



The Mail Car

Issue no. 30 - September 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 meet of the SLD for the 2003-2004 season was held in Pembroke Ontario on Saturday May 29th. The day started out very cool but by the afternoon it was a wonderful late spring day. With attendance of close to 30 individuals and a good percentage being local potential members, the meet was certainly a success.

As always May brings with it the requirement for the annual general meeting and election of officers in alternate years and so we had a short financial presentation from Gary Baillargion who stepped in to take care of business after Doug Cushman was whisked away to the Cayman Islands on business for an extended time. Gary reassured us that the SLD is solvent and likely to continue so, he also indicated that he would be taking a more rigorous approach to the bookkeeping aspects of the position than we have done in the past in order to present a more comprehensive financial report at the end of next season. Peter Nesbitt presided over the election of officers for the next two year term. Grant Knowles had reached the maximum of six continuous years of service on the executive and stepped down from the position of Assistant Superintendent. Alex Binkley, David Steer and Doug Cushman stepped down from their positions to pursue other commitments. Peter

managed to solicit candidates for all positions, and after a call for further candidates from the floor, called for a members vote in favour of accepting the candidates, which passed unanimously. For the term May 2004 to May 2006 the executive officers of the SLD will be, Stanley Conley - Superintendent, Peter Joyce - Assistant Superintendent, Andeas Mank - Dispatcher, Tom Badenoch - Clerk and Gary Baillargion - Paymaster.

With the heavy duty stuff over we could get on to the important stuff and we began with an excellent clinic on turnout construction presented by Andy Cowan. Andy detailed how he approached turnout construction using paper templates and soldering to PC board ties. He had many samples with him and illustrated a variety of situations that arose on the layout and during turnout construction. The clinic was very interactive with participants gathered around the table discussing the finer points after the main presentation.

Following Andy we switched over to review the well stocked display tables which Alex has detailed for the **Mail Car**. It is always a great thing to see full tables since this is where we can actually see each other's work and interests in the flesh.

Continued on page 2



Members sit in deep concentration as Grant Knowles reviews the display table offerings. There were many items on display at the tables on each side of the hall. A few questions from Grant directed at an item's owner was all it took to stimulate a dialog.

Photo: Stanley Conley

St. Lawrence Division

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The Mail Car is published five times a year by the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA.

Opinions expressed are those of the editor (Dispatcher) or the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the St. Lawrence Division–NMRA

Copy Deadlines

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

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

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Although by this time we had all mingled, we went around the room and introduced each layout host and they provided us a capsule description of their layouts and modelling goals to tweak the curiosity of the participants for an afternoon of seven layout tours. John Bateson, John Tabram, Steve Vallis, Kevin Boldt, John Mau, John Wegner and Bill Ringrose all extended us their hospitality for the afternoon and we thank them.

My companions and I did manage to visit all seven layouts, although we did have to forgo lunch to do so! Each layout offered something a little different and as I always say, you learn something from every layout you visit and this collection was certainly lived up to that concept. There are many talented modellers in the upper Ottawa valley and we hope to see more of their work in the future.

I would be remiss if I did not take a little space to thank Rick Dickinson for organising a very large portion of this meet and John Bateson for promoting the layout tours.

Now to shift to the future! As usual for our division we are planning five all day meets, a hands-on modelling workshop (probably spread over two or more separate sessions), and of course participation in our local train show event.

The location for our first meet of the year, September 25th will be in Brockville, Ontario. At the Wall Street United Church downtown to be precise. The following three meets, November, January and March will be held in Ottawa, at the same location as last year, Emmanuel United Church, and the final meet in May is only a faint glimmer in the mind's eye. The best method for keeping abreast of the action is to visit the division's web site located at http://www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld_index.htm.

Each year the division uses a theme to help guide clinic and workshop planning and in the past we have had such themes as bridges and trestles, freight cars and resin kits. This year's theme is shaping up to be scratch building and so we hope to present at least one clinic per meet and focus the workshop on this theme. Please see page four in the **Mail Car** for further information regarding this year's theme.

A major event for the division is participation in Railfair, October 16-17, 2004. This show, now in its 27th year, provides an opportunity for the public to meet us and for us to encourage participation in the hobby of model railroading. Most of you know the drill for Railfair but it's always good to go over things now and then. Our participation at the show primarily consists of exhibiting and encouraging show visitors to operate the engine on the switching module. For the very young children it is enough that they can make the engine run back and forth, for the older children, we provide a set of moves to be carried out like a puzzle. The module has several highly detailed buildings, working road crossing flashers and generally conveys to the viewing public what is possible on a layout while providing the opportunity to participate and enjoy model railroading. From the contact we have with participants, and often the parents of the participants, we are able to advertise our group's existence and bring interested people into the meets, into the NMRA and further into the wonderful world of model railroading. As usual this does not happen by magic, many hands and hearts are required to make this work without being a burden. I am looking for a volunteer to act as co-ordinator, to request and schedule other volunteers to staff the layout and interact with the visitors. Delivery, set-up, tear-down and removal of the layout is already covered.

Pembroke's past photographically preserved Or the May Display Review

By Alex Binkley

One of the highlights of the display at the May SLD meet in Pembroke were photographs of the city's rail facilities back in the 1950s when both CNR and CPR steam and first generation diesels were in operation. Stephen Handke brought out the colour photos, which included a CNR Northern as well as RS3's and GP7's.

Paul Anderson displayed a scale spike he received from his co-workers at his retirement party. The spike comes from the White Pass & Yukon Railway. Now that he is retired, we should see more of Paul's modeling.

Stanley Conley displayed some of his modeling handiwork including NWX 2640, an ACR built URTX 1927 reefer. Stan built the model as it appeared after a 1956 repaint. Next was an Accurail 40 foot outside braced box car lettered as CNR 500492. He started with an undecorated model and thinly applied Accuflex #11 paint and CDS transfers. He described it as a practice exercise to develop skills at removing moulded on detail and replacing with more appropriate elements. (Sounds like clinic material). Stan also displayed A.R.T. 83573, a steel-sided ice bunker built from an Intermountain kit. He weathered it lightly with an airbrush. As well, he had CNR 408756, a 36 Fowler Boxcar constructed from a Kalso Shops kit. He painted it with Modelflex CNR#11 and lettered with CDS transfers and then weathered it. Stan advises working from photos of the car as the instructions aren't much help. The casting is wonderfully detailed and crisp and everything fits together. To round out his display, Stan had CNR 529153, a 40 foot AAR boxcar. Stan applied the weathering lightly.

Grant Knowles also had several models in the display including the WSLCo. heavy duty flat cars he showed in a partly built state back in March. The scratchbuilt On3 cars were finished and entered in the NFR convention in May and both earned merit awards and a plaque. He also had a RGS SN3 combine that he built several years ago and entered in the NFR contest. With some interior details, the car would have earned a merit award, he says. It sure looked good as is. Grant also displayed an RGS track shed in HO scale that he built from a Design Tech kit. He added a few extra details, a handcar and a hard worker to the scene, which will be mounted on his home layout.

Alex Binkley brought out four S scale freight cars, two of which he built for a gent from California. One was an F&C 40-foot New York Central gondola. While it made into a nice looking model, it was an early resin kit and it required a lot of filing and sanding to make it fit. Peter Nesbitt recommended overspraying a model with high gloss before applying decals. The other southbound car was a Leigh Valley Models mill gondola kit. It is an all-wood kit and produced a unique looking model without too much sanding. It was lettered with CDS Erie transfers. As well, there was a 50-foot Canada Southern boxcar from a Pacific Rail Shops, now Gold Coast Models, kit. Lettered with a CDS transfers, it served as a test bed for weathering effects. The last model was another early resin kit, a one-piece bulkhead flat car from Schreiner Scale Models. The biggest challenge with it is bending the deck straight. It is also lettered for the Canada Southern with CDS transfers.

Mike Hamer showed off his tree making expertise that he makes from spirea, hydrangea and sedum plants. Mike scrounges the material from around Ottawa, and has an eight-step process for making the tree, which he would likely share with anyone who asked, as well as nine good reasons for putting trees on the layout. It would be hard to argue against them if trees always came out looking like Mike's do.

NMRA Dates

SLD Meetings

September 25, 2004	Wall St. United Church Wall St. Brockville
November 27, 2004	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
January 29, 2004	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
March 26, 2004	Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa
May 28, 2004	TBA

NFR Spring Convention

Grand Junction
Belleville, Ontario

Theme Clinics and Workshop

By Stanley Conley

In our recurring quest to present an educational and entertaining series of meets, we have in the past utilised the concept of a theme to help structure and focus our efforts. This year of course, is no different and we have decided that it's time to approach scratchbuilding with some vigour.

As the predominant focus, for us as a group, is the recreation of some part of the real or prototype environment in a miniature form, we are all involved in the acquisition of models. Some we can purchase ready made off the shelf, some we purchase as kits, varying from simple to extremely complex. But some items are just not available for purchase, so we have two options, we can wait patiently until someone somewhere makes a model for us, or we can make one from scratch. Okay, to really tell the truth there are a range of options between the two but the only significant difference is the amount of basic material you start with.

Scratchbuilding often throws a cold chill over many modellers, even those that build mighty fine models out of the 600 partly identifiable bits in a box type kit. Part of this is the 'where do I start problem', there are no instructions, possibly only a few bad photos and a vague idea of the size of the real item, there is no take part 23 and glue part 45 to the top! The most important lesson to learn about scratchbuilding is that it is not a single event but a process and like all processes it can be broken down into many smaller, identifiable steps, each conquered in turn that lead to a conclusion, a unique model of a prototype.

Some of the primary steps in the process are; research, layout and design, parts fabrication, assembly and finishes. Research is required to gather as much information as possible about the item in question, photos, diagrams, drawings, written documents and possibly supporting information of similar items or the technology in use at the time of construction. Layout and design encompasses the creation of drawings and dimensional data required to fabricate the item, in whole and in part. It also is the step where you decide how you are going to fabricate parts and assemble them, what materials and adhesives to use, and the order of fabrication and finishing. Parts fabrication covers the actual creation of the parts of the item and may involve many different materials and work methods. Assembly is where you put the kit you have created together. Finishes of course deals with the texture, colour and overall visual image of the item. Some of these processes are linear but most are overlapped and often cyclic in nature, as you iterate to a final conclusion.

In order for the SLD to present a theme, we are going to require a number of volunteers to step forward to present clinics and possibly lead a workshop. As I have outlined above, scratchbuilding is a process involving a number of small steps, think of each step as a clinic, and look into yourself and ask the following question, can I do one of those steps? To give you a start on potential clinics I provide the following list off the top of my head:

- Searching for material in the Craig Library. (National Archives, Science and Tech, local library, take your pick)
- Using the ORER (Official Railway Equipment Register)
- Resources on the WEB
- Interpreting car diagrams
- Interpreting drawings
- Interpreting insurance maps
- Interpreting photos
- Determining dimensions
- How to use measuring instruments such as rulers and callipers
- How to convert dimensions
- Drawing for construction
- Sources for parts
- How to fabricate parts in styrene
- How to fabricate parts in brass
- How to fabricate parts in wood
- How to fabricate parts in paper
- How to fabricate parts in plaster
- Types of adhesives and their applications
- How to cast parts
- How to turn parts
- Planning for assembly
- Planning for finishes
- How to use decal lettering
- How to use dry transfers
- Printing your own decals

And I am sure I have only scratched the surface with respect to potential topics for a clinic.

Clinics can be short and cover a single concept such as *how to use a calliper*, or they can be complex such as *brake rigging on mid-century freight cars*. Clinics can range from straight forward verbal presentation without any visual aids to something as complex as a computer animated graphic presentation. The overriding principle is the sharing of knowledge among your peers. If you feel you have some knowledge to share but perhaps need a bit of help to 'spruce up' the presentation there are members who can help so please do not feel that you must have a fully polished presentation before you can step forward to volunteer.

Technology is always an issue, however we can always come up with a carousel slide projector and screen and in the past have often been able to supply a data projector and laptop for PowerPoint type presentations.

The meets depend on a steady supply of clinics and most of those clinics of necessity must come from members or contacts through members, so take a look at yourself (and your friends) and suggest a clinic you can do or someone you think has knowledge they would share with perhaps a small nudge. I can state with a clear conscience that presenting a clinic has not ever, in the history of the division, been fatal.

We would also like to offer a workshop on scratchbuilding, and since the executive has not gotten much beyond that concept, there is at this time considerable leeway in it's form and execution. My personal inclination is to have a workshop to scratchbuild a piece of rolling stock, probably MOW related such as a crane tender, tool car or such. This gives considerable latitude in the construction method and final appearance, after all many MOW cars are multiply re-cycled revenue cars with various shop-built additions and modifications and hence wide variations and perhaps not necessarily perfect results can be tolerated better than starting towards say, a streamlined passenger car. In my mind the workshop would start with a drawing of a car and would at the very least end with a viable, rolling platform that can track properly and couple with another car, a basic piece of rolling stock. On the route between the two we should cover interpreting the drawing, fabrication of principle parts such as frame, truck support, coupler support, sides, deck if a flat type or ends/roof for a house type, assembly of major components, adjustments for ride height and coupler height. Bonus work would be safety appliances (grabs, steps, ladders, railings etc), brake rigging, and small details.

I am now soliciting comments and suggestions and hopefully some help. If you know of a project either as a existing drawing, or a step by step article that we could follow as a group please pass this on to me. The suggestion has been made that we should work in styrene as a construction expediency. If you are willing to assist or lead a workshop, now is the time to step forward. The workshops would most likely be held on one or more weekend days and last 4-6 hours each time. Since we meet in late September, Railfair is mid October and the next meet is late November, we would need a very enthusiastic leader to hold the first workshop in early November, more likely an early December date would be most practical.

Please give the above some thought and if you are able and willing to lend a hand, or even a suggestion, please contact me or any member of the executive, a shared burden is no burden at all.



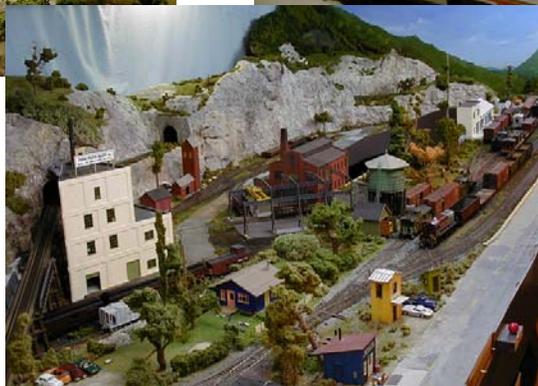
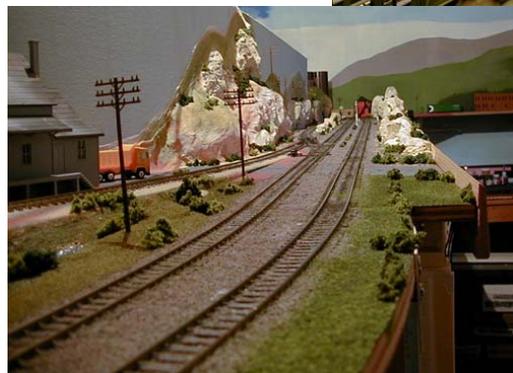
May Layout tours



John Bateson

Kevin Boldt

Bill Ringrose



Top: John Mau
Middle: John
Taram

John Bateson

Photos: John Bateson

Building heritage wood and early resin kits

By Alex Binkley

Last year, California S scaler Ed Loizeaux came up with a novel way of dealing with his stockpile of older, unbuilt kits.

He decided which ones he really wanted to see on his layout and those that didn't suit his modeling interests anymore. The kits in the latter category he offered to modelers who, in return, would build some of the kits he did want and send them back to him. He had a number of takers including yours truly.

For someone who is modeling shortline operations in the 1990s, Ed's treasure trove included a number of boxcar, gondola and tank cars that I had heard of but never seen as I have been in S only since the mid 1990s. So I requested five of them in exchange for building four models for him plus an Amity Star Southern Pacific auto boxcar kit I had picked up somewhere along the way and didn't fit in my plans.

I ended up with Funero & Camerlengo hopper and gondola kits, both resin, and three wood kits, a Kinsman 40 foot boxcar, a Leigh Valley Models scrap mill gondola and the Amity Star kit.

Wood kits are probably old hat to the veteran modelers. However most of my experience has been with plastic and styrene. My experience with these old kits has left me with a soft spot for wood models. Not enough to switch eras but an appreciation for them. My only real complaint is that the delicate pieces in wood are far more fragile than their plastic counterparts and much trickier to repair. Also it is harder to make a car look like it is made of a steel using wood than styrene. That's even with sanding sealer. Subtle weathering with chalks does help disguise the wood underneath. Another drawback is that a wood kit when built is considerably lighter than a styrene or resin one, which requires more creativity in adding weight to the cars.

I also have several wood Amity Star bulkhead flatcar kits to build and some Quality Craft CPR bathtub gondolas and high-sided gondolas, all wood, that I picked up here and there. I look forward to tackling them.

The one plus with most of the wood kits is that they come with scale drawings and lots of dimensions for parts so if you really liked a particular car, you can use the drawings to make additional models in either wood or styrene. Brake gear, coupler platforms and grab irons are readily available from several sources and that's about the only commercial parts you really need.

The F&C resin kits are another story. I find the quality of the castings to be quite good but they are finicky to put together. A lot of sanding and test fitting is required and even then it takes some putty to fill in gaps. When one looks at the current level of resin kits compared to these two which I think date from the late 1980s, a lot of advances in quality are readily apparent.

Bottom line is this. Try a wood kit. You might enjoy it. There is a satisfaction working with wood, even if it is trickier, than with styrene. I think in the future I will try wood for some scratching building projects.

St. Lawrence Division Financial Report

Expenses for the division for the period September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2004 where:

Printing the Mail Car	\$274.39
Postage for the Mail Car	\$257.31
Meet costs (room rental, refreshments)	\$418.43
Total	\$960.13

Reserves as of September 1, 2004	
On deposit + cash on hand	\$1985.18

Data provided by Gary Baillargeon and presented by Stanley Conley

Railfair

October 16-17, 2004
Algonquin College, Woodroffe Avenue Campus

Calling all participants!

The SLD will once again be present and providing the public, young and old, with the opportunity to operate trains on the switching module. This is our major self promotion event for the year and an important point of contact with potential SLD'ers and to promote this great hobby.

In order to make this event work we require a number of participants to volunteer a couple of hours to help assist the public to operate the trains and to interact with show patrons.

We need one special person to step forward to be the Railfair Volunteer Co-ordinator who will schedule all the eager members who want to sign up for a shift (or two). Manpower for module transportation, booth set-up and take-down are already covered.



After any good clinic there comes the time for serious discussion about the issues raised. Here we see some earnest talk about turnout construction methods and the various pros and cons.



These two pictures highlight the freight car end of the display tables at the May meet with Alex's cars prominent in the picture to the left.

Photos: Stanley Conley



Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

When:

Saturday, September 25th, 2004

Where:

Wall Street United Church
Wall Street,
Brockville

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

What's on:

Morning:

Division Business

- Introduction of Year's event
- Railfair preparations

Clinic

- Making it fit
- TBA

Display

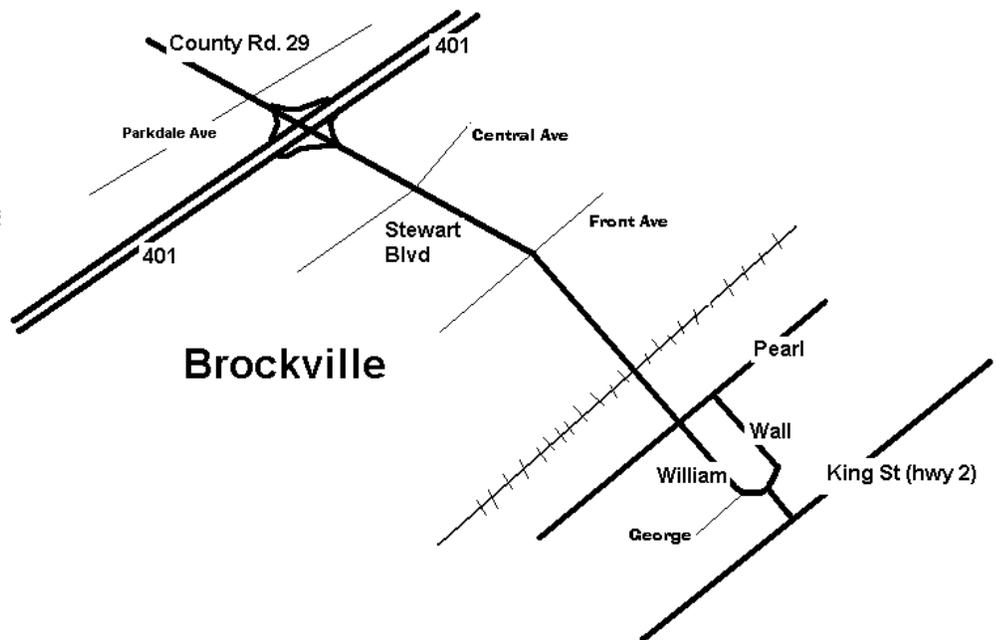
- Your summer projects

Door Prizes

- You never know what to expect!

Afternoon:

- Layout tours
- Local railfanning



Exit 401 south onto County Road 29 (Stewart Blvd south of the 401) and travel towards the downtown, crossing the railroad tracks (and passing Tim Horton's). Pass Pearl at the light and continue south on William and bear left onto Wall as you curve around the court house square. Wall St. United is on the corner, watch for signs there are three churches facing the square!