

IRAX

NEWSLETTER OF THE SUDBURY NORTHERN RAILROAD

April 2005

April, 2005 Meeting

The Gattonis have volunteered to host the April, 2005 meeting of the Sudbury Northern Railroad (SNRC) on Tuesday, April 12, 2005, at 7:30 PM. Instructions to reach their house at 1341 Roy Street in Sudbury are: Driving east on Lasalle Blvd. from Notre Dame Ave., Roy Street is just before the Shopping Center, turn left (north) and travel about two blocks. Gattoni's are on the left side. Go in the side door as usual. Phone number is 566-7650 if you get lost.

March, 2005 Meeting - no meeting in March

Meeting Schedule - 2005 Tentative

Jan.	.....	Art Taylor declined; works nights
Feb.	.....	Garth Harris held February meeting
Mar.	.....	nothing scheduled
Apr.	.....	Dick and Richard Gattoni
May	.....	Mike Svoc
June	.....	nothing scheduled
Sept.	.....	nothing scheduled
Oct.	.....	nothing scheduled
Nov.	.....	nothing scheduled
Dec.	.....	nothing scheduled

Upcoming Events

The Sudbury Modular club (the club that does things) will be setting up at Pioneer Manor on the weekend of May 6, 7, and 8th. This is an opportunity to meet some of the "greatest generation" and hear some stories, real, fictional or imagined from the glory days of steam rail travel.

News in General

Termites - 1; CN - 0

The Transportation Safety Board has concluded that deferred maintenance was the cause of a fatal train wreck on the CNR near McBride, British Columbia on May 1st, 2000. A fiery crash resulted when the weight of the lead locomotive caused a wooden trestle to collapse sending the freight train off the track with the result that two people were killed. CN is facing several charges under the Railway Safety Act and the Canada Labour Code. Most damning was the finding by the investigators that internal rot had been identified in several of the bridge's wooden components in a 1999 report.

Is That a Greenbriar Leading the Consist?

Just recently General Motors Corp. announced the sale of its locomotive division which had been struggling financially. The sale of the Electro-Motive Division will include the plants at LaGrange, Ill. and at London, Ontario. The company's 2,000 employees build freight and passenger locomotives and diesel machine and power generation products. GM bought the company in 1990 and has since built more than 58,000 locomotives in 73 countries.

The sale will be consummated in the first quarter of 2005 and the purchase price is said to be less than \$500 million. The buyer is the an investment group principally led by the New York based Greenbriar Equity Group as well as Boston based Berkshire Partners.

More on Container Traffic

In a recent article in the financial news on successful entrepreneurs this interesting statistic popped out from the text. At this time Walmart is ordering from China, 176,000 containers of goods per week. Shipping from North America to China and the east is tied up for the next two years. When one considers that Walmart is only one of many companies buying Chinese goods the number of containers landing on the west coast must be staggering. Assuming that Canada has about 1/10 the population of the USA and that maybe half of the containers come east of Winnipeg, this works out to about 1,100 containers a day, every day of the week, combined over the CNR and CPR. (Don't hold my feet to the fire over these numbers folks, just a little idle speculation. Some trains contain double stacks; many are for Costco, Canadian Tire and other retailers, and some may go by way of the US, and our trucker friends must carry a few)

This'll Get Your Goat

British Columbia's Railpower Technologies has sold 35 hybrid yard engines to the Canadian Pacific Railway. Railpower which is located in North Vancouver specializes in the "Green Goat", a hybrid yard loco which operates on rechargeable batteries that are charged by a relatively small diesel generator. The loco, which somewhat resembles the "cow" of a cow-calf combination has a low profile with the engineer being able to see clearly over the hood from his cab. The Green Goat emits up to 90% less particulates and nitrogen oxides than conventional yard engines powered by a diesel prime mover. Since a lot of a yard loco's time is spent in idling cycle the prime mover of a Green Goat can be significantly smaller.

CPR figure they will be able to save about \$3 million a year with the Goats. A three month test showed CPR that they could save 60% on fuel and maintenance was reduced. Not to mention that CPR's fleet of 220 low powered locomotives were largely built in the 1950's and are now long in the tooth. Upfront cost of the hybrid locos are less than a new conventional diesel loco and comparable

with a used conventional.

Railpower Technologies share value has been on a steady rise since June of 2004 when it was three dollars and change, and is now just shy of \$7. Ed Dodge, former chief operating officer of Canadian Pacific, was made a board member of Railpower.

From the Olden Days

More Trestle Tales

"Utah Ghost Rails" has an interesting photograph taken during the last days of construction of the Union Pacific/Central Pacific American trans-continental railway. The photo was taken near Promontory where the two companies reached and passed each other prior to the actual joining of the two companies. The Central Pacific conquered a substantial gulch with fill, the "Big Fill", while the Union Pacific built a 408 foot long, 85 foot high trestle, the "Big Trestle" along side of each other. When the Central Pacific took over that section of line they used their own "Big Fill" and abandoned the trestle because of its excessive maintenance.

The interesting part of the whole story is that it took the Union Pacific 38 days to construct this trestle. During the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway north-west from Sudbury trestling was preferable, in the interim, to where fill would normally be used. The various reporters of the Ottawa Valley Press Association, in their annual excursion in the fall of 1884 crossed so many trestles west of Sudbury that they soon hardly noticed them. However, they did note that there was at High Falls, 600 feet; at Windy Lake, 555 feet, 55 feet high; Bannerman Lake, 600 feet, 100 feet high; and Geneva Lake, 900 feet, S-shaped and 100 feet high. It is known from Lavallee's "Van Horne's Road" and other sources that the CPR reached and passed these locations well within the spring and summer months of 1884. Taking into consideration that the Precambrian rocks of the Shield presented more of a challenge than the generally friable rocks and gravele of Utah, the necessity of cutting back and stumping of the forest, the working season shortened by frost; the building of this section of the CPR becomes impressive.

New Books

"When the Railroad Leaves Town", 'American Communities in the Age of Rail Line Abandonment', 'Eastern United States'; Joseph P. Schwieterman; Truman State University Press; 8 1/2" x 11"; 350 pages; 65 maps; 136 photos. This book offers an interesting look at the effects resulting from the removal of rail services from cities and towns in the eastern United States. The layout of the book provides an historical background for rail service to the location, factors leading to retrenchment, the legacy of the railroad(s), a map showing the general location and a bibliography.

Those who have read, or have a copy of, "Last Train to Lindsay" will find much of interest in this book.

Hot Cinders in My Shorts - Viewpoint from the Editor

What's with this Ron Brown character? Well known author Ron Brown is a Toronto chronicler of our past history, whether it be ghost towns, ghost railways, railway stations or backroads to investigate. Or is he? Recent perusal of his book on railway stations turned up this fact, Cartier, where there is still standing a CPR station is "150 kms. west of Sudbury". The village was named "Slabtown" prior to the arrival of the CPR. And this nugget; divisional points were spaced 150 km. apart as this was the distance a steam locomotive could travel before requiring water. Clearly Mr. Brown hasn't looked at the bible of CPR construction, Omer Lavallee's "Van Horne's Road", where on page 131-2 a large map shows that the desire was to have divisional points averaging 125 miles (200 km.) apart. Both "Ghost Railways of Ontario, volumes 1 and 2 make no reference to Lavallee

As with a pre-existing village "Slabtown", where did that come from. A quick look at even a road map would show that there are no significant creeks or rivers in the immediate vicinity of Cartier and it is highly unlikely that this gravel plain in the middle of nowhere wouldn't be a suitable site for a sawmill in pre-CPR 1882.

In "Vanished Villages", Brown says that the ore deposit which gave birth to the Mond Nickel Company and the various mining and smelting operations at Victoria Mines, near Worthington, was discovered by "Henry Rodger". Unfortunately, the person who should get the credit is Henry Ranger.

Inside the back cover credit is given to Brown by that other Canadian icon, the CBC, where it says "Nobody knows Ontario like Ron Brown". It is most unfortunate that so many errors have turned up in these books. It impugns the credibility of all of the work. Personally, the Editor has related his Brown books under "Fiction, c/w with nice pictures".

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Take a youngster train-watching today.