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SUNDAY IN TRAVEL

GETAWAY

JOSEPH KULA (EDITOR) • 604-605-2050 • jkula@png.canwest.com | TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2007

SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2007

B.C. GETAWAYS

THE PROVINCE | **TRAVEL | B7**

Don't be a square, visit the rail roundhouse

REVELSTOKE: Three Valley Gap railroad museum boasts largest covered turntable

BY MARGO MALCOLM
SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE

Like a loon call echoing over a lake, the whistle of a train reverberating through the mountains is a haunting and nostalgic sound. Chugging through the Rockies, trains still ride the steel spine that was once the backbone of a new nation.

"I believe we can't move into the future without understanding our history," says Gordon Bell, owner of the Three Valley Gap Roundhouse and Railway Museum. "It's important that we preserve our history for future generations."

Bell has answered the train's call by creating a home for the iron horses of the past that have been put out to pasture. His covered turntable complex is the largest in North America.

Located less than 20 kilometres from Revelstoke, the roundhouse is in the heart of railway country. To this day Revelstoke still depends on the railroad for its livelihood and nearby Craigellachie, Eagle Pass, is where the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railroad was driven in 1885.

Roundhouses were a vital part

of the old railway system. They were usually built every 100 to 200 miles apart because few steam locomotives ventured more than a few divisional points from their home base.

Most steam locomotives were designed for specific service such as freight or passenger and they were intended to go forward and seldom pulled a train backward. To solve this, a turntable mechanism was used to rotate the locomotives to the different workshops in the roundhouse for servicing. Work on Three Valley Gap's turntable will begin this summer.

If a train whistle gives you a chill, seeing the imposing iron beasts will take you back to the romantic days when the west was opening up.

The roundhouse at Three Valley Gap is home to an impressive display of railway equipment and trains, including a CPR caboose, private coaches and a coal-fired steam engine built in 1922 that closely resembles Cnderdonk's No. 2 locomotive "Curly" used in the CPR construction of the 1880s.

The Three Valley Gap Lake Chateau complex not only

includes the Roundhouse and Railway Museum, the Heritage Ghost Town and an Antique Auto Museum but is home to a 200-room resort.

Amenities include family suites, loft rooms and a unique "cave" honeymoon suite, cafeteria, dining room, gift shop, heated indoor pool, a lake with a sandy beach, children's play area and gardens.

Nearby Revelstoke is also home to the Revelstoke Railway Museum and for those train buffs who can't get enough of a good thing, they host Railway Days every year in August. This year they will be held Aug. 17-26.

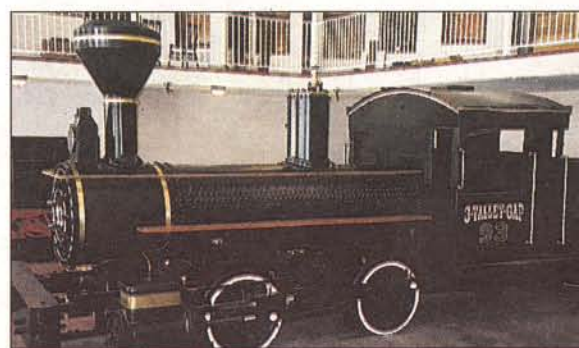
Next time you hear a train whistle echoing through the mountains, if only in your imagination, you'll know that there is a place where the iron horses have found a home.

If You Go

■ Three Valley Gap Roundhouse: www.3valleyroundhouse.com

■ Three Valley Gap Lake Chateau and Heritage Ghost Town: www.3valley.com

■ Tourism B.C.: www.hellobc.com



A historic locomotive is on display at the Three Valley Gap Roundhouse and Railway Museum. — CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

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