

Locomotive engineer completes final "run"

MUSS LAKE — After 42 years service with the C.N.R., Dalton Draper, South Lake Road, Musselman's Lake, has retired. He completed his last "run" on the beautiful Northlander, July 6. Dalton and wife Olive have spent the last 30 summers at this popular resort centre. During the "off season" they reside in Toronto.

Every bit the build of a locomotive engineer, Dalton admits he shed a

few tears on making his final trip. Engineering was his life.

Born at Lucan, Ont., and raised at Cookstown, Dalton was in the trucking business when he learned that a

"truck" operator was needed at Barrie. Not until he applied for the job did he realize it was a hand-operated "truck" for hauling freight. From there, he graduated to a C.N.R. fireman and later, after 3 1/2

years in the army, to a freight engineer.

From 1958, he handled the Northlander, a three-car passenger train between Toronto and North Bay.

What about the so-called romantic era of steam and the switch-over to diesel power? Dalton was asked.

"No comparison," he replied, "you don't operate a diesel, it operates itself."

While modest concerning the responsibility involved, Dalton's first to admit to hazards involved.

"Fog's the worst," he says. At speeds of 70 miles per hour (maximum), it takes at

least a mile to stop. There are other problems too like leaves on the rails or a light rain. These can cause slippage.

During all these years, Dalton was never involved in a collision with another train. Sure, he hit an occasional cow or maybe a deer, but nothing he considered serious. Further, he was never late on the job.

Back in 1945, a fireman on a C.N.R. freight was making about \$60 a week. "Today, they make more on a single trip than I did in a month, forty years ago."

Regardless, Dalton liked the feeling of being his own boss.

On completing his last "run", he was presented with an engraved plaque containing a golden spike. He displays it proudly along with other photos and railroad souvenirs.

Dalton feels he can adjust to retirement. He skates, curls, plays a little golf and cross-country skis. These activities should keep him occupied all year round. But should time hang a little heavy on his hands, he can always re-live the past with a Toronto-to-North Bay trip on the Northlander.

Says Dalton: "You can take the engineer out of the train but you'll can't take the train out of the engineer."



Twenty-five years on Northlander

After 42 years with the C.N.R., Dalton Draper, a summer resident on South Lake Road, Musselman's Lake, has retired. He completed his final trip at the controls of the beautiful Northlander, July 6. An enthusiastic sportsman, Dal-

ton plans to get in a little golf during the summer; skate, curl and cross-country ski during the winter. He and wife Olive have been cottage residents at the Lake, 30 years.

Anxious to return home 'Miss my dog'

By GREG COATES

UNIONVILLE — Although still confined to hospital, Unionville's Stephen Schmucker is in good spirits and anxious to return home.

Following a near fatal accident at the intersection of Hwy. 7 and Oakcrest Avenue, Stephen, 23, is recovering from surgery during which a plate and pin were placed in his hip.

The Unionville man, blind since age four, was hit by an eastbound vehicle, July 14, as he crossed Hwy. 7 with his seeing-eye dog, "Josh."

Stephen credits the 80-pound German Shepherd with saving his life. The dog died at the scene while he suffered a fractured hip and facial lacerations.

In a recent interview at his room in Scarborough Centenary Hospital, Stephen said that, despite his injuries, the most difficult task will be attempting to erase the memory of his dog from his mind.

"We were matched perfectly; he was stubborn and so was I," said Stephen. "I couldn't have asked for a better dog. If it wasn't for Josh, I probably wouldn't be here today."

Stephen received Josh from Guiding Eyes, a training school in New York City, only 10 months ago. And although he's not certain, he says he will likely get another.

"A lot will depend on how I come out of therapy, and recover from the loss of Josh," he said. "I don't think it will really hit me until I arrive home and start moving around again."

As for the accident itself, Stephen can't remember a thing.

"I don't know what happened," he said. "Maybe I was just getting too sure of myself—a little too cocky; I don't know."

Stephen had been crossing the intersection (Hwy. 7 and Oakcrest Avenue) to catch a Markham Transit bus to work every morning for the past three weeks. He recently started as a computer programmer at Centennial College.

And despite the accident, Stephen says he'll probably continue to cross there.

"I don't know anyone else who crosses there that walks to the lights, so why should I? It's out of the way," he said. "It's bad enough getting up at 5:30 a.m. and travelling 1 1/2 hours to work."

He hopes the accident will prompt the installation of traffic lights. Markham council has requested lights for the intersection three times, but has been rejected by the Ministry of Transportation.

Admitting he's fortunate to have escaped with just a broken hip and a few scratches, Stephen said he doesn't expect the accident to slow him down.

"I asked the surgeon how bad my hip was and he said, 'don't ask, I couldn't count the pieces.' I was lucky, but I've never let it (blindness) slow me down before and I don't intend to now."

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