



Semaphore



Minnesota Transportation Museum • Vol. 10 No.6 • June 2023





Scott's Perspective



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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 GREAT NORTHERN 325.
Isn't she beautiful? Completely
refurbished. Coming soon to an
Osceola railway near you.

Stay tuned!

There are so many things that I am grateful for this month:

- 1) I want to thank each of you for the advocacy work you did to encourage legislative appropriations to support Jackson Street Roundhouse restoration and preservation. While the Legislature only appropriated a fraction of what is needed, we are told it is the beginning of a relationship that will draw more support in coming years. Your efforts got us this far, and more work will be needed over this next year. Fixing the structural problems with the roundhouse is top priority and we need public funding to make it happen. Please keep contacting your legislators over the next year, thank them for the support we received this year, but let them know that this preservation project needs to get over the finish line during their next session.
- 2) Thanks to everyone who ensured a smooth and successful start to the railway season in Osceola. The migration went smooth, the equipment is in great shape and looks fantastic, ice cream drew a record crowd to Dresser on our first weekend, and we got fantastic press coverage. Please keep spreading the word for more people to ride the train. Word of mouth is the best marketing!
- 3) I am so grateful to our volunteers who make things happen at both Jackson Street and on the railway. I know you are having fun, so please invite your family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and groups you belong to come join you in the fun. We need more volunteers and your invitation is the best way to swell our ranks. This is important for the longevity of MTM!

- 4) Speaking of longevity, I am determined to extend mine as long as possible. As such, I am taking a short sabbatical from early June through early July. I will do some work remotely to keep the fires of fundraising burning and be available to talk if needed, but routine tasks will be picked up by others. A sabbatical is for renewal of mind, body and soul and I intend to honor that. Please feel my pain as I bake on a beach most afternoons!



The gorgeously refreshed migration train begins its trek back to Osceola for the operating season.

Legislature Begins Support to MTM



The Minnesota legislative session has ended for the year and there is good but not great news to report. Of the \$3.5 million in support that MTM requested to restore and preserve the roundhouse and power plant, the Legislature appropriated \$200,000. That is split between \$100,00 for construction planning, and \$100,00 for roundhouse programming or operations.

While the level of support isn't what is needed to save the historic buildings, they are a beginning. This is the first time that MTM has been included in Appropriations. It is common for the Legislature to appropriate a modest amount in first time funding to make sure the organization manages

the funds with accountability, which of course MTM will do.

In coming weeks, MTM leadership will meet with our engineering consultants from Collaborative Design Group to determine how much we can accomplish over this next year by using the appropriated funds, promised matching funds, and contributions that have been raised over the past year. We will begin making progress!

Additional funding is possible from other sources. MTM has requested \$500,000 in "Congressionally Directed Spending." Both Senator Klobuchar and Senator Smith have included this request on their funding priority lists to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee. Everyone who cares about MTM's historic building must continue contacting Senators Klobuchar and Smith to ask that this funding request be approved.

MTM will also be making a \$500,000 grant request to the Minnesota Historical Society. Their large Legacy grant proposals are reviewed in the Fall with funding approved before the end of the year. In coming months you may be asked to advocate for this funding as well.

No one person can raise the needed funds to preserve MTM's historic properties. It takes each of us to do our part. Thank you for what you have done, and please keep up the effort!

Professional Restorations Underway

Next month we will provide an update of other restoration projects underway at Jackson Street. Thank you to the donors who are making most of these restorations possible!



Freshly painted GN 325 at the Relco facility in Albia, Iowa.

In addition to our shiny fleet that went to Osceola a couple of weeks ago, MTM has four pieces of railway equipment out for professional restorations. These include the 325 locomotive and 1096 passenger coach which are at the Relco facility in Iowa. According to the Larry Paulson, the 325 bodywork is complete, painting is nearly done, and it is looking great. The GN1096 is next on the Relco to-do-list. Both pieces of rolling stock will be coming back to Jackson Street Roundhouse in the next month or so for some final prep work, and then off to Osceola in August during a special migration.

Speaking of the August migration, the GN1215 is expected to join the trip. MTM crews have been busy installing a generator, testing out the AC, and working on the wheels. Some additional wheel work is needed and the coach will be sent to BNSF in coming weeks for the work to be done. If time allows, the 1215 will also get a paint job before the August migration.

Lastly, MTM received a GN railway post office coach, and a Milwaukee passenger coach as donations from the Minnesota Commercial Railway. Both of the coaches are undergoing full exterior restorations at a facility in Erskine, Minnesota.



Rolling Store Rebranded



For many years the 265 baggage coach has served as the rolling store and restroom car on the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway. But there has been little fanfare. In 2023 the “rolling store” has been rebranded as Mariah’s Café. Long ago the coach was given the name Mariah, after Al Hogan’s now deceased and well love dog. “It is only appropriate that Mariah’s legacy live on and enhance our passenger’s experience,” said Scott Hippert, executive director. “With creative ideas generated by Billie Rocarek, our new depot manager, we are beefing up the store,” said Scott. In addition to the usual supply of chips and soda’s, Mariah’s Café now features sandwiches, coffee, hot cocoa, and pastries.

Auditors Love Inventory Controls

Volunteers in Osceola have recently been asked to get their complementary beverages from the refrigerator in the depot storage room instead of from the coolers in the passenger waiting area or in Mariah’s Café (265 rolling store). The reason is simple: MTM has been working hard to maintain best practices in our financial accounting. Each year we are required to conduct an audit. Our auditors want to see clear accountability for our sales inventory. Keeping “for sale” and “complementary” beverages separate in our bookkeeping will help us have a good, clean audit. Please get your drinks out of the volunteer refrigerator!

Friendly Reminder

Got this today from a happy rider. Please put it in the Semaphore with a gentle reminder to all of our volunteers to be especially careful when taking pictures to not encourage taking any pictures of people on the tracks. We want to keep Operation Lifesaver happy.

- Barb



Hello,

My family and I just took the ice cream trip from Osceola to Dresser today (5/20) - and I got this photo of my 4 year old. Figured I'd share as some staff on the train were taking photos and video and thought you might enjoy this one too.

We had a great time!

Cassie Draper

That's a really big snow-bird: Vintage train makes annual migration north from St. Paul to Osceola

The annual return of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway excursion train generally occurs on a Tuesday in May.



Train enthusiasts Brian Rockholt, left, of Apple Valley, and Virginia Anderson, of Arden Hills, take videos as the Osceola and St. Croix Valley Railway's vintage train rolls under the Hamline Avenue pedestrian bridge in St. Paul on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The locomotive and cars were being moved from the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, where it's stored for the winter, back to Osceola, Wis. for the summer excursion season.

(John Autey / Pioneer Press)

By MARY DIVINE | mdivine@pioneerpress.com | Pioneer Press

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For train buffs like Brian and Sandra Rockholt, the annual train migration of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway from St. Paul to Osceola, Wis., is an event to remember.

"It's like the first day of school," Sandra Rockholt said Tuesday as she waited for the restored vintage train to pass under the pedestrian bridge just north of Hamline Avenue and Pierce Butler Route in St. Paul. "I'm a retired teacher, and there's that same feeling of excitement."

Rockholt and her husband, Brian, a volunteer brakeman for the railway, joined a group of about a dozen people Tuesday morning at the Jackson Street Roundhouse, the headquarters of the Minnesota Transportation Museum, to send off the freshly restored and newly painted train.

"There it goes!" said Brian Rockholt as it departed the roundhouse at 10:43 a.m.

The Rockholts ran to their blue Subaru Outback to "chase" the train as it made its way along BNSF track to the Northtown Yard in Minneapolis. Yes, the train has to go west before it can head northeast to Wisconsin.

The museum has agreements to use BNSF track until Northtown Yard. After reaching Northtown, the train crew switches to Canadian Pacific track for its run to Withrow, near Hugo. From there, it switches to Canadian National track for its final trek to Osceola. BNSF employee Brett Bakken joined museum volunteers for the first part of the journey. He and Bob Puelston, the museum's railroad superintendent, went over the "track bulletins" prior to departure.

"This shows everything that is going on, all the restrictions, everything along the route — not only ours, but others," Puelston said. "For our routing, we're fine. There are no restrictions."

"It's restricted speed all the way," Bakken said, explaining that the train is not allowed to go over 20 mph. "We're just going to take it easy all the way."

Bakken said he has been assigned to help with the annual train migration "five or six times" in the past. "It's just another day at work," he said.

Back to summer grounds

The annual migration of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway, which runs excursion trains from Osceola north to Dresser, Wis., and south to Marine on St. Croix, generally occurs on a Tuesday in May.

Tuesdays tend to be somewhat slower days for



Conductor Ben Boege checks the brakes on the Osceola and St. Croix Valley Railway's vintage train at the Minnesota Transportation Museum in St. Paul on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The locomotive and cars were being moved from the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul to the depot in Osceola, Wis., for the start of the Railway's excursion season. (John Autey / Pioneer Press)

the railroads, said Scott Hippert, museum director. The excursion train "doesn't ever take priority over freight rail," he said.

In the fall, volunteers will repeat the process going the opposite direction. The locomotives and passenger cars spend the winter at the Jackson Street Roundhouse undergoing maintenance, Hippert said. "We've got to make sure all the equipment is shiny and running right," he said.

Last year, more than 26,000 people rode the railway, he said.

On Tuesday, the crew departed the Jackson Street Roundhouse with the lead diesel locomotive — the Burlington Northern 6234, built in 1959 — moving forward. It then pulled into a siding. "Then they do what's called a 'shove back' onto the main line, so they are backing up," Brian Rockholt said. "Once they are on the main line, they'll throw the right switches, and they can come forward again."

The train migration on Tuesday also included the Soo Line 559 (Rock Island 1223) diesel locomotive, built in November 1951, and eight passenger cars built between 1911 and 1949.

"The entire train weighed 940 tons and was 757 feet long," said Brian Rockholt, a retired Delta Airlines employee. "The equipment is very well maintained to be able to run and operate on the commercial rails."

Brian Rockholt, armed with a Go Pro camera, a Canon DSLR camera and his iPhone 14 Pro, took photos and videos as the train rumbled underneath the Hamline Avenue pedestrian bridge. Last year, the train got to the signal lights about 400 yards east of the Hamline Avenue bridge and stopped, he said.

"We couldn't see them, but they had red lights, and they couldn't move until they got the go-ahead," he said.

"We sat here twiddling our thumbs for I don't know how long," Sandra Rockholt said. "It wasn't long after that that Brian went and got his radio."

The BaoFeng radio allows the Rockholts to hear the live rail radio audio stream. "We can't track them, but we can at least hear them if we're in range," he said.

The Rockholts were joined on the Hamline Avenue pedestrian bridge by the mother-son train-chasing team of Virginia and Ryan Anderson. "I'm a train nut," said Ryan Anderson, who lives in Roseville. "We did it last year, and it was so much fun, we decided to do it again."

Virginia Anderson, of Arden Hills, volunteered to be his driver for the day. Her husband, Dave, is a volunteer at the museum.

Viewing spots:

The Rockholts said they got to see the train at five spots along the route: St. Paul, New Brighton, White Bear Lake, Withrow and Otisville, north of Marine on St. Croix.

In Withrow, they stopped at the cemetery where Nathaniel Prindle is buried. Nathaniel was the 2-year-old who died during the May 25, 2008, tornado in Hugo. Nathaniel loved trains, and his family chose the Withrow Cemetery because freight trains regularly chug past. The boy's gravesite is engraved with an image of a train; a wooden train memorial with "Nate" written on the locomotive faces the track.

The couple, who live in Lakeville, beat the train to Osceola and got to watch it pull into the depot at 3:04 p.m. Total trip time? Four hours and 21 minutes, they said.

"It was fun seeing it come home for the summer," Brian Rockholt said. "Everybody should come ride the train. It's a fantastic family outing. Adults can be kids again."

The Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway rumbles past the gravesite of Nathaniel Prindle in the Withrow Cemetery on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The locomotive and cars were being moved from the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul to the depot in Osceola, Wis., for the start of the Railway's excursion season. (Courtesy of Sandra Rockholt)



The Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway

- **When:** Season opens May 20 and continues Saturdays and Sundays and most Thursdays through Oct. 29. Round-trip train to Marine on St. Croix (90 minutes) departs 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and noon on Thursday. Round trip to Dresser, Wis., (50 minutes) departs 1:15 p.m. on Saturdays; the trip includes free ice cream at the Dresser Depot.
- **Where:** Departs from the restored depot in Osceola, Wis., about an hour from the Twin Cities
- **Cost:** Tickets to Marine on St. Croix are \$29 adults, \$21 ages 3-15, \$26 ages 62 and older or veterans, free for ages 2 and younger, \$85 family package for two adults and two children. Tickets to Dresser are \$25 adult, \$17 ages 3-15, \$22 ages 62 and older or veterans, free for ages 2 and younger; \$70 for a family package for two adults and two children.
- **More information:** mtmuseum.org

The Girl Scouts at Minnesota Transportation Museum

By: Kim Maas



Taya Gavin, Kim Maas, Mulunesh, Gordon Barr, Sara Gries, Cara, Lucia, Sofia, and Monica Walczak

Gordon Barr and Celina, Troop Leader of Troop # 58206, arranged for The Guild of Metalsmiths to hold the first Metal Smith class for The Girl Scouts at Minnesota Transportation Museum. In preparation for the class, help would be needed. A call went out asking for ladies of the guild to assist with the class. Taya Gavin, Sara Gries, and Monica Walczak answered the call. Frank Parizek, Larry Nevin and Gordon Barr worked together on what the girls would be learning. A heart, horseshoe nail spoon, rose, copper bracelet, jingle (cone) bell, “s” hook, hook and candy cane would be the curriculum.



May 13th was a bit of a gloomy day, but it did not stop the girls from having fun and learning the art of metal smithing. The four scouts were accompanied by troop leaders Celina and Matthew arrived at the Minnesota Transportation Museum at 10 am.

After covering the safety rules and everyone introducing themselves it was time to get busy.



Sara and Cara.



Taya, Lucia, and Sofia.



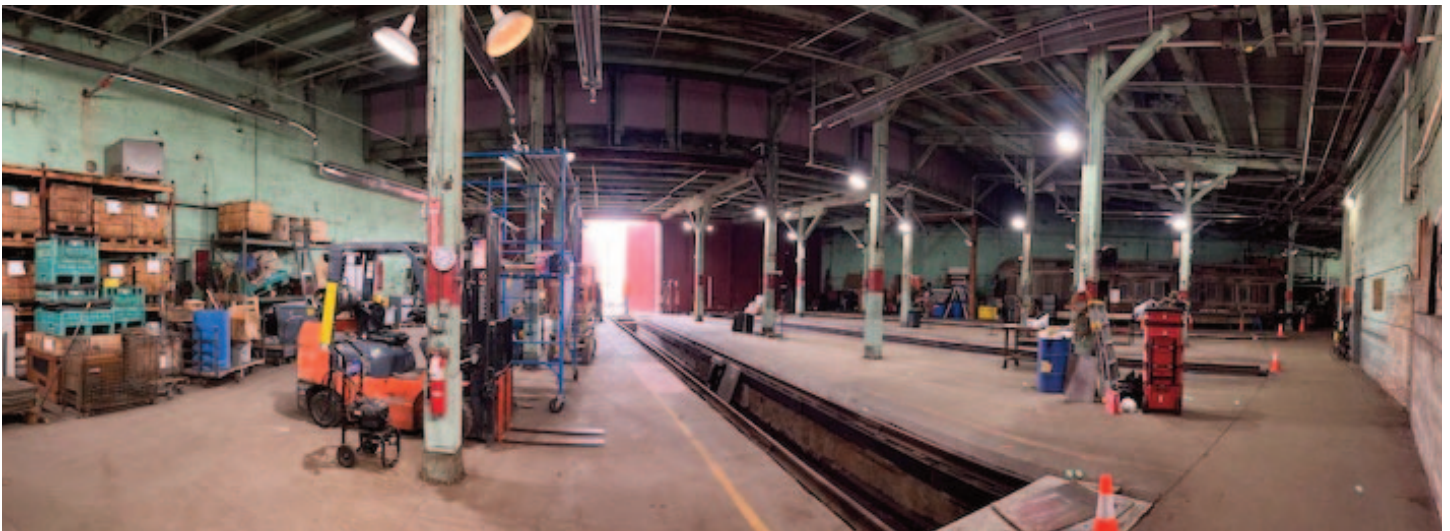
Monica, Mulunesh and Matthew



Celina, the other troop leader, even took a turn at putting the iron in the fire.

The enthusiasm in the smith shop was exciting to watch. The instructors did an amazing job of showing the student how to heat their steel in the coal, taking it to the anvil, and showing them how to hammer in a way to get the results they are looking for. After the instructions the students jumped right in without hesitation. The instructors encouraged and guided the students along the way. The students were so happy and proud of their new handcrafted treasures. The class ended around noon with a little reluctance from one of the students.

The class was a success, leaving the students with a sense of accomplishment and hopefully a future in metal smithing.



Bay B is looking mighty bare after the departure of the migration train. Other projects will be moving in to take their place.
May 18th, 2023.

Shout Out to Scott Heiderich

- Barb Loida



Shout Out to Scott Heiderich RIP

Scott was a proud member and volunteer with MTM since its beginning in 1968. He had strong ties in working with the streetcars in addition to trains and was also an active volunteer with the Como Harriet streetcar museum.

Scott was often the first volunteer to show up at JSR or Osceola and did many tasks that made it easier for others such as snow removal, lighting the stove in the caboose, opening up the passenger cars, brush removal or directing folks where to park. He was a dedicated car host and entertains passengers old and young while sharing his railroad knowledge.

Morton Jorgensen shared the following story of working with Scott.

"After having been promoted to brakeman and conductor on the Stillwater line in the mid to late 1980's, I took a trip as fireman with Scott as the engineer. Scott was "the wild man" and a few students were a bit intimidated by him. As I climbed up in the cab, he immediately told me that he needed a fireman who could start and inspect the engine, plus be able to operate it in an emergency. He placed me in the engineer's seat and the lessons started right away. After a few days he got comfortable with my new skills and started to "fiddle" in the engine compartment while I operated the engine (this was before the FRA license requirements). You could learn

things from Scott quite quickly, as he explained things thoroughly, but preferred to only do it once. After that one time, you needed to be able to do things correctly, or else.... Scott has a way of making you feel stupid, if you don't listen and learn, yet, he is a teddy bear when you ask for help. Scott and I spent many hours going over the mechanical and electrical systems on both MNTX 102, and MNTX 105 and I learned that engine stuff is never clean and oil free. The same goes for you after a lesson with Scott inside the engine compartment. By the fall of 1989 he told me to get tested as an engineer. He had taught me well and I passed."

Thank you Scott for your many dedicated years of service! You made MTM a better place.

May you be riding the heavenly rails!

Thanks and a Shout Out to Mark Quesnell and Sharon Ilgen

- Barb Sheldon

They have worked so hard to put the wine-tasting schedule together. They went to each winery in the St Croix valley, tasted, negotiated with the owners, determined the schedule of vendors for the events all by themselves.



(Continued on next page)

(Shout Out continued from last page)

The program, started near the end of the last season, was expanded this year to every Saturday and some Sundays through the early season. Wine tasting scheduled so far has been totally sold out in June for over a month. July is half full to date, August and September are selling well. We expect to add one or two more dates as the schedule sells out and wineries look at their schedules.

They are the car hosts for each of these events and would really like some time off. If you like wine and would like to help with setting up between wine selections, like to talk wine (or trains!), please let Barb know in the office. The wineries do the pouring so you don't have to worry about spilling on our guests.

And a BIG THANK YOU to Mark and Sharon!! Without you two, this remarkably successful offering on the train would not be available to our guests.

Barb Sheldon

What a bunch of hot dogs!



AWESOME JOB BY THE SHOP VOLUNTEERS!

Thanks to Kurt and Tim, and everyone who made our fleet look and run so good in prep for this weeks migration to Osceola. Paint sure makes a difference!



The work goes on at Jax

The revenue fleet has gone to Osceola for the summer! Time to get going on the Jackson Street Roundhouse Equipment. These 2 cars (the first ones people see when they come to the museum...) in the parking lot need sanding, priming and painting. There is also some wood working to be done to repair rotten and weather damaged areas. Tim Grube and I will be heading up this project. Please contact one of us if you can help, or just show up for the morning huddle at 9:30 on Saturday. Develop your skills! There are lots of things to fix!

- **Todd McGonagle**



Shout out to Gary Sparr for all of the hard work that he has done. Garry Yazell writes: went outside to see what he was doing and he had been sweeping up outside the gate.



Cooling off after a hot day in the sun!
Thanks Gary for your hard work!



Yesterday had visitors Gabby and Clarence enjoying their first date at Jackson Street Roundhouse. I had to take their photo.
- Warren



Coming Events

6/1/2023

5/27	1000	JSR Memorial Day Observed	8/16	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains
5/31	0900	JSR Pavek staff site visit JSR \$5 on the 5 th	8/26	1100	OSCVR A11/1097 grp 60
			8/30		JSR \$5 on the 5th
		6/1 1100 OSCVR 7 Hills Prep 5gr, 165	9/6	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains
6/3	0900	SPUD Train Days		9/11	OSCVR Trains Magzn EB charter
	1030	JSR Lang b'day	9/20	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains
	1330	JSR Lindenfelser b'day		9/16	1530 OSCVR Octoberfest
		6/3 1100 OSCVR Pizza A11&1097, 40		9/21	1100 OSCVR Chip Valley Srs 100
6/4	0900	SPUD Train Days			IHM church 56 Coach
6/7	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		9/23	1530 OSCVR Octoberfest
	1030	AFSA 2 nd gr, 25 total		9/28	1100 OSCVR Owatonna PIZZA 56
	1030	AFSA gr9-12, 25 total			
6/8	1100	OSCVR Osceola CofC A11&1097 50	10/4	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains
		1100 OSCVR TCJC 25 totl	10/5	1100	OSCVR MLTours BOX LUNCH 55
6/10	1030	JSR Dugan b'day	10/12	1100	OSCVR MLT FLAR BOX LUNCH 55
	1330	JSR Silkey b'day			1100 OSCVR SLP P&R PIZZA 56
6/17	1000	JSR Dads for Trains		1100	OSCVR Leisure Tours BOX LUNCH 110
	1030	JSR Wu b'day		1400	OSCVR Valley Tours BOX LUNCH 56
6/21	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains		10/14	1030 OSCVR grp coach 35
6/22	0930	JSR Chip Valley Srs 100 (tent)	10/18	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains
	6/22	1100 OSCVR church grp BOX Lnh 45		10/20 – 10/22	OSCVR Pumpkin Express
		6/23-6/26 Barb out of town			
7/1	1330	JSR Mangan b'day	11/1	1030	JSR Tots n' Trains
7/5	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains	11/15	1030	JSR Tots n' Trains
		7/6 OSCVR Trollhaugen Adventure	11/29		JSR \$5 on the 5th
		7/13 OSCVR Trollhaugen Adventure			Santa's Train Shop 12/2 – 12/17/23
7/15	1030	JSR Crenshaw b'day			
	1330	JSR Whitehurst b'day			
7/19	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		7/20 OSCVR Trollhaugen Adventure			
		1200 OSCV Chisago Lakes schl (tent)			
7/26	1230	JSR Stlwtr Advntr Club 40 gr K-1			
		7/27 OSCVR Trollhaugen Adventure			
8/2	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			