

CRHA Niagara Division Meeting Venues

Andy Panko

The Niagara Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association was established in October 1978, with about 30 people attending the first meeting. This was held in the Faculty Lounge on the 13th floor of the Library Tower (now Schmon Tower) at Brock University in St. Catharines. The reason for this venue was that the organizers of the first meeting, Drs. Bert Holland and Jack Miller were both Chemistry professors at Brock.

Only one more meeting was held at that location. Apparently the cost of renting the room was too high, but would have been lower had the bar bill been higher. Unfortunately, the members did not know that the bar bill was inversely proportional to the room rent (to a certain extent) and did not make any great strides at lowering the rent. Just as well, it kept the meetings relatively sober, so to speak.

The next year, 1979, saw the meetings move to the St. Catharines Historical Museum in Merriton. This venue was not without its highlights. It was the May meeting and the day was a hot one. The upstairs room at the Museum was even hotter, and with no ventilation. Seizing the opportunity to cool things down, person or persons unknown decided to open one of the fire escape doors, which was fitted with a burglar alarm so the boys disarmed it first. Of course the alarm was tamper proof. The police showed up in short order to a "break and enter in progress". The museum curator showed up, in a bath robe, and, oh yes, wet. She was not happy.

Only two people showed up to the June 1979 meeting (Gansel and Panko) but no decision was made to make May the last meeting before the summer break (in more modern times, the Rout-Delogu Extraganza, now called the Longest Day Field Trip, replaces the June meeting, just as the Annual Christmas Party replaces the December meeting).

The April 1980 meeting was probably the last at the museum. The May meeting was held as a "CRHA - Cherry Street Station Presents" at the St. Catharines Library. Renovations at the museum in September left us permanently homeless. Starting that Fall, meetings were held in several locations: Thorold Fire Hall (Panko was President of Protection Hose Co. No. 1 that year; the Irish Club in St. Catharines (bud Boyd a member of that club, managed to allow us to use those facilities for a number of meetings); and Bud's house, also for quite a few meetings. The second CRHA - Cherry Street Presents was held at the St. Catharines Library in April 1981.

The Boyd's continued to host the meetings through the Fall of 1981 to January 1982, then meetings moved to George Rout's (February) and Paul Chapman's (March). In all these cases, the wives always provided

great snacks and lots of coffee. On April 14, 1982 a CRHA Presents (sans Cherry Street Station) was held at Lakeport Secondary School. The April, May, and June meetings were held at Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School (SWCSS).

In September 1982, SWCSS became our permanent meeting location, with only a few single meeting changes made after that. In November 1982 the meeting was held at the Panko's in Fonthill to facilitate a display which was part of the program. A meeting was held again at the Panko's, this time in Niagara-on-the-Lake, in February 1987 as part of a video night. It appears as if the 1988 meetings will continue to be held at SWCSS.

The meetings are normally held the last Wednesday of September, October and November, January, February, March, April, and May. Only once, because of a bad snowstorm, was a meeting changed, that was the February 1984 meeting, and it was moved to the following week. Yes, that first June meeting that only Gansel and Panko showed up for did actually proceed, on the sidewalk in front of the Museum in Merriton.

CRHA Niagara Division Executives 1978 - 1988

Year	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer
1978*	Bert Holland		Peter Warwick	Ken Gansel
1979	Bert Holland	Andy Panko	Peter Warwick	Ken Gansel
1980	Andy Panko	Ken Gent	Kevin Argue	Ken Gansel
1981	Bud Boyd	Ken Gent	George Rout	Ken Gansel
1982	Bud Boyd	Paul Chapman	George Rout	Ken Gansel
1983	Paul Chapman	George Rout	Frank Huhn	Ken Gansel
1984	Paul Chapman	George Rout	Frank Huhn	Ken Gansel
1985	Peter Bowen	George Rout	Norm Conway	Ken Gansel
1986	Ken Gansel	Frank Delogu	Norm Conway	Merv Porter
1987	Ken Gansel	Frank Delogu	Norm Conway	Merv Porter
1988	Andy Panko	Iain Tugwell	Norm Conway	Merv Porter

* Interim executive - October to December.

CRHA Niagara Division Longest Day Field Trip

June 17 & 18, 1988

Southwestern Ontario

For more information call
Paul Chapman 937-7170

Location details, hotel and car arrangements etc, will be
published in the Spring Issue of Niagara Rail