



THE CANORA CHRONICLE

Canadian Northern Society—Camrose, Meeting Creek, and Big Valley, Alberta

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Volume 22, Number 2, June 2009

Mark Your Calendars!

Please take note and mark your calendars to attend the following:

Dominion Day, Wed. July 1, 2009

We are having a baseball game. Meet in Camrose at the depot at 1 pm. Ball game will likely be held at Ohaton. Everyone welcome.

July 31 to August 2

Big Valley Homecoming

Friday, August 7 & Sat., August 8

Camrose Founders Days

Saturday, October 3

Meeting Creek Harvest Festival

The Camrose Railway Park and Morgan Garden Railway, as well as the Meeting Creek Station and Grounds, and the Big Valley Heritage Railway station and Roundhouse Interpretive Centre is operated by volunteers from the Canadian Northern Society.

If you are interested in helping maintain, operate, manage and repair these facilities, please contact Janine in Camrose at 780 672 3099 and Kathy in Big Valley at 403 876 2033.

Individuals interested in participating in our volunteer board of directors, please contact Janine at the above number.

20 Years of Passenger Excursion

2009 marks 20 years of passenger excursion operations on the old Stettler Subdivision between Stettler and Big Valley, Alberta.

In recognition of a few of our “Railway Hall of Famers” and other similar deserving railway veterans, Alberta Prairie Railway and the Canadian Northern Society have invited a handful of special guests to join us for a special “Day on the Railway.”

These guests will join us for a nostalgic round-trip railway excursion between Stettler and Big Valley, Alberta on Sunday, August 2, 2009.

Upon arrival in Big Valley, they will enjoy:

- a wonderful country dinner buffet meal
- an opportunity to tour the former Canadian Northern Railway roundhouse interpretive centre and the heritage railway station.
- a chance to view ex-CN Mountain-type steam locomotive 6060, which will be on display as part of the Village of Big Valley’s Homecoming celebrations and Alberta Prairie’s annual “Rail Fan’s Special” weekend
- a brief program sponsored by the Canadian Northern Society that will provide some colourful background on the railway history of Big Valley and area.

The train, led by Alberta Prairie’s vintage steam locomotive No. 41, will depart Stettler (railway depot at 4611 47 Avenue) at 14:30, returning to Stettler at 19:25 the same evening.

Please feel welcome to volunteer at Big Valley on Sunday, August 2, if you wish, helping host our guests around the station and roundhouse. If interested please contact S.I. Smith 780 679 4008, sismith@cabl-lynx.net.

Alternatively, if you are interested in riding the train, tickets are available: Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions, Stettler, 403 742 2811.

Please note that the Rocky Mountain Rail Society is also holding its second annual “evening with the 6060” after the departure of the Alberta Prairie Train to Big Valley. Please contact the RMRS for further details.

We hope that you can join us for this wonderful opportunity to renew friendships.



Butch Whiteman (L) and Jim Hawthorne (R) representing the CN Pensioners Association, help Shawn Smith (2nd from L), a director of the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame, present Jim Munsey with a Canadian Railway Hall of Fame induction plaque during a pensioners meeting in Edmonton on May 22, 2009.

Camrose Happenings

In amongst the snow and cold weather we've experienced this spring, our station opening on May 16 turned out to be a beautiful warm day! We had a good turnout, excellent media support, including CFCW broadcasting from our location, all day and front-page coverage from both our papers—the *Camrose Booster* and *Camrose Canadian*.

We have one student hired for the summer—Lindsay Sims, third year Augustana student majoring in drama, and we also have for the summer Caitlin Gibson.

Our annual school programs are well underway. Our volunteer coordinator, Barb MacDonald, has taken a strong lead and is doing a great job, for which we are very appreciative! Barb has also joined our staff, taking a 10-hour-per-week position, contributing to the Collections Manager position, conducting research towards various projects. Our administrative assistant will also be contributing 10 hours per week towards the Collections position.

We have had some amazing events to celebrate spring! May 30 we held a garden theme menu and a plant swap and sale. Thank you for donations of plants or gardening books and magazines.

Celebrating First Nations on June 27 will include dance entertainment by The Red Thunder Next Generation, storytelling, children's craft, beading demonstrations, art displays and some delicious authentic food.

An annual favorite: The Old Fashioned Garden Party & Chocolate Festival, July 11. Jeppa's Train will be on site, there will be live music and entertainment and of course chocolate, lots and lots of chocolate!

The Railway Beanery Themed Lunch takes place on July 18; on July 25 we continue the tradition that we honour a community with a Tribute

to Round Hill. Displays and Ukrainian desserts will be available on July 23 and 24 with an amazing Ukrainian lunch menu planned for July 25.

August 1: Tribute to the War Years includes speakers and information about victory gardens; on August 8 we will be again actively participating in the Camrose Founders Day Festival. Under the "big top" a number of community art and craft groups will display and demonstrate their craft. Also on location will be the Camrose Camera Club and the Camrose Genealogical Association. We are very excited to have members of the local Horticultural Club display flowers and garden produce and members of the Camrose Spirals Jump Rope Club conduct demonstrations of this age-old sport throughout the day. Jeppa's Train will also be on site.

As always, Glenys appreciates all help given to these events. It takes community to fulfill our mandate and bring history alive; thankfully we have lots of fun with it! Glenys has asked that I take over coordinating volunteers for most of the events (she wants to spend more time in the garden) so if you can help with any of these events, please phone me at: Janine 780 672 3099 or email me at canadiannorthern@telus.net As well we have a few workshops and luncheons scheduled which we will need help with.

Successful Grants:

- Service Canada and STEP for students for the summer
- CIP for outside tables and chairs, matched funding for the speeder shed, replacement sidewalks
- Community Spirit Grant for the speeder shed
- AMA for interpretive displays
- We have received the Historic Resources grant monies for the painting of the Camrose Railway Station.

Completed Projects:

- Replacement of chairs in the Tearoom and King George Room (all matching—they look great!).
- Janine attended an Alberta Museums course in Lethbridge titled Programming and Public Trust
- Bruce has completed twinning the tracks in the Garden Railway—the entire little park looks amazing! It is such a unique display and deservingly attracts abundant attention from children and adults.
- Installation of security camera and monitor sighting the Garden Railway.

Upcoming Projects:

- Speeder Shed Interpretive Centre
- Outside painting
- Additional story board featuring information about Grand Trunk Pacific Railway
- Janine will be attending a Canadian Conservation Institute course in Mount Making on June 23 and 24 at the Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton.

Our thanks to the following for their generosity:

- CFCW—on site broadcast for our opening day
- Ron Pilger and the *Camrose Booster* for their front page pre-event coverage
- *The Camrose Canadian* for their front page picture of our opening day and for their pre-event coverage.
- St. Andrew's ACW—donation of garage sale items
- United Church—donation of garage sale items
- Stony Creek Lodge—donation of garage sale items
- Gunhild Berke—donation of beautiful crystal items
- Robbie O'Riordan for the tools and items for the tearoom
- Janine Carroll—unique antique juicer

Big Valley News

- Gladys and Bill Douglas—300 perogies, making of gingerbread for the kindergarten programs, gifts for the Garden Party
- Dorothy Lysons—muffins and cleaning liquid
- All those who baked—Carol Roy, Ann Reitan, Murray Roy (broth), Dorothy Lysons, Gladys Douglas, Carol Rawson, Elizabeth Bagdan, Tiffany Mitchell (I hope I haven't missed anyone!)
- All those who volunteered on our opening day—Ashleigh Dickson, Dustin Gagnon, Dorothy Lysons, Bruce and Glenys Smith
- Matilda Fleck—help in the garden
- And thanks also to Rebecca Bridger and Carla Thompson who do so much food preparation.
- Thank you to Society Director Brent and Shanna Cheek of Ardrossan for their generous cash donation.

A reminder to mark your calendars for the 2nd Annual Meeting Creek Harvest Festival on October 3.

Open noon to 5 p.m. at Meeting Creek Railway Station and Elevator. Elevator tours, hay wagon and speeder rides, carve a pumpkin, make a scarecrow.

Concession available serving our special hot dogs, homemade pies, pumpkin cookies and other goodies.

Janine Carroll

This like everywhere has been a challenging spring to try to get work done given the weather.

With the help of Phyllis Garrison, Donna Clark, and Lynn Palmer, we were able to clean and prime the station fence (next to the parking lot). As soon as we can we will be painting it again in the green you are all accustomed to.

Russ Evans and Andy Clarke cut down the carragana hedge in the station garden so that we can shape and maintain it at a more manageable height. Alice Faye Watts and Penny Clarke, and again Russ and Andy loaded the dump truck and hauled the branches away.

Mr. McCann and his Big Valley School grades 7 and 8s did a wonderful job of raking the station grounds and picking up paper along the railway tracks and right of way. Art Tizzard picked up all the bags and took them to our recycling area.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to keeping our station (and the garden and grounds) looking beautiful. The trains are again arriving for another busy season.

Kathy Evans

The community at large, and the entire Canadian Northern Society membership needs to give a big “pat on the back” and thank you to Kathy Evans of Big Valley. Kathy has been an excellent volunteer over the past year in maintaining the station and grounds. Her efforts often go unnoticed but the result of her work is the wonderful way that the site is being looked after and kept. From all of us who care about the past, present, and future of this unique heritage site and local beauty spot—a sincere thank-you to Kathy.

The Canadian Northern Society would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Canadian Heartland Training Railway. Although the station has not been used for any major training programs yet this year, CHTR continues to provide a monthly access fee for the site, in addition to helping pay for utilities. This arrangement continues to be beneficial for our society and we appreciate the support of CHTR.

Viking Celebrates 100 Years



Visit Viking on June 27!

The Town of Viking, along with many communities on both the Grand Trunk Pacific main line east of Edmonton, and the CP North Main Line east of Camrose, are celebrating centennials in 2009. It's hard to believe that a mere 100 years ago, the prairies stood alone against the skyline, without the railway, main streets, and beautiful residential areas that now mark our prairie towns and villages.

The Viking Station Gallery will be hosting tours and displays on June 27 between 1 and 4 p.m. A parade is a highlight featured at 10:00 am Saturday morning as part of Viking's three-day celebration.

The Grand Trunk Pacific railway station in Viking also marks its 100th birthday this year. Your Canadian Northern Society was

an active part of its preservation, and remains supportive of the efforts of the Station Gallery today. The station is now a big part of the wonderful community of Viking, always known for its cleanliness and winner of recent “Communities in Bloom” awards.

Meeting Creek News

Our contractor, Mr. Graham Chillingworth, has begun the task of replacing the rotted driveway approaches of our Alberta Pacific elevator. These wooden approaches, especially on the “south” side of the elevator, were no longer safe even to walk on, and Graham is working with as much original material as possible to restore accordingly. Once Graham has completed this task, he will turn his attention to repairs to our toolhouse, where Brent Cheek has identified a number of items requiring repair—including the floor joists, windows, and roofing.

We have hired Brittany Grey of Viking and her Student Works Painting team to tackle repainting the park gazebo, the depot fence, and the interior of the depot porch this summer of 2009. We are using our casino account funds and funding through the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for the above projects.

Thanks to Brent Cheek for the donation of the sofa for the depot living room, and to Dean and Lorrie Tiegs for their donation of the switchman’s lantern, switch lamp, and old-fashioned fire extinguisher for the elevator office.

Thank you to Lorene Bergstrom for her help pumping water from the depot sump earlier this spring, and to our “regular” Meeting Creek volunteers—Shawn and Liam Smith, Brent Cheek, Don Gillespie, and Norm Prestage for all of their routine help at the heritage site. Remember that there is always plenty of work at Meeting Creek for those who would like to get some exercise mowing grass and trimming weeds—or those who enjoy puttering around with odd jobs, painting, and repair work.

Close Call at Ardley



Article by Ed Plummer, Osoyoos, BC, edited by Allan Johnston, Big Valley, AB.

I hired on the CN, in Winnipeg in August 1951, in the 7th Seniority District. Due to cutbacks in traffic I was unable to hold a turn anywhere there so I was sent to Mirror (in the 9th Seniority District), at the end of February 1952. I made my first trip on March 1.

About six weeks later I was on a trip from Mirror to Calgary, firing for an engineer Fred Birchal. Starting early in the evening, on our return trip, we received a running order all the way to Mirror, with no meets. It was dark by the time we reached Three Hills and when the headlight lit up the train order board, it was in the clear position, indicating no need for us to stop. Just as we reached the station, the board suddenly dropped to red... so we had to stop. The agent told us that, although he was off duty, he lived upstairs in the station, and the continuous ringing of the dispatcher’s phone made him curious enough to go down to see what was going on. It turned out that a track maintenance employee from Ardley had gone for an evening walk and found that the bridge there had been taken out by an ice jam. We had to return to Calgary, from which we returned to Mirror, via the Drumheller Sub, Big Valley, Stettler and the CPR line to Alix.



The *Canora Chronicle* is the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Northern Society—a registered charity dedicated to providing community service through heritage tourism initiatives. The editors may be contacted through the Canadian Northern headquarters or directly at their home:

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