



# the CANORA CHRONICLE

*"Capturing history – Building community"*

## TAX CREDIT

Are you looking for a year-end tax credit? The society's efforts provide both community and economic benefits. Operated by volunteers, the Canadian Northern Society is a registered charity.

We appreciate your support.

## 2012 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE IN JANUARY

Please send your membership to:  
Canadian Northern Society  
Box 1174, Camrose, AB T4V 1X2

Associate memberships are \$10  
Full voting memberships are \$20

*Thank you for your support.*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Looking to meet new people and volunteer your time towards your community?*

Visit [www.canadiannorthern.ca](http://www.canadiannorthern.ca) for more information on volunteer opportunities within our society.

It was a cold and misty Christmas morning in the very depth of winter after a heavy fall of snow and only one farmer and the minister managed to arrive at the church for the morning service.

"Well," said the clergyman, "I guess there's no point in having a service today." "Well that's not how I see it," said the farmer. "If only one cow turns up at feeding time, I still feed it."

## Acknowledgements

The Canadian Northern Society would like to welcome Ernie Beskowiney from Benalto, AB, as a new member to our society. Within the next year Ernie will be working closely with the society as we have donated the wooden caboos now residing beside the Big Valley station to Ernie. Ernie is developing a private display on his property in a goal to facilitate fund-raising for the children's hospitals in the province. Over the years the wooden caboos has severely deteriorated in the elements and Ernie has taken on the project of complete restoration. With his model builder and wood working talents, as well as the tools, equipment and shop facilities needed to get the job done, the society is very pleased to have Ernie wanting to preserve and restore the caboos. We look forward to working with Ernie on the relocation of the caboos and finally seeing this caboos looking like it once did!

Ernie is planning to recognize the donation by the Canadian Northern Society by ensuring that the caboos retains its "Canadian Northern" lettering, and with special mention to the volunteers from our group and the Village of Big Valley who looked after this caboos over the years. We are delighted to be contributing to Ernie's project and this worthy cause.

Expect more on this project and story in later additions of the *Chronicle*.

See more of Ernie's projects by visiting [www.newwestlivesteam.com](http://www.newwestlivesteam.com).

**To all our members,  
friends and volunteers:  
there is no time more  
fitting to say THANK YOU  
and to wish you a Happy  
Holiday Season and a  
Joyous New Year !**



## CAMROSE NEWS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks to the following for time spent or donations to our society:

- Carol and Ted Rawson for carrots and potatoes for the station and their down home hospitality. Thank you to Dorothy, Robbie and Bruce who helped dig at the Rawson farm.
- All the volunteers who helped with Meeting Creek Harvest Festival and the pie-making bee prior. Thanks to Karen, Liam and Adam Smith for making and decorating the pumpkin cookies. A special thank you to Loreen Bergstrom for all the assistance she gave in planning and delivery of both days of the festival. Thank you to Janine for all her preliminary planning plus grant application. Michele Wallace for her father's display at Meeting Creek.
- The Hutchinson family who spent the day and loaned their artifacts to tell the story of Lew Hutchinson, a pioneer contributor to the farmers in the Central Alberta area. A story board has been placed in the elevator and his wife's Barb's story is in the archives and library. Thank you to Cathy Andreassen for presenting the story. Community connections have been built again.
- To Dave Hutchinson for two recent memorial donations to the society.
- Donations of books and artifacts plus memorial donation on behalf of Roy Nixon. A memorial plaque will be prepared in his memory.
- A donation of a memorial large painting by Andra Brown on behalf of Wilfred and Katherine Hrudko. Wilfred worked for CN and CP and worked on this section for a period of time.
- Evelyn Hrydko for a painting that was given to her husband during the time he worked for CN.
- To Sandra and Craig McLay for donating a large amount of quality gifts to the gift shop.
- To Glenys and Bruce Smith for helping prepare and serve at the Volunteer Appreciation Supper held on October 22. To Janine Carroll and all the other volunteers who helped with dishes and donated food, thank you. 40 people were in attendance.
- All who have donated and supported the Christmas gift shop. We have been open on Thursdays and are doing well. The first Thursday open we sold \$274.00 worth of gifts and introduced many new people to the station.
- To Canada World Youth for helping to wash Garden pots and do yearly cleaning of the Freight Shed.
- To Bruce, Ann Reitan, Gladys Douglas, Janine, Dorothy, Carol Rawson for helping with thorough cleaning of the Kitchen and King George Room.
- Carol Roy, Barb MacDonald, Eleanor White for decorating the inside of the station for Christmas.
- Robbie O'Riordan for many hours of work sorting and setting up the gift shop for Christmas. Debbie Dickson for her help.
- Bruce Smith for decorating the outside for Christmas and snow removal.
- Carol and Murray Roy for making Christmas puddings for the Cookie Walk held on December 3.

Congratulations to Gwyn Morgan, a generous donor to the society, for being inducted to the Order of Canada on November 3. He received the award for his important contributions as a business and community leader in Alberta. He was founding executive officer of EnCana Corporation and instrumental in creating one of the most successful oil and gas companies in the world. He was recognized for his commitment to broadening public policy discourse in Canada, which he has helped to advance through participation in organizations such as the Canadian Public Forum and the Manning Center for Democracy. As well his philanthropic support has benefited health care and educational initiatives in Canada.

The Station continues to receive bookings that can be accommodated without harm to our historic building. Our first Christmas booking was the Bittern Lake Historical Society. Bruce presented a history talk and tour of the station.

The next upcoming event at the station will be on March 31, 2012 for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Mark your calendars and join us for a family fun day.

~ Janine Carroll and Glenys Smith

### MEETING CREEK

As always, we are seeking new volunteers and interest in preserving the Meeting Creek station and grain elevator. Our plans for 2012 are modest, but include:

- repairs to the outdoor privy (siding and paint)
- exterior paint of the walkway and doors from the elevator office to driveway
- continued landscaping work around the station.
- continued parging repair around the base of the station

Thank you to Bruce Smith, Don Gillespie, Shawn, Liam, and Adam Smith for the winterization activities.

We were unable to find a suitable contractor to perform an assessment on the Meeting Creek elevator foundation (and the Big Valley roundhouse concrete walls) this summer, however working with Alberta Historical Resources Foundation—it appears we may have now contacted an interested party in Edmonton. We would hope to complete this assessment in 2012.

Lastly, we are going to need to begin thinking of a replacement lawn tractor for Meeting Creek. "Massey" may just about be ready for retirement! We will look at alternatives in spring 2012.

## BIG VALLEY STATION FACELIFT COMPLETE

A walk down to the Big Valley Railway station will reveal a large amount of work performed this summer and fall by the Canadian Northern Society in completing some emergent repairs on the structure, together with a full re-painting of major portions of the exterior.

Thanks to cash contributions by Alberta Lotteries, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions, Canadian Heartland Training Railway, and various individual members of the society—a major investment has been made in the continued preservation of the station that included significant repair work on the roof and historical window frames of the station.

Sincere thanks are due to Don Gillespie of Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions who donated all of his personal time to the cause—co-ordinating repair work, and undertaking specialty repairs that his talents are so valued for. In addition, Big Valley volunteers Russ and Kathy Evans, Phyllis and Wayne Garrison, Alice-Faye Watts, Rosco, and Members of the Beautification Group are to be commended for their help. Also, thank you to the Mailer family for helping Kathy all summer with the janitorial work around the depot—this is greatly appreciated. Thanks also to Richard Graydon, who as an employee of Alberta Prairie involved in the project—also volunteered his time and is now another interested member of the wider community of individuals who have been willing to help ensure that this important heritage site continues to be preserved.

It takes a great deal of effort and dedication to maintain a nearly 100-year-old heritage building like the Big Valley station to be one of the centrepiece attractions in the community. In this regard, thanks as well to all of those who participated in the August Casino where the Canadian Northern Society was able to raise a great deal of the funding that will be applied toward this project. *Your volunteer efforts are sincerely appreciated.*

2012 will mark the 100th year of service of the Big Valley railway station to the community. Look for a special event next summer to help celebrate.

I would again like to thank all those who helped me to keep the station looking so good for the many tourists this season. This year Prairie Steam brought approximately 20,000 passengers to our station. We have had 57 regular trains, two unscheduled, and three Christmas trains arriving November 26, December 3 and 10. We are proud of our restored signal arm that now shines brightly, especially for our evening train arrivals.

*Merry Christmas everyone with all the best  
for the coming year!*

*~ Kathy Evans*

## LLOYDMINSTER RAILWAY BRIDGE COLLAPSES



October 11, railway overpass collapses in Lloydminster.

© CBC News Posted: Oct. 11, 2011 and photo

A railway overpass in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan has collapsed after it was torn off its mounts.

A tractor-trailer carrying a track hoe hit the bridge, which RCMP said had a clearance of 5.1 metres, at about 2:30 p.m. CT, causing the collapse.

“It’s right down to the ground. I mean, it’s completely collapsed,” said Lloydminster Mayor Jeff Mulligan. “The structure is ostensibly in one piece, but the section that’s otop of what would be the west-bound side of the highway is completely collapsed.”

The driver of the truck was unharmed.

The accident on the east side of the city has forced the closure of Highway 16 in Lloydminster, which straddles the Alberta-Saskatchewan border.

Traffic has been halted in both directions and is being rerouted around the city. CP Rail workers have been sent out to assess the damage. The company says it will maintain service in the area while repairs are made.

## A RAILWAY TALE — “I REMEMBER BILL”

I arrived as a spare brakeman in Hanna in the fall of 1950. After a day or so of looking around, I settled in for room and board in a private residence with a married couple and two toddler boys. This was my launching pad for going to new places, seeking new adventure, and meeting fellow employees. In order not to disturb the family during night hours, I arranged to have the call boy call me in person by coming and knocking on my bedroom window, giving me the call which I would answer by flashlight, sending him on his way.

I received numerous calls this way and met quite a number of fellow employees, but it wasn’t until the spring of 1951 that I received an unusual call in the middle of the night, telling me to deadhead to

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Drumheller by freight to be there in time for the 7 o'clock wayfreight to Big Valley, Stettler, and Camrose.

After spending half of the night trying to reach Drumheller, I arrived at the station on the advertised and scouted around for the crew I was supposed to work with. Someone pointed to an elderly gentleman in the office saying, "there is the conductor you are looking for." He responded by saying "Hello, I am Bill Campbell, and your mate Follie Feth will be along shortly and he'll tell you what there is to do."

Until then, my experience had been that older conductors did not take warmly to a new and inexperienced brakeman. However, Bill seemed unconcerned. I noticed that whereas I was just beginning my career, he was working towards the close of his. I immediately admired the man. He was a tall man and walked erect, he had a wealth of experience behind him, he looked like a walking library, yet he said very little. He wore an old tie and an old passenger train uniform coat. There is a proverb that says "A man's hands and feet do all of the work, but it's his tie that gets all the gravy." Bill's tie looked like it had had its fair share.

Later, Folie Feth and I rounded up the equipment, got our train together—which was quite short this day—and left Drumheller on time. We headed towards Munson Junction, which later was baptized Dinosaur. Our duties were mainly to deliver goods to every station along the line, such as large cases of milk, beans, wooden boxes of apples and oranges, sacks of sugar and flour, and other household items. I rode the steam engine as head end man up the scenic prairie.

Bill's duties were the handling of

paperwork such as waybills, which were considerable. He also did the cooking for the crew. At Rowley, I was sent to the caboose on an errand and while there I noticed that Bill had a dozen "refreshments" stashed between the mattress and his desk, one of which he had opened and had it standing up in the top desk drawer, with the desk drawer closed enough to wedge the neck of the bottle. That way, the engineer could jerk the caboose back and forth all he wanted and Bill would never lose a drop. I thought it was ingenious.

On up the line we went, through Rumsey, over the flats at Scollard, and into Big Valley where we did more switching and wayfreight work, and stopped to have our meal. The dinner that Bill served us was potatoes, roast beef, and peas in gravy. No doubt it was the best roast beef and gravy I've ever had in my life. And all he had to cook on was a little pot-bellied caboose coal stove, with a small oven, and a coal box top for a kitchen counter. After our meal we were on our way, up through Warden, Stettler, Donald, and Meeting Creek toward Camrose. Arriving in Camrose in early evening, and after shuffling cars around the yard per the switch list, we put the train away and tied up for the night. Follie Feth went home because he lived in Camrose. Bill cleaned up and went over town to visit with his friends whom he had not seen since his last trip. I bedded down in the caboose and caught my much needed sleep after a long day of



*Typical caboose interior during the days of the old Camrose Wayfreight, worked by Walter Kittler and the story's author, Peter Palamarchuk.*

railroading on the "Camrose job."

In 2005, and after many years of reflection, I remember Bill's erect walk. I remember his tie, his uniform coat, the bottle wedged in the top drawer—but I will never forget the roast beef dinner he cooked up on the very first day I worked with him out of Drumheller. I did have occasion to work with him a number of times after and got to know him quite well. We all looked after Bill, we respected each other and it was a pleasure working with him. "Thank you, Bill."

~ Peter Palamarchuk

This story was submitted by Walter Kittler, and written by his long-time friend Pete Palamarchuk—a long-time conductor on the Canadian National who worked with Walter out of Hanna. Railroaders will remember Pete in the last few years of his career as the regular conductor on the *Canadian* between Edmonton and Jasper.

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](mailto:canadiannorthern@telus.net)

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

Design and Layout by Whale Tail Graphics • (780) 484-4038 • [www.whaletailgraphics.ca](http://www.whaletailgraphics.ca)