

# THE CANORA CHRONICLE

**“Preserving Railway Heritage for Community and Economic Benefits”**



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## Camrose Report

stated in the last chronicle we were looking forward to an exciting summer. It truly has been our busiest summer yet. Despite the heavy rain and move inside on June 18, a good number of people attended the Dutch tribute which had been intended to be an outside market. Hearty thanks go to Ann Reitan for her decorations and direction, to Cathie Murray for preparation of the wonderful Dutch food, the volunteers who assisted, Rose Cottingham's pictures and story of the *Liberation of the Netherlands* celebration and the Dutch Canadian Association representative from Wetaskiwin for bringing the wooden shoes to sale.

The yard sale was a great success due to the efforts of Bill and Gladys Douglas, Bruce Smith, Dorothy Lysons, Joe and Eva Furber, Carol and Murray Roy, Gladys Taranger, Helen Kitchen, Gladys Kupka and Fred Murray. We raised \$900. The days before the sale caused Bruce much grief as wind blew down the tents, but the day of the sale was beautiful and people worked together to make it a special day.

Since June, 129 children have attended summer programming at the station. We have programs for children from preschool age through 12 during the summer months. It was especially busy in June with kindergarten classes. The programs are held on Mondays and Tuesdays so as not to interfere with the Tearoom opening and food preparation. kindergartens are booking a year in advance as we cannot accommodate all requests. Since the beginning of April we have had 250 children attend either half-day or full-day programs.

The Old-Fashioned Garden Party & Chocolate Festival was the "best ever" as the weather was perfect. Approximately 150 people attended. The Swing Band was applauded for their wonderful music. The outdoor dance floor had dancers almost continuously. Children joined in dancing, playing games, doing crafts and

playing croquet. Through monologues, Carlee Dobos told the story of John Ware and Kalynn Dobos told the story of Chester Ronning. Having our events on the Travel Alberta website as well as the city website has resulted in many visitors from out of Camrose and the garden party was no exception. We would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted in food preparation and helping the day of the event. A special thank you to Morley and Duane Riske who coordinated the music. It was a great example of old-fashioned fun including all the generations.

This summer we also paid tribute to the Hay Lakes community and the Kelsey community. In doing the research to develop a monologue for Moses Kelsey we met through e-mail Moses Kelsey's great nieces, Lori Wingard and Joy Bruce. These cousins who had never met each other travelled to Camrose by plane for the event and stayed in the College Lane Bed and Breakfast. As a result of facilitation by Don and Joan Gregorwich, the community of Kelsey turned out to hear the story of the Zimmerman family by Edna Nelson, the Berke family by Vida Innes and the monologue of Moses Kelsey (alias Greg Thirsk).

Greg's great-grandfather came to the Kelsey area with Moses. Despite the wind the day went well, and we are grateful to all who contributed in any way. We now have a binder in the library with the stories and pictures that tell the history of these pioneers as an addition to the Kelsey history book, which was very well done. Edna Nelson took Lori and Joy on a tour of the Kelsey area tracing the historical landmarks of their great uncle's settlement. The Kelsey community society hosted a lunch for them the day after the station tribute. We want to acknowledge the contribution of \$300 toward costs associated with the tribute and the gold tie plaque purchased by Joy Bruce in honour of the day. Thank you to the story tellers, Don and Joan, Joy and Lore, and Penny Nelsen our summer university student who worked very hard on the displays as well as Shelly Simpson, who wrote the dialogue from the researched material.

The daughter and son of Adolf Middlestat, who owned

a general store in Hay Lakes, attended the Hay Lakes tribute. In keeping with our theme our focus was on general stores across Canada and the coming of the telegraph to Hay Lakes. The Edmonton "MO" chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club Inc. tapped in the station. They also came to the Garden Party and Founder's Day. What a wonderful asset they were to these days. The Camrose Centennial Museum loaned and set up a display on general stores across Canada. The Russian and German food was well received.

We are especially grateful to Cathie Murray for researching the food for the summer tributes. In many cases the food history is placed on the tearoom tables as part of the overall historical interpretation. We try to integrate the whole experience for the people who come to the station through story, display and food.

The Victorian days were very special. The tearoom tables were transformed into pink and lace. Carol Roy decorated, and food reflected the high tea and English cuisine. Children were invited to attend with their dolls and teddy bears and to dress in period clothes. A special thank you to Stephanie Olson and her grandma Peggy Shuman, who made one afternoon very special with their presence complete with Victorian dress.

The Railway Association of Canada held a safety workshop in the station on August 9. Our society volunteers catered, and it was a very successful day. We have had increasing numbers of workshops and group meetings in the station. June was a particular busy month for annual general meetings.

Jeff Strandquist entertained with his wonderful cowboy poetry on July 29. This was the only weekend of the year we were not busy related to the Big Valley Jamboree. We may close this weekend next year to give our volunteers a summer break.

Carol and Murray Roy and Penny Nelsen facilitated the War Years tribute on August 11, 12 and 13. This has become a very popular event. Thursday and Friday Marian Bennet using a wonderful picture display spoke of her father and her husbands' time in the services. Saturday a great time was experienced as the Swing Band played war time music with Dolores Schultz leading the sing-along. Bruce and I were away at a wedding in Victoria and are thankful to the people who took over to make this a wonderful event. It is fitting that we display the album of Gwynfryn Morgan at each tribute as the Morgan Garden Railway is dedicated to his memory.

Founder's Days at the station were very busy. Many people came to hear the stories of Walter Kittler on Friday August 19 and to see the premier of *Along These Lines*, the DVD. Thank to Walter for coming to do this for us.

Friday and Saturday the station was part of the OPEN DOORS Camrose. With the assistance of volunteers our home as well as all the buildings were toured by over 150 people. Thank you to Gwen Lister, Bruce Smith and Murray Roy for taking tours. The tearoom sales were larger than they have ever been. Our little kitchen was full of wonderful, patient volunteers who worked so well together. Thank you to Carol Roy, Laurie Miller, Robbie

O'Riordan, Carol Rowson, and our wonderful students Jessie and Penny. The shepherd's pie made by Carol Roy and the rhubarb pies made by Cathie Murray sold out. The CPR display was set up by Penny and was a great interest to many people.

The gardens continue to be a great attraction for visitors from in and out of our community. Dorothy Lysons can be seen deadheading in the north beds usually on Monday or Tuesday morning. The garden continues to evolve as does all our programming. I am beginning to plan changes for next year's garden.

We also want to thank the local papers (*The Booster* and *Canadian*) for their wonderful coverage of events. We could never afford the ads they put in under "Entertainment". The Chamber of Commerce has also promoted our events by drawing attention to tourists.

We were disappointed that it has taken so long for CFEP to assess our application for the kitchen extension. Apparently the application got caught between two programs. There are revisions that must be made so it is unlikely we will see our extension for next year. The volunteers have worked very hard this year and all are looking forward to an approved application for the extension. However, the monies made this summer should help for our part of the project, \$17,000 which CFEP states we need to contribute. Our station computer required updating (\$500), taking a portion of our income. Shawn Smith will re-evaluate the proposal for as early as possible and resubmit.

We would like to thank the following people for the donations to the Canadian Northern Society in the last two months:

David Steiner—the original oak desk from the Camrose Station Freight Shed, now located in the Freight shed tearoom.

Wolf Kirchmeir—Lettering diagrams for railway cars and a CPR nail keg.

\$100 cash from Kate Pasulla to be used for soaker hose system for gardens.

Joy Claypool of Calgary is donating a CNR ticket case from 1899 with its original key. Her father worked for the railway for over 30 years.

Ann Reitan—donation of a mix master to the tearoom kitchen.

Peggy Shuman and Stephanie Olson for dress-up clothes for the Children's Garden.

We want to welcome our new volunteers, Laurie Miller and Bill Hondros. Bill has helped with yard work and painting of the Hand Car and velocipede.

~ Glenys Smith

***The Canadian Northern Society would like to express sincere appreciation and thanks to Glenys and Bruce Smith along with all of the volunteers in and around Camrose that make the Camrose Station such a success.***

*Thank You!*

## Acknowledgements

Thank you sincerely to MGV Energy Inc. of Calgary, who have become a "gold spike supporter" of the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame Pavilion at Big Valley. MGV Energy recently donated a generous cash donation of \$2500 towards the project, for which we are very grateful.

We appreciate as well the support of Shirley McLellan (our MLA for Big Valley) and the Alberta Community Facility Enhancement Program, who have supplied \$10,000 in provincial lottery funds towards the pavilion. This makes Her Majesty's government another gold spike supporter for the project.

The Canadian Northern Society would like to publicly acknowledge the support of the Alberta Museums Association and the Minister of Community Development, the Honourable Gary Mar, for our 2005 Museums Site Operations grant in the amount of \$1500. We appreciate the continued support of lottery funding for our heritage sites, as this funding is essential for rural heritage sites such as our own to continue to operate. We also thank our own MLA, Mr. LeRoy Johnson, who continues to strongly support the Canadian Northern Society. The \$1500 grant assists the society in payment of utility costs each year.

We welcome Carl Leaman of Westport, Connecticut USA as a new member and thank him for his cash donation received with his membership. The society also welcomes its youngest member, Liam George Gordon Smith. Welcome to Barry Williams of Regina, SK, and F.E. Edmunds of Edmonton, AB, as new members as well.

Sincere thanks to Mr. R.A. Spencer of North Vancouver for his generous cash donation received with his membership renewal.

Thank you to "Calgary Free-Mo and the Central Alberta Railway Modellers" for the cash donation following the Big Valley Railway Day weekend.

Thanks to Mr. C.N. Lund of Edmonton for his generous cash donation.

Thank you to long time member Peter M. Didrichsen for his generous cash donation. Peter remarked to the society that he has been busy this past year and had not spent the time he would have liked to on Canadian Northern Society activities, though he says, "I will be back!"

## Cash Casino

The Red Deer Cash Casino has approved the cash casino for the Canadian Northern Society for March 26 and 27, 2006. Both days require a day shift of four volunteers from 1 pm to 7 pm and a night shift of four volunteers from 6:30 pm to 1 am. In addition they require six volunteers for the "count room" from 9:45 am to 1 am. Volunteers from the day shift can work the "count room" after the day shift.

*Please consider helping the society with this fund-raising project. If you require more details or would like to assist with your time at the casino please contact Harry Stuber at (403) 740-9356.*

## Big Valley News

### Hall of Fame Pavilion Update

Thanks to our corporate and individual sponsors, the first phase of the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame Pavilion at Big Valley is nearing completion. Our contractor, Glen Swainston, and his construction crew have completed the initial work on the free-standing outdoor pavilion structure and we are now awaiting the completion of 18 interpretive signs which will describe the inductees to the Hall of Fame, and feature the sponsors who contributed to the project.

Our plan is to take delivery on the interpretive signs over the month of September, and to erect them at the Pavilion in October. Stay close to the Canadian Northern Society website, the Big Valley *Whistle*, and the *Chronicle* for further updates. Special thanks to Harry Stuber and Allan Schilling for their volunteer efforts in organizing the project.



*Pavilion at Big Valley, just south of the station.*

The Village of Big Valley was well represented in several local parades this summer with a fine decorated float. The Canadian Northern Society was proud to have contributed six poster-sized photographs to the float promoting the station, grain elevator, St. Edmund's Church, the roundhouse, McAlister Motors, and the Big Valley Historical Society's collection.

This summer, two rail-themed events took place at Big Valley. On July 31, Alberta Prairie operated their annual rail fans special to Big Valley. Although former steam locomotive 6060 was not available this year due to ongoing repairs, AP 41 and the diesel units were displayed and a photo run-by was made for the group. During the following weekend, for the second year in a row, Big Valley was the site of a successful model railway layout and operation on August 6 and 7. Our Big Valley Chairman Harry Stuber helped to organize this event which included our President Les Kozma, and railway modellers from Calgary, Chilliwack BC, Camrose, and other points in central Alberta. Guided tours of the railway station, roundhouse, and grain elevator were conducted on August 6 and enjoyed thoroughly by those who participated, including visitors from Wisconsin, USA. Special thanks to Dave Armitage, Vice President and General Manager of the Canadian Heartland Training Railway, for providing diesel locomotive operational demonstrations at the Big Valley station to over 60 interested visitors. Thank you to Robert Ballantyne at Canadian National Railways for the promotional gifts and to Don Gillespie at Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions for moving the CWR 7438 and the AP steel caboose from Stettler to Big Valley and return free of charge for the event.

## Along These Lines DVD

**ALONG THESE LINES VIDEO PRODUCTION CELEBRATES  
100 YEARS OF HISTORY IN CENTRAL ALBERTA.**

The Canadian Northern Society is pleased to announce the premier of its newly-released video production known as *Along These Lines*. This 18-minute production celebrates 100 years of history in the communities of Camrose, Meeting Creek, Stettler, and Big Valley, Alberta – and focuses on the heritage preservation activities of the Canadian Northern Society in the area.

The production of this special video was made possible through the financial and technical assistance of the Railway Association of Canada.

This DVD is available from the society for \$12.95. Please e-mail [sismith@cable-lynx.net](mailto:sismith@cable-lynx.net) to order your copy.

Still available, but selling quickly, is the Canadian Northern society's publication *Along These Lines*. These books continue to be for sale through the society for \$19.95 plus \$2.50 postage and handling.

To order your copy today, please send a cheque to:  
Canadian Northern Society  
PO Box 142, Big Valley, AB T0J 0G0

***With the DVD now available to complement the book this makes a perfect gift for any railway enthusiast!***

## Centennial Train

On September 1, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of Alberta as a province within Confederation. As part of the celebrations, Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions teamed up with the Mackenzie Northern Railway, Alberta Lotteries, the Alberta Railway Museum, and CN and CPR to operate a special "Northern Alberta Centennial Train." The operation of this special passenger excursion train over the long weekend in September allowed residents of the Slave Lake, McLennan, and Peace River regions to enjoy the sights and sounds of a real live passenger train once more, and experience Alberta Prairie's unique brand of entertainment in a completely new setting. Six trips in total were operated on the Mackenzie Northern – including a trip along Lesser Slave Lake from Slave Lake to High Prairie, a journey down the famed Judah Hill, and several local excursions. "The response from the local communities was fantastic", said Tim Husel, General Manager of Mackenzie Northern Railway. "Don Gillespie and his team at Alberta Prairie did a great job in giving this area a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ride a passenger train again, after an absence of nearly 30 years on the old Northern Alberta Railways system."

Five coaches were brought from Stettler (the remainder of Alberta Prairie's equipment stayed behind to protect the regular Stettler to Big Valley excursions), and were hauled by two of Mackenzie Northern Railway's diesel roadswitchers – decked out in Alberta flags to celebrate the occasion.

## Meeting Creek Happenings

Special thanks to Brent Cheek and his son Caleb for all the hard work put in making assorted repairs to the station and grain elevator, cleaning, painting, and groundskeeping. The privy has been repainted, platform repairs completed, and repairs to the train order signal are almost completed. Thank you to Shawn and Karen Smith for the donation of paint.

Thank you to Lorene Bergstrom for the flowers at the gazebo and to Karen Smith for the flowers on the station platform. Thank you to Bruce Smith for his efforts in groundskeeping which is greatly appreciated.

We have had several visitors to the site since July - including guests who are just out for a drive, visitors from as far away as Nova Scotia, and a motorcyclists tour.

Artifacts sought for the station:

- Additional items for freight shed (crates, old suitcases, trunks, etc).
- Artificial plants for interior living quarters – (a fern, historic type green plants)
- Artifacts for kitchen (tins, etc.)
- Brass spittoon
- Old-style coal-oil platform lamp
- Old-style sample scale for elevator

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A football fan is a guy who'll yell at the quarterback for not spotting an open receiver forty-five yards away, then head for the parking lot and not be able to find his own car.

If a man watches three football games in a row, he should be declared legally dead.

- Erma Bombeck

Discovering a leak in the bathroom, the lawyer's secretary called the plumber, who fixed it in a matter of minutes. The bill, however was substantial, so substantial that the lawyer called to complain. "You weren't here for more than ten minutes," he said, "and I don't charge that much for an hour."

"I know," responded the plumber sympathetically. "I didn't either, when I was a lawyer."

## About The Chronicle

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