

**50 YEAR FEATURE KEITH ANDERSON,
Hi Baller and Founding Member**

by Craig McDowall

Keith Anderson and **Martin Jergens** were both in the same grade 1 class together and one day Martin talked him into going down to the grain terminal next to Exhibition Park to watch the CPR 2-8-0's and 4-6-2's switching cars. This is where it all started for Keith.

Keith then met some members of the future Hi Ballers (**Roger Burrows** and **Doug Cummings**) while taking photos in the CN yards on Terminal Ave. and again in the CP Rail Yards down on the waterfront, just west of the Second Narrows Bridge.

Martin Jergens, Rusty Savage and **Bob Gevaert** were originally more interested in the BC Electric street cars and especially the interurbans and took many photos down in the BCE yard under the Burrard Street Bridge. Rusty somehow got an air tank off an interurban and a whistle and put this together with an old air compressor on his wooden wagon and would take it down to main intersections where the rail line crossed the road and blow the whistle and all the cars would come to a screeching stop!

This morphed into them getting together on Saturday nights to look at each others photos and talk about where to take the bus or ride their bikes to take new photos. They then started to think about getting a group rate to take day trips and in their mid teens, took the PGE Budd cars to Lillooet so they could ride the Gas Car from Lillooet down to Seton Portage and back on a Saturday afternoon. They then caught the Southbound Budd cars from Prince George, arriving back in North Van that night.

The **Hi Ballers** first official excursion was when the PGE Gas Car had been shipped down to North Vancouver and there was fear that it would be sold or scrapped. (Story in WCRA News, August and October 2011 issues). So they organized a day trip to Squamish using the Gas Car and open car #14. An interesting side note here; the PGE had a coach car that they stationed in Squamish in case it rained when the open car was on trips to Squamish. So the group set up

ticket price of \$5 and started phoning every rail fan they knew and even knocked on doors to get extra sales. As written in an earlier Hi Baller profile, the gas car broke down on it's return trip to North Vancouver and had to be towed back to Squamish and then replaced with different power to return to North Vancouver.

On future trips to Lillooet, the boys would sit in the rear cab of the trailing Budd Car. The Budds in those days had controls on both end of the cars and as it came south along the highway at Porteau, the boys would turn on its headlight if cars had their high beams on.

The next official Hi Ballers Excursion was with West Coast Terminals steam engine #4012 which ran from New Westminster up the Kennedy Hill and out to Abbotsford. The engine developed a problem with a new bearing and the consist had to be doubled up the Kennedy

Hill. The excursion was supposed to return by 6 PM. The local Rock 'n Roll radio station (think it was CKLG) gave updates on the trip but they were working off the initial schedule! The return trip didn't arrive back until 11 PM, almost five hours late. There were a lot of very mad parents (MCM note: including my dad!!) who sat around for hours with no updated info as to what was happening.

Keith was a 'newsie' on the Kettle Valley line in the late 50's from Vancouver to Lethbridge. The passenger train had a dining car on it from Vancouver to Creston, where the car would be dropped and picked up by the westbound passenger train on its return run from Lethbridge to Vancouver as no food service was deemed necessary between Creston and Lethbridge. Keith later became an assistant to the regular CPR 'newsie' during 1966-1967 on the transcontinental train from Vancouver to Revelstoke and return.

He then became a Sleeping Car Conductor during the summers on the CPR's *Dominion* between Calgary and Vancouver. On one trip, he rode the open cars attached to the train when he wasn't busy, which were added to the consist between Calgary and Revelstoke. This is where the idea of buying the three open cars (597—599) by the club became a topic of discussion knowing that they were going to be taken off the *Dominion* permanently. WCRA subsequently purchased all three and sold two to keep one, which is our WCXX 598 *Henry Pickering* today.

Keith was coming home from Mexico in December, 1961 through Toronto (where he flew to see some friends on his way home and so he could ride the train across Canada to Vancouver). When the train stopped in Medicine Hat, there was a Budd car and Business Car #16 on a station siding. Keith took photos and showed them at the next club meeting and this is when the idea was hatched to try and get that business car.

The 'watchers of trains' became 'the wheeler and dealers of trains' as Keith so aptly put it. They contacted CPR regarding the possible sale of #16 and in 1962 CPR established a sale

price of \$300. The club talked CPR into making that price FOB Vancouver, rather than FOB Medicine Hat and the car finally arrived in Vancouver in May 1963. CPR car #16 remains the gem of our collection today, proudly carrying the name *British Columbia* it is preserved and exhibited in the CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre for the enjoyment of everyone.

Our hats are off to Keith—and our other founding members—as it was their foresight that started the whole effort off and led to the many accomplishments WCRA has had in the ensuing 50 years.