



# THE MAIL CAR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LAWRENCE DIVISION - NMRA

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## St. Lawrence Division

### Executive Officers

#### **Superintendent:**

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#### **Assistant Superintendent:**

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Welcome to 2023!

November's meet was presented in a hybrid format, with both an in-person meet and others joining by Zoom. The clinics are available on the SLD web page, and there are videos available on the new SLD Youtube channel: St. Lawrence Division, NMRA Clinic Material.

The next meet is coming up on January 21, 2023. The display table is where you can show off what Santa brought. After lunch there will be another Arduino workshop in the Kit Busters program.

### The Cover

GMD SD40-2 Ontario Northland heading to the Hawkesbury yard, on Lloyd Peters layout. Photo by Lloyd Peters.

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*Opinions expressed are those of the editor and/or the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the St. Lawrence Division – NMRA*

#### Copy Deadlines:

September Issue - August 15

November Issue - October 15

January Issue - December 15

March Issue - February 15

May Issue – April 15



# Superintendent's Report

By Malcolm Vant

This is my last report as Division Superintendent. It has been a really interesting time, these last few years. Never did I think we would have a pandemic to deal with when I agreed to take on the role. It's hard to believe it has been almost six years since I joined the executive. Much has changed since then. The pandemic forced us to adopt some new technologies, such as: Zoom, a Division Facebook page, and a YouTube channel. We benefited greatly by using Zoom to bring in clinicians we would not normally have access to. We have also been able to keep a vibrant and active group running and growing, in knowledge, if not numbers. With the purchase of a bit of equipment, the division has now begun to run hybrid in-person and Zoom meetings. This is a big benefit for members living outside the National Capital Region. I leave the Superintendent position secure in the knowledge that the division is in good hands and will continue to thrive.

As Christmas approaches, St Lawrence Division's 2022-23 program is well launched for the season. We have a challenging KitBuster project and a good lineup of clinics.

Our Arduino theme for this year's KitBuster is somewhat different. Judging by how many are still participating in the project, it is running well. Thanks go to our more Arduino-knowledgeable members and the activity leaders who have created a program and are crafting some homework problems that require independent thought and answering people's questions.

In case you have not been following along, our first meet on September 24 included an introduction to the KitBuster program and the Eleego Uno kits we are using. In October, we made sure everyone knew the basics of loading the software and using the development environment. November's meet included a presentation by Bob Farquhar on how he used Arduinos to implement a model railroad display in a Kingston museum. An early December Zoom meeting took participants through some homework problems to do with controlling a servo. Further progress will be made in the new year.

As for previous years, we are augmenting our KitBuster topic with clinics on other subjects at each regular meet. In September, railfan and photographer John Soehner showed his extensive photo collection of Maintenance of Way equipment. In November, ex-CN railroader Doug Wilson presented The Search for Safety – a discussion of the history of railway signals, what they are for, and what they mean. This was a very informative talk. If you missed it, you can watch it and other recordings on our [SLD YouTube channel](#). In January, I will present a clinic on the

history of rail-served industries in Ottawa. It's based on my research for Ottawa Railway History Circle. It will cover research methods and materials available for those who want to do prototype modelling and provide an overview of what the industrial scene was like in Ottawa from 1900-1990. Although the location is Ottawa, the methods and tools also apply to other locales. In March, Eric Gagnon, a model railroader and author from Kingston, will present some of the research that went into his latest two books about the Kingston industrial scene: "Smoke on the Waterfront", and "Stories on the Waterfront", and he will also discuss how his research affected the design of his latest model railroad, The Hanley Spur. The season ends with a clinic by Lloyd Henchey on how to do scenery. Lloyd has a fairly large layout that is rather unique in that it incorporates four seasons. He has had to learn how to model each of them, including making snow.

By the time you read this report, the SLD will be in the hands of a brand new executive. At the November 26 elections a new group of volunteers was selected by the membership with a mandate starting in January. I am certain that the new executive will do a splendid job.

Thanks to everyone for the support over the last several years,  
Malcolm Vant





There is scratch building and kit bashing. I have built flatcars by scratch building sub-assemblies to fit to modified cars, hence scratch bashing. I have done two so far, with grand intent for a super heavy third car someday.

My first scratch-bashing is Nord Rly depressed flat 9999. This was a European depressed flat car with buffers and European bogies (trucks) I bought at Railfair. An exquisite white metal casting of a cast depressed flat car, with see-through casting. I loaded the space between the cast beams with lead, so the car would track well when empty or loaded. I cut off the buffers and couplers, removed the original truck bolster pivots and built new ones further out for the span bolsters. I scratch-built the span bolsters from styrene, plus commercial brake gear valving and cushion draft gear. The trucks are spaced such that the inboard axles have the same spacing as the axles in the trucks. The grab irons must have been commercial items, but the extended coupler lift is scratch built.



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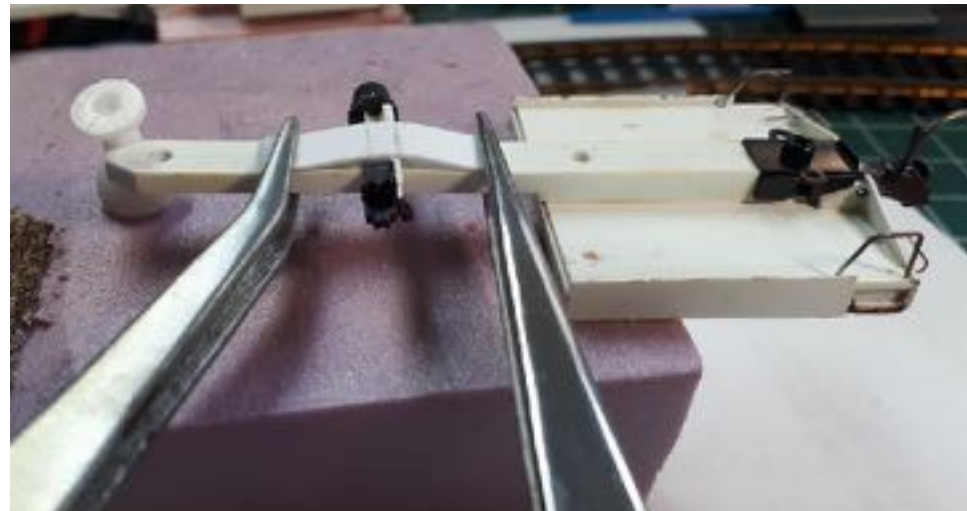
My second scratch-bash is this 12 axle heavy duty flat car, using an Athearn blue box heavy duty flat car body with Athearn six wheel Buckeye trucks on scratch built span bolsters.

I shaved off the car's grab irons and Athearn's span bolster pivot points. I weighted this car with lead, so it tracks very well when empty. I built new bolster pads further outbound to accommodate the new span bolsters for the six wheel trucks.

I constructed the span bolsters out of styrene because I am familiar with it with and have the necessary tools. The structure is based on a styrene shape, 0.060 by 0.125 I believe. I mounted the brake triple valve and



air tanks based on reference photos. While I mounted the air tank cross wise, I could have mounted it length wise. but I was concerned about clearances. I fabricated the end platforms from styrene sheet, commercial grab irons and Kadee™ draft gear boxes. Then I glued and clamped short strips of 0.010 styrene under the brake valve and air tank support beam to give the appearance the span bolsters are thicker in the centre where they will bear the car body's weight. I employed the same trick on the depressed





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flat car.

After many years of running around unpainted, I've finally primed and painted the bolsters and end platforms.

Our little people gives an idea of the car size.



## November 2022 Display Table



Mike Hamer brought out a few kits...

Clockwise from the left:  
East Brockfield Station (Railway  
Design Associates)

Engine House (Paper model)

Commanda General Store (JR Scale  
Models)

McCready's Ltd Pickle Packers and  
Condiments (American Model  
Builders, Laser kit)

These are for David Gardner's  
layout's harbour scene.





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Bruce Leckie brought out a composite laser cut plywood core with Clever Models cardstock textures. The building was designed by Gilbert Lacroix and built by Bruce Leckie.



Lorne Munro is building a farm scene, here is the farmhouse and barn which he photographed and measured.



# Next Division Meet



**Saturday January 21<sup>st</sup> 2023**

**Emmanuel United Church 691 Smyth Road Ottawa Ontario**

**Doors Open at 9:00 AM Admission: \$7.00**

## Morning Program

History of Rail-served Industries in Ottawa  
by Malcolm Vant

Arduino Controlled Warehouse Doors  
by Lloyd Henchey

## Display Table:

What Santa Brought You

## Afternoon

SLD Kit Buster Workshop

