

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1989

23/01/1989 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Chalk River*

*Almonte*

Derailed train blocks traffic for ten hours

A derailed freight train sprawled across Almonte Sunday, blocking traffic for about 10 hours.

All but one of the town's east-west roads was blocked by the train. Traffic was rerouted through the town's only railway underpass while Canadian Pacific Railway crews removed the one part that derailed.

"It was a good-sized train... about two miles long," said Tracy McDougall, who lives beside the tracks.

There were no injuries and there was no damage to other cars on the mixed-freight train.

John Cox, CPR spokesman, said a bearing problem on one of four wheels at the rear of the car caused it to derail.

The car, carrying new automobiles, came off the track just before 5 a.m.

It was removed from the train and sent to Montreal for examination. Cox said none of the automobiles was damaged.

He said the incident caused "a few thousand dollars" of track damage.

The train was back on the track about 3 p.m. Sunday, headed towards western Canada with freight that included grain and chemicals. It left Montreal early Sunday morning.

"It woke me up out of bed," said Rob Dodge, an Almonte volunteer firefighter, who lives about 15 metres from the tracks.

Dodge said he heard a "loud banging noise" and the screeching of the train's air brakes. Then he heard "a helluva loud bang." When he ran outside he saw that one car had hit a nearby stone railway bridge.

The derailed car was about 17 cars from the front of the train.

CPR called the Almonte fire department to make sure none of the six cars carrying chemicals had spilled, said Chief Bill Lowry.

Railway officials refused to say what chemicals were on board.

The stalled train did little to interrupt traffic, said residents. A three-metre rail underpass on Little Bridge Street, nicknamed "the subway," allowed traffic to pass freely across town while CPR crews worked to rerail the train.

"On Sunday, it's pretty dead around here anyway," said resident Diane Villeneuve, whose house faced the stalled train.

12/02/1989 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Maniwaki*

STEAM TRAIN TO WAKEFIELD ON TRACK?: Plans to revive the steam excursion train between Hull and Wakefield, Quebec, got a 'shot in the arm' on February 11. Quebec Tourism Minister Michel Gratton announced during an economic development conference that the Quebec Government will inject \$1.4 million into the Wakefield Steam Train project.

The train's promoters had asked Quebec for \$2.8 million to rehabilitate the 27 kilometre former CP Rail line and to improve the Hull station.

Gratton indicated that the remaining \$1.4 million will be included in an economic development agreement to be negotiated with the federal government.

The National Museum of Science and Technology's former CP 4-6-2 1201 powered the last train over the line on September 1, 1985.

07/04/1989 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Smiths Falls*

Track ripped out from under steam train.

Canadian National is ripping up the rails a group of heritage railway buffs are depending on to start a tourist steam train from Smiths Falls to Harrowsmith.

The entire, 80-kilometre route requested by the Rideau Valley Heritage Railway Association for a tourist steam train could be gone by the end of the year.

Right now, the rails are being lifted from Forfar, about 40 km south of Smiths Falls, to Harrowsmith, 80 km away. The route has not been used by CN since it received permission to abandon service in April 1985.

CN spokesman Mike Matthews said Thursday the railway would call for tenders "in a few weeks" to have the remaining track, from Smiths Falls to Forfar, ripped up this summer.

The Rideau Valley Heritage Railway Association has applied to the provincial government for a \$1 to \$1.5 million start-up grant to begin operating a heritage steam train on this abandoned CN rail line.

At first, the tourist train would operate only from Smiths Falls to Otter Lake, about 15 km. But the association hoped to extend the route southward, over several years, to Forfar and eventually, Harrowsmith, a distance of 80 km.

Wilfrid Walker, of the Ontario transportation ministry's rail of fice, iiaid officials from , several provincial ministries are actively considering funding the tourist train, but have not yet reached a decision.

When told CN was about to go ahead and rip up the rails, Walker said, "I'll try and stir a few people up here."

Rideau Valley Heritage Railway Association president David Strong blamed provincial delays for the situation and said CN has a right to remove the track.

"We'll just have to use any and all resources at our disposal to put pressure on the government to get cracking."

The current cost to install new rails is \$43 per running foot; Strong said. At that rate, it would cost \$11.3 million to replace the entire route.

CN estimates the value of the Smiths Falls line at \$3.6 million, in scrap rail and property. The rail salvaged from the Smiths Falls line will be used elsewhere for repairs and rehabilitation projects.

"We got authority to abandon that stretch of track in April; of '85, which is four years ago," CN official Mike Matthews said. "We've delayed the project several times because of the wishes of the Rideau Valley group."

"Unfortunately, the notion of a tourist railway on that track is just that, a notion. They haven't made any progress, to our knowledge."

27/04/1989 *Ottawa Citizen*

*Maniwaki*

Future of Wakefield steam train clouded by worries over funding

A promoter of the Wakefield steam train project says Quebec may be backtracking on its promise to help fund the defunct rail line.

John Trent, president of the Hull-La Peche Tourist Development Council, said Tuesday it was never his understanding that provincial financing for the project could be dependent upon federal funds.

Quebec Tourism Minister Michel Gratton said Monday at a press conference the province won't foot the bill for the whole project if the federal-, government decides not to pay half its ' \$2.8-million cost.

The money is needed to revive a 27 kilometre stretch of the rail line between Wakefield and Hull. CP closed the money-losing line in 1986.

"The Quebec government cannot go, ahead alone with the \$2.8 million," Marc Toupin, Gratton's spokesman, said Tuesday. "The federal government has to do its share."

Toupin said it's impossible to say whether the province will still fork out \$1.4 million if the federal government doesn't pay its share.

09/05/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Belleville

Perth

Man killed by freight train

Police here say there was no foul play involved in the death of a man struck by a freight train Saturday. Scott Pigden, 23, of RR4 Perth, was hit by an east-bound CPR freight train on the outskirts of Perth about 2 a.m. Police say the man didn't move when the train blew warning whistles.

14/05/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Prescott

All aboard for the ride of your grandparents' lifetime: Ottawa by steam train.

Locomotive 1201 and its train of vintage passenger cars leaves the Museum of Science and Technology three times today for a scenic tour if there ever was one.

The 90-minute to two-hour tour makes its way across the Ottawa River to Hull and back, runs beneath Dow's Lake, through Vincent Massey Park, passing by the Rideau River, Billings Estate and Ottawa Station before returning to the museum.

Trains leave at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Some tickets (\$15 for adults and \$10 for children) were expected to still be available today: head down the museum at 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. (at Smyth Road) to buy them and get on board. If, by chance, you miss out on tickets for a ride today, you should be able to buy tickets for next weekend. Parking at the museum is free.

Bytown Railway Society

18/06/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Prescott

If you missed getting a ride on steam locomotive 1201 a few weeks ago, here's another chance. The historic train will be leaving from the Museum of Science and Technology at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. today for two-hour tours around Ottawa. Tickets \$15 for adults, \$10 for children 12 and under and free for toddlers if they aren't using a seat are on sale at the museum.

(Bytown Railway Society)

28/06/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Maniwaki

Funding shortfall threatens Wakefield steam train plan

After celebrating victory in February, promoters of the Wakefield steam train have learned the project is in jeopardy because no federal funds are available to match a \$1.4-million provincial grant.

John Trent, president of the Hull-La Peche Tourist Development Council, said the public must put pressure on the province to fund the train's entire \$2.8 million start-up costs.

About 130,000 postcards are being distributed by the council to Outaouais residents in coming weeks, through newspapers, stores and caisses populaires.

Residents are being asked to sign the cards, in support of the train, to be sent to Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa and Transport Minister Marc-Yvan Cote.

Although the province promised \$1.4 million for the train in February, that money is in jeopardy because the federal government has no intention of funding the other half.

Michel Gratton, the provincial tourism minister, said in April the province would not foot the bill for the entire project if the federal government won't pay half.

But Monday, a spokesman for federal Regional Industrial Expansion Minister Harvie Andre said Quebec officials are well aware there is no federal money for such a joint venture.

Under a federal-provincial agreement signed in 1988, Quebec promised to spend \$380 million, unilaterally, on regional development projects throughout the province, Andre's press secretary, Jodi Redmond, said.

This agreement provides "a perfect opportunity to support the Wakefield steam train," but it must be financed entirely by Quebec.

"It's been a year, and we haven't seen any of that (\$380 million) yet," Redmond noted. Of that total, \$100 million is earmarked for the central region, to which the Outaouais belongs.

The steam train would use a 27-kilometre stretch of rail between Hull and Wakefield, closed by CP Rail in 1986.

A petition from local municipalities, school boards, businesses and organizations is also being circulated, Trent said. Several have already signed, including the municipalities of Hull, La Peche and West Hull.

15/07/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Train trips a blast (of steam) from the past

Steam locomotive No. 1201 will haul six vintage passenger cars this year on nostalgic rides through eastern Ontario.

The Bytown Railway Society Inc. is planning two day-long excursions. The first, on Aug. 5, will take passengers to Maxville for the Glengarry Highland Games and then on to Hawkesbury, returning to Ottawa that evening.

The second trip, on Oct. 1, is timed to allow for viewing of fall colors on the trees lining CN's mainline to Pembroke.

Both excursions begin and end at the National Museum of Science and Technology on St. Laurent Boulevard.

"One of the things is to show the young generation what train rides are all about," said Leslie Goodwin, the society's director.

It is the second year the volunteer, non-profit organization will offer the trips. Last year, more than 700 people boarded the trains.

Each passenger car will carry about 70 people for a total of 400 on each excursion.

Goodwin said the society has just bought two old commuter cars from Canadian National for 115,000. They hope to have at least one of them ready for the excursions. The oldest is a Canadian Northern car from 1919.

Each round trip will cost \$55 per person. Cheaper rates are available for those not wanting to ride the entire circuit.

Anyone interested can either send cheque or money order to Bytown Railway Society Inc., P.O. Box 141 Station A, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 8V1, or call the museum at 991-9044.

15/07/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Beachburg

Train trips a blast (of steam) from the past

See Alexandria sub. same date

24/07/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Alexandria

Carlsbad Springs

An off-duty Gloucester firefighter was killed Sunday afternoon when his pickup truck was hit by a train near Carlsbad Springs. It was one of eight weekend fatalities in the area.

Larry Cashman, 31, of Carlsbad Springs, was taking a day off, said Marcel Budd, his platoon chief and friend.

Cashman, who was married with two young sons, had been with the Gloucester department for about three years, said Budd.

"It's pretty quiet around here today. He was well-liked by everybody. He was a good natured lad."

Cashman was southbound on Sand Road, three kilometres east of Carlsbad Springs, when his vehicle was struck by a VIA Rail passenger train, said Rockland OPP Sgt. Garry Latendresse.

Cashman, who was visiting friends in the area, was alone in the truck, said Latendresse.

There are no warning lights or gates at the level crossing, said Latendresse. It is marked by two signs.

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATED

Firefighter's death prompts review of railway crossings.

Police and National Transportation Agency officials are investigating the safety of a railway crossing where an off-duty Gloucester firefighter was killed.

Larry Cashman, 31, of Carlsbad Springs, died Sunday when his pick-up truck was hit by a VIA Rail passenger train heading west across Sand Road in Cumberland Township, about three kilometres east of his home.

Cashman is one of 10 people who have been killed in Ontario in railway-crossing accidents since July 12.

"He slowed down and applied the breaks and skidded . . . onto the railway tracks," said Const. Craig McCormick, of Ontario Provincial Police in Rockland..

"At that point, he had no time. He was struck by the VIA Rail passenger train. It hit the driver's side."

An autopsy performed Monday found Cashman died instantly.

National Transportation Agency officials must now decide whether to make recommendations to Transport Canada about the safety of the crossing. Although the train involved in Sunday's accident belongs to VIA, and CN is responsible for maintaining the tracks, Transport Canada is responsible for determining the safety features installed at crossings.

"(The Sand Road crossing) is called an unprotected cross road," said agency spokesman Pascal Barrette. "That means there are no red lights flashing or bells."

Crossings like the one at Sand Road are usually identified only by signs because they are not used frequently, said Colin Churcher, director-general of Transport's Canada railway safety branch.

Because installing bells and lights at a rail crossing costs about \$100,000, not every crossing in Canada is so equipped. Sometimes investigations find that trees need to be cut or rocks blasted to increase visibility.

"We like to get there before an accident happens," said Churcher.

"But frankly, one of the problems we face is that people tend to risk it (beating the train)."

National Transportation Agency officials say they haven't found anything to which to link the sudden rash of fatal railway-crossing accidents.

"Part of our job is to determine if this is truly random or if there is a link," said Garry McLaughlin, director of investigations. "To date I haven't found a link."

McLaughlin says crossing accidents in Ontario are actually lower this year than in the previous five years. However, fatalities are up because accidents have tended to involve more people at one time.

Across Canada in 1980 there were 826 railway-crossing accidents, involving 83 fatalities and, in 1988, 502 accidents, involving 58 fatalities.

In Ontario, there were 103 crossing accidents between Jan. 1 and July 21, 1985. Between the same dates this year, there have been 67 accidents.

Transportation agency officials won't release their report on Sunday's accident until after they've received the coroner's report and analysed an "event recorder," which records data such as the speed the train was travelling and when brakes were applied.

Maureen Cashman said Monday her husband, who had worked at the Gloucester fire department five years, was on his way to a friend's house across the tracks when the accident occurred.

"He was going to get some plans for our new house," said Cashman. "Our sons (Kyle, 3, and Brad, 2) were waiting for him . . . They idolized him.."

26/07/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria**Carlsbad Springs*

## Safety problems unlikely

An off-duty Gloucester firefighter who died when his truck collided with a VIA Rail passenger train was probably being inattentive, police said Tuesday.

Ontario Provincial Police in Rockland said there appear to be no safety problems at the railway crossing where Larry Cashman, 31, of Carlsbad Springs, died Sunday.

Cashman was travelling along Sand Road, three kilometres east of his home, when his vehicle was struck at the crossing. Because the crossing is not used a great deal, it is marked by signs instead of flashing lights or bells.

"We think it's just a lack of attention on the driver's part," said Const. Craig McCormick. "There is no indication to tell us something outside would have caused the accident."

However, McCormick said the case will not be closed until after the National Transportation Agency completes its investigation of the safety at the crossing.

Agency spokesman Garry McLaughlin said his report should be ready within a month.

02/08/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Lachute**Montebello*

STATION RELOCATED: CP's unique log station at Montebello, Quebec, has been relocated 300 metres onto a new foundation in the heart of the village on Notre Dame Street for use as a year-round tourist-history interpretation centre and boutique.

The 33 metre long by 12.6 metre wide station was built in 1931 from logs to complement the nearby hexagonal Log Chateau, now the Chateau Montebello. For many years the station served well-to-do tourists, big name politicians and businessmen on their way to the exclusive and private Seigniori Club, which operated out of the Log Chateau. The station last received passengers on November 14, 1981, when VIA RDC-1 6102 made the last passenger run over the Lachute Subdivision.

03/08/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria**Carlsbad Springs*

## Cooling units eyed as links in car

Sound could drown out oncoming trains

Investigators believe loud auto air conditioners may have been a factor in the railway-crossing death of a Gloucester man and 14 similar fatalities in July.

Garry McLaughlin said the 1987 pickup truck driven by Gloucester firefighter Larry Cashman had air conditioning and he was driving with his windows up when killed by a train near his Carlsbad Springs home July 23. The temperature that day was 31.5 degrees

But McLaughlin, of the National Transportation Agency, said he does not have all investigation reports yet and cannot say how many of the other vehicles had air conditioning.

"If there is a possible common factor, it is that it was abnormally hot," he said.

"It's common sense that when you drive with your windows up and an air conditioner and radio on, you increase the risk" of not hearing a train's whistle or bell at crossings equipped with them.

The little-used crossing at which Cashman was killed, like most other fatal accident sites last month, was unprotected. It did not have a ringing bell or flashing lights. Motorists are warned of an approaching train by the engine's whistle.

McLaughlin said drivers should slow down and open a window when approaching any unprotected level crossing.

No. 1201 on time for steam fans

While 20,000 Scots and Scots-for-a-day crowded the Maxville fairgrounds, 50 steam-train fanatics waited patiently at the Maxville station for CPR locomotive No. 1201.

The engine is the last of its type made in Canada. Now owned by the National Museum of Science and Technology, it's the only steam train in Ontario to travel on main lines.

A man in a striped engineer's cap waiting on the platform had known No. 1201 longer than anybody. Gilles Chevrier grew up next to the tracks in St. Lazare, Quebec and watched 1201 go by every day.

He became CP station agent in his home town. But the age of steam ended, and in 1960 CP started dismantling hundreds of steam locomotives. "No one (in the Montreal shops) wanted to touch No. 1201, and the foreman kept saying, 'Make it the last one,'" said Chevrier, who had been transferred to Montreal, where he still works for CP. "I was so afraid it was going to go I didn't want any news. One day one of the boys came in and said, 'No. 1201 is saved' (by the National Museum). I almost fainted. I was pinching myself. For two minutes I couldn't talk."

The steam whistle was heard down the track, and No. 1201 pulled into Maxville station on its way to Hawkesbury. A team of Ottawa steam fanatics piled out and started greasing most of the engine's 112 fittings. They organized the excursion under the name of the Bytown Railway Society.

09/08/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Hull Electric**Ottawa*

Picture this: Ottawa's old railway tunnel to house new museum of photography

The long, skinny, former railway tunnel may not be a conventional venue for a museum. But it happens to offer just what the curators of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography need.

Right now, it's a cavernous, crumbling edifice with caged windows, rusted support beams and disintegrating walls six-feet thick.

But when construction beside the west wall of the Chateau Laurier Hotel is complete, the new museum's offices facing the Rideau canal will be ablaze with natural light from enormous arched windows.

And rooms full of sensitive photographic paper will be tucked against a wall of the hotel, away from the sun's damaging rays.

Sometime this month, the National Capital Commission, which owns the tunnel, will issue a permit for demolition and by late fall construction should be under way.

Until the area was closed off in May, the tunnel's roof was used to access the parking garage of the Chateau Laurier. Part of the project includes plans to build a two-level terrace in its place to ease access to Major's Hill Park.

If the current target date of December 1990 is met, the \$11.3-million museum will open in the winter or spring of 1991.

"It's a very exciting time for us," said Martha Langford, chief curator of the photography museum. "We've been working on this move in one form or another since 1981."

The photography museum's works are currently displayed between 65 and 100 times a year. But those exhibitions are always on the road because the museum's location at Tunney's Pasture doesn't provide gallery space.

Langford says when the new home has been settled, fresh exhibitions will reach the museum monthly.

The railway tunnel was built in 1912 by Canadian architects Ross and MacFarlane so that train passengers could disembark and walk into the Chateau Laurier without going outside.

But the structure fell out of use when the old train station across from the hotel now the federal Conference Centre was closed, says project manager Michael Calvert.

He says the NCC acquired the property in the early 1980s.

"It's the perfect location for a museum. And the NCC didn't want the area to be used for commercial purposes, so we're delighted with the tenants."

So far, he said, the photography museum has leased the property for 49 years.

The project will be paid for primarily by the NCC, with the National Gallery of Canada, the photography museum's parent organization, and the Canadian Parks Service also helping out.

Calvert describes the museum as having several main zones including a state-of-the-art gallery with movable partitions.

But Calvert says the entry pavilion, a bright, inviting glass area on Wellington Street, will entice tourists more than anything else.

While most of the structure will be modelled after the old railway tunnel, he said, the pavilion will stand in stark contrast.

15/08/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Beachburg*

VIA AND TRANSPORT 2000 DERIDE PLAN TO ABANDON LINE:

A total of \$68 million has been approved to construct a 1.6-kilometre section of Ottawa's bus transitway between Riverside Hospital and Billings Bridge. Of that amount, some \$20 million will be required to relocate a portion of CN's Beachburg Subdivision, which hosts 10 VIA trains a day (four Toronto trains and the 'Canadian' each way).

The Citizens for Ottawa Planning, a group of Alta Vista residents, has advocated that the costs can be trimmed by \$18 million if the line were abandoned and the trains routed through Walkley Yard and through the east-end industrial area to enter Ottawa Station from the east end, thus rendering Ottawa Station stub-ended.

A VIA Rail spokesman said the group's proposal would undermine VIA's schedules. "Our right-of-way now provides the best possible route between Ottawa and Toronto, and it's the best possible option for any future Ottawa-Toronto service."

A Transport 2000 spokesman indicated that if the plan was ever seriously considered, it would end up costing taxpayers a lot more than \$18 million.

12/09/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria**Ottawa New*

Hangin' up the hat

Paul Poirier removes luggage from a Montreal train on his last day as a redcap. As part of its budget cuts, VIA Rail is replacing Ottawa's five redcaps today with two station attendants wearing caps of grey.

22/09/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Lachute**Hull*

Driver survives car-train crash

A Hull man escaped injury Wednesday when a Canadian Pacific freight train demolished his car.

Jocelyn Galipeau, 26, of St. Joseph Boulevard, was hit while crossing the train tracks on Montclair Boulevard at 10:10 a.m., Hull police said. Galipeau told police he stopped at the tracks when he saw the flashing lights warning not to cross. But because he couldn't see the train, even though he could hear it, he tried to make it across the tracks.

Galipeau spotted the train at the last second, he said, but wasn't able to clear the tracks. The train slammed into the rear of the car.

Train fan takes last journey on No. 1201

PERTH - For all his life, Waldo Arbuthnot admired the steam locomotive known as No. 1201.

On Sunday the retired science teacher died of a heart attack during a long-awaited trip on an excursion train pulled by the locomotive.

Arbuthnot, 80, died after the vintage train arrived at the Canadian National station in Pembroke from Ottawa.

His daughter, Fran Alexander of Perth, said her father loved the 1201 and often recalled the old steam engine puffing its way past the family dairy farm near Perth where he farmed from 1946 until 1955, when he took up teaching.

His love of trains continued after he retired in 1973, and eventually became a hobby. He did not own model trains but read extensively about steam engines and locomotives.

But his favorite was the 1201, the train he never forgot even after it was taken off the rails and displayed at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa.

Arbuthnot, known as "Arby" to his friends, sometimes went to see the train at the museum, but always hoped to ride it again. He was thrilled when his daughter Norma Sager of North Vancouver came for a visit and rode with him to see the autumn leaves last Sunday.

And he was overjoyed when the train stopped at Norway Bay, allowing him to revisit the area where he courted his wife Vera Rivington before their marriage in 1932.

A funeral service is scheduled for today at the chapel of Blair and Son Funeral Home, Perth, followed by a private burial at Bearbrook Cemetery.

08/11/1989 *Pembroke Observer**Chalk River**Pembroke*

RAIL MUSEUM FOR PEMBROKE WATERFRONT: Approval in principle has been given by Pembroke city council to establish a rail museum along the city's waterfront. Consisting of a baggage car, dining car and observation, as well as one locomotive, the display would be located near the Council for the Champlain Waterway tourist office at the city's Centenary Park.

According to Zolo Demeter of the Rail Road Heritage Association of Pembroke, the display would be a major tourist draw in addition to enhancing the waterfront in the vicinity of Canadian Pacific's Chalk River Subdivision which hugs the west shore of the Ottawa River as it passes through Pembroke.

During the next phase of the project, contacts will be made as to the availability of suitable equipment for display.

12/11/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Prescott**Kemptville*

Hunter fired shot in vain effort to warn teen of approaching train.

A 14-year-old hunter killed by a train near Kemptville fell asleep on the railway tracks, said his brother Saturday.

Christopher Birch was struck and killed instantly Friday when the freight train rounded a curve masked by trees.

Hunters with Birch told his Oxford Mills family the teenager appeared to have fallen asleep while sitting on the tracks. He was waiting for others to flush the deer out of the woods.

Police blame the 11 a.m. death on inattentiveness and loud winds that muffled the sound of the train. They wouldn't comment on whether he fell asleep because he was tired from hunting early that sunny morning.

One hunter first saw Birch sitting on the tracks but, when he looked over after hearing the train, he was lying down, said Birch's brother, Robert.

"They think maybe he did fall asleep," said Robert. "He sat down and dozed without realizing it."

Robert said one hunter fired off a round in the air to wake him.

"The train came around before they knew it," he said. "He couldn't move (in time)."

The Grade 8 student had skipped school to join his father and other hunters in trying to shoot a deer before the season ended Saturday.

It was Birch's first time in an organized hunt, said his brother, and the athletic, good-spirited teenager was very excited.

"He loved hunting," said Robert, 27. "He'd been wanting to do this for the last couple of years."

A strong wind was blowing Friday and Birch was at a particularly noisy spot where the wind was swirling around, said Const. Dale Kinnear of the Ontario Provincial Police's Kemptville detachment.

Also, he could have been inattentive to the familiar sound of the CP Rail train because he grew up near train tracks, Kinnear added.

Birch's brother agrees and calls it a "freak" accident that has horrified his parents. Members of the hunting group told him it was difficult to hear each other because of the wind, he said.

Kinnear said no charges are to be laid and he is satisfied there was no negligence on the part of CP Rail.

20/11/1989 *The Star**Alexandria*

Former Gloucester football star Keith MacIsaac tackled the most important game of his life Nov. 18 in a collision with a speeding passenger train in Vars.

The 27-year-old Gloucester man was travelling southbound alone on Rockdale Road at John Street and Division Street at 10 a.m. on Saturday morning when he saw railway crossing lights flashing. He hit the brakes, slid on the wet snow and black ice and veered into a ditch before slamming into the side of the train.

The front of MacIsaac's 1987 Chevrolet sedan was sheared in half at the dashboard, reported Rockland OPP Const. Brad Hampson.

"It's a miracle he survived, thank God he as wearing his seatbelt," said Hampson.

MacIsaac suffered a severe head cut resulting in 40 stitches, torn knee ligaments, abdominal injuries and a chest bruise from the lifesaving seatbelt. He underwent surgery on his left knee later that night.

"I have never seen a car more damaged," declared Denis Desjardins, owner of Capital-Cumberland Towing.

"We brought the jaws of life but as it turned out we didn't need them," said Captain Sam Dagg of the Cumberland Fire Department. The driver was dragged a couple of hundred feet with the rear section of the car.

"The roof was off, and all we had to do was cut his seatbelt," Dagg explained.

Sophie Prudhomme, 11 and Josee Landry, 10 were cross country skiing 40 feet from the tracks when they heard the crash.

"We heard a boom and saw what we thought were two cars parked by the tracks. My father ran out and realized it was one car split in two," Josee said. "I was scared." Aime Prudhomme, Sophie's father called the 911 emergency number.

Claude Bertrand, owner of Vars Restaurant, also heard the crash and ran out to see what had happened.

"Blood was pouring from a cut on (MacIsaac's) head," said Bertrand who described the scene. Pieces from the wreckage were scattered over a 300-foot area, and several hundred feet from the crash site lay a tireless wheel rim shredded as thin as the foil in cigarette pack. Bertrand said.

MacIsaac's father, Arthur, spoke briefly to The Star from his Gloucester home Nov. 18 before hurrying back to Ottawa General Hospital to see his son.

"The car was cut in half - I don't know what happened, but I guess the old fellow upstairs was looking out for him," said MacIsaac who believes his son owes his life to both his seatbelt and his good physical condition.

Non railway items omitted

"Keith was alert last night (Nov. 18) and the cuts on his face and hands are healing. He's got a sore lower back and his left knee is banged up, but in a year's time he should be back to the way he was," he said.

Responding to Saturday's train accident proved painful for some Cumberland firefighters.

Several remembered the July 23 train accident that claimed the life of Gloucester fireman Lawrence Cashman. Cashman was hit by a passenger train on an unlit crossing on Sand Road in rural Vars. The 31-year-old husband and father of two was killed instantly. A couple of last Saturday's firemen were Cashman's friends.

Both train collisions happened only a couple of concessions apart on the same line of track at Vars.

23/11/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Lachute

Gatineau

Woman struck by train

A Quebec woman was seriously injured Wednesday morning after she was struck by a freight train.

Gatineau police said the woman was walking down Greber Boulevard at about 11 a.m. and did not notice the bells and flashing lights at the crossing as the train approached.

Micheline Savard, 23, of Gatineau, was in critical condition this morning, but was not in danger of dying, police said. The woman was conscious and talking after the accident.

She was taken to the Gatineau Hospital Centre by ambulance. Savard suffered bruises and injuries to her hip and back.

Canadian Pacific Railway spokesman Mike Spenard said the railway has investigated the accident.

The train, which was made up on only one locomotive, one empty freight car and a caboose, was travelling west at about 70 kilometres per hour. Spenard said the engineer applied the brakes, but couldn't avoid striking the woman, who was standing about arms-length from the tracks. Savard was walking south on Greber Boulevard, which crosses the tracks near Maloney Boulevard.

Spenard said Canadian Pacific officials checked the level crossing after the accident and found that the bell and lights were working.

Witnesses said the woman either couldn't hear the bell or was ignoring it, said Spenard.

30/11/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Carleton Place

Ashton

Truck-train collision

Frank Somerville, 43, of Lanark, was killed Wednesday afternoon when the truck he was driving hit the side of a VIA train about 15 kilometres west of Ottawa. Passenger David

McIntyre, 19, of Lanark, was in satisfactory condition at Queensway-Carleton Hospital. Police said the truck failed to stop at a level crossing on Ashton Station Road.

05/12/1989

Le Droit

Maniwaki

Wakefield

MAYOR SINKS GATINEAU TOURIST TRAIN OPERATION:

True to his word, (Branchline, December 1989) Jean-Pierre Brunette, newly elected mayor of the Gatineau Valley municipality of La Peche (Wakefield) has vowed to end his community's involvement in attempts to turn the remaining portion of the former CP Rail Maniwaki Subdivision into a steam tourist train operation.

At a council meeting in early December, Brunette spoke against the train project saying "I have categorically said no to the train. We should spend the money on roads. I don't believe in the train."

His stance was supported by Councillor Robert Bussiere who stated that "The Wakefield tourist train project is finished. We don't want the train. It will never be viable nor have economic impacts such as job creation."

Tourist train operation to Wakefield ended on September 1, 1985.

15/12/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Chalk River

Almonte

Three seniors die as train smashes into car

ALMONTE Three Ottawa residents were killed and another was seriously injured late Thursday when a CP Rail freight train slammed into their car at a level crossing here.

Dead are: Archie Burnett, 75, of Kes-ler Avenue; his wife, Muriel, 80; and Isabella Lyons, 76, of Hutton Avenue. Lyons' husband, Hendry, 73, is in stable condition at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute in the Civic Hospital, where he underwent surgery early today.

Firefighters from the Almonte-Ramsay Volunteer Fire Department had to cut off the roof of the car to remove the victims.

The accident occurred at 10:36 p.m. as the car was northbound on Bridge Street in downtown Almonte. The train smashed the vehicle into the post used for a trackside signal light, said Deputy Fire Chief Art Brown.

A member of the train's crew told Brown the car was stopped "right on the tracks."

But provincial police in Almonte are still trying to determine how the accident happened.

"Whether it (the car) was stopped on the tracks, or going through, we don't know yet," OPP Sgt. Gilles Labrie said today. One witness to the crash told police the car appeared to be travelling over the crossing when the train struck.

Labrie said the car, driven by Archie Burnett, carried handicapped licence plates, but said it's not known yet if Burnett was disabled and whether that contributed to the accident. Labrie said one of the women was wearing leg braces.

Brown said it took firefighters about 10 minutes to remove the four people.

The crossing has no barriers, but Brown said red warning lights were flashing when he arrived on the scene.

A spokesman for CP Rail said the eastbound train was headed to Smiths Falls from western Canada. It was one of at least six trains that pass through the crossing daily. The line was reopened to train traffic about two hours after the crash.

16/12/1989

Ottawa Citizen

Carleton Place

Save tracks for commuter trains: mayor

Carleton Place Mayor Melba Barker is trying prevent the railways from ripping up two rail lines they plan to abandon Jan. 15.

She hopes the lines will someday be used for commuter trains.

Canadian Pacific's line between Nepean and Carleton Place and Canadian National's line between Nepean and Arnprior are to be abandoned.

"It's a very real concern to all of us that we're going to see the possibility for the future destroyed," said Barker. She thinks that in another decade the growing population of Carleton Place will be able to support a railway.

But if the tracks are ripped up "the land would likely be sold, and that would be it."

Carleton Place Council has endorsed a report released this week by a group of commuter rail advocates from Kanata, Carleton Place, Ramsay Twp. and other west-end communities that urges the province to intervene to save the tracks on both lines.

It also asks the ministry of transport to study the possibility of commuter trains similar to the GO system in Toronto.

Carleton Place is now asking Kanata, Almonte, Perth, Smiths Falls, Arnprior, and the townships of Ramsay, Beckwith, Goulbourn, and Drummond, to support the commuter train idea.

All except Kanata have given preliminary support to the idea, Barker said.

Kanata Council voted against the idea in November when 50 residents whose houses back on the railway tracks protested the trains would be noisy. Kanata Aid. Judy Hunter, once the prime mover behind the commuter rail idea, dropped out of the group promoting it after the 50 residents complained she wasn't representing them.

Barker said all responses to the Carleton Place appeal will be forwarded to Ontario Transport Minister Bill Wrye, who has established an intermunicipal committee to study future prospects for abandoned rail lines in the province.

Gary Rice, of Ramsay Twp., who helped draft the report endorsed by Carleton Place, said ministry officials invited the commuter rail promoters to submit their ideas.

But they warned him commuter travel was a regional government responsibility, and Ottawa-Carleton is served by the transitway.

The report proposes that commuter trains be linked to the transitway.

Train crash cause still unclear

An Ottawa man who survived when a freight train slammed into a car underwent surgery Friday.

Hendry Lyons, 73, is now reported in serious condition at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute at the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

Lyons's wife Isabella, 76, was killed when a CP Rail freight train slammed into a car at a level crossing in downtown Almonte late Thursday. Also killed were the driver, Archie Burnett, 75, of Nepean and his wife, Muriel, 80.

"Whether it (the car) was stopped on the tracks, or going through, we don't know yet," OPP Sgt. Gilles Labrie said Friday. One witness to the crash told police the car appeared to be travelling over the crossing when the train struck, while another said it has stopped.

The Lyons's son, Norman, said the two couples had been at a Shriners meeting. He said it isn't likely the car stalled on the tracks because the vehicle was regularly maintained.

21/12/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Merrickville*

Rail crossing gets the gates

A CP Rail train crossing' near Merrickville will gain an automated light and bell warning System, gates and motion sensors.- A \$119,200 federal grant will pay for the installation at the rural crossing at McCrea Road in Montague Twp. Lou Porter, from the railway safety division in Toronto, said the work is part of a project by Transport Canada to upgrade railway safety standards across Canada. The crossing, which "is used by 23 trains and 123 vehicles a day, has been accident-free since 1980.

29/12/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Carleton Place**Ashton*

Driver survives train crash

For a split second Thursday, Todd Sterritt didn't think he would live to see 1990.

As his car slid towards a westbound VIA Rail train, the 19-year-old Almonte man didn't think he had a prayer.

His small car hit the moving train but Sterritt walked away from the collision. He was treated at Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital for minor cuts.

"It's amazing he wasn't killed or seriously injured," said Const. Neil Fennell of the Ontario Provincial Police in Perth.

Sterritt said he was going to get gas for his snowmobile when the collision occurred at about 1 p.m.

"You can't see the crossing because of bushes. When I got around the bushes, it was too late. I heard the horn of the train, hit the brakes and slid right into it.

"I guess I was meant to see the new year," Sterritt said.

A month ago, Frank Somerville of Lanark was killed at the same unprotected level crossing, on Ashton Station Road, 15 kilometres west of Ottawa.

30/12/1989 *Ottawa Citizen**Carleton Place**Ashton*

Crash survivor blames brush for obstructing view of railway tracks

Todd Sterritt, 19, who walked away from his demolished car after it struck a VIA Rail train Thursday, says brush impeding a driver's view of the tracks should be cut to prevent a similar mishap.

Sterritt said he didn't see the train nor hear a whistle as it crossed the Ashton Station Road "until it was too late. I hit the brakes and I rammed the train."

The Almonte man was at home Friday nursing his cuts and bruises and thanking his stars he's alive to talk about the mishap. His car, a subcompact, is beyond repair.

Sterritt attributed his walking away from the scene of the wreckage to wearing his seatbelt.

Only a month ago, the driver of a truck was killed at the same junction.

Police said Friday that they still haven't been able to talk to a passenger who was injured in that crash.

Ontario Provincial Police in Perth, who investigated both accidents, said there has been no move to have the brush cut down.