



The Interchange

Our 42nd Year

Ottawa Valley Associated Railroaders – OVAR

September 2002

Issue 366

Riding the rails

by Bill Meredith

Growing up in Ottawa, one of my best friends across the street, who never had an interest in trains; became a conductor at CN. He used to do the run to Arnprior as well as the transcon runs to Brent and to Montreal. One day I called him to sell him stag tickets to my brother-in-law's wedding. I lived in Kanata at the time and he lived in Westboro. He suggested that I meet him at the Goulbourn Forced road crossing later that day on his run to the 'prior.

I asked about copping a ride to Arnprior but the answer was a resounding no. At any rate, I met him later that day and the train stopped where we exchanged tickets. During that time the engineer came up to me and asked if I wanted a ride. So, there we were, sitting on the hood of a chop nosed RS-18 heading off to Arnprior with me thoroughly enjoying the ride with my friend the conductor eating his lunch. (As the track is rated at 12 m.p.h., sitting on the hood was a non-issue.) When we arrived at Arnprior, I was forced into helping out with the switching and the setting out of cars. I arrived back home after four hours of fun (and 30 minutes of explaining to my wife where I was for the last four hours).

In a similar vein, that same person called me one day that same summer and I was busy at work. I asked what it was that he wanted and he said "Going to Brent; wanna come?"

I was off. I met up with him and we headed off to Walkley. Waiting for us there was a 4,000-foot freight headed for Winnipeg. We climbed aboard at about 14:00 and I had the fortune of holding down the fireman's seat for the bulk of the run. Again, I was forced into helping out with the switching over in Quebec. This is where I learned how to jump from a moving train backwards! Dur-

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Michel Boucher is enjoying his new career as a Steam Train conductor.

Working on the railway

Former OVAR chairman gets into large scale railroading

by Michel Boucher

At the February OVAR dinner, I was discussing summer plans and retirement activities with Neil Lowes and John Licharson when Neil suggested that I see what work would be available at the Wakefield Steam Train.

He suggested that I would be good as a Trainman or selling tickets. The idea stuck in my head as a good possibility and as something that would be interesting to do as well as challenging.

Little did I know that no less than a week later I would be driving near the Steam Train station for a totally unrelated reason. As I went by the sign, I impulsively took a left and went knocking at the station door. A lady welcomed me and we talked about summer job opportunities. I told her about the discussion we had at OVAR and we discussed potential jobs for a retired fellow like me with strong marketing and people skills.

She happened to be the owner's wife. He mentioned that they were looking for a conductor for the summer as one of their conductors was sick and was unlikely to come back for the coming season. I left her a copy of my resumé and she said that her son in law, who is in charge of operations, would call me back.

To make a long story short I was hired as a conductor. Now, there was no job description for the job and I although I had a vague idea of what was involved I only really found out

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plus much more

From the Private Car

by Fern Leroux, OVAR Chairman

This morning I received the Summer edition of THE INTERCHANGE. With the Summer edition of THE INTERCHANGE in the mailboxes, the days getting shorter and the nights cooler. That means that summer has come to an end and that a new season of OVAR is about to begin and once more basements are going to be occupied. It also reminded me that it is time to write another edition of FROM THE PRIVATE CAR for the September issue. Thank you to Alex, Ian and Stan and all contributors for the hard work in getting this edition ready. Don has also included a timely reminder about membership renewal to us all.

What can you expect of FROM THE PRIVATE CAR?

In writing this column I hope to reflect on the happenings of the previous meeting, highlight items of interest to all model railroaders, inform the membership on deci-

sions taken, changes and happenings within the organization. It is also my hope to profile members of the executive, members' model railroads, model railroad groups operated by our members, local model railroad dealers and other local model railway related organizations. In order to achieve and succeed in this project I will solicit your cooperation.

Over the past few years I have noticed an increase in the number of ladies and children in attendance at our meetings. So as a special request, may I indulge upon all of you to extend all courtesies to them by avoiding the use of expletives in your comments.

In closing may I welcome all of you back for another fine season of OVAR and to those joining us for the first time please feel free to fully participate in all of our activities.

Changes at RAILFAIR 25 will ease volunteers' jobs

by Roger Eaton,
RAILFAIR Volunteer Coordinator

This year's volunteers will be pleased to learn that two changes to the setup and running of RAILFAIR 25 will make their jobs lighter and better organized.

Planning for this year's RAILFAIR started in the early new year with the setting of the dates of October 19/20 at the usual place in Algonquin College's cafeteria. We were greeted with a surprise, however, when we negotiated for the rental of our screens. Our supplier told us that all the old screens had been scrapped and had been replaced by lighter ones with thinner metal frames and alloy metal posts. The screen dimensions are now metric and slightly smaller as well.

Those of you who have turned up at 7:00 a.m. in the years gone by will no longer have to wrestle with heavy pipes and bases and awkward 2x4 framed double-sided peg-board. We will, however, still need as many as possible to help setup as assembly requires a sizeable Allen key and it will all be a new experience.

Our contracted rental fee is a little higher than last year but still within budget.

The other change relates to the selling of tickets and the collection of money. While the final details of this change have not been worked out yet, they will be known by our first meetings [OVAR and BRMNA] in September. Our aim is to simplify and speed up ticket sales while using the same number of volunteers.

Volunteer sign up sheets will be available at these first meetings. Please think about when you can be available over the summer — we need help especially early the first morning, Sunday afternoon and during breakdown.

Check out OVAR's Web Site
www.ovar.ca

For the Record

June Meeting:
113

Current membership:
170

CBC takes to the rails

The CBC has announced its official plans to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. As part of the celebration, VIA will run a special event train from Vancouver to Halifax, making stops at Kamloops, Edmonton, Biggar, Saskatoon, Melville, Winnipeg, Sioux Lookout, Capreol, Sudbury, Windsor, London, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Campbellton, Moncton, and Halifax. At each of these stops will be access to museum cars and at most will be a series of kiosk computers with CBC information.

The train will run from Sept. 7 (leaving Vancouver) until Oct. 5 running on standard VIA routes.

At present, the train appears to have the following consist:

- 2 F40PH-2 locomotives (painted in red livery with CBC logo)
- 1 baggage car (for event equipment)
- 2 Chateau sleepers
- 1 coach (exactly what, I don't know)
- 1 Skyline
- 2 museum cars (converted baggage cars)
- 1 Park car
- 1 flatbed (carrying a CBC mobile transmitter)

You can get further information from the CBC web site:

www.cbc.ca

Local Schedule:

Sept. 24: Depart Toronto @ 9:45 a.m.

Arrive Ottawa @ 4:00 p.m. (Ottawa Station)

Depart Ottawa @ 6:00 p.m. (Walkley Yard?)

Arrive Ottawa @ 7:30 p.m. (National Science Museum spur)

Sept. 25: Event 9 a.m.-9 p.m. @ National Science Museum

Sept. 26: Depart Ottawa @ 10:30 a.m.

Arrive Montreal @ 3:00 p.m. (MMC)

Arrive Montreal @ 9:00 p.m. (Vieux Port)

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!

Riding the rails

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ing this exercise we spent some time riding on the end platform of center flow hoppers. It was at this time driven home to me just how dangerous this work can be.

We arrived at Brent, the crew change point, deep in Algonquin Park at about 19:00. Brent had a modern crew facility at the time with a large comfortable crew quarters that would rival any decent hotel. Comfortable bedrooms, complete kitchen, satellite TV complete with dock and boat. So nice in fact that I was told that during the days of the railroad using five-man crews, crews would purposely schedule multi-day layovers at the spot.

The eastbound to take us back to Ottawa arrived from Capreol just after midnight that evening. This was a 6,000-foot freight with three units on the point. Upon arrival we had the task of observing the complete train arrive for any signs of trouble including parts dragging or brakes showing signs of smoke. The crews exchanged greetings and then the conversation drifted into the future of the line. There were rumors at the time that the railroad would be closing the line later that year (which they did) and the crews were asking around what they would do in the event of a closure. It was at this time that it was driven home to me that this is a hard way to make a living and these guys are just trying to make a living.

We climbed aboard and were soon off to Ottawa. As I was *supposed* be at work I made a feeble attempt at sleeping in the cab of an SD40 which was the last unit of the lashup. You know; you watch fast freights whistle by and you figure that with all that weight it is likely a smooth ride — nope, those babies pitch and shake like nobody's business. I gave up on the idea that sleep would come that night and just enjoyed the trip. I tell ya, there is nothing like standing out on the front deck of an SD40 at dawn doing 5 m.p.h. crossing the Ottawa River at Dunrobin. Soon after we arrived at Cedarview where we passed the early morning westbound stuck in the hole. The crews again exchanged greetings like old friends passing by the water cooler at the office. Home to bed for two hours and then back to work; a little dreary eyed but still riding on cloud nine from the experience.

Not long after that trip the line to Brent was pulled up. I was hoping for a fall run but I count my blessings! At least this time I took pictures; only sorry that I did not take more!

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Working on the Railway

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when I started training in late April. The job really is a combination of brakeman, trainman and conductor. The conductor part is the easiest and the most visible. My training was with a seasoned retired drill instructor for the RCMP musical ride. It was like returning to boot camp and involved a lot more physical activity than anticipated. It was tough. There's a lot of dirt and grease before you get to wear the fancy conductor's suit.

As I am no quitter, I struggled through it

and was able to take my first train out under supervision in less than two weeks. What a TRIP. It changes your perspective on everything about trains. This is no model train in the basement. It is a great learning experience that will translate into improved model train operations for the Delaware and Hudson team in September.

This is the BIG train. I am happy to be living the experience but this is not for the faint of heart. It is tough and at the same time very rewarding. Punching tickets is a relief after switching cars and connecting air hoses.

It's a great summer project.

Moving at railway speed

Michel Boucher's experiences as a conductor on the Wakefield Steam Train will translate into big changes in the way he operates the Adirondack branch of the Delaware & Hudson Railway. Other owners of operating layouts might want to think about adopting some of his ideas.

Compared to model trains, the real ones "run really slowly," Michel recounts. "This is big stuff. We don't move until it is safe. We check switches and wheels; you have to do that or you create a lot more work for yourself."

So for starters, the clock on Michel's layout will be slowed to 4 to 1 from its current 6 to 1. And trains will be operated by two man crews. The engineer will have the throttle and "he will only move the train when the conductor says so." The conductor will have the car cards and is responsible for making sure the switches are lined properly and getting the right cars on the various tracks. "They will be working on a team basis." Michel plans to teach his operators the proper way of communicating between engineer and conductor to ensure that all the moves are made safely.

In the real world, the conductor gets off when the train approaches a station or a switch where there is work to be done. "You approach these places with caution," Boucher adds. "The conductor always has to think about where he is in relation to the train."

Train crews will take over most of the switching jobs that were operated by yard masters and they will be strategic about where they leave cars and when they switch sidings to eliminate run around and other moves. For example, they will save set outs and pick ups at facing switches until they make the return trip.

Boucher says he thinks the new format will be as much fun as before and will give the operators a better taste for how the real railways operate their trains. "We will try it and see how it goes."

Editor's note: you can read more of Michel's Steam Train experiences on his website at:

www.delaware-hudson.com

Letter to the Editor:

While surfing the web I came across your newsletter, in which you mention a talk by Ian Wilson about his book STEAM OVER PALMERSTON. I thought you would like to know that the station at Palmerston has been renovated and is being used as a Railroad Museum, staffed by local volunteers.

We still have some track left (not much), we also have a 2-6-0 Mogul steam locomotive on static display, unfortunately it has not been looked after very well but is now in the process of cosmetic restoration. We do run a

couple of handcars on the tracks for visitors and are in the process of renovating a storage shed.

I am starting a web site devoted to the history of the Palmerston area with emphasis on the railroad:

www.angelfire.com/co4/palm

There's not much on it yet but I will be working away at it. Anyway I thought this might interest you. If you have any questions, my E-Mail address is:

aniren40@hotmail.com

John Savage



Both the high-level Amtrak (left) and Metro (right) New Carrollton stations can be seen

Railfanning by Washington, D.C. Metro

by Normand Levert
photos by the author

Washington, D.C. has a very good Metro system that offers some good possibilities for railfanning. The lines use a colour coding for identification. In downtown Washington, the Metro is a subway system, running underground with closely spaced stations. In the suburbs, the Metro runs in the open, with many segments alongside rail lines. The Metro is then more like a regional service; the stations are spaced further apart and the trains run at a good speed. It is then possible to reach interesting many railroad activities by riding the Metro. You can obtain a Metro System Map at this site:

www.wmata.com

When you click on a Metro station, you get a map of the immediate surrounding area.

Alexandria, Northern Virginia

If you find yourself flying out of Washington, D.C. from Ronald Reagan National Airport, you are in good position for railfanning CSX, Norfolk Southern, Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). National Airport is most convenient to the Washington Metro National Airport Station, being directly linked by walkways. Let us hope that someday Ottawa Airport will be so well served! From National Airport, the Blue and Yellow Metro lines run south together two more stations, or about five minutes until King Street station, in Alexandria, where they go their separate ways. The METRO line runs parallel to a triple track CSX mainline. This is ex Richmond, Frederickburg and Potomac (RF&P) territory. Some years ago, this was a huge complex of rail yards, where the Pennsylvania RR interchanged with RF&P, but most of the land has now

been sold for development.

From King Street station, the METRO Blue line continues west alongside CSX, first passing in between a very large METRO maintenance complex and the NS/CSX interchange. CSX swings slightly north then southwest on a flying junction over the Norfolk Southern. The Metro Blue line is already south of Norfolk Southern so it swings alongside the now double track CSX, leaps over them and runs beside them until Franconia/Springfield, the current end of the Blue line.

The Amtrak/VRE Alexandria station is just across from the Metro King Street station. You already have a good observation point from the Metro station platform. There is a road overpass just south of Alexandria and King Street stations with an excellent vantage point over the Alexandria station platform.

The afternoon rush hour brings VRE push-pull trains, Amtrak long distance trains and CSX freights. Norfolk Southern has running rights, mainly to service a coal fired electricity plant and paper warehouse in Alexandria. CSX runs intermodal trains of course, but general freights of boxcars and tank cars. One interesting train I saw twice is the TROPICANA orange juice unit train.

Washington, D.C.

A good choice, guaranteed to let you glimpse intriguing rolling stock is riding the Red Line toward Glenmont. The Red Line emerges above ground just alongside the Union Station yard, where you will see MARC (Maryland Area Rail Commuter), Amtrak and VRE (Virginia Rail Express) equipment laying over. MARC uses distinctive rebuilt GP40's with cabs similar to SDP45, FP45-style

flared radiators and APUs for HEP. Union station is the Southwest end of the Northeast corridor, and so the end of the former PRR electrification. Amtrak has AEM7 electric locomotives and Acela train sets. As well, you will see P42 diesels with conventional and highlevel rolling stock. Many Amtrak trains have high speed boxcars — er, pardon me, Material Handling cars and roadrailers tagging along. The interesting Union Station critters are the Amtrak switchers, including an SW1 still active as the station switcher. VRE locomotives are more conventional but with a very good paint scheme. The commuter rolling stock is quite varied, with single and double level cars from many different builders. When the New York Ave. station is built, it will offer an excellent place to watch trains jockeying in and out of Union Station.



Southbound Amtrak CARDINAL at Alexandria station.
The Interchange



North of Union Station, a MARC train is led past New York Avenue by modified GP40.

You have to walk to New York Ave. overpass for reasonable photo opportunities, but it is a bit of a trek. Be aware that the overpasses near Union Station have view blocking walls, New York Ave is only good facing toward the Capitol.

Today, you will speed past a junction (CSX, ex B&O and PRR), Union Station Amtrak coach yard, with VRE equipment laying over. The Red line continues north, first beside the double track CSX/Amtrak line and then in between the two tracks to points north. There is MARC commuter traffic on the CSX line, so you could see those trains close up. At Silver Spring station, you can reach the adjacent MARC/Amtrak station for a different viewpoint. There is CSX traffic on this line, which has to detour around the Union Station. I have caught glimpses of freight trains on this line, but never quite managed to be at the right place at the right time

A second good location is downtown at L'Enfant Plaza, which is a Metro exchange station between the Yellow/Green and the Blue/Orange lines. L'Enfant Plaza station connects with a VRE commuter platform on the CSX (ex PRR) line. Just follow the VRE signs to find your way. The commuter station offers legal trackside railfanning on former four track electrified territory, now two tracks. Though the catenary is gone, the supporting structures are well in place, including the PRR position lights signals. There is a sharp curve, turning toward the CSX (ex PRR) bridge across the Potomac River, so train speeds are reasonable for photo opportunities. In the afternoon, one could ride VRE to Alexandria or Franconia, and then come back by Metro.

New Carrollton, Maryland

New Carrollton station is the eastern end of the Metro Orange line, or about 20 minutes

from L'Enfant Plaza. The combined Orange/Blue line comes up above ground at Stadium-Armory, where the Orange line splits to go northeast. It runs alongside de-electrified former PRR freight trackage until Deanwood station, where the Amtrak Northeast electrified corridor joins. The Metro line and the Northeast Corridor then run side by side until New Carrollton. There is an Amtrak/MARC station opposite the Metro station. The Amtrak station is underground, and the trackside structure is a high platform between tracks one and two. One track has a gantry arrangement, to swing freight trains away a few more centimetres from the high platform. When high speed express trains approach, you have a bell ringing and taped voice announcement to brace yourself. If you like the feel of 100 m.p.h. trains rushing a metre or two from you, this is the place to be!

Curiously, I don't have a good picture of that 100 m.p.h. train!



At right is the Metro King station. September 2002



Shown at Crystal City, this VRE train can also be seen at L'Enfant Plaza and Alexandria.



In addition to his Chairman's Choice model, Jacques Thuot also displayed this derrick and flat car set.

Thuot shows his steamy side in June

Ian Cranstone photos

Jacques Thuot won the CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE Award in June for his HO logging donkey, a well-rendered model of steam-powered machinery from the past. It was one of four models that Jacques brought for the display, the theme of which was McEwan cars and steam engines. There was a good turnout of the McEwan cars.

Jacques said his logging donkey was all scratchbuilt except for the boiler and the winch. His other pieces included a portable sawmill which combined a Juneco flatcar and Woodland Scenic sawmill. He also had an auxiliary water tank, which was all scratchbuilt but for the water pump. As well, there was a steam powered crane. It featured a crane from OMI and a car from Juneco and all sorts of other details. Great work once again, Jacques.

Eric Smith brought out some of his roster of steam locomotives including Pacific & Northwestern 2-8-4 #1448 which he says is an early LMB model of a Boston & Albany 2-8-4 to which he had added a stack extension and a tender from a Nickel Plate 2-8-4. Eric also had an Oregon Short Line 2-8-0 #560. He said it was one of only two large 2-8-0s with Walschaerts valve gear. The model is a rebuilt Santa Fe 2-8-0 from PFM (United) with a new cab, cylinders, smokebox, stack, domes and modified UP tender.

John LeBlanc, who as June reviewer Bud Nelson noted is one of the most consistent contributors to the monthly display, brought out two HO CNR steamers. They were 3709 and 3712, light 2-8-2's that John CNRized from Akane models. Good looking units.



Large steam power was displayed by Eric Smith (P&NW 2-8-4 #1448, front) and Tom Hood (CNoR 2-10-4 #4705, rear).



Greg Stubbings displayed branchline power — CNR 4-6-0 #1401.



Smallest steamers on display belonged to Norm Levert.

Another CNR steamer in the display was **Greg Stubbings' #1401**, a class H-6-g 4-6-0 that worked in the Lindsay–Peterborough area before being transferred to Palmerston in November 1956. Shortly after that it was stored serviceable and scrapped in March 1960. The model was imported by Van Hobbies 25 years ago. It was custom painted by Bill Scobie and is weathered with layout room dust.

Normand Levert had three quite different steamers on the display stand. First there was an Austrain 75 cm gauge 0-6-2T which he thinks was made by Lilliput. Next was a cast white metal (ZAMAC) docksider, a 0-4-0T which Normand acquired in 1969, the year he graduated from RMC. He says he added a snowplow to cover up some damaged footsteps. Though diminutive, the loco pulls 40 cars easily. Last but hardly least was a Rivarossi Challenger which he received as a gift from his unit in Valcartier. It is an excellent puller.

Tom Hood had an HO CV 2-10-4 that is painted and lettered for the Canadian Northern. Those were handsome looking engines on the CV and look pretty sharp in CNoR colours as well.

Alex Binkley had an S scale 4-6-2 Pacific painted for the Canada Southern. This was the first new non-brass steamer in S scale in 40 years. It was released in 1999 by American Models. An S Scale Loco and Supply Co. detailing kit was added. The unit has been lightly weathered.

Michael Franklin had a G scale working steam crane, scratchbuilt on a Bachmann flat car and adorned with real rust and rain!

Al Craig brought out a Gauge 1 live steam model of a Southern C-2x loco. When you are running it under its own power, you will have to invite us all over to admire it, Al.

Jim Jarrett displayed an N scale British weed killing train including the spraying van, a coach for the operating crew, two tenders off steam engines for the water and two small tank cars used to transport the pesticide. Quite an interesting model.

J. Adams had a Walthers EMC electric coach that he displayed right out of the box. He said it had parts for handles and rails.

Grant Knowles had another of his superb structure models out for us to admire. This one was the R.M. Allen & Son building built from a Thomas Yorke kit of a stone structure found in Idaho Springs, Colo. The kit was comprised of four plaster walls, Grandt Line window castings and strip wood. Grant built the platforms, stairs and roof from scratch.

September 2002



Michael Franklin scratchbuilt G scale steam crane on a Bachmann flatcar.



Part of the impressive N scale weed train on display by Jim Jarrett.



Grant Knowles provided another superb structure kit, this time of R.M. Allen & Sons.

TIMETABLE

Upcoming events of particular interest to OVAR members

Sept. 21-22: NEPEAN – 11th Annual Train and Toy Show, Nepean Sportsplex, Salons A&B, 1701 Woodroffe Ave. Info: Hugh Laing (613) 592-5824 or Frank Steele (613) 378-0309.

Sept. 28: CORNWALL – St. Lawrence Division NMRA, The Nativity Hall, 301 McConnell Ave., Hwy 138 south past 401 & Hwy. 2, 9:30 a.m., Info: Grant Knowles

(613) 825-5438, e-mail: g_knowles@cyberus.ca

www.cyberus.ca/~gknowles/sld/sld_index.htm

Oct. 19-20: NEPEAN – RAILFAIR 25, Algonquin College, Woodroffe Campus. Info: Tom Paterson (613) 831-1133, e-mail: trp99@magma.ca

Nov. 16: Ottawa – Model Train Flea Market, St. Anthony's Soccer Club Hall, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Admission: make donation at the door. Info: Fern Leroux (613) 830-9979, email: fleroux@infonet.ca



Next Meeting

RAILFAIR of the past

presented by

Bill Scobie

Display

t.b.a.

Tuesday, October 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 Peter Joyce at 841-1950. Thank you.



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2002-2003

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THE INTERCHANGE

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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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