



the CANORA CHRONICLE

"Capturing history – Building community"

2010 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE!

Please send your membership to:
Canadian Northern Society
P.O. Box 142, Big Valley, AB T0J 0G0
or Box 1174, Camrose, AB T4V 1X2

Associate memberships are \$10
Full voting memberships are \$20
Thank you for your support.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & MEETING CREEK CLEAN-UP

Annual General Meeting and election of officers and the Meeting Creek station and elevator clean-up for the upcoming season will be held in Meeting Creek on April 24, 2010, starting at 10:30 a.m. with the annual meeting starting at 1:00 p.m.

Deadline for nominations will be April 22 for the positions of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and four director positions. Nominations can be e-mailed to Dean Tiegs at secretary@canadiannorthern.ca.

SEEKING LEADERS AND SUPPORTERS FOR BIG VALLEY

The society's efforts in preserving heritage railway depots have been successful only due to the dedication of volunteers and long-time supporters.

One of the society's projects that can use assistance year round is the maintenance of the railway station and roundhouse at Big Valley, Alberta, and the depot and grain elevator at Meeting Creek.

For more information please visit our website at canadiannorthern.ca or call Janine at 780 672 3099.

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Northern Society wishes to thank all of those who have stepped in to help keep watch over the Big Valley station while Kathy Evans has been on the mend. Thanks to Don Gillespie and his Alberta Prairie Railway staff, Joe Bracken of the Canadian Heartland Training Railway, Bob Willis, Russ Evans, S.I. Smith, Brent Cheek, Lois Miller, Donna Clark, Wayne and Phyllis Garrison, Art Tizzard, and all of you who just stopped by to make sure the furnace was running, and generally checked on the station this fall and winter.

The Canadian Northern Society would like to welcome a new member, Gladys Kupka of Camrose. Thank you for your support.

Appreciation and thanks go to the following people for their generous cash donations received with their annual memberships: Harry R.J. Home of Jasper, Mike Westren of Calgary, Leslie Kozma of Edmonton, Ray Taylor of Bashaw, Dean and Lorrie Tiegs of Edmonton, and Carl Leamon of Westport, Connecticut. Thank you also to the cash donations received from Zarski's Auto Body and Norm Meyer both of Camrose.

Long-time member Harry Home of Jasper has written the society asking if any of our membership might know what the recipe was for the CNR christmas pudding that was available in the stations and on passenger trains in the 1960s-70s? Yes, it was good, and it survived into VIA times. Does anyone have any ideas? If so, please send the recipe to the Canadian Northern Society and we will pass it along to Harry.

Harry also passes along his best for a healthy new year to all of the Canadian Northern Society membership.



Meeting Creek in the 1930s—Peterson Brothers Hardware store, located on Main Street, had a thriving business serving local needs.
Photo courtesy of Jerry and Lorene Bergstrom of Meeting Creek.

JOIN THE CANADIAN NORTHERN SOCIETY FOR A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION!

Friday, April 23, 2010, marks the 100th anniversary of the very day that the Canadian Northern Railway's track-laying gangs entered the community of Camrose, pushing its Vegreville to Drumheller branch south towards the grain country of central Alberta and the coal reserves of the Drumheller region.

All our members and friends of the society are invited to join the Canadian Northern Society for an open house and program at the Camrose Railway Park, where we will celebrate this significant anniversary. It's your chance to learn about the heritage of this pioneer railway, its continuing legacy, and the ongoing community development work of the Canadian Northern Society.

Friday, April 23, 2010, Camrose Railway Park, 4407 47 Avenue, Camrose, Alberta
Open house begins at 2:00 pm, program at 3:00 pm

Complimentary cake and refreshments following the program.



Canadian Northern Railway depot at Stettler, circa 1915. This fine example of a Standard Second Class station is now preserved at the Stettler Town and Country Museum. Alberta Prairie Railway's Stettler station now occupies the original site of this depot.

mond. While the spikes were being driven the band played, children frolicked, while the older ones looked on with interest.” (*Stettler Independent*, 15 June 1910)

Looking for a great way to celebrate this centennial? Alberta Prairie Railway just happens to be operating one of their regular excursion trains leaving Stettler at 1100 Sunday, June 13, to Big Valley, returning at 1555. Bring the family and enjoy Alberta Prairie's unique brand of prairie hospitality. For prices and reservations call 403 742 2811.

100 YEARS AT STETTLER — ANOTHER CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY CENTENNIAL MILESTONE!

Similar to the April 23 centennial event that will take place at Camrose, Sunday, June 13, will be another historic anniversary for the old Canadian Northern Railway in central Alberta. At 1500k, it will be exactly one hundred years to the date that the Canadian Northern steel-laying outfit arrived at the crossing of the CPR Lacombe branch at Stettler and installed the diamond, allowing construction of the Battle River Subdivision to continue south to the station grounds, and eventually to Big Valley and beyond.

“...a large number of citizens headed by the Stettler band, marched down to where the Canadian Northern intersects the CPR line, and witnessed the placing of the dia-

CAMROSE NEWS

An organizational meeting took place on January 12, 2010, at the Camrose Railway Station to form a new group to be known as “Friends of the Station.”

“Friends of the Station” is essentially a group of people who volunteer their time and services individually and collectively to uphold and support the aims and visions of the Camrose Railway Station and the Canadian Northern Society. Membership is open to all—men, women and youth—who are interested in the preservation and promotion of railway and early

prairie history.

2010 is an exciting time to establish this group as it coincides with the 100th anniversary (April 23) of the CN tracks reaching Camrose. The following year, 1911, the first CN train station was completed in Camrose.

We are looking forward to being part of the celebrations for these two upcoming commemorations in addition to the many other activities taking place at the station.

Robbie O’Riordan

Sincere thanks to the following people for their donations:

Carol and Murray Roy: sketches and prints of significant early Camrose structures. Murray also donated the wood for new composters.

Richard and Marianne Yamabee: donation of oak Canadian clock from 1800s. The clock has been repaired and hangs in the tea room.

Duane Riske: costume dress and two high-neck blouses.

Shawn Smith brought in a paper collection with many filled in documents from Duhamel along with other early forms. They contain way

bills, telegrams, stores requisitions. One significant form is an original labelled Mackenzie, Mann & Company Ltd used by Canadian Northern employee J. Moody. These will make wonderful display items once they are copied.

Thank you to Bruce Smith for changing the bathroom sinks and taps. They are the same sinks only in better condition. Also installing the new washer and dryer. The public health inspector required that we replace the old ones. He also stripped and waxed all the floors, installed additional shelves in the old kitchen after the cupboards were painted. Bruce has built two large wooden composters for the garden and finished the restoration of the velocipede. He also built a plate rail for the King George Room. We now will house our royal collection in this room. Bruce also does the majority of snow removal around the buildings.

Doug Freeman has been data basing in the library and has completed the magazines and almost completed the books. I have reorganized the files according to established categories and new labels are being put on each file to make access easier. These files will also be data based.

Thank you to Barb McDonald who has organized and booked all the school programs for May and June. She has worked diligently at completing updated signage for the bunk house and speeder shed. Barb is now working on the inside watchman's shed interpretation. She has been paid some hours through the AMA grant that we received last year and will continue until this grant money is used. Completing the upgrading of the signage in and out of the station has been a true team effort as Janine, Lorrie, Bruce, Shawn, Brent, Barb and I have all had parts of the process. Proofs of the signs are now being made at Woodwind Signs. We have applied for a grant through

Alberta Museums to help offset the cost of this project.

Thank to all who helped in any way with the Valentine's Supper. 52 guests attended and it was a great success. Thank you to Carol Rawson, Carol and Murray Roy, Barb McDonald, Robbie O'Riordan, Hilda Saddleback, Ashleigh Dickson, Cheryl and Norm Prestage, Bill and Gladys Douglas, Gladys Kupka, Bruce and Glenys Smith and Janine. Special thank you to Joanne Hildebrandt, our caterer, who donated her time to cook an absolutely fabulous gourmet meal. Lyndee Olsen also donated his time. He played classical guitar music through the supper. The decorations were wonderful thanks to Carol Roy and Robbie. Thank you to Janine's son John for shovelling snow prior to the event.

We have a volunteer that does his work with no direction. His name is Dan. Every snowfall he comes and cleans the parking lot with his truck and blade. What a wonderful contribution.

Many changes have taken place this winter. With the lottery money a window has been installed between the tea room and kitchen for serving meals. A cupboard has been installed under the window for storage and also as a counter for buffets. An AV centre has been installed at the south end of the tea room consisting of a cabinet with storage and a 52-inch TV monitor. We will be marketing to small businesses to consider the station for AGM's and meetings. We have regular customers who use the station for this purpose, but it can now be increased to add revenue.

The opening hours for the tea room will see some changes for the coming season. Saturday will be the only day for goodies and lunch. The other days the station and grounds will be open and cookies, tea and coffee will be available on a self-serve basis. The focus will change to interpretation and

experiential activities. Our students will be in character for visitors to the station.

We will continue to take group bookings to which Joanne will cater.

Glenys Smith

Mark your calendars for the following events at the Camrose Railway Station and Park:

March 27

Annual Hot Cross Bun Tea and Children's Easter Egg Hunt

May 22

Opening Day for the Museum, Park and Tea room

May 31 - June 4

Plant sale and swap (donations of plants, pots, planters, plant books and magazines welcome)

June 21

Celebrating First Nations

June 26

Our Dominion Day Celebration including a tribute to Czechoslovakian Settlers

July 17

Tribute to the Community of Armena

August 7

Summer Berry Theme Lunch, tribute to Pioneer Women of the Camrose District

August 14

Founders Day Festival

Q: What do you call rabbits that marched in a long sweltering Easter parade?

A: Hot, cross bunnies.

Q: Why are people always tired in April?

A: Because they just finished a march.

MILES MADE - RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRAIRIE RAILROADER

Over the last five years, volunteers from the Canadian Northern Society have been busy collecting the hand-written memories of Walter Kittler and placing them into a simple bound volume of recollections. The result is an interesting collection in Walter's own words of stories and memories from his childhood, his days as a conductor on the

CNR from 1948 to the 1980s, and his stories of "short-lining" with the Alberta Prairie Railway for the last twenty years.

Entertaining and enlightening, Walter's memories are a must for anyone interested in the life and times of a true prairie railroader, and that of a fine gentleman who is respected and loved by all who know him.

Limited copies of Walter's recollections are available for a price of \$25.00 per copy by contacting

Janine Carroll of our society at canadiannorthern@telus.net, or by Royal Mail at the society's Camrose address. Orders to be shipped please include \$3.00 for postage.

Perhaps if there is enough interest, Walter's memories may form the basis for a future Canadian Northern Society publication. Maybe a good start for *Along These Lines* Volume 2... anyone interested in leading that project?

UPGRADES TO THE BIG VALLEY STATION AND OPEN HOUSE

Since mid-January, Don Gillespie and a capable group of short-line carpenters from Alberta Prairie Railway have been working to repair and restore the express room of the Big Valley station.

In the mid-1970s, the depot express room was "modernized" for alternate uses, including the housing of a photograph display that would eventually form part of today's wonderful Big Valley Historical Society Museum collection. A drop tile ceiling, fluorescent lighting, and wall panelling concealed the original lath and plaster and wainscoting finishes, and regrettably some of the original interior features were destroyed in this undertaking.

Last fall, the Big Valley Historical Society, who had been using the room for many years, moved the remaining artifacts and collectables that were housed in the building across the street to the McAlister's Garage. This presented an opportunity to restore the express room for continued community use, using the historical themes presented throughout the interior of the station.

As a result of the work led by Don and his building crew, the express

room will soon emerge as a community meeting room that will be available for use by local organizations, for railway training purposes, and for continued historical interpretation of Big Valley and area. Some interesting new displays of railroading, models, antique plates, and artwork will also complement the existing station interior. In addition to badly needed insulation and electrical upgrades, original finishes that remain in place have been retained, and the interior of the room will reflect the appearance of the express room when it was in railway service. Upon completion of the project, we will be furnishing the room with a meeting room table, chairs, and eventually plan to have audio-visual equipment available. Don is donating as his personal contribution his time to this effort, and he is building as a further contribution two beautiful wooden boardroom type tables that will seat around 16 people for the meeting room. Historical photographs and artifacts reflecting the Canadian Northern Railway together with those from Big Valley's past will be shown.

Special thanks to Don Gillespie and the Alberta Prairie Railway team for their leadership on this project, and to the Canadian Heartland Training Railway for their contribution. The remainder of the funding for the project came from our society's casino proceeds. For those who have volunteered for these casino events in the past here is an excellent example what your contribution means to heritage preservation and to the community-at-large.

An open house will be held at the Big Valley station on Saturday, March 27, from 11 am to 3 pm. The open house will be a great opportunity for society supporters as well as the public to view the upgraded community meeting room in the station, take a guided tour through the station, and to learn about Alberta Prairie Railway's plans for 2010. Canadian Northern Society's efforts, and the work of Canadian Heartland Training Railway will be showcased. *Please plan to attend this open house and show your support for all the work that has taken place to make the station a true community centrepiece.*

The *Canora Chronicle* is the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Northern Society—a registered charity dedicated to providing community service through heritage tourism initiatives.

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