



# NEWS

SPRING 2007

## GOT CAR, FIXING CAR, GONNA RUN CAR



The Society's Annual General Meeting held April 28th at the Hampton Inn, was well attended. Left, President John Sprung leads the meeting. Surrey Councillor, Judy Higgenbotham, City liaison addressed the group, followed by special guest speaker, Ed Eckley from the Friends of BCER 1223, which has been restored and is on display at the Burnaby Museum

*Photos: Ray Hudson*

### ***"It's a Great Future For Rail in Surrey" - Chair John Sprung***

Twenty-nine members and two guests of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society attended the 2007 Annual General Meeting.

"The purpose of our society has been termed "get car, fix car, run car" which we have done over the past year, in all aspects of this phrase," reported Chair John Sprung. "The majority of last year's effort was spent on the rehabilitation of BCER 1225, lead by our Rehabilitation Coordinator and Vice-Chair, Bob Ashton. We've also made advances toward operating the Interurban on the original Fraser Valley line in Surrey, by working with the City of Surrey. We are also working to acquire another car for the empty half of our car barn."

We have added space to our car barn, a shop to store and safely use our tools. Along side the shop is the storage room for

parts removal from BCER 1225, and staging space for the new material to be added to it. The feature of this shop space, and I understand a very welcome addition, was the heating that allowed our dedicated team of volunteers to work through the colder months. These additions were constructed by the Mufford construction family and managed by the Lark Group, funded in part by a grant from BC Gaming.

We have also added an office trailer at the south side of the barn. More than just lunch space for volunteers, it is used for the monthly meetings of the Board. Previously, we met in different locations, such as the Lark Group boardroom or more recently here at the Hampton Inn in their meeting rooms. And although the board has enjoyed the luxury of these meeting rooms, there have been

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### **Open House 2007**



**Monday May 21,  
Sunday June 17  
Sunday July 15  
Sunday August 19  
Sunday September 16  
Monday October 8  
12 noon to 4 pm**

**At the Car Barn, 152nd & 64th Ave.**

## Join us for the Ride - *John Sprung, Chair*

some costs associated with them. Our friends here at Hampton provide very attractive discounts for the use of their rooms, however the board wishes to insure our funds are directed to the rehabilitation purposes of the society.

The Society hosts members and the public at our six monthly Open House activities. We hope that you will visit often and that you will get a chance to enjoy the new office facility and a few of the cookies as well.

This year you'll see many changes to 1225, and if you return each month, lots of progress as we work towards getting it back on the track. At the suggestion of board members, we are looking at Open House themes and links to other allied groups this year. Building on the visits last year of the local vintage car club, we have plans for a summer tea at the station with historic costumes and vehicles.

There are changes outside the barn as well including ground work to address the drainage, planting of grasses and the addition of other structures as well. If you came by the site on your way here today, you would also have noticed A large trailer unit outside the gates. This has been donated for use as a storage area which will serve to keep the barn's work areas clear and safe. We think more space will be needed as the 1225 refit continues and there are more things to move around the barn.

Not all the work is directed to 1225 however. This winter, 1225 ½ has also seen some work. The speeder trailer has been refitted for another season of rides. We hope to have an original speeder shed moved to the Sullivan site sometime this year so it will not have to stay outside during the winter.

The society benefited from a \$14,000 Grant from the Surrey Foundation for a community outreach program. Combined with a grant from Vancity, for an LCB projector, we look forward to an improved audio visual display during the Open House events and other presentations. The bulk of the funds will be used to increase our presence in the area under the direction of our Communications Director, Ray Hudson. We look forward to seeing more about the society in the neighbourhood.

The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society brand and logo now appears in a number of places. This coming year it should appear in a few new ones. Our souvenirs will be restocked and expanded under the direction of our Director, Jerry Gosling. Jerry has worked with other groups in this capacity and we look forward to seeing many new items at the Open Houses.

Our location in Sullivan has many historic references. The most visible is outside our site: the Sullivan Community Hall. We've been in contact with the Sullivan Community Association to coordinate some of our events and ensure that the growing community is aware of both groups. On a slightly wider scale, we've hosted a meeting with the Surrey Historical Society. Many members turned up to welcome and discuss the heritage aspect of our collections. We were also able to view the Fraser Valley line video in the office trailer.

Rehabilitation of BCER 1225, the "fix car" part of our motto, is now well underway. The future is the "run car" portion. To

ensure that we can take 1225 outside of the Sullivan compound, we need to work with other groups. BC Hydro, Southern Railway and the BC Safety Authority are now well aware of our direction. New groups are becoming important to our operation on the rail corridor. Translink now recognizes the rail line in their future. The City of Surrey is now moving ahead with a project that is directed towards passenger use of the rail corridor. The Provincial and Federal governments having renewed their green commitments lately, have become more aware of our heritage greening existence and the electric railway. Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Canada, the federal agency promoting the use of hydrogen, joined the FVHRS and is now a corporate member.



Chair John Sprung

The unavailability of overhead electrical power, has encouraged us to look at alternative power sources. Operating the heritage cars such as BCER 1225, and using new hydrogen power sources along with new funding for these power sources, has generated the phrase "Heritage to Hydrogen". This has caught the interest of a number of groups around the world. Associated with the 2010 Olympics is the Hydrogen Highway, which also includes Surrey by way of the BC Hydro subsidiary Powertech, and now the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society. The City of Surrey has identified us as a project for one of the Olympic Legacy initiatives. The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Committee under the direction of our Secretary, Allen Aubert, is working with other agencies, government groups and suppliers to identify funding and provisioning of an alternate power supply for BCER 1225.

The City of Surrey has also identified future passenger use of the rail lines powered by these alternate sources. They've created the Heritage Rail Demonstration Project to determine the feasibility of community rail operations and provide a demonstration operation using our heritage car and a replicated BCER baggage car (which will contain the hydrogen power unit) prior to the 2010 games. The city has engaged Peter Holt, as the Program Lead for the demonstration project and this may, in time, lead to the formation of a new rail Operations Group to schedule use of the rail lines.

We've achieved much, and there's much left to do, but we are moving ahead with purpose. One important thing about moving along, is recognizing the accomplishments of the volunteers who provide their time, expertise and elbow-grease. To show our appreciation, we've instituted a Volunteers Recognition Dinner, as a way of saying "Thank you". Last fall we had a nice dinner at the New York New York Restaurant across the street in Sullivan. We also included spouses by way of thanking them for allowing the volunteers to come and play in our rail yard.

This is a very exciting project to be part of, thank you all. I'm very glad you are joining us for the ride.



## We are in Good Shape Financially - *Stephen Plant, Treasurer*



**Stephen Plant CGA, Treasurer**

is already allocated to the rehabilitation project and all the other things we are doing.

Total Revenue for 2006 was \$123,654, a significant amount of that was from donations and BC Gaming grants. This is compared to \$133,581 the previous year. Expenses were \$14,925 compared with \$19,496 the previous year. The largest expenditure was insurance costs, nothing to be done about that. The net income was \$109,000. We are in a good cash position with most of the funds in GICs until we need it. Most of it

Total assets are \$661,012 as compared with \$554,130 in the previous year.

Total liabilities are nil. \$12,480 is held in trust for the Cloverdale Street Car 30 Society (yet to be formed) as compared with \$15,039 from the previous year. Funds were used to pay P & R Rail Contractors to relocate the street car from the FVHRS car barn to a storage site in Cloverdale. Funds held in trust will be moved to the Street car 30 Society as soon as a new Street car Society is registered and a dedicated bank account opened. The Street Car 30 initiative is a project of The Cloverdale and District Chamber of Commerce. The stewardship of Street car 30 is being undertaken by Bill Reid of the Cloverdale & District Chamber of Commerce.

The total cost of 1225 at the moment is \$302,000 not including the value of the volunteers. Without them, the costs would have been significantly higher. To this point, we have logged some 3,000 volunteer hours, which if valued at \$10 per hour, would total \$30,000.

We are keeping our expenses down, we have the money to cover our operating costs, and financially, the society is in pretty good shape.

## Piece by Piece 1225 is Coming Back Together

*Bob Ashton, Vice Chair*

As the winter "rainy" weather turns to spring "rainy" weather, much has been accomplished on the rehabilitation of BCER 1225. The "A" end (north) vestibule roof has been completed and installed. Its underside has been painted white. The "A" end door jams and train door jams have been completed and installed. With the installation of these items it is possible to see the outline of the new vestibule.

In preparation for the installation of the wood body frame the two corner posts at the "B" end (south) have been removed. On one of them was found an interesting touch with the past. A worker, probably a BCER employee, impressed into the wood, via nail holes the year "1928" and his initials "D B".

Minor roof work has begun with the removal of all the ventilators. All work on the roof is being done with safety in mind and each person is required to wear a safety harness and be attached to an installed safety line.

Removal of old stain/varnish and sanding of various bulkheads and doors continues. On the advice of a professional paint conservator all original gold leaf lettering (ie "Smoking", "St. Louis Car Co. Builders") seen inside the car will be saved.

The passenger section windows sashes are in the process of

being shaped to original standards. This job is one that has been contracted out and is being done off site.

Along with the above-mentioned efforts other volunteers are working on smaller jobs. For example, cleaning and painting of various metal parts, the removal of old rattan from the seats and the disassembly of the metal seat frames in preparation for sandblasting and repainting. All are important to the overall effort.

A container was donated to the society and once the ground dries it will set up in our compound and many items now stored in the car barn will be placed in it. This will allow much more room inside the car barn for the volunteers to set up more permanent workstations.



**Bob Ashton Vice Chair**

# WANTED

## Wrought Iron Railing

FVHRS is looking for the top portion (half circle) of your old interior railings. The metal will be used to replace rusted out moldings on BCER 1225. Please bring this to car barn or call 778-838-8141 to arrange for pickup.



# REBUILDING BCER 1225 - A SALUTE TO THE VOLUNTEERS



Bob Ashton with safety harness, on the roof



Wayne Abbott and Lloyd Knoblauch on the roof



Wayne and Lloyd rebuilding the vestibule roof



Installing the vestibule roof



Framing the vestibule roof



Frank Horne, window framing



Ron Jones, rattan seat removal



Ron Powers inspecting wiring



Wayne rewiring the car

**Wayne Abbott  
Tom Allam  
Donna Bradley**

**Terry Dewell  
Rene Doyharcaba  
George Grover**

*Thank you!*

**Frank Horne  
Ron Jones  
Lloyd Knoblauch  
Ron Powers**

**Andrew Ward  
John Welsh  
Neal Wilkie**



Donna Bradley polishing the brass fittings



Neil Wilkie sanding the steel side plates



Neil - "jack of all trains"



Wayne & Lloyd cutting posts



Bob & Wayne laminating corner posts



## Fundraising Aided by Forthcoming Donors

- Report by Allen Aubert Secretary



Allen Aubert, Secretary

Allen Aubert, reported that considerable success had been achieved during the year with donations being made to the Society in cash and gifts in kind.

Several financial institutions had made donations including Coast Capital, GVC Credit Union, Vantel/Safeway Credit Union, Polygon Homes, The Surrey Foundation, the City of Surrey. The Province of BC Gaming, also made

major donations toward the rehabilitation of BCER 1225, the construction of the workshop and the introduction of a Community Outreach Programme. Many individual members also made cash donations with their membership renewal. An increasing number of corporations have made gifts in kind including, Starline Windows, Cloverdale Paint and many others.

The next major 'fundraising area' is to secure funds to complete the overhaul of the trucks including the brakes, wheels and electric motors. The cost to overhaul the trucks is estimated to be between \$125,000 and \$150,000 depending on how much work is required.



### Surrey Foundation

A major boost to the operations of the FVHR Society's Outreach came in the form of a grant from the Surrey Foundation.

Pictured at the presentation (left) standing on Car 1225, are Chair John Sprung, Surrey Foundation Executive Director, Danielle Callens and SF Director, Amrik Randhawa. The are joined, in the photo on the right by Secretary Allen Aubert.



## "I See Light at the End of the Tunnel"

- Councillor Judy Higgenbotham, Council Liaison

"I think one of the important reasons for attending the Annual General Meeting is that you get a compilation of all of the hard work that has taken place over the previous year," she said. "I have to say that the reason that council is so supportive of the Fraser River Heritage Railway Society is because they are very competent, they (the council) know that the volunteers work very hard and they know that their heart is in the job that they do. They do it because they want to do it. They do it because they want to make a difference and because it's the right thing." Higgenbotham noted that society had changed over the past few years looking beyond the car and seriously considering going back to rails. She said that it has long been held that there was a conspiracy in the fifties to get rid of the rails in favour of buses, and now the trend is going back to rail, essentially going back to the future.

"We'll move ahead a few steps at a time," she said, "and the Heritage Rail Project has certainly put rail cars back on the map for all of the cities that are linked by this rail line. I know

they're coming on board. A lot of them are hesitant to put money into it and I think that's where Surrey has taken a leadership role."

The genesis of this project actually goes back to 1996 when Surrey Advisory Commission member Jim Wallace, put \$25,000 into a fund for the city's Heritage Committee to investigate re-establishing rail service.

"We have never looked back. I see some light at the end of the tunnel and I believe the future is not just in Heritage Rail, but in Community Rail, and we're working toward that."

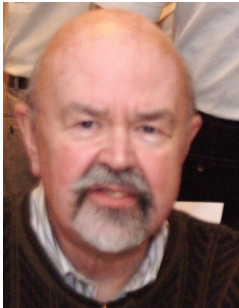


Councillor Judy Higgenbotham, Council Liaison



## Milestones of the Interurban Service

- by Henry Ewert.



**Henry Ewert**

Over the coming editions of the news letter, we will present a number of articles highlighting the historic moments and mileposts in the construction and life of the BC Electric Interurban Railway.

- September 24, 1906, two years after completion of the New Westminster Rail Bridge, BC Electric announces that an electric railway line will be built to Chilliwack from New Westminster
- January 10, 1907, an agreement with the provincial government was achieved for running rights on the rail bridge at New Westminster
- August 26, 1907, the first sod turning ceremony for the new rail line was conducted at 125<sup>th</sup> and Old Yale Road by Rochfort Henry Sperling, also known as Mr B.C. Electric, and New Westminster Mayor W.H. Keary.
- October 15, 1908, the first rails (2000 tons) arrived at New Westminster for the New Westminster to Cloverdale section of the rail line. Ties had already been distributed along the grade as far as Cloverdale. "A crane had been rigged on the BC Electric wharf in New Westminster to unload the rails from the large ocean going scow and the several smaller

scows, which had been floated by two tugs from Vancouver, where the steel had arrived earlier in the month by Blue Funnel Line Freighter. With grading to Cloverdale ready from the Fraser River bridge, the laying of rail awaited only the completion of the long wooden trestle approach to the east end of the Fraser crossing."

- October 15, 1908, was also the deadline for tenders from companies seeking the contract to provide fir ties for the rest of the line.
- August 24, 1909, BC Electric announced they had secured a terminal site at Huntington at the US boarder in order to connect with the Great Northern and a number of US Railroads. Less than two weeks later some settlers near Chilliwack chased BC Electric officials off the new right-of-way at gunpoint because of their alleged failure to pay the settlers for their land. By the end of September 1909 the track laying to Cloverdale was completed.

*Henry Ewert has written 4 books on local transportation. The book commissioned for Expo 86 was the story of the BC Electric Railway Company, Victoria's Streetcar Era, A Perfect Little Streetcar System: North Vancouver, and Vancouver's Glory Years co-written with Heather Conn (which is still in print). Mr. Ewert also lectures at Simon Fraser University.*

## 2007 AGM at a Glance

- Photos by Ray Hudson





## Recognition For Retiring Directors



The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society AGM was the occasion to recognize the invaluable service provided by retiring directors Kelly Breaks (above) and Terry Lyster (right). Kelly is going to remain involved in the Society's security requirements. Terry was the former editor of the publication, and is also active in Valtech. Thanks fellows.

## Board of Directors: 2007

### *Executive*

John Sprung, Chair  
Bob Ashton, Vice-Chair  
Allen Aubert, Secretary  
Stephen Plant, Treasurer

### *Directors*

Larry Fisher  
Jerry Gosling  
Peter Holt  
Ray Hudson  
Roy Mufford  
Doug Watkins

Councillor Judy Higginbotham  
- Surrey city liaison

## Surrey Historical Society



Chair John Sprung explained the rehabilitation of 1225 to members of the Surrey Historical Society which visited the Barn this past winter.



Fraser Valley Heritage  
Railway Society

## NEWS

Published by the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society for its membership, sponsors and limited public distribution.

The Editorial Board welcomes brief letters and stories recalling when BCER's interurban trains plied the rails between New Westminster and Chilliwack.

### Send contributions to:

Ray Hudson, Editor, FVHRS News  
e-mail [rayhudson@dccnet.com](mailto:rayhudson@dccnet.com)

Business card size ads are welcome at  
\$20 per placement per issue.

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