

The Railway Museum of BC Newsletter

APRIL TO JUNE 2023

Day Out with Thomas - a complete success!



RAILWAY MUSEUM
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vol. 63
Issue # 2

FROM THE EDITOR

Day Out with Thomas Sold Out again in advance this Year!

Our 2023 DOWT was a complete success highlighted by four days of great weather and a new route for the train ride which was far more interesting than the previous route of travelling out of the park and then switching to go south across the road and down the less than interesting CN Squamish Yard.

This year the trip was far superior due to two main factors . In Feb 2022 , thanks to our board member , Singh Biln initiating the application, we receive \$342,460 from BC Ministry of Tourism , Arts & Culture during their second round of CERIP funding grant to rebuild much needed trackwork . This benefited DOWT as this improvement from our station to the derail outside the north gate allowed us to leave the park at an increased speed.

And sincere thanks to Robert MacBeth, our CMO, and full co-operation from CN, which resulted in us heading directly north out of the yard , with no switching resquired, with Thomas traveling north over the picturesque Manquam River and north to MP 43 (Thompson). Not only was the route more scenic , but we travelled at an increased speed as it was on the CN's main line on welded rail. On every one of the 28 departures over the two weekends, we had folks 'track side' waving as we passed!

Over 9000 admissions were sold, with excellent revenue also from our large retail store and food and beverage sales. In addition most families rode our 3 mini rail trains around the park . A big thank you to Aaron and his crew of 'rail gang' restoring the roadbed after the winter snow. (See Thomas photos on page 7).

Updates from WCRA

As stated in the last issue, I am including reports from the major departments of the association to advise our members of how we are doing in the previous three months.

Bob Philip - President's Report

The West Coast Railway Association has, for many years, relied on donations to balance the books and to fund projects. It was in fact a major gift which got us through the pandemic years. This year is no different so I am reaching out to you to ask for your support to help finance necessary repair and maintenance work on the operating rail fleet and facilites. As examples we need to replace the electrical generator in MP2 (even though all costs to bring in new hydro power were paid for by BCRP) at a cost to the association of \$200k.

And we are beginning an annual major overhaul of the operating coach fleet doing one per year and of the two main workhorses: CN 6520 and Budd car BC 21. These costs will be in the \$100-200k.

Summer days at the museum and both DOWT and NPEX are doing very well post pandemic, but until our predictable revenues equal or exceed annual expenses, we will be asking for your continued support.

And with the movie industry in a holding pattern due to two strikes, we can't host any productions until both strikes are settled.

If you would like to help us, please email finance@wcra.org to the attention of Hardeep with the following information to enable us to send you a tax receipt.

Name:

Physical address:

Mailing address (if different to physical address)

Donation amount:

Email address:

Telephone Number:

Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Philip
CEO

Gordon Bell - General Manager's Report

This report will focus mainly on Blacksheep Event Rentals (Editor's note: the WCRA owns Blacksheep Rentals).

Blacksheep Event Rentals is now in the full swing of another busy event season. The labour market remains a challenging factor for many reasons, but this year we have been fortunate to secure four outstanding team members all visiting Canada on work Visas. Two of these team members brought previous experience in the event rental business and particularly, large structure installations. They have all been tremendous additions to the team.

The business is already on schedule to record another positive year financially. Keeping in mind that traditionally "the season" doesn't start until May 1st, in the past three months revenue exceeded projections by 5% and is projecting to increase almost triple over the next three months.

Although Cheeky Ranch does not reflect in the following numbers as its first wedding of the year is not until early June, our other partnerships and relationships continue to play a large and positive role in the business.

Film Production

Although we had some early success with film in 2023 and some serious progress on a possible Netflix series for the fall, the WGA strike that hit May 1st has ground all production to a halt. Based on the previous two WGA strikes that lasted 100 and 150 days, it could be pretty thin for film for some time to come. On a different side of film production, I have been continuing to work with Norman Foote on some small 30 second vignettes of film for children featuring some of our collection as characters in the narrative. These would have many uses including getting children not only interested in trains and history but OUR trains and history. The end goal with this project would be enough momentum to produce an additional large event featuring our Characters. Norman has a lot of experience with Knowledge Network and believes there is potential for exposure there as well with these fun little vignettes.

RMBC Revenue Events

Firstly, I want to acknowledge, the great job the operations team did with Thomas this year. It was a great success, and everything came together for a smooth pre-production, event days and tear down. Congratulations to all involved!

As the ops team gears up for Museum opening on July 2nd , the CN Roundhouse will be host to two more large weddings and the High School Dry Grad booking. I am currently also working with the producers of the Constellation Festival for some possible smaller music events in mid September after the museum is closed and another potential event in October.

Robert MacBeth - CMO's Report

Track Work

The last few months before Thomas we started a major track work project, mostly rebuilding from the North Yard Crossing to the Derail at the north end. This is the track we mainly use and is critical for our major events. Along with Carshop track 1. B&B was the best bidder, also with consultation with Rick Hunter, for the work and did an amazing job. Together with "New Ties" they widened out the shoulder where our track was sluffing off into a slough. Thanks to Singh Biln, who spearheaded the grant money for this project. And also to Kirby Read, who organized the work.

Railway Relations:

We continue to grow our Railway relations on many fronts with both CN and CP. Recently we were approached by SRY to possibly loan or rent one of our coaches for their family days. The talks are at very early stages, mainly revolved

around around insurance and liability. I have asked Singh Biln to assist as he was instrumental when we previously loaned the train set to Southern Rly when it ran on Vancouver Island years ago.

Equipment Updates:

#6520: Operational and ran for Day Out with Thomas for all four days.

#4069: Plan on having it waxed for Museum Days this summer for display.

#561: Work is needed and plan on completing that work this summer.

#6503: Still out of service. Lube oil test done and is currently out of service due to lube oil that has saturated with the fuel. Needing time to fix.

Tom Arnott - Museum Operations Manager's Report

Overview

As I reported in the last issue, the three months between December and February were extremely busy and there has been little respite in the workload, activity and bookings in the Roundhouse.

We had a really successful Model Train and Hobby show in March with approximately two thousand visitors. We plan to make this an annual event. This was followed by the three-day Bespoke Market, a number of weddings, one which had 600 guests, all of whom were required, for religious reasons, to remove their shoes before entering the Roundhouse! And then of course our annual Day out with Thomas which was a huge success and went without incident. Probably one of the best organized Thomas events we have ever hosted.

Royal Hudson

Thanks to Bill McEnery for painting the floor of the cab which has made an enormous difference. Maintenance is always on going with the Hudson. We are working with a graphic designer to create banner story-boards for the Hudson and other exhibits, which will enhance our visitors' experience.

Mini Rail

Rolling stock - We've had several issues installing the new locomotive wheels on to the trucks. However, Aaron and Andy Gruber have overcome the fitting problems and all electric locomotives have had new wheels fitted. We also decided to have the gearbox transmissions on all three locomotives overhauled at Eagle Engineering in Abbotsford. New bearings have been fitted and further work is required on some transmissions to replace the bronze worm screws. The units are now all age-obsolete but

but fortunately Eagle Engineering have the expertise to repair and maintain these units.

Gary Shortt, another one of our volunteers, has completed a full survey of the condition of the mini rail track and produced a working document prioritising the work required this year to maintain the track at a safe level.

We are proposing that a further two 'sea cans' be purchased to accommodate the additional rolling stock we are hoping to acquire from Train Mountain later this year. One of the sea cans will be converted to create a workshop for maintenance of the rolling stock.

Roy Family Acquisition

Mini rail locomotive PGE 561 and a caboose have been gifted by the Roy family to the museum. Sincere thanks to the Roy family.

Wilkie Station/School House

Roy Crowston and John Jellis have completed a survey on the building's condition. They discovered that the wooden wall studs are all rotten and as such the building is now, sadly, considered dangerous and beyond economical repair. The building, which was originally a workers tool shed, was located behind the Pacific Central station in Vancouver – it was probably built pre WW 2! It was acquired by the museum and moved in 1990 to Squamish. It was then modified to create the first gift shop in the museum.

Gift Shop

The new layout and lighting has proved successful. We are seeing good sales through the shop and have been working with our clothing supplier who has provided us with a more interesting selection of garments, particularly children's clothing. Gord Hall has been busy creating small HO, N and TT gauge layouts, which have been selling well along with our stock of model trains and kits.

Roundhouse Mezzanine - John Hardie Mitchell Gallery

The new art gallery and 3-dimensional display area is almost complete and we hope to open it to visitors in mid July.

Huge thanks to Kathy Shortt and Diane and Jay Waters for the monumental task of finding and displaying the objects which have been donated or discovered in the Archive.

Also thanks to Barbara Stover, John Jellis, Roy Crowston and David Walmsley, who have all given many hours to create this new feature which adds another attraction for the public to admire.

Thanks also to our new volunteer Randy Schreiber, who was responsible for the Day Out with Thomas sound system. Randy also has a background in IT and Lighting, as well as reviewing our sound system. He recently completed a review of the interior lighting in the Roundhouse and Car Shop.

Car Shop

The old wood shop, which is situated on the east side of the Car shop, is currently being refurbished to create the White Pass G scale layout which was donated by the late Carl Vanderspek. David Jones is carrying out the work and he anticipates it may take him up to 2 months to complete due to the complexity and size of the layout. Once finished it will be an amazing addition to the museum, especially for the children.

Grounds and Garden

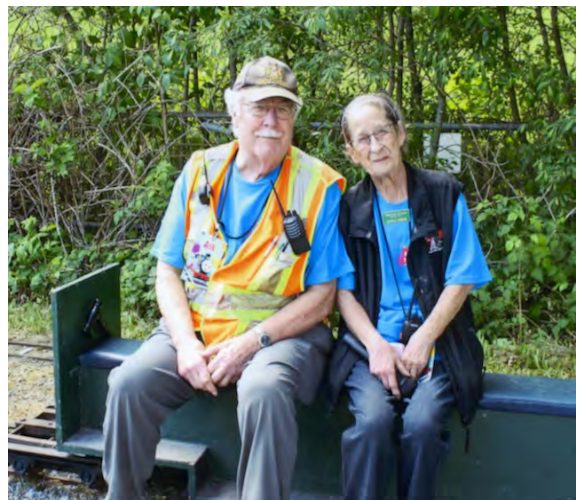
Work is on going to improve the general garden areas within the museum. We have volunteer gardeners, Trudy Hellenes, Gill Arnott, Karen Schreiber and Tom Bruvall who do an incredible amount of work on a very large site. Coast Aggregates have donated 5 yards of compost amender to improve the soil in the various beds around the site.

Thanking our Volunteers who donated their time at DOWT

Once again, our volunteers 'came to the party' to enable us to host a very successful event. A huge thank you to all! Here are just a few of many.



'Little Thomas' and Gerry Wolf



Jeremy Davy and Donna Simon



The 'Men's Shed Gang'



Kirby Read, Craig McDowall and Bob Philip



Tom'o Oshikawa, Koji Otsuka & volunteer from Squamish Tourism



Trudy Hellenes



Gordon Hall aka 'The Toy Train Guy'



Nick Nuziale & Vida Babaki



Gary Shortt, Ryan Kreschuk, Andy Gruber and Gary Kreschuk



Rene Brissette & Mattaeus Diaz



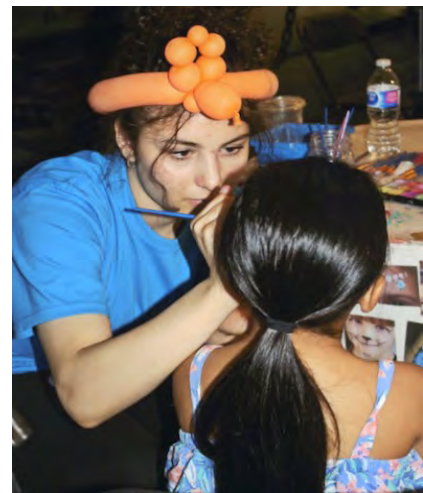
Judy Rhodes and Gill Arnott



Missy Rasmussen, Jaydin Stephen,
Larissa McKinney & Karen Schreiber



Aaron Gruber, Ryan Cruikshank & Tom Barss



Carla Gentil



Janice Whiting, Sharon Svensrud & Betty Tyson
(Canada Post Heritage Club members)



The 'Balloon Gang'

What's New at the Museum?

The Lions Club members refurbished and repainted the wood Malcolm Train over the past winter.

The original train was built by the late Lion Malcolm McEwen in 2004/2005 and placed in the popular children's play area. Lion Malcolm also volunteered for the Railway Museum. The Train was featured in the October 2008 WCRA News as part of the Canadian Route 66 Association Picnic.



The original train was completely rebuilt in 2014 by Lion Malcolm McEwen . A photo and article was included in the September 9, 2014 WCRA News when the Malcolm Train was put back into service for the children.

A ribbon cutting ceremony by Michelle McEwen - Malcolm 's niece - was held on Saturday May 13, 2023 . The ceremony was attended by Lion Malcolm 's relatives , Lions Club members and Bob Philip & Tom Arnott from the WCRA . Also in attendance were representatives from Century Signs , Cloverdale Paints and Gray's Trophy Works: all who sponsored the project . Children visiting the Railway Museum can once again play on the Malcolm Train and enjoy the 'romance of train travel' .

New Staff

We have two new members on staff. Ling Quin who will assist Hardeep and is responsible for bookkeeping and general administration.

And Jaydin Stephen who will assist Tom Arnott with the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the museum.

Repainted Shield for #4069

Our beloved and talented volunteer, Barb Stover, did a great job repainting the Beaver shield for our ex CP FP7.

Photos: David Walmsley



Rebuilt track work now Completed

Thanks to a BC Government Grant (see previous newsletter item) for new track on the main lead out of the park, here are two photos of the work in progress.



Photos:
Kirby
Read

RAILWAY NEWS

West Coast Express Restores 5th Train

After rebuilding by Progress Rail Services, West Coast Express F59PH No. 907 began revenue service in mid July, making it the first locomotive to serve all three of Canada's heavy-rail commuter services.

Its first 21 years were spent with Toronto's GO Transit as GO 533 and it did a short stint in 2012-13 for Montreal's Agence Métropolitaine de Transport.

With No. 907 joining the fleet, WCE has restored the full service of five trains after more than three years of pandemic cutbacks. The locomotive was assigned to trains W2/E2, which had not operated since March 25, 2020. In normal pre-pandemic service, WCE operated five weekday trains in each direction between Mission City and Waterfront in downtown Vancouver.

At pre-pandemic loads, the five trains used 41 cars with another three held spare for maintenance. As ridership plunged in the early days of the pandemic, by April 22, 2020 that had dropped to three trains using a total of eight cars. The fourth train was not reinstated until September 7, 2021.



With the fifth train restored, 35 cars were in service as of June 19, although the total passenger boardings are only about half of the typical 2.6 million riders per year before the pandemic.

Article and photo used with permission by Ian Smith

The CHRA Pacific Coast Division's Newsletter - 'The Sandhouse'

In a related news story, it is with great sadness that the rail fan community was made aware by Ian Smith that the Spring 2023 issue of The Sandhouse has published their last issue. The Sandhouse has been continuously published for 47(!) years, the last 22 years by Ian as the editor. As a fellow editor, I know the hours that Ian worked to publish the quarterly issues, most of which exceeded 50 pages! Those who subscribed to The Sandhouse will miss it arriving in the mail every third month. Enjoy your 'retirement' Ian!

CP

A federal judge in Laval Quebec has found Canadian Pacific to be in contempt of court after the company forced train crews to work excessively long hours in violation of a court order to abide by the collective agreement and Transport Canada regulations.

The contempt motion was filed by the union representing rail workers, the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC). Crew fatigue is a well-documented safety hazard in the rail industry. From the early 1990s until mid-2022, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada has identified fatigue as a factor in at least 32 train derailments and other accidents. Rail workers are constantly on call and may work no longer than 12 hours under Transport Canada regulations or 10 hours under certain provisions of the collective agreement.

The judge found "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the rail company "intentionally" overworked train crews in 22 incidents of the 38 presented. However, the judge also noted that "CP's own evidence was that thousands of situations continue to occur annually" where train crews are not relieved from work in time.

VIA

VIA Rail Canada no longer needs to run unoccupied "buffer" cars on trains with stainless steel Budd "HEP-1" and "HEP-2" passenger cars and rail diesel equipment, Transport Canada announced in early May and effective May 17th.



The order repeals a previous order issued last October after questions surfaced about the structural integrity of the 1950s-vintage rolling stock, refurbished to accommodate head-end power. That equipment is used on all VIA regional and long-distance service

"VIA has since conducted a series of simulations, testing, and inspections, which concluded the cars showed no additional deficiencies, and the cars are still compliant with structural design standards for crashworthiness". At least four pieces of equipment - a coach, diner, RDC, and non-Prestige class Chateau sleeping car were destroyed in the testing process.

Transport Canada and VIA have never explained exactly what triggered the original decision.

Germany Rail System Funding

Trucks in Germany are now paying higher tolls to use main highways, with the extra money to be invested in the country's government-owned rail network.

The new tolls were effective July 1. The new funds will address a rail system that is suffering in places from a high level of use by both passenger and freight trains, but seeing limited investment in new track, signalling, and power systems. This is leading to daily disruptions due to infrastructure failings.

The tolls have been expanded both in terms of roads and vehicles. Toll previously limited to the 9,400-mile Autobahn network, comparable to the U.S. interstate system, are now charged on all federal-status roads, or Bundestrassen, quasi-analogous with U.S. state highways. This increases the total road network on which tolls are assessed to around 34,500 miles. Toll are now charged on all commercial vehicles over 3.5 tons (a typical large delivery van) rather than the previous 7.5 tons (a small truck).

National Steel Car Company

About 1,500 workers are on strike at railcar manufacturer National Steel Car. The workers, represented by United Steelworkers Local 7135, walked out on Thursday, June 29. Local president Frank Crowder told the newspaper via email that "significant issues," including wages, remain on the table. The company's latest offer was a three-year deal with a 4% raise the first year and 3% increases each of the following years.

Picket lines were set up outside the company's plant; the main gate has been barricaded and production has been halted.

The company has been under scrutiny after three workers died in a 22-month period during the pandemic, most recently the June 6, 2022, death of welder.

Union members asked police to open a criminal negligence investigation at that time. In addition to the fatalities, the company was facing government charges over injury cases in 2019 and 2021.

GO Transit

A two-year pilot program offering GO Transit commuter rail service between London and Toronto — hampered by its lengthy travel time — will not be renewed when the trial period ends in October, the London Free Press reports.

The single round trip, which debuted in October 2018, is currently scheduled for exactly four hours in each direction to cover the 114 miles between London to Toronto Union Station.

VIA Rail Canada trains, which use a more direct route, can take as little as 2 hours, 10 minutes, but cost anywhere from C\$41 to C\$176 (for “Business Plus”) one-way compared to the C\$30 for a one-way GO fare. Driving can take 2 - 3 hours depending on traffic.

Ridership has never been impressive, averaging 32 per trip a month after the service began and 65 per day in February 2022. At that time, Deputy Mayor Josh Morgan said he was not surprised by the ridership, saying the service needed to be faster and more frequent.

Progress Rail

Progress Rail’s long promised EMD Joule Battery Electric Locomotive arrived on April 19th at its destination at Pacific Harbor Line’s Wilmington, Calif., facility for long term testing and demonstration purposes. The builder said it will be at home in switching service, regional service, and part of a consist with traditional diesel-electric locomotives.

According to the builder, Joule locomotives recover energy through dynamic braking. When dynamic braking is activated to control train speed, the batteries are charged, saving what would otherwise be wasted energy. Alternatively, the batteries can be charged through a range of wayside charging options tailored to meet operational needs.

The unit, originally a standard EMD SD40-2 built for U.S. service, was rebuilt and retrucked for narrow gauge use in South America. It was used as a core for the project where it was converted back to standard gauge. Upon arrival at the Port of Houston, the unit was sent to the AAR’s new MxV test facility near Pueblo, Col., for testing and certification. Upon being certified by the FRA it was dispatched enroute to PHL for use in and around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach on a two-year demo lease.

The six-axle unit features the latest lithium-ion battery technology and battery management system, alongside AC traction and state-of-the-art technology. The unit has a battery capacity of 2.4 megawatt-hours for a runtime of up to 23 hours depending on charging and utilization. The unit is capable of 3,200 hp.

The Joule is the first battery electric switcher locomotive designed by a major locomotive supplier for North America that appears robust enough for the demanding PHL environment,” said Otis Cliatt II, president of PHL.

One of the primary benefits of battery-powered locomotives is their potential to reduce emissions. Traditional diesel locomotives emit a significant amount of greenhouse gases, contributing to air pollution and climate change. Battery-powered locomotives, on the other hand, produce no emissions during operation.

In addition to being more environmentally friendly, battery-powered locomotives offer a number of other benefits. They are quieter than diesel locomotives, which can be important in residential areas or other places where noise pollution is a concern. They also require less maintenance, as they have fewer moving parts than diesel locomotives.

Despite their potential benefits, there are several challenges that must be overcome before battery-powered locomotives become a practical solution for the railroad industry. One of the primary challenges is the weight of the batteries.

Locomotives are incredibly heavy, with some weighing up to 200 tons. Adding batteries to these already-heavy locomotives can significantly increase their weight, making it more difficult for them to climb steep grades and navigate difficult terrain. Additionally, the weight of the batteries can reduce the amount of cargo the train can carry, which could make them less cost-effective than traditional diesel locomotives.

Another challenge is the range of the batteries. Locomotives often travel long distances, and it's important they can do so without needing to stop and recharge their batteries. While advancements in battery technology have improved the range of batteries, they are still not capable of powering a locomotive for the same distance as a tank of diesel fuel.

Finally, there is the challenge of cost. Battery-powered locomotives are still relatively new technology, and they are currently more expensive to produce than traditional diesel locomotives. While the cost of batteries is expected to decrease over time as the technology becomes more widespread, it is unclear how long it will take for the cost of battery-powered locomotives to become competitive with diesel locomotives.

CP Rail



This will be the final time that the name CP Rail will be used in the newsletter as it is now official even locally as evidenced by the new sign in the CPKC Port Coquitlam Yard.

Photo credit: Keith Anderson

'Triclops' Locomotives

At the beginning of the comfort cab revolution in the United States, EMD constructed its first “North American cab” SD60M for customer Union Pacific. Numbered 6085, it was a similar design to what Canadian National had been using for years, with one visual difference. The new cab featured three front windows instead of the four-window design on CN’s orders.

Nicknamed “triclops” by railfans, this design would only last for a handful of years beginning in 1988 and would be replaced by EMD’s refined design that used a two-piece windshield on future comfort cab-equipped freight locomotive orders. Only four EMD models — the passenger F59PH and freight SD40-2F, SD60M, and SD60MAC — were so equipped, and only one model, the SD60M, would continue to be built with a North American cab with two windshields. It should be noted the successor to the F59PH, the F59PHI, also had three front windshields, but uses a significantly different design and never carried the triclops moniker.

All 73 F59PH passenger locomotives were built for two customers, GO Transit and Metrolink, while 25 SD40-2Fs went to Canadian Pacific, and 240 three-piece windshield SD60Ms were built for Union Pacific, Soo Line, and Burlington Northern. The four SD60MACs were test beds for EMD and never sold.

While some of these unique locomotives found new homes years ago, many of Union Pacific’s large group of 185 three-piece windshield SD60Ms have been entering the second-hand market recently, increasing the number of railroads operating them. With the exception of Soo Line and Burlington Northern SD60 M’s, all freight and passenger railroads still roster some of their original purchases today, with BN’s and Soo Lines units folding into BNSF’s and CP’s rosters, respectively.

Honolulu's New Light Rail System

Hawaii’s new Skyline light rail system, billed by manufacturer Hitachi as the first fully autonomous metro system in the U.S., will made its debut on June 30 th. It will be the first new major rail transit system to debut in the United States since 1993. The first train departed on a 10.75-mile, nine-station segment of what will eventually be an 18.9-mile, 19-station system. Regular service will begin Saturday, July 1. When complete, the system is projected to replace an estimated 40,000 trips by car per day.

The Hitachi-built fleet of 20 four-car trains have a capacity of 800 passengers, are fully ADA compliant, and have wi-fi, among other features.

The entire system slated to cost more than \$10 billion , about twice the original estimate with the next phase of the project adding 5.2 miles and four stations , is projected to open in summer 2025.

FRA warns Norfolk Southern on Conductor Training

The Federal Railroad Administration is demanding immediate changes to Norfolk Southern's conductor trainee program, citing "grave deficiencies" that have been marked by incidents resulting in "amputations and other serious injuries."

In a June 14 letter, Allison Ishihara Fultz, FRA's chief counsel, wrote that despite nearly two years of FRA working with NS to improve the program, the railroad still "has not developed an adequate conductor certification program.

"FRA's ongoing audit of [the NS program] has laid bare grave deficiencies that NS must rectify immediately," she wrote. "The magnitude and significance of these shortcomings, especially in the context of the large number of hires currently undergoing training, necessitate swift and decisive action on NS's part ."

"During the audit, FRA has observed new hires grappling to comprehend , internalize, and retain the critical safety information presented in training. New hires without previous railroad experience need adequate time and relevant exposure to the railroad environment to absorb its specialized language, procedures, and safety protocols."

The FRA demanded a detailed action plan and a timeline for implementation within 90 days, including "a schedule for re-training those conductors who were trained under the non-compliant program."

A 'Funeral Train' includes ex BC Rail Units

CN ran a funeral train on June 25th from Charlotte, NC northbound to Canada for scrapping. A total of 19 locomotives including three former BC Rail units. They were all C40-8M's including: BCOL #4619, #4620 & #4623.



The GE C40-8M is a 6-axle diesel locomotive built by GE from 1990 to 1994. BC Rail bought 26 units numbered 4601 to 4626. #4609 is the last one still in service

Photo: TO

CPKC

Twenty-nine cars of a CPKC train derailed on July 4th in Reeseville, Wisconsin leading to delays for Amtrak's Empire Builder.

The derailment occurred about 1:55 p.m, with the derailed cars carrying grain and potash. Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt said there were no injuries but significant property damage, and that Main Street in Reeseville is closed as a result. The road was reopened as of Wednesday morning.

The westbound Empire Builder and the eastbound train that left Seattle on July 2 would both detour around the derailment skipping some Wisconsin and one Illinois stop.

Norfolk Southern

The famous 4.7% Saluda Grade of Southern Railway (Norfolk Southern in later years) in Western North Carolina was the steepest mainline railroad grade in the United States.

The famous Saluda Grade in western North Carolina has seen its last train . Railbanked in December 2001, nature has slowly but surely reclaimed the right-of-way. Now, an agreement has been reached to sell the railroad to become a hiking trail.

The Saluda line is one of three former Southern Railway routes in the North Carolina mountains with grades in excess of 4%. But Saluda is by far the straightest and therefore the most prone to runaways. There were so many runaway trains in the early days that something had to be done. The solution was to install two safety tracks on the mountain. In later years, a road foreman of engines was required to take each train down the mountain - an expensive operating proposition.

Operationally, the challenges of getting trains safely down the mountain were met with equal challenges, with how to get them up the mountain. The grade was so steep that couplers would break apart under the heavy strain. The compromise was to cut the trains into sections at the bottom, make up to three trips over the hill, and then recombine everything at the top. This time-consuming and expensive operation was a main reason for the line's eventual closure.

A LOOK BACK

WCRA News from 40 Years Ago (April/May 1983)

Association News

Received a status report on #374's restoration. The City has OK'd our building permit for Granville Island and we need to get members to help an 'alteration party' to resize the doors to allow moving the locomotive inside.

We need volunteers for the WCRA display at the Hyack Steam Festival on May 21-23.

CP Coquitlam tour to be arranged by Keith Anderson for mid July.

A proposed excursion to the Yakima Valley Traction was discussed. Doug Cummings to determine costs.

John Shaske and team working on the possibility of a 'flag stop' for Horseshoe Bay, mainly for people to connect with BC Ferries sailings.

The Seattle and North Coast Excursion looks to be a complete 'sell-out' for Saturday, May 28th. The package trip includes charter bus to Port Angeles (via the ferry to Port Townsend) and then by train Port Angeles - Sequim, WA and return on our charter. Power will be two ex BN F7A's with a hot lunch being served on board. All of this for only \$55! A big thank you to the organizing committee headed by Grant Ferguson and Bernie Tully.

RAILWAY NEWS

CP Rail

An 18 month study to prepare a long term plan for the port of Vancouver was released and called The Port Master Plan. The plan covers all areas from Burrard Inlet to the US boundary (excluding the Fraser River). The biggest issue has been the CP Rail ferry slip where rail cargo is loaded daily on ships and barges for Vancouver Island. Of particular concern are the tank cars carrying propane and other hazardous cargo which comprise 12% of the rail traffic in this downtown area. So a new location for this operation needs to be found. With the removal of the ferry slip, all railyards west of Thurlow St. can be removed. Those rails east of Thurlow would remain to handle the proposed commuter rail service and non-hazardous freight for the port area. The CN pier is proposed to become a home port for tugs, fishing boats and emergency vessels by building a new shoreline.

CN

CN has stopped ordering continuous rail from Japan and has switched to the Sydney Steel Corp. of Sydney, N.S. starting in August. This despite the fact that the Japanese rail product is head-hardened carbon steel and is superior to the chrome-alloy rail product by Sydney Steel.

The Okanagan night freight on Feb. 16th from Kelowna has two F-7's(!) # 9179 & 9177 with two GP-38's and 62 carloads.

A CN EB freight arrived in Kamloops Junction on Feb. 11th with a lone SD-40 # 5225 pulling 114 empties.

The CN line between Victoria and Deerholm is finally being torn up except the 6 km section bought by the Sooke River Railway Society. The original contractor, Excel Rail Contractors of Richmond, defaulted, due to financial problems, and is now being completed by a contractor from Chemainus.

BC Rail

THE LIC (Location, Identification & Control) system will be operable in April in the Squamish sub. This radio-controlled computer assisted traffic control system is the first of its type in the world! It uses BCR's microwave communication network.

The experiment with the Royal Hudson and Harbour Ferries, which ran for 4 days last summer, was successful enough to warrant a good look at the same package this year on a much more frequent basis. Tourism Minister Claude Richmond stated that the government is committed to increasing patronage on the Royal Hudson this year and will also build a new storage facility for the locomotive.

VIA

The last coach of the WB 'Ocean Limited' derailed on Feb. 7th, 280 km NE of Quebec City injuring 13 passengers, 2 seriously, when the sleeper jumped the tracks and skidded into an ore hopper on the adjacent siding.

A proposal is being considered by VIA to retire all ex-CP passenger units still numbered in the 1400 & 1900 series. This just after FP7A #1403 & 1432 have been equipped with front end MU. Two units that have been retired are ex CP F9A units #1411 and 1412, which wrecked and burned in the Fraser Canyon a couple of years ago, Both were scrapped at Ogden in January.

The standard FP9A units with steam generator equipment have been removed from the Churchill line due to track weight restrictions. Rebuilt F7Au 9150's.

operating with steam generator cars are within weight limits, so VIA will lighten five of their own FP9A's.

Ex NYC roomette sleepers which have had half the roomettes removed to convert to baggage sections are being used to replace 'E' class sleepers on the 'Rupert Rocket' between Jasper and Prince Rupert.

VIA will drop all sleeper and meal service cars between Moncton and Halifax resulting in 'coach only' service.

RDC #6146 which was involved in that tragic wreck at Wessex AB last February which killed five people, including the engineer, was retired in May,

Northern Alberta Railway

The unique NAR 'combooses' have been taken out of service. These cars, possibly the oldest operating revenue equipment in Canada are of wood construction with truss rods(!) and four wheel trucks. Replacements on the 'Waterway Mixed' is a RDC and a former NAR bay window caboose (for the crew).

Alberta Pioneer Rly Association

The APRA will have their ten wheeler ex-CNR #1392 under steam on the May long weekend after having her superheater tubes replaced.

CN #6060, under the care of the APRA, has had her superheater tubes removed for testing and repair. The boiler jacket has been removed and the flues have been cut off at the tube sheet and partially removed. They are trying to go as far as they can with volunteer labour but need more funds to continue to ehe work.

Expo '86 Update

Thanks to an 18 month battle waged on behalf of all rail fans by the Friends of the Roundhouse Society (and especially our member Grant Ferguson), Expo '86 have agreed to restore and rebuild the roundhouse, machine shop and turn table. The \$5 million restoration, in co-operation with BC Place, will be used as a theme pavilion during Expo '86 and then used as a community and retail centre after the fair. CP Rail will not be involved with the renovations and the surprise decision was mainly based on a mangagement change at Expo '86. The roundhouse will be taken apart 'brick by brick' to allow lateral bracing for seismic protection. The original bricks will be put back in place replacing only the mortar. The only two significant buildings to be demolished are the boiler house and blacksmith shop. The theme of the Pavilion will be 'Man in Motion'.

CREDIT LINES

Editor: Craig McDowall
Distribution: Jeremy Davy
Donna Simon

Contributors: TM (Trains Magazine)
JM (Jim McPherson)
TO (Trainorders.com)
KA (Keith Anderson)

ISSN 1204-072X RMBC
News: Vol. 63 Issue 2

Note: Don't forget for WCRA members to keep track of your volunteer hours for 2023 to send to donna@wcra.org. Deadline is January 31st, 2024.

Send news contributions direct to the editor at 404 Bury Lane, West Vancouver, B.C. V7S 1K3, on the Internet to: news@wcra.org

Phone news to (604) 926-4851
Check us out online at: visitrmbc.org
Contact us: Heritage Park: 604-898-9336
CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre: 604-898-9336

Photo Credits: Front Cover Kyle Miller. Back Cover: Russ Grycan
Photo of VIA WB #1 taken at MP 124.5 on the Clearwater Sub.



Published by the West Coast Railway Assoc.- visitrmbc.org ISSN 1204-072X
P.O. Box 2387, Stn. Main, Squamish, B.C. V8B 0B6 Vol. 63 Issue 2
Canada Post, Canadian Publications Mail Sales Agreement #40007853

