



# **WCRA NEWS**

## **MARCH 2017**

**ROYAL HUDSON JUBILEE  
CELEBRATION MARCH 18**

**JOHN DAY TAKES US TO  
SEE RAILS IN IRAN**



## GENERAL MEETING

The **General Meeting** of the WCRA will be held on **Tuesday, February 28 at 1930 hours** at Rainbow Creek Station, corner of Willingdon and Penzance in Burnaby. Nominations will be finalized to fill one position on the WCRA Board of Directors.

Entertainment will be **Bridges, Tunnels and Trains**—a selection of vintage shots from the **Doug Battrum** Collection in the archives.

## ON THE COVER

Where on earth are we??? - we're in Iran, where a Hyundai-built GT26CW emerges onto the Silakhor Plain, with the Zagros mountains for a backdrop, near Azna. See page 15 for full story and more photos by **John Day**.

## MARCH CALENDAR

- **West Coast Railway Heritage Park open daily 1000 through 1600k.**
- Saturday, February 25—Beach Party! (CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre) - page 12
- Friday, March 3—Newsletter deadline for the April 2017 issue
- Saturday, March 11—Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon—1100 hours, Her. Park (page 10)
- Friday, March 10 & Saturday, March 11—High Tea at the Heritage Park, seatings at noon, 2PM and 4PM—just \$25 each.....see page 11 for details
- Saturday, March 18—Royal Hudson Jubilee Tour 40 Year Reunion at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park—see back cover for details
- Sunday, March 19—Western Rails Railroadiana Show—Cameron Recreation Centre in Burnaby, 0900—1600 hours (see page 7)
- March 20 to March 24—Celebrate Spring Break Week with Bunker C Bear's Unfrozen—a train ride and activities to help awaken Bunker C Bear from his winter hibernation—kids \$24, adults free with the children—see page 10 for details
- Tuesday, March 28—WCRA General Meeting, 1930 hours, Rainbow Creek Station

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](http://www.wcra.org) or mail to WCRA, PO Box 2790 Stn. Term., Vancouver, B.C., V6B 3X2.

# EDITORIAL

## HERITAGE PARK RE-AWAKENING

It has been a winter like none other in our area—unprecedented long lasting snow and ice conditions, especially in Squamish at our West Coast Railway Heritage Park. In our last issue you saw the Polar Express operations in the snow, like we have not seen in any other Polar event we have operated. And it didn't stop there—as snow, freeze, partial thaw, more snow and freeze kept coming. We had over two feet of snow at one point, and two inches of solid ice underneath, making for treacherous conditions and freezing our track infrastructure solid.

It became downright depressing, and we had to keep the Heritage Park closed after New Year's Day for the first time in history. The turntable is frozen so rolling stock cannot be moved in and out of the roundhouse. Track switches are iced and still not dug out. And here, as I write this on February 4, we are in the midst of another three or four days of snow again. And, even our volunteer appreciation event—to say thanks to all who made our events and activities so successful in 2016—has been delayed into March.

But—Spring must be on the horizon out there somewhere.....and in that vein you will see in this issue a whole host of fun plans to get fully active again come March. So check out the dates and make plans. We have decided to kick off the 2017 season with a Beach Party just to change the mood, and then March will be a busy time as we catch up with our Volunteer lunch, a High Tea weekend, a 40th anniversary celebration of the Royal Hudson's California tour from 1977, and the fun of Bunker C Bear's reawakening from winter hibernation.

So, if you have been feeling a little blue about our lack of activity (as I have been) - then look no further than page 2 of this issue and make some plans.

All aboard for 2017.....!

*Don*

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## FROM THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was chaired by **Jeremy Davy** with a quorum present of around 30 members and guests:

- A moment of silence was held for recently deceased members **Marian Mills, Hope Rust and Bob Spencer**
- **Ken Tanner** provided a report from the President
  - Polar Express was a great success with outstanding guest satisfaction, all who helped were thanked for their extraordinary efforts under difficult circumstances
  - Ken noted he is scrambling a bit after returning to the President & CEO role for the next few months until we get a new President selected, his goal is to do all he can to

leave WCRA in a strong position for his successor

- Ken noted that we are in the midst of our lowest revenue months, made even tougher as the Heritage Park was closed most of January
- **Gordon Bell** reported that work to get the Heritage Park unfrozen and operational again is quite a struggle—it is open again but with limited access to exhibits
  - Operations work at the moment is focussed on training, rules certification and safety management plan updates for the 2017 season
  - Roundhouse Events marketing is going well and a great couple of years are ahead
  - The banquet storage shed needs to have a new floor—a concrete floor will be done once weather permits to make this facility more permanent
- **Bill Marchant** provided an update on work on BCER 960
- **Ken Tanner** and **Don Evans** reported on fundraising and thanked all for their support in 2016
- **George Game** reported on new LED lighting that had been installed in the Locomotive 374 Pavilion by the Park Board
- Nominations for one WCRA elected director position were held—eligible for another term is Director **George Game** who was nominated, a second candidate **Matthew Robson** was also nominated. Matthew was not present and there were some questions regarding his standing, accordingly the matter was deferred to the February General Meeting where the nomination will be finalized.
- There were several motions and much discussion regarding the Collections de-accessioning motion that was passed in June of 2016.
  - A member put forward a motion that the blanket de-accessioning of 11 pieces of the collection be rescinded—that motion was carried
  - The Collection Committee then put forward four motions to de-accession and dispose of four pieces of freight equipment...
    - To dispose of the Museum Train tank car Carried
    - To dispose of BCOL 1910 tank car Carried
    - To de-accession and dispose of PGE X-401 flat car Carried
    - To de-accession and dispose of BCEX 894 tank car Defeated
- Guests were welcomed and the calendar reviewed
- The Raffle was drawn and winner **Don Evans** donated the proceeds to the WCRA
- **Ryan Cruickshank** did a short Show & Tell with his recent acquisition of American Flyer S gauge and O gauge trains
- Entertainment was a great show by **Timothy Horton** on the 1970's era BC Museum Train

## MEMBER NEWS

A sad month as we note the passing of three members.....

**Marian Mills** passed away on January 19th. Marian was a lifelong volunteer and was active at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park since its inception back in the early 1990's. Marian leaves behind son Trevor (WCRA Archivist) and family and will be missed by us all.

**Hope Rust** passed away on January 21. Hope was the wife of long time member Tom Rust who pre-deceased her back in 2014. Membership dates back to the 1960's.

**Bob Spencer** also passed away on January 21 in Vernon, BC. Bob had been a long time active member of WCRA along with his wife Peggy (who passed in 2001). He moved up to Vernon a few years ago to be closer to family. We have many fond memories of Bob and will miss him dearly. Bob had been a member since 1991.

### **PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

If your label reads 01/31/2016 then your membership has expired, if your label reads 10/31/2016 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 back to membership **Keith Bennett** of Maple Ridge; (J.D.)

### **PRESIDENT & CEO SOUGHT FOR WCRA**

As planned, work to conduct a search for a new President & CEO is now underway. The WCRA Board's Governance Committee commenced the process at its January meeting, and ads are being paced in early February as follows.....

“The West Coast Railway Association (WCRA) is seeking a President and CEO to lead its railway preservation work and operations. WCRA is a leading Canadian not for profit charitable organization which operates several different business units in its jurisdiction, the largest of these being the West Coast Railway Heritage Park attraction in Squamish, BC (just north of Vancouver). The CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre has grown into a major event site. WCRA preserves, exhibits and operates Canada's second largest heritage railway collection - a collection of national significance. More information on the WCRA can be found at [www.wcra.org](http://www.wcra.org)

Reporting to the WCRA's Board of Directors, the President & CEO oversees all WCRA staff and is accountable to the board for all areas of operations, fundraising, financial management and is the primary public spokesperson for the Association. The position is based in the Metro Vancouver, BC area.

Applications / Expressions of Interest in this position are only accepted at [hrcommittee@wcra.org](mailto: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 and he was not present, so the matter was held over to be finalized at the February general meeting.

## WCRA TRIVIA #338 - By Ryan Cruickshank

What is the "*Walkway over the Hudson State Park*" and why the connection to trains?

(Answer on page 26)

## 2016 VOLUNTEER HOURS – Reporting ends February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Time has nearly run out for submitting your hours and the WCRA relies heavily on the hours generously donated by our volunteers carrying out the activities of the Association. They are part of the supporting information requested when seeking funding from other organizations.

Thank you to those who have submitted their 2016 volunteer hours. If you still have not submitted them, please do so as soon as possible. With the exception of attending General Meetings, All the time you spend volunteering for WCRA counts - ... At the Heritage Park or being a Custodian at the 374 Pavilion, Serving on a WCRA Committee, Attending Board of Directors meetings, Working on WCRA related activities at home ... **All hours are important and all hours count.**

### Reminder ...

*Volunteer hours for work performed **at the Heritage Park** are required to be reported by WCRA to BC Safety and Transport Canada annually and to be included in the Park's Safety Management System statistics.*

***As a minimum - Please separate your hours into PARK and OTHER when you report them.***

Please advise **Donna Simon** of the time you have donated. You may do so by email at ***membership@wcra.org*** or by calling 604.815.0812 (604-484-2791 toll free from Vancouver calling area) – both phones have voicemail. If you prefer to send your information by snail mail you can send it to Donna at PO Box 2535 Garibaldi Highlands BC V0N 1T0.

To all those who have submitted their hours ... Thank you again.

To all Volunteers ... thank you for your support of the WCRA through your donation of your time. (D.S.)



## WESTERN RAILS 2017 - MARCH 19, 2017

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual edition of *Canada's Largest Railroadiana Show* will be at the Cameron Recreation Complex, 9523 Cameron Street in Burnaby (behind Lougheed Town Centre) on **March 19<sup>th</sup> 0900 to 1600.**

The Show attracts not only those who are into Collectables, Models, Railroad Hardware & Timetables but also those who just like trains. It doesn't matter if you're buying, selling, or just looking there is something here for everyone. Again this year operating model layouts (representing TT Scale to G Scale) will be featured.

**Fare: Families \$20.00; Adults \$8.00; Seniors & Youths \$4.00; Children 5 & under free.**

**Mark SUNDAY March 19th - on your Calendar!!!**



**CANADA'S LARGEST RAILROADIANA SHOW**  
**Sunday March 19th 2017**  
 9:00am until 4:00pm  
 Cameron Recreation Complex  
 9523 Cameron St. Burnaby BC  
 – behind Lougheed Town Centre –

**Vendors buying, selling and trading ...**  
 Models, Collectables, Photos, Timetables, Keys, Locks, Lanterns, Buttons, China, Telegraph equipment, etc  
**Plus see operating model layouts**

**Show Entrance Fares** Cash only please  
 Adult \$8.00 ... Senior (60+) & Youth (6-15) \$4.00  
 Family (max 2 Adults & 3 Youths) \$20.00 ... Child (under 6) free

**INFORMATION ...** email [westernrails@wcra.org](mailto:westernrails@wcra.org), or phone (604) 484-2791 (Has voice mail – Please leave message)  
*Western Rails 2017* is presented by the **West Coast Railway Association**




*Western Rails 2017* is presented by the West Coast Railway Association. Further information is available on request by emailing [westernrails@wcra.org](mailto:westernrails@wcra.org) or phoning 604.484.2791. (J.D.)

## COLLECTION

### BCER 960 REPORT

Hi 960 followers... Our shop has been very cold, and without any operational plumbing, so we made only one visit up into MP2 this past month—a most harsh and unusual winter.

In my previous report it was mentioned we were somewhat stymied as to how to correct imperfections in the mating of the front hood to the deck and as well the respective right side steel panels to both the hood and deck, due to the collision damage to the hood and some

warping of the deck plate. For sure it was thought some major mods and compromises were going to be necessary in both the look and structure of the panels in order to fit of all the pieces to the front and right side deck. However, when we clued in that the rust we couldn't scale off under the sand box housing, plus the pinch of the deck close to the sand box base had in fact raised the sandbox, we surmised this had in turn forced hood higher and out of position. Perhaps not quite as simple as I've made it, but it's clear that after 1.) we unbolted and hoisted off the hood and side panels, 2.) zip cut 7/8s off all around the top of the sand box housing, and 3.) we once again dropped the hood back into place, plus positioned all the side panels, the result was a marvellously better fit with a perfectly de-warped hood.

It took the three of us, Bill, Gordon and myself to lift ( with crane) and reposition the awkward flexing hood first off and then back onto 960 without doing damage to the hood, cab and the sand box ( which the sleeve affixed under the hood hatch has to friction fit into) . We know some tweaking is still needed to certain panels, but for sure a satisfyingly productive day, all be it a freezing cold one.

Some late great news, we received another very generous donation from an anonymous donor. This adds to our pool of donation funding and for sure permits a timely clearing of an outstanding to our steel fabricator. So far, the BCER 960 project has fully paid its way from donations, we have no bills outstanding and happily we have some dollars going forward.  
(M.McG)

### **Colonist Car CPR 2514**

Progress continues on the Colonist car thanks to volunteer **Blaine Thomson**. Blaine had a special visitor all the way from Georgia when **Bill Parks** came to check on Blaine's work. A small gathering of volunteers enjoyed a light lunch and a tour of the colonist and the recent progress that has been made on the rear of the coach. This work requires a highly skilled wood worker and the West Coast Railway Heritage Park is blessed to have two volunteers in Blaine Thomson and Bill Parks so committed to doing this work. (G.B.)

### **Trackmobile**

Special thanks to **John Jellis, Roy Crowston, Mike Lloyd** and all the Monday boys for rebuilding the trackmobile that was generously donated to the park by **David Walmsley**. As the CN Roundhouse and Conference Centre continues to get busier this will be an invaluable tool to handle the switching in and out of the Roundhouse for events.

### **THREE FRIEGHT CARS TO BE DISPOSED OF**

At the January 31, 2017 meeting approval was given to dispose of three freight cars that are currently at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park site. One was de-accessioned from the collection while the other two had never been formally added. All are surplus pieces.



To be scrapped are:

- The tank car that was once part of the BC Museum Train—this piece had never been part of the WCRA collection, it just arrived at our site one day several years ago
- Tank car PGE 1910—circa 1937 and once UTLX 59835—this car had been previously deaccessioned. WCRA will retain PGE 1926 in the collection to represent this era of tank cars, PGE 1926 was built in 1921 by ACF for the Pacific Great Eastern
- Flat Car PGE X-401—this 36 foot shop flat car is a duplicate in the collection, which will retain sister car X—402 (built circa 1914) in the collection

In accordance with the WCRA's Collection Policy, all of these pieces had been made available to other heritage organizations over past months, and proceeds from their disposition will be directed to other collection projects underway at this time.

### **THANKS**

- To **Jim Lanigan** for the donation of photos of Esquimalt and Nanaimo cabooses as well as a book *Shays on the Switchbacks* by Dave Wilkie and Elwood White

## **WEST COAST RAILWAY HERITAGE PARK** *Home of the Royal Hudson*



### **HERITAGE PARK RE-OPENS AFTER UNPRECEDENTED WINTER**

The West Coast Railway Heritage Park re-opened in late January after being closed since Christmas due the unprecedented ice and snow conditions at the site. Heavy snowfalls, then melt, and then more snow created an unprecedented situation where there was a couple of inches of hard ice under snow—severely slippery. In addition our trackage was inoperable due hard frozen switches so it has been impossible to get rolling stock moved.

While the Park is now open, we are having another major blast of winter again as this issue is being written (early February). The Heritage Park is open again daily, but anticipate some exhibits remaining inaccessible these days.

The Mini Rail tracks also remain buried so there are no mini rail operations at the moment. Hopefully Spring will arrive soon and we can get dug out.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 18—ROYAL HUDSON SILVER JUBILEE TOUR EVENT**

The 40th Anniversary of the Royal Hudson's Silver Jubilee Tour will be celebrated on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park. This iconic journey down the coast from Vancouver to Los Angeles, California was witnessed by millions as the famous

train rode the rails of the western US. More details on this 1977 trip can be found in our last issue (page 17).

On March 18 we have a day of celebration planned—reception, dining, presentations, memorabilia and movies from this trip—and some of the original participants—including the family of **Grace McCarthy**, BC's Tourism Minister of the day who made this trip happen and was a key participant as well. Plan to attend on March 18—book your tickets now at [www.wcra.org](http://www.wcra.org)—more info on our back cover this month. (K.T.)

### **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON – Saturday March 11, 2017, 1100-1400**

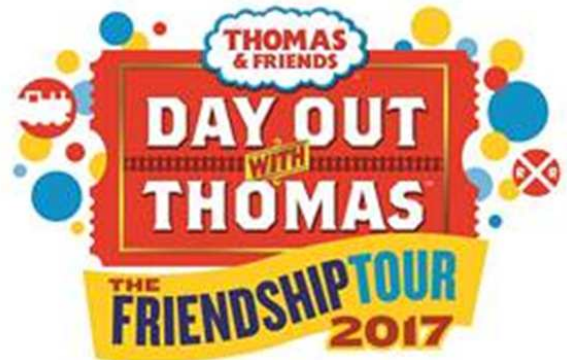
Our most successful events like the Polar Express and Thomas along with most of our core restoration work is fueled by volunteerism at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park. On Saturday March 11 come on out and enjoy a luncheon and social free to all volunteers that give so much through-out the year. Doors open at 11am Lunch buffet opens at noon. Please RSVP to Gord at [generalmanager@wcra.org](mailto:generalmanager@wcra.org) if you plan to attend. (G.B.)

### **BUNKER C BEAR'S UN-FROZEN – Monday March 20 – Friday March 24, 2017**

Every year Bunker C Bear, the West Coast Railway Heritage Park Mascot, awakes from his long winter nap. This year some of his other Mascot friends have planned a week long Spring Break party to celebrate the Un-freezing of winter. Kids of all ages will enjoy a ride on our full size Heritage Train to Bunker C Bear's cave where they will wake him up and have a dance party and enjoy all sorts of activities. Included in ticket prices are the train ride, mini rail rides, bouncy castles, mini golf, cave paintings and much more. Call 604-898-9336 for details or book online at [wcra.org](http://wcra.org) Tickets are \$24 and one parent rides free with each child.

### **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](http://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.

Book your Day Out With Thomas tickets today at [www.wcra.org](http://www.wcra.org) and don't be disappointed—this major event sells quickly. (G.B.)

# *High Tea at the Heritage Park*

**Friday, March 10 &  
Saturday March 11, 2017**

**Seating times are 12 pm,  
2 pm or 4 pm**

## **Vintage hat display!**

\$25 includes your selection of specially blended teas and a three-tier tray of sweets, tarts, sandwiches and scones.

**At the West Coast Railway  
Heritage Park,  
39645 Government Rd,  
Squamish, BC**

**Call 604-898-9336 to make  
your reservation or email  
[giftshop@wcra.org](mailto:giftshop@wcra.org)**



LEAVE WINTER BEHIND.....



# BEACH PARTY

**Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017**

**Featuring Checo Tohomaso and  
the Sweet Soul Gospel Choir,  
followed by the Hairfarmers**

**An indoor beach party including beach  
volleyball, fish tacos and breezy cocktails**

***Doors open at 5 pm***

***\$40 with dinner or \$20 entertainment only***

**Go to [www.wcra.org](http://www.wcra.org) to  
purchase tickets**

**At the CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre  
39645 Government Rd. Squamish**

**CN ROUNDHOUSE  
& Conference Centre**



# LOCOMOTIVE 374 PAVILION

Our visitor count for January was 1,779. We had 294 people less than last January.

We have started planning for this year's 374 Rollout on May 21 and Canada Day, July 1, 150 Year Celebrations are underway. This will be the 130th Anniversary of the 374 Locomotive arriving in Vancouver. This year the Yaletown Business Improvement Association will be joining the Roundhouse Community Centre and the 374 Crew to celebrate this event. This is the first time that the YBIA has participated in our celebrations. Please mark your calendars. It should be a good party.

The 374 Pavilion has a new volunteer. **Norm Wilson** will be working with us starting in February. Norm comes to us from TransLink and has worked with the public for many years. Thanks for joining the team Norm! Your people skills will be an asset.

Volunteers are always needed. Please give me a call (778-875-3573) if you would like to join our team. One or two days a month would really help us out. You will not be working alone. We are located at the corner of Davie St & Pacific Blvd. Just across from the Canada Line Yaletown/Roundhouse Station. Free parking is available. Winter Hours are 1100 to 1500 daily, please drop in for a visit. (G.G.)





## **CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre**

**Immersed in nature and surrounded by history**

The CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre is available for weddings, private parties, corporate retreats, conferences, and fairs.



39645 Government Rd. Squamish, B.C.

**Contact: Jennifer Chisholm at [jenn@wcra.org](mailto:jenn@wcra.org) or  
1-604-524-1011 for rates and availability**

**CN ROUNDHOUSE  
& Conference Centre**

[www.wcra.org](http://www.wcra.org)

## **FEATURE ARTICLES**

### **IRANIAN INTERLUDE— EMDs at 2,000 METRES**

Story and photos by **John Day**

“You’re kidding, right?” was the usual response to my announcement that I was going to Iran. “They’ll throw you in jail, they’ll confiscate your cameras, they’ll...” I have to admit, it was with some apprehension that I signed up to what was billed as the first ever railfan photo trip sanctioned by RAI: The Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to give them their full title.

Travel was by scheduled train, chartered train, chartered draisines (large speeders), chartered bus and chartered 4x4 SUV’s. Iran is a rugged country and its railways cross mountain ranges through several passes exceeding 2,000 metres. To put this into perspective, Kicking Horse Pass is just 1,627 metres at its summit.

But really, why go to Iran at all? The country’s railway system is relatively young, the Trans-Iranian Railway linking the Persian Gulf with the Caspian Sea only having been completed in 1938. The civil engineering needed to achieve the high summits is truly remarkable with loops, spirals, high bridges and every other device known to engineers to keep grades to 1:36 (2.8%).

Following the 1979 revolution, but particularly in the past fifteen years, railway building has been a high priority. Iran currently boasts 8,286 route-kilometres but has a further 3,529 km under construction. Clearly the railway is important to the economy and is rapidly being modernized; however, there are some fairly elderly diesels on the roster from the 1970’s and 80’s that are worth noting such as in the photo on top page 16 of a work train headed by a G22W built by Đuro Đaković in Yugoslavia in 1982 crossed the viaduct leading from Do Ab Station

Passenger trains are important and are largely assigned brand-new “Iranrunner” locos built under license from Siemens: unusually, this class of 150 locomotives has been built as single-cab “A” units, and, as many trains have only one locomotive, new turntables have been installed to allow the locos to be turned. (photo, bottom page 16 Siemens-designed, but Iranian assembled "Iran Runner" or "Safir" locomotive on a passenger train near Firuzkuh )

Other passenger trains are handled by the ubiquitous EMD GT26CW-2 (essentially an export SD40-2—see cover this issue). Lighter trains were entrusted to venerable EMD four-axle G12 and G22W units (photo page 15); the G12’s received an interesting local rebuild to eliminate the high hood at the cab end.

Having been persuaded by several European friends that this was a trip not to be missed, I







found myself on a Lufthansa plane on May 6 (2016) bound for Frankfurt, connecting to Tehran. Even before we had landed, I experienced Persian hospitality with the gentleman in the next seat (who it turns out was from North Vancouver) offering advice on clearing customs, baggage claim and money exchange. He even made sure I had made contact with the guide that was meeting me before he left the airport. After a few hours' sleep, the program started in earnest and we were soon navigating the streets of Tehran in the height of the morning rush hour.

With 12 million people, traffic is Tehran's most notable feature. Our destination was the countryside to the east and north of Tehran, where the railway first climbs to a pass through the Alborz Mountains and then descends to the Caspian Sea, which itself is a couple of dozen metres below "mean sea level". This descent is where a number of switchbacks occur, with tracks packed one above the other on the mountain slopes, ever descending (and of course climbing in the southbound direction). This area was interesting enough for us to spend a couple of days scouting locations and waiting for trains. And – surprise! – Iran is not all desert and heat, as we had cool, rainy weather in the forested mountains.

We fairly quickly came to understand that the typical Iranian freight consisted of two or three



elderly diesels hauling trains of up to 50 cars or so, with express passenger trains being hauled by the new IranRunner locos and made up of European-patterned rolling stock, either sleepers for overnight or spartan day coaches for locals. While there is some variety to this pattern, and some fairly new diesel trainsets operate, the trains we saw were largely uniform.

Nonetheless, it was



easy to pick out a couple of dozen superb photo locations including the amazing Veresk Bridge which stands 110 metres above the valley floor on a single 66 metre arch sprung from mountains on both side of the deep gorge. (photo page 17) The bridge was built in 1936 by a Danish firm which had the contract for the construction of this part of the railroad; Hitler asked Reza Shah Pahlavi to order its destruction during World War II to slow the Allies' ability to supply Russia by rail and ship; fortunately the Shah declined the "request". Getting a photo here requires a sharp eye and ear as the train emerges onto the bridge with almost no notice and then is gone.

One of the real highlights of the trip was the 4x4 convoy we made, going into a barren landscape penetrated by the railway but not by paved roads. We were able to see nomadic shepherds watering their sheep adjacent to the railway, as well as spectacular scenery reminiscent of the American west.



Our journey then took us back to Tehran where a visit to the main locomotive depot had been arranged; we were free to wander at will to admire ancient EMDs (built in the US, Canada, Korea and Yugoslavia), a couple of MLWs and GEs, Hitachis from Japan as well as new Siemens units including one just being delivered to the railway from the builder. While there was a lot for us to see, we were also objects of curiosity and lots of selfies were requested by the shop crews and enginemen. The locomotive shop featured a very busy transfer table or



traverser with two tables active, and running almost continuously as locos were shuffled from track to track. (Below, a modernized G12 keeps company with newer Siemens units in Tehran's locomotive depot.



We were taken from the depot directly to Tehran's main station, where we were seated in the VIP lounge to await our train. Various railway officials came to shake hands, and enjoy tea and biscuits with us. Adjacent to the platforms in Tehran is a "stuffed and mounted" 2-10-0 ( below) which our tour leader Bernd Seiler said could be brought back to life with minimal effort.





Eventually our train was called, lengthened by a sleeper for our group as well as a full diner for our exclusive use.

The second half of our tour took us to central Iran, to the high mountains of Lorestan Province which is almost exactly halfway between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Here the railway negotiates steep canyons through a roadless, largely barren landscape.



*Photo—a US-built EMD GT26CW passes flocks of sheep and goats deep in the mountains of Lorestan Province, Iran.*

At Sefid Dashit, the railway does a figure 8 in a tight space, looking like the prototype for a model railroad crammed onto a 4x8 sheet of plywood. In the more fertile part of Lorestan, irrigated fields backed by high, snow-capped mountains yielded a beautiful backdrop to our photographs (see cover) Access to some photo locations was provided by “chartered” (more like “commandeered”) draisines (large speeders) as there was no other way in.

Our trip continued by overnight train (comfortable, European style 4-berth compartments in first class), connecting in the religious centre of Qom (home of the Ayatollahs) to a chartered



coach train. Chartering a train was the one condition that the railways required our group to adhere to, in order to gain unrestricted, no-limits access to the railway. As there was no convenient scheduled train, it made sense to use this train to travel to the large, modern city of Isfahan, stopping for photo stops in the bleak desert along the way.

Isfahan is notable for its large Armenian population, which is tolerated by the Muslim majority, and which has a large Orthodox (Christian) cathedral and museum. Making our way back to Tehran by chartered bus, we overnighted in the 5,000 year old city of Yazd, visited a rare, non-touristified “caravanserai” and enjoyed formal Persian gardens which are the inspiration for Persian carpets. If you travel that far, you can’t see only trains.

And so it was over, soon enough. Our trip was as smooth and hassle-free as you could hope, we were welcomed everywhere and saw amazing sights. A significant number of tourists were seen in some of the more famous centres, though I suspect that up in the mountains, we were probably the first real foreigners many people had seen. The trip was sufficiently interesting and worthwhile that I have signed up for the organizer’s return visit in April 2017. It will feature some of the places that we had poor weather the first time (and a chance for an even better shot of the Veresk bridge), the country’s only electrified line at Tabriz and an opportunity to see different trains and infrastructure in the southeast. For information see [www.farrail.net](http://www.farrail.net)

## **FROM WCRA NEWS - February 1980 - Part 1**

Thanks to **Craig McDowall**

### **An F7 Retires**

The station operator at Fairfield was out on the platform as the passenger train pulled in behind a GP30 an hour behind schedule. F7A #810 had another road failure and the F7B was unable to handle the train alone. The units quietly uncoupled from the 7 car stainless steel train consist and headed for the shops.

#810 had had too many failures lately and the CMO asked the shop crews to make a complete investigation of the unit and give him a full report on necessary repairs. Next morning he read the report and the answer was obvious. #810 was totally worn out and repair would be totally uneconomical. The unit would be retired immediately and boiler equipped GP9 would assume duties on the daily passenger train until a final decision re: replacement power was reached.

Fairfield is not a very big town and many of its residents work at the railroad shops. Word spread quickly throughout the town and reached the city council about #810's retirement, as she was a favourite, having pulled the very first passenger train into Fairfield ten years earlier. The unit had handled those duties regularly ever since. It couldn't be allowed to just be sent to scrap.

The Town Council approached the railroad as there was a small piece of land near the mainline that was designated for park use. It would be great if the F7 could go on display there. Several weeks later the railroad replied and said it would donate the locomotive and arrange to have it delivered to the site.

Work soon began on construction of a 'shoo fly' into the park site. City crews constructed protective fencing and planted grass. A playground was installed nearby. Then the day came when SW1500 #1218 brought the retired F7 down the line. A switch was thrown and #810 was slowly pushed to her final resting place. F7A #810 was now on display resplendent in her restored red/silver livery.

One of the greatest appeals of Model Railroading is that it is only limited by the extent of one's imagination. The story of F7 #810 took place in your editor's (Don Evans) basement. The unit is a TRIX N scale F7 which was the first power on a new line and served faithfully for the past 12 years in both passenger and freight service. The loco had so many 'miles' on it that the nickel silver on the wheels had worn right through to the brass resulting in unreliable electrical contact. So she is now on display in the park for all who wish to visit.

*Ed. note.....a quick check in the basement (a different one than back in 1980) reveals that a railway preservation group rescued the F7 from the Park and rebuilt it—it is back operating on occasional excursions on the mainline.....and a 4-4-0 steam locomotive has replaced in it the Fairfield town park!*

### **WCRA News (from the minutes of acting Secretary Bob Hunter)**

The tarp has been installed on locomotive #16 to protect our locomotive from the weather. A long discussion of the future of #16 resulted in the calling of a special vote at the February Meeting

The Executive will follow up with VIA re: a possible excursion behind diesels using Royal Hudson coaches to Boston Bar and return.

Nominations for Executive positions in the WCRA were completed with results being an acclamation situation. Nominated were **Craig McDowall, Gary Oliver, Grant Ferguson, Bill Marchant and Bernie Tully**

Our planned BC Hydro steam trip is still on! A hitch with the insurance forced deferment of the proposed excursion with #3716 up BC Hydro's Fraser Valley line in May. The difficulty was that Hydro carries no passenger insurance coverage, being freight only, and is only self insured with a \$10M deductible clause. Insurance has now been confirmed, with the date now moved to the fall following wrap up on the Royal Hudson season.

The WCRA's annual winter excursion on the BCR is on but delayed till March. The round trip to Lillooet using chartered BCR Budd cars will run Saturday March 22nd and Sunday March 23rd. Fare, including lunch in Lillooet, will be \$25 for adults, half price for kids.

### **British Columbia Railway**

The BC Government has granted BCR \$7.4 million to cover 1978 and 1979 operating losses associated with the Fort Nelson extension.

The Strike Saga continues. On January 21st the strike continues with trainmen picketing and the line remains shut down. The line then re-opens the next day after pressure from all sides. But dissident pickets set up picket lines the following day in Squamish and North Van. The shut down then expands as far as Lillooet. Then on Thursday, the LRB orders trainmen back to work but 4 of the 7 unions involved recommend rejection of the proposed settlement in voting still yet to come. But the line returns to normal operation while the vote is held by all unions and within a few days, the union finally accepts the settlement by a 52% vote.

The BCR has purchased six sets of locotrol equipment from the Burlington Northern RR but the master units' electricals only and will be installed in BCR locos. The slaves are ex F3 and F7 B units. BN has phased out mid train radio controlled power in its operations.

A Sperry Rail Service car tested BCR rails from North Vancouver to Fort St. John during the period from Nov. 26th to Dec. 12th

Thirteen cars of a BCR freight derailed west of Lillooet on Feb, 17th with two cars containing chlorine which fortunately did not rupture. The wreck closed the line for 24 hours.

## **RAILWAY NEWS**



### **FURTHER TO LAST MONTH'S ITEM RE THE DOCKS.....**

An add to the ending of the item re the changes made by CN to serve the south side container terminals at the Port of Vancouver.....the "they" in the article refers to Vanterm and Centerm Terminals on the waterfront. With the increased workload from an extra ship making regular calls at Vanterm, and increasing switching delays experienced by both Vancouver docks, they too needed overload trucking help to keep the containers moving. (J.M.)

With CN shifting container operations to the New Westminster sub into the city and their Glen Yard reactivation, congestion at the port has eased.



## **SUPER LONG TRAIN**

CN has operated what may be its longest ever train on the BC South District—on Monday, January 30 train Q 11131—27 departed Kamloops at 15,877 feet for its trip to Vancouver Intermodal Terminal in Surrey. The train had 253 cars (incl. 30 empties) and three locomotives positioned—SD70M-2 8806 on the front, Dash9-44CW 2533 mid train and Dash9-44CW 2708 on the rear. The total length equals 3.0 miles or 4.8 km long! (J.M.)

## **MOTIVE POWER NOTES**

CN train 81141 14 was westbound on January 14—15 with CN ET44AC 3015, CREX 1306 and BNSF 6756—the train was hauling mostly traffic destined for North Vancouver. After North Van they split up and presumably the CREX and BNSF units headed south (L.R. / J.M.) ...Seen running southbound through Seattle's King Street Station on the afternoon of January 29 was a unit oil train with all CN power—two GE's on the point and one as DMU on the rear.....



## **MOTIVE POWER NOTES**

A CP train arriving Coquitlam on January 11 had CP ES44AC 8766 / CP ES44AC 9369 / Union Pacific 5542 (J.M.).....A CP train through the Fraser Valley on Feb. 03 had CP ES44AC 8939 on the point and Union Pacific 6304 mid train.....Union Pacific units get around, CP train 303818 arrived Thornton yard on the evening of February 3 with UP 8980, which had been working trains on CN mid January in Illinois. (J.M.)

EMDX Demonstrators 1605 and 1606 have been working around the Prairies between Calgary and the Midwest where they have made it to St Paul and Chicago on CP trains (TJ). These units are model SD70ACe-T4 and are painted Union Pacific yellow but lettered ElectroMotive on the long hood sides. These are the latest in Tier 4 emissions compliant units from EMD.

## **TRACK EVALUATION TRAIN**

Departing Roberts Bank on January 26 just before 1700 hours was a CP Track Evaluation train with GP20-ECO #2241 and three cars—CPR Crew Accommodation car 68 (rebuilt from a former baggage—express car), MoW car 424993 and Track Evaluation Car 63 (ex MoW 411255 nee Antigua, built 1931). The consist was reported through Ashcroft on January 27. (J.M.)



## WINTER CONSISTS

VIA's **Ocean**, train 14 east on December 27 from Montreal and west on December 29 from Halifax had a lengthy consist.....VIA F40PH-3's 6440, 6428 and 6420 then 7009 Renaissance baggage car, Renaissance coaches 7220, 7226, 7222, Renaissance Accessible coach 70108, Renaissance coach 7200, Renaissance service car 7309, Renaissance diner 7401, Renaissance service car 7314, Renaissance accessible sleeper 79501, Renaissance sleepers 7513, 7510, 7507, 7517, 7509, 7500, 7519, Renaissance transition car 7601 and Park Observation *Tremblant Park*. (three locos and 19 cars!). (T.M.)

VIA's first **Northern Lights Specials** departed January 26 with F40PH-3 locomotives 6441 / 6438 and six cars—Baggage 8602, Coaches 8130, 8120, Diner 8415 Princess, Sleeper *Chateau Lemoine*, and Park Observation car *Evangeline Park*. (J.M.)

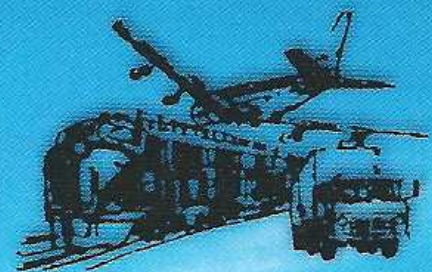


## SUPERLINERS ON 516

The SuperLiner three car consist is at work on Amtrak Cascades train 516 and its return counterpart between Seattle and Vancouver, BC. This will go on for some time while the Talgo trainsets receive HEP upgrades.

This does slow things a bit as the SuperLiner consist operates at slightly lower speed than the Talgo equipment (no pendular tilt technology), and the train wyes and reverses into Pacific Central Station on arrival at Vancouver.

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**TRIVIA ANSWER**

The "*Walkway over the Hudson State Park*" is the longest elevated pedestrian bridge in the world. It was opened on 1 January 1889 as a double track, seven main span, steel cantilever railroad bridge by the Central New England Railway running across the Hudson river from Poughkeepsie to Highland, New York. The bridge, 212' over the river and 6768' (1.28miles) long was passed down through the New York, New Haven & Hartford to the Penn Central and finally Conrail's Maybrook line during its 85 years in service before being damaged by fire on 8 May 1974 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. It was restored and re-opened to people only on 3 October 2009 and now sees upwards of half-million visitors a year.

**BACK COVER**

Join us on Saturday, March 18 for a great day of recalling a classic rail trip with Royal Hudson 2860 to Los Angeles 40 years ago, the Silver Jubilee Tour of 1977.



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