



WCRA NEWS

APRIL 2017

DAY OUT WITH THOMAS
MAY 20, 21, 22, 27 & 28



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** of the WCRA will be held on **Tuesday, March 28 at 1930 hours** at Rainbow Creek Station, corner of Willingdon and Penzance in Burnaby. Regular AGM business and some special resolutions will be voted on by the membership.

The March General meeting will follow the AGM.

Entertainment will be by **Don Evans** of travels in 2016 as time permits.

ON THE COVER

Snow like we have never seen before! This scene of the snow at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in early February shows PGE Troop sleeper #714 up to its axles in snow, with only the very tips of the picket fencing visible above the top. Snow reached a depth of three feet at the height of this winter, and the Heritage Park has been under snow continuously since December 10, 2016. (Photo, Gord Bell)

APRIL CALENDAR

- **West Coast Railway Heritage Park open daily 1000 through 1600k.**
- March 21 to March 23—Celebrate Spring Break Week with Bunker C Bear's Spring Adventure Zone—kids \$19, adults free with the children—see page 10 for details
- Friday, April 7—Newsletter deadline for the May 2017 issue
- Friday, April 7 / Saturday, April 8—High Tea in the Tearoom, Heritage Park—servings at 12, 2 and 4PM each day, reservations at 604-898-9336
- April 21, 22, 23—Home Show in the CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre
- Tuesday, April 25—WCRA General Meeting, 1930 hours, Rainbow Creek Station
- April 28—29—Refresh Market, CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre

The West Coast Railway Association is an historical group dedicated to the preservation of British Columbia railway history. Membership is open to all people with an interest in railways past and present. We are a non-profit British Columbia society, registered as a Canadian charity. Membership prices are as follows, **Please note that GST must be added to all fees:**

Senior \$50 (\$52.50), Individual \$55 (57.75), Family \$65 (68.25) **E Members (electronic newsletter only) are \$35 (\$36.75) Senior, \$40 (\$42.00) individual and \$50 (\$52.50) family.** Other categories are:

- Junior Member (age 18 and under) \$ 30 (\$31.50)
- Sustaining Member \$100 (tax receipt) **plus** membership type regular fee
- Life Membership \$700 (\$735) individual life / \$1,200 (\$1,260) family life

All memberships include the monthly newsletter, Heritage Park admission (except Special Events), mini rail rides and discounts on food and merchandise. The Association holds a monthly meeting on the last Tuesday of the month at 1930 hours in Burnaby at Rainbow Creek Station in Confederation Park. Apply through **www.wcra.org** or mail to WCRA, PO Box 2790 Stn. Term., Vancouver, B.C., V6B 3X2.

EDITORIAL

WILL IT EVER END?

As we go to press the weather is, well snowing.....and we are approaching March 15! At the West Coast Railway Heritage Park, efforts are underway to get back to normal, but it is still a work in progress. Another 15 cm of snow this past weekend, and here it is—March 9th—and it is snowing again.

The West Coast Mini Rail will remain closed for some time yet—as the tracks are still buried under the snow—so no outdoor mini rail for Spring Break week for the first time ever.

Who ever was it that said those famous words.....”Let It Snow”.....sorry, but for this writer, enough already!

Don

ASSOCIATION NEWS

FROM THE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

Chair **Jeremy Davy** called the meeting to order at 19:37K with [18](#) voting members, 2 spouses, 1 staff and 3 guests. A quorum was not present.

MEMORIAM SILENCE – A minute of silence was held in memory of **Herb Dixon**. He was president of the Alberta Railway Museum and involved there for 25 years guiding it from a train club to a full-fledged museum.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PRESIDENT – Ken Tanner

Thanks first to **Craig McDowall** for stepping in to assume the president’s role as Ken focused on donations and finances. Craig managed Thomas, the summer season and fall events as well as Polar Express. This allowed for the more focused management of the donation situation and debentures. With Ken now back in the president’s role the focus is on: managing cash flow, get the 2016 books in order, renewing the mortgage, purchase of MP2, and launching of Thomas for 2017.

FUNDRAISING – Ken Tanner

A slow month for raising funds so the priority was the work required to keep our mortgage in place, manage the other financial issues, and prepare financial statements for the AGM.

FINANCE – Ken Tanner

A net income summary was presented showing -\$3,000 for 2016 vs -\$93,000 for 2015. The

net income after G&A allocation for Polar Express was \$101,000. The board has approved a 2017 budget showing revenue of \$2.2 million vs expenses of \$1.35 million which, after G&A, will leave a deficit of \$36,000. Details will be presented at the AGM on March 28

HERITAGE PARK OPERATIONS and ADMINISTRATION– Gordon Bell

During February, we continued to fight the snow but did manage one wedding and a movie shoot. Well done Gordon and team! The park is currently seeking people for the following positions: Volunteer Coordinator, Locomotive Mechanic. Volunteers are sought for educational fieldtrips and daily summer tours for the Blacksmith shop, printing press and general interpretation. In celebration of *Canada 150* the park will be offering interpretive tours as well as 50% discounted admissions.

LOCOMOTIVE 374 – George Game

Daily admission numbers are slowly rising as the weather improves. Events on May 21st and July 1st will involve the moving of the locomotive into the turntable plaza complete with celebrations and festivities.

COLLECTION –

Bill Marchant reported little progress with BCE960 due to weather and shop conditions.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Nominations for one WCRA elected board member were held in January. **George Game** was nominated as was **Matthew Robson**. Barring any last-minute changes an election will be held to choose the member. An election committee has been struck to manage the logistics.

NEW BUSINESS –

A notice of Annual General Meeting was declared for March 28th at Rainbow Creek Station, 7:30 PM.

EVENTS CALENDAR –

The calendar was read. Details available in the newsletter. *Western Rails* will be held March 19th with set-up on the 18th at the Cameron Recreation Centre. Volunteers are needed. **Jeremy** requested all interested volunteers to signup at this meeting.

TRACKSIDE REPORTS –

Ryan Cruickshank gave a show and tell with a Lionel UP M10000 O-27 passenger train set. He also had a 2003 version of the same set in original packaging.

Bill Marchant filled us in on recent events in the industry.

ENTERTAINMENT – A slide show *Bridges, Tunnels and Trains* from the **Doug Battrum** collection was shown to the delight of all, thanks to **Bill Marchant**

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If your label reads 02/28/2016 then your membership has expired, if your label reads 11/30/2016 then this is your last issue. If you are an electronic news subscriber, please watch for an email noting pending membership expiry. Please renew—we need you all as members if we are to continue to be able to preserve British Columbia's railway heritage. (J.D.)

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome to membership:

- Simon Cornwallace of Vancouver;
- Melissa Harper and Family of Squamish;
- Derek Hayes of White Rock;
- Ed Robertson and Family of Brackendale;
- Keith Stall and Family of Langley;
- Rachel Wiersma and Family of Burnaby;
- Teri Worth and Family of North Vancouver;
- Nicole Young & Peter Jensen and Family of Whistler

We welcome back to membership....

- Jan Easton of West Vancouver;
- John Kyle of Salt Spring Island;
- Robert MacBeth of Brackendale;
- Robert Mearns and Family of North Vancouver

(J.D.)

HERB DIXON PASSES

We are sad to report that **Herb Dixon**, long time driver behind the Alberta Railway Museum, passed away suddenly on February 7, 2017. Herb was well known to many of us in the railway preservation field in Canada, and will be missed by us all.

EVELYN (EVIE) ATKINSON

We are also sad to report this month on the passing February 2, 2017 of long time member and the driving force behind the preservation of CPR 374, **Evelyn Atkinson**. Evie was a vocal and active supporter on behalf the preservation of the historic loco, founding the Friends of the 374 Society and helping raise over \$500,000 back before Expo 86 to restore the locomotive, and then forming the 374 Station Society to care for it after the World's Fair. The latter group ultimately merged into WCRA in 2006—and WCRA looks after locomotive 374 to this day.

Evie received many awards over the years, the most precious one being her naming to The Order of Canada in 1996.

PRESIDENT & CEO SOUGHT FOR WCRA

Applications have been coming in for the position of President & CEO of WCRA—the position closes March 31 and interviewing will start after that.

Applications / Expressions of Interest in this position are only accepted at hrcommittee@wcra.org Further information will be provided to qualifying candidates.

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD POSITION

Nominations were opened at the January General Meeting for one elected director position on the WCRA Board of Directors. Director **George Game** is ending his first three year term on the board and he was nominated for a second term of three years. Nominated from the floor was member **Matthew Robson** so we had two candidates for this single position. It became unclear on Matthew's volunteer hours (they were subsequently confirmed) and he was not present, so the matter was held over to be finalized at the February general meeting.

Subsequently, Election Committee Chair **Jeremy Davy** has been advised that Board Chair **Bill Johnston** has resigned from the WCRA Board of Directors due to other personal commitments. As a result it is no longer necessary to conduct an election for WCRA Directors. There are now 2 vacant positions which will be filled by the 2 members nominated, **George Game** and **Matthew Robson**.

The Association thanks Bill for his many years of service on the WCRA Board of Directors, Bill plans to continue as a an active volunteer at the 374 Pavilion and in other areas. We look forward crossing paths with him on numerous occasions in the future. (J.D.)

WCRA TRIVIA #340 - By Ryan Cruickshank

Everybody that lives in the Washington DC area knows the west building of the *National Gallery of Art on the National Mall* (south-west corner of Sixth St. & B St. nw - now know as Constitution Ave.), although most people don't know the history of this location. What connection to railroading is there and why is it famous?

(Answer on page 22)

COLLECTION

COLLECTION UPDATE

The snow has hampered doing much work at all with the collection since the conclusion of Polar Express in December. The operating locomotives were winterized and stored inside over at the MP 2 shop , and the operating consist from Polar was stranded in the snow conditions on the main track at the Mac Norris Station.

The deep snow with several inches of ice underneath precluded any ability for rail operations until early March, when crews were finally able to dig things out a bit and access the loaned Rocky Mountaineer coach to get it on its way back to RMR in Kamloops. It left on the tail end of a CN train southbound on March 5th and is on its way.

WCRA MECHANICAL STAFF NEEDED

WCRA is in need of maintenance people for both locomotive and coach maintenance resources. There are paid staff and volunteer opportunities available for people with the right skills. Contact Chief Mechanical Office **Robert Macbeth** if you can help or are interested in a role with our mechanical team. robert@wcra.org

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER ARCHIVES DONATION

A huge thank you to **Rocky Mountaineer** for the donation of a large collection of framed art prints, posters, and model trains. The company is moving its head office and many of the items which have adorned their walls over the years will now come to the WCRA for preservation. There are items from the early days of Rocky Mountaineer right up to art prints of current advertising images.

The items were picked up recently by **Gordon Bell** and will be placed in the *John Hardie Mitchell Gallery* where they will be inventoried and an exhibit showing Rocky Mountaineer over the years will be assembled for display this summer in that gallery at the CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre.

Our thanks again to Rocky Mountaineer for their long time support to WCRA.

WEST COAST RAILWAY HERITAGE PARK

Home of the Royal Hudson



DAY OUT WITH THOMAS—NOW ON SALE



Mark the calendars now for the 2017 version of Day Out With Thomas. **Day Out With Thomas—the Friendship Tour 2017** arrives at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park May 20 and will operate for five days—May 20, 21 and 22 on the first weekend and then May 27 and 28 on the second weekend.

Tickets are now on sale at www.wcra.org and prices are the same as they were last year—\$24 or \$28 depending on the

timing of the train ride that you choose. Of course, this event is far more than just the train ride with Thomas—you can enjoy visits with Sir Topham Hatt, crafts, Thomas stories and videos, Thomas play tables, live entertainment, great food, mini rail rides and more—including merchandise that is only available for the tour event.

WORK GOES ON DESPITE SNOW

Although the Heritage Park was closed to the general public after Polar Express until the start of March, work was being done behind the scenes to improve our offerings for the 2017 year. **Zoe Cilliers**, our former Volunteer Coordinator, has been working two days per week on two separate projects. Firstly Zoe has been working to formalize and clean up all the volunteerism documents, particularly the data base. This will allow for a much easier transition and structure for the new volunteer coordinator to work within. Secondly, Zoe has been working to formalize two educational tour offerings for the West Coast Railway Heritage Park going forward. This work includes a detailed description of the tour, where it links into the school curriculum, who is qualified to be an interpreter on said tour, along with all contact info and scripts for each station of the tour. The document will also address greeting, parking and safety protocols for the educational field trips. The goal of building this structure is to allow the association to deliver valuable and consistent educational field trips even as staff and volunteers may change.

In addition I am working with **Jeanene Nelson** to bring back the tea room for 2017. The dates have been set for the 2017 season running usually once per month starting in March and running through the end of August. Jeanene has done a terrific job of building the structure, pricing and parameters of this addition to our Heritage Town. All the work to date on the High Teas has been done on a volunteer basis.

Special thanks to **Jeanene Nelson**. **Kyle Harris** and **Aaron Gruber** have been working on the completion of the North End of the Patricia Anne railcar so that the entire model railway will be completed for spring 2017. The Kootenay River and Cowichan River display cars are currently closed to the public and are ready to be moved into the car shop for refurbishment as time and money allow. We are also ready to complete the displays/housing of the Printing Press and Forge to enhance the experience. Work is also being done behind the scenes on an improved experience at Mason Station, where the log books were slated to be installed. Consideration and preliminary studies are being done on a possible Chinese work camp display or a First Nations camp that could possibly allow for an overnight experience at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park.

Along with a stronger advertising push for the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in 2017 that will align with Canada 150, we are also adding daily walking tours to our offerings, similar to the strategy that BMM currently employs with its visitors. Over all we are poised to have an up-turn in visitation and experience in 2017. (G.B.)



This photo by Gordon Bell shows that on some days we actually had to shovel our way to doors in order to be able to access our buildings as in this scene of getting into the PGE Shop!

LIKE CATS AND DOGS



Despite the weather, the West Coast Railway Heritage Park continues to have a good season with movie shoots. The latest is being set up now, and will be called **Like Cats & Dogs**, set in the Mac Norris Station. Photo here shows set construction underway in the station, which will serve as a corner store in some scenes as well as a pizza kitchen.

A huge thank you to **Patrick Doiron** for his assistance as our film agent—we enjoy working with him and he has brought some great film business our way over the past year. (G.B.)

BUNKER C BEAR MOVES INDOORS

Even Bunker C Bear can't change the weather.....his event had to change from a hibernation awakening outdoors to an indoor festival called Bunker C Bear's Adventure Zone. The event now features mini rail indoors along with music, activities, bouncy castle, model trains, arts and crafts, dinosaur digging and more. Event operates three days only—March 21, 22 and 23 and admission is just \$19 per child (with two accompanying adults for free!). (G.B.)

LOCOMOTIVE 374 PAVILION

Our visitor count for February was 1,958. We had 439 people less than last February. Where have all the locals and tourists gone?

With Winter almost over our Visitor Count should increase as the weather improves.

Planning Meetings with the Roundhouse Community Centre are now underway for the May 21st, 374 130th Anniversary Party. We are also working on a Canada Day, 150th Anniversary



Celebration. Please mark your calendars. I hope to see you at the 374 Pavilion for these events. There will be cake!

Please give me a call (778-875-3573) if you would like to join our dedicated team of outstanding Volunteers. One or two days a month would help us out. You will not be working alone. No prior knowledge of the 374 needed.

We are at the corner of Davie St. & Pacific Blvd. and across the street from the Canada Line Yaletown/Roundhouse Station. Free parking is available for Volunteers at the roundhouse.

Winter Hours are 11 to 3.
Spring, Summer and Fall Hours, 10 to 4.

Please drop in for a visit or to check out Volunteer opportunities. (G.G.)

RAIL TRAVEL TOURS TO THE NORTH

WCRA members can celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation and the 300th anniversary of the origins of Churchill, MB by experiencing a 7 day 6 night guided rail tour to Northern Manitoba. The two options are to travel in August to see the Belugas or in October for the Polar Bear Migration. The packages feature a variety of sleeping car accommodation(s) on the train with access to the Park Car (with its dome and tail end observation areas—photo page 12) and hotel stay in Churchill. See the Cape Merry Historic Site, the Hudson Bay shoreline, Parks Canada Visitor Reception Centre located in Churchill's Heritage Rail station, The Eskimo Museum's renowned collection of Inuit art, most meals and additional heritage experiences and presentations.

BELUGAS AND HERITAGE of CHURCHILL MB *-Book early to confirm you spot!*
Tuesday August 8 to Monday August 14, 2017

Travelling round-trip from Winnipeg to Churchill by rail, this 7-day, 6-night tour includes: train travel in sleeping car accommodation (2 nights each direction) also a 3-day and 2-night visit and hotel stays in Churchill; beluga whale-watching boat tour; heritage tours of the town and area; a visit to Prince of Wales Fort (which is only accessible in the summer); see the Port of Churchill, Eskimo Museum tour, Cape Merry National Historic Site of Canada, and additional experiences. There will also be a tour along the shoreline of Hudson Bay with a local heritage & wildlife guide to look for elusive summer Polar Bears and enjoy the coastal views enroute and learn about the former Churchill Rocket Range.

Per Person Double Occupancy: Train Section - \$2,695.00 - Train Cabin - \$2,995.00

- Single supplement \$400.00. **FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE JUNE 23, 2017**



HUDSON BAY BUGGIES & BEARS *-Ask about the early booking bonus!*
Tuesday October 10 to Monday October 16, 2017

Also travelling round-trip from Winnipeg to Churchill by rail to take part in the annual Polar Bear Migration this 7-day, 6-night tour includes: train travel in sleeping car accommodation (2 nights each direction to see the last of the fall foliage) and hotel stays in the town of Churchill (2 nights in total). Travelling on the world Famous Tundra Buggy along the shore of Hudson Bay for a full day searching for Polar Bears is always a highlight. Also the tour includes station to hotel transfers and town and area tour featuring a visit to the Cape Merry National Historic Site for stunning views of the Churchill River where it empties into the Hudson Bay, as well as visits to local attractions like the Eskimo Museum, heritage & cultural presentations

and time to shop the many souvenir stores in town. As well, local guides that share their passion and their knowledge of the area's history, wildlife, ecology and culture for our guests to enjoy when we drive along the shoreline of Hudson Bay while searching for more wildlife.

Per Person Double Occupancy: Train Section - \$2,995.00 - Train Cabin - \$3,395.00
- Single supplement \$400.00. **FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE AUGUST 24, 2017**

These comprehensive packages, offered through our partner **Rail Travel Tours** include hotel stays, rail travel on VIA Rail's Northern Manitoba services, transfers, heritage attractions, meals on the train and in Churchill, a detailed tour information kit with maps and rail route guide, visit to the Winnipeg Railway Museum, cultural presentations and more! They can also book pre and post tour nights for their partner rate at Winnipeg's grand railway hotel the Fort Garry. For more details and to reserve space with a \$250 per person deposit call toll free **1-866-704-3528**. All bookings made noting WCRA will benefit our organization.

RAIL CRUISE?

Want to take a US rail journey aboard a restored heritage railcar—then check out **www.railcruise.biz** for some interesting itineraries. Their tours travel in private cars attached to regular Amtrak trains on a number of different itineraries.

FEATURE ARTICLES

FROM WCRA NEWS - February 1980 - Part 2

Thanks to **Craig McDowall**

CN

CN shipped a huge load east when they had a 240 ton generator loaded off a ship at Centennial Pier onto a specially designed depressed centre flatcar owned by Calgary Power. This special train was spotted eastbound with a SW 1200 RS, five box cars, the flatcar and a caboose at the top of the Grandview Cut on Friday Feb. 8th. The special flatcar has a 500 ton capacity (that is 1,000,000 pounds!) and rides on 36 wheels. It is 160 feet long and is equipped with devices to offset the load on curves and on narrow track sections. A crew rides aboard the car in little yellow houses located on each end of the car.

A shiny newly painted 40' CN boxcar on Vancouver's waterfront had a large golden wheat grain design painted adjacent to the centre door.

Work continues on the re-opening of the downed Second Narrows Rail Bridge. On Monday, Jan. 28th, the downed span was cut away from the leaning north tower. Two days later, it was raised out of the water by large cranes and placed on a barge where it will be taken to be repaired. *MCM note: in October, 1979, the Japanese freighter "Japan Erica"*

carrying logs collided with the bridge in heavy fog knocking a section of the bridge just north of the lift span into the water. The bridge was closed until March 4, 1980.

Word has it that ex CNR #6060 will come west to Vancouver for rebuilding at the Drake Street yards this fall. Once rebuilt, plans are to run the engine in excursion between Edmonton and Jasper.

CP Rail

Baldwin switcher #7075 has been retired and was shipped east from Coquitlam, presumably to be scrapped, on Sunday, Jan. 30th.

Strategically placed horseshoes is the only possible explanation on why disaster was avoided at the China Bar siding on Jan. 30th. The problem was that CP404 East could not be given the clear signal to leave China Bar. An inspection by the crew found sheared rail-bond wires and some minor damage to the ties and the east switch. It was determined that the last Extra West train managed to get one pair of wheels off the track 1/2 mile east of that switch. With the crew not aware of this, the train continued westbound. But here is the rest of the story . . . as the derailed wheels came to the switch, they re-railed themselves and that is why the crew of the westbound didn't realize there was a potential disaster waiting to occur with the next train to roll through!

In just three short years, 'PAT' has become a CP Rail institution. PAT (Pacific Auto Train) is a high priority run-through train of new autos in regular operation between Toronto and Vancouver. The train leaves Toronto at 09:00 hours Tuesday through Saturday with an 88 hour schedule to Vancouver and averaged 41 multi level cars per trip during 1979

CP Rail has closed its False Creek container operation. Containers had been loaded and off-loaded near the Drake Street Roundhouse.

VIA Rail

Via's Canadian train #1 arrived in Vancouver late at 18:20 hours on January 29th with 8250 HP on the front end with only a nine coach consist! The heavy accumulation of ice coating the trucks and under-frame of the cars indicated a very rough trip through the Rockies. Motive power was four CP Rail units - an SD40-2 and three GP-9's.

And a second VIA #1 had issues on January 30th when it was delayed 1 1/2 hours at Mission when fire broke out in the Skyline dome car during the train's regular station stop. The Mission Fire Dept rushed to the station to fight the smoke pouring out of the car's ceiling vents. After forcing the main vent open, they found a 25 year accumulation of kitchen grease burning. The fire was extinguished quickly and the car was inspected and then locked off before the train resumed its trip. It was determined that the cause was probably a cigarette as

the conductor found a partly burned paper litter bag in the upper dome next to the ventilator opening with the ignited bag falling into the vent and igniting the grease below. The train was powered by FP9A #1400, GP9 #8514 and FP9A #1402. *MCM note: After it's VIA service life, #1400 was returned to CP Rail and after servicing, became the original head end unit on the Royal Canadian Pacific excursion train. It has since been deleted from CP's roster and is used for parts for CP #1401.*

About the only way left to distinguish The Canadian from the Super Continental some days is the power. It seems anything goes in each of the consists with Park cars on the tail end of the Super on occasion.

VIA's westbound Canadian derailed Feb. 10th at Kenora ON. One of four locomotives and 12 of the 13 passenger cars left the tracks, but fortunately none overturned and surprisingly none of the 150 passengers were injured.

AMTRAK

Amtrak will let out bids for a fleet of new HEP Single level cars in the first quarter of 1980. The new equipment will be used to re-equip eastern (long distance) trains such as their Florida trains, the Broadway Limited etc. The order is to be ready in roughly 2 years. Included will be all types of cars needed in the consist from baggage to diners to coaches to sleepers and 'slumbercoaches'.

New Amtrak trains are to be funded by the relevant states and operated under contract by Amtrak. They include a second San Joaquin round trip (Oakland to Bakersfield), a seventh (!) San Diegan (LA to San Diego) and two new trains in Oregon between Portland and Eugene.

Amtrak is again changing the power on the Coast Starlight at Portland with the SDP-40F's being used south of Portland only. F40PH's and steam generator cars are on the point between Seattle and Portland.

MEET CHINA'S PREMIERE TRAINSPOTTER

- thanks to **Patricia Treadwell**

(From an article in The Guardian Weekly, photos by Don Evans taken 2011)

It has been ten years since China's self styled "train hunter" set off on a 300,000km quest to document the greatest railway lines on earth. Armed with his trusty Nikon camera, Wang Wei has hiked up to the frosty Tibetan plateau and across the Gobi desert; he has journeyed to a tropical island in the South China Sea and to China's remote border with Pakistan—all to satisfy his inexplicable urge to photograph trains.

“I never get tired. You don’t get tired if you are doing something you feel truly passionate about”, says Wang, who at age 24 has already built a personal archive of hundreds of thousands of photos of trains.

China’s number one trainspotter, who grew up next to Beijing’s Xizhimen station and still lives with his parents, believes he was born with a fascination for ferroequinology. His great grandfather was a train driver who once transported Wu Peifu, a warlord whose exploits in the early 20th century earned him a place on the cover of TIME magazine alongside the headline, “Biggest Man in China” “I think there may be a love for trains in my blood,” confesses Wang, whose bedroom walls are covered with his photographs of Chinese trains.

His train hunting mission—which he officially began in 2005—has coincided with one of the most spectacular bursts of railway construction in history: an immense engineering project that some compare to the 19th century railway boom that helped make the US the world’s leading economy. In 2006, after Wang’s expedition began, China opened the highest railway line in the world, finally fulfilling Mao Zedong’s dream of integrating Tibet with central and eastern China. The following year, China upped the ante again, kicking off a multi-billion-dollar high speed rail revolution designed to demonstrate the Communist party’s scientific and political might.

Since that pre-Olympic push began, China has built the world’s longest and fastest high speed rail routes, using sleek white bullet trains to slash the distances between mega cities including



Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. In just over three years, about 19,000km of high speed track—about 55% of the global total—has been laid. “What the world did in half a century, we have done in ten years,” says Zhou Jian, a transport expert from Jiantong University in Beijing. China’s high speed lines were initially concentrated along the wealthy eastern coast but increasingly the revolution is sprinting westward towards the deserts and mountains that surround the old silk road, at speeds of more than 350 km/h.

Beijing’s railways are also going global with countries including the US, Thailand, Indonesia and the UK poised to build high speed rail projects with differing levels of Chinese involvement. There were even reports last year that China was considering expanding its rail empire by punching a tunnel under Mount Everest.

The furious pace of expansion has raised some red flags, including many over safety in the wake of a deadly 2011 high speed rail crash near the city of Wenzhou. The disaster which claimed 40 lives, exposed a web of corruption at the heart of the country's railway ministry, which was officially disbanded in 2013. Zhou, a long time critic of China's high speed railway push, said there were also doubts about the financial viability of many projects. Building such connections between major cities made sense, but doing so in China's less densely populated interior is questionable he says.

Wang, who has photographed seven of China's eight high speed "arteries", describes high speed rail as a "great invention" that has profoundly changed the lives of millions of Chinese citizens. "In the past, if I wanted to go to Shanghai, that would mean spending a whole night on a train unless I took a plane. Now, its only a couple of hours by train. It certainly has made it easier for me to travel from A to B", he says.



Wang admits a soft spot for China's old fashioned fleet of trains, of which some Mao-era models are now facing extinction. "It's quite sad to see the old stations and rail lines being demolished. I'm quite a nostalgic person and I like old things," he says. "But it's inevitable as time goes by. The only thing I can do is to document the changes in an artistic way."

Train hunting is not for the lighthearted. During a trip to a remote village in the south western province of Guizhou, Wang and a friend were forced to cram into a rickety single bed beside a pigsty. While trekking across the Gobi Desert last year, he accidentally skewered his foot with a large thorn and ended up in an Inner Mongolian emergency room. "I looked down and realised there was a lot of blood on the floor," he recalls. "I almost fainted while the nurses in the hospital tried to clean the wound."

Wang's most treacherous mission was during a trip to the province of Qinghai where he spent a week hiking at night to secure the best shot of his target train. "The oxygen levels there are very low because it is on the Tibetan plateau and the altitude is very high," he says. "I felt a terrible headache when I was climbing."

Ten years after China's biggest train enthusiast began his travels, the railway boom shows no sign of slowing. "I will never stop," says Wang, "this is a permanent project."

ABOARD AN INCREDIBLE DOME CAR

Sometimes you just luck into something special—and that happened to your editor in San Diego on March 1, 2017. One of the very first things I do when I get there is head out into the sunshine for a walk, and check down the tracks towards the Santa Fe station to see what is happening. Doing so on February 28, I couldn't help but notice the lines of a classic dome car in the distance. A closer inspection turned up a pair of private cars belonging to **Patrick Henry Creative Promotions** (out of Houston, TX), a sleeper car and a dome lounge.



Both are ex Union Pacific and extensively renovated—the sleeper (built 1954) Evelyn A Henry features six deluxe double bedrooms and the dome lounge Warren R Henry (built 1955) is the wonderful living room, with dining room under the dome and swivel seats up top. Gorgeous—check out the website www.phcp.com/the-train/ for great views.

Next day, I am with the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum, and the pres. is giving me a ride back to town. Her husband is the Amtrak Manager at San Diego. So, we stop by to pick him up and are invited onto the cars. Patrick Henry is there and we get the cooks tour of the cars from stem to stern, and then invited to sit down and enjoy a glass of wine and snacks with them!

They are great friendly people and we talk heritage trains and railway museums as well as other topics in surroundings that are absolutely amazing. They will be heading back to Houston the next day, so the cars have been turned and positioned to trail a San Diegan north to Los Angeles. Right place, right time, and wonderful people—doesn't get much better!

RAILWAY NEWS



NEW SPANS FOR NEW WESTMINSTER RAIL BRIDGE

CN has installed new spans at the west end of the New Westminster rail bridge where the structure crosses over Front Street. The new spans eliminate some piers that imposed on the roadway below. The spans were fabricated by Supreme Steel—Vancouver (formerly Cannon) and were installed over the weekend of February 3 through 1400 hours February 6. The bridge was closed to rail traffic during this period while the old spans were removed and the new spans lifted from a barge on the river into place. (SDHSE)

BNSF DETOURS

BNSF had a very difficult time with snow and weather closures on its northern main line affecting all the passes in both Washington and Montana. The railway operated several detour trains over CN routing back to the US in eastern Montana including train 30651 16 which departed Thornton on February 16 with CN 8866 / BNSF 7141 / BNSF 6836. (J.M.) As we enter March, there are still BNSF detours operating in several areas.

TUMBLER SUB TO REOPEN

CN has said that the Tumbler Ridge line, which services coal mines near the north eastern BC community, will reopen later this year. A change in ownership of three mines has resulted in a resumption of mining in the area. CN noted that the line had been de-commissioned in 2015—2016 after the mines had shut down and that a considerable sum was needed to reopen the line. (TOL)

TEST TRAIN VISITS

A CN Test train visited the area recently, coming west to Thornton, then over to the North Shore and north on the Squamish sub. The train consisted of locomotive (Illinois Central GP38 -2 in IC black paint and lettering), two Test box cars 415867 and 415852 and observation car with open platform - Geometry car 1057. At Squamish, the GP38-2 was replaced by CN SD75I 5628 for the northward trip as the GP doesn't have dynamic brakes. (J.M., T.M.)

FINAL TIER 4 CREDIT UNITS COMPLETED

General Electric has delivered the final eight Tier 4 Credit ES44AC units to CN—they are numbers 2976—2983 and were built at GE's Fort Worth, TXD plant. (BL)



MISSION BRIDGE CLOSED FOR A DAY

CP's Mission bridge was closed for a day after being struck by a barge on January 23. While temporary repairs were carried out, trains were diverted on other routes with CN trains to and from Delta Port using CN eastbound while eastbound trains originating from Thornton came via New Westminster and CP's Sapperton sub to Coquitlam to access the CP line east. A permanent repair is yet to be done and will require some newly fabricated steel. (SDHSE)

MOTIVE POWER NOTES

Electromotive Demonstrator SD70ACe-T4 unit 1606 has made several more trips into the west coast, generally on coal trains to DeltaPort.....The final 13 SD40-2F units have been shipped to Chicago for dismantling. The balance of the former CP fleet of these units work on in Quebec on the Central Maine & Quebec.....The EMDX demonstrator 1606 continues to show up—recently on a train out of Roberts Bank with CP 8919 / EMDX 1606 / CP 8722 / CP 8914 (J.M.).....and potash train 603 arrived Thornton March 2 with Union Pacific 5507 / 5422 on the point and CP 8951 pushing on the rear. (J.M.)

BEAVER LOGO RETURNS

It didn't take long after the departure of former CPR CEO Hunter Harrison for things to start to change. One of the very first actions taken by CP's new President & CEO Keith Creel was to bring back the classic Canadian Pacific beaver shield logo. The logo is deemed to be a classic icon of both the railway and the company and will once again take its place as CP also celebrates Canada 150 with many heritage posters, photos and other artifacts from its past..



SRY GETS NEW PRESIDENT

Southern Railway of British Columbia has announced some changes in its leadership, as its President since 2008, **Frank Butzelaar**, heads over to North Vancouver to become CEO of Seaspan, ULC. Replacing Frank as President of SRY will be **Derek Ollmann**, a long time SRY employee and most recently SRY's Director of Operations. (S.B.)



CANADA 150 ADORNS VIA RAIL

Several locomotives and cars of the VIA Rail Canada fleet have received special Canada 150 treatment—including P42DC and F40PH-3 locomotives as well as some LRC cars

Locomotives in the Canada 150 livery at press time included P42DCs **907, 908 and 916** and F40PH-2 **6454**. Both **916** and, for a few days, **907** had silver pilots, and so far **916** is the only one with white cab side numerals. A switch has been made to black pilots and black cab side numerals (shades of the VIA-CN FP9As and FPA4s all over again, with them switching over from yellow to black pilots). LRC coaches **3359, 3356 and 3361** (so far) also have been completed. City names, on both the passenger coaches and motive power differ on each side. For example on the left side (top to bottom) on 916 are the cities: Truro - Vancouver - Ottawa - Churchill and on the right (top to bottom): Jasper - Brantford - Halifax - Quebec. Right side. (TJ)

Not sure what we will see out west as the LRC cars never work this way, possible the F40PH-3 will be seen. The colours feature lots of yellow and silver, with Canada 150 in a red rectangle with white letters, and the city names in various colours on the sides. Not sure it is terribly attractive to these eyes, however you certainly wouldn't miss one is it rolled by.!

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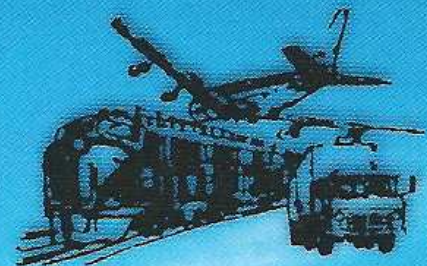
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TRIVIA ANSWER

This was formerly the site of the **Baltimore & Potomac Railroad station (aka The Sixth Street Station)**. It was here that the 20th President (2nd of 4 to be killed) James Abram Garfield was shot. He was elected on 4 Mar 1881 and shot twice, once in the arm and once in the back at 9:30am 2 Jul 1881 by Charles J. Guiteau (a disgruntled office seeker). President Garfield survived the initial attack, but died later in hospital on 19 Sep 1881. The Station itself was opened in 1873 and demolished in 1908. The four American Presidents to have been assassinated were Lincoln-1864, Garfield-1881, McKinley-1901 and Kennedy-1964.

BACK COVER

Thanks to **Gerry Brewer** for this photo of Royal Hudson #2860 on the Good Times Express which operated across Canada in 1978—to promote BC Tourism. Note the two Tuscan red F7B units from CPR—one of them is our own #4459.



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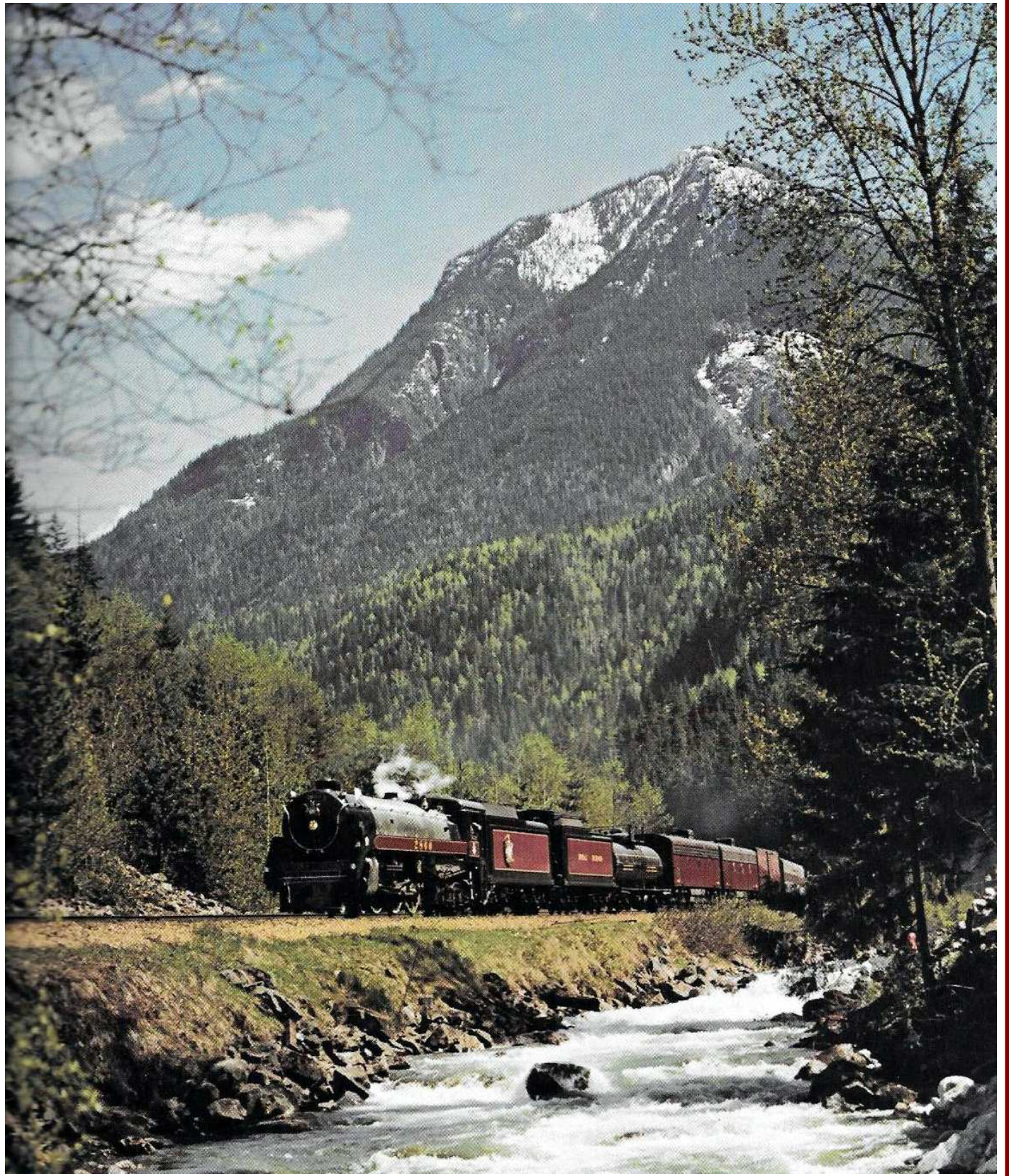
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