



# STEAM RAIL NEWS

---

*Rocky Mountain Rail Society*

[www.6060.org](http://www.6060.org)

Jan/Feb 2008

## Christmas Cards and Canadian History: From the Perspective of the Railway-Obsessed

It was the morning of December 2, 2007. At 0600, sunrise was still a ways off, and in any case it would do little to mitigate the -20 weather to which we woke. The “we” in this case would be Kevin Quigley and Russ Grycan, photographers; and me, Zac Brewer, equipment caddy and backseat driver. Our mission on this day was to find the perfect shot for Kevin’s Christmas cards, and of course a few “keepers” for our own albums. What or where exactly was this “Christmas card shot” supposed to be? Kevin seemed to have some inkling that it was to be found somewhere between Calgary and Field on the 136-mile Laggan Subdivision of the CPR, and, of course, we would know when we found it.

The day did not get off to a particularly good start: despite ideal light conditions, serendipity was not on our side. We reached the Hwy 1X bridge over the mainline at Seebe in time to see a pair of bright red diesels hustle a hot eastbound stack train underneath and out of sight before we could even pull off the road.

“There goes my Christmas card, heading to Calgary at forty miles an

hour,” Kevin lamented.

From then on, photographic conditions began to get worse. The day became overcast, and the cloud eventually brought with it heavy snow. Nonetheless, the frequent traffic and dramatic conditions yielded some great shots, but somehow none was quite right for Kevin’s cards. As it turned out, the image that announced his Christmas greeting, CP’s Holiday Train, was taken in Calgary a couple of weeks later. As far as our intended purpose was concerned, our 500-kilometre excursion had been almost a total failure!

Over dinner the night before, Kevin and I had discussed the difficulties that arise when trying to explain to someone not familiar with our hobby exactly why it is we are indeed driven to rise before dawn, travel for hours on poor roads, and stand outside in freezing conditions, all in the hopes of catching some good exposures of trains in operation. Admittedly, even to me these things seem a little crazy, yet I find myself to be



an ardent practitioner of such seemingly inexplicable behaviour. Imagine what someone who is not a “train person,” or even someone who is interested in railways but does not possess this degree of outright obsession, must think. To the average individual, we must seem completely nuts.

Our discussion had got me thinking, though. Despite being on the younger end of our membership, I have been interested in trains for quite a long time: long enough, in fact, that this interest has basically become second nature, and that I can hardly imagine myself not having some involvement with railways. Lately, I have found that even those parts of my life that I thought were safely sepa-

## Christmas Cards and Canadian History: (cont.)

rate from railroading have developed a connection to this interest and this tradition. Several weeks ago, I was involved in a conversation with a historian who claimed that there is no consciousness of historical value in Alberta, and these general sentiments were echoed in a presentation I had the opportunity to watch at an Undergraduate History Conference in Kamloops over the weekend of January 18<sup>th</sup>. “Why,” the presenter asked, “can’t I find Canadian history in Canada?”

I felt that I would be doing a disservice to Canadian history if I simply left the presentation without attempting to answer that question. I responded by stating that I believe we are lucky in Canada with regards to our history for one major reason: so many of the things that we use to define what Canada is historically are still alive and in use today. Canadians do not have a long legacy of spilling the blood of other Canadians on our soil, nor was some kind of civil war a major turning point in the story of our nationhood like it was in America, England, or France. Pierre Berton tells us that the story of Canada lies in the building of railways, railways that are still going strong this very moment. Canadian Pacific and Canadian National alike continue to be vital transcontinental reaffirmations of our nation, and expressions of our past. And the fundamental irony of the pre-

sender’s question lay in the fact that not one but *both* of Canada’s national railways, as well as Kamloops’ own operating steam locomotive, were literally within walking distance of the building where the conference was being held. At least in some sense, this presenter, herself a native of the city, could not see the proverbial forest for the trees.

I’m not going to pretend that every time I watch a train I do so out of a sense of historical duty, but I think that, for me, this notion has begun to underlie a lot of the railroad-related activities that I consciously undertake. I find it almost impossible to visit Field, B.C., and the Big Hill without thinking that this is one of the storied locations in railroad history, both in Canada and abroad, and that I am privileged to be able to experience it as frequently as I do. In my estimation, this same sense of privilege is keenly felt by many, if not all, of the members of this society, since we have the opportunity to support and maintain the operation of our very own historical treasure, Canada’s largest operating steam locomotive. Again, I can’t pretend that I was actively looking to become an amateur steam locomotive mechanic when a trip to Stettler took me past Warden – one of those “fateful accidents,” I suppose – a couple of summers ago. Nonetheless, I’m glad it did, and today I’m proud of what we as a group, and I as an individual, have accomplished in

keeping 6060 in operation for the enjoyment of all citizens of, and visitors to, this part of Canada. Working in Stettler has also given me a further appreciation of the importance of railways to the development of this region, as well as the particular history of the long-defunct Canadian Northern and its role in the creation of the country and the nation in which we live today. Thus, in the same way that I felt I had to disagree with the conference presenter, I really have to disagree with the historian and his more pointed comments against Alberta: not only am I one Albertan with a sense of historical value, but I also know and work within a large group of people who share a strong commitment to keeping Albertan and Canadian history alive today, and into the future.

So, does this explain why we set off in early December to photograph trains in the Rockies? Perhaps not directly. Was our consciousness of the importance of railways to Canadian history motivating us to freeze ourselves at trackside? Well, probably not. Is it a good way of justifying and explaining spending a winter’s day capturing railroad action to someone who is not a “train person,” since attention to, and participation in, our national history is no doubt a pleasant side-effect of our railway interest (or obsession)? Of this there is no question: absolutely.

**Zac Brewer**

## 6060 Story

In 1960, many of my railroad buddies and I were saddened when steam power was totally withdrawn from running on the Canadian National Railways. So, we resolved to at least preserve one steam locomotive for display in Jasper. The story of how this came about, our ad hoc committee, negotiations with Mr. G.R. Graham, CNR Vice President, is a story in itself which I will not put down here except to say that I have a treasured Christmas 1962 letter from CNR President Donald Gordon, expressing his pleasure that we were enjoying the 6060 in Jasper.

The 6060 arrived in Jasper in May of 1962 after a cosmetic restoration in Transcona, Manitoba. I met her in the east end of the yard as she majestically rolled into town as a dead engine, hauled by the Extra 9126 West - Engineer Carl Wickdahl, Fireman John Romanow and Head End Brakeman Pete Shearer. It was very evident that the 6060 was in excellent mechanical condition, nothing had been "robbed" (parts removed by the shop staff), and I made up my mind, then and there, that somehow or other, this locomotive must run again.

We put the 6060 on display close to Jasper station for 10 years where she was a popular tourist attraction proudly maintained by many of my fellow rail-

roaders and myself. Gallons of boiler black paint; silver paint for the motion and undercoating; preserved the metal from the elements as well as grease to cover the plain bearings. Also, washout plugs were removed in strategic places to permit the boiler to "breathe" and to remain as free from moisture as possible. The cab was kept locked and secure and we experienced only one incident of vandalism.

In 1972, we moved the 6060 from Jasper to Montreal for total restoration. The story of how this came about is once again a story in itself which can be told another time. The locomotive was taken to the Point Ste. Charles shops where the tender was separated from the engine, the boiler removed from the frame, the rods removed and the drivers and wheels dropped. Very fortunately, many of the shop staff were still well experienced in steam locomotive repair etc. and as Vice President Keith Hunt remarked: "The 6060 has undergone an extensive examination and restoration and she will be running for a very long time indeed". How right he was! As I recall, here are at least some of the projects completed in the 1972 re-birth of the 6060: new CNR red brass used for the crown brasses, crank pins and crossheads: frame examined - OK and new spring rigging applied: all appliances serviced and repaired as necessary; however, the Exhaust Steam Injector was not re-

paired and was left on for show - it was replaced by a non lifting inspirator; a brand new Westinghouse Cross Compound 8 1/2 inch Air Compressor replaced the old one to complement the fully restored 6-ET locomotive air brake system; the valve gear & rods, spool valves & pistons, valve chambers and cylinders all received the required attention and the benefit of "eastern valve setting"; the boiler was found to be in remarkably good shape; all 123 4 in. flues, all 35 2 1/4 in tubes, and 34 superheater units were removed, examined, tubes and flues safe ended, and put back in the boiler; the firebox was carefully examined & new brick applied; as I recall, very few stay bolts were in need of replacement; the engine was put back together, trammed and so on; new jacketing was applied over the asbestos insulation; painting was the final process and our engine looked like a million bucks! I've no doubt left out a number of procedures but by the middle of 1973, the 6060 was ready for her new life pulling steam excursions on the Canadian National Railways in Canada and the United States of America.

On 15 September, 1973, I had the honour of becoming the Locomotive Engineer - Special Duties on the 6060. On that momentous day, along with Engr. Malcom McKinnon and Fireman Bill Fyfe, we ran the 6060 out of Montreal Central Station to Victoriaville, Quebec & Return - pulling around 15 Coaches and more than 600 passengers aboard. The 6060 performed magnificently much

## 6060 story (cont.)

to the joy of all concerned especially CNR President N.J. Mac Millan. who had been the driving force behind the 6060's restoration and re-birth. My dream had become a reality.

The 6060 ran on railfan trips out of Montreal and Toronto until 1980 when we brought her back to Alberta in time for Alberta's 75th Anniversary celebrations wherein we made 6 or 7 railfan runs. I had brought her back home to Alberta, under steam, and we made it from Toronto to Edmonton in five days, cut in behind the diesels on Trains 349 & 375. A unique experience. Regional Master Mechanic George Threlfell road with me from Winnipeg, Man. right through to Biggar, Sask. and I put him in the hoghead's seat for the whole trip. I think he had as much fun as I did even though we were in the cab for almost 24 hrs. straight. At Melville, Sask., George arranged for a big lunch which I still remember. He even liberated the coffee pot full of strong black coffee from the Melville Yard Office. We had great coffee in the traditional CNR Loco Tin Cups

After the 75th Anniversary, the 6060 was inactive for six years due to a lack of funds and other circumstances. Finally, funding became available (another story), and on the 18th January, 1986, we arrived in Jasper from Namao with great hopes of "back-shopping" the engine in our roundhouse here

in time to participate in SteamExpo at Expo 86 in Vancouver, B.C. I had planned on starting the work in the previous November and knew that we were going to be hard pressed to be there for the starting date of 23 May, 1986. The work started in earnest and we concentrated on boiler work. We had fired the engine in Ontario and Quebec with locomotive diesel fuel and this proved to be a mistake as this type of fuel is simply too hot and damaging to a locomotive boiler. The peen on the rigid stays in the side sheets had been burnt off, and after removing all the cups on the flexible stay bolts, a total of 241 stay bolts had to be removed and replaced; also, it was discovered that the multiple throttle had been damaged by outside storage so we had lots of headaches to overcome. And overcome them we did, thanks to the perseverance of Bob Swanson and the excellent work of Boiler-maker Pip Stairs. We ordered 123 brand new flues, 35 brand new tubes and 34 brand new superheater units from Combustion Engineering; Ray Chabot did a fine job of rebricking the firebox; besides all his boiler work, Pip Stairs was able to repair the crack in the multiple throttle; many volunteers from Jasper worked very hard with Swanson's crew; so, on the 29th May, 1986, the 6060 headed for Vancouver pulling 10 loaded Alberta grain cars, a way freight coach, caboose and a brownie



box (Superintendent's Car). The crew leaving Jasper was Condr. John Shredwick, Brakeman Brian Dick, Brakeman Fred Syroteuk, Locomotive Engineers Cal Elliott and myself. Just like the star of a show, the 6060 made her triumphant entry to Steam Expo on the 31st May, greeted by her many friends and the marvelous cacophony of music created by all the steam locomotives present with their steam whistles wide open!

The 6060 still needed more work so we kept her in Vancouver outside of the Royal Hudson Shops until the funding could be made available (another story). An unfortunate error was made in the work on the 6060 at Vancouver which we have been slowly correcting. I shall say no more, for now, except to say that they were not of a nature to permanently damage the engine's integrity.

After a number of attempts to keep the engine in Jasper and elsewhere (another intriguing story), we have been most fortu-



**6060 story (cont.)**

nate to find a home in Stettler, Alberta, in 1993, with Alberta Prairie Steam Tours (APST) where the 6060 has made over 70 round trips pulling their passenger trains between Stettler and Big Valley, Alberta. We have a dedicated, talented mechanical crew of volunteers who take good care of the engine. Also, Mr. Don Gillespie, President & CEO of APST has been terrific in providing us with facilities and the expertise of his mechanical staff and himself in ensuring that our locomotive is maintained to a high standard. We always try to rigidly adhere to the rules and regulations of Alberta Boilers Safety Association whom we are responsible to for maintaining the boiler in a safe and reliable condition. Each year, they check our locomotive with a 1.5 hydrostatic squeeze. Also, we conduct non destructive testing of the boiler and I am pleased to state that the boiler, its flues, tubes, superheaters are all in great shape with the exception being a number of flexible stay bolt cups have to be replaced due to fibreglass insulation being used to replace the asbestos. Once again, this fibreglass was used in error in Vancouver. On the other hand, we have only had to replace two stay bolts and our flues, tubes, superheaters, and front flue sheet have been found to be in good shape. This is a fitting testimonial to the fine work of Boilermaker Pip Stairs & that grand old man of steam -

Bob Swanson. In terms of daily use, my calculations are that the boiler has been under pressure for no more than 200 times (very likely less) since the Boiler work was done in the Jasper shops. Therefore, I respectfully state that, in terms of boiler and machinery, the 6060 is capable of many years of safe and reliable operation at Stettler and elsewhere. For example, in 2001, we journeyed from Stettler to Jasper and return to participate in the transfer of Jasper's Heritage CNR Railway station to Parks Canada. We pulled a 17 car passenger train & traveled over 850 miles.

The 6060 now has a new 26 L Locomotive Brake System- the same as our modern Diesel Locomotives; a Mechanical Lubricator for the Air Compressor; Ditch Lights to the front and back of the Locomotive (complies with federal regs.); new self-closing water gauge; Radio that is compatible with APST, CN, CP; Firebox rebricked by Ray Chabot's son; many damaged flexible stay bolt cups replaced; Whistle valve repaired and old piping being removed from whistle valve; further maintenance work too numerous to mention. Thanks to Don Gillespie, Terry Wolfe & Dennis Pringle, we have use of proper water treatment. We are not using diesel fuel which is so damaging to a locomotive but do use Newalta fuel which is in the range of 500,000 b.t.u.'s per U.S. gal., as recommended

by the I.C.S. Manuals.

As a result of an agreement with the Alberta Government, the 6060 is now the property of the Rocky Mountain Rail Society. In other words, it is the property of all Albertans and it has a great future. It is my opinion that the 6060 is capable of relatively trouble free running for many years to come. We do need a proper roundhouse with a turn table, drop table etc., as well as a wye at Big Valley and heavier steel to run upon. One of our highly respected members of the Rocky Mountain Rail Society said recently : May the 6060 live for a long time and make many runs. I felt this was a very complementary statement to our mechanical staff and the people who have made the correct repairs. This statement was made by Dick Coleman who has loved steam locomotives and trains all of his life in Britain and here in Canada. He would not make such a statement lightly. This little paper is dedicated to the memory of Dick Coleman and the inspiration he gave us all. It is my sad duty to state that Dick passed away unexpectedly last 2 Nov/07 in Calgary, Alberta.

Written at Jasper, Alberta, on 20 November, 2007.....

Harry R.J. Home



# That Whistle in the Night

*Oh diesel queen of the glittering rail,  
 Pride of the streamlined train,  
 Your throbbing pistons rule the grade  
 Where once was Steam's Domain.  
 The iron horse has spent his day,  
 Now fades his thundering might;  
 But diesel, diesel save for me  
 That whistle in the night.*

*Silence forever - if you must -  
 The roar of steam and fire.  
 Let soulless men be satisfied  
 With the growl of a diesel flier  
 The clanking rod and roaring stack  
 Forever fades from sight;  
 But diesel, diesel save for me  
 That whistle in the night.*

*Oh, let me hear that plaintive wail  
 Across the lonely plains,  
 Or hear the snow-clad peaks fling back  
 The voice of thundering trains.  
 Then in my soul there stirs a peace  
 That tells me all is right;  
 So diesel, diesel save for me  
 That whistle in the night*

Robert E. Swanson  
 Author

# 6060 Operating Dates w/APST

The 2008 tentative schedule for APST has been released with the **6060** running on the following dates: **June 28, June 29, July 10, July 12, July 13, August 28, August 29, August 30 & August 31.**

We are planning an excursion trip from Calgary for the Sunday, July 13, 2008—Country Dinner to Big Valley Run. Total price plus bus from Calgary to Stettler is \$110 (GST included).

You can check out Alberta Prairie Steam Tours excursions complete schedule at their web site: [www.absteamtrain.com](http://www.absteamtrain.com)



# Supertrain 2008

Calgary's Model Railroad Show, Supertrain 2008 will be held at the Calgary Soccer Centre, 7000 - 48 St SE, this year. The dates are April 19 & 20, 2008.

The facility is larger than the old Big 4 Building and provides free parking. RMRS will again have a booth set up. The framed 6060 painting to be raffled off will also be on display. So come on out and enjoy the day. Volunteers will be needed.

Call **Don Totten** at **403-256-1986 H.** or **403-617-6360** or by e-mail at [dtotten@telusplanet.net](mailto:dtotten@telusplanet.net) for more info.





## Donations

**RMRS** would like to thank the following people for their gracious donations to our Society in recent weeks;

**George Trojan, Gary Meed, John Kampen, Warren Keefe, Lyall Walsh, Bob Leinweber, Telus Communications (2), Earl & Shirley Beswatherick, James Berry, David Duh, Kevin Quigley, Helle & Thomas Vardy, Martin Zevenhuizen, Ronald Barrie.**



## RMRS Membership Survey

Enclosed with this month's newsletter, you will find a copy of the Rocky Mountain Rail Society Member Survey. Its purpose is to gather some feedback from our membership in terms of experience, expertise, and availability to assist the society in day-to-day operations and projects. We are also looking to see how much interest there is within our membership to participate in fun social functions (like periodic barbecues or group outings). Finally, as a member, we want to make

sure that you have a say on the society's future direction and objectives. Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire and mail or email it back to us. All replies received prior to March 31, 2008 will be entered in a draw for one of four \$25.00 gift certificates that can be redeemed for any in-stock RMRS souvenirs or merchandise (including our new 6060 giclee print). Your opinion is valuable to us!

Also, **2008 memberships are due.** If you haven't sent in your renewal already, please use the form sent in the last newsletter or go to our website, [www.6060.org](http://www.6060.org), to renew.



**6060 Painting by Merv Brandel**



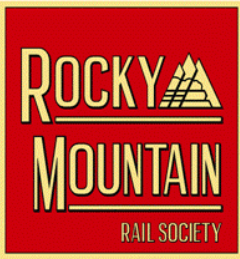
**Brand name Clocks & Watches, Fine Jewellery and more  
Sales, Service and Repairs**



Bay 336 - 22 Midlake Blvd. S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2X 2X7

**Tel: (403) 201-6446  
Fax: (403) 201-6446  
Email: [tstn@shaw.ca](mailto:tstn@shaw.ca)**





PO Box 81076—6060, BPO  
Calgary, Alberta T2J 7C9

[www.6060.org](http://www.6060.org)

.....  
**RMRS Board of Directors:**

<b>President,</b>	<b>W.E. (Bill) Williams</b>	403-803-6805	billwill@telusplanet.net
<b>Vice-President,</b>	<b>Don Totten</b>	403-256-1986	dtotten@telus.net
<b>Treasurer,</b>	<b>Russ Grycan</b>	403-366-7121	russelljames@shaw.ca
<b>Secretary,</b>	<b>Al Watch</b>	403-271-6924	watch@telus.net
<b>Directors,</b>	<b>Harry Home</b>	780-852-5818	hehome@shaw.ca
	<b>Joe Cernak</b>	403-285-7758	
	<b>Larry Buchan</b>	403-601-2859	larrybuchan@lincsat.com
	<b>Ron Switzer</b>	403-288-5327	olympiaeng@telus.net
	<b>Kevin Quigley</b>	403-990-5931	kquigley@gienow.com
	<b>John Pinter</b>	403-271-2169	2pinter1@telus.net



**6060 Painting Raffle**

RMRS is holding a fund raising raffle of a 6060 painting by Merv Brandel. It's a framed 36 x 24 print, # 1 of 205, signed and numbered by the artist. Draw date is June 30, 2008 or sooner if sold out before that date.

Tickets are 1 for \$10 or 3 for \$25

Call **Russ Grycan** at 366-7121 for info on getting tickets

**Meetings**

All members are invited to Board of Directors meetings every 2nd Tuesday of each month. Contact **W.E. (Bill) Williams**, President for location @ 403-803-6805

**Website**

**Geoff Sowery** has been working on our new web site, [www.RMRS.ca](http://www.RMRS.ca) and we hope to have it up and running soon. Our old site [www.6060.org](http://www.6060.org) will link directly to the new site so that we will still be able to promote it. Geoff has also set up an account at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com).

**Newsletter**

Tracy & I would like to thank all of you for the great comments regarding the last newsletter. It was a tough one to get out as we started from scratch. We hope to have Steam Rail News available to members on our new web site in PDF format in the near future. Again, we can always use stories and pictures from members.

**Glenn Astren** 403-614-6511 [gdstren@hotmail.com](mailto:gdstren@hotmail.com)

**Pictures**

**Kevin Quigley**, our resident photographer, still has various 8x10 railroad photos for sale for \$10. All proceeds will go to the Rocky Mountain Rail Society. Kevin can be reached at 403-990-5931  
e-mail: [kquigley@gienow.com](mailto:kquigley@gienow.com).

**Membership Update**

Membership as of Jan 22, 2008: **264**

