



WCRA NEWS

JAN/FEB/MARCH

2020

POLAR EXPRESS - A BIG SUCCESS!

**Our #6520 debuts in her new
CN Paint Scheme**



© John M. Day

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

The next monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 28th in Burnaby, BC at Rainbow Creek Station at 19:30 hrs.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the West Coast Railway Association will be held on Tuesday, March 24th at the Rainbow Creek Station in Burnaby at 19:30 hours.

ON THE COVER:

Our ex CN/VIA #6520 debuted in front of over 100 people at the Railway Heritage Park in Squamish on Sunday Nov. 17th. Unit was generously donated by Carl Vanderspek and Marg Hope. Photo by John Day

January/February/March Calendar

- West Coast Railway Heritage Park is closed except for special events for the winter until expected re-opening on April 1st.

Please note since there will NOT be a regular monthly meeting in February, and the WCRA News will change to a quarterly publication in a magazine format in June (with the last regular issue not until April), notice is given now that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24th, 2020 rather than the normal last Tuesday in March at Confederation Park at 19:30 hours.

WCRA Trivia #367 - In 1930 Errol Flynn and Olivia De Havilland starred in a movie titled Dodge City which opened with a scene of stage coach in a race with ATSF #18, which was in disguise. What railway was it actually from and has it been scrapped?

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 19:30 hours in Burnaby at Rainbow Creek Station in Confederation Park. Apply through www.wcra.org or mail to WCRA, PO Box 2387 Stn. Main, Squamish, BC, V8B 0B6

FROM THE EDITOR

The Polar Express is our single largest revenue generator each year for the WCRA. This event requires over 100 volunteers to stage the Polar Express. A wide variety of volunteers dedicated their time (some for all four weekends!) ranging in age from 12 years to 70+ years. If we didn't rely on these folks, this event wouldn't happen. Attendance over the four weekends was slightly down from last year due to the early first weekend in November (3rd weekend) which is always the one weekend that does not sell out. Our staff headed by Gord Bell along with many 'early' volunteers, headed by our beloved 'Squamish Gang' started working on set up weeks in advance. One of the new features this year was 'Santa's Cabin' which really looked great. Howie came over from Vancouver Island to assist in setting up the mini rail and Gord Hall set up three different layouts in the North Pole as people passed from the North Pole into Santa's Workshop (which was a lot warmer this year than last year's appropriately named the 'Ice Cave' thanks to Gord Bell setting up a propane heater in the Car Shop. We also had the cab of the Royal Hudson open for folks with Keith Anderson hosting those climbing up into the cab. Kudos to Tammie and Christie for all their their work and Jacs handling all the arrivals at the front gate. This was a fine example of staff and volunteers working together to make this event a memorable one for the families attending and passing the word to others to attend next year.

WCRA TRIVIA #367 - By Ryan Cruickshank

ASSOCIATION NEWS

FROM THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

The November meeting of the WCRA was the Annual Christmas Dinner, held Tuesday, November 26 at the Accent Inn in Burnaby. A great crowd of over 40 members, staff and guests gathered to enjoy a wonderful festive dinner.

Jeremy Davy acted as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

Jeremy noted that the 2019 Awards would not be presented during the evening ...

Presentations to be made @ a VOLLIE Appreciation event in late January Date

TBD

Following dinner, guests were welcomed and a short business meeting was called to order with Jeremy as Chair noting:

Business

• NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

• Starting in January 2020, meetings will be bi-monthly on the last Tuesday of Jan (28th), Mar (24th), May (26th), July (28th) and Sept (29th). The July meeting will be @ WCRHP ... All others at Rainbow Creek in Burnaby

• The next meeting is Tuesday, January 28 at Rainbow Creek Station and that nominations will be accepted there for three WCRA Elected board positions open

for election

- The Annual General Meeting will be held Tuesday, March 31 at Rainbow Creek Station.
 - 25 year Life Member Jack Wallace was remembered. Jack passed away Nov 4 th at age 98. He & Bev regularly came from Victoria to attend the Annual Dinners .
- Events Calendar
- Polar Express – Next 3 weekends. Need Volunteers ... Call Park.
 - West Coast Railway Heritage Park is closed to the Public thru mid-April 2020 except for Special Events.
 - The Planned reopening in mid- April to mid-October daily 1000 to 1700. • The Park and MP2 will be closed to all activities Dec 20th to Jan 5th.
 - The Park and MP2 will re-open Jan 6th to Members /Volunteers working on Restoration projects ... Staff on site daily 10:00am to 4:00pm • Friday, Jan 10 - Planned deadline for the February issue of WCRA News
- A 50/50 draw was held.

Bonnie & George Game and Donna Simon were thanked for their assistance with organizing the evening.

The meeting was closed, with all present wished a Merry Christmas, the best for 2020 and to have safe travels home.

MEMBER NEWS

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If the expiry date on your membership card or the date on your label is 1/31/20 it is time to renew your membership If the label reads 9/31/19 or 10/31/19 this is your last issue of WCRA News. We need all of you as members, please renew today.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome as a Lifetime Member

- Tim Roark of Surrey

Welcome to membership

- Mark Dailey and Family of Coquitlam

Our condolences go to the families of members who have passed away recently:

- Barrie Sansom, a Member since 2003, supported WCRA through his tee shirt concessions at many WCRA events and operating the coffee concession at WCRA General Meetings

- George Massey, a Member since 2006 an active MiniRail volunteer for most of them;

- Klaus Michel after a brief illness, a Member since 2016 and regular MiniRail volunteer; •

Jack Wallace, a Life Member since 1994.

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD POSITIONS

Nominations will be accepted at the January General Meeting for THREE positions on the WCRA Board of Directors Elected by the Membership:

- Director George Game is ending his first three year term on the board. He is eligible to be nominated for a second term and has agreed to stand; also
- Two positions currently vacant, one previously held by Don Evans and one not filled last year.

These are all 3 year terms ending at the 2023 AGM. (JD)

VOLUNTEER HOURS - Reporting

As part of the supporting information provided when seeking funding from other organizations the WCRA relies heavily on the hours that our volunteers generously donate while carrying out the activities of the Association.

All volunteering you do for WCRA counts - except attending General meetings

At the Heritage Park assisting as a Tour Guide or on a project, At the 374 Pavilion as Custodian, Serving on a committee, Attending board meetings or At home working on Association related projects ... all hours are important and all hours count.

We have clarified with the Controller that the reporting period for Volunteer hours remains on the Calendar year basis (Jan 1 to Dec 31) as it is unrelated to the Association's Financial system. WCRA is required to report to the BC Safety Authority Volunteer hours given annually at the Heritage Park and to include them in the Park's Safety Management System statistics. As a minimum when you report them - Please separate your hours into time spent at the PARK and OTHER.

Please submit volunteer hours for 2019 as soon as you can as they need to be included in the 2019 Annual Report.

Finance has advised that they will forward to me any volunteer hours documentation that you included with your Mileage claim. Please send me the time you have donated for activities from the end of your mileage claim to December 31st.

You may do so by emailing donna@wcra.org or by calling 604.815.0812 (604-484- 2791 toll free from Vancouver calling area) – both phones have voicemail so you can leave a message. If you prefer to send your information by snail mail send it to Donna Simon, PO Box 2535 Garibaldi Highlands BC V0N 1T0.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES - Mileage

Don't forget that Mileage for Volunteer hours worked in the period Oct 1/19 to Dec 31 / 19 is eligible reimbursement but as a 2020 expense . They should be reported on your 2020 Claim for the period ending Sept 30/20 ... Keep the record of your Hours

after Oct 1st in order to do so.

For additional information regarding Mileage/Expense Claims see Message from the Chief Financial Officer on Pg 12 of the October 2019 Newsletter
Thanks again for everything you do during the year.(DS)

A bit of WCRA History - How two railfans met the WCRA (by Bob Hunter)

On December 26, 1975, an errant Log Barge the "Swiftsure Prince" slipped its mooring lines during a storm and crashed into CNR's Fraser River Railway Bridge at New Westminster. One bridge span toppled into the river severing rail access north of the Fraser for Canadian National, BC Hydro, and Burlington Northern Railways.

For some months it forced these three railways to detour onto Canadian Pacific trackage in the New West/Fraser Mills area, along CP mainline's Cascade Sub to the CPR's Mission Bridge south across the Fraser, where connections were made to the detouring railways.

It was a great time for railfans with all these detours along with CP's regular traffic. It was "The Great Detour of 1976".

One Saturday or Sunday (likely Sunday) three WCRA members, Roger Burrows, Grant Ferguson, and myself chased BC Hydro's "Valley Freight" on the CPR east to the Mission Bridge. We positioned ourselves south of the river high atop a ramp of the incomplete Mission Highway Bridge. Our vantage point gave us a panoramic view of Mission City and we were set to photograph the Hydro train as it headed south over CP's Mission Sub.

As we waited we observed that two railfans had climbed part way up the "sandhill" to get a lower angle photo.

Grant decided to clamber down and make contact with the pair, who were unknown to us.

It turned out they were two BC Tel employees. Grant told them about the WCRA and invited them to the next meeting which they attended.

Thus Don Evans and Bill Marchant were welcomed into the WCRA!

And thanks to the "history altering" Log Barge!

Featured Articles

Famous Railway Builders

Little Known Facts About our Railway Pioneers: by Bill Johnston

Previous articles in this series focused on the pioneers who built the CPR. It is now time to look further and investigate a person involved in the origins of the other major Canadian Railways.

Continuing the series, we look at a famous CNR president whose name is well known in the Vancouver area.

Sir Henry Worth Thornton (November 6, 1871 – March 14, 1933)

Thornton, an American, achieved much fame in Canada after very successful careers in the USA and U.K. railway industries.

After graduating from St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, Thornton headed for the University of Pennsylvania, where he became a star football player and served as class president during his freshman year. Upon graduation in 1894, he coached the football team at Vanderbilt University. In the same year he began his career in the railroad business, entering as a draftsman of the Pennsylvania Railroad based in Pittsburgh. He became supervisory engineer in 1899 and District Superintendent in 1901. As he climbed rapidly through the PRR hierarchy, he became a favorite of management and workers alike, enjoying immense popularity. In 1912 he was again promoted, being named General Superintendent of the Long Island Rail Road.

In 1914, when the Great Eastern Railway Company Ltd of Great Britain was looking for a manager to modernize its system, Henry W. Thornton was chosen as General Manager. At first, there was heated debate about the necessity of bringing in a foreigner to run such an important railway; however, Henry soon proved himself competent and well liked. During World War I, he moved up the Allied ranks, ending up a Major General and Director of Channel Transports. His ability to move supplies and men to the front resulted in his appointment to Inspector General of Allied Transportation, where he distinguished himself. In 1919 he became a British subject and King George V made him a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire. Thornton was also named an officer of the Order of Leopold (Belgium) and named a Companion of the Legion of Honour of France. He also received the Distinguished Service Medal from the United States.

In 1922 Sir Henry W. Thornton was named Chairman of the Board and President of Canadian National Railways and asked to modernize and amalgamate several lines. Not only did he complete the amalgamation,

but he introduced passenger-friendly travel, with onboard radios and more modern locomotives. The radio network established along the route was a precursor to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He also directed the railway to invest in communities which it served, building hotels and resorts. These investments changed the face of Canada, moving the population into the vast areas between the coasts. The cost to modernize the CNR and Sir Henry Thornton's rather lavish lifestyle made him many enemies. When the Conservative Party came to power in 1932, Sir Henry was forced to resign, denied a pension, and removed from the Board of Directors of a local bank. Disgraced, Henry moved to New York City, where he died less than a year later from pneumonia and complications from surgery. In the years after his death, Sir Henry's contribution to Canadian business and culture was recognized and his reputation was restored. In 1992 he was inducted into the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame.

In Vancouver, Thornton Park across Station Street from the former CNR station (now Pacific Central) is named after him as is a nearby street. The 3.4 km long Thornton Tunnel running under Burnaby's Willingdon Heights and Vancouver Heights neighbourhoods built in 1969 by Canadian National to connect the Second Narrows Bridge to the main line in Willingdon honours his legacy. CNR's extensive railway yard under the Port Mann bridge in Surrey also bears his name.

COLLECTION

The Debut of ex CN #6520

Over 100 guests attended the unveiling of locomotive CN 6520 at the Heritage Park on Sunday, November 17th. The unit was recently painted in the CN orange- black-white paint scheme, the only F7 locomotive currently in that livery.

The event was organized by staffers Gord, Rob & Tammie who even managed to get the weather to cooperate. The festivities commenced in the Roudhouse with Gord welcoming everyone and acknowledging that the unique re-paint was funded by the Canadian National Railways Historical Association (CNRHA), Rapido Trains Inc and a private donor. Singh Biln then thanked attendees on behalf of the Board and acknowledged Carl Vanderspek & Margaret Hope who generously funded the acquisition of the Waterloo & St. Jacobs passenger train which included locomotive 6520 nearly 10 years ago.

Gord then noted the significant work done by volunteers & staffers in preparing the unit a couple of years ago. These included David Walmsley, Brodie Moffet, Trevor Mills & David Heine. This year, we retained equipment painter Pedro Espinoza who completed the repaint with assistance from Aero Ozey & Max Nelson.

Following brief speeches by Al Lill of CNRHA and Jordan Smith of Rapido, the guests gathered near Mac Norris Station for the unveiling. No one was disappointed as Rob drove the locomotive to the station assisted by Christian Vazzaz and CP engineer Dan Brewster. The locomotive looked beautiful generating many accolades, photographs and videos. (SB)

History of ex CN 6520 – compiled by J. S. Biln

History below from Canadian National Railways FP9A's by Murray W. Dean & William G. Blevins as published in Canadian Rail No. 191 September 1967

"In 1954 the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors Corporation, LaGrange Illinois, introduced a new model of ostensibly dual service diesel locomotive designated FP9A. These locomotives are a version of the standard F9 freight locomotive, lengthened four feet in order to provide adequate space for a steam generator and water tanks for passenger service. There are four locomotives of this type in the United States (built by EMD) and fifty-four in Canada (built by General Motors Diesel Corporation, London Ontario) of which the Canadian National Railways bought forty-three between 1954 and 1958. They carry road numbers 6500 to 6542 and classes GPA-17a to GPA-17e. The original cost of each locomotive including 10% sales tax, varied from \$223,213 for the first order to \$243,790 for the last order.

The locomotives are of the B-B wheel arrangement with four traction motors and 40-inch diameter wheels on swing bolster trucks. The prime mover in all the locomotives is one General Motors sixteen-cylinder 567C V-type engine generating 1850 horsepower of which 1750 horsepower is available for traction. Units numbered 6514 to 6542 were built equipped with multiple unit control connections on the front end while numbers 6500 to 6513 were so equipped in 1957 at a cost of \$886 each.

Originally all the units were given a top speed of 83 miles per hour but during 1963 the rating was increased to 89 miles per hour due to a gear ratio change from 59:18 to 58:19. In the autumn of 1965 prior to the inauguration of the Rapido service between Montreal and Toronto, several units were equipped with the new General Motors D-67 traction motors, which allow a slight increase in the maximum speed.

The 6500's are used exclusively in passenger service and until recently have all been assigned to the St. Lawrence Region for maintenance purposes although they were (and, indeed, still are) regularly used on transcontinental passenger trains."

RAILWAY NEWS

CN has appeared to signed an order for 20 Progress SD70ACe-T4 units for delivery this year (SGW)

Amtrak

A car hit a northbound Cascades at Kaslo street crossing (lights and gates) just east of Renfrew on Jan. 9th. Two cars drove over the crossing as the gates came down but he stopped when the gate hit his trunk. The elderly man wasn't seriously injured but his car was a write-off. The Cascade was delayed an hour before arriving at its Vancouver destination (VP)

West Coast Express

The WCE have been approved to have their locomotives rebuilt. but no work begun yet..This is for 901 - 905 all built 10 - 1995 GMD F95PHI. No decision about #906 . Apparently #902 has had a major mechanical failure, early in December, and is out of service. WCE has no spare locomotive now. May be damaged enough to be beyond repair. (KA)

White Pass & Yukon - by Keith Anderson (on a Sept. 2019 Cruise to Alaska)

The WP&Y, now owned 40% by Carnival Cruises and 60% by Survey Point, (a South East Alaska company), is accomplishing image and operational changes. While riding their train to Summit and back, behind engines 98 and 90 and 13 cars, I saw that much of the track below the hill is now welded rail. New sidings, to allow meets, one at the bottom, ending at the shop area, with another about half way up the hill. They are long sidings. The trains go around a loop at Summit, rather than engines run around the train at the Summit, then pull from the other end. This allows Tour Guides on the train to ask the question "Which is the best side of the train for Scenery?" Answer "Both sides, because the train turns at Summit" on a new loop recently built for that purpose.

Many of the passenger cars are newly built to look old, to increase capacity for passenger loads, and to add to the fleet, as well as allow some of the older cars to be rebuilt, or furloughed. These cars are heavier than the older cars, causing the engines of the 90s and 101s series to struggle more with the heavier trains. The locomotives of the 90s and 101s are looking bright and shiny, as if they all had recent repainting.

I had heard earlier that engine #73, their 1947 Baldwin 2-8-2, had been totally rebuilt, to maintain their ever popular steam operation on their line. This information and that concerning new locomotives ordered by White Pass & Yukon is below from Steve Wasiura, Road Foreman of Engines for the WP&YR.

These locomotives, once on the property, will further change the operational piece for the company.

#73 left Skagway in September of 2017 and went to Newell Machine in Arlington, WA for its rebuild. They had never done locomotive work before so they brought in a few experienced steam contractors, including some people from the Strasburg Railroad, for some of the work. It was indeed stripped all the way down to the frame and should be in service for many years to come. #73 returned to service in Skagway, July, 2019.

The new locomotives are being built by National Railway Equipment in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. The 90s were all rebuilt about 10 years ago by a company that has since gone out of business, and the work done on them was subpar. They have not been very reliable since being rebuilt, so if the new engines work as intended, the plan is to park most of the 90s and even several of the 101s. At least three of each class will be kept in service for work train and yard use, but the plan is to replace most of the passenger trains with the new ones.

The new locomotives are based on a model that NRE has produced for export to Australia, the E-3000E3B. They are to be powered with SD40 type prime movers, 3000 HP. The first two should arrive next March, then two more in April and two in May. The plan is for all six to be here in Skagway in time for the busy summer season next year. I believe the new car program will continue as well, along with rebuilding several of the older cars each year to expand the fleet, though some of the oldest and smallest cars may be retired. On our busiest days currently we don't have enough seats to meet the demand.

Rotary plow #1 has not run for a number of years now, with snow removal is done by bulldozers. #1 is displayed outside the station in Skagway. It will be interesting to see the changes, once in place. (KA)



Rocky Mountaineer

Rocky Mountaineer received their final car (10th) from order placed with car builder Stadler back in 2015 . With this order Stadler now has a North America platform to build bi- level cars. (GC)

VIA

The contract for \$16.4 million project announced in Oct. 2018 to rebuild four of the heritage (stainless steel) dining cars for the Canadian has a projected completion date of the second quarter to this year. (MCM)

CP

Canadian Pacific held their annual Remembrance Day ceremony at the Veteran' s Memorial Monument at Ogden Yard in Calgary on 11 Nov 2019. Well attended, probably 500 people in attendance. They then unveiled their five tribute locomotives adjacent to the Royal Canadian Pacific Pavilion

The five SD70ACu's are:

CP 7020 - in NATO Green with black markings, representing army vehicles in temperate regions

CP 7021 - in Desert Sand with black markings, representing army vehicles used in Iraq and Afghanistan

CP 7022 - in Royal Canadian Navy Shipline Grey and Oxide Red, representing military ships

CP 7023 - in a 2-tone 'sky camouflage' pattern of Light Ghost Grey and Medium Grey; the colours used on today's CF-18 fighter jets

CP 6644 - a memorial to the troops who fought at D-Day, 06 June 1944, as they invaded fortress Europe, painted in RAF Dark Green and RAF Ocean Grey, the camouflage colours used on WWII Spitfire aircraft. Black and white 'invasion stripes' as used on Allied aircraft on D-Day adorn the rear of the locomotive.

All of the locomotives, except for CP 6644, have the Canadian Flag on the engineer's side and the American Flag on the conductor's side, honouring the Armed Forces of both countries and recognizing that the CPR operates in both countries. (AC)



CP SD70ACu No. 7020 at unveiling at Ogden Yard on Remembrance Day 2019. Image: C. van Steenis

CP #7020 - in NATO Green - photo by C. van Steenis.



CP SD70ACu No. 7021 at unveiling at Ogden Yard on Remembrance Day 2019. Image: C. van Steenis

CP #7021- in NATO Green - photo by C. van Steenis



CP #6644 in WW II RAF paint

Pacific Northwest Bullett Train

Microsoft hosted a high-power meeting of state policymakers, train manufacturers and rail supporters at the software giant's headquarters on Nov. 7th in conjunction with the U.S. High Speed Rail Association. At the Cascadia Rail Summit, enthusiasm to build a bullet train capable of going from Seattle to Portland — or Seattle to Vancouver — in one hour rubbed against an anti-tax message from the passage of Washington Initiative 976.

After bemoaning that the state's highways, bridges, ferries and rail cars "are on a glide path to failure," Washington Department of Transportation Secretary Roger Millar laid out the case for building an ultra-high-speed railway on dedicated track.

"As we regroup here in Washington state and think about investing \$50 billion in ultra-high-speed rail," Millar said, "do you think we'll ever get to a place where highway expansion keeps up with economic expansion and population? It will not happen. It cannot happen."

Millar estimated a cost of about \$108 billion to add one lane to Interstate 5 in each direction from the Oregon border to the Canadian border.

"Half of that invested in ultra-high speed rail and it's game-changing stuff"

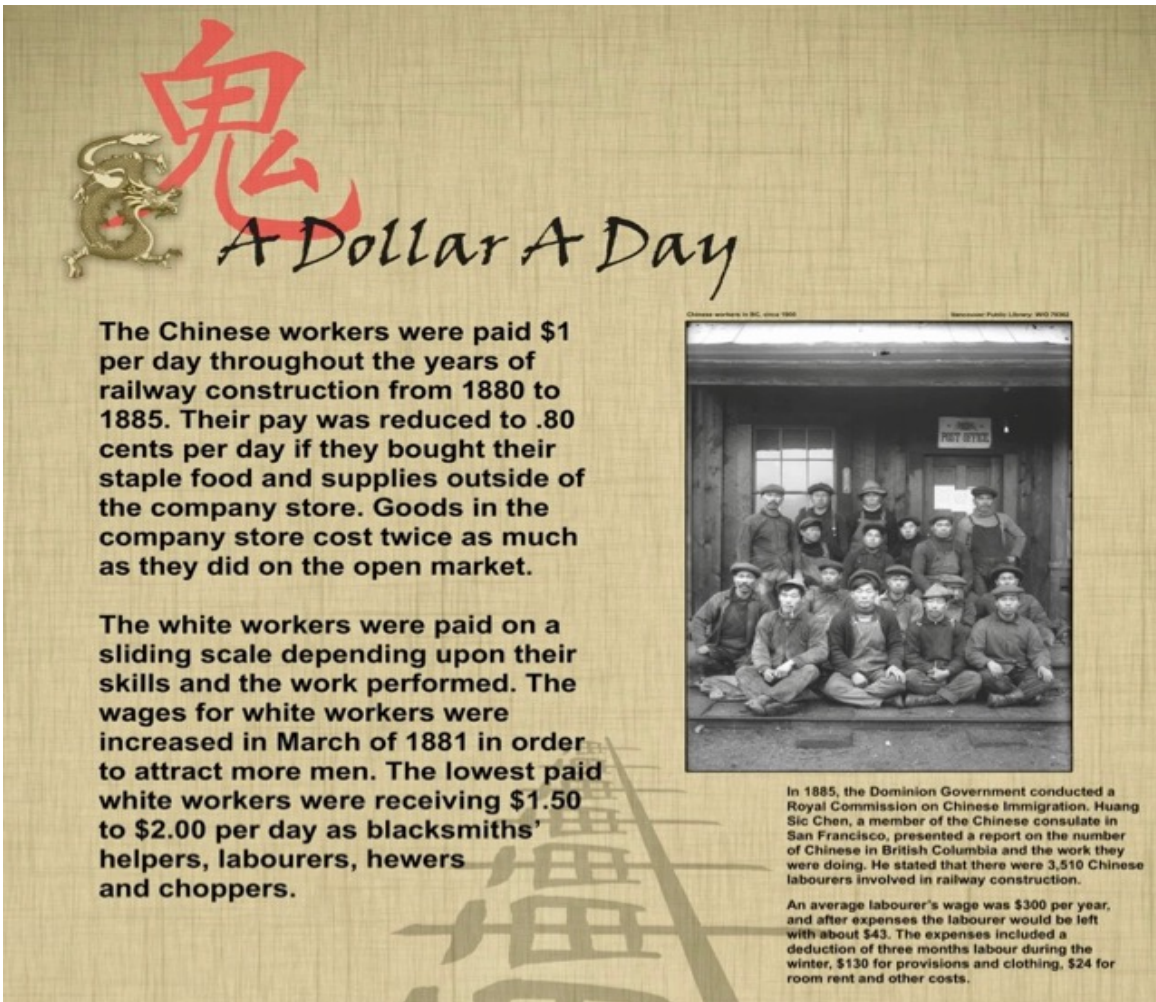
CPR 374 Pavilion Update

Our total visitor count to the end of November was 3,942. We had 594 less people than at this time last year. Total visitors YTD 51,249.

It feels like Winter has arrived. The Pavilion can be very cold when the temperature drops. This makes working at the 374 a challenge. The building cannot be heated and we rely on overhead and floor heaters to keep warm. One must keep moving to avoid feeling the cold. I am hoping for a mild winter.

On November 30, Yaletown held its Annual CandyTown Street Festival. We hosted 1,040 visitors that day. There are street vendors, ice sculptures and free horse drawn carriage rides. Santa is also on site.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Revelstoke Train Museum this summer and they have generously allowed me to reproduce their excellent Chinese Railway Labourers Exhibit. This gives the story of the Chinese workers that built the railway across BC. We had this display at the Squamish Heritage Park a few years ago and I am looking forward to reproducing it at the 374 Pavilion in Yaletown. We are very close to Chinatown where the descendants of the railway workers settled. I am hoping the exhibit will be ready in January. Here is an image of one of the tiles from the Chinese Display in Revelstoke.




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A Dollar A Day

The Chinese workers were paid \$1 per day throughout the years of railway construction from 1880 to 1885. Their pay was reduced to .80 cents per day if they bought their staple food and supplies outside of the company store. Goods in the company store cost twice as much as they did on the open market.

The white workers were paid on a sliding scale depending upon their skills and the work performed. The wages for white workers were increased in March of 1881 in order to attract more men. The lowest paid white workers were receiving \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day as blacksmiths' helpers, labourers, hewers and choppers.



In 1885, the Dominion Government conducted a Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration. Huang Sic Chen, a member of the Chinese consulate in San Francisco, presented a report on the number of Chinese in British Columbia and the work they were doing. He stated that there were 3,510 Chinese labourers involved in railway construction.

An average labourer's wage was \$300 per year, and after expenses the labourer would be left with about \$43. The expenses included a deduction of three months labour during the winter, \$130 for provisions and clothing, \$24 for room rent and other costs.

WCRA News - 39 Years Ago - January 1981

WCRA Meeting Notes from December 1980 Meeting:

The Mount Garibaldi has returned to the Drake Street coach yards following work at BCR in North

Vancouver Planning continues for the WCRA's 20th Annivesary banquet to be held this spring

We have some leads towards the possible party responsible for theft of locomotive #16's smoke box number plate

The trial re: locomotive #16 and Terry Ferguson was heard for five days (Dec. 15th to 19th) by Judge Lee Skip in the Vancouver Court House. Eleven of our twelve witnesses presented evidence. The proceedings have been carried over to March 1980 for completion of the case

Entertainment was provided by Bob Hunter with many chuckles and the quiz winners were Larry Russell and Bernie Tully

Sacramento 1981 State Railway Museum Grand Opening trip for members and friends. The trip will run from May 2nd - May 10th. We have confirmed with the museum that UP's 4-8-4 #8444 and SP's 4-8-4 #4449 (in full Espee Daylight colours) and the John Bull replica. UP's Challenger will also attend if work is finished in time for departure.

Help Wanted

Bob Turner, author of 'Vancouver Island Railroads' and soon to be released 'The Pacific Empresses' is hard at work on another book. Possibly titled 'Railroads of BC' and Bob is looking for help re: photos of the following areas;

- photos of Great Northern lines into BC - particularly the Kootenays
- Kettle Valley and SE BC CPR material
- PGE steam era photos (really need action shots)
- photos of CNR Jasper-Prince Rupert & Fraser Canyon steam action

Roundhouse Update

The rails in the Drake Street yard are coming up . . .and quickly! Momentum continues to build with a feature article in the Vancouver Province on Sunday Dec. 21st and ended with a question posed by member Roger Burrows "How could anyone consider the destruction of a century-old railway facility for a fair to celebrate the Centennial of the arrival of that very railway"?

CP has until November 1981 to remain in the roundhouse and then start moving out. Current plans call for demolition by June 1982.

Weather Affects All BC Railways

The BC Railway had a major washout 2 kms north of Squamish on Dec. 26th in addition to several mud and rock slides between Squamish and Lillooet. By Tuesday, Dec. 30th, there were over 20 washouts between Squamish and Lillooet in addition to flood damage to bridges and roadbed. Estimates to restore the line are between 3 and 4 weeks! Due to this, 300 employees were laid off temporarily or relocated to Prince George.

CP Rail operations were halted by a major washout at Gordon Creek at MP 28.4 Cascade Sub which was 300 feet long and 50 feet deep! Four other washouts happened on the same sub in a 6 km length. On the Westminster sub, water covered much of the line along the Riverview flats closing the line to all traffic. The Princeton sub also was affected with five washouts from MP 84 to 124 and an additional major washout at Merritt where the mainline and a siding were washed out for a length of over 100 feet. A crew was called from Penticton to move parked freight cars so they wouldn't risk falling into the increasing washout.

CN was also affected. The main bridge over the Coquihalla River just out of Hope washed out on Dec. 26th. The original steel truss span was originally placed in 1924. The west pier shifted 3 feet south of track alignment sinking 5 feet on the upstream side. The pier broke away but fortunately didn't take the span with it. CN tried to detour a WB freight after hearing of the washout on Dec. 26th from Edmonton to Prince George and down the BCR but of course their line was out by the time it arrived in Prince George so had to reroute back to Edmonton and finally arrived in Vancouver 13 days later! After working around the clock the bridge at Hope was re-opened to traffic on Jan 4th.

VIA passengers were flown between Vancouver and Edmonton/Calgary or bussed to intermediate points. The first passenger train via CP arrived in Vancouver 5 days later and the first on CN didn't arrive until 9 days later.

BCR

A chemical fire at the switching yard at Vancouver Wharves on Dec. 22nd resulted in closure of the Lions Gate Bridge. A fire was touched off at 01:45 hours when a tank car of methanol side swiped another car just east of the bridge and spread to five other cars carrying pulp and paper. A very tense moment occurred during the fire when the BC rail crew moved a nearby propane car away from the flames.

CN

CN has placed its 1 millionth concrete tie since the replacement program started in 1976 when it replaced a wooden tie on the Albreda Sub between Jasper and Blue River.

The retired CN steamship Prince George has been sold for \$500,000 USD to the Canadian Cruise Lines of Victoria for use in coastal cruises this summer . The 248 passenger vessel was built in 1948 by Burrard Yarrows in Victoria for use on the Alaska run. And co-incidentally she will return to Burrard Yarrows for a \$4 million refit this spring.

CP

CP is modifying 75 mechanical refrigerator cars at a cost of \$1.5 million to increase 'back haul' shipments of dairy and food products to and from Western Canada. The cars normally haul meat east and return empty. By re-enforcing the floors and installing moveable bulkheads, the cars will now be able to return west with loads of dairy and food products.

A CP grain train spotted westbound at Kamloops at 14:00 hours January 8th had a consist of CP diesels (head end and mid train) and more than 100 of Alberta's new Heritage Fund grain cars in blue with gold ALPX markings and after arriving in Vancouver unloaded (where else?) at the Alberta Wheat Pool

The CP Rall yard in Lethbridge will be moved 8 miles out of town to the west at a cost of \$25.6 million - cost to be shared by the City and the Provincial Government.

VIA

Passenger were more than a little upset when Train #2 - The Canadian - rolled to a stop at Cartier, ON (55 miles west of Sudbury) on December 10th and the temperature dropped noticeably on the train when the crew told the passengers the train had run out of fuel! Apparently when serviced in Thunder Bay, the crew forgot to refuel the engines. After a one and a half hour delay, the crew handed out blankets but with the regular charge of \$2 per blanket! Which further enraged the passengers.

One passenger rated the trip 'a disaster movie'. Complaints included delays out of Winnipeg due to a broken rail, frozen toilets in almost ALL the cars, leaking windows and liquor 'abuse'. VIA officials expressed 'surprise'!

Puget Sound Railway Historical Association

The PSRH's Santa Trains at Snoqualmie WA were a huge success. The train was powered by Mallet #11 and ran on Saturdays and Sundays the first two weekends in December and carried 6000 passengers and their trolley ran trips to the Snoqualmie Falls and carried an additional 3000!

Drake Street Report

Royal Hudson #2860's overhaul work started on Jan. 6th. First project was the removal of the main drivers. This was done to replace the axle of the main driver. The driver was then load onto a Johnston Terminals low bed truck for transportation to Stevens Electric where a 600 ton press will be used to force the axle off the drive wheels. The axle and drivers will then be transported to Burrard Yarrows Shipyard where a new axle will be fabricated and fitted.

Work also commenced on the dis-assembly of the smoke box front, feedwater heater, superheater and stack petticoat in preparation for retuning of the boiler. Work is being done in the storage stall instead of the main shop areas the CP Rail personnel in the roundhouse complained of excessive noise created by this work on #2860. Hopefully the Roundhouse will eventually become a Transportation Museum in the near future and Bill Silver and his gang can make all the noise they want!

Sperry Railcar #138 spent Christmas in the Roundhouse while her crew was on Christmas vacation. She was rebuilt from a gas-electric car and was ex Rock Island #9057

White Pass & Yukon RR

Steam will return to the White Pass and Yukon Railway this summer! WP&Y's 2-8-2 #73 (built in the late 1040's) is being rebuilt in the Skagway shops. Bob Swanson's Railway Appliance Research is doing the boiler work and the RR is refurbishing the running gear. The train will operate when the cruise ship season starts this summer.

Southern Pacific

SP is trying out another new paint scheme. Top of the diesel engines will be gray, with an orange body and red ends. Undergear will be gray with the front and back of the units with a wing design in white (termed later by rail fans as the 'flare design'.

WCRA News - 39 Years Ago - February 1981 - Part 1

WCRA's Meeting Notes from February's 1981 Meeting

Our 20th Anniversary Banquet will be held Sat. April 4th at 930 Station Street with dinner, head speaker and dancing afterwards. Details next month

Arrangements are being confirmed for our strip to Sacramento for the opening of the California State Rail Museum from May 2 - May 10.

A proposal to change our quorum from 50% to 33.3% active members will be put to the membership at the next meeting

Bottle raffle (really?) was won by new member Art Jones

As we go to press, we now have 94 members of which only 3 are delinquent with their fees We welcome new members Harold Holtby, Art Jones, John Shaske, Barry Chamberlain and Reg Barbour

Help Wanted

Barrie Sanford (author of McCulloch's Wonder) is working on another book and needs help as it will have a strong emphasis on photos and is looking for photos of the Seton Portage railway sign that stood beside the PGE/BCR tracks at that location, photos of Canadian National steam in the 1930 - 1950 era on mainline east of Kamloops and Prince Rupert line and current BCR operations north of Prince George

Roundhouse Update

The 'Friends of the Roundhouse' have met recently and compiled a proposal for a feasibility study to determine if the Drake St. Roundhouse can be preserved and to examine potential uses for the building. Applications for funding have been sent to the City of Vancouver, the BC Heritage Conservation Branch and Heritage Canada.

BCR

The accidental removal of yard limits at Seton Portage on Time Table #7 left the equipment for trains #7 8 (a school special mixed train) on the mainline without protection. Consequently the train ran designated a 'mixed work extra' for a few days until the error was corrected.

The BCR wants to reduce train crews from three to two as has been done on CP and CN but the union stated it would not be safe citing lack of automatic signalling and poorer track conditions. Federal officials stated it could be done if the radio system is reliable and radios are provided for every member of the crew with a back up unit for the conductor. Also cabooses need to be equipped with safety glass and inside hand rails to ensure safe movement of the conductor and each caboose is equipped with two air brakes instead of the existing one. And that full crews are maintained on any runs exceeding 10 hours.

The BCR announced on Feb. 5th that it would be drastically cutting back on passenger services effective Feb. 16th in an effort to lessen losses and allow more maintenance time for the RDC fleet. On board food service will be taken off with food stops at Lillooet and Williams Lake instead. The new schedule will see NB runs from North Van to Prince George reduced from three times a week to once a week. And daily service from NV to Lillooet will be cut to Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sundays. One would assume this is the forerunner to total discontinuance of passenger service on the BCR.

The BCR has been hit with a \$8 million 'fraud charge' over the Dease Lake extension construction problems. The award by the BC Supreme Court was made to KRM Construction due to be fraudulently induced to bidding on grading and culvert work on the extension.

The BCR has sold its headquarters building at 1095 W. Pender to the Provincial Government with an agreement that BCR will lease back for 24 months with plans for a six story building on Esplanade in North Vancouver to be completed when the lease expires.

BCR had three 'low nose' RS-10's in the North Van yards on Feb. 6th.

BCR's 'winterization' program began at the end of October with the switch from summer to winter grade fuel and the start of engine watchmen at various locations to protect engines from freezing up. Also continuing is a program to install electrically heated windshields and electric heaters on all units.

A program of replacing old rail along Anderson and Seton Lakes with 100 pound 78 foot sections of welded rail with 115 pound rail between MP 167 and Kelly Lake.

CN

CN has taken delivery of ten new SD-40-2' units (#5354 to 5363) built by GMD in London ON. And Bombardier (ex MLW) has orders from CN for 10 HR412's (4 axle 12 cylinder 2000 HP units) and 20 HR616's (6 axle 16 cylinder 3000 HP units) with delivery in Oct. '81 to March '82.

CN's mainline bridge at New Westminster (shared with BN and Amtrak) was closed for 24 hour periods from Feb. 7/8 and Feb. 21/22 to replace four pin joints on the through truss. During the closures some unit trains and express freights were rerouted over to CP

CP

The two BCR owned ex BN robot cars (#106 & 107) seen frequently on CP's mainline must be working out fine as they are considering buying sisters (105 & 110) directly from BN.

CP has officially announced its new diesel shop to be built in Coquitlam. The complex to be completed by the end of this year will be home to 70 four axle switching locos and 50 mainline SD-40-2's. The shop will feature a wheel assembly repair track and two run-through tracks designed to accommodate five locos at a time. This will replace the Drake Street roundhouse complex.

CP has announced that the Princess of Vancouver is up for sale and will come off the Vancouver to Nanaimo run for good. She ran during the summer only in 1980. Her freight duties will be handled by an extra sailing of the Carrier Princess.

AMTRAK

The Coast Starlight was scheduled to start conversion to Superliners on January 15th with the first set to go into operation. Each consist will have a baggage car, six coaches, one lounge/cafe car, one diner and two sleepers. And in the works is a change in routing for Trains #11 & 12 through Sacramento.

A Look Back on this Month Thirty Years Ago

30 years ago this month (Jan 15, 1990 to be exact), the federal government plan to radically restructure and reduce the VIA Rail network was implemented. Among the many changes was the elimination of the **Super Continental** and the rerouting of the **Canadian** from its traditional CP route to the more northerly CN route.

The official justification for the rerouting was that the trains would serve more remote communities, but the concentration of ridings held by the Progressive Conservatives along the CN route attracted the charge that the move was chiefly political. Harvie André, one of Alberta's federal cabinet ministers who represented Calgary, stated publicly that he did not care if he never saw a passenger train again in his lifetime!

The Mulroney cuts allowed Via to consolidate its fleet of cars and locomotives, resulting in a fleet of refurbished stainless steel (HEP-1 and HEP-2 rebuilds, for head end power) and LRC cars, as well as rationalizing its locomotive fleet with GM and Bombardier (LRC) units.

CREDIT LINES

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BACK COVER

Top Photo: CN #6520 - Photo by Don McQueen

Bottom Photo: WSJ #6520 - Photo by Don McQueen

TRIVIA ANSWER: The ATSF #18 actually had the same number off the movie set but was owned the Sierra Railroad in Jamestown CA where the railroad scenes were filmed. The loco is still around and owned by a private owner in Merrill OR.



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VIA #6520 at Lobo Township Road - Ontario



WSJ #6520 on 'home rails' in Waterloo, Ontario

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