

THE WHEATLAND ROUNDUP

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LITTLE BIG TOWNS MAYOR'S RACE KICKS OFF

All the candidates have been named in the mayor's race. While most our candidates were expected, there was one big surprise: Little Big Town has a woman running for mayor. Big Momma Mopsy was able to get enough signatures on her petition for candidacy and has her hat in the ring for what is shaping up to be the most exciting mayor's race Little Big Town has ever seen.

Current mayor Schmo is in disbelief, "I don't think this is even allowed. Not only has a woman never run before, but she has all women signatures on her petition for candidacy. It has never been done before." We asked the town lawyer if she was within the rights of the law, and Mr. Fast claimed, "I have spent quite some time looking into this matter, and yes, lawfully, she can run for mayor of Little Big Town." The only other candidate in the race is Billy Trumpet, and he was giddy when asked what he thought about Big Momma Mopsy running in the mayor's race. "Well, jeez, I won't have any problem beating a woman for mayor, and well old Joe Schmo needs to go. Hey, I like the sound of that. I think that's my campaign slogan."

We caught up with Big Momma Mopsy as she was bartending at the local saloon. When asked why she wanted to run for mayor, she commented, "This town is on its way to being run by a couple of gangs of thieves, and it is about time someone stepped up and got tough on these bunch of criminals. A woman running things is just what this town needs, and I do not go by Big Momma Mopsy anymore, my name is Ms. Marion Mopsy, and that's what everyone can call me from now on. Not only will I be tough on crime I will also be fighting for women's rights. It's about damn time

we have a bit of a say in matters around here." Rumor has it Big Momma Mopsy wants to bring back the death penalty, which has already earned endorsement from Merv, the mortician who has now volunteered to be her campaign manager. "We are going to win this race no matter what. It's about time we get a mayor that supports hanging criminals again."

Sheriff Jenkins had this to say, "I don't get involved with the politics. I will work with whomever the people decide to elect. Although I would like to see someone who can help me get the thieves in line around here." Comments like that only add fuel to the rumor fire that there is a budding relationship between the sheriff and Ms. Marion Mopsy. With three months until the election, it is shaping up to be a very exciting summer in Little Big Town.



NOBLE NOTATION

MAIL TRAINS

Written by Bill Noble

The Gopher. The Badger. The Fast Mail. The Olympian. The Royal Mail. The Irish Mail. The International Limited. The Bangalore Express. TGV La Poste. The Owl. These trains, and hundreds more, most identified simply by a number, were part of a huge international network, the Railway Post Office. There was even a model railway company, Pacific Fast Mail, that imported hand-made model locomotives from the Orient. Just ask any model railroader “of a certain age” about “PFM” and you might be rewarded with a visit to a basement rail empire to see one of these custom-built beauties in action.

These days, when the vast majority of interpersonal communication flows by e-mail, social media, and texts, it is a stretch to think of a time when the humble letter - in a paper envelope, with a stamp, dropped in a mailbox - was king. Mail was part of virtually all aspects of our lives and the Railway Post Office was a vital part.

It wasn't long after the first trains began to run that the idea of carrying mail on the railways emerged. In 1830, Britain's post office, the Royal Mail, began to send mail, in bags as ordinary baggage, by train. In 1835, the US Postal Service issued its first contract to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to carry mail in bags. In Canada, things developed a bit more slowly. It wasn't until 1859 that Canada's Royal Mail issued the first contract to a Canadian railway to carry mail.

Early on, it was recognized that simply transporting mail in bags on trains limited the potential of the rail systems. In 1838, Britain's Royal Mail began to sort individual letters on specialized rail cars. The era of the RPO, the railway post office car, was born. In North America, things moved a bit more slowly. It wasn't until after the turmoil of the American Civil War that



events accelerated. In 1864, the first US Railway Post Office car, built to permit mail to be sorted on board, entered service between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa. By the 1880s most passenger trains in North America included a mail car or cars and ultimately RPO cars ran on over 9000 passenger routes over more than 200000 route miles. More than 300 tons of mail moved each day.

RPO service was customized to fit the needs of the route. At its simplest, the service was simply a portion of a baggage car, locked to seal it from the rest of the train, equipped with a sorting table with pigeon holes and staffed by a single postal clerk. Moving up the scale, a busier route could command one or more full RPO cars, equipped with mailbags on racks to permit individual bags to be prepared for towns along the route and staffed by several clerks. At the top of the ladder were dedicated mail trains - high priority, non-stop trains that carried tons of bagged mail in sealed express cars between large centers. These trains usually traveled at night, roaring through the darkness, their contents secured by armed postal clerks in a passenger car. Serious business.



The RPO was very serious business. The importance of the mail contracts from the national postal services to the railways cannot be overstated. The steady income from these contracts enabled many train services on lightly traveled routes to exist. It is also important to point out that the RPO was entirely staffed with clerks from the post office service. There were several thousand employed. A career as a railway postal clerk was a well-paid, prestigious job, much sought after. RPO clerks were well trained and highly motivated. Clerks were expected to have an encyclopedic knowledge of RPO routes: the location of towns and junctions along the route as well as the schedules of connecting trains and the ability to identify locations in the dark, at speed had to be second nature. Travelling RPO inspectors administered frequent surprise tests. According to information from the era, a mark of only 96% would be greeted by a reprimand and a warning to "Pull up your socks".

An RPO was a busy place. It began its trip, loaded with sacks of mail bound for post offices and connecting trains along its route as well as its final destination. The clerks would place open bags on sorting racks. At each stop, the local postmaster would receive mail and load mail. The incoming bags would be opened and the contents sorted and placed in the proper bag. Speed was important because the incoming



mail could be bound for a distant destination or for the next town, nine miles down the line. In addition, there was a mail slot on the side of the car. Letters received in this way had to be quickly sorted. My Dad was an elevator agent for the Searle Grain Company and always put mail directly into the RPO. A letter mailed at 1545 in the afternoon on Number 6, the CNR southbound, would arrive in Craik in 15 minutes, Regina at supper time and Winnipeg the next morning. Now, this was all fine on lines such as our prairie branches, where trains stopped at each station. However, things got a bit more exciting on busier lines, those were fast, intercity trains such as CNR's number 16, The Maple Leaf, did not stop at all stations. At these locations, mail was exchanged "on the fly". The clerk opened the side door of the RPO and deployed a hook to snag the incoming bag from a line side "mail crane" while simultaneously kicking the outgoing mail onto the platform. At 75 or 80 miles an hour. In the dark. Timing and technique were all important. Deploying the hook too early risked it striking a switch stand or a close clearance bridge abutment. Deploying it too late - was too late. Kicking the bag off the train also had its challenges. If it was not given sufficient speed, it risked being sucked back under the speeding train, creating what was known in the trade as a "snowstorm". Too much oomph had been known to propel the sack through a station window. And, there were occasions when on the fly deliveries were made in quick succession with just a minute or two to exchange bags. And, RPOs had two sides. It was vital to know where you were at all times.

The era of RPO operations peaked in 1950. Then, beset by better highways, the rise of air travel, and the decline of railway passenger trains, the service declined until April 1971 when the last Railway Post Office car made its final run in Canada. In the US, RPO operations lingered until 1977 when it too made its last run.



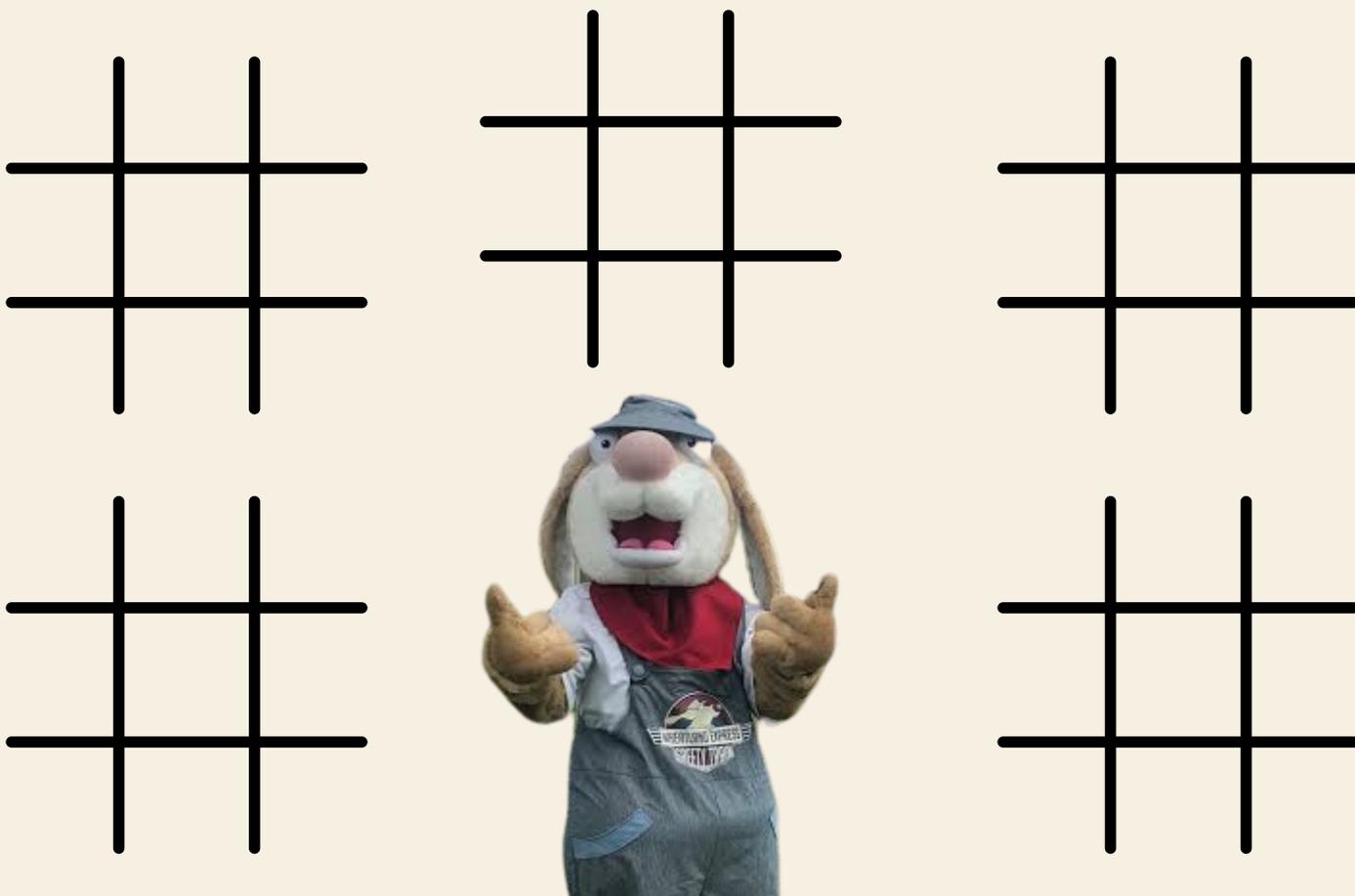
SPIKES SAFETY SCOOP

Hey boys and girls, it's Spike the safety dog here! The weather has finally warmed up which means summer is almost here! You know what that means... Lake days are just around the corner! That's the best part of summer for sure. I can barely contain my excitement on the long car ride there! Even though the thought of having fun tubing on the lake is on your mind, you must remember to stay rail smart on your way there. Even if you're not the one driving the car you can remind your parents of these important safety tips. Always remember to STOP, LOOK and LISTEN before crossing uncontrolled railway crossings. When stopping make sure you stop five meters behind the crossbuck sign. At uncontrolled crossings, make sure that you never cross the tracks until the train has completely cleared the crossing, and you have looked in both directions to make sure no other train is coming. At controlled railway crossings, with lights, bells, and/or gates, never cross until the lights stop flashing, the bells stop ringing, and the gates are fully raised. Now it's time to have some fun on the lake! I invited my friend Gainer to come and do some fishing with me. I bet him a few biscuits that I could catch more fish than him. Wish me luck, fishing always gets me hungry for some treats!



-Spike the safety dog

PLAY TIC-TAC-TOE WITH SPIKE



OPERATIONS UPDATE



Wheatland Express Safety Train

As Spring is underway, the Canadian Safety Train Express continues in full force. Between Zoom presentations and Social Media, we continue to spread awareness of railway safety to our target audience and followers. Through Instagram and Facebook, we are able to post railway safety tips and raise awareness on the crossing and trespassing incidents that occur all over Canada. Our website has an incident tracker that is updated daily, including the incident type (crossing/trespassing) location, and date. Our goal is to bring these numbers down by teaching members of our target audience about railway safety.



Wheatland Express Learning Centre

As the weather warms up, the Learning Center is well underway with audio and video. We recently purchased 10 TVs that will be distributed all over the railcars to show our exhibits and videos. One recently extremely exciting factor is that we have lined up Golden Mobility to install a wheelchair lift in order for our learning center to be wheelchair accessible. This will give more members of our target audience the opportunity to experience our Learning Center exhibits hands-on.



Great Sandhills Railway

We are busy putting out ties for installation in June. At that time we hope to do some surfacing along with the dumping of ballast. Storage cars remained consistent for the month with the same coming in as going out.

We hope to complete the Stettler car in the first couple of weeks in June. By then the new baggage car will have arrived. Work will begin on the western town in June.

We again added a new employee Dwight and are in the process of looking for two more. We will be bringing in a brush cutter next month as well to clean up the hard to get to spots along the line.

There is a lot of optimism as more and more folks get their shot. Please keep it up as it is critical we get back closer to normal and with that the operation of the Wheatland Express.



Wheatland Charities Inc.

Wheatland Charities Inc. is excited to announce this years train heist collections will be allotted between the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation and both the Wakaw and Cudworth Lion's Clubs. We cannot wait to rob you this summer.



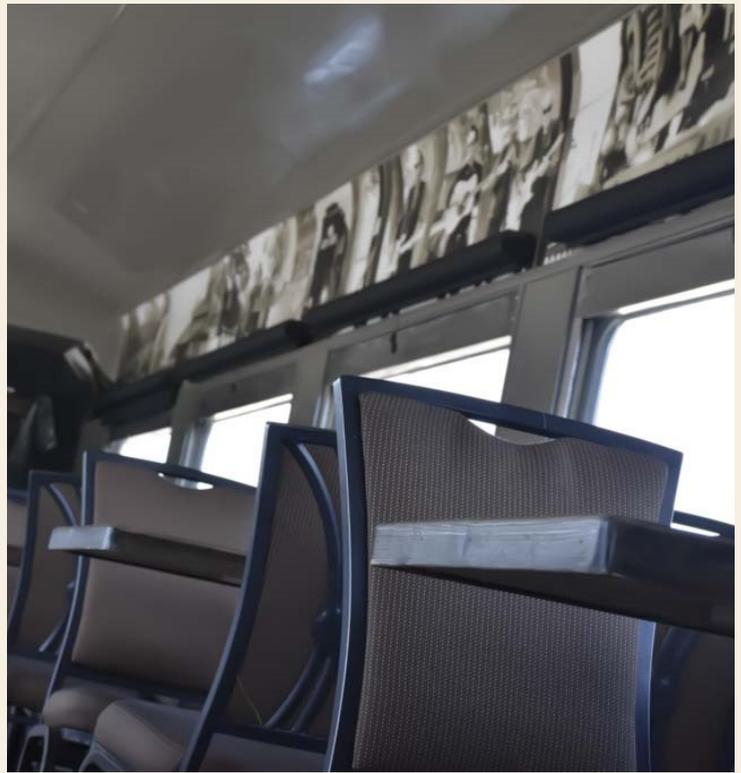


Wheatland Express Excursion Train

May has gone by like a whirlwind! The excitement is growing about the return to tours. We are eager to announce our return and while a date remains unknown, we continue to feel optimistic as vaccines roll out, that we too will be rolling down the tracks before long.

We were fortunate to host Carla Shynkaruk from CTV this month for a news segment. Ashlyn & Barry discussed the development work Wheatland Express has undertaken over the last year and our plans for the future. We toured through the newest cars of our fleet and if you want a sneak peek inside, check out the feature on our Facebook page.

Work continues in GSR 2020, our new wheelchair-accessible railcar. Our Florida cars, GSR 2021 and 2022 are completed and ready to depart on our first tours in over a year! We're so excited to be able to provide inclusive experiences to passengers! Our western town-front is set to break ground and begin construction in Wakaw. We hope to accomplish a lot before the train leaves the station!



This week, Ashlyn is representing Wheatland Express at Rendezvous Canada Plus, Canada's signature tourism show where the international travel trade connects with Canada's tourism industry partners. We are looking forward to making connections with companies from around the world for travel in 2022 and beyond. This is the first time RVC+ has been hosted virtually and the first time for Wheatland Express to attend. Canada is a sought-after destination and we are proud to represent Saskatchewan.

Tourism is a people business bringing people together for experiences and events. The Government of Saskatchewan has declared May 23-30, Tourism Week and from coast to coast the week will be celebrated. Next week we challenge YOU to take the 2021 Tourism Pledge to Travel In Canada. An invitation to come together as a country and support our local tourism destinations, businesses, and employees. We ask you, where will you travel first?



Did you know Abraham Lincoln's assassination helped publicize train travel?

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Barry Pellerin

Born: North Battleford, Sask.

Currently Reside: Saskatoon, Sask.

Work History: Consulting Engineering (Drafting) 3 Years CN most everything from Checker to Trainmaster 33 Years

Favorite Movie: Devils Brigade

Favorite Sports Team: Montreal Canadiens

Favorite Wheatland railcar: GSR 2017

Did you know: Barry is an avid model train enthusiast and built the amazing model of our own train that you will enjoy on-board the Wheatland Express.



STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

HOW TIMBIT SEE'S IT



Neigh there. I am Timbit, a reporter for the Wheatland Round-Up my job is to keep the folks of Little Big Town updated to the goings-on on all things four-legged. As promised, Tommy and Jerry have been busy getting fit for their upcoming season with the Wheatland Express, and well, Jerry seems to be enjoying the exercising and pampering. Tommy is not too sure.

How did you enjoy your bath, guys?

"I thought it was great. The day was hot, the water was warm, it sure felt nice," said Jerry

"Jerry, are you nuts? It was awful. As soon as she brought out that snake-looking thing, I knew it was trouble." Explains Tommy

"It's called a hose, and it's the same one they use to fill up the water trough that you have no trouble sticking your big nose in and splashing it around, making a mud hole in our pasture. And you didn't have to go roll right after and get filthy again." States Jerry

"It's different, and I was itchy" Says Tommy

I'm on Tommy's side here. Baths are not that great, although I don't dance around like a little girl.

"No, you just sleep with a sheep." Laughs Jerry

Hazel is just my roommate.

"Sure, Timbit, that's why she yells for you every time you leave?" giggles, Tommy

Oh, look, here comes Jamie to harness you guys up

"Great, let's go, Tommy," says Jerry

"Let's go? How about let's go and play dead, so we don't have to exercise today."

2021 WHEATLAND EXPRESS SCHEDULE

Wheatland Express is committed to re-opening as soon as conditions permit us to do so. Here's a glimpse of what we have planned for you so far in 2021! Had tickets for 2020? Your tickets are valid for rescheduled tour dates. Ticket holders can expect to receive an e-mail from us with event updates and options if they cannot make the 2021 date.



JUNE

27- Prairie Train Heist Excursion



JULY

0 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
10 - Cowboy Showdown & Country Cookout
Excursion
11 - Murder on the Wheatland Express Excursion
17 - Eagles Tribute Excursion & Dinner Show
18 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
25 - Family Summer Express Excursion



AUGUST

08 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
22 - Murder on the Wheatland Express Excursion
28 - CCR Reprisal - CCR Tribute Excursion &
Dinner Show
29 - Family Summer Express Excursion



STAY TUNED FOR ADDED DATES, TOURS
AND TRAVEL OFFERS!



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