

The Railway Museum of BC Newsletter

January - March 2025

March Train Show was very successful!

New Spring Event to Replace DOWT



RAILWAY MUSEUM
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vol.65
Issue #1

FROM THE EDITOR

I apologize for the slight delay in the arrival of this issue of the newsletter. I collapsed on the golf course in Palm Desert and wasn't able to receive 'open heart' surgery until the third week in March. It's been a long road to recovery and as a result of my heart issue, wasn't able to volunteer as 'Train Master' for the North Pole Express for the first time since its inception. I was still able to co-ordinate all the main media advertising buys and promotions as I have done for the last decade. And the idea of offering the first weekend with 25% discounts worked very well as that first weekend has traditionally been the toughest sell being the weekend furthest away from Christmas. So we sold out the first weekend in advance and added some extra departures the weekend before Christmas to make up for the lost revenue from the first weekend discounts. The end result was all departures sold out again this year!

Due to the exchange rate on the US dollar and the cost of hosting Thomas where almost all costs are in US dollars: all merchandise sold on site, the cost of the Thomas replica and other costs in USD combined with one of our two normal weekends is booked for a big private event, we passed on hosting Thomas this year. In place for the second weekend, we are pleased to host a brand new event for families: 'Buddy and Friends' This will be a very interactive event, with live entertainment, interactive activities and, of course, lots of train rides. And the cost is very reasonable: \$20 or \$75 for families of four. Details are included in the ad in this newsletter

Updates from WCRA

Reports from our major department heads for the last quarter:

Bob Philip: President

We are looking forward to building on the momentum created by NPEX as we move into 2025. We have already had a successful model train show and we are offering a new event "Buddy" to replace the cancelled DOWT which had been successfully operated for a number of years but which saw numbers dwindle last year.

We are in full swing with the Tourism Passport program and we will be open Saturdays and select Sundays starting May 10th until Thanksgiving. We will also be open Fridays during July and August and we will be offering a special program on Canada Day.

We had a successful Mother's Day last year and will be holding it again on May 11th as well as adding Father's Day on June 15th and a dinner train June 14th.

Hope to see you at the museum.

Rail Services Report - Kirby Read

General Update

In 2024, we reduced 2 FT senior positions and 1 PT position from Rail Services allowing us to keep the 3 junior positions working during the first quarter to progress much needed work on our equipment. The current team (Kirby, Calley, Holly, Patrick) is efficient, productive and works well with the rest of Museum staff & volunteers. In addition to WCRA staff, we are sharing Blacksheep staff where possible so they can be retained instead of laid off during Blacksheep slow periods.

Motive Power - All operating locomotives (except CN#6520 used to switch) and the Budd Cars are winterized so will not be used until early May. Work to get BC-33 for operations is continuing as time permits.

Speeders – Fairmont A9 speeders 'Big Red' and 'Big Blue' are ready for summer service. Last month, our Rail Inspector from Technical Safety BC noticed one of our ads offering rides on Woss Speeder #123 and advised me that we cannot have this equipment in service as it is not included in our Safety Management System (SMS). Singh is preparing the Risk Assessment required to add this unit to our operating fleet.

Coaches – For the first time in many years, we completed a detailed assessment of every operating coach, identified and prioritized the required work and developed a plan to complete the maintenance and repairs. To allow me to focus on locomotive, track and facility projects, contractor David Walmsley will complete work on all coaches.

Tracks – Considerable track work last year has paid off with our operating tracks being in safest condition in decades. This year, contractor B&B Construction completed lifting & surfacing Track 6 and rebuilding the crossing at Track 7. Scrapping of surplus equipment and the great condition of our tracks is allowing me to source additional revenue opportunities by leasing out track spots to railcar storage, loading & unloading customers.

Facilities – Several facility projects are progressing on both sides of Government Road. On the Museum side, we are moving the Lions Club coach to Track '0' to free up the current turntable tail track for ease of switching Roundhouse and display cars. In addition, we are sourcing safety fence for the turntable pit as well as working with Tom to improve the Beanery Concession. On the MP2 side, we have emptied a portion of the Quonset for Blacksheep storage and getting a quote to repair the former metal shop roof as it leaks.

Mini-rail – Work continues on repairs and painting of BCR#646 & riding car, minor repairs on remaining equipment and tracks in preparation for the model train show.

Museum Manager's Report - Tom Arnott

After a well-earned break over the Christmas holiday period, work began on January 6th to tear down the North Pole Express set up. Although not as much work as setting up the event, never the less it is a huge task. This year we had planned well ahead and we had a great response from our volunteer base and the help and support from the Blacksheep team. We had the Roundhouse dismantled and packed away in the boxcar in 10 days!

Next we tackled the Car shop, which took only a week to dismantle and then onto the NPX coaches to remove the decorations and finally to the station. Unless you are actually involved in this process I don't think people realize the amount of work and the physical effort that is required in often-unpleasant winter temperatures.

It's worth noting that, with regards to volunteers, during North Pole Express we had approximately 4500 volunteer hours. If we had to pay for these hours at say \$25 per hour it would cost around \$112,000!

We have used this down time in January and February to deal with a lot of maintenance issues and small projects around the site to prepare for the upcoming season.

Volunteering

As you know, we are an organisation that depends heavily on volunteers to keep us functioning. As I have stated above we had 4500 hours of volunteer time committed during our North Pole Express event. Over the 2024 museum season, 17,196 hours were recorded. The Round house at Yaletown in the City recorded 4,797 hours. We can always do with more volunteers but these figures are very encouraging. We recently had a thank you lunch for our volunteers and had over 70 attending. Thanks to Jeremy and Donna for all the work in collating the annual volunteer numbers.

2025 Museum Season

Sea to Sky Model Train and Hobby Show

Our first major event of 2025 is the Model Railway and Hobby show on the 22 nd and 23rd March. This will be our third year hosting this event in Squamish and it is the first of many model train events in the west coast area. Bookings, so far show 9 model clubs attending, 10 Exhibitors and 9 vendors.

The event usually attracts 2000 visitors over the weekend and includes the Vancouver Lego club, Squamish model aircraft club, remote control racing cars and hobby tool suppliers. We will be operating the mini-rail and the CN red speeder. We are doing a lot of local advertising and hope that will encourage local residents to take out annual family season tickets to the museum.

Museum dates

Our first day of opening for the 2025 season will be Friday 19th April (Easter weekend) and our last open day of the season will be Sunday 12th October. We plan to open for 46 days. We also intend to open on Fridays from July 4th until Friday 29th August. We are planning a special event for Mother's day, 11th May and Father's Day, 15th June. We will also open on Sundays during long weekend holidays.

Buddy & Friends Children Festival 3rd - 4th May

We are excited about this new event, which will replace our traditional 'Day out with Thomas' event. A planning group has now been set up and we have have started working on the concept for this new event.

Proposed Projects for 2025

Lions Car relocation to track '0'

Singh, Kirby and I had a meeting with the Chairperson from the Squamish Lions to discuss moving the car they use as a club room on the museum site from it's current location between the Car shop and the Roundhouse to track 0 behind the Tumbler Ridge Caboose. Relocating this car would allow us to move the BC 'Rules car' to this location, which would give more exhibit space and a volunteer lounge area during NPX.

Woodfibre LNG funding for the Kid's Caboose

The kid's caboose, which is located behind Silver Fox station, has not been in use since 2020 and is in need of refurbishment and repair of the stair access and entry platforms. We were successful in receiving a grant application from Woodfibre LNG to cover the costs of this work. We approached the Squamish Men's Shed and they have agreed to do the work. Once complete we would like to use this area on open days where children could play and also rent out the caboose out for kids birthday parties.

Reinstating the Beanery café

The current General Store was originally an open-air café called the Beanery, serving drinks and snacks. It was then converted into a General Store following the theme of a Heritage Village. I'd like to covert it back to a café area and create a decked area at the back of the building overlooking the mini-rail station at Silver Fox.

I'd like also to relocate the Garden G Scale railway, currently located at Wilkie Station, to this area, which would allow more visitor access and enjoyment of the railway. We are in the process of working up costs and sources of funding for this project.

Gift Shop Refurbishment

The on-going refurbishment is now complete with new mobile display units and new storage areas and counter tops to better display merchandise. We received a large donation from Lynn Ledgerwood to allow us to complete the work. If we receive more assistance I'd like to upgrade the lighting at some time in the future.

Internal high-level Lighting

Internal ceiling lighting in the Roundhouse and Car shop is in need of replacement and upgrading. We have had a full assessment of the current lighting in both buildings. New LED replacement lights have been purchased for the Car shop and work is due to start in the next few weeks

Geothermal Heating Control Units – Round House

The current heating control panel and software is in need of replacement and upgrading. It is becoming difficult to programme the heating control and some of the software is proprietary and probably now obsolete. Christian, has been advising us and we are looking at what's required to resolve this problem.

Staffing Resource

As you are aware we have significantly reduced the number of staff at the museum. The impact of this will mean more pressure on us as managers and asking volunteers to do even more to help us during this year's season. The Exec team is now much more united and working well and more effectively than I have ever known it. We are organising two team planning days to work up an operational strategy.

374 Pavilion - George Game

Daily attendance is increasing as the weather improves. The 'new' Canadian customer counter (highlighted in the last issue of the newsletter) is receiving a lot of positive comments. And having the original Stanley Park train now in the pavilion has also had a very positive reaction. We are also upgrading the photos and posters on the wall to better show our attendees the history of #374 and it's historical connection to the City of Vancouver. Donations have also increased as the daily attendance increases and donations typically are from out of town visitors. IF you haven't been down to 374 in a while, drop in and you will see the improvements we have made.. All volunteers now have the brick ID locations on their cell phones to assist in locating where a brick is in the floor.

ROTARY CONVERTOR ON DISPLAY

Longtime WCRA member and volunteer Bill Marchant was instrumental in getting, transporting & restoring the BC Electric Railway's North Vancouver Rotary Converter for our Museum. A rotary Converter is a motor-generator set that converts AC electric power to 1500-volts DC required for the overhead trolley system. Over the last year, Bill spent countless hours bringing the machine to its former glory.

On October 16th, BCRP tenant Combustion Engineering provided their 15-ton forklift to move the Rotary Converter from MP2 to the Carshop. Tom Arnott, Kirby Read and David Walmsley assisted forklift operator Stuart to safely move and position the delicate machine at its final display site.



Sea to Sky Train Show another Success!





BC Chapter - Toy Train Society



John Sprung (FVHRS)



Volunteers: Lynn, Kathy, Sarah Jane, Barbara & Judi



Exhibitor Dave Emmington



Don't Miss 'Buddy & Friends'
this Weekend!!

Gordon Hall Family & Kyle Miller

BUDDY & FRIENDS
CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

MAY 3RD & 4TH
2025

SQUAMISH

A FULL WEEKEND OF FUN!

AWARD WINNING CHILDREN'S PERFORMERS, MUSIC, ART, ACTIVITIES AND OF COURSE... TRAIN RIDES!

RAILWAY MUSEUM
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

TICKET LINK IN OUR BIO

<http://www.wcra.org>
visitrmbc

SCAN ME

CURRENT RAILWAY NEWS

Stanley Park Train

The Vancouver Park Board confirmed in a news release March 17th, that the train will not return to the tracks in time for its Easter Train event and will remain “inoperable for the foreseeable future.”

Park Board general manager Steve Jackson stated that while staff have been working “tirelessly” to get the train running for Easter, he recognized “how disappointing this news is for so many people and their families.”

The train has been closed since last winter due to concerns about emissions safety. That prompted the cancellation of the highly anticipated Bright Nights Christmas Train, and 17,000 tickets for that event were refunded.

The Park Board noted that this latest closure of the train has put into question the “operational and financial viability” of its operations with its existing engine issues. Recent testing of the train’s locomotive engines, which are over 50 years old, showed that “efforts to address emissions concerns were unsuccessful,” added the Park Board.

“Our mechanics have a high degree of expertise working on the train’s aged combustion engines and have been working tirelessly with the Park Board’s external third-party train engineer on designing solutions to the exhaust issue,” stated Lon LaClaire, the general manager of City of Vancouver’s engineering services. (VP)

Via

CN has placed speed limits on VIA’s Siemens Venture in the Ontario-Quebec corridor operations. Specifically CN has imposed axle limit or speed restrictions for VIA’s new trainsets, citing issues that can lead to problems in triggering grade-crossing warning devices.

CN announced that Venture transits of fewer than 32 axles could not operate at track speed (160 kph) at crossings with Grade Crossing Predicators (which activate crossing gates base on oncoming train speeds). Those trainsets with a locomotive, cab car coach, three regular coaches and a business-class car have only 24 axles. Those transits must operate at 72 kph and VIA is now advising passengers to expect delays of 15 to 45 minutes.

Interesting that Transport Canada and CN tested these transits prior to their debut in 2021 to their satisfaction and have operated in service since November 2022. CN stated on Oct. 11, 2024 that these Venture trainsets were “now operating in expanded service with crossings which may experience ‘shunt loss’ and are thus ‘unprotected’.

The speed restrictions are only in place on CN lines, not VIA- owned trackage and on host CPKC and Toronto area Metrolinx tracks. (CN)

VIA announces new Board Chair

Jonathan Goldbloom, a member of the VIA Rail Canada board since 2017, has been named as VIA's board chairman effective April 12, 2025. Goldbloom's five-year appointment as chairman was announced on Saturday, March 8, by Minister of Transport and Internal Trade Anita Anand. Goldbloom, of Montreal, is a partner at Avenue Strategic Communications in Montreal, which describes itself as a full- service communications and public relations firm. He previously was founder and president of his own firm specializing in crisis management and stakeholder outreach.

"I am pleased to announce that Jonathan Goldbloom will serve as Chairperson of VIA Rail," Anand said in a press release. "He brings considerable experience in the transportation and rail industries to his new role. I wish him every success in his work to connect Canadians across the country." (VIA)

CPKC

Members of United Steelworkers have ratified a new four-year contract with Canadian Pacific Kansas City, the railroad has announced. The union represents about 600 clerical and intermodal workers in Canada. The railroad did not release terms of the agreement.

CPKC previously has reached Canadian agreements with Unifor, representing approximately 1,200 mechanical workers, and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Maintenance of Way Employees Division, representing approximately 2,300 engineering services employees.

CPKC & the Panama Canal RR

Canadian Pacific Kansas City and the Lanco Group/Mi-Jack have sold the Panama Canal Railway to APM Terminals, a global terminal operator and an independent division of A.P. Moller-Maersk.

The 47.6-mile railway provides ocean-to-ocean freight and passenger services along the Panama Canal and has been a 50/50 joint venture between CPKC subsidiary Kansas City Southern and Lanco Group/Mi-Jack since its formation in 1998.

Prairie Dog Central

PDC's #3, 142 year old steam locomotive, remains down for ongoing major repairs, pending fundraising \$150,000 for outside contract work that cannot be completed 'in house'. They are hoping to have it operational in time for their 2025 season and have started a 'GoFundMe' page in addition to other efforts and that has raised just around \$10,000 to date.

Amtrak

Amtrak cancels Amtrak' Cascades' trainsets Vancouver to Eugene

On March 26th, Amtrak announced it was replacing most of its railcars with buses along its Cascades route. The fleet was pulled after inspectors found corrosion on the railcars. "Amtrak has determined its fleet of Horizon trainsets will immediately be taken out of service due to identified concerns with this aging equipment," the service announced this week. "A total of 70 passenger cars across the country are affected, including 26 cars on the Amtrak Cascades route." This leaves just one train on the route, operating between Seattle and Eugene.

But days later, train service was set to resume April 1 on the 516 and 519 trains between Seattle and Vancouver. As more train cars arrive, rail service will replace bus service on more trips – with one caveat. "The goal is to quickly restore all trips, but with a limited number of cars on each train," the statement from the company said, explaining that in some cases the total number of seats available for would-be travellers will be cut in half. It is uncertain how long this limited seating will remain in place. Between March 26 and April 1, Amtrak was offering bus-only service on the twice-a-day Vancouver to Seattle portion. There is now one daily bus service and one daily rail service on that route.

Washington Department of Transportation spokesperson Janet Matkin said Amtrak was moving several Amfleet I train cars to Seattle to replace the Horizon train sets taken unexpectedly out of service. "Some train cars have already arrived, while others are on their way to the Pacific Northwest," Matkin said.

Amtrak is adding colour coding at the entries to its railcars to guide passengers to the correct location to board its trains. The first cars introducing this system, which uses green near the doors to denote coach, blue for business class, and red for first class, were to be released from the Bear, Del., maintenance facility on March 3rd.

The new feature is part of the "Phase VII" design, introduced on new Siemens Charger ALC42 locomotives and added to some P42 units, that is now being introduced on other rolling stock. Amtrak says the design "seamlessly adapts" to equipment with full-body paint, as well as stainless steel cars with graphic treatment along the window line. Equipment will be updated with the Phase VII design as they are serviced.

Portland Union Station

Prosper Portland (formerly the Portland Development Commission), has placed the station up for sale. The 1896 rail landmark, part of the National Register of Historic Places, is in need of least \$250 million in track and facility upgrades. Amtrak had been interested in purchasing the property, but the estimated restoration costs ended those talks before any agreement on purchase price.

'Musk does it Again'

Elon Musk, who heads the advisory “Department of Government Efficiency” as part of the Trump administration’s efforts to upend business as usual in Washington, told a tech conference this week that Amtrak should be privatized. Musk offered no specifics on how Amtrak could be privatized or what company would be interested in running a passenger railroad that posted a \$705 million adjusted operating loss in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. Musk said Amtrak was an embarrassment compared to other passenger railroads around the globe. However, Amtrak says it’s on a path to reaching operational profitability for the first time. “Amtrak’s business performance is strong. Ridership and revenue are at all-time highs, and transformative projects are underway that will greatly improve the customer experience,” spokeswoman Christina Leeds says. “By maintaining this momentum and the ongoing support we’ve built with our federal, state, and private-sector partners, the train service we operate across our nationwide network, as mandated by law, is on-track to reach operational profitability — for the first time in history — during this administration.” (TRNS

Trip Optimizer’s Automatic 'Start and Stop' Feature

The SMART-TD union says technology is no substitute for a trained engineer and conductor. The union that represents conductors says it will ask the Federal Railroad Administration to deny CSX’s request to become the first railroad to use Trip Optimizer’s Zero-to-Zero feature, which allows the advanced cruise-control system to automatically start and stop trains

After a round of tests in 2020 and 2021, CSX initially sought FRA permission to use Zero-to-Zero in 2022. The FRA has yet to make a decision on the safety waiver request, partly due to the need to conduct a detailed study and partly due to the agency’s reluctance to approve technology-related waivers during the Biden administration. CSX has said the goals of using automatic start and stop are to save fuel and improve safety by reducing the potential for train pull-aparts. The SMART-TD union doesn’t buy that. It sees Zero-to-Zero as a gateway to autonomous operations.

Cargo Theft on the Rise

Cargo theft cost U.S. Class I railroads more than \$100 million in 2024, the Association of American Railroads says, calling for more federal efforts to address the thefts and more effective prosecution of those arrested.

The AAR says in a recently released fact sheet that organized criminal groups are increasingly targeting freight moves, with estimates that more than 65,000 such thefts occurred in 2024. That would represent an approximately 40% increase. Railroads also say suspects are increasingly armed, increasing the risk of violence when attempting an arrest. No more than one in 10 theft attempts result in an arrest, the industry says, and many of those arrested are repeat offenders; one railroad has reported arresting the same individual 17 times

San Diego County's 'Sprinter' Passenger Service

The North County Transit District's Sprinter rail service is facing an unexpected need to replace its fleet of diesel multiple-unit trainsets, which could place the service between Oceanside and Escondido, Calif., in jeopardy. Maintenance issues have sidelined all but five of the Sprinter's 12 two-car train sets, with the others being used for parts. The Siemens 'Desiro' train sets were delivered in 2006, before service on the 22-mile, 15-station line began in 2008, and had a projected 30-year lifespan. But the maintenance issues appeared early, with Sprinter service suspended for a period of time in 2013 because of problems with brake rotor wear and traction motors.

Seimens stated that a variety of diesel and electric Desiro trains are in operation in the UK, Austria, Germany, and elsewhere, but they are different variants of the Desiro family. No other U.S. operator has used the Desiro equipment; Stadler train sets have been the choice for other systems using DMUs, such as TEXRail & A- Train in Texas, and the Arrow service in San Bernardino County, Calif.

Royal Gorge Route Railroad

Colorado Royal Gorge has returned its F7A and F7B locomotives to service. F7A No. 403 and F7B No. 1503 handle the Royal Gorge Route train. F7A No. 403 was built for the Chicago & North Western in 1949, and former Alaska Railroad F7B No. 1503 led a train out of Cañon City, Colo., on Monday, Feb. 24, 2025. It was the first revenue run for the two locomotives, stored since 2021, but back after a restoration and 'a comprehensive tune-up', according to the railroad.

Rocky Mountaineer

The Rocky Mountaineer is transitioning to a new name in the U.S. The train will be called 'Canyon Spirit'. And starting in 2026, it will also expand its current route from Denver to Salt Lake City as part of a three-day excursion. This new train will operate in addition to the current two-day excursions.

The current train 'Rockies to the Red Rocks' trips have run between between Denver and Moab, Utah, since 2021. The expanded operation will feature overnight stays in Glenwood Springs, Colo., and Moab. The company says the new name reflects its commitment to "unforgettable train journeys through the American Southwest's most compelling landscapes."

The three-day excursions will launch on April 21, 2026, with one westbound departure from Denver and one eastbound trip from Salt Lake City each week. The three-day trip, including hotel accommodations in Glenwood Springs and Moab, will start at \$2,123 per person, plus tax.

The company has operated Rocky Mountaineer excursions in western Canada, where it currently operates three routes, for 35 years. In that time, it has served more than 2.3 million guests

RMRX #8600, SD40M-2, led the first 2025 'Rockies to the Red Rocks' 10-car excursion out of Denver Union Station, Denver, CO, Wednesday, 23 April 2025. The train will run over Union Pacific's Moffat Tunnel Sub with the usual overnight stay at Glenwood Springs, CO. (RM)



UP/BNSF

BNSF has running rights over UP's (formerly Southern Pacific's) 'Tehachapi Loop' in Southern California. The railroads have been unable to come to terms on a new deal for BNSF's use of the line. And so UP has brought a rare trackage-rights dispute to the Surface Transportation Board.

The two railroads filed their final briefs in the case in March. Barring a settlement, regulators will determine how much BNSF ultimately will pay UP for its continued use of the line that links Northern and Southern California.

UP says payments are so low under the current trackage rights agreement that it's subsidizing rival BNSF's operations. BNSF says UP's proposed payment increases would significantly boost its costs and stifle competition.

"Through this proceeding, UP seeks to achieve through regulatory fiat what UP could never have achieved through private negotiations: a trackage rights compensation windfall and a dramatic increase in the costs of its competitor," BNSF told the STB, adding the claim that the trackage rights dispute is part of a broader UP effort to curb competition.

NHL travels by Train!

The Chicago Blackhawks played the Montreal Canadiens in Montreal on April 14th. On the 15th, the Hawks will finish the season at Ottawa vs the Senators. It was announced during the game that the Hawks will travel to Ottawa via train! First time in decades that an NHL has traveled by train!

A LOOK BACK in our ARCHIVES

WCRA Newsletter – January 1998 Association News

A good crowd of 88 members and guests were present for the 5th Annual Christmas Dinner and Awards Night at the Pineridge Catering facility in Burnaby. President Bill Johnston welcomed everyone to the event and after the roast beef dinner, announced the awards:

Corporate Support Award

BC Tel Education for their long time support with their donation of their meeting room in the BC Tel Education Centre on Willingdon Ave.
Accepting the award was Bernice Benekritis – Director, Learning Services.

Media Award

The Squamish Chief for their consistent coverage of activities at the Heritage Park in news coverage, editorial support and promotion of community events hosted at the park. Accepting the award was Al Price, who commented that without non profit groups like us, he would not have sufficient material for the paper.

Best Contributor to the Newsletter

Al Hamilton of Osoyoos, for his three part series ‘South American Adventure’ which ran in three issues of the newsletter the past year. He subsequently provided visual entertainment of the same trip at one of our meetings last year.

Volunteer Award

Devon Generous for a tremendous amount of volunteer work at the Heritage Park– almost 800 hours (!) over ten months of last year. Devon worked on our locomotives, operated our motive power when needed, and helped with mini rail maintenance.

Best Contribution to Rail Preservation

Barbara Brown and Bruce Mackay for their tireless efforts working through our various coaches putting them into display condition. First major project was Mountain Observation Car #598, followed by efforts on the BC Rail Classroom car.

Members Choice Award

A new award this year. This better reflects the award previously named the Presidents Award. Steve Barone (who received the most member submissions) for volunteering as the Chair of the Park Management Committee as he participated at the park for whatever needed doing and was qualified to operate our heavy machinery when needed.

(Look Back - cont'd)

Mini Rail at Canada Place

Our mini rail layout had two sets of trains. Our F unit painted in the West Coast Express colour scheme just completed by Paul Roy, powered one of our trains and Shane Carr's CP AC4400CW was power on our second train set. The trains ran right through the holiday season until January 4th. Thanks to all our members who volunteered to make it such a financial success.

Thanks to Hardy Focke for the donation of a steam locomotive bell off #163 and a builder's plate off an early PGE diesel. Some research by Glen Wideman determined that #163 was a Mikado 2-8-2 built by the Canadian Locomotive Co. in Kingston Ontario. She was the last steamer built for the PGE and was in active use until 1956 when retired at Squamish. And Trevor Mills did some research on the builder's plate and was revealed that it was none other than the builder's plate off our own RSC-3 #561!

And thanks to the District of West Vancouver for the donation of clean fill for the Heritage Park Phase Two area.

The 'Trains '97 Show' was a Success

The annual event at the Cameron Rec. Centre in Burnaby sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the NMRA was held on Nov. 9th. It was well attended again and the gym was filled with modular railway layouts, dioramas, exhibits and vendors. The WCRA was represented by 'Manny' our conductor mannequin, our restored velocipede and a collection of rail maintenance tools illustrating our goal of 'Preserving BC's Rail Heritage'. Dave Emmington coordinated our participation and we had 11 members attend as volunteers.

Heritage Park Update

Phase Two construction is getting underway with a number of activities to complete over the winter. The general goal is to get the Car Shop work completed: consisting of truss strengthening, machine shop addition and new roof to be finished before the park opens for the season. To achieve these goals, a Construction Management Committee has been formed with Ron Anstey, Don Evans, Grant Ferguson, Nick Monkhouse, Bill Watson and Glen Wideman. Reports from outside consultants have been received and BC Rail Engineering has started work on the final track design working from our site survey. Fill has started to arrive at the site to develop the roadbeds needed and track materials will also arrive from BC Rail and Ashcroft Treating. The fill from West Vancouver alone was valued at \$12,000.

Southern Railway

There has been much press lately about revitalizing the SR mainline through to the Fraser Valley for commuter passenger service. Originally the BC Electric mainline, it is easier said than done. One of the major stumbling blocks is a core piece of the line from Cloverdale to Fort Langley which is now owned by Canadian Pacific and hosts a daily heavy volume of Delta Port traffic. And much of the line in Surrey will need major upgrades as the current speed limit is 10 mph. So very unlikely.

The repainting of SR's locomotive fleet into the new Washington 'RailLink' scheme is progressing with the three MP15 units and all but one of the SW900's done. At least two cabooses are also in the new livery but none of the SD38's so far.

BC Rail

BC Rail received several lease units in November from Motive Power International (ex Morrison Knudsen). Units ran through CP's Coquitlam yard on Nov. 22nd with SD40's and and 3 ex Santa Fe F45 units painted in the yellow and blue freight paint scheme. All units were spotted in the BC Rail yard in North Vancouver three days later.

CN

The remaining five stalls of the Kamloops Junction roundhouse were torn down on November 21. This section was built in 1929 and has been unused for some time, although it had remained an equipment shop after the turntable and other stalls had been removed. After the demolition, a fire accidentally started in the tinder dry rubble resulting in the fire and smoke seen for miles.

CP

The new series of AC4400CW units are now being seen in the Vancouver area. The new units sport the new Canadian Pacific paint scheme and logo and also feature 'steerable' trucks which are quite different in appearance from the standard GE six wheel trucks.

An 'all new' coal train also appeared in the Vancouver area with four of the new GE units on the point and the entire consist were the all new aluminum ribbed sided cars lettered ALMZ 11 series and are hard wired with 'Electro Pneumatic Braking'. The consist is 122 cars long.

Work continues on the signalling and track upgrade east of Kamloops on the CP mainline. When completed, the mainline will have higher speeds through the crossovers as well as bi-directional running on both tracks.

And new signalling cabinets have been installed on most grade crossings. There are also changes at Campbell Creek, where the CN mainline switches off CP and heads south. CN trains will now operate on either CP mainline crossing over at Kamloops East or McCracken.

VIA

The ten VIA Rail coaches damaged in the wreck of the Canadian at Biggar, SK on Sept. 3rd arrived in Montreal on Oct. 15th. The consist included CN flatcars carrying coaches (including two Skyline Dome cars) sans trucks with those in CN gondolas.

Due to the loss of the two dome coaches, VIA has transferred the Skyline from the Chaleur to the Canadian and replaced the dome car on the Chaleur with a full diner.

Special Year End Thanks

Now that 1997 has come to a close, we'd like to offer a very special thank you to all who have supported for 'Full Steam Ahead' capital program both in cash and/or 'in kind'.

Recognition Status of Top Two Categories

Founding Sponsors (\$150,000 and up):

BC Rail

Canadian National

Heritage Park Patrons (\$25,000 to \$75,000)

Ashcroft Treating

Great Canadian Railtour Co.

Howe Sound Inn & Brewing Co.

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Note: WCRA volunteers:: Do not forget to send your volunteer hours for 2025 and send to donna@wcra.org. Deadline is February 28th, 2026.

Send news contributions direct to 404 Bury Lane, West Vancouver, B.C. V7S 1K3

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Back Cover Photo: Ken Storey: 2025 RMX's first run of it 'Rainforest to Goldrush' on April 27th at Polley Bridge



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