

SPOT NEWS

WESTERN VANCOUVER ISLAND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SOCIETY

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1926 "Federal" at the Port Alberni Train Station.

****News Flash!**** - June 24
"No. 7" back in service!



"BEAVER EXCURSION"

The First Alberni Beaver Colony went for a Waterfront Excursion in May, on board a 1940's era Logging Crew Speeder that once worked for "Comox Logging & Railway Company", out of Ladysmith. Speeders were the "utility vehicles" on the logging railroads. This one was restored at the Industrial Heritage Centre.

Pete Geddes was the Operator for the excursion.

Photos: D. Hooper

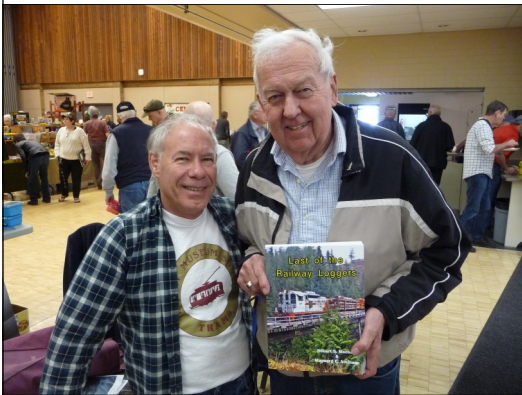
APR News

In April, the "No. 7" was well along in the maintenance schedule when "non-destructive testing" revealed a crack in the pin on one of the right-hand drive wheels. The new pin was inserted on June 18 so, "Seven" should be up and running soon. The 1954 "ALCO" RS-3 has taken the visitors out to the McLean Mill National Historic Site in the meantime.

Replacing 'dead' ties in the Yard has continued with Rod Gledhill, Kody and the Tie-Insertor machine on that job. Twenty-one ties were changed on the 'Shop Lead' to "No. 7"'s stall; 69 ties changed so far on the Diesel track and a considerable number in the Yard. Mike McKay milled a lot of yellow cedar ties for this job, including extra-long 'switch ties.'



Photos: D. Hooper



Ken Ruth-erford and

Rick Lord organized the annual Model Railroad Show at Beban Park in Nanaimo. It was the usual success. Sandy Macham was there with his new book, "Last of the Railway Loggers" - the story of rail logging in the Nimpkish Valley—and he sold out all of his copies! He is seen there with Sterling Stump, (*left*) who had his own small layout in the Show.

Sandy was also the recipient of an award this year, for his contributions to the preservation of BC railroad heritage. Ken Cringan came up to Port Alberni June 15 with a plaque from the Canadian Railroad Historical

Association—the 2018 "Norris Adams" Award - for his work. (*See photo below.*) He has joined some illustrious company, as Robert Turner was a previous winner of this Award. Bravo, Sandy!



(r.) **Tamping** the ballast around the new ties on the 'Shop Lead' to the Round-house.

(Below left)

New pin on drive wheel (*illuminated*) of the "No. 7".

Photos: D. Hooper



"New Pin in Place"

Pat Williamson (APR mechanic) and Pete Lowe pose with the newly-inserted pin—still frost-covered from being chilled in dry ice—in the drive wheel. The wheel had been heated and the pin frozen, to make the fit easier. The pin was shipped in from a foundry in Pennsylvania that specializes in heritage locomotive parts.

Photo: R. Gledhill

More Railroad News

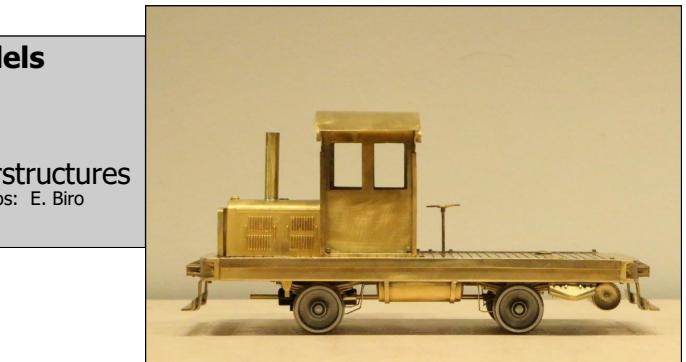


APR People at the Nanaimo Model RR Show (l.) Show co-Organizer, Rick Lord, ran the door, with former APR Ticket Agent, Leanne. (Below) (l. to r.) Bill Walker (CHRA table), Irv McIntyre & Hugh Grist man the A.P.R. table.



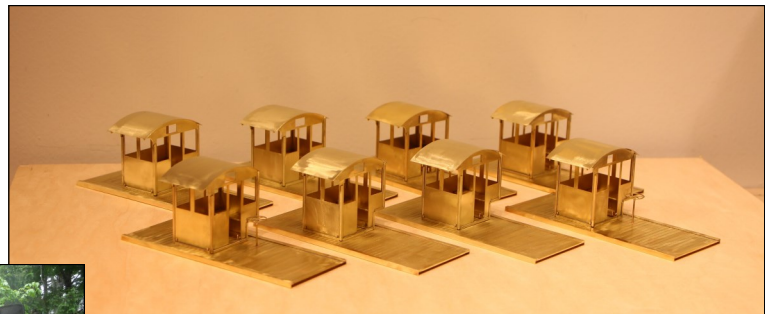
"BUDA" MODELS

Ede Biro,, a modeller from Calgary, spent the winter building ten brass models of the 1928 "Buda" gas locomotive used by the "R.B. McLean Lumber Co." to move logs and lumber around the Mill site. (Below) The real "Buda".



Ede Biro **Models**
(r.) Side view

(Below)
"Buda Fleet"- superstructures
Photos: E. Biro



"Number 7" back to work—June 30, 2018
Engineer R. Gledhill



The **Youngest Railroader**
Richard Spencer—Trainee



Photos: D. Hooper

—In
Memory of Art Thompson—

70 Years in Trucking —the “Bracht” in “Rayner & Bracht” (*first of 2 part article*)

Jim Bracht (Sr.) came to B.C. from Saskatchewan after serving four years in the RCAF in the Second World War. After demobilization in 1946, he came to the West Coast to join his Dad, who had just bought a ‘stump ranch’ in White Rock. Jim worked for him while checking out possible opportunities. He soon heard of “Lots of jobs in Port Alberni” on the construction of the new “Bloedel Stewart & Welch” pulp mill. Hired on as a ‘crane operator’, he soon was operating a shovel for a gravel company contracted to the new Mill project.

Before the War, Jim had worked driving truck and operating equipment for “Saskatoon Sand and Gravel”, a big operation in that city. Thus, he was familiar with the industry. Seeing the opportunities in the booming economy of post-war Port Alberni, he bought a new, 1946 “Chevrolet” single-axle dump truck in 1947 and looked for work for it.

“Saskatoon Sand & Gravel” 1939
1928 “International” dump trucks. Jim (l.)



There was a local contracting outfit - “Kennedy & Rayner”- and Kennedy sold his share in the company to Jim, (who also got married that year.) They had three trucks, three machines and a new name - “Rayner & Bracht”. Syd Rayner was senior partner. Business continued to boom here; in fact, all over Vancouver

Island. Jobs were there for the taking; even more so if one was ready to work away from home.

One interesting contract was road-building for logging companies out of Port Renfrew, on the West Coast. The big logging companies operated railroad logging ‘shows’ but, by the 1940’s, all of the accessible valley bottoms had already been logged. Logging the steep mountain sides is not practical, nor economical, by rail so, the big companies were converting to truck logging.



First new truck—1946 “Chev”
Photos: J. Bracht Collection

This meant “Road-building” and there were some especially big contracts to build the new main haul roads. The period of transition from rail hauling to truck hauling was‘interesting’, as the following story reveals.

“Rayner & Bracht” got the contract to build road for “Malahat Logging” in 1949-50. Their railroad included the highest trestle on Vancouver Island—the 235 foot high bridge across Bear Creek. Log trains continued to run while the new road system was being built. Jamie Bracht tells the following story:

Ties were laid on top of the trestle to make a road surface for gravel trucks to cross over Bear Creek to continue the road-building. Thus, there were both trucks and trains using the bridge. Mike Mihaychuk was driving across the bridge one day when the steering wheel came off in his hands! He daren’t touch the brakes as he knew



Bear Creek Trestle
Photo: BC Lumberman , August 1940

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that the truck slewed to the right. So he just continued... and made it across. Another time, a loaded logging truck was crossing when the wooden trailer reach broke. By some miracle, that driver too, made it across.

In those first years, Jim took contracts all over the mid-Island but he finally decided to work only in the Alberni Valley as there was plenty of work in what we now know were the "Boom Years". It was in 1957 that "Rayner & Bracht" started to haul chips from the waterfront sawmills to the "Alberni Pulp & Paper" mill. Jim started out using tandem dump trucks. The previous contractor was using single-axle trucks and refused to go to the newer technology.

"Macmillan-Bloedel" continued to expand, particularly at the pulp and paper operation. When the "No. 5" Paper Machine was added in the early Sixties, not only were there construction contracts; new Stamp Avenue had to be built around the mill site when Victoria Quay road was cut off at the foot of Roger Street. "Rayner & Bracht" sub-contracted to "Souther Construction" at the Paper Mill, doing excavation work.

In retrospect, this was the heyday for "Rayner & Bracht". Jamie remembers that they had trucks numbered up to "No. 29" with other equipment as well—cats, loaders, lowbeds, etc.; sixty employees, including a big Shop Crew of 13 to maintain the fleet. That is when Jim bought the 1963 "Mercury" brand-new. This is the truck that, after twenty years hauling for "R&B", became a Farm truck for Shannon Farms for twenty-five more years, before Dan Shannon donated it to the I.H.S. for restoration.

Lovingly restored by Vic Laughlin in memory of Jim Bracht (Sr.), it is a memento to seventy years of trucking in the Alberni Valley. *(To be continued)*

Before restoration



After



(Below & above) Jamie Bracht & Vic Laughlin with the 1963 "Mercury". Photos: D. Hooper

Photo: Ken Macdonald



On June 1, 2018, the 1963 "Mercury" was hooked to one of the new trailers to haul a ceremonial load of chips from APD to the Paper mill. *(Photo above)* With only half the horsepower of a modern tractor, the "Merc" still could do the job! Photos: Ken Macdonald
(Below) 1963 "Merc" reports for duty at the Office on Tenth Ave.



Photo: Ken Macdonald

FREDERICK J. BOYKO

It is with regret that we acknowledge the passing of Frederick J. Boyko (Jr.) aka "Freddie Boyko". Fred was a man of many interests but a very big one was local history. He was a good source of local history and lore. ("Just go ask Fred; he'll tell you.") He was a member of many local organizations – Alberni Rescue Squad, the Radio Club – you would always find Fred at the Canada Day and Fall Fair parades Marshalling area, helping to coordinate the entries. He was an active member of the Rock and Gem Club for more than fifty years. I expected to see him at the Annual "Rock and Gem Show" again this year – until I remembered that he was gone.

Fred's first job after schooling was at a mine near Della Falls, above the head of Central Lake.. He was interested in minerals, not just 'rocks'. He was a serious collector of 'mineral samples.'



Photos courtesy of Diane Boyko

His wife, Diane, reports that she is still dealing with 'a lot of rocks'. She told a story of their trip to the Yukon in their RV and Fred was storing all of his new finds in the compartment under the unit.... until the bottom fell out! His collection was scattered all along the road by the time he realized the problem!.... So, for the remainder of the trip, Fred carefully stored his finds on the floor inside the RV!, making for a mobile 'rock garden'.

And, he was an interested member of the Industrial Heritage Society. He was well-known for his collection of

historic photos from local logging camps. (He worked at Franklin River Camp for several years, before taking an Electrical Apprenticeship.) He had organized ten panels of photos, each with 40 to 50 images and they were labelled! He would share them at local events, such as the 80th Anniversary of the opening of Franklin River Logging Camp and Doug Harrison's presentations on "APL Camp One".

You could count on Fred to show up, in costume, at historical commemorations, such as the 100th Anniversary of the Arrival of the first train to Port Alberni (2011). In the photo at the right, he is seen in front of the "No. 7" locomotive with his nephew, Kenji, and his brother, Al.



PHOTOS from the Collection of Fred Boyko

The Bainbridge Sawmill was located on the "E&N", about one mile North of the R.B. McLean Lumber Co. sawmill. There was a Train Station and siding, a large Log Pond and a small community at the Mill site. The mill shut down in 1927, after about ten years in operation.



Log Pond at the Bainbridge Mill
The 'jack ladder' into the mill is at the far end of the pond.
(below) "Bainbridge Lumber" ad from "Westcoast Lumberman"

The company logged the old-growth along the base of the Beaufort Mountains. They also had timber towards Stamp Falls so they laid railroad tracks to both places

The mill specialized in cutting extra-long, large-dimension timbers, up to 120 feet long.

The company operated a 60-ton "Shay" steam locomotive pulling "disconnect trucks", rather than "skeleton cars".

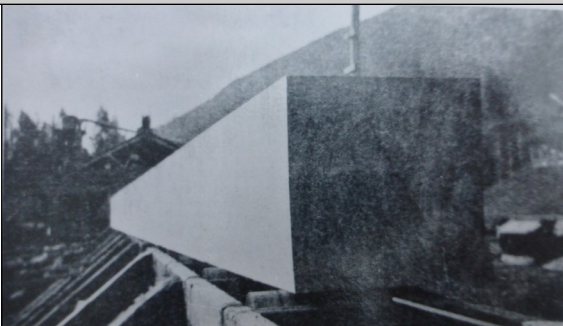
This was because they were hauling such long logs that would not fit on the much shorter skeleton cars. The big problem was that there were no air brakes on a log train of "disconnects"; only hand brakes that the brakemen had to run alongside to try to apply—a very dangerous job!

"Disconnects" were declared illegal by

the Government after a tragic accident on the Bainbridge company's line to Stamp Falls, involving "disconnects" running away with the logging crew on board. Two men were killed and several others badly injured. The Company closed down shortly afterwards. After that accident, logging companies were obliged to provide separate transportation for the loggers. That is when "Crew Speeders" [See Cover photo] came into use on logging railroads.



Large-dimension timber on the deck of the Mill
36" timbers were a common cut. The Mill had a very long carriage to be able to handle these 'Westcoast toothpicks'.
(By comparison, the McLean Mill carriage is only 40' long.)



Timbers loaded for shipping to market
(1.) The timbers often straddled two—even three—flatcars. The extra-long timbers were a challenge to load as they had to be able to "float" on the middle flat car, when the train went around curves .

**ANTIQUUE TRUCK & MACHINERY SHOW 2018
"100 YEARS OF TRUCKS"**

Sept. 1-2, 2018
10 a.m.—5 p.m.

At the **Industrial Heritage Centre**
PORT ALBERNI

Vintage Fire Trucks, Miniature Steam Train rides for the children, Radio-controlled boats in the "Mason Basin" and Lou's R/C model trucks and treads display. 100 year old logging trucks

Sponsored by "Kingsley Trucking Ltd."



1918 "White"



1940 "International"
R. McCoy & R. Catto. (r.)

Joel Larsen is a grandson of the late Don Rowe, a local contractor who worked in the logging and trucking sector in the Alberni Valley after the Second War. He bought a 1944 "International" 6 x 6 Army truck war-surplus and that is how he got into business. On his passing, the family donated the old truck (and a dozer) and volunteers restored them both to operation. Joel has been volunteering his electrical skills at the IHC and was very happy to have the opportunity to drive his grand-father's old truck. (bottom two photos)



TRUCKS DEPARTMENT

We are into the Summer and Shows season. Our Eleventh "Antique Truck" Show is on the Labour Day weekend.

Something new this year is that the IHC Truck Museum will be open for guided visits six days a week, thanks to two summer students, Nik Treleven (*below right*) and Nate Cyr. They will be offering tours from 1 to 4 p.m., Monday to Saturday.

Ted Maurice took the model "Challenger" to the Log truck Parade in Lake Cowichan in May... and won two plaques!

The Crew made a Parade vehicle out of the 1940 "International" and used it on July 1st in the Canada Day Parade.



OLD-TIME LOGGING STARTS UP

The "J.J. Logging" Crew got ready for the season, starting with High-Rigger Aaron Thom inspecting the spar tree (r.), the blocks and guy lines.

This summer, they will doing Shows on **Saturdays**, at noon.

CREW AT REST

(l. to r.) J. Netzer, T. Maurice, E. Netzer, J. James, T. Super, B. Simpson, K. Fyfe. *Photos: D. Hooper*



(l.) Running the **Haulback** line up through the block at the top of the Spar Tree, pulled by the 'straw line'. Eric Netzer (l.) and Jack James supervise. *(right)*

Three Schoolmates from 1944 in the one-room school at Anutz Lake logging camp, where Jack James grew up with Gracie Mills-Hodgins and Betty-Jane Smithson. (r.)



Tracy Golden has done the lettering on many of the I.H.S. 'artifacts', including the "No. 7" locomotive and the "Two Spot". He recently put the "R.B. McLean" signage on the 1937 "White" - freehand—and on the 1940 "International" just-restored parade vehicle. "Thank you", Tracy!

CHILDREN at the INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Members have hosted several children's groups this spring, first at the Regional Heritage Fair at Echo Centre. More than 100 children took part in 'hands-on' activities that morning.



Setting up for 'Crosscut Sawing'

(l. to r.) P. Blake, R. Catto, T. Super, T. Maurice

(below) Fire Engine Rides

Children from Alberni Elementary School came for A "Trucks Birthday Party" - 1928 "Chev"'s 90th.



Gas Engine Generator

Lane Boyd's restored 'gen set' was a hit. Tony Super (l.) steadies it while a child gets ((b ready to start it.

(below right)

T. Maher (l.) & N. Groves guided children while they operated the "Hi-ab" crane on the truck.



Photos: D. Hooper



Two Second Grade classes from Maquinna Elementary came to help celebrate the birthdays of two trucks—the 1928 "Chev" fire truck and the 1938 "Railroad Mack". They went for truck rides as well as getting to test-drive the two "Soapbox" racers built at the IHC. Museum staff organized activities, too. A group of Grade Six French Immersion students came for "Technological Change" activities, to try for themselves how people in the last century had to do things without modern tools—cutting wood, making roof shakes, drilling holes, making electricity, etc.



(l.) The "Pit Crew"
T. Maher, R. Catto and
T. Mollet ready a racecar
on the ramp.

(r.) Splitting Shakes
B. Pfaffenschmidt (l.)
and Bert Simpson
demonstrate before the
kids started splitting
shakes for themselves.

