



the CANORA CHRONICLE

"Capturing history – Building community"

The Canadian Northern Society mourns one of its charter members

Keith Ewart of Saskatoon, SK, had a keen sense of history. He was a founding member of and a major contributor to the Canadian Northern Society. He made it a point to attend the annual meetings and get-togethers, never letting the distance get in the way.

Keith loved to travel and nowhere was this more evident than in the large-scale heritage projects that he undertook over the years. He crossed and re-crossed the prairies, taking photographs of railway depots, grain elevators and highway bridges. Incredibly, he managed to track down virtually every extant railway station in Saskatchewan. He documented these stations with great care, and he was very proud when he published his two-volume set dealing with this fascinating subject. This and his extensive collection of photographs, now safely ensconced in archives, will be a bounty to future researchers.

His contributions to the Saskatchewan Railway Museum were countless and they are legend. He undertook the researching and the painstaking restoration of numerous stations on the property. Further, he was a long standing member of the executive.

It was this passion, his sincerity and his humbleness that endeared him to his colleagues. We are all saddened by Keith's passing, and we will miss him greatly. But we are all grateful to have known him and we recognize and appreciate his legacy.

~ Les Kozma

Acknowledgements

Sincere thank you to The Gwyn Morgan and Patricia Trottier Foundation for their generous donation to the society's continued operations.

The society thanks Walter Kittler of Mirror, AB, Charles W. Bohi of White River Junction, VT, and Ernest Shatz of Oliver, BC, for their generous cash donations sent in with their membership renewals.

Thank you to Shawn and Karen Smith and family of Camrose, AB, for the recent donation towards painting work at Meeting Creek.

The Canadian Northern Society welcomes a new member, Donald Wilson of Regina, SK.

Thank you to Don Gillespie for once again performing the annual maintenance and installation on the Meeting Creek washrooms pump.

Thank you to Peter Didrichsen for the generous cash donation received with his annual membership renewal, and for the donation of two fine books for the society library; *The Golden Age of Canadian Railways* and *Built for War*.

Thank you to Kathy Evans for her continued dedication to the maintenance and operation of the Big Valley station. Kathy once again has worked so hard to keep the depot and grounds immaculate, open the building for visitors—including several school groups this spring, and put on coffee for the annual open house in June. Thanks to S.I. Smith and Peter Didrichsen for also helping with the open house, and to all of those who simply dropped in for coffee and to visit.

Thank you to Clayton and Ruth Jones of Surrey, BC, for the very kind donation of several large framed photographs and maps that can be used in circulating and permanent displays at our sites. In addition, we thank the Joneses for their donation of the station name sign from Spruce Grove, AB, and several miscellaneous railway artifacts that will soon be put on display.

Thank you to Lorrie and Dean Tieggs for their continued dedicated service to getting the *Canora Chronicle* prepared and out to all of the membership. This is a big commitment and job—and is sincerely appreciated by the many readers who comment on the quality and interesting items found regularly in our organization's newsletter.

Gratitude and thanks from the society to over 60 volunteers that helped make the 50/50 Oilers game casino on March 26 a success. We had many volunteers from Edmonton, Camrose and area that are not members of the society, but simply knew someone who is and came out to support our group. Again, thank you!

CAMROSE NEWS AND EVENTS

At the Camrose Railway Station we just finished hosting a travelling exhibit, created by K. Linda Tsang, the Cultural Communities Curator at the Royal Alberta Museum titled *Chop Suey on the Prairies: A Reflection of Chinese Restaurants in Alberta*. It was very exciting to have here and enabled us to research our community history in this area. We were able to collect some interesting local narrative history that will be preserved in the archives. Thanks to Barb McDonald for her hours of work preparing the event and to Bruce Smith for helping set up and take down the exhibit.

Camrose Railway Station celebrates its 100th birthday on Saturday, August 13, during Camrose Founders Days Festival. We invite all Canadian Northern members to join Les Kozma, Shawn Smith and Brent Cheek for Historical presentations with discussion, 11 am - 3:00 pm.

- 11 am - noon, Shawn Smith, co-founder of the Canadian Northern Society, presents a discussion "Grain Elevators of Camrose County," a historical presentation detailing the historical role and contribution of the grain industry on the Camrose region.
- 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Community historian Les Kozma presents "Camrose, the Railway City," providing an illustrational talk on the railway history of Camrose and area.
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm, join Brent Cheek for a "Prairie Snap-Shot" presentation. Through a series of spectacular photographs travel and learn more about historical landmarks of the Canadian Prairies.
- 3:30 pm, 100th Birthday Celebration of the Station.

Members, please join us for this afternoon of historical reflection and for a piece of delicious home-baked centennial celebration carrot cake.

The complete Founders Day schedule can be found at

www.camrosefoundersdays.com.

Just prior to the Founders Days weekend, we will need help sorting and setting up for the White Elephant Sales table. If anyone has time to assist us with this please join us.

Reminder that we have baking bees scheduled August 10 and 11 in preparation for Founders Days. We traditionally serve home-baked pie, so we will be getting together to prepare.

We also would greatly appreciate help at the Camrose Station during the last two weeks of August and first week of September, assisting in the garden and helping water.

The Camrose Station will be hosting their 2nd annual Tribute to Pioneer Women, Saturday, August 6. Four women will share stories and experiences of their pioneer ancestors—an excellent afternoon. We will be needing some extra help hostessing and welcoming visitors on this day, please let us know if you would be able to help.

Canadian Northern will host a casino in Red Deer August 9 and 10. There are a couple of positions left to fill, if you would like to help please call Janine at 780-672-3099.

Meeting Creek Harvest Festival news: we were successful in getting

a grant to allow us to add a second day to this event and become an Alberta Arts Festival Destination Site! On Friday, September 30, we will explore Native culture with dance, music, storytelling and displays. The Meeting Creek valley is a splendid site for this cultural celebration and we have invited several county schools to attend.

On Saturday, October 1, the second day of the Festival, we will again centre on the harvest theme, similar to the last several years of successful events. The grant does allow us to have increased entertainment! Be sure to come and enjoy this and other events, and if you can help, we welcome you to, please call Janine 780-672-3099. If you have any ideas or suggestions to share, we welcome them.

Prairie Fun Days is an initiative lead by the Camrose Station in partnership with the Camrose County. We have designed a driving tour with 11 county destinations, including our very own incredible Meeting Creek Railway Station. Pick up a brochure (available at Tourism Information Centres, at the County Office, and at the Camrose Railway Station), and join in—there are many wonderful sites to tour, great food, history and nature to explore.



A group of students who attended a recent summer camp day at the station show off their crafts.

Thanks to Alberta Prairie for once again providing us with some great raffle prizes—two sets of two adult fares on their steam train excursions with meal! Thanks also to Carol and Murray Roy who donated a piece of original driftwood artwork. Be sure to get your tickets, just \$2 each or 3/\$5, available at the Camrose Station. The raffle draw date is August 27, 2011.

Thanks to:

Dianna Nichol - donation of many flower art pictures for sale in the White Elephant Gift Shop.

Carol Roy for her endless energy helping in the garden.

Shirley Macintosh Family for the many items donated to the gift shop and for a large trunk.

Everyone who helped with the opening day of the Station Café, serving, baking prep and cooking.

Thanks to the many outstanding volunteers who helped with the school programs.

Peggy Shuman and Margarite Rhine for collecting so many items needed for the school programs.

Gale and Doug Freeman for their donation of an excellent print which we have for sale.

A huge thanks to the City of Camrose for help with our pruning project and for help with beautification of our site in preparation for events and celebrations.

Thanks to Jim Huber for help with some mechanical work on one of the track cars.

~ Janine Carroll

IN HISTORY

- 1886-08-13 (125 years ago): Sir John A. Macdonald drives the last spike at mile 25, Cliffside, on the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway on Vancouver Island. The line became part of Canadian Pacific in 1905.

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Canadian Northern Society**

MEETING CREEK EVENTS

Meeting Creek's 100th anniversary centennial parade was held on June 13. The Canadian Northern Society and Alberta Prairie entered the excellent parade. With Karen Smith, Glenys Smith, and Adam Smith riding on the float—the society won a third place prize! (Photo below, left) The weekend that features an annual fun baseball tournament saw a good stream of visitors to the depot.



In June, we also were able to finally complete some repairs to the missing siding on the Meeting Creek elevator and the driveway doors thanks to a contract with Blue Bronna Painting.

Prairie Fun Days is August 20 and 21 at the Meeting Creek Railway Station and Grain Elevator. On Saturday, August 20, we will be having a work party at Meeting Creek. Please join us for this event and for beef on a bun with happy hour to follow. It all starts around 10:30 in the morning. It would be great to have as many volunteers as possible to help with the work that continues to accumulate around the site, and join in the fellowship and fun.

Sincere thanks to Meeting Creek volunteers: S.I. Smith, Adam and Liam Smith, Bruce Smith, Don Gillespie, Lorene Bergstrom, and Janine Carroll for your work this summer. More volunteers are always welcome.

BIG VALLEY UPDATE

Once again, as it does each year—the Big Valley depot grounds and park look beautiful thanks to the local volunteers who care for the site. Kathy Evans reports that the station was the site in June for a country music video featuring Alberta Prairie locomotive 41 and western Canadian singer Gord Bamford. The community room is seeing regular use from Canadian Heartland Training Railway and meetings of local Big Valley organizations. This was Don Gillespie's vision for this truly community facility and it is nice to see local groups take advantage of this.

We are undertaking significant maintenance work around the station to clean up deferred items like cracked window glass, shingle deterioration, and needed repairs to the train order signal. In addition, we are getting a head start on painting the exterior trim in advance of next years centennial celebrations in Big Valley. Thanks to Don Gillespie and his staff at Alberta Prairie—including Rich Graydon who is now on staff there (and a member of the Rocky Mountain Rail Society) we have had great contracted help to undertake these repairs.

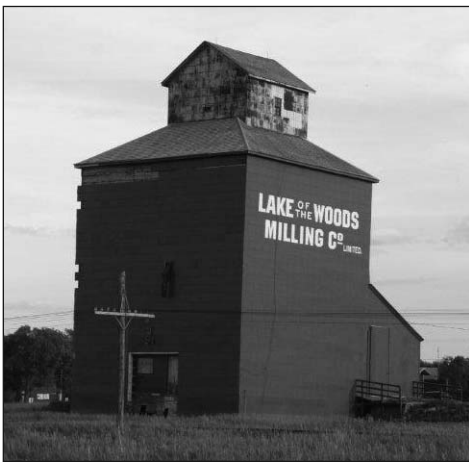
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The Big Valley roundhouse site has also been the focus of some recent attention as there is deterioration noted on some of the concrete in the area of the opening between the former backshop area and the locomotive stalls. On behalf of the Village of Big Valley who own the roundhouse site, the Canadian Northern Society is working with the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation to determine the best course for these repairs.

Brent Cheek and S.I. Smith were recently at Canora, SK, and dropped off some artifacts and items for the depot there—including storm windows for the second storey. The depot at Canora continues to be well-maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers, and the Canadian Northern Society is proud of our association with this effort. Our annual contribution is towards the cost of insuring this heritage site.

The Viking, AB station gallery features an excellent Sunday brunch in the depot café during the summer months, and the tea room is open regularly on weekdays. Check out the homemade food at this site that also continues to be supported by our group.

FLEMING, SASKATCHEWAN RALLIES TO REPLACE HISTORIC GRAIN ELEVATOR



Lake of the Woods elevator at Fleming, SK, August 2009. ©S.I. Smith

It was a grim day February 9, 2010, when the hardworking residents of Fleming, SK, located just across the Manitoba border along the Trans Canada Highway, awoke to find their recently restored, nationally-recognized historic grain elevator was engulfed in flames. A press release issued shortly after the fire stated that the RCMP were treating the fire as suspicious. On May 2, over a year later, another press release was issued stating that two Manitoba men have been arrested in relation to the crime that destroyed the historical Lake of the Woods Milling

Co. elevator and are facing charges for arson. Fleming mayor Philip Hamm was relieved that arrests had been made. For years before the devastating fire, the community had rallied together to restore the historical structure. “We’d been working on it informally since the year 2000 when we were able to get United Grain Growers to stop the demolition of the elevator,” explained Hamm. “In 2004, Agricore United acquired the land and the elevator from the Canadian Pacific Railway and turned them over to the Town of Fleming for a dollar.” From then on, the townspeople of Fleming worked tirelessly to renovate the elevator, which had been designated as a provincial as well as national historical structure. Built in 1895, it was recognized as the oldest grain elevator in Canada and the only elevator in North America with its particular hip roof design. “We valued it not only locally, but nationally as well. We were very proud to have it,” says Hamm. In the fall of 2009, their hard work paid off when their pride and joy was awarded the Lieutenant Governor Award for exterior renovation of a historical

project. Unfortunately, their efforts were rendered futile mere months later.

Not wanting the arsonists’ actions to dismiss their ambitions, the town refused to accept defeat. Several discussions were conducted as to what could be done; the construction of a replica was seriously considered until they were approached in the summer of 2010 by the owner of a former Wheat Pool elevator in Doonside, SK, who was willing to gift them the structure. Thirty years newer and of the same slope-shouldered design as most elevators of the early 1920s, they found that the elevator was in excellent condition. Having decided to move the newer structure to Fleming, the town has once again thrown themselves into the task of fundraising to cover the cost of its transport. “After the fire, we decided to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and see what we could do,” says Hamm. “We can’t have our elevator, but we can save another.” They are planning on running tours through the functioning elevator once it has been moved and slight repairs have been made.

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

Canadian Northern Society, P.O. Box 1174, Camrose, AB T4V 1X2 / Ph: (780) 672-3099 / Email: canadiannorthern@telus.net

Editors: Dean and Lorrie Tiegs / Ph: 780 484 4038 / Email: secretary@canadiannorthern.ca; Contributor: Shawn Smith

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