



WCRA NEWS

JUNE - SEPTEMBER

2021

**OUR SATURDAY OPENINGS
HAVE BEEN A BIG SUCCESS!**

**THE NORTH POLE EXPRESS IS
COMING TO THE RAILWAY
HERITAGE PARK JUST IN TIME
TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS!**



The WCRA MONTHLY MEETINGS

The in person Monthly Meetings have been postponed until further notice due to the current pandemic.

ON THE COVER:

The Heritage Park was the location for another movie shoot this past summer. It was a 'period western' and this shows the prep on the station during one of our open Saturdays (area was roped off) when they weren't shooting on weekends. This signage was at the gate when the park was closed for filming.



MEMBER NEWS

The WCRA News is now a quarterly publication and will convert to a magazine format hopefully before year's end. Our funding application through the Community Gaming Program is under review by the BC Lottery Corp. This funding mainly covers the cost of production and distribution of our newsletter.

NOTE: Due to the delay in publication of the advertised quarterly news magazine, all existing memberships will be extended to Dec. 31st, 2022.

Note: the bi-monthly WCRA members meetings will be held via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Our last Zoom meeting held on Sept. 28th was another successful event with 30 members online. We once again had members from Vancouver Island, Squamish, Fraser Valley and even the US! The next Zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 29th.

Minutes from that meeting will be in the next issue of the newsletter.

Trivia Question: What did Robert Swanson regulate for BC Railways that was different than other federally regulated railways in Canada?

FROM THE EDITOR

This summer, the Railway Heritage park was open every Saturday from 10 - 5 to raise some much needed funds and to also make the public aware that the park is 'still alive and kicking'. This was the second summer since the pandemic started that we have run with this program of being open to the public one day a week. This year we doubled the overall attendance and many families came back to visit more than once during the season. The new park policy of 'one price admission' worked very well. The admission included everything operating in the park with the only extras being lunch bought from our red mobile kitchen, ice cream from our ice cream shoppe or purchases in the gift shop. Families could ride our mini rail, our speeders and our Budd car (which took patrons over to MP2 to get a glimpse of the restoratoin work on our BCER #960 and CPR Baldwin #8000). Additional exhibits this summer included the 100+ year old printing press in the Print Shop next to the 'Silver Fox' mini rail station, the forge next to the Car Shop, the operating miniture railway in the Patricia Ann coach and the Garden G Scale Railway was in operation to the delight of our mini rail passengers.

Our attendees and staff all wore masks without any 'anti vaxer' issues. The entire program ran with only three paid staff members with all the areas being staffed by volunteers, many of which were there EVERY Saturday! Without their participation, we would not have opened this summer. And the added benefit compared to hiring staff was the 'vollies' were placed where they could inform the public of the history or knowledge of the exhibit they were hosting. And their enthusiasum was also so evident. We received many compliments on how helpful and knowledgable our volunteers made their day more enjoyable. We only had showers or rain on two of the 13 Saturdays so we were very fortunate weather wise. We are featuring our volunteers in this issue with the photos taken by my wife Nora.

THE NORTH POLE EXPRESS IS COMING TO THE HERITAGE PARK!

After a two year hiatus, we are pleased to announce our annual giant Holiday Event is 'back on track'! Four weekends from Nov. 27th to Dec. 19th with five departures each Saturday (10 AM, Noon, 2 PM, 4 PM and a special night time 6 PM deparutre). Four departures on each Sunday from 10 AM to 4 PM. Many new attractions included in your ticket. Your visit begins with hot chocolate being served at the new Candyland Station, then board the Express for cookies, candy canes, Christmas songs and new Christmas characters on the train ride . Then arrive at the North Pole for a personal visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. And Santa has a new miniature train ride through his expansive and magical workshop along with othe interactive activities for all the children

Note: your vaccine passport will be necessary to purchase tickets. The health and safety of our staff and our guests is the highest priority, and we will be operating with all appropriate Covid-19 health protocols in place. All our Staff & Volunteers are all fully vaccinated.

Ticket prices as follows:

Coach Class Seats – \$35

First Class Seats – \$49 (includes collectors mug, station platform loading/unloading, with tables on board)

Night Time Ride – \$59 (same as First class) Saturday 6:00 pm departures

Alberta Private Coach* – \$1,500.00 (allows up to 15 friends and family). There is limited availability on the Alberta as many departures are already sold out – call us at 604-898-9336 for more info.

Tickets for all classes and info at: visitrmbc.org

A LOOK BACK

WCRA NEWS - AUGUST 1978

CP

An update on the developments of the E&N passenger service between Victoria and Courtenay is necessary. Passenger traffic greatly increased during July after fares were reduced on July 1st. And also due to Premier Bennett's heavily publicized promotional trip on the Dayliner in the middle of June. As a result, E&N employees sent a telegram in early July to CP Rail regional headquarters in Vancouver appealing for an additional passenger car to handle the now overflow crowds. CP decided to wait to see if the increased loads continued. However by July 21st, CP decided a second RDC was warranted and RDC-1 #9067 with a capacity of 89 seats was added to the existing 71 seat RDC #9103. Then CP also added a Sunday round trip commencing August 6th, extending service to seven days a week to meet the demand.

The blockade by the St. Mary 's Indian Band on CP 's line into Cranbrook has continued off and on through to the middle of July. The blockade was lifted on July 16th when a CP freight derailed in Crowsnest Pass .The removal of the blockade permitted access to the train. The blockade was renewed a few days later but agreement was reached by the end of July when CP Rail agreed to give the band 335 acres and will share the cost of purchasing a further 2500 acres with federal Indian Affairs if the present property becomes unusable at a future date.

CP converted 60 bulkhead flatcars into 'covered wagons' at Drake Street Yards in June and July. The cars, which were five years old, had been used to carry packaged lumber. They have been fitted with wooden frames and blue plastic sheets covering the sides and tops of the cars. They have been modified to transport pulp from the Weyerhaeuser mill in Kamloops to dockside in Vancouver. This conversion was done due to condensation developing when still hot pulp was loaded into regular boxcars in the cold winter months and the condensation would freeze the boxcar doors shut! This plastic sheeting is expected to last 30-36 months before having to be replaced. The blue coloured coating protects the plastic from ultra violet ray damage.

The CTC scheduled a public hearing for August 15th in Penticton to hear opinions whether CP Rail should be allowed to close the Carmi subdivision between Penticton and Midway. The CTC must first determine if the line is a branch or a secondary main line. If it is the latter, the railway will have to re-apply for its closure under a different section of the Railway Act. Losses on the line amounted to more than \$1.5 million between 1972-1974. But much of that loss is the result of depreciation of fixed plant which would be reduced to scrap value if abandonment is approved. Freight service between Penticton and Midway ceased in 1973 with only light traffic using the line between Midway and Beaverdell. The hearing has now been postponed to Oct. 11th for unspecified reasons.

CP ran a 57 car solid train loaded with zinc concentrate from the Fraser-Surrey dock to the Cominco smelter in Trail. The zinc came from the Cypress Anvil mine in the Yukon by ship. It's a rare occasion that a loaded unit-train runs east out of Vancouver. To date, it's a 'one shot' effort due to the availability of a large amount of concentrate at one time.

The Princess Patricia, originally scheduled to be retired this fall by CP Rail, has been booked for another season of sailings to Alaska in 1979. The reasons for CP's change of heart is based on this year's 18 sailings being totally sold out after two years of poor patronage. The future however, past 1979, is very doubtful due to the cost of extensive modifications to meet new US pollution standards prohibiting sewage discharge in US coastal waters.

The enclosed water tank at Brookmere, on the Princeton sub, is still standing with 2 spouts - one for CP and one for the then Great Northern!

An update to the item above re: the Carmi sub application . . the line east out of Penticton in the city limits at Calgary Ave. has been cut and the tracks lifted (a bit presumptuous perhaps?). This was done to facilitate the repaving of the street to eliminate a pronounced dip to rail level. The work was completed in the early summer. The last use of the Carmi sub was for the filming of sequences for the National Dream when the CBC used the Credit Valley 4-4-0 and GP9 (to bring it and its consist up grade out of Penticton) to film in the Myra Canyon as a substitute for filming in the Rockies which wasn't possible due to daily traffic. CP's Kootenay barge service was discontinued last winter. This was the service between Proctor-Kaslo-Lardo & Gerard. Cars on the barge were removed and brought back on board by winch rather than by a locomotive due to the isolated ports of call. The tug 'Malinda Jane', which towed the barge, has been brought down to the Lower Mainland. CP had discontinued the service for two years previously but the CTC ordered them to restore it.

The ex CP station in Kimberley has been converted into a restaurant called not surprisingly 'The Station'. An ex wooden caboose remains on the short piece of track next to the station. The station was closed in 1968 and the tracks removed in 1972. The interior of the restaurant is extremely well done with lots of railway memorabilia.

CP's Mission to Matsqui swing bridge over the Fraser River was closed to traffic mid-May for four days to undergo a round-the-clock overhaul and replacement of the turning mechanism. Hydraulic jacks were used to lift the swing span in order to replace the turning mechanism. The three-a-day unit coal trains, which normally cross the bridge, were detoured via CN at Cisco. The Sumas daily was re-routed via New Westminster and Port Mann. The bridge, built in 1903, is 1300 feet long.

CP's SD-40-2's #5279-5293 will not fit through the Robert Bank dumper due to wide handrails, so cannot be used on U899-U898 Coal Valley-Robert Bank trains.

CN

An old CN wooden caboose is now a tourist information centre at the shopping mall in Armstrong.

CN's profits for the first six months soared to \$61.2 million, an increase of \$56 million over the same period last year. Mainly due to gov't legislation to recapitalize CN which reduced the first half interest charges by approx. \$33 million.

CN is going to fit a new design of track for unit coal train service between Alberta and the Lower Mainland to increase rail life expectancy. Today's heavier trains are wearing out the rails faster than projected, especially on curved sections. So, during August and September, they will change out the trucks on the unit coal trains after being unloaded on the coast. The new truck design will allow the wheels to steer into the curves instead of biting their flanges against the outer rail. Rubber cushions will replace the traditional metal shims (which hold the axles in the slots) and will allow some radial movement rather than just vertical travel. These redesigned trucks will cost \$1750 per truck (exclusive of labour), but CN expects it to pay off over 18 months vs current rail wear.

CN GP40 #4011 which was leased to the L & N in the US, was the lead unit on a coal drag on July 6th when it was involved in a head-on collision. The unit was demolished and is being returned to CN loaded in three gondolas. This unit was part of the first series of GP40's ordered by CN.

VIA

The first 'all blue & gold' train arrived in Vancouver at the CN station on July 1st as train #3, and left that night as train #4 with an FP9-A and two B units and 400 passengers on board 16 coaches.

AMTRAK

Old equipment was utilized on the International from mid-July to mid-August due to a shortage of Amfleet equipment on Amtrak's major runs. However, one exception was the arrival of the NRHS 'Convention Special' on Sept. 3rd with three extra private cars on the tail end. The 'Mount Hood' and two others (unidentified). The latter two went out on CN's #4 on Sept. 6th.

WHITE PASS & YUKON

The decision by Cassiar Asbestos, one of WP&Y's major customers, to close its mine at Clinton Creek YT, has resulted in a large number of staff layoffs. On August 15th, 9 senior staff were let go and this November will see 65 hands on its two container ships losing their jobs. WP&Y has applied for government assistance for the railway but not the shipping division.

Skagit River RR

The railway out of Sedro Wooley, WA, which was supposed to run steam at the end of August and over the Labour Day weekend, cancelled the runs due to problems with obtaining BN crews to work the run. Rumour has it that low pay and spare board status, together with the time involved in dead-heading from Seattle or Everett, were the reasons for insufficient crews being available.

GARY'S TRAIN CENTRE

The retail outlet of all things pertaining to railroading and modeling, being operated by hard-working WCRA member Gary Oliver, is now open for business. The store has yet to obtain an official address due to red tape at good old City Hall, but it is located at 367 E. Broadway, just across from Kingsgate Mall. The store phone number is 874-5716. Display space is available for any memorabilia (yours or the club's) and Gary has offered to sell good used models etc on consignment. In addition, any WCRA member will receive a 5% discount on all purchases. Store hours are 10 AM to 6 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Saturdays and 10 AM to 9 PM on Thursdays and Fridays. Your editor checked out the store recently and two items caught his attention: the CP Bygone photos and the Sunset Brass Models - especially the Texas & Pacific 2-10-4. A real beauty! Drop in and say hi and support this new endeavor by one of our long time members.

CURRENT RAILWAY NEWS

Canadian Pacific: has cancelled its annual Holiday Train for the second consecutive year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they will be hosting the tour in virtual form. CP will donate to food banks and communities along its network and host a virtual concert instead of its regular holiday train program for the second consecutive year. (A-JC)

A protracted battle between rival Canadian railways for the acquisition of Kansas City Southern is over, with Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. coming out on top. CP Rail said Wednesday it has reached a deal to acquire KCS for approximately US\$31 billion, after Canadian National Railway Co. dropped its rival takeover offer for the U.S. railway. The news came after KCS on Sunday ruled the bid by CP Rail was a superior proposal to its deal with CN. CP states that this will be the first- Mexico- Canada rail network. (CNN)

On Sept. 20th, Canadian Pacific CEO Keith Creel appears to be trying to gain the support of steam fans for the merger with Kansas City Southern, as he stated that if the U.S. Surface Transportation Board approves the CP-KCS merger that the railroad would celebrate by running its Pacific #2816 for an excursion across the new CPKCS system all the way to Mexico!

Ed note: Wonder if this is mainly a result of the success that Union Pacific has had with their 'Big Boy' being rebuilt and running all over their network the past two years with huge crowds at every stop. Great PR for the UP!

Canadian National: After the proposed merger with Kansas City Southern RR fell through due to US federal opposition, KCS will pay CN a USD \$700 million cash as a 'Company Termination Fee', as well as a USD \$700 million cash 'CP Termination Refund' provided for in the CN merger agreement. CN is also not obligated to pay any termination fees as a result of the termination of the CN merger agreement.

CN announced on Oct. 19th that its chief executive Jean-Jacques Ruest will step down as soon as January, weeks after the UK hedge fund manager, Chris Hohn, called for his resignation. However, CN stated that Ruest's departure was a planned retirement after just three years in the role. But his exit comes as CN has been battling to keep investors on side and Ruest only last month announced a strategic plan called 'Full Steam Ahead'. A campaign led by Hohn's TCE hedge fund has been building steadily over the past five months in which the UK billionaire has sought to oust Ruest as well as several members of the board.

A special orange painted locomotive was proposed by 13 year old Jacob Hoffer, an Indigenous youth, who in the summer 2021 wrote to CP asking to consider painting one of CP's locomotives orange as part of the national campaign Every Child Matters. In September, Jacob and his mom, Darcy, were invited to CP headquarters in Calgary to participate in the unveiling of the locomotive he helped make a reality. (see photo on back cover).

The Royal Canadian Mint has issued a new limited run coin for the CP Holiday Train. At \$42.87 (including taxes and shipping) it's a little pricey for a 50 cent nickel-plated steel coin.

CN's old Hope BC Station A group of concerned citizens in Hope is trying to save the century-old CN station in Hope, B.C., which is in danger of losing its heritage status and being demolished. The Hope Canadian National Railway Station, known as the Hope Station House, was built in 1916 and served a key role in the development of the Fraser Valley. In 1942, it served a much darker role as the main station for transporting Japanese-Canadians to internment sites. (AJ-C&JM)

Amtrak is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. In honour of their 50 years of serving the US, they are painting six locomotives in heritage paint schemes which are now operating or will be to mark this anniversary. The final 50th Anniversary commemorative locomotive has emerged from their Beech Grove, IN paint booth on Sept. 17th. (AJ-C)

The Osoyoos Desert Railway: is closing this year. “I just turned 80 a few weeks ago , thought it was time for retirement ,” owner Poul Pedersen said , adding that COVID was another contributing factor. “Between the virus situation and my age, they didn’t really work together.” Poul and his wife opened their model shop to the public 18 years ago, but their collection has been accumulating for 50 years. (MCM)

VIA Rail: has taken delivery of the first of 32 trains built by Siemens for its Quebec City – Montreal – Toronto – Windsor corridor as part of a \$989 million contract awarded in 2018 . The push-pull trains , which are being built in Sacramento, California, are each formed of five coaches with a 3100kW Charger SBC-40 diesel- electric locomotive at each end. The coaches are the same Venture platform that Amtrak uses in the north east of the United States. All of Via Rail’s new fleet will be delivered by 2024 and will replace the existing life-expired fleet when they begin to enter traffic towards the end of 2022. (JM)

OUR OPEN SATURDAYS THIS SUMMER

As mentioned in my editorial, the revenue we raised this summer was solely due to our 70 cherished volunteers helping out in various roles in the park. Here is a photographic 'Thank You' for just a few who made our event become so successful! We are sorry if we didn't get you all 'on camera'.



Our Front Gate Team: George & Bonnie Game



Nora McDowall & Barb Stover



Bill McEnery & Tom Bruvall



Gordon Hall & Singh Biln



Dai Yates, Karen Moodie & Christian Vazzaz

Marg Hope, 'Brandy', Donna Simon & Jermy Davy



Dustin Blundell



Ryan Kreschuk



Judi Rhodes



Matt Robson & Craig McDowall



George Gruber and Max Nelson



Ashlee & Hailey
Simon



Tom Barss



John Cornish & Fred Dannels (Canad Post retirees) moving the 'catch post' into position

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ISSN 1204-072X
Vol. 61 Issue 3

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BACK COVER: Top Photo: CP's 'Every Child Matters' Locomotive.
Photo: Ken Storey

TRIVIA ANSWER: Robert Swanson set a new regulaton that all BC Railway locomotives have a five chime whistle rather than the federal regulation of only requiring a three chime whistle.



**CANADIAN COUNCIL
FOR
RAILWAY HERITAGE**

WCRA News acknowledges the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia




RAILWAY MUSEUM OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ...presents the **NORTH POLE EXPRESS**

Take a *train ride* to the North Pole and meet *Santa Claus*

Nov. 27/28 • Dec. 4/5
11/12 • 18/19

Departures: 10:am, 12:pm, 2:pm, 4:pm & Sat. only 6:pm

 **Railway Museum of BC**
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Published by West Coast Railway Association
PO Box 2387, Stn. Main, Squamish BC V8B 0B6
www.wcra.org

ISSN 1204-072X
Vol. 61 Issue 3

Canada Post, Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40007853