



# NEWS

Fall/Winter 2009/10

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OpenHouse  
Dates  
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## 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday April 24, 12:00 - 3:00

### Special Report

The Story of 1304 and the Fire of '45

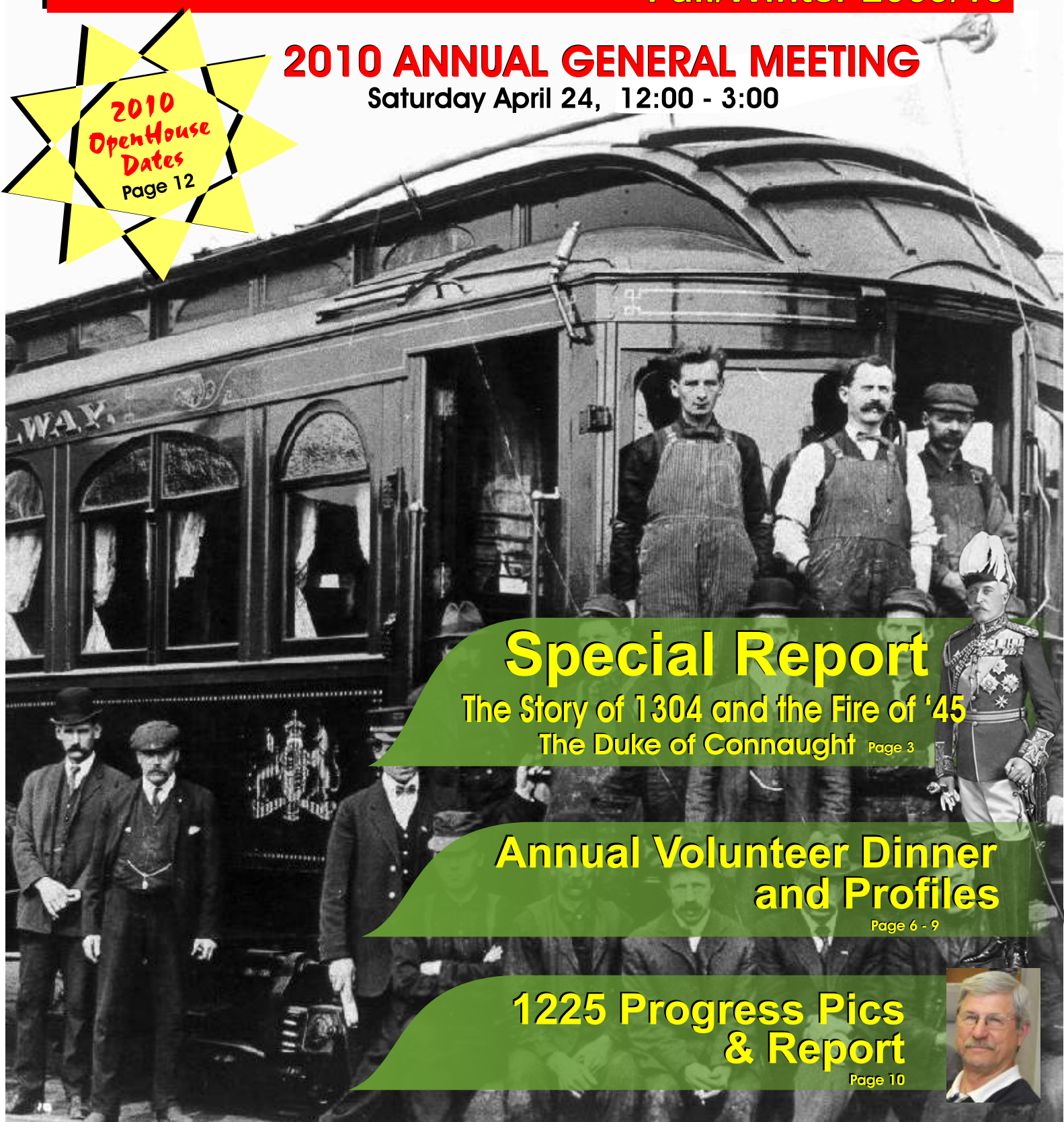
The Duke of Connaught Page 3

### Annual Volunteer Dinner and Profiles

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### 1225 Progress Pics & Report

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# Looking Toward the BCER Line 100th Anniversary

- Chair John Sprung



Another year turns, and for 2010 we look forward to celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the re-opening of the BCER Fraser Valley line.

Our FVHRS volunteers are continuing to complete the work on 1225 while the trucks, motors and tyres are being refurbished off-site. Over the years this

great group of volunteers has contributed over 13,500 hours (as of November 2009) to the rehabilitation of 1225. Our expectation is that just over 15,000 hours, with a value of over \$450,000 in "sweat equity," will be spent on the rehabilitation of this heritage car by the time it is ready to run. The interior work is nearing completion and every day there is a vast change in the appearance of the car. If you visited last year at any one of the Open House events, you will notice a big difference now. The brass has been installed and is shining and the new wood glistens in anticipation of the passengers soon to arrive. It still tickles me that a vehicle with steel wheels has tyres, however both 1225 and 1304 do have steel tyres and they need to be inspected to ensure safe passage on the old BCER, now SRY Rail Link, main line through Surrey.

Bob Ashton, our Vice-Chair and head of rehabilitation, reminds me there are many other things we need to do to be allowed onto the tracks. Working with Transport Canada and the BC Safety Authority, Bob and FVHRS Director & Superintendant Ron Powers, are putting together the operational plans, procedures and policies that will ensure our registration for railway operation. These plans also include training and certification of motormen, conductors, yard and station crew as well as all the other necessary operation and maintenance positions.

Now is the time to step forward if you are interested in volunteering to operate the interurban car, work with the public either in the car or at one of the stations. We will be looking for a number of people to learn how to run and look

after both the cars and the people once we get underway. Please contact Bob, Ron, myself or any director of the society if you are interested in helping out.

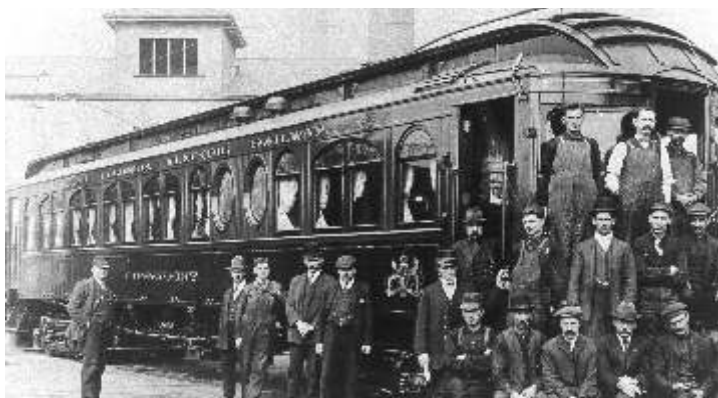
One hundred years ago, the BCER opened up the Fraser Valley line. It was called by many names including the Chilliwack Run, the Valley Line and District 3; however the BCER preferred the Fraser Valley Branch. We will celebrate the anniversary of the Fraser Valley Branch along with our corporate member and partner SRY Rail Link by touring the fully restored interurban BCER 1225 through the Fraser Valley this year. We are working out the details so please check the website for plans and dates when 1225 will be at a stop near you in the Fraser Valley. Our efforts are now turning to our power source. We need to provide power for the heritage interurban cars as the main electric line was removed over 50 years ago and will not be replaced. We are looking into the acquisition of a generator on a cart, which is called a 'Donkey' in rail slang, to provide the electricity we need to power 1225 with the 600 volts of electricity required for the electric motors. Eventually, the generator could be moved into the replica baggage car we would like to acquire, but until we raise enough funds for the replica baggage car we will use the donkey. If you happen to have a 650KW generator in your backyard, Superintended Powers would like to have a word with you. If you do not happen to have a generator, you can help us with a donation to the ***One Passenger at a time*** campaign so we can purchase one. We have a few options to investigate but as always, all options involve more money to purchase the needed equipment. Working with SRY Rail link and the City of Surrey, we are looking into a number of options of how best to connect to the main line.

This year we will continue our Open House events and offer another year of Speeder rides around the Sullivan car barn to our eager passengers. We will also spread the word of our heritage rail project at a number of up-coming events in the Lower Mainland. Our next appearance will be at the Marpole Museum and Historical Society, March 13 at 1:30pm, and then the annual Bradner Flower Show in April. I hope to see you there. In April we will be holding our Annual General Meeting. You will be receiving dates and times very soon.





## Phoenix Rising: Royal Car 1304 Trial By Fire



*BCER Car 1304 as the "Duke of Connaught" Car in Royal livery, 1912*



*1304 after the fire in 1945, immediately after arrival for rebuild*

*The late Dave Reuss was not only a dear friend, but also a fervent B.C. Electric fan all his life. He gave our society the plans necessary to construct a replica of Sullivan station, he authored a splendid book on the B.C. Electric, and he created the beautiful maps in my first B.C. Electric volume. His article on our interurban 1304 first appeared in the July 1970 issue of "Traction & Models" and we reprint it with pleasure as a small tribute to the extraordinary creative Dave. - Henry Ewert*

In 1912, a royal tour of Canada included the use of an outstanding interurban car. Placed in regular service, the car ran until destroyed by fire in 1945. However, this is not the end of the story. This historic car was built again to meet the demands of increased traffic and so became the last wooden interurban constructed in the grand old manner. Best of all, you may ride and possibly operate her on a summer weekend in 1970.

As traffic developed in the early years of this century, the British Columbia Electric Railway management searched for a way to increase the number of cars available on their expanding network of street car and interurban lines. Many other companies in North America faced the same problem and delivery of new equipment was slow. The expense of equipment to the North West and the low cost of home-grown materials helped in the decision to build locally. No. 1304 was one of several built in 1911 by the B.C.E.R. shops in New Westminster. The design had to match the appearance of some stately cars built the year before by the American Car Co. and the Ottawa Car Co. for the long run up the Fraser Valley to Chilliwack. So-called "soft woods" such as Douglas Fir went into 1304 and yet the finish was so well done that it was chosen to be the Royal Coach in its first year of operation.

It is hard to imagine the fervour that surrounded a royal visit in 1912. The Victorian splendour of the British Empire had not much diminished and Canada was intensely loyal to the British Crown. King Edward VII installed his brother, the Duke of Connaught, as Governor General of Canada, and this required a state visit across the Dominion. The Duke brought the Duchess and their daughter the Princess Patricia, with him in the most lavish way possible, travelling with a large personal suite and many ranking army officers. Vancouver went mad with civic pride to welcome "His Royal Highness", building great triumphal arches of imitation stone

through which the Duke would pass in his carriage. Even the Great Northern Railroad created a huge arch of fir boughs surmounted by a locomotive. Great crowds cheered the Royal Party wherever they went and newspapers of the time declared the streets to be like ancient Rome. Such was the spirit of the times.

The Duke who "ruled as representative of the King" stayed in Vancouver three days before he used the interurban. The B.C.E.R. had prepared 1304 for the occasion, but contrary to our hopes today, found no use for this car in touring the city or opening the Connaught Bridge, a major street railway artery. However, on Sept. 21, 1912, he motored to the Interurban Terminal at Carroll and Hastings Streets, where he began his trip to New Westminster aboard what really was the 1304. The Royal Car was freshly painted in the dark green of the Company and highly polished in honour of the trip. It bore the designation "Connaught" and the royal coat of arms. Inside the seats and partitions had been removed and new interior equipment provided by the Hudson's Bay Company store (which, incidentally, is 300 years old in 1970). The idea was to make it as much like a living room as possible with carpet, upholstery and curtains mostly in green and cream colours. The window arches contained orange glass, but this was hidden on the side windows by curtains. "In one corner a bank of incandescent lights with red globes have been placed which when lighted give the illusion of an open fire in a grate." "The compliments passed by His Royal Highness and the various members of the party on the splendid results . . . were specially pleasing." Evidently, the B.C.E.R. had done its best to create the finest in electric railway transport even to

*Continued on Page 4*

# From Luxury to Ruin to Rebuilt for Service

*Continued from Page 3*



*Interior of the "Duke of Connaught" for the Royal Tour*

surpass the Ottawa Electric Railway's efforts a few years earlier.

The Duke and his party of military men and officers of the B.C.E.R. crossed the red carpet to enter the "Connaught" which moved out of the terminal promptly at 10:45 a.m. Cheer after cheer went up from the crowds and the Duke responded by bowing and raising his feathered Field Marshall's hat at a side window. All traffic on the interurban lines and tracks over which the royal car left the city was halted for fifteen minutes prior to the departure of the "Connaught". Turnouts were spiked and a pilot car containing police officials ran five minutes ahead. Thousands gathered along the city route and on the interurban line through Central Park and Burnaby to New Westminster. One newspaper estimated that ten thousand people came out to see the Duke in his special car, which would be most of the population in those days.

At the New Westminster interurban depot which was a 3-track run-through design, there was a guard of honour waiting composed of one hundred members of the 104<sup>th</sup> Regiment drawn up in two lines with their scarlet uniforms glittering in the sunlight. The regimental band played six measures of the National Anthem while the Duke and the Reception Committee bared their heads. At this point the Royal Party left the B.C.E.R. to continue their tour by automobile. However, that evening they returned to Vancouver on the "Connaught". Everyone must have been exhausted but Motorman Mark Freure and Conductor L. Grimmer, on time again, got them back to Vancouver where the Duchess and Princess had remained on "doctor's orders".

The "Connaught" and numbers of other things named for the Duke were left behind on his departure. (The Princess has a whole regiment named after her.) For a time, though, the royal car became a special conveyance for officials or dignitaries. There is no available record when this car became the 1304 again, but soon the interior was restored as a "typical" interurban with rattan flip-over seats, car advertising, and a partitioned-off smoking section where the seats were all of wood for fire prevention purposes. On the outside, 1304 was repainted and, ultimately, joined the ranks of the other B.C.E.R. cars in the

typical rich scarlet and very light cream livery.

At first there was gold striping too, but most significant were the M.U. connections on all four "corners" which allowed the 1304 to run in "trains" with other cars. For the rest of the life of this car it ran on the same route used by the Duke from Vancouver to New Westminster 12.5 miles, via central Park. This was later double tracked completely, with a new entry into downtown New Westminster by private right-of-way called, you guessed, "Connaught Hill". From there, 1304 would often continue the additional 63 miles to Chilliwack where it could really get up speed in places. Although originally capable of more than 70 mph, these cars had their field shunt wiring removed following one or two "near misses".

The 1304 seldom, if ever, operated on the other interurban lines which were the exclusive domain of cars with different M.U. control systems. Peak traffic years passed; the Depression slowed everything; and then W.W. II again put tremendous pressure on the electric railway network which had changed very little from when the Duke rode the line. Rush hour trains of 2 or 3 cars ran on the Central Park line every five minutes and mingled with the Burnaby Lake interurbans as well as the city street cars on East Hastings St. The 1304 would appear leading or trailing in these trains except on the Chilliwack run where it was the usual practice for a baggage-express motor or combine to head the train.

On Sept. 16, 1945, the 1304 was returning on the Chilliwack

*1304 Burned Wood Stripped Away Ready for Rebuild*



line at the back of an empty, three car train. The crew had all gone forward and said afterward that the sun seemed very bright behind them. However, people near the private right-of-way saw that it was the 1304 that was glowing – and burning up. When the fire was extinguished there was only a burnt-out shell left to tow into Kitsilano Barn where the scrapping was done. However, the traffic pressure showed no signs of immediate decline and the B.C.E.R. was short of cars. The veteran car builders were called out once again s that by the end of the year old 1304 began to take shape. Many parts from the old car were salvaged, mostly from the underfloor and framing.

At this time the B.C.E.R. was slowly rebuilding the old fleet of street cars and it seemed natural to apply many of the

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## ***4TH ANNUAL VOLUNTEER DINNER***



***STORIES AND PICTORIALS FOLLOWING FOUR PAGES***

Coming in 2010

**BC Electric Railway in the Fraser Valley**  
***Celebrating***



**100 Years**  
**1910 - 2010**



## Volunteer: Ron Jones

### 4th Annual Volunteer Dinner

For my birthday, my wife took me to the Cloverdale Museum, and there was a display on the Interurban in Surrey. Beside it was a beautifully coloured brochure from the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society with a beautiful picture of one of the trams I used to ride on. I thought to myself, there's something that could be interesting. I sent in my money and eventually I received a call from Allen Aubert, with an invitation to come down and help out. That was in 2003. When I walked into the barn, Car 30 (the Clover Belle streetcar) and the Speeder, 1225 ½ were sitting there. We went to work on a number of things, but in August of 2005, B.C.E.R. Car 1225 arrived and that set the wheels in motion.



***What did you do in your working life and how did you apply that to the work at Heritage Rail?***

I grew up in East Vancouver, very close to the Burnaby Lake tram line. I used to take pennies or dimes and put them on the track, I'd hide in the bush so they wouldn't see me, and after the tram had passed by I'd go claim my flattened coins. I used to ride the tram into Vancouver occasionally. I remember on PNE parade day, they were very crowded and people would be standing on the step and even hanging on the stanchions. I remember the old Carrall Street Station very well and maybe the not so desirable people around there. I graduated from Gladstone High School, went to university and became a teacher. I taught for thirty-three years, but the seeds were planted.

In 2000, I heard about the trams in False Creek, operated by the Downtown Heritage Railway (DHR). I rode a few of those in my day as well and that's all it took. I joined the DHR and learned how to drive the cars. Now, I can hardly wait to get my opportunity to get my hands on the controller of 1225. Every once in a while I get out my manual and refresh my memory on the steps to start up and run the cars, I'm ready!

***What do you enjoy most about your work at the Car Barn?***

I enjoy the people. It's nice to have the camaraderie. At home, my wife and I do daycare four days a week for our grand-kids. That can be a bit wearing. But when I go to the Car Barn it's really relaxing. Although we work like crazy, it's a very pleasant environment. I'm not a mechanic and anything of a mechanical nature is challenging to me. However, what I can do, I try to do really well, like painting parts of the undercarriage and so on. That's been kind of fun. But now I'm looking forward to the experience of riding on, and hopefully driving, the car when it's up and running. I also look forward to having as much fun when we turn our attention to rehabilitating 1304.



*Chair, John Sprung welcomed the volunteers*



*FVHRS volunteer band, Circle of Friends sing 1225 Ballad*



*Well, it is a dinner after all!!*

November 25, 2009

## Volunteer: John Welsh



*FVHRS umbrella presented to Councillor Marvin Hunt*



*Bill Watson introduces keynote speaker Brian Croft*



*A Christmas Reunion 1914, by Brian Croft*

*See page 10 for the story behind the painting, and news of his next work.*

I became a volunteer because of Rene Doyharcabal, who was in the vintage car club with me, and with whom I play crib. Because we belong to so many things together, I agreed to come down to see what he was doing. When I met, and got to know, this great bunch of guys, I knew I had to be part of it. Besides, I used to ride those things when I was young, in 1938 and 39 you know. We rode these and the street cars and I can hardly wait to get 1225 going.

### *What do you enjoy most about this?*

I enjoy the atmosphere. It's relaxing, you associate with a great bunch of guys, and I'm always learning things, even though I'm an old guy. It's a great mix of guys who have the technical know-how and experience, and those who just have a lot of enthusiasm and commitment to make it work. Some are professional electricians, retired school teachers, railroaders and so on. We have a great time.

I take a lot of pride in my work. Here, I've been able to use the same skills I developed restoring old cars, and transfer them to working on the rail car. I really enjoy this because I like working with my hands. It's just amazing that the hobby of vintage cars, works so well with my other hobby of working on the interurban car.

### *Do you want to drive one of the cars?*

I don't have the expertise to do that, but I'll certainly be there to help any way I can. I'm working for the day when we'll be able to run from Scott Road station to Cloverdale. And I know we'd like to take it the whole way up the valley. I've talked to so many people in my car club, in the Abbotsford and Sardis areas, and they are also pushing for their people to get on board and support this thing to run further up the valley.

I'm looking forward to the day we make that happen.







# 8 4th Annual Volunteer Dinner

Fall Winter 2009/10

**Doug Hunt**



**Wayne Abbott**



**Bill Meeks**

**Richard Sutcliffe**



**Phil Lafevre**



**Ben Bentley**



**Peter Holt**



**Merv Tinck**

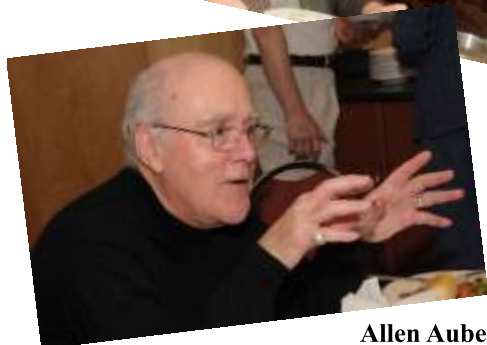


**Larry Perkins**

**Bill Watson**



**Frank Horne**



**Allen Aubert**



**Roy Mufford**

**Jerry Gosling**



# November 25, 2009



Fall Winter 2009/10

Judy Higgenbotham



Vince Holmes



Neil Wilkie



Ken Silen



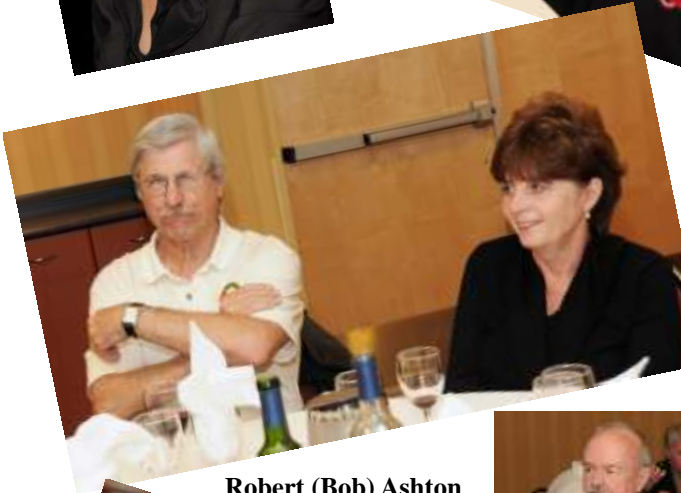
Les Brown



Mary-Lou McCausland  
Murdoch McSweeney



Robert (Bob) Ashton



Ron Jones

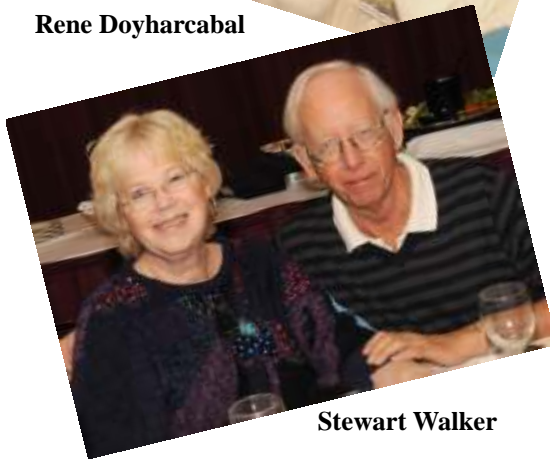


Henry Ewert

Brian Croft



Rene Doyharcabal



Stewart Walker

John Welsh



Ron Powers



Neil McLeod





# 1225 Rehabilitation On Schedule for this Spring



***Vice-Chair, Robert Ashton, reviewed with editor, Ray Hudson, what still remains to do to complete the rehabilitation of 1225.***

We have to upholster the rattan seats. One of our volunteers, Lloyd Knoblauch, a retired upholsterer, is looking after that. He has already started to rehabilitate all of the seat frames, then he'll do the rattan work. The trucks are at Carr's Machining, and they're in the process of being assessed. The wheels and various other worn out parts will either be refurbished or have the parts cut out and new parts put in. We're looking at a target date for completion in March. The motors are pretty well finished, and once that's done, we can send them over to Carr's so that everything can be put back together. Once that's achieved, we can put the whole car back together as one unit. That'll happen soon.

As far as the car body itself, we have the roof all canvassed and

painted, and the vents are on now. The "B" end, which is the south end, is getting close to finished. Most of the woodwork is finished. What remains is some electrical work. Most of the brass work is complete as well.

The first class section still needs to have the ceiling panels installed, and some wood trim. It should be pretty well finished except for the seating.

It should all be finished, except for the seating about the time the trucks come back. As I said, we will then mate them back together and Ron Powers will test the motors to make sure the wires are all hooked up the right way so we don't end up with one set of wheels driving one way against the other set driving the opposite direction.

I'm really proud to say that the volunteers have done a terrific job. I estimate that they'll have put just over 15 thousand hours into the project by the time we're done.





# Volunteer Dinner Awed by Croft



Artist and historical painter, Brian Croft, the keynote speaker at the Volunteer Dinner, held the audience spell-bound with a PowerPoint presentation of his works, particularly those, depicting the historic lower mainland, the street cars, interurbans and communities along the BC Electric Railway.

Along with the visual delight and entertaining commentary, Croft left greeting

cards with the outstanding painting, "A Christmas Reunion - 1914" about which Mr. Croft writes:

The painting depicts Jardine Station near Fort Langley, on land which is now part of Trinity Western University. Tram 1304 has just arrived from up-valley bringing a young family back home to Langley. In previous years, the cold white winters would routinely choke off long distance travel in the valley. But 1910 however, this had all changed. On this evening, Grandma and Granddad wait beside the bright new Jardine Station and

soon their reunited family will be snugly together for Christmas.

I used artistic licence in a rather extreme way by painting #1304 in red and cream livery, a configuration that would not be seen for another two decades. I beg forgiveness to those who might be offended at this departure from historical truth; I simply thought it made a better picture this way.

I am currently working on a winter evening painting of Cloverdale, circa 1913 which will feature the last daily eastbound interurban at the BCER station. I did this in part, to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the Fraser Valley Line as well as to generate a Christmas card for this next Christmas.

Also featured in the painting will be a Great Northern train at the station on 176th Street. The newly finished Surrey Hall is also prominent as well as the opera house and many other early buildings. *We will all be anxiously waiting a peek at that Brian!*

For a full view of his works, you are invited to visit his website at [www.briancroft.com](http://www.briancroft.com)



## Delegates to ARM Convention Visit Car Barn



*September 16, 2009, approximately fifty excited delegates to the Association of Railway Museums, ARM, (holding their annual Conference at the West Coast Railway Museum in Squamish) paid a visit to the FVHRS.*

## Royal Car 1304 *Continued from Page 4*

innovations in the reconstruction of 1304. Instead of the clerestory roof, "new 1304" received an arch roof rather like the 1309 – 1311 had from the beginning, but not quite so high. A wider "facia" board above the windows compensated for this. The toilet compartments were not needed as badly as seats so they were not installed and the two elliptical windows were omitted in favour of two arched double windows.

Inside, new dark brown leather flip-over seats appeared, but the ceiling was painted the usual cream colour and the walls remained varnished wood.

In June of 1955, following the "rails-to-rubber" campaign which wiped out the Central Park passenger trains, number 1304 was retired – North America's newest wooden interurban. However

active enthusiasts were doing their best to save these cars and, naturally, the sturdy 1304 was soon sold to a group called the Willamette Valley Electric Railway Assn. A B.C.E.R. diesel took the car to the interchange and soon it was on its way south at the rear of a G.N. freight train.

*1304 was purchased by the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine, in 1955 and trucked to Glenwood Trolley Park in Oregon and eventually moved to the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society in Brooks Oregon, where it remained until it was returned to BC and the FVHRS Car barn in April 2009.*



# Save the Date

## 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday April 24, 12:00 - 3:00

Hampton Inn & Suites, Langley Bypass

## Open House at the Car Barn - 2010

12 Noon to 4 p.m. on the following Sundays:



May 16

June 20

July 18

August 15

Sept. 19

- ♦ Walk through Interurban cars 1225 and 1304 ♦ Ride our speeder 1225 ½ ♦ Refreshment, hot dogs, popcorn
- ♦ Live entertainment with the Circle of Friends ♦ Free admission, Free parking, Free fun