end was held in place with four #6 round head wood screws with flat washers inserted into the over sized holes. The screws were centred in the holes and not fully tightened down to allow movement (Photo 3).

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Photo 4: Track clearance is slightly less than the NMRA standard.

Note from the editor: When using the NMRA gauge as a height gauge, one also has to remember that the height of the gauge actually changed over the years. In modern times, with double stack containers and tri-level auto-racks, the NMRA gauge actually conforms to plate E. (which is the description of the profile the real railroads use)

In the 1940's and 1950's, the tallest profile was plate C (which roughly fits a passenger dome car) and even that did only apply to railroads west of the Mississippi. Most eastern railroads had height restrictions below plate C. If you still have a NMRA gauge from the 1950's around, you will find that it is not as tall as the current ones.

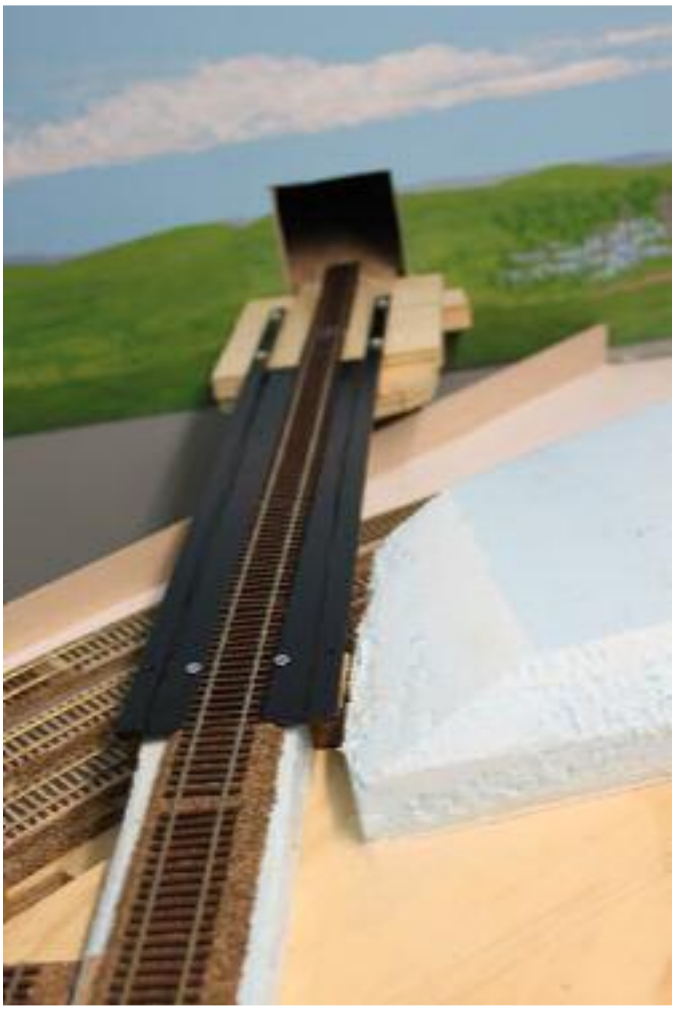

Photo 5: Over all view of the bridge installed. The track heads off through the wall to staging in the next room.

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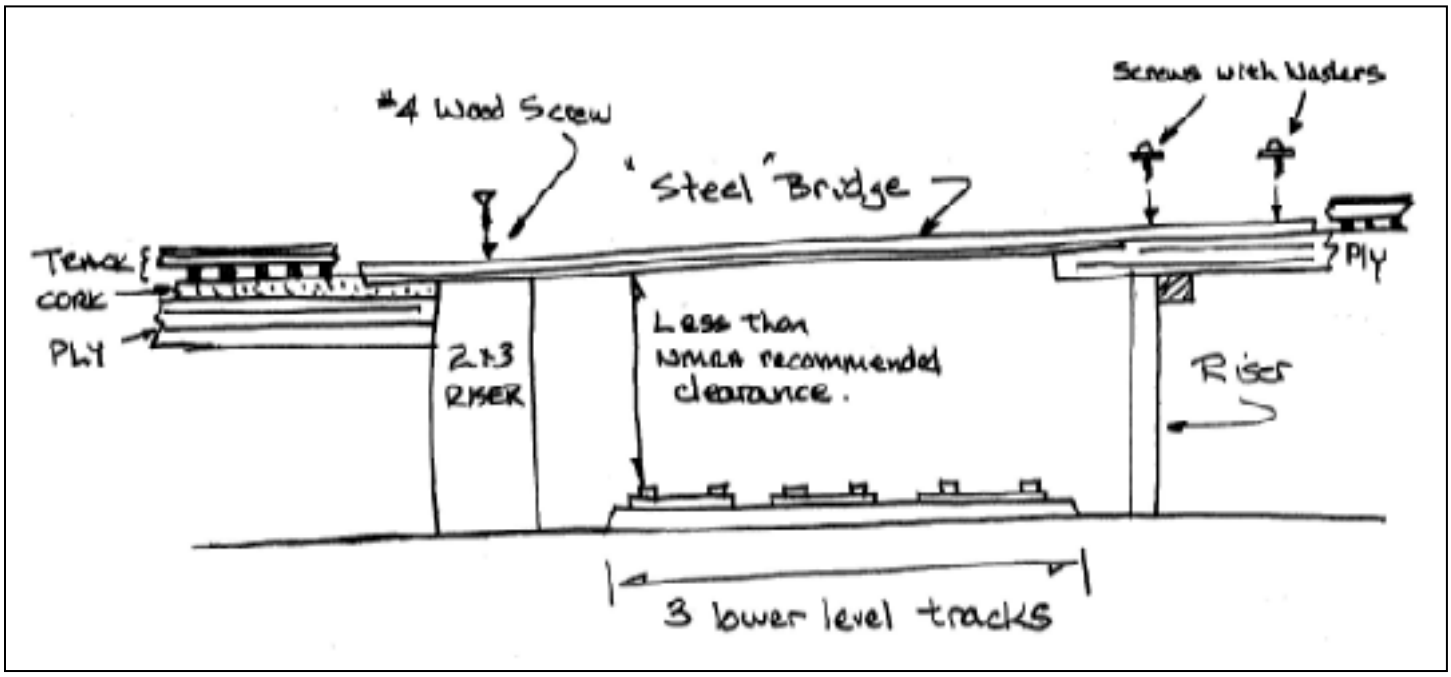

Diagram 2: Side view of the installation demonstrating the mounting arrangement.

The flex track was then extended as a continuous piece across the left end and glued to the bridge deck. A gap was cut into the track as it crossed the right hand end of the bridge thus allowing the track to slide back and forth in the rail joiners to accommodate the bench changes.

This completes the bridge replacement exercise. So far the bridge is performing admirably.

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GP-38 No. 2008 inside the shop building. Vale uses this unit and her 7 sisters for all rail operations.

to our modelling or on techniques such as airbrushing and the design and use of a resistance soldering unit.

More than 10 layouts covering a range of scales, sizes and interests were on tour. For my personal taste, I enjoyed Brian Buss' small switching layout best as it reminded me of my own personal interest.

The highlight of the convention was the tour of the mining operations of Vale industries. The people at Vale went out of their way to make us welcome. Vale's operations cover a vast area around and up to 8000 ft below Sudbury. Vale is mining precious metals, mainly nickel and processes the raw ore. The operation is supported by a rail network of close to 50 miles of track. These days, the railway is completely dieselized with 8 re-build GP38 (2,000hp each) supplying the motive power. Recently, the hopper fleet has been replaced with 220 modern ore cars of 92 ton capacity with rotating couplers. The main railway operation is the transport of the ore from the mines to the smelter, the movement of the hot

slag from the smelter to the tailings pile and the movement of approximately 150 acid tank cars per week from the sulphur refinery.

The visit was well co-ordinated. After a short introduction into the railroad operations at Vale, we were taken to the slag dump and observed the colourful spectacle of the hot slag (1200C) being dumped onto the steep embankment. Next we were given a tour of the engine house and had the run of the service area. Several of the GP38's were parked there and we were given access to one of the cabs. On one of the back tracks, we found electric box cab 118, the last of its kind. Two other electrics are preserved at the NORM in Capreol.

Several other interesting pieces of equipment were on display as well. This was followed by a visit to the ore dumper at the smelting operation. The ore cars are emptied using a rotary dumper with a capacity of two cars. As the dumper is 60 years old and was not set up with ore-cars with rotary couplers in mind, the dumping process is actually quite elaborate.

The final stop on our tour was a visit to the nearest mine load out. The load-out was not operating while we were there, thus we were able to closely inspect the facilities. The tour lasted 90 minutes longer than scheduled but no one on the bus complained except Peter Joyce, who was worried we would not make it back in time for the dinner banquet!

In summary, I had a great time and everybody I talked to enjoyed the convention as well. I hear that next years convention will likely be held in or near Mississauga and I hope to see you all there!

Fully decked out in safety gear, Stan Conley is trying his best to get the shot.
Photo: Paul Anderson

Inco No. 118 is the last of the electric box cabs remaining on the property. The operation was switched to diesel electric at a time when major maintenance would have been required to keep the electrics going.

TimeTable

Date	Meetings		SLD Workshops
May 26, 2012	Champlain Trail Museum 1032 Pembroke Street East, Pembroke		
September 29, 2012	tbd		

Display Table

By Grant Knowles

The subject for the March Display table was "Structures" and amazingly enough, we had an appreciable number of structures on display!

Our Plaster Master, Lorne Munro had his beautiful Fenlon Falls Station on display along with the styrene mould that was used to cast the plaster core. The mold allowed Lorne to cast not only the four exterior walls but also the interior walls all on one piece. Lorne then proceeded to carve the bricks on the walls after cutting out the door and window openings. Lorne was also one of our clinicians at the last meeting and shared with us his trials and tribulations of making structures from plaster.

The Fenelon Falls station was scratch build by Lorne Munroe. Lorne created his own styrene mould to cast the plaster core.
Photo: Andreas Mank

Ron Newby had a pretty O scale Big Lars General Store on display. This is a laser wood kit made by Classic Miniatures that is based on a store in Silver Plume Colorado. The model sports a fully detailed (scratch built) interior.

As you are aware, Mike Hamer is an active participant with the online Railroad Line Forum group. To celebrate their 10th anniversary, they had an informal building challenge to which Mike built a very busy diorama (Gillespie Street) that was comprised of at least four buildings and all the miniature people in a 100 miles! Dominating the scene is the Lyon Concert Hall which was hosting the infamous Rusty Spikes Band. The structure is a Rusty Stumps kit that Mike has extensively modified. To add more excitement and interest to the scene, Mike painted over 100 figures and placed them in a line around the block – all waiting to get a seat in the hall to hear the band! Boileau's Radio Repair shop is just next door, this was built from a Foscale kit. And buried down the back is Mike's Canoe Outfitters with Woodland Scenics canoes and a store from Full Steam Ahead.

Gillespie Street diorama created by Mike Hamer. Judging by the line-up, the Rusty Stamps seem to be very popular!
Photo: Andreas Mank

In keeping with our Kitbusters theme, David Gardner assembled this Signal Box (English parlance) from a card stock kit.
Photo: Andreas Mank

Lorne also brought out his current project – a scratch build HO model of the Kinmount station. This is to accompany the Austin Sawmill that we saw last November.

David Gardner brought out a beautiful "card kit" he had assembled from a freebee that came with the January issue of Railway Modellers magazine. This is a Metcalf kit. Well made David!

Stan Conley shifted gears this month and had his nearly completed HO scale coach made from a Labelle wood kit. I cannot wait to see the finished product complete with glass and lettering. Stan also had his "Stanley Stove Works" Bar Mills structure out – very nice.

That does it for this month. 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://sld-nmra.ca/meets/mar_12/mar_12.htm

Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, May 26, 2012

Where:

Champlain Trail Museum

1032 Pembroke Street East,
Pembroke

Doors open at 9:30 am -- Admission $7.00

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business:

Election

Clinics:

Gilbert LaCroix
LED Lighting in Buildings

Steve Handke
Canadian Pacific Slide Show

Display:

Bring what you want

Afternoon:

Layout Tours:

John Mau

Rick Dickenson