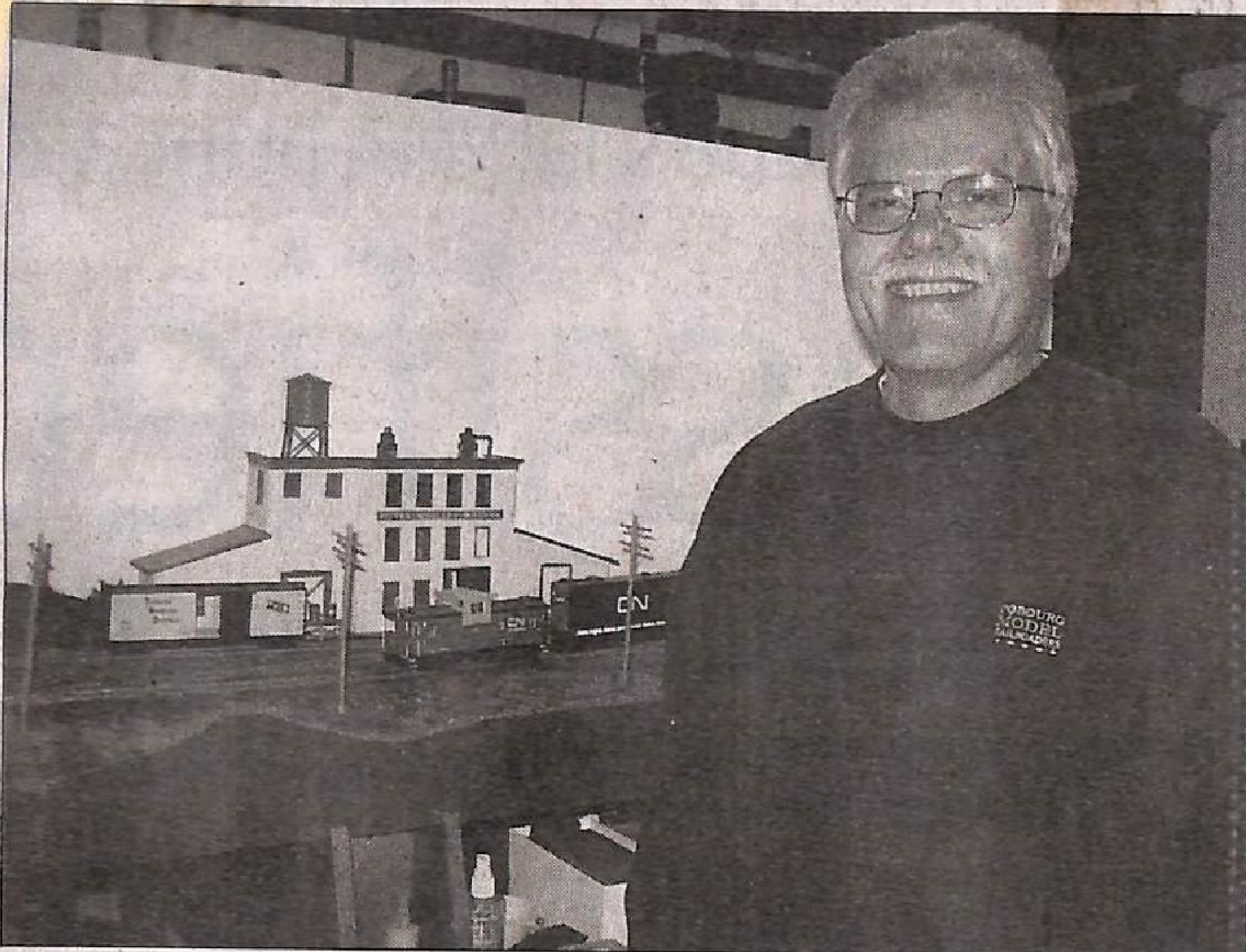


■ **ON TRACK:** Train show returns for 14th year



CECILIA NASMITH Sun Media

Grafton railway modeller John Johnston shows off a bit of the world-in-miniature he will be displaying at the March 7 Cobourg Model Train Show.

# Full steam ahead: model train show Saturday

BY CECILIA NASMITH

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Like a bullet train at full speed, the Cobourg Model Train Show shows no sign of slowing down — even now in its 14th year.

The next one will be held March 7 at the Lions Community Centre.

"Based on attendance and the success of the show, it continues to grow and surprise us with its strength," show organizer Scott Berry said.

"The train show has become an annual tradition for both avid model train collectors as well as families with kids looking for an event that is affordable and entertaining," Berry added. "The Lions Centre will be packed wall-to-wall with model train layouts, trains for sale, and displays for both kids and adults."

The Cobourg Model Railway Club's 25 members (of all ages) come from as far away as Bowmanville to share this passion. The show is another way of doing this.

"It's one of our ways to really give back to the hobby. It's an important way to expose it to the youth of today, and promote and grow the hobby if we can," Berry said.

One of the exhibitors is mild-mannered insurance agent John Johnston, who becomes a train modeller by night. He favours the S-gauge train — the former American Flyer brand, later owned by Lionel, now partially owned by Canadian singer Neil Young.

Johnston takes it a step further, buying the cars and modifying them to be more reflective of the scale of an actual car.

The layout in his Grafton basement is based on his own historical research that he used to create his own fictitious railway line: the Shelter Valley-Trent River Railway.

It's based in the 1950s, when CN was not yet VIA, when the Grafton harbour was prosperous

and still in existence.

It ran from Grafton through Shelter Valley up into the north country, to Hastings and up to the mines beyond.

The streets on the Hastings end are based on the layout in Hastings: Some of the buildings are based on actual buildings in Hastings. Cars and trucks of the era are parked here and there. Clumps of trees designate forested lands. Power lines are strung. Even a helicopter hovers overhead.

Johnston will not be dismantling this panorama for the show, but is working on a different one in a separate room that he will pack up for display.

Viewing the craftsmanship of these worlds-in-miniature, one can only imagine the time and devotion that went into the lay-outs. And while this aspect fascinates the children, the older people who grew up with steam locomotives can enjoy the nostalgia aspect.

The popularity and reputation of the Cobourg show has grown to the point where it has established itself as the largest train show in Northumberland and one the top-10-rated train shows between Toronto and Ottawa.

The many train displays will keep you entertained for hours, Berry said. The train layouts, in all shapes and sizes, are highly detailed with model buildings, scenery, and special effects.

The event also includes model trains and supplies for sale for visitors to expand their hobby.

Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$1 for children aged 12 and under. The price has only risen once or twice over the years, so it's still a great bargain, Berry said — and a portion of the proceeds supports local charities.

The Lions Centre is located at 157 Elgin St. E. (watch for the train show signs), and the show will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

■ **COURT**

NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY Feb. 26/09

# Fraud case goes to judicial pre-trial

BY CECILIA NASMITH

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Colborne resident Jennifer Petruk has had 164 fraud charges adjourned to a judicial pre-trial March 30.

Justice Robert Graydon made the ruling yesterday in the Ontario Court of Justice in Cobourg.

Though the 34-year-old accused

was not present, she was represented by her attorney, James McGrath.

Petruk worked for Rona Cashway in Port Hope during the time of the alleged frauds, which was April to November of 2007.

It is alleged she provided receipts for fictitious returned products and pocketed the refunds actually paid out.

■ **CRAMAHE TOWNSHIP:** Council begins work

# Initial \$9.4M budget represents 7% increase over 2008

BY BOB OWEN

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NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY lion Build Canada Fund grant for sewage treatment expansion.

The department heads have submitted their wish lists and the first cuts have been made; now it's time for Cramahe Township council to get down to the task of setting the 2009 budget.

Currently sitting at \$9.4 million, it represents a 7% increase over the 2008 budget of \$8.8 million.

In a presentation to council Monday, Cramahe CAO Christie Alexander set out the township's current position, then laid out what has been done so far to prepare for this year.

She used several charts to show that Cramahe fares favourably financially with provincial averages in most categories.

At year end, 2008, the township was in deficit \$9,748.

In the same year the township completed Castleton Town Hall renovations, consolidated its bylaws, purchased the VBJ Centre, extended the road in the north industrial park and assisted in the relocation of two major industrial employers.

Since 2006 the township received more than \$500,000 in grants before last month's announcement of a \$4.2-mil-

In pointing out Cramahe's limitations, Alexander noted most of its revenues come from the residential taxpayer.

This year the township hopes to add lighting and storage at the Keeler Centre, improve various parks and roll out its new Zamboni. A grader worth \$230,000 is also on the wish list for 2009.

The budget proposal recommends a 2.5% salary increase.

Township staff is proposing that \$4.1 million of the proposed \$9.4-million budget come from taxation. The rest would come largely from grants and reserves.

Treasurer Mora Chatterson explained those whose Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) evaluations exceed the average for the township will pay more, and those whose evaluations were lower than the average will pay less when the budget is finally passed later this spring.

According to charts tabled at Monday's meeting, residential property value increases averaged just under 10%. Industrial values were up about 4.6% and commercial values increased by 6.7% in the MPAC review.

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