

Steamy surprise in store at Tottenham

By WES KELLER
Freelance Reporter

In typical fashion of the bygone heyday of steam locomotives, the South Simcoe Railway excursion pulled out of Tottenham Station nine minutes late for its 3 p.m. tour Monday.

Passengers in the three coaches didn't seem to mind that they were going across the scenic countryside to Beeton in a train powered by a 61-year-old diesel-electric engine 703 rather than the historic, former CPR steam engine 136 built in 1883.

They were still experiencing a little of what har-

vest workers from Ontario must have felt as they sat in straight-backed leather seats on their trek to the Prairies in the early 20th century, where some of them took up homesteads in the ill-fated Palliser Triangle, and of what many of those experienced on their return to Ontario after they had abandoned their homesteads during the Dirty Thirties of the 1930s.

Before boarding, they had been entertained by a vintage-clad group from the Toronto Steam Punk Society, a 347-member group of history buffs, part of which makes frequent

appearances on the SSR station platform at Tottenham, on a short surviving stretch of a rail line that once ran from Hamilton to Allandale.

I had gone there on the Civic Holiday not to view the train but to report on the progress of restoring the historic steam engine to operating condition, but no one was working on 136 and the shop was locked, said a railroader-clad SSR volunteer who wouldn't pause long enough to identify himself.

"We are all busy running a train," he said as he hurried away.

He didn't have a specific comment on progress, except to say that the unveiling of the famous steam locomotive would happen "as a surprise" for the public.

If you watched The National Dream CBC-TV series in the 1970s, you have seen what is to be

unveiled in Tottenham at an as-yet-unspecified date that the SSR volunteers hope is before Thanksgiving.

Engine 136 is something of a prideful possession of SSR as it is one of the locomotives that helped build the transcontinental railway, the Canadian Pacific, across Canada in the 1880s. The railway had to be built to bring British Columbia into confederation at a time when there was pressure to expand the U.S. northwards.

But the other SSR engines are also vintage: No. 136 is a Rogers 4-4-0 steam locomotive built in Paterson NJ in 1883; No. 1057, also long out of service to have its boiler rebuilt, is a Montreal Locomotive Works 4-6-0 steam locomotive built in Montreal for the CPR in 1912; No. 703, running most of the time these days, is a GE 70 ton diesel

built in Erie PA in 1948; and No. 22 is a yard engine, a 44-ton diesel-hydraulic locomotive built in Kingston in 1960.

South Simcoe Railway Heritage Corp. is a not-for-profit organization staffed by volunteers ever since it was founded more or less as an offshoot of the local Chamber of Commerce nearly 17 years ago.

It became the only steam-powered rail line in Ontario.

Operating from May to Thanksgiving, it attracts between 35,000 and 40,000 riders each year. The volunteers, all of whom have taken the requisite courses in railroading, are all from other unrelated businesses and professions.

Apart from passengers, its most pressing need for the moment might be for persons with expertise in the mechanics of steam engines. Engine 136 will be restored, but its return to service would be sooner if there were a few more hands to complete the task, a recent statement by SSR indicates.

You can contact SSR by phoning 905-936-5815 or by email at info@southsimcoerailway.ca, or by writing to South Simcoe Railway Heritage Corp., P.O. Box 186, Tottenham, ON L0G 1W0.



Contributed Photo

THE LEGION POPPY FUND TRUST BURSARIES were awarded last week at Col. Fitzgerald Branch 233 in Orangeville. Recipients (front row, left to right) were Kaitlin Graham, Warren Brown and Brianne Snell. From the Legion were, left to right in the back row, Gloria Thomas, Darrick Landry, Brian Richardson and Ronald Simms.

Internet funding scheme

From page A1

business in the area since 2001, pays between \$500 and \$600 per installation. At one point, it was able to charge \$99 per installation, based on a three-year contract; aiming to recoup their costs over the course of time.

Such an arrangement, however, involved a partner who would help finance the original costs. Everus is currently not involved in such a partnership and has no choice but the charge the entire installation cost to the end user.

Mr. Cantin says the company is in the process of finding such a partner.

Dufferin County has been awarded nearly \$600,000 under the provincial government's "rural connections broadband program" to bring it closer to providing high speed internet service to as many residents as possible.

The announced second round of provincial fund-

ing fell somewhat short of the county's hoped-for \$1 million. The Town of Mono has gone its separate ways and has its own application filed for funding under the same program.

If the county project works in the same fashion as the first phase, a selected service provider would be expected to invest at least \$600,000 to match the provincial funds, and the county itself would contribute another \$600,000 in "in kind" funding such as providing access.

Few details of how this second phase will progress have become available. County CAO Linda Dean said the first step in the process would be to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a consultant.

Ms. Dean could not say how quickly the project might get under way. But it would be intended to provide service to some areas missed in the first round.

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Charming three-bedroom home, the soaring sloped ceiling in the great room carries through from the foyer, unifying the space and providing a touch of drama. The room's gas fireplace, flanked by entertainment units, will cast its warm glow into the dining room and kitchen. The dining room includes a doorway to the sundeck, and also features an optional built-out buffet that will not only provide extra storage space for dishes and glassware, but will come in handy when the family entertains guests for dinner. The kitchen is separated from the dining area and great room by a generous work island with a small sink on one side and an eating bar on two sides, with space for five seats. Natural light will flood into the kitchen through a window with an extra-deep sill placed over the double sink. A walk-in pantry will provide invaluable storage. To the left of the foyer is a den or third bedroom where corner windows offer views of both the front and side gardens. Just outside this room and convenient to the kitchen is a useful phone/computer desk. The master suite also features a sloping ceiling near the windows, as well as a doorway to the sundeck. The ensuite, occupying its own bayed-out nook, boasts a soaker tub with a tiled surround, as well as a corner shower stall. The walk-in closet is roomy enough to accommodate the most fashion-conscious couples clothing. Separated from the master suite by a three-piece bathroom, the second bedroom has a window with an extra-deep sill that could make a delightful place to curl up with a book. To the right of the foyer, behind the coat closet, is the laundry room, which includes a coat closet for family gear and has access to the double garage. Exterior finishes include decorative woodwork in the home's three gables, horizontal siding and stone accents. This home measures 46 feet wide and 61 feet, 10 inches deep, for a total of 1,588 square feet, plus the unfinished basement.

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