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See page 3
We need your help!**



Semaphore



Minnesota Transportation Museum • Vol. 10 No. 4 • April 2023



SCOTT'S PERSPECTIVE

HOME STRETCH LEGISLATIVE SHOUT OUT

CREW TRAINING UPDATE

GE 45 TON SHOP SWITCHER COMES HOME

BUNNY EXPRESS AND THE WEINERMOBILE ARE BACK

BYLAWS OVERHAUL DISCUSSION

TWIN TRACKS BACKGROUND ARTICLE

MINNESOTA TRANSFER HISTORY



Minnesota Transportation Museum Corporate Office
193 Pennsylvania Ave E
St. Paul, MN 55130-4319
651-291-0074

Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway
PO Box 176
114 Depot Road
Osceola, WI 54020
651-291-0074

Jackson Street Roundhouse
193 Pennsylvania Ave E
St. Paul, MN 55130-4319
651-228-0263
Barb@TrainRide.org

Minnehaha Depot
Minnehaha Depot c/o MTM
193 Pennsylvania Ave E
St. Paul, MN 55130-4319
651-228-0263

Newsletter Editor
Warren Plaisance
warren@trainride.org

Osceola & St Croix Valley Railway
is a division of Minnesota
Transportation Museum.

Visiting information

Wednesday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Admission \$7 to \$11.

Saturday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Admission \$9 to \$15

Saturday activities feature 20 minute train rides which is included in the admission fee

On the cover: The former American Can Company factory in the Midway District celebrates the history of the Minnesota Transfer Railway Company. Editor Warren found an old article on it's history in an old Railroad Magazine at Jax.

Scott's Perspective

PROUD: That is the best word to describe my feelings about MTM this month. On April 11th we dedicated our new Twin Tracks exhibit to honor the work of African American railway workers in the early 20th Century. It was an amazing day with elected leaders, members of the community, and many of you taking part in the event. I am proud that MTM is one of the first railway museums to recognize the work of the porters, red caps, cooks, and others who contributed so much to railroad history. I am proud of you for your support of this project, and I am proud that so many other groups have asked to borrow the exhibit for their events. My thanks to all MTM members who made April 11th so significant.

I am also proud of each MTM member and friend who has taken time to contact our elected state officials to encourage lawmakers to support the request for public funding to help restore and preserve the Jackson Street Roundhouse. The potential appropriation continues to work its way through the legislative process, and the next couple of weeks are of key importance. We will need to continue building momentum.

There is so much more that makes me proud of MTM. This is an amazing organization that contributes so much to our mission, to the community, and to each other.

Thank you!

- Scott



Another Legislative Shout-Out Needed



MTM's funding request to the Minnesota Legislature for critical repairs, including a new roof, at the Jackson Street Roundhouse continues to build momentum at the State Capitol. Several bills are floating through multiple committees, and the legislative session will soon end. Legislators need to hear from you in the next couple of weeks if this is going to happen.

PLEASE contact your legislators, and members of the committees listed below. A short email asking them to support funding to save the Jackson Street Roundhouse in Saint Paul is what is needed. Let them know that the Roundhouse is a community asset, open to the public, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and holds much of the developmental history of Saint Paul. Public funding is critical to save this important landmark.

The web addresses listed below will help you make important connections:



Your Legislators:

<https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>

House Capital Investment Committee:

<https://www.house.mn.gov/Committees/members/93002>

House Legacy Finance Committee:

<https://www.house.mn.gov/Committees/members/93019>

Senate Capital Investment Committee:

https://www.senate.mn/committees/committee_bio.html?cmte_id=1002

Senate Legacy Finance Committee:

https://www.senate.mn/committees/committee_bio.html?cmte_id=3094

Governor Tim Walz:

<https://mn.gov/governor/contact/>

Migration Coming – Your Help Needed

The annual excursion of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway train from Saint Paul to Osceola will take place in a few weeks. That means we need to get all the equipment maintenance wrapped up and the cars cleaned and loaded. Please plan to spend extra time at Jackson Street over the next few weeks. Your help will make a huge difference.



Osceola Depot Preparation Day Saturday May 6

Set aside Saturday May 6 from 9 AM to 3 PM to help prepare the Osceola Depot for the season. Meet at the depot ready to help with:

- 1) Get signs, equipment and tools out of storage
- 2) Sweep the depot and platform
- 3) Set up chains, signs, waste baskets, etc.
- 4) Check the fence, lights, etc.
- 5) Prepare the office and waiting room for the season
- 6) Clean and stock the supply room.
- 7) Check, clean and supply the bathrooms
- 7) Anything else the depot needs.

We expect the ferry move later on May 16. We want the depot ready for the move. New staff will be hired and they will need the depot ready for the crowds. We will also prepare the concession storage and supply rooms.

There are many things to take from storage in the freight room. Bring gloves, brooms, rakes and any other tool that could be used inside and out.

Noel Petit
612 968 7827

Marketing Committee needs you!

MTM Marketing Committee will meet in person on Weds. April 12th at 6:30 at the Jackson Street Roundhouse. If you are interested in joining the committee please come. We are interested in your ideas and could use your help.

Barb Loida
barbloida@gmail.com

JSR is looking for “Sprucer Uppers”

I will be looking for people interested in working the grounds this spring, the jobs include general cleanup, planting, weeding, tree trimming and more. At this time I only have a couple of volunteers helping with the grounds. My plans are to plant more wildflowers in the island of the parking lot in moveable planters. We hope your son is going to be okay!

Garry Yazell
yazel001@umn.edu

Proposal Approved at Annual Meeting

The chairman of the board had proposed reducing the lower limit of board members from 9 to 7 and the upper limit to from 15 to 17. This is in part due to our current reduction of members on the board and lack of incoming new members. The increase of the maximum allows the board to expand. The voting results were in favor of the proposal by over a 3 to 1 margin.

Board Chair Wayne Merchant

Update from the Crew Training Crew

New crew class

The crew training team has been busy this year transitioning to new teachers and new students this 2023 winter and spring. Our new or returning students have all passed their written examinations and will have their hands-on class in April. Congratulations to John Peters, Asa Wilcox, Jeremy Carl, and Jason Banick! Tell them good job when you see them.

Teacher Craig Lofgren presented most of the material and tried a new approach, focusing on what brakemen will encounter. Then we had conversations about how the rules and safe practices determine what we need to do as volunteer crew members. It worked out well.

USOR cards

The new USOR cards for all crew who passed re-qualification by Mar. 24 will be available in person this Saturday 4/1 from 2pm to 4pm at JSR. I'll either be at the gift shop or in the main business office. Saturday April 8 I'll be in the same locations, but 10am-noon, with any more crew cards of those who re-qualified through April 2 or so. After that, the USOR cards will be available for pick-up in the JSR yard office, on the table.

Non-crew training class for rail safety

We will hold a class for all volunteers and staff on April 22, 3:30pm to 5pm in the JSR training room. It will also be shared online and recorded. We're aiming to teach docents, station masters, passenger attendants, mechanical and shop area folks, managers or team leads, cashiers, etc. Basically everyone that's not a qualified crew member may attend. We will teach safety around tracks and equipment, what to watch and listen for (even what to smell for), why blue flags are critically important, hand signals, and other select topics that are good for all of us to know in our working environments.

Then we will discuss first aid and AED usage, which could help the injured or save lives. Though the class is for non-crew, it will be taught primarily by the crew training team because it covers much of the same materials - with no exam! Ward Gilkerson will teach the rail operations side and Eric Kallas will teach the medical safety side.

PLEASE send your rsvp if you will attend and how you will participate (in person or online) via email to crewtraining@trainride.org. We need your rsvp so we have enough handouts or to give you access to the online meeting.

FYI this class will cover different material from another class being planned about industrial safety around the shop and yard areas by Eric Hopp. Both classes are recommended for shop & mechanical area volunteers and staff. Basically if you set foot in the yard or bays A, B, or C you should attend both classes.

Fall operational recap

This fall the crew training team will hold a crew-oriented class that counts toward required FRA training for crew. It will likely occur at the Roundhouse after the fall migration train. Volunteers and staff, as you go through the year of rail operations at both Osceola and Jackson Street, make note of any moments where there were potential issues of safety, lack of crew resource management/team cohesion, or other "teaching moments" we could address. Send those observations to... you guessed it, crewtraining@trainride.org.

Thanks to all of you: volunteers, members, and staff.

--

John Radimecky
MTM Director of Training Department-Rail Operations,
MTM Director of IT,
& MTM Board Member
<http://www.trainride.org>



where clearances were tight. Although intended as switchers, they sometimes served mainline duties, although nearly all had an imposed speed limit of 20 mph (32 km/h) due to the double reduction gearing of their traction motors.

- March 30, 2023

Moving equipment around the rail yard will be a bit more predictable thanks to the arrival of a GE 45-ton switching locomotive on March 30th. Our thanks to Progressive Rail for donating this work-horse to MTM. It will allow the tired General Ben to finally get some rest.

Bldr Number: 31000

Batch/Order Nos.: 281-4526

Bldr Dates: 5/1951

From Wikipedia -

Equipment

The locomotive was equipped with two 150 hp (110 kW) Cummins diesel engines, each driving a GE 1503 generator which, in turn, drove one of the two GE 733 traction motors, one per truck. In early models, the second axle on each truck was driven with side rods. Later models had chain drives inside the trucks that served the same purpose.

A traditional train air brake was optional, but all came with two compressors (one per engine) and a straight-air independent (locomotive) brake. The cabs were spacious for the size of :man's seats were raised almost two feet on platforms (under which was the brake equipment, if applicable), to provide better visibility during switching.

Uses

The GE 45-ton was extremely versatile and many variants existed. It has a high weight to power ratio and has excellent traction, rated to be able to pull 20 loaded freight cars on level track. They were built with a short wheelbase for use in industrial plants, yards, and other places



The Bunny Express is back on April 8th!

Bunnies and Wieners at MTM

Saturday special events continue at the Jackson Street Roundhouse this month. The Bunny Express returns on April 8th. The Easter Bunny will be on board to entertain our passengers and to serve up some punch and cookies. On April 29th, the Wienermobile makes a visit to Jackson Street Roundhouse and Deb's Hotdogs will be serving up lunch in the museum.

We expect good attendance at both of these events, and we will need more docents and other volunteers to make the day successful. Please plan to be at Jackson Street on April 8 and 29 to lend a hand.



20 Minute Train Rides | Railroad History | Storytelling | Hands on Experiences
Free bunny snacks on the train

Hop on the
Bunny Express

Saturday, April 8th
10:00-4:00

Regular admission

Jackson Street Roundhouse
193 Pennsylvania Ave. E. | Saint Paul, MN 55130
trainride.org

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

The poster features a pink background with a large image of speckled Easter eggs on the left. On the right, there is a photo of the Easter Bunny mascot wearing a blue vest and a yellow bow tie. Below the bunny photo is a small image of a train. The Minnesota Transportation Museum logo is in the bottom left corner.



Hot Dog!

On the 29th of April the Wienermobile will return to Jackson Street Roundhouse for the third year in a row.



The Wienermobile is back!

Ride our caboose
Have a hot dog!

Saturday, April 29th
Jackson Street Roundhouse
193 Pennsylvania Ave. East
Saint Paul, MN 55130
trainride.org

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

The poster features a yellow background with a large photo of the Wienermobile, a yellow and orange hot dog-shaped car, parked in front of a brick building. The Minnesota Transportation Museum logo is in the bottom left corner.

Why the Museum needs new bylaws!

To all of the members of the Minnesota Transportation:

The bylaws committee, with the guidance of Jessica Birken, an attorney and the owner of Birken Law Office a firm designed to help nonprofits, has reviewed, revised and approved the new bylaws proposal for MTM. The final version would give the board the ability to bring in upstanding members of the community. These members would have knowledge, experience and resources that would allow MTM to thrive and flourish. Knowledge and Experience to keep MTM on our current path of growth and success. Resources to provide MTM the tools, materials and the funding to adhere to our mission to restore, preserve and educate the great history of railroading in Minnesota.

I strongly believe this is the best path for the Minnesota Transportation to secure our future as a nationally renowned historic museum and railroad excursion.

On Thursday, May 4th at 6:30 PM at the Jackson Steet Roundhouse, Jess Birken will explain the benefits of this type of board structure and answer questions. This is the first of several meetings to discuss the new bylaws.

Below is an introduction to Jessica Birken, her bio and an email from Jess explaining why we should adopt these new bylaws. I hope to see everyone there!

Thank you

Wayne Merchant
Board Chair

Hi, I'm Jess Birken.

I am the owner of Birken Law Office, I help nonprofits solve problems so they can quit worrying and get back to what matters most – The Work. I'm not like most attorneys, I actually have an outgoing personality, and – like you – I like to think outside the box. Most of my clients are passionate and have an entrepreneurial spirit. I'm like that too. My goal is to help you crush it when it comes to achieving your mission. Getting bogged down in the minutia sucks the joy out of the important work. My clients want to do the work – not the paperwork.

My Credentials

- BA, Sociology, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (2001)
- JD, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Magna Cum Laude (2007)
- MA, Nonprofit Management, Hamline University (2010)
- Certified Transformative Mediator

My Biography

I am the former CEO & Managing Partner at Urban Birken PLLC, a boutique firm that specialized in serving the nonprofit community. I have worked with nonprofit organizations for most of my career.

Before becoming a private practice attorney, I spent four years inside a national nonprofit organization, I worked my way through law school and had the beginnings of a promising career in criminal law after graduation. However, I quickly realized that going to court is depressing! In court, the toothpaste is out of the tube and you're just trying to clean up the mess. My colleagues reassured me I'd become callous and get used to the grim reality. But I thought that sounded like a terrible personal outcome and decided I needed to change course. I really missed the

nonprofit sector. As a result, I went back to grad school and earned a Masters in Non-profit Management. I rejoined the nonprofit sector through my work with Pheasants Forever where my role was a marriage of attorney work and federal grant management and administration.

Since that time, I have run my own firms. I'm now the owner of Birken Law Office a firm designed to help nonprofits.

My Family

I have two daughters, who are the light of my life. (Well sometimes they can act like little scamps but mostly they are awesome!) We live outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, near their dad who is amazing and a great friend.

In my free time, I enjoy pretending to be a foodie, science fiction, films, dance music, running and spending time with great friends.

The Following email is from Jess Birken, Attorney.

Wayne, Scott,

Thank you for your time today on the phone, I wanted to provide some written guidance after our call so you can share my advice with the group at your meeting tonight.

Why the Museum needs new bylaws:

As you know, I've recommended the organization get new bylaws. The reasons for that are fairly clear:

1. The current bylaws are old, contain internal inconsistencies, and are difficult to follow
2. The current bylaws are structured in a way that allow bad actors to disregard nonprofit best practices and control the organization for their own ends.

A good set of bylaws limits, on the other hand:

1. Limits the role of the executive committee to prevent a few from having undue control over community assets
2. Creates enough high-level policies about segregation of duties, and management, etc. that a toxic board is not allowed to flourish.

The problems the museum has been going through stem in large part from having bylaws that are legally compliant but still pretty terrible.

The other thing we discussed today is the need for the group to decide what form the bylaws will take – as I explained, my recommendation is to transition away from having voting members and change our governance to a non-voting member structure.

Why we should shift away from a voting member structure:

1. It is very strange for a museum to have a voting member structure. Voting membership organizations are usually groups like trade associations, neighborhood associations and church congregations. These organizations serve a very small and specific population – the Minnesota Association of Heating and Cooling Contractors; the Hale Page Diamond Lake Neighborhood Association; a Lutheran Church congregation. In these groups it makes sense that the board is elected from the relatively closed pool of people being served by the nonprofit. These nonprofits lead a community, lead a spiritual community or advocate for trades changes to codes, etc. It makes sense that this closed population would elect board members and have legal standing.

2. Most museums, art institutions, theaters, zoos etc. are also membership-based organizations, but they are non-voting members. If I join the Minnesota Zoo or the Children's Museum, I get to go to the museum as much as I want that year, maybe a discount at the gift shop, maybe being invited to special member event days. I do not get to vote on who's on the board or bring a lawsuit against the organization. Why? Because these groups serve the general public. Museums serve every Minnesotan and any tourist who comes to our facility. We don't serve a closed group, we don't advocate for the group or lead a group, we truly are a public charity.
3. So having a non-voting membership allows us to engage as many people as possible from far and wide, without worrying about quorums and annual meetings. We can still require that anyone that serves on our board is a dues-paying member – I'm sure there is no person on the Minnesota Zoo board who isn't a zoo member! But we don't have to have all the bureaucracy and headache that comes from voting member issues.

I recommend as you consider purchasing the bylaws project, that you also determine in your decision whether you will continue as a voting member organization or a non-voting member organization as it makes a big difference in how I draft the bylaws.

How would members be affected by this change?

On a day-to-day basis, the members won't notice the change, other than members won't elect the board. They will still enjoy all the benefits of membership and really that is the only thing that would change from a member's daily experience.

We can also still require that the board members join the organization and we can put in a process for the board to publish a call for applications so members are aware of any upcoming open seats and have the opportunity to apply for board service. And of course, most of the board recruitment will be from the pool of folks who are passionate and engaged in the mission – which is our members.

Since this change would make things so much easier to administer, it is my recommendation as counsel that we make this change. It will help resolve some of the issues we've experienced in the past, reduce drama and lead to a healthier organization.

Warmly,

–jess–

-From Minnesota Public Radio

Black railworkers were instrumental in the early 1900s. A new exhibit tells their stories



Rondo Days co-founder Marvin Anderson photographed July 9, 2013 at Union Depot in Lower-town St. Paul. Behind Anderson, on the second floor overlooking the passenger waiting room, is the Red Cap Room. Anderson advocated for the name to recognize the Red Caps, the mostly African American station porters who welcomed passengers to St. Paul for more than 78 years. Jennifer Simonson | MPR News

CATHY WURZER: Back in the day, traveling by train was elegant, a little slow, but you could see the scenery at a leisurely pace, have a little lunch or dinner in a dining car, and then perhaps retire to your own little room with a bed. The people who helped not only build the railroads but attended to the needs of passengers were Black. The Minnesota Transportation Museum is telling that story with a new exhibit opening this weekend. It's called "Twin Tracks."

As part of our North Star Journey series, Marvin Anderson joins us right now. Mr. Anderson is a curator for the exhibit. He is also co-founder of Rondo Avenue Inc, which is working to build a land bridge over I-94 in Saint Paul to link up parts of the old Rondo neighborhood.

Oh, Mr. Anderson, how have you been? It's been a long time since you and I have talked. Welcome back.

MARVIN ANDERSON: Thank you so much. It's good to be here with you again, Cathy.

CATHY WURZER: You are used to getting things done. Previously, you led the way to getting a room in the Union Depot dedicated to Pullman porters. Can you explain why the porters were so important to the railroad?

MARVIN ANDERSON: Actually, the room at the Saint Paul Union Depot was in honor of the Red Caps, the gentlemen that would take your bag when you got out of your cab, your car, or the streetcar. These were the gentlemen that cut the grass, shoveled the snow, ran the elevators, in addition to all of their-- their main job, which was to make the passengers feel comfortable, make sure they got to their train on time, make visitors who came to Saint Paul-- tell them about Saint Paul.

They were called Saint Paul's "first ambassadors." That's back at the time when the Saint Paul Union Depot would have over 200 trains a day coming through. It was a very important station in railroad history, and the Red Caps were a part of that.

CATHY WURZER: So there were Red Caps, and then were there porters?

MARVIN ANDERSON: There's Red Caps. There's Pullman porters. There's chefs. There's waiters. And there are brakemen, people who worked-- firemen who worked outside of the train. What the Twin Tracks, our exhibit here at the Minnesota Transportation Museum, is doing is hiring the Red Cap when you walk in, the Pullman porter when you take your ticket, the chef

who prepares your food, and the waiter who serves you food in the dining car. Those were predominantly African American men in the railroad for well over 130 years.

CATHY WURZER: Did you have family members who worked on the railroad?

MARVIN ANDERSON: I did. I am from a-- my grandfather was a porter under Great Northern Railroad out of Seattle, Washington. My father, who was transferred to Saint Paul with the Northern Pacific, was a waiter and a private car steward in that he would work for the president of the railroad when the president's private car was on a-- was on a trip. So, yeah, railroading is in my blood.

It goes back-- my grandfather started railroading when he was-- in the 1900s. He survived the third-worst railroad fatality crash. 95 people on the train that he was a porter died when a snow, like there's going on in the Cascade Mountains right now, an avalanche tipped over his car and another car. 95 people died and my grandfather survived that. And had not he survived, I would not be talking to you today, Cathy.

CATHY WURZER: Right. Wow. That's a heck of a story. Another story, of course, since, as you pointed out, these folks were Black men, and these were-- these were difficult jobs. Their unionization in the 1920s was a huge milestone in American history. Does the exhibit--

MARVIN ANDERSON: Absolutely.

CATHY WURZER: --go into that? I'm betting it probably does.

MARVIN ANDERSON: Yeah, absolutely. I should add there were also African American women on the trains for a number of years. They were hired to babysit. They were hair stylists. And they were there to assist the women who needed help. So they traveled the train as well. And there will be a section of the African American women who rode the train as well.

But you're absolutely right, the porters and the

waiters and the chefs in Minnesota and across the nation, they became the backbone of many communities, including Saint Paul and wherever you would have strong railroad travel. And their wages in the beginning were subpar. The railroads felt that they would get tips from their service.

The porter might get \$0.05, \$0.10 a bag. If he was lucky, he'd get a quarter. The Pullman porter would be given a tip. He would make the beds, shine shoes, attend to the needs of people who were in a sleeping car. A tip was left for the waiters in the dining car. And they would all kind of chip in and make sure that the chef got some of the tips. But until they unionized, those were sub-- they almost doubled their wages. They went from about \$45 a month in the Union fight. And then they were able to get \$80 a month, which was a big leap from there.

CATHY WURZER: Yeah, it was, but it still-- it was, again, a very difficult job. And I'm going to-- I'm going to assume there was a lot of discrimination on the job.

MARVIN ANDERSON: Oh, there was. There was discrimination, and there was an indignity as far as the porters were concerned. George Pullman, the man who actually designed and would build Pullman, these plush cars that were sleeper cars, he would hire a lot of the porters and he would lease them to a railroad. So you got the sleeper car, and you got the porter as well.

George Pullman had it in his mind that the white traveling customer would have a difficult time remembering an African American person's name. So he commanded that all porters who worked for him would be named "George." And there's a wonderful book called 10,000 Men Named George.

And that was the greatest indignity not to be able to use your name so that the customer would feel more comfortable. I don't know if that was true. But I do know that my grandfather would talk about the fact that not being able to be called your name was something that would get to his craw, as he called it.

CATHY WURZER: Mm-hmm. Does this new exhibit, by the way, include anything about the families of railroad workers because they also-- it was tough on them too?

MARVIN ANDERSON: Absolutely. Let me stress right now that this is the Reader Digest of exhibits. The Minnesota Transportation Museum has committed to expanding this exhibit. And if we don't have the female workers now, they'll be sure as the-- as this exhibit expands over the next years, you will see how it touched the families, who else was working on the railroad. It's going to be a marvelous exhibit.

But what we would like to do starting Saturday-- and then it is our hope that we can set up a direct link-- we want the descendants of people whose ancestor worked for the railroad to contact the Minnesota Transportation Museum and tell your story so that we know how working on the railroad affected them. We will have a better idea how it affected them and the role that was played by the people who were left behind, in a sense, for those five days. The standard run for a porter and a waiter and a chef was five days on the train, five days home, five days on the train, five days home.

During the time you were out on the railroad, things had to be done. And this is where this incredible experience of growing up in a community where working on the railroad was the primary job of Black Saint Paul. The railroad

people were the number one employers.

Our mothers, our aunts, our grandmothers did all of the work. They would shovel the snow if you were too small. They would hammer. They would nail. They would form auxiliary groups. They got involved in civic affairs. And they planned events for the kids to go to. They were Scout leaders, Boy Scout leaders, Girl Scout leaders.

CATHY WURZER: They did a lot, obviously.

MARVIN ANDERSON: They did a lot. It had to be done.

CATHY WURZER: I wish I had more time with you. I always appreciate our conversations. Again, this is going to open up on Saturday.

MARVIN ANDERSON: Opens up Saturday at 11:00 at the Minnesota Transportation Museum, 193 Pennsylvania Avenue East. There will be refreshments. There will be a short train ride. And there'll be a tour of the exhibit itself. So we really hope that people come and help us build this story about the African American contribution to railroading in Minnesota. It's very important, and we need help.

CATHY WURZER: All right. Thank you, Marvin Anderson.

MARVIN ANDERSON: Always my pleasure, Cathy.



Shout Out to Warren Plaisance

- Mr. Tot

- Barb Loida



While working in the basement one Wednesday we were startled by all the little voices shouting and yelling. We realized the ruckus was Warren entertaining the children at the Tots and Train event at JSR and they were having a grand time. “For me, it’s watching the reaction of the little boys and girls, their parents and grandparents as they are engaged in a story. It makes this my favorite activity. I also like introducing them to books they haven’t seen before.”

iWarren has been volunteering at MTM for 12 years. In addition to leading the Tots and Train events Warren has been the editor of MTM’s Semaphore newsletter (for 10 years), lead on board elections, and organizer of the annual meeting and many events. He was on the crew that brought the Gritty Palace back to Minnesota last year and served as chef. Ask him where all the au jus went. Warren has also been working hard on the upcoming beer tasting event.

Warren caught the train bug as a little boy. His grandparents lived across the street from the tracks in Brownton Minnesota. When a train could be heard no matter what time, there was Warren watching them go by and counting the cars.

Asked why he volunteers, “When you go into Bay C as a diesel is fired up, you smell, hear and feel the train, the history and you realize how this museum is someplace so special on earth.”



Todd McGonagle and crew progress on Rock Cars

Bob Brown did most of the work on this one. Most noteworthy is his rebuild of the vestibule to house a handicapped accessible platform. He and his crew have done a really nice job on the 2608 coach. My work on the 2604 will finish up in a couple weeks.

Gateway to the Northwest

Every Day, Seven Days a Week, 2500 Cars Roll Through the Minnesota Transfer, Serving Nine Great Roads

By Frank P. Donovan

From a May 1954 issue of Railroad Magazine

If anyone should ask you what makes the Twin Cities famous, you can tell them in three words "The Minnesota Transfer." Some twenty-five hundred rail cars roll through the Transfer every day, seven days a week; and when the heat is really on, the total climbs to thirty-five hundred.

This setup is splotted on the map of the North Star State midway between the capital, St. Paul, and the central business district of Minneapolis. Known as the "Gateway to the Northwest," it has 700 men on its payroll. No other railroad in the world with as few as thirteen miles of mainline employs so many people. The MT also boasts 150 miles of yard and industrial tracks, one of its major functions being to handle carload freight to and from the 400 industrial plants located beside its hard shining steel.

To railfaring men the country over, the MT is a classic routing point comparable to the Clearing Yard of Chicago, Enola in Pennsylvania and Potomac Yard opposite Washington D.C. These facilities are doing a great job of shuffling cars and trains - in short, moving a big chunk of the nation's freight.



Looking north from the roof of the Minnesota Transfer Railway Company's general offices on the north side of University Avenue viaduct west of Prior Avenue, St. Paul. 1925 MNHS

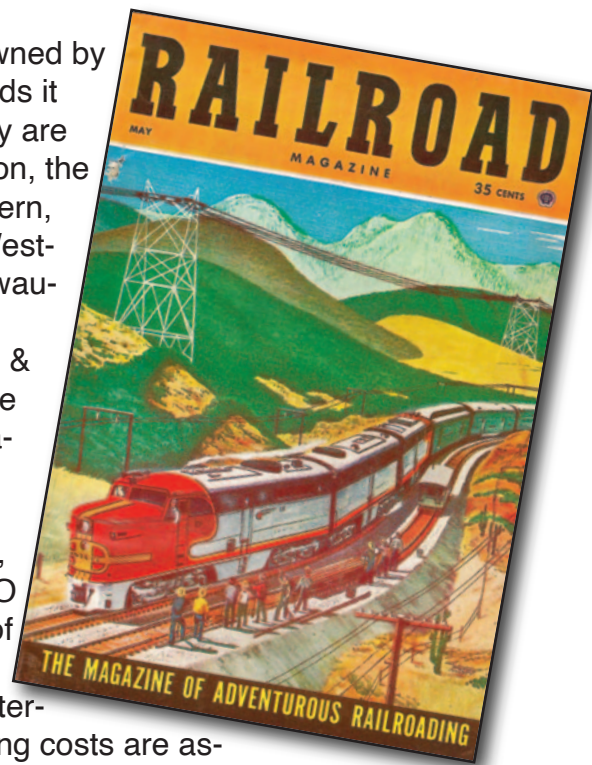
company owned by the nine roads it serves. They are the Burlington, the Great Northern, the Great Western, the Milwaukee, the Minneapolis & St. Louis, the Northern Pacific, the Omaha, the Rock Island, and the SOO Line, each of which has a one-ninth inter-

est. Operating costs are assessed among the various roads on a unit of service basis.

Crossing University Avenue, the main highway between the Twin Cities, the Transfer connects the Great Northern tracks with the Milwaukee's. Cuts of cars are continually being shifted over two railroad bridges spanning the highway. The Minnesota Transfer at work is between seven and eight a.m. You go to the Top End yard office, where Yardmaster Charlie Arland is busy dispatching trains by phone. He may be telling a switch foreman: "Hans Russ, pick up P-6 and take to Lower Yard!"

More orders follow as switchmen come and go. On both sides of the building you see moving freight cars. Charlie explains that in an hour's time eleven diesel crews leave the enginehouse within sight of the office to the south. Six of these head for the Lower Yard, about a mile to the north. Three crews are slated for C, J and P yards respectively. Others work the Wabash Avenue and Southeast industrial districts.

The ganglia of tracks in the area between the Milwaukee Road and the Big G is the heart of the Transfer. Just north of the yard office are oceans of tracks. To the right is C Yard, used primarily in receiving cars for the west. It has 27 tracks. On the left is the 13-track J Yard, where



cars for the various industries are spotted.

Between these two facilities is the hot P Yard that receives and classifies eastbound cars. This one is operated by gravity with its highest point almost opposite the main building. P-Yard now has twenty nine tracks.

You may ask: "Since C is a receiving and departure yard, how are its cars classified?"

A look down the tracks reveals the answer. C empties into a sprawled - out westbound classification facility known as the A, or Lower, Yard. The latter is run by gravity, with a yard office opposite. where cars are dropped down the lead tracks.

A is the largest yard, having 42 tracks. Finally, at the extreme north end running parallel to the Great Northern main line is another cluster of tracks - eight in all - comprising B yard. This serves as a receiving center for two railroads. And there are two more yards, the F and R; the former is for storage, the latter for repairing cars.

Every car going to or from the Minnesota Transfer Railway uses some of these facilities. Busy as the hub is, it accounts for only about two - thirds of the 35 crews who work the MT daily. The remaining crewmen are nearly equally divided between those who shunt cars to and from industries on the old Transfer and those who operate on the Belt Line.

The only difference is that Belt "snakes," or switchmen use a caboose while those on the Transfer proper do not. This indicates that Belt Line trains are the nearest thing to road operation.

In the historic Transfer are many industrial spurs serving factories, warehouses and shops. Branching to the west near the Milwaukee's main stem is the Wabash Avenue lead, which extends a few hundred feet into Minneapolis and serves such big outfits as Waldorf Paper, Weyerhaeuser Timber and International Harvester. Four crews work this lead around the clock. One of them spends nearly all its time switching cars in the Waldorf plants.



Minnesota Transfer locomotives at the roundhouse on Cleveland Avenue during an employee strike. 1950 MHS

Next, and only a block from Wabash, you see the Myrtle Avenue lead; and further north the Charles Street lead, near which is the throbbing central warehouse, with its own three-mile line of sidings and tracks, operated as a warehouse and interchanges exclusively with the Transfer. Before dieselization, the central warehouse was run by electricity with a steeple-cab locomotive having a pantograph drawing power from catenary suspended trolley wire. A 44-ton diesel is now the motive power.

The Midway district, being within easy reach of both of the Twin Cities, is a choice industrial area. The Engineering Department spends much time in planning spurs for the new plants, which sometimes entail reverse curves, crossing diamonds and minimum-clearance side of the road operation.

The Minnesota Transfer Railway crosses the Great Northern at St. Anthony Tower. All the road north of the tower - and it comprises ten route miles - is called the Belt Line. Here the trains are orthodox, with an engine at the head end and a caboose at the rear, or near - rear. Occasionally a stock car may be coupled behind the crummy.

None of the crews are concerned about Rule 99, for flagging is rarely necessary and the road's little green rulebook forbids the use of torpedoes. Train collisions exist only in the fading memory of oldtimers.

A ride up the Belt is a study in contrast. Leaving the lower yard, you cross the Great Northern's main line and a few minutes later the Northern Pacific at Park Junction. This is the interchange point for the NP and the Burlington. Farther on is the Park Junction district, with a half dozen industrial tracks.

By far the busiest part of the Belt is the East Hennepin lead in Minneapolis. Three or more round trips are made daily out Hennepin way to serve some of the great industries whose names are household words. The road also has a freight station there.



Inter-campus line showing car arriving at the St. Paul University of Minnesota campus. 1940 MHS

A thousand feet beyond the junction is the interchange point for the University of Minnesota's own trolley that serves the Farm Campus and the Agricultural College. A switch-car emblazoned with the university's crest delivers coal, grain, and fertilizer to the "ag" school.

Beyond that you find pasture land, hog farms and glassy lakes. At Rose Crossing the Belt intersects the NP's Minneapolis-White Bear branch. Long pipe lines from the Southwest have outlets here, and complete trains are often made up of tank cars originating in this area.

Still riding the Belt, you see farm land replace the oil tanks and at Bulwer Junction, the SOO Line crossing, cars are interchanged with that road. Then you come to cattle, stockyards and pens. Stockmen employed by the railway fed, water and rest the beef animals, which Federal law requires after 36 hours of travel. Although the

stockyards are located in suburban New Brighton, they have a typical Western setting and handle thousands of cattle at one time. Up to 156 stock cars may be accommodated on sidings.

Beyond the stockyards glitters the bright blue water of Long Lake. You can see the rotting platforms where harvested ice was formerly loaded into refrigerator cars. Now the job is done with manufactured ice. Near here the so-called Butcher's Spur leaves the main line to serve rendering plants about a mile away. Another spur leads to the Twin Cities Arsenal, which has its own locomotives inside closely guarded gates.

The last two miles of the Belt Line are wooded and rural. Here and there new suburban developments adjoin the right-of-way. End of track is at a large creosoting plant, where carloads of ties and poles are taken to be treated and then returned for use on many roads, including the Transfer.

The Transfer, being a joint possession of nine Class I roads, always has as its head an executive from one of them. Like a Congressman's, his term is two years, but he cannot succeed himself, for the office is rotated among the nine roads. The current president of Minnesota Transfer is John W. Devins, executive vice president and general manager of the Minneapolis & St. Louis.

Top executive "on location" is Harry P. Congdon, vice president and general manager, who as a boy greatly admired James J. Hill and worked as a messenger for the Omaha Road. Today he runs the Transfer which Hill founded.

Economy was the watchword on the Transfer; you took what you could get, made it do, and were content. For example, the MT uses more different weights of rail than does the whole M&StL. It has nine altogether. They run the gamut from slim 60-pounders on some spurs to 115 on the main line. Real ingenuity was needed to get the most out of what was handed down by the nine roads, or, on rarer occasions, purchased new.

But the old axiom, "It takes money to make money," is truer today than ever before. On the

Transfer it means a lot of modernization, most of which was done in the past three years. All-diesel operation, put in effect in 1952, has proven a substantial saving. The old twelve-track roundhouse at the south end of the railway still stands, but has been revamped for diesel servicing and is kept as clean as a Dutch kitchen. A diesel shop with a 25-ton crane takes care of heavy repairs.

Eighteen Alco diesels, of which eleven are 1,000 horsepower, five 660 h.p., and two 1,600 do all the switching. There are now two 0-6-0 steam locomotives. One of these is held for stand-by service; the other has a flanger and is used for snow clearing. The steamers are oil burners. Other rolling stock includes six cabooses, two reefers, one Jordan spreader and a work car - all restricted for on-line use.



S-4 (Alco) 105 built 1951, is one of the locomotives described in the article.

At the other end of the Transfer in the lower yard stands a rebuilt car shop, in which up-to-date machinery has cut the cost of repairs and stepped up the work. Hundreds of car parts are kept in its neat and spacious store room.

In bygone years the Great Northern and Northern Pacific would not let their freight cars go East, because they had too much difficulty in getting them back. Every load consigned for the East had to be transferred from the GN or NP to cars of other roads at Minnesota Transfer. Fifty or so five-man crews would toil at the job in long, rambling sheds. At times hundreds of cars of lumber and shingles waited to be unloaded in the over-worked and undermanned "garden."

Until 1922, the road was a depository for nearly all LCL freight destined for the Twin Cities. It would break bulk in what is now the P Yard and be transshipped into trap cars for Minneapolis and St. Paul. An odd sight was the Jumbo or 60-foot, four-door cars, which the Great Northern used to move package freight to downtown stations in the two cities. Today all the railroads in the Twin Cities work their own shipments; the amount of LCL unloaded at the Transfer is negligible.

Still another sight of yesterday were Zulu cars of immigrants bound for Montana, the Dakotas and other parts of the Northwest. Each spring, from about 1905 to 1914, as many as 100 to 400 boxcars a day would clear the Transfer with colonists from a dozen European countries.

The Story of how the road came into being is related by Hugh McCarthy, a retired Transfer superintendent. The setting was the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where he and Jim Hill were admiring Corots which Hill had loaned to the art gallery. Mutual interest in the paintings led the Empire Builder to strike up an acquaintance with the young man.

Learning that McCarthy was an M&StL yard-master at Cedar Lake, Hill recounted an experience he'd had in coming into the Great Northern's (then the Manitoba's) yard at Minneapolis. A derailment blocking his train brought home to him the congestion of that yard. Impatiently he hired a farmer to hitch up a team and drive him to a Minneapolis hotel.

Not long after that, Hill began buying land cheaply in the Midway district, then outside the city limits. He afterward sold it at cost to the Minnesota Transfer. This foresight in relieving the terminal jam has paid for itself many times over.

First president of the Transfer was Herman Haupt, who had the United States Military Railroads during the Civil War. At first the outfit was owned by only five roads; the others came in on the deal later.

High point in the MT's history was when it took

over the 14-mile Minnesota Belt Line Railway & Transfer Company. Chartered in 1889, the Belt's chief mission in life was handling livestock from Fridley to what was then the affiliated Minneapolis Stock Yards & Packing Company's plant in New Brighton.

In its heyday the Belt Line also ten passenger trains to and from the stockyards, but this service was discontinued a half a century ago. Passengers no longer wait in the red brick headquarters for the "dummy" train.

Recognizing the value of Transfer facilities, big industries began to seek trackage in the convenient Midway district. One president predicted that the Transfer would soon be crowded out of existence.

He was the last of the old school. It goes without saying that today the Minnesota Transfer is as eager to get new industries as are any of its owners whose rails blanket the Northwest.

No story of the Transfer would be complete without a mention of its left-handed locomotives. Most of the yards are crescent shaped, and the grades are located so that cars gravitate in a northward direction. This means, in gravity switching, that the engineer is on the strong side. If the engine is turned around, the tender's chafing blocks get a drubbing, and the hogger spends most of his time looking backward. Neither practice is desirable. To alleviate this dilemma Trainmaster Leavitt suggested that they try southpaw operation.

So the road acquired four left-handed Baldwin and Lima 0-8-0's, out-shopped in 1916 and 1923. Patterned on United States Railroad Administration standards, they served efficiently until modern diesels took over the job of shifting cars through the "Gateway to the Northwest."



The Minnesota Commercial is the modern day successor to the Minnesota Transfer. A future Semaphore will discuss the operations of this railroad. - Warren

Coming Events

3/24/23

4/1	1030	JSR Johnson b'day	7/5	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
	1330	JSR Parker b'day		OSCVR Thursdays Trollhaugen Adventure
4/5	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains	7/15	1030 JSR Crenshaw b'day
4/8	1000	Bunny Train	7/19	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
	1030	JSR Hardy b'day		7/20 1100 OSCV Chisago Lakes schl (tent)
	1330	JSR Gagliardi b'day	7/26	1230 JSR Stlwtr Advntr Club (40 gr K-1)
4/12	1000	JWP 11 gr 55k, 3a (tent)		
4/13	1830	MTM BoD mtg	8/2	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
4/15	1030	JSR Adaniya b'day	8/16	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
	1700	JSR Gudmastad b'day	8/30	JSR \$5 on the 5th
4/19	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		
4/22	1530	JSR all-crew training (OSCVR)	9/6	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
			9/20	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
5/3	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		9/21 1100 OSCVR Chip Valley Srs 100
5/6	1030	JSR Swanson b'day		
	5/6	0900 OSCVR clean-up	10/4	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
5/13	1030	JSR vanDyke b'day		10/5 1100 OSCVR MLTours BOX LUNCH 55
	1330	JSR Hegna b'day	10/12	1100 OSCVR MLT FLAR BOX LUNCH 55
		5/16 Migration		1100 OSCVR SLP P&R Pizza 56 seniors
5/17	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		1100 OSCVR Senior coach 55
		5/20 OSCVR Opens		10/14 1030 OSCVR grp coach 35
	5/25	1100 OSCV MaplGrv P&R BoxLunch	10/18	1030 JSR Tots 'n Trains
5/27	1000	JSR Memorial Day Observed		10/20 – 10/22 OSCVR Pumpkin Express
5/31		JSR \$5 on the 5 th		
		6/1 1100 OSCVR 7 Hills Prep 5gr, 165	11/1	1030 JSR Tots n' Trains
6/3	1030	JSR Lang b'day	11/15	1030 JSR Tots n' Trains
		6/4 1100 OSCVR Pizza starts	11/29	JSR \$5 on the 5th
6/7	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		Santa's Train Shop 12/2 – 12/17/23
	1030	AFSA 2 nd gr 25 total		
6/10	1330	Lindenfelser b'day		
6/17	1000	JSR Dads for Trains		
6/21	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		
6/22	0930	JSR Chip Valley Srs 100 (tent)		
	6/22	1100 OSCVR church group 45 (tent)		
	6/23-6/26	Barb out of town		