



The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 31 – October 2004

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

From the Superintendent's Desk

By Stanley Conley

The last Saturday in September turned out to be a glorious, warm bright summer day. A great day for a little road trip to Brockville and a day of model railroad companionship. The 27 people who gathered in a church basement hall must have thought so as well, and were rewarded with three wonderful clinics, and later in the afternoon a layout tour with a very amiable host.

We had three clinic presentations to start off the new season. Paul Ward delivered a history lesson involving the Ottawa and Prescott railroad and its development just down the St. Lawrence River. Paul discussed the physical layout, traffic and operations as well as some of the sources of his information. Paul is working toward building an O scale layout based on the railroad and has spent considerable effort to locate prototype information upon which to base its design and operations.

Our next presenter was Chris Butler, who had contacted me and asked for 'five minutes or so of time' to talk about his newest toy, a miniature table saw. As I predicted at that time, his presentation and the question and answer period extended to about half an hour. Obviously this type of presentation was well received by the group and I would like to use this opportunity to encourage others to come forward with a 'five minute presentation'.



Peter MacDonald rounded out the morning with a trip across his modular layout segments, detailing the source material and adaptations made to fit a variety of standard building kits into the irregular geometry of the streetscape. He covered such things as modifying walls, removing or adding floors, exchanging doors and building fronts between kits, colour variations and signs. All changes to provide personality and life to the streetscape while avoiding the straight out of the box recognition. Many of Peter's modifications are inspired by real buildings in and around Kingston and he encouraged us to look around and observe our own locales for clues such as appropriate building heights, store fronts, architectural details and signage to provide appropriate personality to our own layouts.

Peter MacDonald (of *Peter Macdonald Hobby Supplies* in Kingston, if ya didn't know) also kindly provided a *Branchline* box car kit as a door prize, which was won by no other than Grant Knowles. Since it was a standard gauge car from the 50's and therefore would be slightly out of place on his narrow gauge Colorado theme, Grant decided to build it and add it to the supply for the switching layout, so thanks to Both Peter and to Grant!



Young and old have fun with the SLD module at Railfair. We gave away over 150 certificates to participants!

Photos: Stanley Conley

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November Issue - October 15

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March Issue - February 15

May Issue - April 15

September Issue - August 15

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

Continued from page 1

Mention was made of the next NFR spring convention to be held in Belleville. I want people to start thinking about the convention and particularly about attending. The travel will be easy, Belleville is a mere three hour drive down the 401, and the organizers will need our support in order to pull off a successful event. After the September meet, Grant Knowles also encouraged me to beat the bushes for members willing to provide a clinic at the convention, we both know there are talented people in this division who can contribute their skill and knowledge.

After a quick lunch in a local restaurant with the boys, we took a stroll down Brockville's main street to the home of Paul Bullock and a visit with his first home layout. Paul's first layout was built at a local high school and used to teach computer interfacing and control, some of you may have seen it during the course Paul gave on simple interfacing to a computer. This new layout is in a bright finished attic room, recently vacated by Paul's son. Paul, like many modellers is wrestling with the design and purpose of his miniature world, and very open to suggestions and positive critique. Since we had chosen to walk, our little group was among the last to arrive and definitely the last to leave and by the time we did I am afraid Paul's poor head was spinning and few of his buildings left unmoved as we explored possible track and scenery arrangements and their effects on the appearance of the layout. I am sure Paul was glad to see us go so he could absorb the ideas and sort out the good from the outrageous!

Most importantly, I wish to thank Paul Bullock for encouraging the SLD executive to hold a meet in Brockville, and for taking on the majority of the ground work for the event, booking the hall and arranging to meet us early in the morning to set up, beating the ground for possible local layouts to tour and offering up his own when there were none to be found.

Railfair has come and gone for another year and the SLD module was a star attraction with over 150 certificates being given out to participants, young and old. It was especially rewarding to have young people come along and recognize the module from the year before and look forward to operating the train. I also spoke to several individuals who were looking for a group or organization to connect with to either get started or expand their skills in the hobby so at some level the advertising for the SLD is working. I would like to work with some SLD members to expand upon our advertising and promotion aspects of Railfair participation as it is the only public event we partake in the region and hence our single shot at attracting new members. I wish to thank the following individuals for spending a little or a lot of their weekend at the module over the two days, Paul Anderson, Tom Badenoch, Alex Binkley, Paul Bullock, Greg Gee, Grant Knowles, Mike Hamer, Bob Hobbs, Andreas Mank, Greg Montague, and Bill Meek.

November's meet promises to be a good one. We will have a presentation by Bill Meredith entitled "Quest for Precision" which will focus on the creation of more accurate models through the use of modern technology. Bill also wants to give everyone a heads up, *Busy Bee* has what he feels is a tremendous deal, \$24.99 for a vernier micrometer and caliper set with the price good until January 8th. So I think I can tell where this clinic is going! *Busy Bee* is located next to the Museum of Science and Technology behind the McDonalds. Andreas Mank is going to take us over the pond to show us some meter gauge steam from Germany. In the afternoon it will be a trip back in time to the glory days of the Canadian Northern Railway.

SLD Display Table Report

By Alex Binkley



Carl Swail's scratchbuilt St. Johnsbury station complete with full interior partitions, wainscoting and door to boot! Carl's still working on the roof, that's a lot of shingles. On the table are photos and scaled reproduction images for reference.

Alex Binkley brought out four S scale freight cars from the mid 1990s and a 40 foot container. It was converted into a storage shed by cutting an appropriate sized hole into its side for a *Rix* roll up door. It is one of two storage units the Canada Southern Railway has built for its main yard and service areas. He also had a *Pacific Railshops* 50 double door boxcar painted and lettered with CDS for CPR. He had an *S Scale America* three bay hopper lettered for the CSR. It will be used in coal and gravel service. As well, he had a two bay hopper. It was built from an On3 kit of an East Broad Top car that was painted in oxide and lettered for lettered for the CSR. The brake gear and wheel were replaced with 1/64 equipment as were the trucks. It was lettered with CDS for the Ottawa Valley Railway. The name came from an Ottawa Valley Ntrak specialrun of 10 years ago. As well, there was a 22,000-gallon tank made from a Downs kit and lettered for Procor using CDS decals.



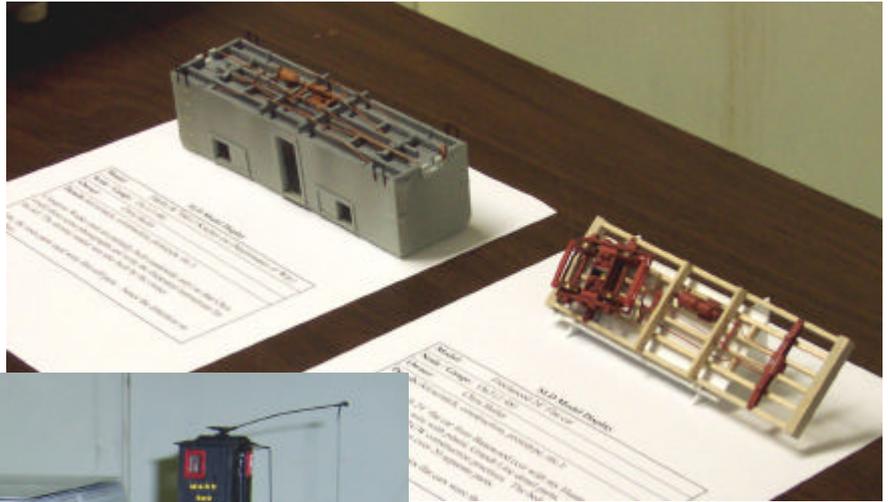
One view of the display table showing Alex Binkley's cars in front, with Brian Earl's NMRA Living Legends car on the box to the left and another view of Carl's St. Johnsbury station in the background.

Stanley Conley brought out a *Red Caboose* CNR 42 foot flat car he built over the summer. He said the wood deck on the car was quite good. He also showed a *Proto 2000* CN stock car that was right out of the box but will get some lived-in look treatment. These were the only HO cars in the display. Stanley also displayed a series of articles on scratchbuilding cars which will be the SLD's workshop theme this year.

If the good readers ever wondered what careful scratchbuilding could produce then take a long appreciative gander at the HO model of the St. Johnsbury Station that Carl Swail has built. The outside detail including the brick finish, the windows and doors is superb. The shingle roof must be seen to be appreciated. Of course with the roof removed, there is all the inside detail including carefully coloured walls. Perhaps Carl should do a clinic on how he built this gorgeous structure.

Not quite as advanced as Carl's building but showing great promise was the Millet Creamery that Grant Knowles is building for a customer. It is an HO model by *South River Modelworks* of a New England creamery. The kit has plaster castings, laser cut wood and many plastic and white metal castings. Grant says the parts are of a good quality and the instruction book, the size of a small catalogue, contains lots of useful information. Grant states that "When considering the purchase of a monster kit, remember that often the cost per hour of building enjoyment is far lower than that of a similar dollar amount of individual kits."

Chris Butler displayed two On3 cars – a D&RGW kitchen car used in a MOW service that he scratchbuilt in styrene as a master for *Cimarron Works* kit and a freelance 24 foot flat car that he scratchbuilt from basswood and *Grandt Line* parts. There were 20 separate parts just for the bolsters. Chris used his new miniature tablesaw to do most of the cutting for this project. The tablesaw was on the display table and also was the star item in a clinic Chris gave.



Bill Meredith displayed three SN3 Pullman cars that are part of the *Cimarron Works* line. They are resin kits drawn from styrene masters and the decal artwork is done with Corel Draw. The cars were C&S business car 910, Pullman Palace sleeper Kenoshia and UPD&G coach 153. The cars are excellent examples of what modern resin casting can produce for modellers in minority scales.

David Steer displayed two samples of narrow gauge freight cars and a huge binder of supporting material he used to create a clinic on building such cars for presentation at the annual narrow gauge convention.

Excerpt from the *SLD Moduleton Weekly Drivel*

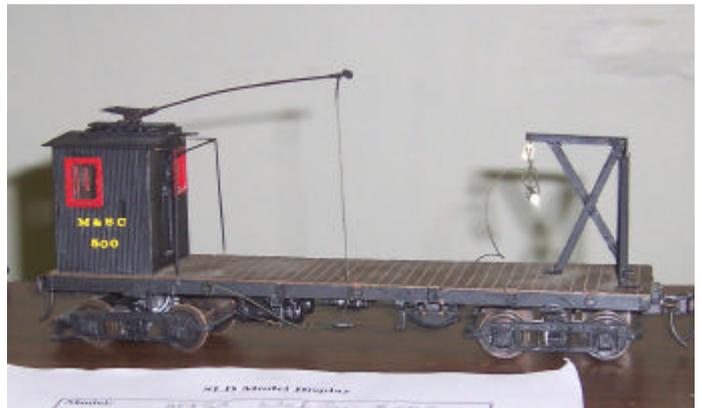
Notice of commercial rezoning

The ESSO rezoning application has now been approved by the Town Council thus paving the way for construction of the oil depot on the team track.

The zoning documents detail that the petroleum depot will consist of two horizontal storage tanks, plumbing and transfer equipment to unload the railway cars, and load the highway vehicles, as well as office.

ESSO representatives were very upbeat on this decision as it will now mean residents and commercial customers will no longer be required to be serviced from the closest petroleum dealer, 30 miles to the east

ESSO is currently requesting tenders to build this facility. Construction will consist of kit bashing a commercial plastic kit along with scratch building a few parts. Supervision is available if required. If you are interested, please contact Grant Knowles.



Peter Joyce brought out some more of his O scale Montreal & Southern Counties railway empire. One was flat car 910, that he scratch built from a kit he obtained from Brian Ludlow in a trade. The prototype was GTW car circa 1923 that was rebuilt by the M&SC in 1937. To get a varied shading of colours on the decks, he dunked the individual deck pieces in diluted paint, gave the container a hefty shake and then removed the pieces of wood and let them dry, very effective. His other model was work car 500 that he scratchbuilt from an MRC article in 1988. It is intended to operate using overhead wire.

Last, but by no means least, was Brian Earl's latest NMRA Living Legends car for Hal Carstens Susquehanna Northern. Brian has the full set of NMRA Heritage and Living Legends cars.

NMRA Achievement Program

The Motive Power Certificate



By Grant Knowles, SLD AP Chairman

This is the second instalment where I will be reviewing the AP Criteria for each of the AP Certificates and presenting some helpful tips on how to approach these certificates. Additional information can be found on the NMRA Achievement Program web page - www.nmra.org/achievement/

Also, you may refer to the "NMRA Achievement Program – The Cars Certificate" article that appeared in the January 2004 **Mail Car** for further details on the core objectives of the AP program and the AP Judging guidelines.

Today we will focus our attention on the Motive Power certificate and the associated requirements. The Motive Power Certificate makes up the second of the two certificates that are available under the Model Railroad Equipment category. Now let's take a close look at the requirements:

To qualify for the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate:

1. **Build three scale models of railroad motive power, one of which must be scratchbuilt. Motive Power is defined as a locomotive or a self-propelled vehicle.**
 - A. **To qualify as scratchbuilt, the motive power must contain the following scratchbuilt items as applicable:**
 - Steam Locomotives: frame, boiler, cab, tender, frame, body, either valve gear or main and side driving rods.
 - Other Motive Power: body, frame, cab, power truck frame, pantograph or trolley poles where appropriate.
 - All models must be capable of self-propulsion on track of the same gauge as the model. Power trains for all models may be commercial motors and gears.
 - All models must be super detailed either with scratchbuilt parts or with commercial parts as defined in the "DEFINITIONS" Section.

Remember only one model must be considered scratch built. The other two can be extensive kit bashed units. When you take the kit bashed route, ensure what you do will earn you a high score in the remaining four categories as your scratchbuilt one will be low. Just remodeling to follow a specific prototype while including a high level of detail will bode well.

- B. **The following parts are specifically excluded from the scratch built requirement (although you may scratch build them to earn additional points):**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motor• Gears• Drivers and wheels• Couplers• Light bulbs & electronics• Trucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paint, decals, etc.• Bell• Marker and classification lights• Brake fittings• Basic shapes of wood, plastic, metal, etc.
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("Basic shapes are things that builders of the prototype would have used as raw materials. For example an "I" beam would be a basic shape; a commercial door or window casting would not.)

- C. **The term "scratch built" implies that the modeler has done all of the necessary layout and fabrication that produces the final dimensions, appearance, and operating qualities of the model.**

This is a good statement of the intent and spirit of the 'scratch built' requirement. Note that the use of "commercial" parts will not disqualify the model as being "scratch built". In general: "Completely Scratch built" means that 90% or

more of the model was scratch built. (But you do need to scratch build the specific items listed above.) This means that in contest or merit judging, the model you are claiming as "scratch built" should have earned at least 11 points in that area.

2. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points with each of the three scale models of motive power either via an NMRA sponsored contest or AP Merit Award Judging.

Remember that your three locomotives do not have to be from the same era, prototype or even scale. You also don't have to earn your three Merit Award certificates at the same time. In my first flirt with the AP Program, I submitted my Hon3 C&S 537 and the HO CN Sweep 7102. They both fared the same – poorly.

The 537 started life as a MDC Outside framed unit. All the boiler details were removed and replaced with brass detail parts. Both the engine and tender were lowered, the motor and gears replaced with NWSL goodies, etc. This make over was directed towards replicating the C&S prototype. I scored only 80.5 points – not good enough for a merit award.

The Sweep fell to the same end despite being a major kit bash. In short, the feedback I received from the judges indicated I needed to add more details to the models and spend a little more effort in the workmanship area.

Not totally demoralized, I decided to learn from this experience and promptly rebuilt the models. Since the models had been reworked, they were eligible for resubmission for judging. This time the 537 earned 101 points (healthy margin) and the Sweep got 109 – even better still. I had now completed 2/3 of the certificate.

I am now working on the third and final piece of motive power. As the previous two were “kit bashes”, this one has to be a scratch built unit. Since I'm not yet mentally prepared to scratch build a brass steam engine, I have chosen to build a gas rail bus for my C&S railroad based on a prototype Scott unit.

The AP Judging

As discussed in the January article, the models will be evaluated against the standard NMRA AP Program guidelines that cover the following 5 fields:

1. Construction (0 - 40 Points)
2. Detail (0 - 20 points)
3. Conformity (0 - 25 points)
4. Finish & Lettering (0 - 25 points)
5. Scratchbuilding (0 - 15 points)

The Merit Award is presented when a score of 87.5 (out of a possible 125) or greater is earned. Models submitted under the Car and Structure categories will also be subject to these guidelines.

It is important to remember the model is NOT being judged against the other entries, but against a well defined set of standards. If this can be viewed as a competition, it is only with the modeller against himself, not in reference to the other entries.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

NMRA Dates

SLD Meetings

November 27, 2004	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
January 29, 2005	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
March 26, 2005	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
May 28, 2005	TBA

NFR Spring Convention

Grand Junction
Belleville, Ontario

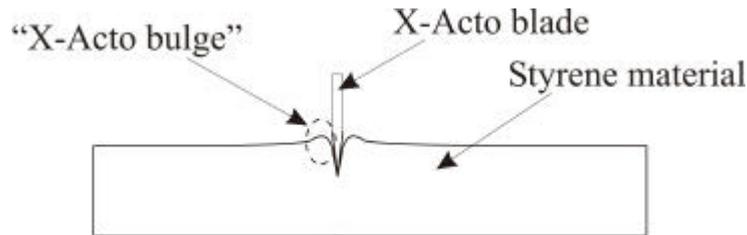
Miniature Table Saws: Why You Might Need One and Points to Consider

By Chris Butler

Photographs and Illustrations by the Author

Understanding Why You Might Need One

For the longest time, I've found that cutting sheets of styrene with an *X-Acto* knife by using the score and bend method has proved less than satisfactory. This has been because of what I refer to as the "*X-Acto* bulge" effect (see Fig. 1.).



The "X-Acto bulge" effect

When anything is cut with a knife, the cutting edge of the blade merely displaces the material by pushing it aside. Remember, it's a knife and not a saw. It's this "displacement" action that causes the bulge effect and any knife will cause this.

I try to buy my sheet styrene in 4 x 8 foot sheets because it's cheaper that way. The problem with this approach is how to reduce the sheet to a workable size for your projects? The problem doesn't end there. Cutting a sheet of thin brass with a razor saw, junior hacksaw or even tin snips isn't any easier – there's no "bulge" but getting the work piece flat and square can be equally difficult.

One way to solve these and other problems is to use a miniature or model building table saw. One really useful feature of most model building saws is the ability to cut many materials such as wood, styrene, brass, aluminium etc. Other advantages include the ability to cut materials without the need for sanding, accurate and repeatable parallel cuts, angular cuts (using the Mitre Gauge and / or the Tilt arbour), capacity to do rip or cross cuts (explained later), etc.

Things to Consider

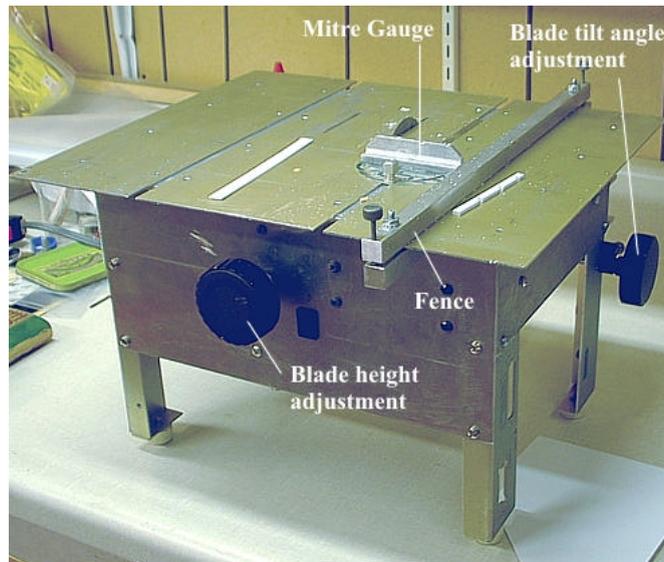
Here are a few points to consider when purchasing a table saw.

Fence: This feature is what a table saw is all about. The Fence allows for highly accurate and repeatable parallel cuts. I use a variety of methods to set my Fence including vernier callipers, dimensional styrene and also a scale rule to set my Fence. Personally, I don't think that having a calibrated Fence is all that important.

Mitre Gauge: Going hand in hand with the Fence, the Mitre Gauge permits angular cuts. Look for ease of adjustment i.e. ease of setting it back to 90° after doing an angled cut. The *Hunterline* saw has an un-calibrated Mitre Gauge and so I use a machinists square to ensure it's exactly 90°.

Portability: Ripping material (lengthwise cut) creates a lot of dust. The saw should either be highly portable (not bolted down) to take outside, medium weight and have feet that exhibit a good grip on a horizontal surface or have a vacuum attachment.

Bed (or Table) Size: The *Microlux* bed is 9½" x 11½" and the *Hunterline* bed is 12" x 14¾". I really like the size of the *Hunterline* table as it feels just right to me.



The authors Hunterline table saw

Arbour and Blades: Make sure the arbour (the shaft that holds the blade) is of a standard diameter – 10 mm seems to be a popular size but saws are also made with ½ inch arbours. Micro-Mark stocks an adapter that allows a ½ inch blade to be used with a 10 mm arbour. A 290 tooth fine blade is great for smooth cross cuts (across the grain) or an 80 tooth for ripping. I've had success ripping with the 290 tooth blade but the material has to be fed slowly. Tungsten carbide blades for cutting metal are also available. Blades can be easily purchased via mail order from suppliers such as Micro-Mark (expensive), Campbell, Blue Ridge, e-bay etc. Another important feature is the ability to tilt the arbour (and hence the blade) to achieve angular cuts.

Speed: Some of the saws have adjustable speed drives. The *Hunterline* saw doesn't and also my full size 10" table saw doesn't. Personally, I don't think this is a critical feature.

What's Available On The Market?

1. The *Microlux* from Micro-Mark is currently priced at US\$335 plus duty, GST, shipping etc. Assume it'll be around C\$550 landed here in Ottawa. I found through e-bay that the Micro-Mark product is a copy of the *Proxxon Micromat* product.
2. *Proxxon Micromat* is US\$359 plus duty, GST, shipping etc. Although *Proxxon* is a German company, I'm told that the saw is actually made in Japan and isn't very good. E-mail me at chrisbutler@igs.net and I'll point you to some people that have had first hand experiences with it.
3. *Jarmac's* deluxe saw. Around US\$300. Now out of production but you might find one on e-bay.
4. *Hunterline*: This past summer, I paid C\$265 for my saw including a 0.020" wide 290 tooth fine blade. For some reason, Rick doesn't sell these saws through his company so no taxes are applicable. The saws are made in Waterloo, Ontario and available from *Hunterline*. Rick Hunter can be reached at hunterline@golden.net. E-mail either Bill Meredith or myself for details.

Safety...A few important points here

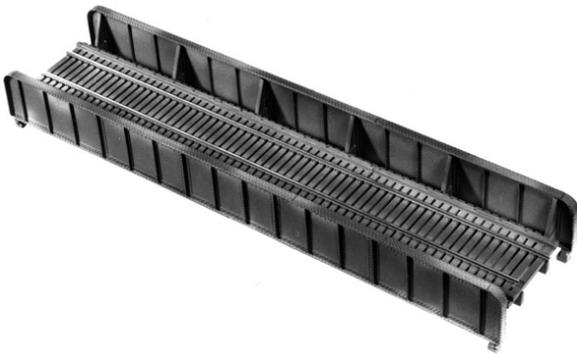
- Take care, this is no toy! Just like the full size version, I'm sure it will "eat" fingers given the chance.
- Wear a mask! The wood dust is extremely fine and the styrene chips are less than 0.001". At best it will temporarily give you more grey hair!
- Eye protection is needed for sure. The biggest problem comes from rubbing ones eyes with 0.001" static charged styrene particles on them after doing some cuts! This tends to produce very red eyes.
- Use some scrap basswood as a push stick when feeding material through the blade. Consider this to be very important.

Questions? Feel free to e-mail me. Answers are free but right answers will cost ya!

Until next time...

WANTED BRIDGE CONTRACTOR

The SLD Railroad has recently acquired a
72 foot Plate Girder Bridge



to span the river on their mainline (just west of the station). The bridge is a state of the art steel construction manufactured by the renown

Central Valley company

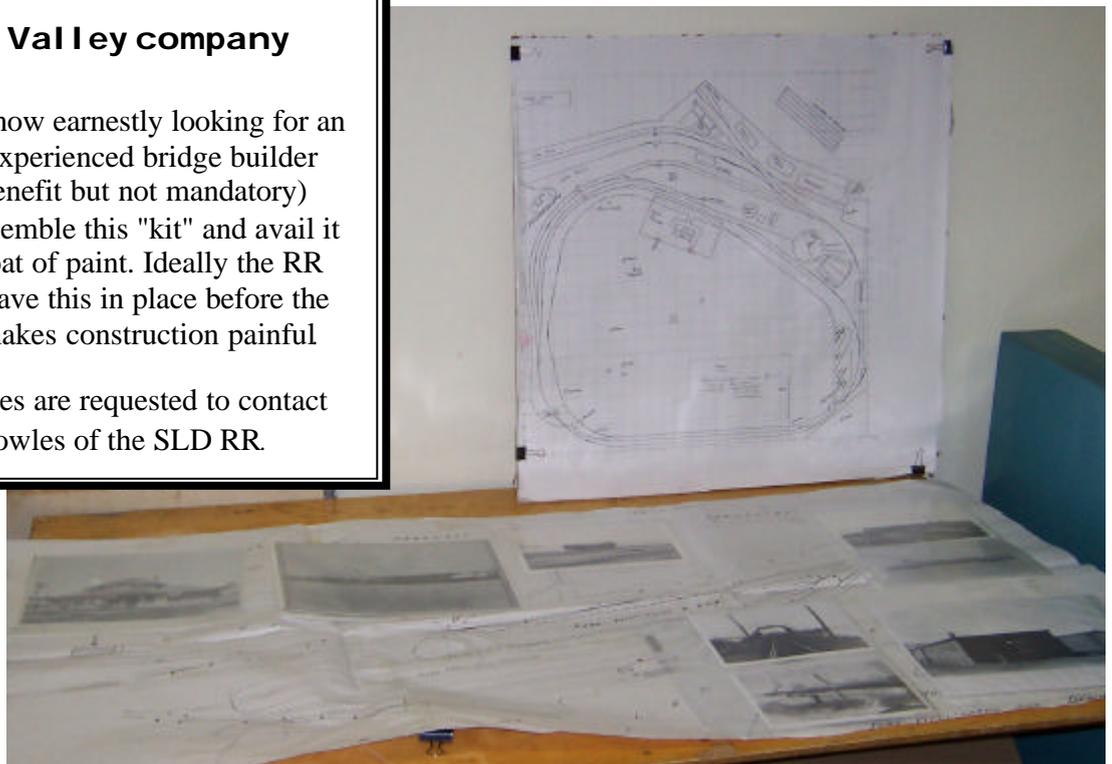
The SLD RR is now earnestly looking for an enthusiastic (experienced bridge builder would be a benefit but not mandatory) individual to assemble this "kit" and avail it with a fresh coat of paint. Ideally the RR would like to have this in place before the winter frost makes construction painful

Interested parties are requested to contact Grant Knowles of the SLD RR.



Peter MacDonald displayed two modules on which he has created an urban environment with a diverse streetscape typical of a small city. The buildings are mostly kitbashed to change their common ancestry and represent the irregular geography of our real world. Providing realistic personalities for the structures helps to further the illusion we try to create with our models.

Photo: Stanley Conley



As part of Paul Ward's clinic he displayed part of his growing collection of period photos, maps and drawings he has acquired in his quest to model the Prescott operations of the Ottawa and Prescott railroad. He also displayed a drawing depicting the latest evolution of his future O scale layout.

Photo: Stanley Conley



Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, November 27th, 2004

Where:

Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road,
Ottawa

East of CHEO at Dauphin Road

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

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business

- Theme project
- Railfair redux

Clinic

- The quest for precision
- German meter gauge steam

Display

- Off shore cabooses and overseas equipment

Door Prizes

- You never know what to expect!

Afternoon:

- Canadian Northern

