

Alberta's Grain Elevators

Hans Huizinga

As the dust settles on another rural community in Alberta it is not only from the drought stricken farmlands but also from the remnants of the last elevator in this area crushed under the bulldozer's treads. Closed grain elevators have become the tombstone symbols of dying towns. These wood cribbed structures clad in metal or wood siding proudly proclaimed the name of the town. They served as a hub of the commerce of the community. Now their demolition comes in the name of progress – bigger is better.

The early transportation of grain in Canada was in bags and picked up from flat warehouse sheds along the rail lines. The invented use of scoops on a continuous belt inside a leg of a wood cribbed storage tower allowed the bulk transfer of grain and saved vast labour costs and time. The "standard" elevator originated in 1881 in Gretna, Manitoba by the W. W. Ogilvie Milling Co.¹ along the transportation system of the CPR.

Alberta's grain movement history started in Strathcona, now an Edmonton district, in 1896 with the construction of the Gillespie Flour Mill elevator. Many elevator companies followed the rail lines of the Canadian Pacific, Canadian Northern, and Grand Trunk Pacific constructing their elevator towers in competition with each other through rural Alberta communities creating the elevator rows. The Elevators were constructed on leased land from the railway in a siding next to the watertower or at every second watertower which had a station and coaling facility. These were about 8 to 10 miles apart due to the limited water capacity of the early 4-4-0 steam locomotives along the railway lines. The railways determined the station locations on the prairies, most often the name of the town and its layout on their land.² These became hubs of commercial grain activity, competing for the farmer's business, designating towns and hamlet with its names, became the sym-

bols for the western prairie landscape. The largest number in Alberta was reached by 1929 with 1755 of the 5,155 elevators dotting the prairie provinces.³ A row of five or more different company elevators along a siding was not uncommon. As private companies were combined and Pools absorbed other companies the numbers started to decrease, but the size of the elevator complex increased with the additions of many annexes. From the standard 25,000 to 30,000 bushel capacity one elevator could contain up to 200,000 bushels.

The system worked well for the farm community and provided our grain consumer countries with a high quality reliably shipped product. But changes were underway. The abolishment of the protective Crow shipping rate, the abandonment of now 'unprofitable rail lines, and the move to larger bulk trucking units all combined to spell the doom of the country elevator.

In the pursuit of investor dividend returns, the elevator companies closed the smaller labour intensive elevator and constructed the massive 'economical' complexes in strategic locations.

The sloping concrete Buffalo elevator and the concrete multiple silo now serve the farmer who has the grain delivered via a truck trailer and pup in a 20,000 bushel capacity haul. The wood cribbed elevators are closing and demolished. When the rail goes, the elevator closes; or the company closes the elevator forcing the farmers to deliver to the 'big' centers taking their consumer business with them.



Grain elevators at Rowley

In communities like St. Albert, Rowley, Nanton, Leduc, Meeting Creek, Radway and many more, these commercial structures have been preserved by local organizations.

Can grain
elevators be saved?

Sometimes it takes only one voice to halt *Continued Page 3*

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the progress of the demolition bulldozer and preserve this western Canadian heritage. This person with a vision is able to galvanize community support, convince the Grain Companies and the land owning railways for time to gather the funds to purchase the historic grain transfer facility and property, securing its protected status.

These groups and other people interested in the grain elevator preservation have linked into a network of mutual support called the "Alberta Grain Elevator Society" or AGES for short.⁴ The organization is able to share experiences and expertise, collect data on elevators. It hopes to provide help with the dealing with codes, bureaucratic red tape and development of a guideline to the requirements of preservation procedures. Various re-adaptive uses, and possible interpretation programs are shared to link together into a theme development of the Grain Elevator Trail. The flat prairie landscape was dotted with the elevator signposts indicating, towns and life. As these structures are demolished, the lights go out in the towns. These western Canadian heritage commercial landmarks need a voice for preservation, and protection. With the recent February 14 demolition of the Trochu United Grain



Bellis grain elevator at Ukrainian Village (above)
Grain being dumped from wagon into elevator (below)

All photos Hans Huizinga



Growers elevator the remaining number of woodies is down to 157.⁵

As the wooden Grain Elevators disappear, so does the visual sign post of the town or village. Railways are not in favour of empty elevators in their land. Insurance cost and maintenance cost force the Grain corporations into demolition for they too do not actively support these historical monuments. Our landscape is changing back to the empty prairies.

- 1) "The Elevator in Alberta", Everitt, John; 1992 Alberta History Mag. Pg 18.
- 2) "History of Canadian National Railways", Stevens, G. R.; 1973, pg. 187
- 3) "The Elevator in Alberta" (part two), Everitt, John: 1993 Alberta History Mag. Pg 24.
- 4) The Alberta Grain Elevator Society, see web site: www.grain-elevators-alberta.ca
- 5) 'Vanishing Sentinels', Pearson, Jim; Feb. 16, 2009, email

(editor's note: Hans Huizinga restored the wooden box car, originally from the Museum, now located at the Ukrainian Village and seen in the photo above)

Thefts from Silk Train

Alan Vanterpool

The railways were always very concerned about the possibility of the theft of bales of silk from silk trains en route. The bales contained many hanks of raw silk fibre and weighed about 130 pounds: they measured 36" x 24" x 18." The value of one bale on the commercial market approximated the average annual income of a working man. Silk trains, carrying over \$2 million worth of silk were not all that uncommon.

Consequently, a number of measures were taken to reduce threat:

1. They insured the cargo to their own account. This cost around 6% of the value of the cargo calculated hourly, and was perhaps the greatest single reason for the traditional high speed of these trains;
2. The railways provided armed guards, often their own railway police, while in the US "special agents" were sometimes hired. Especially in the US, there was sometimes a guard in the locomotive, one in the accommodation coach and two in each car loaded with silk;
3. The high speed of the trains discouraged attempts en route; and,
4. Within a given sub-division silk trains stopped only for water, and at the crew change point. At the latter location there were lots of employees around, making access to the loaded cars difficult. At night, the area was often well illuminated. There were usually two or three places in each sub-division where water was picked up, but potential thieves would have difficulty in finding out which one would be used.

It has been stated that no transcontinental silk train was ever robbed.¹ No records were found of Canadian silk trains being robbed or of any US trains west of Chicago. The market for raw silk in these areas was inconsequential. Most silk was bound for the New York City area, with less than 10% of the total going to Chicago and Indianapolis.

However, in the area between Chicago and New York City, stolen silk could find a ready market and successful attempts were made to steal it. In fact, within a 200 mile radius of New York City there were around 500 silk mills, some of the owners of which were not beyond engaging in larceny.

The earliest report found of theft from a transcontinental silk train took place in 1909 in Indiana. It was believed that the thieves were railway employees or former employees. They probably entered the silk cars through their end doors, when the train was stopped at a crew change point. They bided their time until the train had to slow down while climbing a steep grade, and where there was a road alongside the railway track. The car doors were opened and the loot thrown on the right of way, where it was picked up by confederates. It was carried to the road and loaded aboard a horse-drawn wagon. Unfortunately for the thieves the Lake County sheriff was riding along this particular road at night and spotted a team of horses tethered to a tree. Upon further investigation he saw men carrying large packages. He commanded them to stop, but they ran away.² A similar theft had occurred earlier, near Valparaiso IN.³

In the annual report of the Silk Association of America in the spring of 1920, it was mentioned that a new form of silk theft was occurring – namely thefts from transcontinental "silks"⁴. Several of these occurred in the first half of 1920. They were all on the New York Central Railroad and involved raw silk in transit from the Vancouver wharf, to New York City⁴:

- (i) January 21, 32 bales valued at \$85,000 consigned to William Guerin & Co.;
- (ii) January 27, 71 bales valued at \$170,000 consigned to Mitsui

& Co.;

(iii) February 13, 83 bales valued at \$198,000 consigned to Shibakama Co.; and,

(iv) April 8, 121 bales valued at \$218,000 consigned to E. Gerli & Co.⁵.

These thefts were part of a very large operation where over \$6 million worth of goods were stolen from moving trains. Forty-eight persons were arrested, some of whom were railway employees, while some of the others were owners of silk and woolen mills.

It should be noted that silk prices were at their highest ever – over \$20 per pound – in the first few months of 1920. This could have been a partial cause of these robberies.

A year later, some thieves near White Plains NY robbed a New York Central "silk" in transit⁶. In 1922, another New York Central silk train in transit was robbed at Poughkeepsie NY⁷.

No reports of silk train robberies have been found after 1922. By this time the Silk Association of America had introduced a number of security measures, and there was greater co-operation amongst the various police forces involved.

The transcontinental silk trains appear to have terminated in either Hoboken NJ or New York City. The silk was unloaded from trains and stored in warehouses under customs supervision⁸. It was released from customs when it was purchased by a silk processor.

Many pieces of silk had to be moved four or five times from one processor to another between the warehouses and retail outlets. It was much easier to rob individual railway cars and trucks, involved in these transfers, than it was to rob the transcontinental trains.

End Notes.

(1) B. Webber, *"Silk Trains. The Romance of Canadian Silk Trains or the "Silks.""*, World Wide Works Publications, Kelowna, BC, 1993.

(2) *Sheboygan Press*, November 3, 1909. Interestingly this report was printed in a Wisconsin newspaper many miles west of the scene of the theft. The name of the railway involved, and whether the thieves were arrested and convicted was not recorded.

(3) *New York Times*, March 25, 1920

(4) *ibid*, June 8, 1920. The silk on these trains had been carried by the CPR from the Vancouver wharf to Prescott ON. It was then ferried across the St. Lawrence River to Ogdensburg NY where it was picked up by the NYCRR.

(5) Most silk was consigned to banks or brokerage houses which had loaned the funds to pay for the silk in transit. The business of the Guerin Company is unknown. But unusually, the other three companies purchased raw silk in Japan and had it shipped to New York where they sold it to processors. Gerli was American owned. After the silk market collapsed in the USA in 1929 the Japanese Government stepped into the Japanese end of the business. As a result, from the early 1930's until silk imports to the USA ceased in the summer of 1941, most of the raw silk in transit from Japan to the USA was owned by Japanese firms.

(6) *New York Times*, September 25, 1921.

(7) *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 3, 1922.

(8) There was no customs duty on raw silk but US Customs required silk to be transported in bond, and only released it when it was purchased by a silk processing firm. Such a bond often amounted to \$2 million – the cost of which was another significant charge on the railway companies' tariff. For much of the 1920's this amounted to \$9 per hundred pounds divided among all the railways involved in transcontinental silk runs.

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Alberta Railway Museum hits middle age

41st season commenced May 2009

The Alberta Railway Museum's 41st year kicked off on the Saturday of Victoria Day long weekend. CN F7 locomotive 6514 pulled the train consist of baggage car and coach. The weather cooperated and a fine time was had by all. An additional boost was gained from a short segment on Global TV news.

Father's Day weekend was also busy. We hosted the Children's Heart Foundation on Saturday, and Dads had free admission on Sunday, when accompanied by their kids. In a few cases we had grandfathers, accompanied by their sons, and the grandchildren, for a three generation visit to the Museum



Passengers onboard enjoying the ride, including Keith Reed (blue hat) and his grandson. Keith is the proprietor of 100-year-old Johnny's Store at Nampa and also lends a hand with the 4H Club BBQs



Above: Waiting for the train at 100 year old St. Albert Station

Below: CN 6514 pulls into the station for the first run of the season



The 4H Club BBQ attracts Museum patrons and volunteers



Passengers enjoy Father's Day on our shady speeder trailer

Photos Stephen Yakimets

Gibbons Parade

The Museum was invited to participate in the Town of Gibbons Canada Day parade, marking 50 years of the incorporation Gibbons. Many thanks to all who helped put the speeders and hand car on the



Marilyn & Jamie Yakimets throw candy to the spectators



(L to R) Niale Smith, Sherry Jackson, Stephen Yakimets, Gloria Jackson, Jamie & Marilyn Yakimets

trailer, and who participated in the parade.



Locomotive 5213, privately owned by Niale Smith



CN donates steam engine wheel to Fort Saskatchewan

The steel wheel which formerly was located outside the main entrance to Edmonton's CN Tower has been donated to the City of Fort Saskatchewan by CN. The wheel was restored and polished by George Parkinson, who worked as a machinist for CN for many years. The wheel was put in place for the opening of the CN tower in 1966. Norm Corness was a co-worker of George's, and provided the historical details and information on the wheel for the presentation.

Plaque reads: "The steel wheel rolling on the steel rail carried Western Canada to greatness. This is the main driving wheel of steam engine 3805, a Mikado type 2-8-2, which accumulated 1½ million miles of service in Alberta from 1936 to retirement in 1960".

(L to R) Ben Jessup, CN Superintendent, Edmonton Terminals; Norm Corness; Ed Duliba, Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society ; Jim Sheasgreen, Mayor of Fort Saskatchewan.

Photo Terry Wolfe

Fort Station is Historic Resource

Paul Grigaitis / Fort Record

At 103 years of age, Fort Saskatchewan's Canadian Northern Railway Station has officially been declared a Provincial historic resource, according to a provincial news release just before Christmas.

Last March (2008), city council gave its blessing to Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture to designate the station as a historic resource.

According to the Heritage Resources Management Information System's website, the Canadian Northern Railway Station is the only existing example in Alberta of a railway station built according to the railway company's 100-19 plan - a standard station plan first introduced in 1904. The stations were considered "special stations" placed only at significant points on the line.

Fort's CN Station is now home to the Fort Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

Other sites declared historic resources at the same time as the local CN Station include the Alberta Wheat Pool Grain Elevator and the Canadian Pacific Railway Station in Paradise Valley, Strathcona Collegiate Institute in Edmonton, the Alberta Wheat Pool Grain Elevator and Bow Slope Stockyard in Scandia, the Isolation Hospital in Lethbridge, the St. Ambrose Anglican Church in Redcliff and the Whitecourt/Woodlands Meteorite Impact Crater. The owners of Provincial Historic Resources are eligible for matching grants for conservation work and have access to technical expertise.

o Fort Record Tuesday, January 06, 2009



Happy 100th St. Albert Station

Hans Huizinga

This fourth class Canadian Northern Station was constructed in village of St Albert in 1909 as part of an agreement with the Order of the Grey Nuns in exchange for free land for the line and station construction. The passage west from Edmonton through the towns of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain was blocked by the land rights of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The swing north and west through St. Albert in 1906 and parting of the competing railways culminated with the two lines again close together at Entwistle.

The line through St. Albert is over an impressive curved trestle over the Sturgeon River to the Mission side of the town. The industries that it would serve were a Gillespie Flour Mill and Elevator, Alberta Grain Co. grain elevator and a loading platform for local merchants. A second elevator, Alberta Wheat Pool (1929), was construct-



ed in line with the now renamed Alberta Pacific Grain Co. Elevator on the same siding. The Station site located on the north side of the track on the main line had a watertower situated opposite the grain elevator. This AGC elevator and the loading dock are on a siding south of the line. The elevator's loading platform is very large in order to reach the track, this indicates that the elevator was constructed to open in 1906 prior to the track survey. A section gang was also located on the station site with the wooden speeder sheds eventually replaced by the trailer models, which have been moved to the Museum.

The station at its time of removal to the Alberta Railway Museum property in northeast Edmonton was 21'-4" from the center of the rail to the south station wall. The 15'-3" long platform edge was 3"-9" away from the rail edge and only 7 1/2" above the tie height. The baggage area had been extended inside to provide additional 'coal' storage, the platform door sill was 20" above the station platform giving a small challenge to the station staff. All these measurements were taken prior to removal of platform and station.

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Norm Corness, Harry Pollard and others ensured the accuracy and safety of the extraction and move in 1971. The purchase price was \$1. and were able to get the station after refusal from the St. Albert Town council. Upon arrival on the Museum site it stood on temporary blocking until the foundation could be constructed for it and at the same time for the Gibbons watertank & enclosure. We started using the station and constructed a temporary platform and used power supplied by our diesel power generator located at the baggage end. The Canadian Northern plan 100-06 had been modified to meet St. Albert needs and the station had at least two extensions during its life. The present gift store area was previously divided into living space of the station agent, although the agents were later located in CNR houses in town close to the station. These partitions were constructed of tentest (a fibre board composite) and some drywall. The original outside and ceiling walls were lath and plaster but all had split and cracked with large patches of plaster removed. The usual shaving insulation had compacted to the firestop half way in the walls and their bottom. Windows were damaged and some pane-less and the doors required restoration. An overall restoration and rehabilitative use plan came into existence after careful assessment of the station.

In 1983, fibreglass insulation, a vapour barrier, and new drywall were put in place. The living quarters became a large tourist shop area with authentic ceiling globes from the demolished old CNR office building formerly on 99 St. and Jasper Ave.. Windows were stripped, cleaned painted and re-glazed. The flooring became tiled for easier cleaning. Our mini basement held two propane furnaces to provide temperature control. Unfortunately, massive spring flooding of the same has destroyed their use. The wing areas were boarded and insulated. The original fir wainscoting had splintered with age. New wainscoting was applied and painted to 1950's standard color code. The rough plaster finish was duplicated with textured paint. The operator's bay had special furniture reconstructed to replicate operation status. This area has been enhanced and is well used by the Morse Telegraphers Club. The waiting room area became an excellent display place and emergency exit. A new baggage door was constructed to replace a plywood cover. Restoration was fairly complete. Except ... our station building was rocking. The mesh and stucco that had been applied to the exterior in the late 20's held the building, including sagging, in a firm grip. After repair and some replacement of rotten floor joists, we undertook the problem. The station was leveled as best as possible on the new foundation but the extended baggage area (optional coal room) floor was lower in one corner. Thus the decision to build a room within a room and provide an excellent display space. The lino tile flooring covers the uneven subfloor throughout the station to provide a pleasant and smooth walking service. The baggage receiving area doors and transom windows have been rebuilt to restore this space as they were during the station's lifespan.

A later engineering study on the structure had us reinforce the ceiling rafters in order to prevent roof sagging. Extra supports remedied that future problem.

So what has been done since? You will notice the roll down blinds protecting the displays from bleaching sun. The station stove



St. Albert station at Alberta Railway Museum, 2009

has migrated to the water tower where it serves to re-live the hobo comfort days inside the enclosure. The exterior has had new paint on the wood work, storm windows have been refurbished. Our platform is aging again, requiring new fitted planking. But the flower pots and new rose plantings enhance the sides and back and it looks great at 100. It was a great 4th class station plan by CNoR and still serves our needs well on a 1st class basis.

(Plans are located in: [The Marker](#), 1983, pp150,151; The CNoR line notes: [The Marker](#), 1983, pp 114 - 116, 119. Early platform construction can be seen in June 1977 in [The Marker](#).)

A Bridge of Time

George France

On Dec. 12 2008, the Town of Peace River held an Open House at the Peace River N.A.R. Station to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the railway bridge over the Peace River. This writer was unable to attend due to extreme cold conditions.

Is this bridge any different from thousands of other railway bridges? The Central Canada Railway from McLennan to Peace River, Whitelaw and the Pacific Ocean had reached Peace River in 1916. The Mighty Peace had to be crossed, and there were no other bridges over this river. J.D. McArthur, the railway builder contracted Canadian Bridge Company to build the crossing. Work started in winter 1917-18, and the last steel was placed in October 1918. The bridge is 1,736 ft, with 11 spans.

Dr. McLennan inspected and signed off the bridge on November 8th. Vigorous campaigning by local residents had persuaded the Alberta Government to fund the planking deck and side rails to allow people, horse traffic and vehicles to share the bridge.

The bridge now permitted E.D. & B.C. locomotives that hauled the Central Canada trains to turn on the wye laid tight to the west end of the bridge. This made the return pull up 7 miles of twisting 2.2% grade on the east hill easier and safer. Presently engines could take water at the tower located inside the south leg of the wye, rather than having to gamble on getting back to Tank, later named Nampa to replenish supply. The north leg of the wye, named Duet (for Second Peace River), was extended to provide access to a bed of gravel for pit run ballast.

The typical train of that time that the bridge had to support was an 0-6-0, or at most a 2-8-0 light Consolidation, with maybe a dozen 34 or 40 ft box cars, tanks or flats and a wooden caboose.

In 1955 inspection of the bridge piers revealed the fast currents and rolling rocks on the river bottom were eroding the bridge piers. Indeed, one was actually hanging from the main structure.. Repair work was done on and under the ice in winter 1955-6.

My picture taken at -40 F. shows an engine stationed on the



bridge blowing steam down to thaw the ice and prevent the new cement from freezing. The engine would block the bridge for three hour sessions, round the clock. Rip-Rap rock was dropped around the pier bases. The next picture of the bridge was taken in 1967, showing work on the piers for the new road bridge,

Close examination of these pictures reveals the Bridge Tender's Cabin, suspended on the side of the center span of the railway bridge, Just big enough for one man's chair and a coal heater. He controlled



barriers on the road approaches, and a semaphore signal at each end for trains. These were the only semaphore signals on the N.A.R. except for one at Morinville Junction for the C.N. line to Athabasca, and of course the Station Order Boards. The local freight stopped to supply him with coal off the tender as required.

In December 1974, General Manager, Ken Perry rode his Business Car Peace River to attend the R.C.M.P. Annual Ball. His guest on board was recently retired R.C.M.P. Staff Sergeant (Edmonton) E.H. (Ned) Rivers, my cousin. I took my family in to meet the train, and we were given a tour of the magnificent car's interior.

1978 marked the Diamond Jubilee of the the Railway Bridge,



and a celebration was in order. The N.A.R. was planning to decorate up Rules Instruction Car #18001 for the N.A.R. Jubilee in 1979, but this job was accelerated, the car being painted a brilliant yellow gold. It was equipped with a display of

railroad artifacts, and an H.O. model diorama of 'Trains of the N.A.R.' provided by yours truly. It featured the Blue Train with Engine #161, and an N.A.R. GP 9 with a way freight and home built N.A.R. bay window caboose.

On 6 August three engines broke a ribbon at the bridge approach, and the train crossed over and back again. Conductors George Stevenson and Dick Coulman staffed the coach.

Next day, August 7th, the way freight for Hines Creek, coupled

to the 18001, and with engineer Ivan Ivancin at the controls of a GP9, I was invited to ride the cab. We broke through a ribbon to access the bridge, progressed to Grimshaw, then had a flag stop at Berwyn to pick up railway historian, Evelyn Hanson.

Upon arrival at Fairview, 18001 was uncoupled to help Fairview town celebrate its diamond jubilee. Then the local freight rambled on to Gage and Hines Creek.

Trains across the bridge got longer and heavier, witnessing three SD 38-2s and heavy loads of lead- zinc ore from Pine Point enroute to Trail B.C.

In 1980 the N.A.R. was gone, and Canadian National took over all operations. After several years of difficult operation by short lines RailLink, and Mackenzie Northern, the Peace River Sub is once again C.N.

Now the old bridge stands up to as many a six SD40-2 engines and one hundred cars. Mainly lumber and propane South and fuel oil and



gasoline north, with a daily turn to the Daishowa-Marubini Pulp Mill, with two or three SD40-2s..

Over the years the Bridge has not needed any major repairs or strengthening. It did receive "new" rails in December 2008.

A Bridge built Well in Every Way, and has stood the test of Time.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Herb Dixon

The big news for 2009 is the Museum's partnership with the On-Track Railway Institute of Canada. The On-Track Railway Training Institute of Canada (ORTIC) graduated the first class of 12 students in early May from its innovative Trackman's Training Course, held at the Museum. The students are all of First Nations and Métis heritage, with the first class composed of students from Gleichen, Alberta. ORTIC is conducting the classes, and the museum is providing the site for training use, and the accommodations for the students.

ORTIC's function is to deliver a practical course which will benefit the railway and support contractors. This program will help to solve one of the industry's most perplexing and costly problems for the railways, which is the recruitment of new track labour personnel, who understand and accept the lifestyle of the rail worker, and possess a desire to build a lifelong career in railway construction and operation. A First Nations Elder is called upon to provide guidance to the students, and Niale Smith, one of our museum volunteers, serves as the go-between for ORTIC and the Museum.

The first class of 12 students is currently employed by railway companies. The students replaced about 50 ties, three lengths of rail and 12 crossing planks on the Museum mainline and yard tracks. They also leveled and spiked existing tracks. More importantly, a switch and frog were changed out, re-gauged and re-ballasted. At the same time, several deficiencies in existing trackage were remedied. The next class is scheduled to start in early July.

During the training, a track inspector from the Dangerous Goods and Rail Safety Division of Alberta Transportation inspected the property and noted the improvements from the last inspection. This



Yard switch rehabilitation

gained the Museum the approval to operate trains over our track. Without that approval the Museum's 2009 operating season would not be under way.

All this is done with a minimum of disruption to the Museum property and facilities. The Museum has found the ORTIC principals to be very accommodating and supportive. The

Institute's concern

about the potential disruption of museum operation and the care shown towards our historic equipment is outstanding.

The Alberta Railway Museum strongly supports the continuance of this program wherever and whenever possible. The Alberta Railway Museum has benefitted greatly from the training program and wishes to emphasize the value of the initiative. Specifically, we received about \$25,000 worth of track maintenance and repair services, without which our interpretive and historical mission would be severely hampered. As a not-for-profit society, this kind of partnership is crucial to our sustainability.

DOWN BY THE STATION

The word from the editor

Stephen Yakimets

Museum upcoming events

The Museum is open for visitors every weekend during the summer. Volunteers are needed to operate speeders, help out in the gift shop, and to provide tours and interpretation. We have been very fortunate that Gloria Jackson and Niale Smith have spent most of their weekends at the museum, Gloria running the gift shop and handling admissions, and Niale operating speeders (in addition to redoing many of the signs on site!). Herb Dixon, as always, is onsite, keeping operations highballing down the mainline.

On July 18 & 19 the Museum is participating in the Country Soul Stroll, a self-guided driving tour of the rural countryside north of Edmonton, including St. Albert and Sturgeon County. In past years the turn-out has been high. Our location in north-east Edmonton makes us the first stop for many on the Stroll. Volunteers are needed to help run speeders, and conduct tours.

To kick-off the Historic Edmonton festival, City TV's Bridget Ryan will broadcast Breakfast TV live from the Museum Friday July 24. We are operating speeders again this weekend, July 25 & 26. Come out and run the speeder, help out in the gift shop, greet visitors on the platform, or interpret a car or locomotive. The theme of the festival is "Celebrate Our Heritage - Our Ties". The Museum is prominently featured with an ad on page 3 of the Festival Guide. We are offering the Second Prize in the photo contest, a Family Pass to the Museum, with First Prize being a trip to Jasper on VIA Rail.

For the August Heritage long weekend, we are celebrating 180 Years of the Steam Engine, commemorating Stephenson's Rocket, the first "modern" steam engine built in 1829. The plan is to run CN 1392, our ten-wheeler steam engine. Volunteers are needed for all aspects of the Museum, especially in the gift shop as Gloria and Herb will not be at the Museum. Train crews are also needed for the head-end and tail-end. For head-end contact Dennis Pringle (dpringle@agrium.com, 780 998 3715) or Terry Wolfe (steamwolfe@shaw.ca, 780 998 0272). Call me re the tail-end (numbers below).

The other weekends in August need volunteers for speeders, tour guides and interpreters, and Gloria can use help in the gift shop.

For tours, the Museum guidebook is available at the gift shop and it has the information on the cars and locomotives in our collection. Alternatively, if you do not feel comfortable doing a full tour, choose a specific car or locomotive to interpret, and then enlighten and entertain visitors as they come through. Enthusiasm is more important than a deep historical knowledge. People are interested in what the car or locomotive was used for, where it was used, and interesting facts. The majority of visitors will not ask about the haulage rating of a locomotive, or the type of trucks under a passenger car. Training on speeders is done onsite, and is very easy to learn.

Finally, for the September long weekend, people are needed for the gift shop & train crews. See August long weekend above for full details. Once again, the plan is to have 1392 in steam.

All submissions are gladly accepted and are published based on space and theme of each edition. My aim is to publish everything I receive, sooner or later! Stories, articles on trips, your railway experiences – I am open to what you think is interesting. I can scan photos and printed pages, and of course digital materials can be emailed:

Stephen Yakimets syakimets@shaw.ca 780 441 5917

Mail: 1154 Kane Wynd, Edmonton, AB T6L 6T6