



The Interchange

Our 47th Year
Ottawa Valley Associated Railroaders — OVAR

April 2007

Issue 414



My son Paul Churcher inspecting a sample car at National Steel Car, Hamilton, Ontario on August 5, 1982.

The sample car

by Colin Churcher
photos by the author

One of my more pleasant duties while working in grain transportation for the Federal Government was to attend the sample car inspections arranged by the rail-car manufacturers. In the 1970s and 1980s the government bought a large number of cylindrical covered hopper cars for grain transport from the three Canadian manufacturers at Hamilton, Ontario (National Steel Car), Sorel, Quebec (Marine Industries) and Trenton, N.S. (Hawker Siddeley).

When the first car of an order was completed the manufacturer would invite the railway

mechanical people to the plant to inspect the car. Inspectors crawled all over the car with tape measures to ensure that it met their plans and specifications precisely — right down to the last nut and bolt. This inspection was very thorough indeed and would take several people the best part of a day.

When it was pronounced satisfactory, and after any modifications required, the sample car would be retained at the plant until the order had been completed. The idea was to make all subsequent cars of the order identical to the sample car. If any manufacturing question came up, it could be resolved by referring to the sample car.

The first sample car inspection I attended I was asked if I was happy with the car. I said no because, while the entire car was painted an eye-catching red with black trim, the ABDW valve was painted blue and I wanted the ABDW valve painted red. I was told they couldn't do this as this was the way they came from the air brake manufacturer and if it was repainted it would invalidate the

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plus much more

From the Librarian's Carrel

by Dave Knowles

Recently I was railway browsing on the web and logged in to the Canadian Railroad Historical Association website, a.k.a. Exporail. Browsing through it I clicked on the Archives tab on the home page. I was checking up on their holdings as I had seen a reference to the Soper fonds being held by the CRHA. I couldn't find it, so prowled around the tabs in the lefthand top side and hit CRHA. Then remembering that Earl Roberts was awarded a lifetime Annual Achievement Award last year (but for 2004) I checked in to the list of past recipients. Listed recently, but for 2005, the lifetime achievement award went to Robert Turner, a former B.C. archivist and author of a veritable (actual, not virtual) library of railway (and railway owned steamships) books. It is I think truly deserved.

Scanning down the list I noted that the Association has listed two Preservation Awards for 2005, the first to the Orangedale Station

Association and the second to Dave Venables. I phoned Dave to congratulate him. He was unaware of the award but indicated that it was probably for his work on restoring WADDON, the CRHA's LB&SR steam locomotive held at the Canadian Railway Museum. This prompted a review of all the lists to see how Ottawans had featured in the various awards. And I noticed that the 2005 lists only named the winners, while earlier lists also note the reason for the award.

The third list was for Articles written in a CRHA publication. The 2005 winner was Ken Heard. This list, going back to 1987, contained only one Ottawa author, Doug Smith for his article "Laying the Foundation" in the September-October 1987 issue of CANADIAN RAIL.

List four, was for articles in Non-CRHA publications. There was no award for 2005, but Phil Jago won in 1988 for his article "Curtain Call for the B&W" in the Sept issue of BRANCHLINE. However, BRANCHLINE

has published three other winners in December 2001, June 2000, and November 1999.

The book award for 2005 is Val Knowles — again there is no listing for what but as the only railway book she has written is the biography of Van Horne, FROM TELEGRAPHER TO TITAN, it must be for that book. (This by the way is the hat trick as it previously won the 2004 Ottawa Book Prize for Non-Fiction, and the 2005 University of British Columbia Prize for Canadian Biography.) In 1989 The Bytown Railway Society won for the CANADIAN TRACKSIDE GUIDE, and Bytown published the 2002 book winner Charles Cooper's HAMILTON'S OTHER RAILWAY.

The Multi-Media category was only established in 2004, S.J. Smaill and S. Ropchan won it for 2005, but again no production was named.

That is a pretty solid contribution from the Ottawa Railfan community, but I do find it peculiar that the winners aren't notified before the listing is made on the web and that the titles of the winning article and books are not named.

Back by popular demand

2007 SAFETY EXPO & Open House

Saturday, April 28, 2007
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Walkley Yard

FREE
ADMISSION *

- Huge tent with displays and rail artifacts
- TransCAER interactive tank car
- VIA Rail and OC Transpo Displays
- Model railway layouts
- Bytown Railway Society
- M&M Meats BBQ
- Prizes

Plus Take a ride on an
OCR Diesell



Christmas 2007 Cheer



Ottawa Central Railway
3141 Albion Road South, Ottawa, ON K1V 8Y3

* Donations gratefully accepted for the "Christmas Cheer" fund

TIMETABLE

Upcoming events of particular
interest to OVAR members

April 28-29: IROQUOIS – Model Railroad Show & Sale, Seaway District High School, Hwy. 401 to exit #738, 3 blocks east on Hwy. 2. Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Info: Jason Edge (613) 657-1392, e-mail: cuttingedge@ripnet

May 1: OTTAWA – Bytown Railway Society, Canada Science & Technology Museum, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. 7:30 p.m.: www.bytownrailwaysociety.ca

May 2: CORNWALL – Moccasin Model Railroad Club, RCAF Association Wing 424, 240 Water St. W. 7:30 p.m. Info: Chris Patrick, e-mail: cpatrick1@cogeco.ca

May 3: MORRISBURG – Morrisburg Model Railroad Club, McIntosh Country Inn. 7:30 p.m. Info: Steve Skerry stvskerry@personainternet.com

May 17-21: VICTORIA, B.C. – CARM 4th Annual National Convention & 75th Anniversary of the CRHA, Co-sponsored by Victoria Model Railroad Club and Mid Island Railway Club, U. of Victoria. Info: www.caorm.org

From the OVAR Archives:

Sixty postcards that made OVAR

Dave Knowles
OVAR Archivist

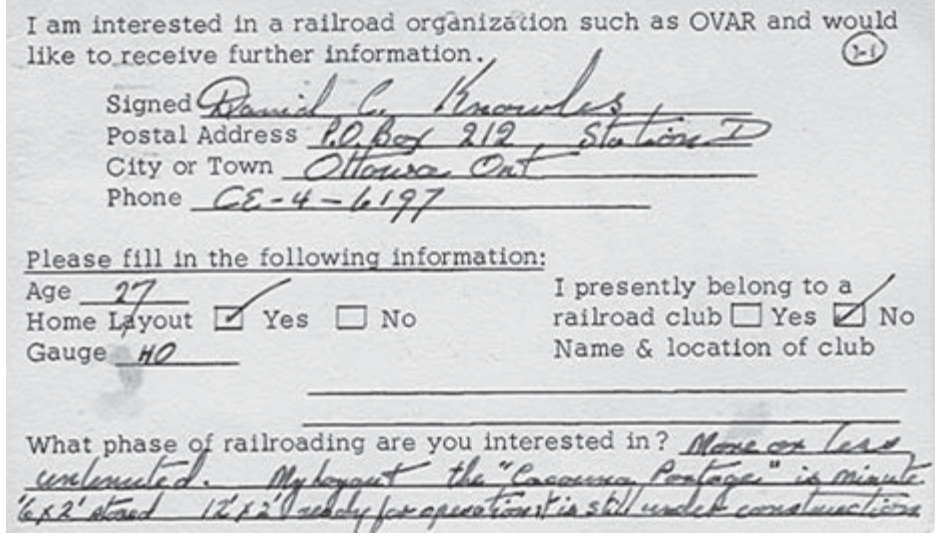
April is an historic month in OVAR history.

On April 4, 1960 seven model railroaders gathered at the home of Joe Thomas to discuss the activities of the Southern Tier Railroad Club of Endicott, N.Y. The seven decided to emulate the Southern Tier and compile a map of the members' model railways and to publish a newsletter called the INTERCHANGE. The first INTERCHANGE and a map were dated April, and the second INTERCHANGE followed seven months later. The surplus INTERCHANGES were left at the local hobby shops, and in December a survey postcard was also distributed through the hobby shops. The response to the survey and the second INTERCHANGE prompted the group to sponsor a dinner meeting on April 16, 1961. There were 23 at that dinner and they and some others who indicated interest at that time became the "charter members" of OVAR.

The survey was a postcard with a few simple questions on it. Some 60 postcards were returned and are now in the OVAR Archives in the C. Robert Craig Memorial Library. Thirty-three of the cards were mailed in and are postmarked between Dec 1960 and May 1961. January (7) and May (10) were the biggest months for returns, I suspect the April dinner was a factor. Recently I pulled the cards to answer a question from Barry Innes as to how Herb McEwen spelled his name. (For the record it was McEwen, not McEwan.)

The questions were simple. Are you interested in an organization like OVAR? Name, postal address, telephone number, age, Do you have a home layout? What gauge? Do you belong to a railroad club? Which one? What phase of railroading are you interested in? Today, I suspect that we would not be allowed to collect such personal information!

Of the sixty who filled in the cards, thirteen are currently members, although not all have been members continuously for the full 46 years. The age spread was interesting, Six were between 10 & 19, five between 20 & 24, six between 25 & 29, thirteen between 30 & 34, thirteen between 35 & 39, six between 40 & 44, five between 45 & 49, and two over 50. Seven were from outside the Ottawa area. The predominate gauge (53)



Dave Knowles submitted this postcard, along with 59 others (listed below), in response to the question posed by the original seven proposing a new organization.

Baird, Wm.	Elliot, Ken	Legendre, Georges	Rous, Jack [7]
Barr, Al	Emond, Ted	Linley, Bill	Schwing, H. Louis
Carrick, J.	Evans J. E.	McEwen, Herbert L.	Sheldrick, Doug.
Chamberlain, W.R.	French, Adrian [7]	McCracken, Samuel	Sieralaski, M.
Chivers, Kenneth F. [7]	Galway, Ronald E.	Mills, Fred J. [C]	Smith, Keith A.
Cote, Darcy	Grace, John P.	Milner, H.	Smith, Eric [C]
Couzens, D. T.	Hare, Robert [7]	Moon, Derek [C]	Souliere, Jacques
Craig, Bob [7]	Heinbuch, R. N.	Murphy, J. B.	Stremes, Graham M. [7, C]
Cumming, J. A.	Hird, L. W.	Naish, Paul	Strong, David [C]
Curry, Bruce [C]	Hood, Tom [C]	Nesbitt, Peter [C]	Svos, Michael
Dube, R.	Hope, M. B.	O'Connor, George B.	Tennant, Jas. B.
Dube, Dwight	Hughson, A. C.	Orr, Sgt. L. H.	Thomas, Joe [7]
Duffy, Carroll A.	Kidd, Michael	Panagapko, Syl M.	Thomas, D. H. L.
Eaton, Roger S. [C]	Knowles, David C. [C]	Perry, Ross	Williams, Bill
Eggert, Gunther M.	LeBlanc, John J. [C]	Rainboth, R. M.	Wilson, Gerry

was HO, although O, S and OO each had a single proponent. Six were members of the Ottawa Model Railroad Club, two of the RCAF model railroad club at Rockcliffe, and three of other railfan organizations. Interestingly of the five teenagers, three are still active railfans and two are members of OVAR.

For those who add things up not everyone answered all the questions.

The March 2007 INTERCHANGE reports 195 current members and 136 at the February dinner (in October it was 150). In 2001 Barry Innes produced an all-time membership list which included some 815 names.

A list of those who returned the postcards is attached. The original seven are indicated by a "7" and current members by "C".

For the Record

March Meeting:
125

Current membership:
195

If you know of an event that may be of interest to OVAR members contact THE INTERCHANGE with the details — see page 2 for your guide to model railroad happenings

The sample car

continued from page 1

warranty. It seems you could have any colour of ABDW valve as long as it was blue!

The government received a number of suggestions about these cars over the years. The grain elevator agents wanted a hand brake on each end because it was a long way to walk from the A end to the B end. This couldn't be done because it would take twice as long for train crews to ensure all hand brakes were off before a train departed. One of the more curious requests was to put a ladder into the hopper itself so that people could climb out after having fallen in. The answer was to ensure people didn't fall in and I believe a metal grill was installed across the open hatchways. The unloading gates on the bottom of the hoppers also caused problems such as wrenched backs at the unloading terminals until we standardized on a gate that could be opened with an air wrench.

I have a couple of finished Intermountain Government of Canada HO scale grain hopper cars and recently acquired two of their kits. While the instructions are generally easy to follow, there were a few times when



A train of brand-new hopper cars being delivered out west at Walkley Yard, Ottawa on 17 September 1981.

I wasn't quite sure what had to be done. I put the model aside for an hour or so and then I realized that I had my own sample car. I brought out one of the finished models and it became clear to me how to proceed. However, when I examined my sample car I found

that the ABDW valve had been painted red so I had to get out my paint brush and paint it the proper colour.

I had always wondered about the sample car and why it had to be retained in the car plant until the end of the order. Now I know.

INTERESTED IN BRITISH TRAINS ?

NO ROOM FOR A LAYOUT?

WANT TO SHOW OFF YOUR MODELLING?

The Ottawa British OO Group are planning to replace their exhibition layout "Mortimer" and are seeking new members to participate in this project. The new layout will be 23 ft. x 19 ft., with two double-track main lines at different levels, each with opportunities for shunting. The style of the layout will follow "generic" British practice in the period from the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s. It is designed to be operated by DC and/or DCC systems; a draft plan is available.

The new layout will be constructed and presented to high standards set by the group, with a consistent appearance.

What would I have to do?

- Members will use their specific skills on the whole layout, not just on "their" modules, to obtain the consistent standards and appearance.
- You would be responsible for the storage, minor maintenance and transportation to shows of no more than two 4 ft. x 22 ft. modules (or equivalent). Members may share transport to shows.
- You must be available to operate at most

of the exhibitions at which the group decides to present the layout. We expect to be at three or four shows per year.

- While most members prefer to run their own British trains, we expect that a "standard operating procedure" will allow the layout to be operated by any members while presenting a professional appearance to the public.

What will it cost?

- During the construction period of 24 months, a financial contribution of about \$15 per member per month will be required towards the cost of baseboards, track, wiring and basic scenery.
- Generally, members will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodation costs at shows, though some organizers provide some assistance.

I would like more information!

Contact: Derek Uttley
97 Pheasant Run
Ottawa, ON, K2J 2R3
Phone: 613-825-0038
E-mail: derekuttley@ncf.ca

SPAREBOARD on the web

submitted by Colin Churcher

Two OVAR members are now hosting THE SPAREBOARD, the monthly magazine which is put out by the Ottawa Central Railway for its staff and other interested observers of the railway scene.

This excellent publication is available in pdf format from:

Ian McCord's site at:

www.mrfreightcar.com

Colin Churcher's Railway Pages at:

www.railways.incanada.net/spareboard/spareboard.html

New editions will be posted as they become available.

THE INTERCHANGE

wants to know what you're doing
on your model railroad
— or what your favourite
prototype is doing!
Don't be shy — write!

TrentonWorks railcar plant in Nova Scotia to close amid heavy losses

as printed on Yahoo.ca news site

HALIFAX (CP) — A Nova Scotia town with over 100 years of steelmaking history met the cold-blooded reality of modern business Wednesday with the announced closure of its railcar plant and loss of 330 jobs.

U.S.-based parent, the Greenbrier Companies, said it would shut down its TrentonWorks plant in Trenton, N.S., later this year and shift operations to Mexico and to its primary facility in Portland, Ore.

“The very strong secular outlook for the Canadian dollar, uncompetitive labour and benefit costs coupled with geography and other factors really meant that we didn't have a choice,” Bill Furman, the company's president and CEO, said during a conference call.

“While this will have some short-term pain in terms of cost to the community... it will mean a better economic foundation for Greenbrier.”

In its latest fiscal results, released Wednesday, Greenbrier said losses incurred by the plant during the second quarter were about US\$3.8 million before taxes.

Furman said the Trenton plant will remain open for the next five or six months, long enough to complete its last order of 300 railcars.

He said workers at TrentonWorks, where the average pay is between \$18 and \$20 an hour, made about double the salary of work-

ers at the company's other plants.

In operation since 1872, the sprawling plant in northern Nova Scotia employed 1,200 as recently as November 2005. In the 1980s, employment peaked at above 2,000.

On Tuesday, Premier Rodney MacDonald wrote to Greenbrier to offer financial help.

The letter, released Wednesday, contained a promise of over \$18 million in assistance. Ottawa's share was \$3.5 million, while the province's portion of \$14.5 million included an \$8.8-million loan guarantee extended to the company in 2002 through its Industrial Expansion Fund.

“We did put forward an offer which was very fair and very generous, so the province of Nova Scotia can only do so much when it comes to these types of issues,” MacDonald told reporters Wednesday.

The premier said the company was facing difficulties in remaining competitive when faced with cheaper labour costs in places such as Mexico.

“We are there to help them if they want to diversify... but again we will only do so much,” he said.

MacDonald held out hope that talks on keeping the plant open were still possible, but Furman said the company, which had only reached a new contract with its unionized workers last month, has made up its mind.

“This isn't about a negotiation — we're

not going to reopen this,” said Furman. “We've made the decision, we're going to go on with it, it's behind us.”

Dave Fanning, president of the United Steelworkers local, said many plant workers and Trenton residents were in shock.

“It's a hard blow and it'll take a day or two for it to sink in,” he said. “We were all hopeful and worked hard to keep it afloat, but this is pretty devastating news to us.”

Fanning said he hopes some sort of fabrication work can be found for the plant, which was once used to make oil rig components.

Trenton Mayor Shannon MacInnis said the closure will affect all of Pictou County.

“It's sad to see it go, but hopefully it's not over,” he said.

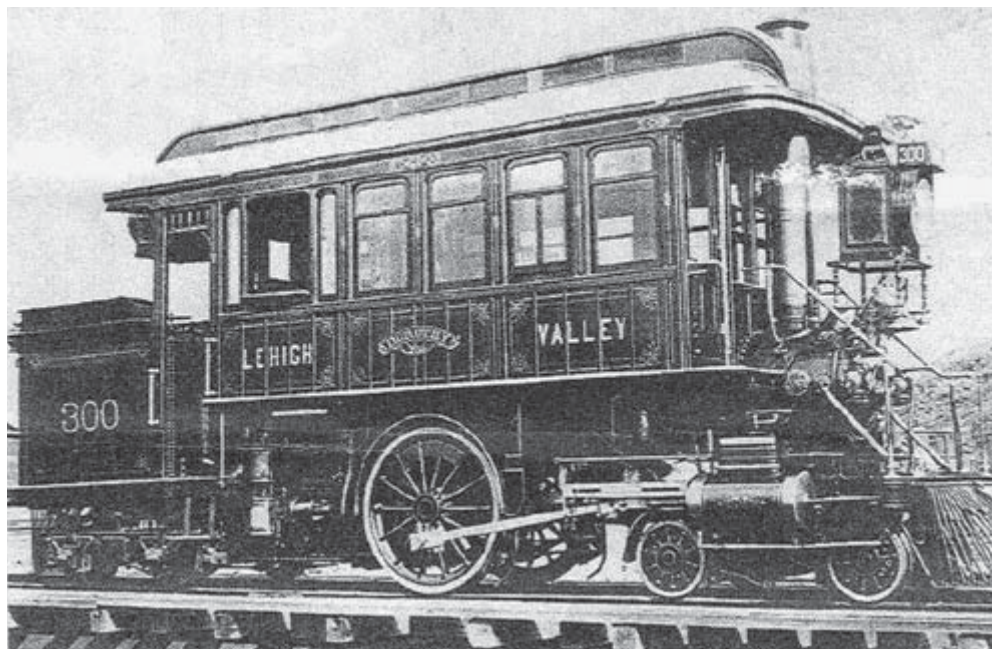
“Maybe we can work with the federal and provincial governments to try and entice somebody else to come in here and build, maybe not railcars, but something else.”

In Halifax, MacDonald said his government would do all it can to seek new business opportunities for Pictou County.

But one thing the province won't do, the premier added, is get into the steel business just to save the plant.

“There's many options, but the province of Nova Scotia is not in the steel plant business, I can assure you,” he said.

“It was our government who ended up closing Sydney Steel.”



More from Dave Knowles on his March display model:

The model was not a modeller's fantasy, it is a model of an actual “Inspection” locomotive built by the Lehigh Valley Railroad in May 1884. Originally numbered #300 and named DOROTHY. It was rebuilt in December 1894 and renumbered #1. It retained the name and was retired in 1934. Subsequently it was owned by two private owners and operated on private track by the first. The second owner's widow donated it to the war effort in 1943. The model was built by KMT in 1963 with 300 copies imported by Red Ball, selling for US\$30.

(Dorothy was my mother's name, hence my interest.)



Trevor Marshall displayed SW1200RS/SW1200RS/"Sweep"/transfer van consist, complete with crewmen.



Robert Peck had Charls Gendron paint this model of CN Skytop car MAHONE.

Strong Canadian presence in March

Ian Cranstone photos

Former OVAR member **Trevor Marshall** visited with a strong display of modern CN power. Trevor brought with him an Overland CN lightweight GP9 (a branch-line Geep with small fuel tank and Flexicoil trucks), Overland GRS-413 "Sweep" 7105 and a pair of SW1200RS's. Trevor also showed his Overland CN transfer van and Pointe St. Charles van. Pierre Oliver of the Elgin Car Shops acted as Trevor's paint shop for these models.

Another custom-painted car was shown by **Robert Peck** — this time a Soho CN Skytop observation car, which was Charls Gendron's handiwork. Robert also showed CN SD40-2W 5304, received in trade from John Licharson for a CV 2-10-4, the unit having been painted by then-16-year-old Andrew Castle. He completed his display with CP wide vision caboose 434678, painted by then-15-year-old Mat Kai.

Charls also painted **Andrew Chisholm's** Van Hobbies CN Pointe St. Charles caboose 79848.

Charls Gendron then wore his Custom Trains hat, displaying a model from the custom run of ONR Rapido coaches obtained used from VIA.

John LeBlanc displayed a CNR Athearn metal boxcar with a 1950s herald, and a companion plastic car that John notes "was poorly decalced and I suspect a herald never used."

Terry Firth showed Ten Wheeler #1353 (Van Hobbies), a former CNR locomotive acquired in 1946, and van (Athearn), both



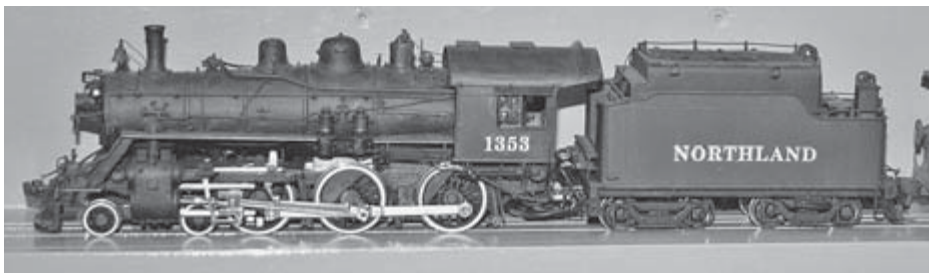
Charls also painted this Andrew Chisholm Van Hobbies CN Pointe St. Charles caboose.



Finally, Charls displayed Rapido CCF coach from custom ONR run.



John LeBlanc showed a pair of heritage Athearn boxcars in CNR lettering.



Northland Mining & Railway Ten Wheeler and caboose were shown by Terry Firth.



Two-unit Proto 1000 CPR RDC consist was shown by Gary Baillargeon.

lettered for his Northland Mining & Railway. Terry notes that his van shows that maintenance was not a high priority of his 3rd-class railroad.

Gary Baillargeon showed two Proto 1000 CP Rail RDCs, complete with passengers and lights.

John Chambers displayed his Athearn CPAA boxcar, noting that this ex-Milwaukee Road car was the last Pullman-Standard design.

Brian Ludlow showed an O scale 50' automobile box constructed from a Menzies kit, with a few additional parts. Brian also showed a CPR combination door box constructed from a salvaged Athearn kit, with many rebuilt parts.

John Mitchell showed his Westerfield NYC autocar, which was transferred to the CASO in the early 1940s, which was built, painted and lettered by Peter Nesbitt.

Eric Smith showed a CPR Manor sleeper built from a Grant kit from about 1960 (and still under construction). Eric notes "the kit came out about five years of the real thing — they moved a bit faster than today!"

David Moat constructed three Canadian road boxcars from Athearn kits back in 1979, using three different 1950s CNR heralds from then-new C-D-S dry transfer sets. David has recently upgraded these models with era-appropriate trucks, steel wheels and McHenry couplers. The original Humbrol weathering has been enhanced through the application of Bragdon chalks.

Graham Stremes modified an Accurail single-sheathed boxcar into a more accurate rendition of an ACR car by adding horizontal steel strips across the top of the vertical reinforcements.

David Strong showed a pair of Van Hobbies sleeper CPR sleepers: the ROSSER and the GLEN CASSIE.

Finally, **Mike Hamer** displayed a collage of Rob Kazakoff images featuring the operating sessions of the Friday Night Group. Mike notes "Indeed, model railroading is fun!" Well said, Mike.



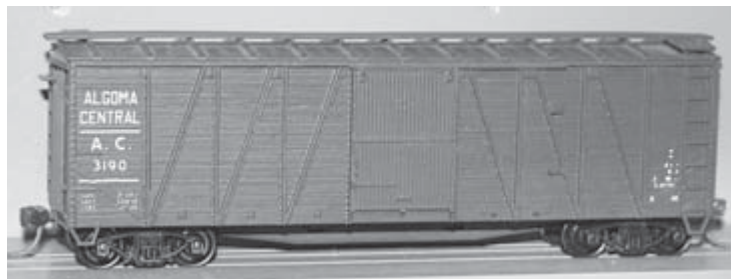
Menzies GN auto boxcar was constructed by Brian Ludlow.



Eric Smith displayed CPR MANOR sleeper built from Grant kit.



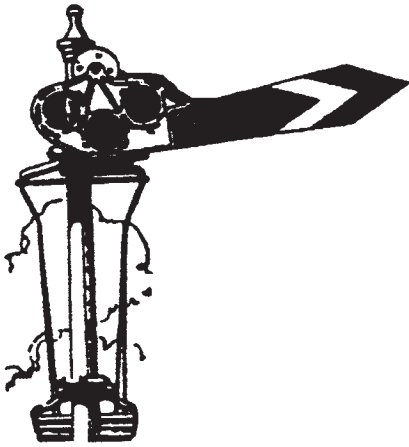
David Moat refreshed three Athearn box cars with new trucks and weathering.



Graham Stremes modified an Accurail CNR boxcar to create this model of ACR box 3190.



Van Hobbies model of CPR ROSSER was shown by David Strong.



Bathurst Paper and Paperboard Mill

presented by

Patrick Brennan

Display

Non-Canadian

Tuesday, May 8

St. Anthony Soccer Club Hall
523 St. Anthony Street, Ottawa

(just off Preston Street at the Queensway)

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner served at 6:30 p.m.

Admission: \$20.00

Includes dinner, facilities, program expense, taxes and gratuities.
Free parking.

Please note:

If you cannot attend the meeting after saying you would, please call Fred Mills at (613) 723-1911. Thank you.



OVAR Directory

2006-2007

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Web Site: www.ovar.ca

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Editorial Staff

**Features, Story Ideas,
Comments and Complaints:**

Ian Cranstone
3715 Campbellcroft Rd.
P.O. Box 634,
Osgoode, ON K0A 2W0
Phone: 613-821-7423
e-mail: lamontc@nakina.net

Distribution and Mailing:

Mike Shore
25 Bainbridge Ave.,
Ottawa, ON K2G 3T1
Phone: 613-829-8867
e-mail: mshore1@rogers.com

Submission of Articles:

THE INTERCHANGE welcomes your submissions that may be of interest to club members. Please send them to one of the departments listed above. Material submitted can be handwritten, typewritten, on floppy diskette, or sent via e-mail.

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