

Lakehead Transportation Museum

President's Corner

Welcome to the first newsletter of Lakehead Transportation Museum.

LTM was first formed and incorporated with the Ontario Historical Society in 2015 as a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the collection, preservation and display of historically significant transportation artifacts of Thunder Bay and area.

Our first major project was the acquisition of the former Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker *Alexander Henry*. We purchased the *Henry* in 2017 and brought her home to Thunder Bay from Kingston Ontario, where since 1985 she had been the centrepiece of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes.

The LTM secured a new docking site in the heart of the city's north side Marina Park at the old Pool Six Cruise Ship dock. On July 18, 2018 we opened the ship to the public, sixty years, to the day from when the *Alexander Henry* was first christened at the Port Arthur shipyards, where she had been built and launched.

Last year we were off and running with a very successful first season. More than 2800 visitors toured the ship and learned of the area's rich transportation history. This year's season will start on Saturday, May 18, the



May long weekend. If you haven't as yet had the chance to tour and explore a real working icebreaker, come on down to the waterfront this summer and enjoy.

The *Henry* is just the first project for the LTM. We have exciting things planned for this year. In addition to tours of the *Henry*, we will be continuing to spruce the ship up with a new paint job and maintenance projects. As well we will continue to improve our location with a new fence, landscaping, events deck and seating.

We are also in the process of expanding the site property, having secured more land from the City of Thunder Bay for the inclusion of

two restored Brill trolley buses that were once the backbone of the transit industry in Canada. We are also looking at the opportunity to take over the *James Whalen* tug from the City of Thunder Bay, and

relocating her from the city's south end to our present site as part of our marine heritage display.

There are a lot of other smaller projects, such as new mini-museum rooms, education, events and programs, which we are developing for 2019. Looks like a busy but exciting time ahead for LTM and the public. Hope everyone gets a chance to come and visit.

- Charlie Brown, President

2019 OPERATING HOURS

Official opening date for the season: May 18, 2019.

Season runs Thursday to Monday from May 18, 2019 to September 30, 2019.

Closed Tuesday and Wednesday for ship maintenance.

LTM and the *Alexander Henry*, Phase One: Mission Accomplished

Back three years ago, the newly-formed non-profit Lakehead Transportation Museum Society (LTM) had a dream: to bring to the city built on transportation, a transportation museum to showcase its rich transportation history. And bringing home to Thunder Bay the former Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker, the *Alexander Henry*, became Phase One.

The LTM board, incorporated with the Ontario Historical Society in June 2016, first heard in September 2016 about the potential scrapping or sinking of the *Alexander Henry*. And they set the goal to save her.

The *Henry* was built in 1957-58 at the former Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. in Thunder Bay. She entered service on July 30, 1959 as an icebreaker and buoy tender for the Canadian Government's Department of Transport Marine Service and transferred in 1962 to the newly-created Canadian Coast Guard. The *Henry* is 60.29 metres (197.8 feet) in length with a beam of 13.29 m (43.6 feet), draught 5.46 m (17.9 feet), and has a massive derrick for lifting five-tonne buoys in and out of the water.

In mid-1985, after 26 years of service, mainly on Lake Superior and the Great Lakes, the *Henry* was de-commissioned. A year later, she became a museum ship at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston. However, when the museum's property was sold by the Canadian government to a private developer, the museum had to move out. *Henry* was towed to a temporary docking site in Picton, Ontario to await her fate.

At about the same time, LTM received its charitable status and with a rallying cry of "Bring *Henry* Home" strongly supported by the community, set about to save the *Henry*. A deal was reached with Kingston's Marine Museum – if LTM would pay for the costs of the approximately 1,000-mile tow through the Great Lakes, they could

purchase the *Henry* for a few dollars.....but it had to be all done by the museum's deadline of July 1, 2017. Could they really do it?

Saving the *Henry* became phase one of the LTMS's goal of establishing a transportation museum. After months of discussions, negotiations and successful fundraising appeals to individuals, corporations, and provincial and municipal governments, *Henry* arrived back home on June 27, 2017. She was docked at a private facility until November 23, 2017 while lease agreements were worked out, then towed to her Thunder Bay waterfront site at the Cruise Ship dock Pier 6.



The *Alexander Henry* arrives in Thunder Bay on June 23, 2017 after being towed by the tug *Monarch* through the Great Lakes to the temporary dock.

After restoration, cleaning, hooking up electrical power (thanks to IBEW 420 volunteers) and minor repair work, nine mini-museum display rooms showcasing the region's transportation history were set-up on the ship. On July 18, 2018, an official rededication and re-christening took place. The *Alexander Henry* is finally home welcoming visitors, and Thunder Bay has its first transportation museum.

By Elle Andra-Warner

The CPR: A Vital Link to Northwestern Ontario

The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway trunk-line consisting of some two thousand miles of track from 1881 to 1885, not only forged Canada into one nation but also impacted on the founding, growth, and survival of many cities, towns and villages. Those that were located on the line and those that were established after the railway was built had good prospects, whereas those left in isolation would likely struggle. Initially, the likelihood of the rail line running along the north shore of Lake Superior through Port Arthur and Fort William was not considered feasible.

A formidable figure to whom Canada and outlying Northwestern Ontario communities owe a debt of gratitude was actually an American, William Cornelius Van Horne. In 1882 he was hired as general manager of the CPR, later to become chairman of the board from 1899 to 1910. After conferring with the highest executives of the Canadian Pacific Railway, on January 13, 1882, Van Horne announced two major decisions. One was the choice of The Kicking Horse Pass as the passageway to enter the Rockies. The other was to change the route westward from Lake Nipissing to allow the line to hug the north shore of Lake Superior passing through Port Arthur and Fort William.

For Northwestern Ontario it was critical, in that most of the immigrants looking to settle in the Thunder Bay region arrived by train. Consequently, were it not for the decision made in 1882 at CPR headquarters in Montreal, Thunder Bay would not be the thriving city it is today and communities like Nolalu may never have come to be.

In December 1980, my wife, two year-old daughter and I travelled from Toronto to Thunder Bay on Via Rail's 'The Canadian' to spend Christmas with our parents. The route along the Superior north shore was especially spectacular when viewed from the 'Skyline Dome Car'.

At the time, I didn't know that it would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. On January 15, 1990, 'The Canadian' was moved from its home rails on CP to the northerly CN route. Thunder Bay lost its direct passenger rail link. Vestiges of that passenger train heritage still remain in the Canadian Northern Station (1905) providing a historic visitor attraction in Marina Park.

Today there is a movement to revive the passenger rail service. Find out more at:

www.revivesuperiorrail.ca.

By Leo Hunnako

Leo is a local historian and writer who contributes to the LTM newsletter.

Transportation Quiz Answers on last page.

1. Which vessel was built at Port Arthur Shipyards?

- Alexander Henry
- War ISIS
- Noronic
- Thunder Bay
- Canadian Runner
- All of the above

2. What locally-built transportation artifact was saved from a British Columbia 'graveyard'?

- Dugout Canoe
- Brill bus
- Gun from HMCS Corvette Port Arthur
- Clock from Noronic
- None of the above

LTMS Board of Directors

President: Charlie Brown

Vice-President: Dave Benedet

Treasurer: Wally Peterson

Administrative Director: Elle Andra-Warner

Directors-at-Large:

Peter Vanstone

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Find us on Facebook

Newsletter Committee

Barbara Yurkoski, Editor

Elle Andra-Warner

Leo Hunnako

The museum is located near the Pool 6 dock at the end of Marina Park Drive



Answers to transportation quiz

1. All of the above

2. Brill bus

VOLUNTEER WITH US

LTM is a volunteer-based organization and relies on our dedicated volunteers and members to give us a hand to make a world-class museum and tourist attraction. Interested in the history of transportation? We would love to have your support and expertise and there are a number of ways to do that. You could become a member, a volunteer, make a donation or become a sponsor. Thunder Bay was built on transportation. LTM is committed to saving our rich heritage for current and future generations as well as becoming a major attraction for the city and area.

Volunteer opportunities include everything from painting, operations maintenance and cutting grass (we've expanded the size of the site) to tour guides, historical researchers/writers, gift store (2 hour shifts) and fund-raising. LTMS is a member of Volunteer Thunder Bay, or contact us directly.

Email: brillbuddies@gmail.com

Phone: 355-5277

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

It's membership renewal time. See the enclosed form. Benefits of membership include:

- Unlimited access to visit Alexander Henry, mini-museum rooms and LTM site during season
- Unlimited access to image database (for personal use only)
- Early invites to LTM events
- LTM newsletter (by email or in print)

OUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS A NAME

Yes, it is the LTM Newsletter, but we know our members can come up with something catchier. Suggestions are welcome and the winner will receive a one year LTM membership for 2019-20 and one Alexander Henry mug.