



SRHA News and Goings On

By Cal Sexsmith

Edited by Allissa Reimer

We have completed another successful season at the Saskatchewan Railway Museum. Over 2400 people visited the Museum in 2023 which is just below the five year average of 2500 but well below our record attendance of over 3700 in 2018. Tours were down considerably with just over 100 visitors on tours or about 4% of the total. Typically about 20% of our visitors come on tours. If we had that level of tours in 2023 tour attendance would have been about 350 and total attendance 2900. Our August attendance, at 1317, was our second best August ever with August 2017 at 1429 being our best.

Railway Heritage Day on August 7th was a great success. Special activities included running the Trackmobile and caboose, Keith Flory's live steam locomotive and John and Kristine Rye's model railroad display. We also had the food truck out again. We have had the most success with Railway Heritage Day when it has been held on the Monday of the August long weekend. We have used this date from 2016 to 2019 and again this year. Attendance on this date was 328 in 2016, 657 in 2017, 666 in 2018, 453 in 2019 and 539 this year. By contrast in 2022 when we were two weeks later we had only 107. The CN Picnic was also in August this year. We did shut the Museum down for the day but we did have about 350 guests from CN.



A number of projects were completed this year. The restoration of the wood CN caboose was finally completed and this significant artefact was on public display for most of the summer. The lean to addition to the Model Engineers Shop is mostly complete and going forward it will be used to store the lawn equipment. The design is such that we should be able to randomly access the various pieces of equipment. The staff also repainted the old staff room in Kopko. Plans are now being formulated for this space, stay tuned.

In September I was able to attend the Heritage Rail Alliance Conference in Montreal. I had earlier sent out a report on this conference so I won't repeat myself here other than to say that both our new Welcome Centre and the CN wood caboose restoration were recognized at the conference. I will be presenting a slide show on the conference at the Annual General Meeting.



The Museum Association of Saskatchewan has proposed some major changes to the Museum Network Program. We are currently members of the River Valley Network along with museums in Blaine Lake, Borden, Langham, Hepburn, Waldheim, Rosthern and Hague. Six of the eight museums in the network are very

active in network activities and MAS admits that it is one of the more successful networks. In our opinion this is because the network covers a relatively small area and travel time to meetings is less than one hour. MAS is proposing to alter network boundaries to align with the sport and recreation boundaries. In the case of River Valley Network it would be split into three with Blaine Lake and Borden going to the northwest; Hepburn, Waldheim and Rosthern going to the northeast; and Langham, Hague and ourselves going to the central region. Travel times to meetings would be greatly increased as the northwest goes all the way to Meadow Lake, the northeast to Hudson Bay and central to Regina. The Network has objected to the change and MAS has acknowledged that we are doing something right and that changes may be delayed or modified. In any case the River Valley Network is considering continuing in its present form despite what MAS says. The spring meeting will be May 4 at our Museum.

The Strategic Planning Committee continues its work on the new Strategic Plan. The committee plans on meeting with the membership early in the new year. Five Strategic Goals have been developed:

1. Ensure Financial Stability
2. Increase Number of Visitors
3. Increase Number of Volunteers
4. Improve Quality of Displays
5. Review Governance Structure

The Annual General Meeting will be Saturday January 27th at Grasswood Smitty's. Further details will be coming with the Notice of Meeting sometime in December.

Canadian National Railways' Caboose Renaissance: A Tale of Three Decades

By Michael P.J. Kennedy
 Edited by Allissa Reimer



CNR Caboose 78687 before restoration

The newest showpiece of railway history at the Saskatchewan Railway Museum is actually one of the earliest acquisitions of Saskatchewan Railroad Historical Association (SRHA). Over three decades ago, former CN caboose #78687 was acquired by the SRHA and moved to the highway 60 site. For years it languished in disrepair despite the fact that its heritage goes back to CNR predecessor Grand Trunk Pacific which had it constructed in 1912 when it was built as a boxcar. Its life as a caboose began in 1949 when the car was reconstructed at the Canadian National Railways shop in Moncton. It operated as an end-of-train caboose from 1949 until 1987 when it was donated to the town of Watrous.

In 1989, the wooden-sheathed, end cupola van was donated to the SRHA and it was one of the first pieces of rolling stock to appear at the then undeveloped Museum site. Several times individuals or groups have begun the process of restoration/reconstruction which were well documented by member Lorne Lavier in his Annual General Meeting Report of 2015 (See AGM Caboose Committee Reports 2014-2023). Subsequent documentation of the caboose project is taken from Lorne's report as well as other SRHA publications and from Terry Enns and Doug Jones.



Finished paintwork and lettering by Colin Farnan

By 1997 the deteriorating piece of rolling stock was moved inside the Museum's large shop building where it remained basically untouched until 2000 when Terry Enns and Ron Adams, assisted by Bob Byrnes and Ben Enns, formed a caboose committee. Led by Terry Enns and Adams, sections of siding were removed (2001) and the pair did an evaluation of what needed to be done to restore and reconstruct the historically significant caboose. Work was discontinued until 2008 when Regina members Bruce and Louisa Eastluke formed a caboose committee and made detailed plans for the project. Timbers were acquired and some framing work initiated. However little other progress was made until Art Vessey and several other volunteers stepped up and began work on insulation, siding, and windows in 2014.

Among the group doing various tasks ranging from extensive interior and exterior work scraping, sanding, and ultimately painting and staining the wood and repairing windows to assisting with carrying in the cast iron stove from 2014-2015 forward were Norm Dyck, Lois Dyck, Lorne Lavier, Carol Struck, Keith Flory, Bill Rafoss, Cam Hood, Doug Jones, Jack Timmerman, Charlie Bennett, Bill Chimboryk, Terry Clark, Jeremy Lee, David Morrison and Mark Fidelak. In 2016, the cupola roof was replaced and the main roof repaired while windows were rebuilt. In the following years cupola seats were restored and the preparation of wooden surfaces continued as well as sanding and staining along with insulation work and the construction of replacement window sashes. The classic caboose was truly coming back to its prime.



Caboose interior

Led by Norm Dyck's tireless work on both the interior and exterior, the caboose work group with stalwarts Lorne Lavier and Doug Jones in particular putting in yeoman service, the 2020s saw the finishing touches put on the multi-year project. A major job, replacing the patched-up main roof with a metal one, was completed in 2022. Storm windows were fabricated,

ceiling prepped and painted, interior walls varnished, furniture and bunk/bins built. Doug Jones' craftsmanship was in evidence as he built a sink pedestal, shelves for dishes, racks for timetables and bills of lading, a coal bin, and pedestal desk. Added, too, was another desk and captains' chairs to create an authentic mid-twentieth caboose interior.

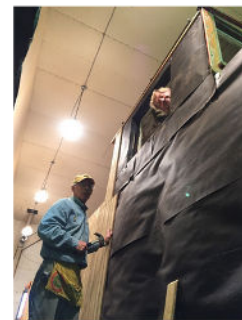
Although Norm Dyck passed away in 2023, his inspired work to complete the project was carried on by his colleagues so that the exterior stack was installed and marker lanterns mounted. Perhaps the penultimate work on the venerable van was the expert painting of the "CNR Serves All Canada" logo and "Canadian National 78687" painted by Colin Farnan in late summer and early fall to revive the classic CNR caboose look of the era. Spring 2024 should see some finishing touches added to the exterior painting and interior interpretive signage installed.

The renaissance of the 1912 railcar recreated to its 1949 caboose structure was a multi-year, multi-individual and group achievement. Indeed, the vision and planning of SRHA volunteers and the subsequent hours and hours of work over three plus decades has finally paid off in the creation of one of the Museum's best railway displays. The fact that visitors can walk through the caboose and see its history makes it a true example of our museum's bringing to life railway history for all to enjoy.

SOURCES: Lorne Lavier, Terry Enns, Doug Jones, and SRHA Publications



Doug Jones
 Lorne Lavier
 Jack Timmermann



Lorne Lavier
 Norm Dyck



SMR Tram #51: Thirty Years at the Museum

by Michael P.J. Kennedy



City of Saskatoon

The Saskatchewan Railway Museum brings to life Saskatchewan's railway history for all to enjoy. Indeed, thirty years ago the shell of one of Saskatoon's streetcars was rescued from a farm and restored/reconstructed to become the popular "walk-through" display it is today.

Many individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses collaborated to create this key component of the Streetcar Display at the Saskatchewan Railway Museum which highlights urban rail transit in our province's largest city.



City of Saskatoon

This steel streetcar was manufactured in Hamilton, Ontario by the National Steel Car Company Limited and sold to Saskatoon Municipal Railway (SMR) for \$11,552. in 1927. It was a double-ended, 41 passenger tram with two overhead trolley poles to allow operation in either direction. Power went to the traction motors located in the truck assembly (wheels). Metal grates over the lower portion of the windows were installed in spring-summer to prevent injuries to passengers if they were to stick out their arms where the tracks ran at close proximity to each other downtown.



After it was taken out of service in 1951 when streetcar service ended in Saskatoon, this tram was sold to the Bulani family near Biggar where it was used as a summer kitchen and storage building before being donated to the Museum in 1994. Interior restoration and reconstruction including cleaning of horsehair seats (Sacher's) and installation of new rattan for seat covering (Barbara Parr) was done professionally. Piping was courtesy of Kelsey Campus Plumbing Programme but the steel seat restoration, ceiling painting, and wood restoration were done by Museum volunteers. New canvas was installed by Museum volunteers after the wooden roof was constructed by workers from Employment Canada. Exterior repainting was done by Saskatoon Auto Body Association volunteers with lettering by LB Signs. The trucks were purchased from Halton County Radial Railway Society in Ontario. New doors (Shaver's Door & Sash) and windows (Richard Boechler) were constructed using the originals as patterns. Financial support was through SaskPower and individual donors.

Three decades and dozens of individuals have shown how our museum can keep our railway history alive for future generations to learn and appreciate.



City of Saskatoon

Collection Highlight



Argo Station

Argo Station is the flagship building of the Saskatchewan Railway Museum. It is a standard Grand Trunk Pacific type "E" station. Built at Argo, Saskatchewan southwest of Biggar in 1913 for \$2011, it was sold to a local farmer in 1961 and served as a farm house until the 1990's. It was then moved to Unity, Sask. where the plan was to use it as a business. This plan failed and the station was donated to the museum and moved to our site in 2000.

Originally, Argo Station had a waiting room, office, agent's bedroom, living room, kitchen and bunkhouse on the main floor and two bedrooms and a storage room on the second floor. The kitchen wing was demolished when it was moved off railway property. It was reconstructed when the building was on SRM property.

It is believed that Argo never had a permanent agent and that the Section Foreman's family occupied the living quarters. Normally, a Section foreman would be provided a house separate from the station.

Restoration of Argo was undertaken under the lead of museum member Keith Ewart, an expert on railway stations in Saskatchewan. The waiting room and station agent's office were fully restored to original, including a working train order board. The kitchen has been carefully replicated with period flatware. The bunkhouse was converted to a freight shed, as was often the case, and it has lately been repainted and restored. It is currently used as a meeting room for museum members. The staircase to the upstairs was rebuilt in its original location and serves as access to the rooms above. The roof was repaired and the dormers were sided with cedar siding. Out front, the station platform was rebuilt to allow access to railcars for the public.

The museum is very proud of Argo station and we thank the late Keith Ewart and his crew for bringing it back to life.

Rail News in Canada

Canadian National

CN announces the appointment of Patrick Whitehead as Executive Vice-President and Chief Field Operating Officer effective November 15

Canadian Pacific Kansas City

Preside and Chief Executive Officer Keith Creel addressed the Morgan Stanley 11th Annual Laguna Conference on September 13.

Via Rail

Via Rail invests more than \$80 million on its Heritage Stations as well as maintaining and increasing travel demands and service between Ottawa and London.

Western Development Museum

The museum hosted the annual "Blow Off Some Steam" showcasing their 75 Case Traction Engine and running the K+S Potash Canada Short line 101.

Wheatland Express - Excursion Train

The railway moved its Head Office into Stonebridge in Saskatoon as well as welcoming a new employee.

Eastend Scenic Rail Tours

Works continues as the railway works on a foundation for a caboose and working on getting all the ESRT equipment in one place.

If any of the Saskatchewan shortlines or excursion railways want to add news to this section of the newsletter, feel free to contact us at srha@saskrailmuseum.org



Heritage Railway Alliance Canadian Member News

Rocky Mountain Railway Society

Work on stay bolt replacement is in progress for CNR #6060

Alberta Railway Museum

A new addition was added to the collection, CN #4618 (formerly BC Railway "Draper Taper" Dash 8.

Alberta Prairie Railway

Make-A-Wish brought a young child to the railway and gave the family an amazing day.

Cranbrook History Centre

The museum see increased support with ED Talks, Haunted Train, Toddler Tuesdays, Summer Camps and Pro D Day Camps.

BC Forest Discovery Centre

Samson the Friendliest Steam Locomotive celebrated its 113th Birthday Party.

Kamloops Heritage Railway Society

The first of many steps to reopening took place on August 24 with architects from the city of Kamloops.

Revelstoke Railway Museum

August 24th announced a trial of a new program "Throwback Thursdays".

Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society

BCER interurban 1231 made a test run and marked a milestone for the railway.

Railway Museum of British Columbia

The museum was a part of CN Family Day at Thornton Yard Locomotive Reliability Centre.

Vintage Locomotive Society, Inc.

The Prairie Dog Central Railway has various Halloween themed excursions for all ages.

Winnipeg Railway Museum

The Winnipeg Railway Museum was at Mega Train on September 30 and October 1.

New Brunswick Railway Museum

The museum remembered Conductor Ed Bowes, who passed away in September.

Middleton Railway Museum Society

The museum put new sheet metal on CNR 1274's tender and painted CNR 7260 and boxcar 524129.

Northern Ontario Railroad Museum and Heritage Centre

The museum is hosting "Zombie Train" on October 27-29

Niagara Railway Museum

The 2024 calendars have arrived in limited stock and can be purchased for \$20 each.

Guelph Historical Railway Association

Window restoration continues on one of their cabooses.

Via Rail Historical Association

No news at this time.

Komoka Railway Museum

The museum is working on a display for Remembrance Day to collect stories and/or pictures of people who served in any branch of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Halton County Radial Museum

The museum had over 2000 visitors on Oct 14-15 alone before closing in November.

Bytown Railway Society

The BRS Publications Committee is looking for photographs for the outer and inner covers on the 2024 edition of the Canadian Trackside Guide.

Ingenium Canada Science and Technology Museum

CN 6200 has been moved to a new display pad.

CHRA Niagara Division

CRHA was at the Kitchener Model Train Show on October 22nd.

Toronto Railway Historical Association

The TRHA gets a new website.

South Simcoe Railway

The popular Fall Colour Excursions will be going from September 30-October 22.

Exporail

With collaboration with Fantômes Montréal Ghosts, the Ghost Train was hosted on October 21st.

Southern Prairie Railway

The railway hosted a Harry Potter themed excursion that sold out.



Upcoming Events

- SMR Board Meeting - November 14**
- Prince Albert Train Show - January 20-21, 2024**
- SMR Annual General Meeting - January 27**
- Heritage Fair - February 4, 2024**
- Saskatoon Train Show - February 17-18, 2024**

Membership

Becoming a member helps to financially support the museum. By buying a membership, a member is also given privileges compared to the average museum visitor.

A member has the option to join board meetings and influence decisions during a meeting. A member has free, unlimited visits for the entire year. A member has the freedom to volunteer their time outside of museum hours. A member has opportunities to work more closely with staff, the curator, committees, board members and volunteers and perform various tasks and jobs at the museum.

If any of these perks interest you, we encourage you to purchase a membership during the museum's opening hours.

Don't forget to follow our Social Media



Saskatchewan Railway Museum



Sask Railway Museum



saskrailmuseum1990

Saskatchewan Railway Museum is a member of the Heritage Railway Alliance and the Museum Association of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Railway Museum acknowledges being on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Metis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Metis ancestors of this land and reaffirm our relationship with one another.



MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF SASKATCHEWAN
MUSEUMS ARE MORE.



Volunteer Opportunities

The Saskatchewan Railway Museum relies on volunteers to function reliably every year. We accept people of various skills and various backgrounds to help us out. Volunteering is a great way to learn about the artefacts in a new way, as well as learn how museums works. It's a wonderful way to gain experience and to build friendships with others with similar interests, whether it be railfans, history people, tinkers, artists and more! Here are some ways volunteers can help out!

Streetcar #51 has its own committee led by P.J. Kennedy in keeping up with the maintenance of the street car exhibit. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: repairs, painting, landscaping and maintaining the street car exhibit and displays.

The CN Wooden Caboose, though essentially complete, has a committee led by Lorne Lavier. There are still finishing touches needed before the caboose is completely finished. Skills include woodworking, mechanical work, building experience, painting experience and more.

"The Wednesday Crew" is the museum's maintenance crew. This group involves volunteers of all ages and skill sets to do various jobs around the museum site, including building, plumbing, electrical, painting, mechanics, servicing, organization, landscaping and more!

The Restoration Shop has been freed up now that the CN wooden caboose has been completed. This opens up many opportunities for tinkers and mechanics to fix and maintain various equipment and collections. The shop works with the Wednesday Crew and offers jobs when the weather outside isn't optimal.

If you're interested in volunteering, email the museum at srha@saskrailmuseum.org.



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