4th of July Already?
Wine Train Successful
Are you Password Savy?
Gritty Palace Return Trip
Weinermobile Returns
First Responder Day
Is it the 4th of July already?

Thank You to the St Paul Police Officers and Firefighter!

The St Paul Police Officers and Firefighters were invited to JSR to show our gratitude for all the magnificent work they do. Our guests enjoyed the museum and the caboose ride. Senator Amy Klobuchar was invited to speak to our guests and on the day of the event she had to cancel due to scheduling conflicts. Although the senator’s cancelation was disappointing, John Vessler, the Senator’s husband showed up and saved the day. He read a letter on behalf of the Senator expressing her support for our first responders. John spent a fair amount of time touring the museum and enjoyed the experience. It was a pleasure to meet John and we are grateful for his visit to the Museum.

Steam Program

There are many wonderful things happening at MTM. On June 9th at JSR there was a town hall type meeting to discuss the restoration of Northern Pacific steam locomotives 2156 and 328. Kurt Mahr, Bob Ball and Dave Hartgie lead the discussion with about forty members attending. At the end of the night a show of hands suggested a significant support for the restoration of both locomotives. While there were concerns about funding and volunteers being taken away from the needs of MTM, this was addressed by a promise that funding would only be used the steam program that is raised specifically for this project (the current finance committee will be diligent with oversight) and many of the volunteers were interested in steam are not currently involved in other projects at MTM. At the end of the night the consensus was to proceed with exploring the logistics of a cosmetic restoration of the 2156 and the 328. They are also doing a feasibility study on the possibility of an operational restoration of the 328. If you are interested in supporting the steam program at MTM, please contact Kurt.

The Palace

The Gritty Palace will be on her way home to St Paul. After numerous calls and emails with all the people involved, the “Gritty” will be moved by freight rail to Spencer, NC, then to Charlotte, NC where Amtrak will take over. Then from Charlotte to Chicago, stopping to pick up the passengers to ride the final stretch of the trip to St Paul, MN. Somewhat like the winners of the golden ticket and Chocolate factory, the passengers will enjoy the once in a lifetime experience of riding in beautiful
executive railroad car with friends, gourmet food prepared by Warren Plaisance, friendly conversation, and impressive views. The “Gritty” will return to St. Paul on July 18th if all goes as planned. Thank you to Bob Puelston, Warren Plaisance, Bob Willet, Steve Sandburg and for making this event possible and all that donated to this wonderful event! MTM is grateful for your generosity.

The siding

MTM was recently the recipient of a very generous donation to pay for the much-needed repair the siding at Marine on St Croix. Over 500 ties were replaced. This makes this siding the nicest stretch on the line. Thank You to the donor!

The Sprinkler

We accepted payment on the insurance claim for bay A with MTM’s insurance company. This money will be used responsibly to fund our liabilities and operating cost as the money to repair bay A came from our operations budget.

The Wine

This season we have started running wine tasting trains. Six events were arranged with three different wineries. All six are sold out. The first one on June 11th with Dancing Dragonfly Winery and the second one with Fowler Chateau Winery on June 25th were both a remarkable success. I had the pleasure of serving wine to our guests and they were enjoying the experience. We are currently planning to add more this season.

Lawn Mower

Toro Corporation recently donated a 42” riding mower to MTM. It will definitely make short work out of mowing the lawn. Thank you, Toro, for your generosity and this well needed lawn mower!

Pullman Porter

The Twin Tracks (Pullman Porter) Prototype Exhibit has been completed and is on display at JSR. This exhibit has been in the works for several years. It tells the story of the Pullman Porter and the Red Caps that served the railroad at St Paul Union Depot. It is an excellent addition to the museum. Come by the museum and check it out!

The second half

Just like in football, the second half is when it really gets exciting! This year is shaping up to be a good year for MTM with the Wisconsin tourism grant kicking in we will start seeing the tv ads again and the phone will be ringing off the hook. I have barely touched the surface in these paragraphs of all the things that are happening at JSR and OSCVR. You may have already received a letter from Scott Hippert and me about donating to MTM. I make the same request that I did when I rode the wine train last week. If you enjoyed the experience that you had today and you believe in what we do at MTM please give what you can afford! I believe I can speak for Scott when I say that we are grateful for your support, financial or otherwise. The amount of work that is done by our volunteers at MTM is outstanding. THANK YOU!

Wayne Merchant, MTM Board Chair
That’s one fine looking siding!

Your editor visited some of our volunteers at Osceola last week. Every conversation started out with, “have you seen the upgraded passing track at Marine?” Well no I hadn’t but I was sure going to check it out.

Never having been to the site from the ground, I had several false starts trying to find it from my truck. Finally I did find it and was I ever impressed! At least 500 new ties were installed. The track was raised with the laying down of new gravel and the roadbed leveled out.

The project was fully funded through the very generous contribution of an anonymous donor.
Dear Members,

AMTRAK has confirmed the move of the Gritty Palace from Chicago to Saint Paul. If all goes according to plan, it will depart Chicago on Monday, July 18th at 3:00PM and arrive at St. Paul Union Depot at about 11:00PM. Only a very few tickets are still available to MTM members for this once in a lifetime experience on the Gritty Palace. We are requesting a donation of $1000 per person to help cover the cost of moving the Gritty from NC to MN. A first-class dinner and cocktails will be served enroute.

Those traveling will be responsible for their own lodging, expenses and travel to Chicago. While AMTRAK has confirmed our dates, please understand that things can happen along a rail line and sometimes there are delays.

If you have an interest in riding the Gritty Palace from Chicago to Minneapolis, and enjoying a gourmet dinner with cocktails and wine, please let me know ASAP. Any seats still remaining will be offered to the general public. My email is scott@trainride.org.

Thank you.

Scott
Sunday June 26th was St. Paul First Responders Day. Jackson Street Roundhouse was buzzing with volunteer help around the museum to help welcome our special visitors. A planned visit by Senator Klobuchar was anticipated with a few remarks during the event. Unfortunately her schedule had to be changed due to other demands of her time that day. Her husband, John Bessler attended however and presented her prepared remarks. The letter he read is provided on the next page. All activities such as caboose rides, simulator, G Scalers, shop tours, blacksmith shop, and other exhibits were operating. The Dick Mullen Trio serenaded our guest. Thank you volunteers!

Wayne Merchant, John Bessler, Mari Pew, Scott Hippert, Joe Henderson at the first responders day event.
June 26, 2022

Minnesota Transportation Museum
193 Pennsylvania Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55130

Dear Friends:

Thank you for the invitation to join you for today’s St. Paul First Responders Appreciation Day. I want to take this opportunity to thank Board Chair Wayne Merchant, Executive Director Scott Hippert, and the Minnesota Transportation Museum for hosting this event to honor and thank the men and women who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe.

To our first responders, I express my sincere gratitude for the dangerous, difficult, and life-saving work you do. As health care heroes, those providing essential services, and those who pledged to “protect and serve,” we look to you during some of our scariest moments. As St. Paul’s first responders, you bravely answer the call – doing whatever it takes and making countless sacrifices.

Honoring those who put others before themselves has always been a priority for me in the senate. I have worked hard to secure funding for local police departments, to keep our firefighters safe on the job, and to improve our 911 infrastructure so that our first responders have the best tools possible to carry out their crucial work. But it’s not just first responders who serve. The families who sacrifice and support you deserve recognition, we are so grateful for them.

Enjoy your time at the museum! I know so many of us have great memories of family days and school field trips here, taking in all of the incredible locomotives on display. Thank you again to the Minnesota Transportation Museum for opening their doors today, and to all the first responders and their families, I am proud to serve you in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator
Anderson Windows 3110 is back up and running!

A lot of thanks go out to the volunteers that spend time getting the switcher back in operating condition. It will help to give the NP 105 a chance for some needed attention and continue our caboose rides without interruption.

Wine Train Photos

The Wine Trains were discussed earlier in this Semaphore. Here are some photos from on board.

Weinermobile Returns

Chateau St. Croix Winery with James, Scott, and Jim.

Oscar Mayer Weinermobile stops in to Jackson Street Roundhouse Wednesday June 29th. It was a great promotion that helped us boost mid-week attendance to over 150. A special treat was the operating handcar.
Through the Gateway

Volume 30 Issue 1    Summer 2022

- Tom Acheson

Introduction

Northeast of St. Paul there is a recreation trail that is built on an old rail bed. It runs from near downtown St. Paul and terminates north of Stillwater at Pine Point park. This is the Gateway Trail. Part way up the trail, there is a branch, off to the east, that terminates in downtown Stillwater. That section of trail is Brown’s Creek Trail. Collectively, this entire trail is known as the Gateway Brown’s Creek Trail. There is a volunteer organization, The Gateway Brown’s Creek Trail Association, that issues a frequent newsletter, organizes volunteer projects to improve the trail and announces special events to be held on the trail. The DNR owns the property and does the heavy maintenance on the trail. Users of the trail include bikers, runners, walkers, dog walkers and roller bladers.

The following article appeared in a recent GBCTA newsletter.

In 2009 my wife Mary bought a nice two-seat bike and we used it on the Gateway the years 2009-2012. We departed from the 55th street lot and went up to Pine Point and back. She eventually lost interest in riding so I bought an individual bike and have used the trail every year since 2012. In recent years the rides have been 23 to 25-miles each time. And as I’m moving along, and I’m sure I’m not alone on this, my brain starts to wander. And three items always seem to make their way into those brain wanderings…..

1. The rail tie remains of a platform or structure on the east side of the trail, about 80-yards south of Duluth Junction,

2. The large elevated “hills” parallel to the trail in several areas of the trail between Jamaca and Pine Point

3. And lastly Lake Masterman.

Prior to digging into this, at the suggestion of the Minnesota Transportation Museum, I acquired a copy of the book, Rails to the North; A Minnesota Railroad Atlas, by Richard S. Prosser, printed in 1970. It has 283 pages filled with the history of the many railroads that once populated our state. 1862 was the start of railroads in Minnesota. This includes Minnesota being ranked 6th of all states in route miles (9,114) in 1920. Then in 1960 the decline in rail traffic began, with passenger use seeing the largest decline. Personal automobiles and air travel were main contributors to the decline.

The Gateway portion of the trail is built on the old rail bed that at one time was The Soo Line. The original name of the Soo railroad was Minneapolis St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad, according to a 1951 map that I have. A 1967 map that I have, shows this same route as the Soo Line. With the MSRSSM being the mouthful that it was, the name was changed to the more easily spoken and remembered Soo Line.

If you look at a satellite map today, you can see how the rail line went NE from Pine Point, straightened out to go east, pass through Arcola and cross the St. Croix River over the Arcola...
High Bridge. After that it is difficult to connect the dots to see if it continues up to Dresser Junction.

The Brown’s Creek trail segment was the old rail bed of the Northern Pacific, based on the same 1951 map. It came from the White Bear Lake area and terminated in Stillwater.

The 1967 map shows that same route as the Burlington Northern. It began in 1867 as a route from St. Paul to Stillwater. In 1871 a section was routed from St. Anthony to White Bear Lake under the Mpls. & Duluth Railway, eventually sold to the Northern Pacific. Looking a bit farther south on the map shows the BN rail route coming north from the St. Paul area, with a branch routing over the north end of White Bear Lake, looping slightly south and turning east, to head for Stillwater, passing over Lake Masterman.

Today there is a seldom used rail line that parallels highway 61, passing on the east side of Bald Eagle Lake and continuing to just south of Hugo where it terminates. This may have been a continuation of the line, after the branching off of the line that headed for Duluth Junction, running from St. Paul to Wyoming, continuing later to eventually make its way to Duluth, under the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad Co.

One detail of the NP route as it approaches Duluth Junction that is interesting is the land bridge over a narrow stretch of land on the south end of Lake Masterman. As you go over the highway 96 bridge on the Gateway and look south west, that body of water is Lake Masterman. The lake is straight west of Duluth Junction. You can’t see the lake from DJ but it is there. Many times, as I passed through that area on the bike, I thought it would be interesting to get off the bike and walk west, looking for that narrow strip of land over the lake and see if there are any remnants of the rail bed or even abandoned rails on that land. But that is private property today, so I elected not to risk it. In the spring or in the fall after all of the leaves and ground cover have given-up, might be the best time to go exploring.

And those high “banks” on each side of the trail in various locations of the trail’s route. Are they natural? Probably not, as the ridges or banks are too parallel to the trail or earlier railbed. My guess is that they are formed from the earth that was plowed or pushed to the side as the rail bed was constructed. Some sources say that railroad tracks cannot exceed an incline of more than a 2% grade. In a one-mile span, that is approximately a maximum rise of 106-feet. So the rail route could not just run over existing hills or occasional rises, those obstructions had to be modified to accommodate the rail line. After reading the Steven Ambrose book on the building of the first transcontinental railroad, where he paints a detailed picture of the actual construction work involved in building a railroad, I can imagine similar efforts being applied to our local trackage. It had to be interesting to witness in 1870.

Think about the actual railroad route of the Gateway Trail. In some cases, it was where our trail is. But as you make your way down the trail, there are some abrupt ups, downs, short quick tight turns, etc. The rail bed did not traverse those extenuations. More likely, in some situations, the rail bed ran where the parallel horse trail is today.
Back to Duluth Junction and those “platform” remnants……lots of questions…what was it? Just an elevated passenger or freight platform? A foundation for a switch gear assembly? Was it enclosed or covered at one time? Who used it? Talking with the Minnesota Transportation Museum, I learned that at one time there was commuter service in the area. Who were the commuters? Prosser’s book refers to transit and interurban lines, which, today, we might call them commuter routes. Did they take the train from Stillwater or White Bear and get dropped off @ Duluth Junction and catch a train to the Twin Cities? Or maybe catch a train to points north including Dresser Junction, WI and on to Superior, WI, from the platform where they waited? Or vice versa?

Odd that Duluth Junction is not mentioned in the Prosser book but my own maps identify it. Worth noting is the oldest map in the book that on page 187 is a rail line routed from St. Paul to Duluth, which was constructed by the end of 1870, meaning the GWT is on one of the oldest rail beds in Minnesota. That’s only +152-years!

Looking down the road, it would be interesting to remove all of the saplings and ground cover that surround the platform today, replace the broken ties, fill the elevated surface with gravel, construct a gravel path from the Duluth Junction kiosk and place one of those historic site plaques next to the platform, with some historic notes and dates about the platform.

Today’s trail users do not have the memory of seeing the many sprawling networks of railways in yesterday’s Minnesota. But we are the beneficiaries of access to a small remnant of a couple abandoned rail routes. We can’t see the railroad tracks but we can imagine them.

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Fun facts about Gateway and Brown’s Creek trails

Railroads first came to Minnesota in 1862
Minnesota was 6th of all states in route miles in 1920
The Gateway is built on the old Soo Line rail bed
The rail line went from Pine Point across the Arcola High Bridge on its way to Dresser Junction
Brown’s Creek was built on the Northern Pacific line.
Platform remnants that once helped passengers board can still be seen at Duluth Junction

Interested in more? Email gbctanewsletter@gmail.com and you will be connected with Tom. Thanks Tom!
Good Passwords

By John Radimecky, MTM Interim IT Manager

Several MTM employees and volunteers have recently asked for an article about what makes a good password. This article is about just that, and is the first half of a two part series on how to use and keep track of good passwords to keep your online accounts safer.

What makes a good password?

There’s two main categories of passwords for the purpose of this article. Ones you can remember and ones you don’t even try to remember.

Passwords one can remember

The current best-practice for good passwords is to use a phrase, also called a passphrase. For example:

- MyDoggo!WasNamedAfterAPopeyeCharacter
- USORRule710IsAllAboutNoise(.
- In1880,ICrashedForAttemptedTrainRobbery.

This can combine lowercase letters, Uppercase letters, numbers, and punctuation. The best passphrases will include them all and be 20, 30, or more characters long. Pick a phrase that is unique to you, something your best friend couldn’t possibly guess. Note how the first example doesn't include the actual pet’s name, but a reference to what it could be. In the second example, a specific USOR rule is mentioned but it doesn’t quote the actual rule (which could be looked up); instead it’s the author's interpretation of it that is harder to guess. Make it something hard to guess but easy to remember. The third example is just humorous fiction but it’s weird enough that it might help to remember it.

Now you might say, “hold on, I was told never to use a word you can find in the dictionary?” As a single word, that's still true. The thing is, single words just aren't complex enough but an entire phrase is.
Another trick is to use a phrase but use the first letter of each word, for example “coming up with a good phrase is sometimes hard!” becomes cuw/apish! With a substitution of “w/” for “with.” Now the abbreviated phrase might look more complex but it’s actually much shorter than the entire passphrase we first covered. Below we’ll explore more on why a longer password is more important than a shorter one and, although it’s fundamentally a math concept, we won’t go into the gory details. Promise.

Passwords too complex to remember

Great passwords are basically random gibberish passwords with no two passwords alike. What’s great about them is that they aren’t connected to anything about you - names, family, pets, phone numbers. Ex-girlfriend/boyfriend names. clothing sizes. addresses. etc. - There’s nothing guessable at all.

Examples:

- Mm^xc21zaGl0rB#5%r25
- 086xMpm$mh5f
- 0Krv%RqU0E7i81K48D@yKxY2!qiInss

Basically they are near-perfect passwords - but they are nearly impossible to remember by themselves! For now you might want to keep a list of passwords in a desk drawer, but there is a better way. Enter the password manager, which we’ll cover in the next article. Now let’s think about the opposite concept - a bad password.

What makes a password bad?

Two things make passwords bad, in general. Making it easy to guess or making it easy to crack. Let’s explore each one and explain a little more.
Easy to guess

Well this one is pretty obvious, if someone can guess your password then they can take over that account. Passwords that include 123, abc, xyz, or some similar trick are so common that if someone knows or can guess the rest of your password then it only takes a few tries to add those well known combinations. If that happens, you're scrambling to get that money back from your online account and change your passwords in a hurry.

Information about yourself or your family is relatively easy for people to find online. Don't use your phone numbers or addresses, current or old, as they are far too easy for people to find. Don't use the names of children or pets. Simply put, try not to use anything that people might know about you.

Be wary of online quizzes that are asking you personal things like, "Where did you go to high school?" When the data is collected from all of the unsuspecting people, it can be combined into lists of account validation answers. You know, those questions that try to prove that you really are you to your bank or other account? If someone can guess those answers then that's as good as having your password.

Other, older wisdom is now considered out of date too, like using a “slmp13 5ub5t1tut10n” like i=1, e=3, s=5, and so forth. This doesn't really make your passwords any harder to guess or to crack, as we'll talk about a bit. It pretty much just makes the password harder for you to read.

Easy to Crack or Brute-Force
Computers are really fast. They can do what humans can do mathematically in a tiny fraction of the time. This works for guessing passwords too.

Why would anyone do this? Imagine you were an attacker determined to guess one particular person’s password, maybe because they have access to cameras, security, or the IT infrastructure of a Museum and you wanted to cause trouble. As an attacker, you might start by trying a, then b, and so on through the lower case then upper case alphabet, then numbers, and even punctuation. Move on to trying two character combinations, then 3 characters, and so on until eventually you guess the password. It would take you forever but given enough time you would eventually guess it. When computers do this it’s called a brute force password attack or “cracking” the password.

Remember how computers are blazingly fast? They can crack simple passwords by brute force attacks in hours to days. So what can you do to help protect yourself? Have long passwords making the computers take months to years to crack the password. Adding just one character makes it more work for the computer to guess the password. Adding, say, 3 characters makes it exponentially harder. If you are unfamiliar with what that means, it isn't just harder, it will be much harder. Add 8 characters instead of 3 and it becomes much much much much much much much much much much much much much much much much much harder. Want a really good password? Try the paraphrase idea in the beginning of this article and aim for 20-30 characters if you need to remember it, or use random characters if you store the password somewhere safe.

**Next time**

Look for part 2 of this series to learn what using a Password Manager means and how it can help you remember all those passwords, always have them available, help you pick great passwords, and warn you about bad ones. Password Managers help you manage the complexity of keeping your online accounts safer.
Coming Down the Track

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OSCVR: We get rave reviews!
Wayne Merchant, Chair
Kurt Mayre, Vice-Chair
Bob Puelston, Secretary
Deb Wood, Treasurer
Mari Pew, At Large
Gordon Barr
Scott Johnson
Morten Jorgensen
Lane Littrell
Barb Loida
Martin Masters
Todd McGonagle
Larry Paulson

The following are the 2022 committee chair assignments:
Museum membership and volunteer development – Wayne Merchant
Equipment Maintenance – Kurt Mahre
Education & Training – Bob Puelston
Finance - Deb Wood
Buildings and Grounds – Gary Yazell
Collections and Restorations – Todd McGonagle
Volunteer Coordinator - Mari Pew