



# The Mail Car

Newsletter of the St Lawrence Division – NMRA

Issue no. 35 – September 2005

St. Lawrence Division web site: [www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld\\_index.htm](http://www3.sympatico.ca/gd.knowles/sld/sld_index.htm)

## *From the Superintendent's Desk*

**By Stanley Conley**

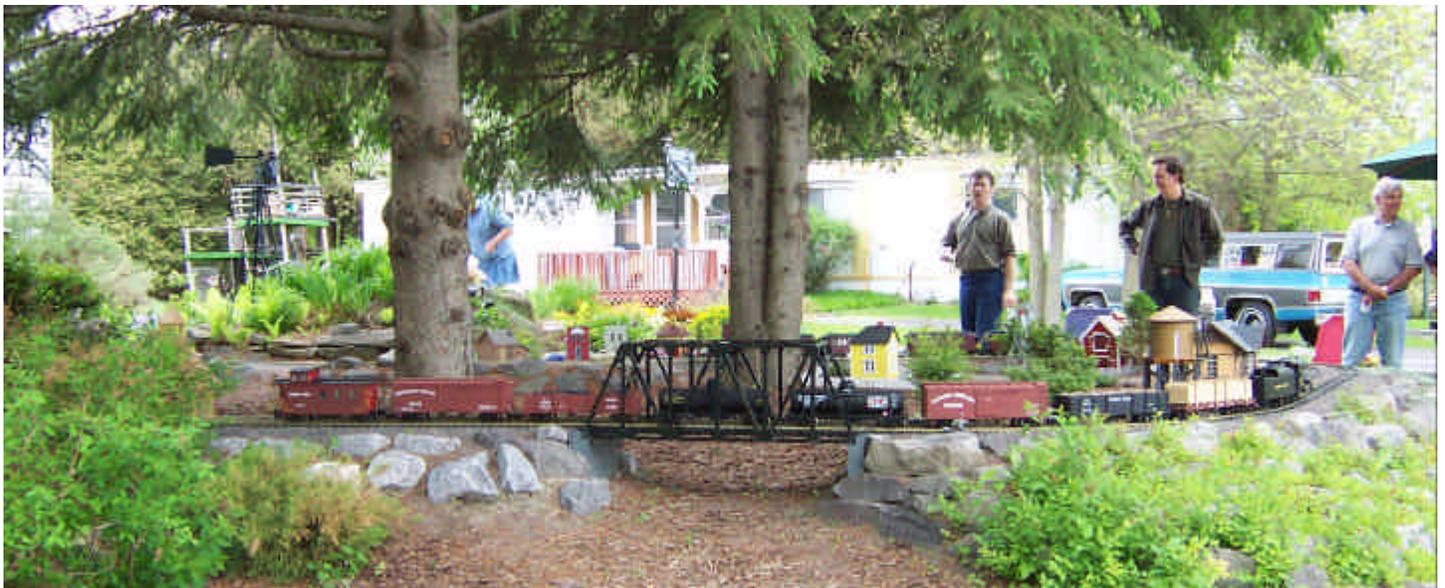
The last Meet of the season was held on May 28, 2005 in Kemptville Ontario, 30 minutes south of Ottawa. With an outdoor prototype tour and a garden layout, the foreboding forecast and grey morning clouds did not look good, however by the time the doors opened the sky was clear and the sun bright. The Meet was held in Leslie Hall, a very nice old stone building on the grounds of St. James Anglican Church, Clothier Street West. The meeting room offered ample space for us to spread out and was dark enough for the data projector to function to good effect.

Our business portion was confined to two items, a quick financial report to the members, confirming that we are in the black, and a required vote on changes to the code of operating rules as required by the recent changes to the NFR regulations.

Grant Knowles provided a report on the NFR Spring Convention and the model contest results for our local members.

Two excellent clinics were provided, Andrew Batchelor described how he turned his home video footage of the recent visit by CP 2816 into a full fledged production with titles, music and fancy transitions using his computer to edit everything digitally and then producing a DVD. A very impressive bit of work! Andrew managed to keep us entertained as he covered some of the do's and don'ts of taping and editing footage to produce a video without bogging down into the technical or computer details. Carl Swail discussed and illustrated how he created a line side wetland typical of many places in the Canadian Shield. Carl took us through the creation of the basic landforms and water areas, to the development of characteristic wetland plants such as grasses, cat tails, water lilies and the occasional tree. Carl's work is impressive as anyone who has seen the large wetland area on Tom Hood's layout can attest.

First up in the afternoon was a guided tour of the Growmark Fertilizer distribution plant in Kemptville, the last remaining customer on the truncated Bedel subdivision.



Jim Davis's layout under the trees was the treat for the afternoon of the May Meet. This excellent garden layout occupies the front garden area with access to the basement for train storage. With a couple of water features, several bridges and structures this gem is a treat to watch and certainly displays the enthusiasm of it's builder. Photo: Stanley Conley

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

Continued from page 1

The plant handles bulk loadings of two basic commodities, potash and urea, that are brought in in unit train loads and distributed by truck. The large conical silos and the array of overhead conveyor systems would make of an interesting although space eating model, perhaps only the unloader and conveyor legs going off into the isle.

The afternoon was capped off with a visit to Jim Davis's J.P.&F Scenic Ry, a garden layout located front and center. The railway meanders through a well developed garden full of small shrubs, flowers and ponds, over bridges and around boulders, and into the house! The layout extends through a basement window into a staging yard to allow the trains to be quickly brought out and put away, a very nice touch and it gets him running trains more often. If you go down to look at the staging, you also get to see his HO layout, and should I mention his truck collection?

I would like to thank Andrew Batchelor for a very large portion of this Meet. He invited us to Kemptville, arrange for our use of Leslie Hall, fostered contact with the manager of the Growmark Fertilizer and gained access for our group to the facility, and made a presentation.

Looking forward to the coming year's program, we looked back on last year's successful scratchbuilding workshop, and in particular the interest generated in the concept of having informal workshops during which participants work on individual projects in the company of other modellers for both technical and social interaction. This is an avenue that the division will explore over the next season in addition to the regular meets. A volunteer has already stepped forward with thoughts along the same lines and he has indicated a willingness to organise one or two events along those lines. We have yet to work out any details but welcome input, both on the 'lend a hand' side and on the 'I would like' side, so feel free to contact me or any member of the executive and raise your voice.

The first Meet of the year will be held on Saturday September 24, 2005 at the Beckwith Township Hall, 1702 9<sup>th</sup> Line Beckwith, and as always we will have a morning program followed by an afternoon of Layout tours. Future Meets will be November 26, 2005, January 28, March 25, and May 27, 2006, as always, the last Saturday of the month.

The SLD's other commitment is coming up rapidly, RailFair approaches! As in previous years the SLD will be present at Railfair in the form of the switching layout, interacting with the public, encouraging participation and certainly providing entertainment. We will require a number of volunteers to man the layout during the public hours; Saturday October 15, 11:00am to 5:30 pm and Sunday October 16, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. Under ideal conditions there should be two members present at all times; this works out to 25 man hours in total and a commitment of an hour or two will eat away at that total rapidly so please sign up.

Those of you who were present at the last Meet will recall that I made reference to changes in the NMRA organization internationally that will have a direct effect on members of the SLD, and on how we conduct division matters. The proposal by the Australasian, British and NMRA Canada, groups was accepted and approved by the BOD at the mid year meeting with an effective date of 1 September, 2005. Under the proposal, each group will now establish and collect an annual dues amount based on the local conditions and out of this dues amount the group would purchase core services (access to library, achievement awards, standards and specifications, and the like) at an agreed amount from National. The group would, on behalf of their members purchase a subscription

to Scale Rails if the member wished to. One of the objectives was to reduce the total and to enable the dues to be collected in Canadian dollars. As of this writing it would appear that the Annual NMRA dues for a regular member will be set at \$20.00 per year, a subscription to Scale Rails (the monthly magazine of the NMRA) will be set at \$24.00, and at the regional level, a subscription to the NFR Flimsy (the quarterly newsletter of the NFR) will be set at \$13.00 per year.

Rights to member benefits would not change; a Canadian member would still be an NMRA member and have access to the resources, meets and Annual National Conference as before. I hope that by the end of September I will have full details of these changes and what it means to us so that I can pass it on to you.

The most tangible member benefit the NMRA offers is the Meet. Meets take almost as many forms as there are divisions, they are organized on a local level by division members on a regular or irregular basis, some are a small and simple as a handful of members getting together at some one's home to as complex as a four day conference attended by hundreds of participants. The reality is the Meet is how members serve each other, and it is at the core of the NMRA's activities and benefits.

When the SLD was initiated there was a realization that this geographic area was an area rich in model railroading interest, talent and capability but that very few potential participants had any experience with the NMRA or the potential of an NMRA style Meet. When the division was chartered and the Code of Operating Rules drawn up, two classes of participants were created, Members who were full fledged NMRA members, and Supporters, participants who paid higher (generally double) dues but were not expected to be NMRA members. Both groups had access to the

Meets, and received a copy of the **Mail Car**, the division newsletter.

Two things have happened, first the division has matured, and more and more people participated in and spread the word about the SLD, we are now a relatively known commodity. Second, changes in the NMRA Regulations have eliminated the possibility of having participants like the supporters. Under the new NMRA regulations, there is no longer the old three tiered, national, regional, and division membership and dues structure, there is only an NMRA member, you join at the top and the rest is part of your benefits as an NMRA member. The bottom line is that the SLD can no longer collect dues from NMRA members. As a division we are allowed to collect fees at the door to cover meet costs and to offer subscriptions to the division newsletter to cover that cost. As an aside, the former membership cost was used almost exclusively to cover the cost of the **Mail Car**.

What this means is that for current NMRA members you will see very few changes, for former supporters, you will be asked to join the NMRA in order to continue to enjoy the benefits of the meets and other organized activities of the division. The difference in cost between the former supporter dues and the minimum NMRA membership is certainly less than the cost of a single kit, or a couple of magazines and surely should not be a barrier to the benefits of the division meets and activities. Those of you with a more philosophical barrier to NMRA membership will have to make peace with yourselves.

In order to accommodate new faces who are unsure of just what we are all about, we will likely steal an idea from a division in Southern Ontario; we will maintain a list of fresh faces and allow them access to two meets before they must meet the requirement of NMRA membership.

## NMRA Dates

	<b>SLD Meetings</b>	<b>NFR Spring Convention</b>
September 24, 2005	<b>Beckwith Township Community Hall 1702 9<sup>th</sup> Line Beckwith</b>	<b>2006</b> Chatham Ontario
November 26, 2005	<b>Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa</b>	<b>Railfair 28</b>
January 28, 2006	<b>Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa</b>	October 15,16, 2006
March 25, 2006	<b>Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road, Ottawa</b>	
May 27, 2006	TBA	

# May 2005 Meet Display Report

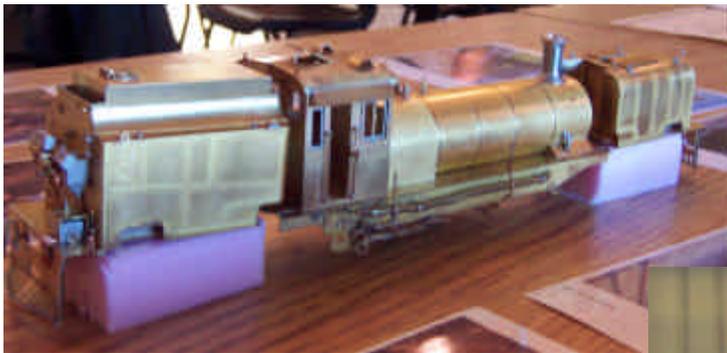
Text and photos by Stanley Conley

With many apologies, working from memory far too long after the event, I have missed some of the displays I am sure. If I have missed anyone please feel free to remind me, although it may lead to an article in the **Mail Car!**

Chris Butler brought out two items; the first is his O scale version of the small shanty he built for the SLD module which he admits was a bit of a learning experience as he adjusted to a new scale. The second display item was the impressive structure he is creating for Don Leger's layout. The multi story structure is designed to wrap around a post supporting Don's living quarters upstairs. This large building presented a completely different set of problems of assembling large panels, bracing and tying together the sides while leaving room for the post and a method to assemble on the layout.

Bob Hobbs brought a metal box sold to carry a tool such as a circular saw which he felt was the right size to transport models in complete security, the box is strong enough to stand on and the relative price was reasonable.

There was also another box on display, built of wood to transport a locomotive or a couple of pieces of rolling stock with the equipment sitting on rail and gently held down in safety.



David Steer displayed the current state of his construction of a South African Railways narrow gauge Garratt Loco. This Backwoods Miniatures kit in 7mm/foot scale is nearing completion of the superstructure although the Styrofoam running gear needs some improvement.

I believe that it was Peter Nesbitt who displayed a fine model of East Broad Top's M1 rail motor car, a fine looking item indeed.



There are two other items I recall but have no name to attach, for which I apologize. The first is a very nice model of the "Dionne Homestead" in North Bay. This item was intended as a souvenir but is reasonably scaled and a nice rendition of a small home and I'm sure it will look just great on the layout.

# Modeling Tips

from the machine shops of the

# Bonnechere & Braeside Railway Company

In March I wrote what I thought was the last of these tips. But! A few months ago I found a new (to me) solution to a reasonably common problem and after sharing it with a couple of people it was strongly suggested that I share it with the SLD members.

First the problem, which can occur in various forms. A space between two things or surfaces, one or both of which are finished. One instance would be a space between a wall of a building and the ground. Plaster is not a good idea because of the high probability of getting it onto the finished wall. Caulking also has the same risk.

Children's home made "Play Dough" works very well. Its clay like texture doesn't stick or mar the type of surfaces we're dealing with. But do a test to be sure. While in a closed container it stays fresh for a number of months but once spread it will harden in a day or two. Since it doesn't have any "stickiness" after it hardens a bit of ACC can be used if needed to hold it in place.

The recipe I used is shown below.

1 cup boiling water  
1 cup flour (more if dough is too sticky)  
1/2 cup salt  
2 tsp cream of tartar  
2 tsp oil  
Food colouring of your choice

Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar with a fork.  
In a separate bowl - mix water and food colouring, add the oil.

Mix with flour mixture.  
Knead well.  
Store in airtight container.

Peter Nesbitt  
General Manager



The second item was an interlocking tower, of which even the picture I have is poor and fuzzy!

Grant Knowles and Stanley Conley brought out their models which were entered in the NFR Model Contest in Belleville this spring.



As part of the afternoon program, the Growmark Fertilizer plant in Kemptonville opened their facility for a guided tour of the bulk unloading and handling facility. Here we see the participants approaching the truck loading area under threatening skies.



# Next Division Meet

St Lawrence Division – NMRA

*When:*

**Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

*Where:*

**Beckwith Township Community Hall  
1702 9<sup>th</sup> Line Beckwith**

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

*What's on:*

## ***Morning:***

### **Division Business**

### **Clinic**

- TBA

### **Display**

- Summer projects

### **Door Prizes**

- You never know what to expect!

## ***Afternoon:***

- Layout Tours

