



## CN RAILVETS OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA E2

June 2025 Volume 15 Issue 2

**From the Presidents' Desk:** Wow! We finally made it through the spring that was more like winter, also more like summer with some actual spring weather added in. Truly a bumpy ride! Now I find myself knee-deep in weeds and a strong desire to solve that dilemma with gasoline and matches 😊 ...probably a bylaw against that however. Have you spoken with your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren about the upcoming deadline for the CNPA Scholarships? Applications are *ONLY* accepted until August 15, 2025 - no exceptions. More details are inside. By the time you receive this, we will have already had our annual Picnic *IN* the Kerby and I know by the fact that almost no one replied to Brians' message, that most of you did not attend. Seems to be quite the illness this Association has, very contagious, in every local (except for a few). If you are out and about 'holidaying' this summer, take care but enjoy yourselves. Please be 'fire aware' because it's tinder-dry in a lot of the places people like to get away to. Like Smokey the Bear says, "Only YOU can prevent forest fires" (you and Mother Nature that is). And don't forget the bug spray – West Nile Virus and the mosquitoes responsible for it are still around. Ounce of prevention and all that! On the gardening front – have you noticed the price of bedding out plants and containers of vegetables or flowers? Thought I'd need use of a defibrillator after my foray through the various stores offering such. That and a bank loan! Who knew there was a fortune to be made in seedlings? 😞. We have now entered the monsoon season so please take care around all bodies of water, especially the quickly forming ones! Happy Canada Day! Show your pride in the best country in North America! If you're driving anywhere on the Labour Day weekend, please be extra careful. Talk to you in October!

Talk to me! Comments? Complaints? Suggestions? Photos? Call or email me. Sincerely, Judy Woods, President E2

### UPCOMING EVENTS: Next Meetings:

**Sept 8** – Regular meeting, join us for lunch

\*Please note phone calls will be made on the Sunday prior to the meetings to confirm that specific date, especially during inclement weather.

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**All published CNPA newsletters can be read at [cnpensioners.org](http://cnpensioners.org).**

**NEWSLETTERS AVAILABLE THE FOLLOWING TIMES:  
February, June and October**

### HOW DO YOU GET THIS NEWSLETTER?

1. by **Canada Post** (most expensive, our least desirable),
2. by accessing it yourself on **[cnpensioners.org](http://cnpensioners.org)**,
3. by receiving it directly in your **email** in-box from our local council (best choice for us). Please advise Brian Woods at 403-280-9107 or woodsby@nucleus.com if this option works for you.

**Any changes** to your pension - address, telephone number, power of attorney, death etc. must be called into **Life Works at 1-800-361-0739, toll free**. They can also help with all questions regarding your pension or rail pass.

**NEXT MEETING: September 8th, 2025**

MEETING LOCATION: Games Room downstairs at the Kerby Centre, 1133-7 Avenue SW (403-705-3248)

**TIME:** 12:30

**The Membership of E2 welcomes our New Members**

- Loraine Shearlaw
- Linda Albert
- Rob Anderson
- Sharon Davis

**Happy Birthday wishes to:**

- George Merik, June 23, 88 years
- Bertha Esplen, July 26, 99 years
- Evelyn Wittchen, July 30, 84 years
- Linda Campion, August 17, 74 years
- Linda Engel, August 24, 85 years
- Terry Eckstadt, Sep 4, 86 years
- Terry McDonough, Oct 4, 98 years
- Madeleine Pelletier, Oct 11, 84 years

**Anniversary congratulations to:**

- Prez & Vice, June 24, we lost count
- Owen Boyd & Karen Prescott, September 28, 6 years

**Obituaries**

- John Davis ?
- Billy Smith, May 10/25 100 years, short a few weeks of 101!

Want to see your name in print? The Company keeps all your details secret so if you want to see your name in print, call to give us those details so that can happen. A pseudonym for any nefarious members could be arranged 😊.

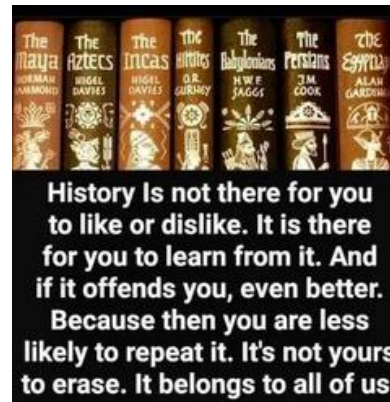
**Membership Advantages:** The Scholarship Committee will deny any applications sent by non-contributing members children or grandchildren. **Only** contributing members receive the annual CN calendar, delivered to your home – for only \$1/month. Also added is an association with the travel discount company, Colette Travel, plus the opportunity to join the CNPA Blue Cross plan when you initially retire. If you join the Rail Roaders In The Community program, a \$100 bonus donation is available. Be a promoter of the CNPA and encourage any non-members you know to call Brian Woods 403-280-9107 where, for that mere \$1/month (by PRD), they will become members. Also, they'll receive a copy of this wonderful newsletter! **Please Note:** Membership for a Spouse or survivor is **not automatic**, but they are invited to attend meetings (no voting unless in good standing - paying that is) and special events. **Social memberships** are also available (\$10 paid to us annually), this entitles the member to attend all functions of the local, and vote on local, non-CNPA, matters. Matters of the CNPA may only be voted on by the Pensioner or the surviving spouse per the constitution. **New incentive to join** – There is currently an offer of a two-year FREE membership so let's chat up anyone about to retire!

'The industry is broken', that was the remark from the manager of the agency I deal with had said last year, and reading and hearing from consumers, it sure is! I get a chuckle out of the commercials touting that with the increase in climate issues, you need protection more than ever, no, protection would come from better building materials that will withstand hail, wind and water mitigation damage. Your (the insurance industry) job is to offer fair and reasonable coverage for damage that has incurred, and they are not willing to do that.

Reading about the homeowners in N.E. Calgary after claiming for hail damage the last two years and having their premiums being raised to \$180-\$580 a month!, or raising their deductible to \$10,000!, or having their policies cancelled completely. I recently ran into a member, who also was also shopping around, and he informed me some firms will not insure homes valued at more than a million.

I recently renewed my homeowner policy, and I was not happy about the 20% increase from last year, so as usual I got other quotes, I even phoned a broker in Edmonton who said my firm is as good as it gets, and this years' 20% increase is across the board, and to expect the same % increase next year! Now after all this searching and signing on the dotted line I decided to give the CNPA website a look see. Johnson Insurance is no longer in business, and Belaire direct has taken their place. I gave their online quick quote a whirl and upon filling it in, and submitting it, an agent gave me a call. Once we drilled down some additional numbers, they came closer to reality than some of the other quotes I got. Now I don't advocate for any firm over another, I'm not smitten with my provider, they're the best (?) of a bad lot, and Belaire direct offers some perks to CNPA members, but please do shop around, it's your money, and at 20% increases every year, you will retain less and less of your money every year. And next time I will have a rant on our governments' plan to 'make auto insurance better' for Albertan citizens.

B



### 2025 Picnic *IN* the Kerby

The Picnic *IN* the Kerby took place on June 9, 2025 in the Kerby Games Room. As there were only nine members and two guests in attendance, we opted to choose our meals from the Kerby posted menu. Food and fellowship was great but we'd really like to have more people attending as many of our former 'regulars' have passed and replacements are needed! (And, unlike the Christmas Luncheon you have no weather excuses.) My heartfelt thanks to Doreen Morin, Laura Cusano and Eileen Lefley (who came all the way from Drumheller) for joining us!



A great time was had by all!



### CNPA Scholarship Program Mountain Region

Mike Englehart and team review all of this regions' applications. CRITERIA: 1. Applications are accepted from children, grandchildren, great grandchildren (includes legally adopted and stepchildren and step grandchildren) of CNPA Contributing Members. 2. Minimum 80% grade average over the most recent 2 full academic school years to qualify. 3. Applicants must be a full-time student enrolled and attending a Canadian or United States accredited University or College. 4. Applications will only be accepted from **April 15th to August 15th**. SCORING: 60% Based on the Average mark from last 2 Years; 15% of overall Community Involvement; 10% of overall Personal achievement; 10% of overall Academic Participation 5% Other - goals, initiative, special situations Please AVOID DISQUALIFICATIONS due to: 1. No resume submitted. 2. Missing or incomplete marks. 3. Applicants' sponsor *not* a CNPA Contributing Member. 4. Unacceptable proof of registration.

Follow all the rules as set out on our website: [cnpensioners.org](http://cnpensioners.org) There are **no exceptions** to these rules so read them early and comply in full and on time.

#### Bill(y) Smith

June 19, 1924 - May 10, 2025

Brian and I were happy to attend Bills' 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party last year and were saddened to learn of his passing just weeks before his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. Bill had wanted to 'drive the steam engine' since he was a child. Got his wish via a circuitous route, first with the CN car department out of Camrose (1942), then into the Royal Canadian Navy (Anti-Submarine Artificer) until discharged in 1945, then back to CN in Drumheller and transferred to Hanna in 1946 as a locomotive fireman, finally promoted to engineer in 1952! He involved himself with the unions – B of LF&E, B of LE and the Alberta Legislative Board representing all engineers in the province. He helped organize the Hanna CN Curling Club and served as president for two years. Bill retired January 31, 1983 and lived in Calgary for many years. I like to think of Billy as one of those rare characters you meet along the way of our lives. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Judy



### Joe Shearlaw

Mike Barter, Brian and I attended the memorial for Joe Shearlaw on May 3, 2025 in High River. It was nice to get together with so many pensioners we normally never see (I should have held a meeting!) and Joes' family and friends. Discovered Joe was a man with varied interests and talents. He and Lorraine had travelled almost everywhere (or certainly a lot of places)! Our thanks to Lorraine for inviting us to this celebration of Joes' life.



Junction Creek, K-Country June 2025. Note the extremely low water levels. And no snow left to melt (below).



### From Steve Mihell – Provincial Govt. Liason

Alberta Government News – May 2025

Don't get measles: Get immunized. Alberta's government is expanding measles immunizations access and launching a new advertising campaign to raise awareness and help prevent the spread.

Traffic safety tips: Motorcycle safety: Motorcyclists are back on Alberta's roads; keeping an eye out for them could save lives. Detect early, stop cancer: Alberta's government is investing \$5.5 million in cancer screening to improve early detection and ensure faster access to life-saving diagnosis and treatment.

[and yet, the Alberta government has ceased paying for COVID shots – so much for caring about the health of all Albertans] Grants to grow primary care: New grants totalling about \$25 million will support innovative, community-led projects to improve access to primary health care across Alberta.

There was nothing in the provincial or national news releases about fire safety, but with summer and camping season approaching, it might be a good time to remind the membership to be careful in these (dry) areas. Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected everywhere, but with those in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in particular. Enjoy your summer all.

### Blakes' Rant About VIA

Hello all! (My Editorial Comments Only regarding the current contract negotiations!) I realize that working wages and conditions are important but much like Canada Post, the bleeding continues at VIA.

Here are the financials from Via Rail for the last 5 years...it is important to notice that the losses have totalled **\$3B** over that period. It costs \$190 to make \$100 in ticket revenue(!), not including 2024 losses likely over an additional \$800M. Sounds like a going out of business strategy to me!

Canada post has lost **\$3.8B** since 2018.

And both of these corporations get that money from...yes, all of us through taxes on our fixed incomes! And the unions know that you and I have an endless supply of money and they can just ask for more.

So, there is my rant. I hope that someone stops the bleeding and some of this money goes to useful items such as healthcare or education. The national dream is long over, there will never be a productive cost-effective passenger rail system in Canada, at least not if run by the government, but no one has the guts to face that fact. The Rocky Mountaineer makes money every year and is consistently recognized as one of the best companies in Canada.

As a side note, in 1979, when CN and CN gave their passenger operations over to the Government of Canada (and they created Via Rail), CN and CP lost a combined \$44m that year... last year Via lost \$773m. We ran more passenger trains in 1979 and they were faster and on time! And our CN Passes don't affect this... as CN pays VIA for the exact amount of the tickets we purchase on our passes for free. But we contribute to the losses.

Ok, time for a nap! Blake

**NOTICE: Johnson Travel Rebrand: Monday, June 30th**

Effective July 1, 2025, Johnson Insurance Travel operations will come together with belairdirect and rebrand as **belairdirect travel insurance**. With belairdirect, members can expect the same level of service they know and trust.

To support our system integration to belairdirect, our Travel departments will be closed from Saturday June 28 at 5:00 p.m. EST (3 p.m. MDT) to Wednesday, July 2 at 6:30 a.m. EST (4:30 MDT) for planned system upgrades. t at 819-566-1002.

Both website and IVR (telephone system) messaging will provide advance notice to your members in mid-June.

Normal hours of operation will resume on July 2, 2025.



Nice truck! Turner Valley 2025

**(Repeated) CNPA Deals**

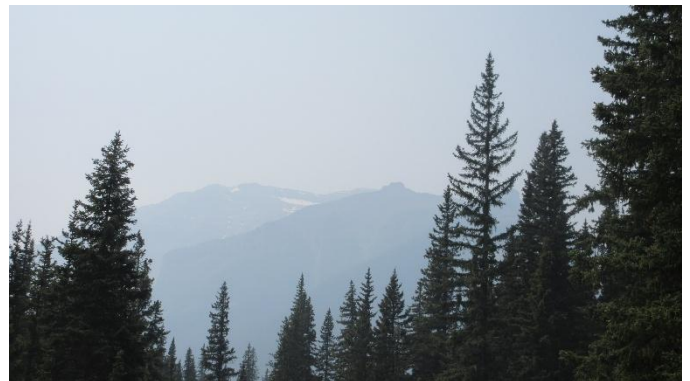
**HearingLife** – providing the best hearing care service to members. HearingLife and its Network Partners have over 400 clinics and for the largest network of Hearing Health care providers in Canada. Details: <https://www.cn pensioners.org/membership/membership-discounts/discounts-hearing-life>

**Ford/Lincoln** – through the Ford Partner Recognition Program. Our members can login on the Ford portal to generate their own personal identification number (PIN) for the program and then use that PIN and their proof of CNPA membership to access Ford/Lincoln price discounts at any Ford dealer. Details: <https://www.conpensioners.org/membership/membership-discounts/discounts-ford>

**Rogers** – This cel plan is *not available* through your local Rogers kiosk but instead, it is a CNPA negotiated group rate by Rogers group supplier – **Planet Mobile**. Any inquiries *must* be made through [vcapsis@planetem.com](mailto:vcapsis@planetem.com) at Planet Mobile and Vangy can walk you through your available options.

**HOLO Alert** – medical alert pendant and watch. For further information, or assistance in registering, contact Mathew Toth at [mtoth@holoalert.ca](mailto:mtoth@holoalert.ca) or [www.holoalert.ca](http://www.holoalert.ca) or telephone 825-401-1905.

**VIA Passes** – some existing passes no longer work within the new VIA reservation system. As of November 2023, VIA reservation system no longer accepts initials. **IF** your Pass contains only initials, contact CN Pension & Benefits Admini9stration (1-800-361-0739) at least 4 weeks prior to travel to have a new pass issued. It is **your responsibility** to create an online profile with VIA. Members should contact VIA customer service for any online issues at 1-888-VIA-RAIL (1-888-842-7245)



Smokey day in K-Country 2025

### National Newsletter Request

A big Thank You, to those who have already submitted stories for submission to the National Newsletter.

As your Mountain Regional Representative for the CNPA National Newsletter, I would like to encourage you this summer to take the opportunity, while enjoying our remarkable Canadian weather with former colleagues and family, to inquire about any railroad stories they might be willing to share. Multi-generational families likely possess significant railroad history that is worth documenting. Additionally, we welcome any photographs that accompany these captivating accounts.

Moreover, please consider recognizing the contributions of Railroaders within your Community. At your next CNPA meeting, kindly request attendees to indicate if they are engaged in any volunteer activities and how many are registered with the CN Railroaders in the Community program. You might be pleasantly surprised by the number of participants and the untold stories they can share.

Exploring past editions of the newsletter can provide valuable insight and inspiration for new submissions, illustrating the breadth of topics covered. If you have ideas for new features or wish to share your voice, your contributions will help us collectively build a richer and more connected community through the stories we tell.

Wishing each of you and your families a great safe Canadian summer.

Rae Sexton, CNPA National Newsletter, Mountain Region Representative

### On Getting Older

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office.

"Is it true," she wanted to know, "that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.

There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, "I'm wondering, then, just how serious my condition is because this prescription is marked 'NO REFILLS'..."

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in life for.



### Pension Committee & Health Care Committee Meetings

Pension Committee and Health Committee meetings were held during the week of May 20, 2025 in Montreal. Details are not printed in local newsletters, only discussed at local meetings. During that week, we also met with CN on our relationship in community activities, with CN HR on the CN/CNPA Partnership agreement, on provisions of the Pension Plan; and also with some of the unions on issues of mutual interest. (And you thought they were just wasting time smoking and drinking, talking about the 'good old days' – didn't you? These are our representatives working on our behalf so be supportive and consider getting involved. Judy)

You will see more on this in further updates, Blake



The long and winding road that, like us, goes ever on...