



INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZERS: 2002

Harry R. J. Home

Harry Robert John Home began his career with Canadian National Railways on July 28, 1949 at Boston Bar, British Columbia, working on a signal gang for 86¢ per hour. In the fall of 1949, he returned to school in Kamloops where his family resided and worked in the railway's shops. His father, John Cameron "Jack" Home, was a main-line locomotive engineer with the CNR, beginning his career in 1913 on the Canadian Northern Railway. Following in his father's footsteps, Harry too would become a locomotive fireman, and later a steam locomotive engineer on the CNR. He recalls his first "pay-trip" as a fireman on Second 406, with engine 4303 on a trip east out of Jasper, firing for an engineer named Jimmie Robb. "I waited over 19 years for that day to come," remarked Harry in the summer of 2004, recalling that 51 years had past since that glorious summer day.

Being the son of a locomotive engineer, Harry's childhood was spent at places like Jasper, Kamloops, Hanna, Big Valley, and Edmonton. Later he would work out of many of the same terminals as an engineer on the CNR.

As an employee, Harry will always be remembered as a safe, honest, and valued railroader. The younger generation looked up to him and enjoyed his company, and his spinning of yarns on the history of the railway. However, it is Harry's passion and dedication for the preservation of CNR steam locomotive 6060 that has given him national and in fact international recognition. Since 1960, Harry has worked to preserve the 6060 - a CNR "Mountain-type" steam locomotive, which once hustled transcontinental passenger trains across our country. Today, thanks to Harry's vision and leadership, it has been preserved operationally for the benefit of future generations. Harry retired in May 1998 after a wonderful career at CN. Crowds gathered at the CNR depot in Jasper as he brought in a modern CN intermodal train from Kamloops. On the occasion of his induction to the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame, CN further honoured Harry with the naming of a control point just east of Jasper as "Home."

A wonderful ambassador for the railway, a talented locomotive engineer, a good union officer, and a respected man in the community - Harry Home is a true example of a railway hero, and the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame was honoured to induct him accordingly.

Kevin Lihou and Donald Blain

On behalf of the employees of Canada's railway industry, the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame is recognizing the high degree of professionalism exhibited by two VIA Rail Canada engine service employees who were tragically killed in the line of duty on April 23, 1999, at Thamesville, Ontario. The actions of Kevin Lihou and Donald Blain seconds before their train derailed and struck stationary railway equipment located on an adjacent storage track prevented further risk of injury and death to many others involved in this unfortunate accident.

After determining that a serious accident was about to occur that would affect not only their train but other trains moving on the adjacent main track, Mr. Lihou and Mr. Blain as the locomotive crew of VIA No. 74 made an emergency broadcast from the locomotive radio seconds before



the derailment and collision occurred. As a result of this broadcast, VIA train No. 71 approaching Thamesville in the opposite direction at the time of the accident was able to make a safe and controlled stop, saving the lives or injury of other employees and passengers.

In addition, the quick actions exhibited by the locomotive crew on VIA No. 74 in activating the engine stop switch prior to the collision occurring with the stationary railway equipment further mitigated a risk of serious fire and explosion.

Many owe a degree of gratitude to Kevin Lihou and Donald Blain. Their quick actions and compliance with established procedures despite the serious threat that was evident to their own lives exemplifies the dedication of these men to their work and to the safety of their fellow employees.

On February 20, 2002, Canadian National honoured the actions of Kevin Lihou and Donald Blain by renaming two line points on the CN Dundas Subdivision in southwestern Ontario — Lihou at Mile 61.6 and Blain at Mile 45.1 respectively. In addition to CN's recognition of these employees, the entire Canadian railway industry is honoured to induct Kevin Lihou and Donald Blain into the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame.

Roger Cyr and Benoit Levesque

Operation Lifesaver is a unique public-private partnership that saves Canadian lives and suffering from injuries incurred at highway–railway crossings and from trespassing on railway property.

The public-private partnership program, sponsored by the Railway Association of Canada and Transport Canada, is supported by Canada's railways, police forces, safety councils and leagues, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, community groups and some 500 volunteer presenters in communities from coast to coast. Without the program, more Canadians would have been seriously injured, or killed.

Roger Cyr, the original Operation Lifesaver National Director in Canada and a former General Claims Manager for Canadian National and Air Canada, says the program started with little more than an idea and some reference material gathered from the U.S. program.

Mr. Cyr had a desk and a filing cabinet, and eventually an assistant. He dug in and started to establish Operation Lifesaver in Canada. He accumulated data, worked his contacts in the railways, and developed ties with government agencies.

Gradually, the OL network came into being. Operation Lifesaver committees in the provinces were set up. The Canada Safety Council and the provincial safety councils and leagues in eight provinces became important partners. Saskatchewan joined in 1981. Nova Scotia was the last to enter in 1988. Initially, the program had one mandate — to promote crossing safety. In 1989, however, the anti-trespassing component was added.

To promote its railway safety message to the public, OL established an education program to target the general population, from school-age children to adults. Partnerships with various agencies, such as police forces and engineering groups, were developed.

During this 10-year period, Roger introduced a wide range of public awareness programs, such as crash simulations, rail safety days, mall displays and was instrumental in introducing a new



cross-buck safety symbol. In 1991, after 41 years of service at CN and 10 years with Operation Lifesaver, Roger decided to retire.

His successor, Ben Levesque, joined Operation Lifesaver as National Director on January 1, 1992 following early retirement from Canadian National's Operations department. The OL programs already in place had worked quite well and involved volunteer railway employees and police officers, some provincial and municipal police forces, and the provincial safety councils and leagues.

It was time to build on the solid base that had already been established. Education became the principal theme of the new program. In 1992, OL introduced the first Officer on the Train program in Canada with the cooperation of CSX police officers between Chatham and Sarnia, Ontario. As a result, enforcement agencies became keenly aware of rail-related public safety issues.

In the mid-1990s, Mr. Levesque was invited to attend the Program Development Council of Operation Lifesaver Inc. in the United States and was accepted as a member of Council. The Canadian presenter kit was developed as a result to promote a consistent message throughout the country. The program expanded dramatically.

The 1995 Railway Safety Act review recommendations to the Minister of Transport included one to reduce the number of collisions at crossings and trespassing incidents by 50 per cent by the 2006. Direction 2006 was established to implement the recommendation. Operation Lifesaver became a partner in the program, and Ben Levesque accepted the chairmanship of the Education Committee. OL expanded its activities through the Presenter Program and its involvement in Direction 2006.

Demand increased for educational material, and a website was developed to increase OL's visibility. Other important partnerships through Direction 2006 have been forged with groups able to influence public behaviour. New documents and products were produced, an electronic database was created to keep track of people, presentations and activities, and new material and videos have been produced, with positive results.

Today, with increased train traffic, more railways, and more vehicles on the road, the number of deaths and injuries along Canada's railways continue to be driven down further, and faster. The volunteers and dedicated supporters of Operation Lifesaver have made it the best public safety program in Canada, and Canadian communities a better, safer place to live.

Sir Sandford Fleming

A pioneer Canadian civil engineer and surveyor, Sandford Fleming is a leading historical figure in the development of the Canadian railway industry. Born in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, in January 1827, Fleming immigrated to Canada in 1845.

Fleming's first railway posting was working on the survey of the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Railway. In 1863, Fleming became the chief engineer responsible for the completion of the Intercolonial Railway, connecting Québec with the Maritimes, completing the project in 1876. In 1871, Fleming was appointed as the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was charged with the survey of the line in western Canada through the Rocky Mountains. His survey chose the Yellowhead route through Edmonton and present-day Jasper in 1872; however, this



northern route was never utilized by the CPR. A southern survey closer to the United States border was chosen instead. He left the CPR in 1880, but continued to act as a consultant to the company. In fact, he found and surveyed the Kicking Horse Pass on the railway's southern route through the Rockies.

Knighted in 1897, Fleming also invented the system of "standard time" in use world-wide today. By dividing the globe into 24 separate time zones, Fleming's concept standardized time on railways in Canada, adding to the safety and efficiency of operations. Fleming was also the designer of Canada's first postage stamp — the "three-penny beaver" introduced in 1851. He died on July 22, 1915 and will forever be remembered as one of Canada's first railway heroes.

Pierre Berton

Pierre Berton is one of Canada's most celebrated journalists, historians and media personalities. Born in 1920 at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Mr. Berton has become a familiar name in Canada as a popular historian and best-known living writer.

Mr. Berton entered the newspaper business in Vancouver in 1942. At 21 years of age, he became the youngest city editor of any Canadian daily newspaper. He went on to become editor of Maclean's magazine and later joined the Toronto Star. Since the late 1950s, Mr. Berton has hosted his own television shows or appeared as a panellist on public affairs programs such as Front Page Challenge.

During his illustrious career, Mr. Berton has authored many publications that have documented interesting and romantic aspects of Canadian history. Books such as 1967: The Last Good Year, Farewell to the Twentieth Century, and Vimy have, among others, drawn exceptional reviews.

Two of Mr. Berton's popular books The National Dream (1970) and The Last Spike (1972) told the story of the background and construction of Canada's first transcontinental railway in a colourful and detailed manner. These two works were later adapted as a television series that provided Canadians with a fascinating insight into the early history of the Canadian Pacific Railway and its fundamental role in the development of our nation. Mr. Berton's dramatic narrative of The Last Spike earned him a third Governor General's Award in 1972.

In addition to serving as chancellor of Yukon College, receiving numerous honorary degrees and four major literary awards, Mr. Berton is a Companion of the Order of Canada. The National Dream and The Last Spike chronicled the beginning of the Canadian railway industry unlike any other narratives. As a result of Mr. Berton's writing, Canadians learned of the important historical role the CPR provided in early national unity and as a driver of economic growth.