

Newsletter



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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By Paul von Goertz – KRHCC Board Member

TODD LINDAHL SCORES ANOTHER BIG PRIZE FOR DEPOT

KRHCC historian and board member Todd Lindahl has secured another prize for our depot, just after a big score last month when he found an Express Wagon. See April issue.

Earlier this month Todd ventured to Woodville, WI, to check out a former Northern Pacific depot stove to replace the long-missing Cole M stove that had been in our depot. (Photo right: Todd Lindahl assembles the stove in its approximately permanent location inside the depot agent's office. Photo: Randy Ellestad. Many thanks to Lee Cohen for removing many coats of gray paint from chimney brick.)

The Northern Pacific stove is similar to our original, which was one of three in our depot. One was in the depot agent's office. The second in the women's waiting room to the east of the office. They both used the same chimney at the east end of the building, but from opposite sides of a wall. The third stove was in the men's waiting room, which was west of the agent's office.



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A fourth room on the far west end of the depot, which is no longer there, was the baggage room and it was unheated. A coal chute was in front of the baggage room and allowed coal to be dumped into a large bin in the basement. A trapdoor and stairs in the rear of the baggage room led down to the bin when more heating coal was needed.

The depot had three coal scuttles, one for each for the three stoves. One of the many duties of the agent during the winter months was to keep the rooms in the depot warm. During the summer, the office stove was probably used only to make coffee or warm up a meal. The original small shovel used to add coal to the stove and clean out ashes was found in the attic of the depot.

Now many of you reading this are wondering if the stove will be functional, and the answer is “Yes” and “No.” “No” because the stove is not UL approved and so we cannot get insurance on our building. “Yes” because we will install an electric ceramic heater inside the stove that will give off heat. But don’t tell people that. Let them huddle around the stove on a late spring or early fall day and feel the warmth radiating from a real 1900s depot coal stove!

I have learned after seeing what Todd has scrounged for our depot, and what I think are at bargain prices, is that Todd is so well respected state-wide for his knowledge of railroading, that people hoarding a depot treasure are actually flattered that Todd covets it (and don’t even realize the low ball price they just agreed to).

The KRHCC wants to thank Bill Berg for sponsoring the stove in memory of Terry Berg. Terry was a much-loved member of the KR community and used her creative talents to make beautiful Christmas decorations that she donated to the craft sale at KR’s annual Christmas Julebyen.

Terry would be pleased to know visitors to the depot on cool days will enjoy warmth and conversation while huddled around a stove given in her memory.

Thanks to Todd Lindahl for providing the information for this story.

MORE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

While not trying to sound like the president of the Todd Lindahl fan club, I do want to show readers the results of some of Todd’s homework over COVID in bringing back the appearance of a 1900s depot.

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The photo shows one of the two ticket counters at the depot. At one time there were two waiting areas - one for women and one for men prone to body odor, flees and wood ticks.



Photo: Counter signage viewed from women's waiting room. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

Between the two waiting areas was the depot agent's office from which the agent sold tickets to those in either waiting room. In the 1920s, when passenger ridership began to decline, the men's waiting was removed and both men and women shared one room on the east side. So, while we have just the one waiting room today, we have simulated a second one on the west wall of the agent's office.

The replicated Western Union Telegraph sign confirms why the depot was the communications center for the KR community – not just official communications, but also gossip.

The chalkboard gave the arrival and departure schedules for the two railroads that shared the depot.

The ticket counter is nearing completion thanks to Larry Ronning's finishing skills using select clear maple. The counter cages were hand made by Dale Burton of Burton Forge & Gallery of Larsmont and donated to the KRHCC. Many thanks to Dale for lending his talents in replicating 1900s ticket counter cages.

Funding for the period signage was provided, in part, by Iron Range Regional Resources through a Cultural & Tourism grant. The KRHCC is very appreciative of the support the IRRR has shown in helping the Center preserve and present the history of the KR area.

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KR'S BARE-A\$\$-BEACH

One nice thing about being this newsletter's writer and publisher, is that I am also the editorial review board, which I take means that I can choose stories as long as they are based on bare fact.

In the 1950s and up until the building of the Duluth to Two Harbors Express Way in the early 60s, local boys had a favorite swimming hole on the Knife River just above the first falls and below the now Express Way. Because it was above the First Falls and off-limits to stream anglers, it offered a degree of privacy, and so was referred to as Bare-A\$\$-Beach, which I will just refer to as BAB.

Now, boys swimming BA was not unusual in the mid-50s. All swimming at the Boys YMCA in Duluth, where I learned to swim was BA; likewise, swimming classes in the junior high schools in Duluth. So, swimming BA for boys - when afforded a bit of privacy - was an accepted practice.

I grew up on 26th east in Duluth next to the Lake right where London Road and I-35 come together. Growing up there was much like KR, next to a railroad track and Lake Superior where we practically lived during the summer months. We boys swam BA there and at least on a few occasions – girls...

Anyway, back to KR's BAB. Local KR boys who are now grandfathers favored this swim hole for its privacy, a bit of a refreshing waterfall and a long sloping and smooth rock. The rock made it easier to get in and out of the river and being smooth was easy on the feet. The rock also absorbed the heat from the sun and so one could stretch out on it and warm up after a cool dip. At 26th east we warmed, and sunned ourselves, on similar rocks. KR boys called these rocks "Hot Rocks."



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So, there you have it. An interesting bit of KR history stripped bare. Many thanks to the geezers who gave me the skinny on this story.

Photo page 4: BAB was just below where the Highway 61 Express Way is today. The swimming hole is just to the right of the flat sloping rock also known as a “Hot Rock” where boys could warm themselves with the sun’s heat absorbed by the dark rock.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

AREA IN FRONT OF DEPOT AND FREIGHT BUILDING WILL REMAIN OPEN

In late April, the KRHCC avoided an issue that would have greatly compromised visitor access to the front of the depot and freight buildings.

Through a spirit of cooperation and with a shared goal in mind, the St. Louis & Lake County Regional Rail Authority, North Shore Track Services, and the North Shore Scenic Railroad all worked with the KRHCC to work out a solution.

The issue was a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulation that would mandate a 4 ½ foot high fence 24’ back towards the depot from the center of the mainline. This would place the fence just 18” inches from the order board pole, and seven feet from the depot. At that location, the fence would all but prevent visitors from walking along the front face of the depot, and force those with mobility issues to walk completely around the back of the depot. It would also block any attempt to photograph the full front of the depot.

Bjorn Ojard, General Manager of North Shore Track Services (NSTS) and consultants to the Regional Rail Authority (RRA), proposed using the depot and freight buildings in conjunction with fencing to keep people a safe distance from the right-of-way, while keeping the area in front of the buildings open.

The plan now in place calls for a fence to run from Marina Road east to the depot, then be picked up again on the other side of the depot, and from there to of the northwest corner of the freight building. By using both the building and fencing as barriers, we are able to keep the area in front of the depot and freight buildings open.

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Locking gates in the fence will allow people passage to board and get off trains. A larger gate between depot and freight building will let trucks pass for snow removal and deliveries.

Keeping the area open in front of our buildings is critical to the planning of this year's site work. Now we can plan placement of four 24" x 36" outdoor historical interpretive displays, a memorial to county veterans, and reconstruction of the fish loading dock that was part of the original depot.

Two different types of fencing in conjunction with depot and freight buildings will be used. Black chain link fencing will be used from Marina Road east to about the train loading/unloading platform. More decorative period fencing will be used from that point east to the freight building. In this way, the area immediate to the depot will fit the character of a 1900s depot.



Now, decorative fencing is much more expensive than chain link and requires mounting to concrete. Cost for the decorative fencing in the number of feet we need is about \$2,000. Can you help? The KRHCC is an IRS-recognized 501(c3) so all donations are tax deductible.

An early 1900s photo shows the open area between depot and trains. For reference, the order board pole today is the same

distance from the mainline as it was in this photo. The area will remain open under a plan recently worked out with the Regional Rail Authority, the KRHCC's landlord.

Photo credit: Todd Lindahl/Randy Ellestad

RUBB-A-DUB DUB – CRUSADER II IN A TUB

Last summer the KRHCC applied to the DNR/Coastal Zone Management for a \$10,000 grant to cover 80% of the cost to develop a site plan with shelters for CRUSADER II

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and picnics/events. The grant required a 20% local match (\$2,000) from the KRHCC for a total of \$12,000 in engineering and design services.

On April 30, we received the final plans from our selected firm of Krech Ojard & Associates in partnership with SAS + Associates Architects. It was a six-month process to develop the plans and the KRHCC board was closely involved all the way.

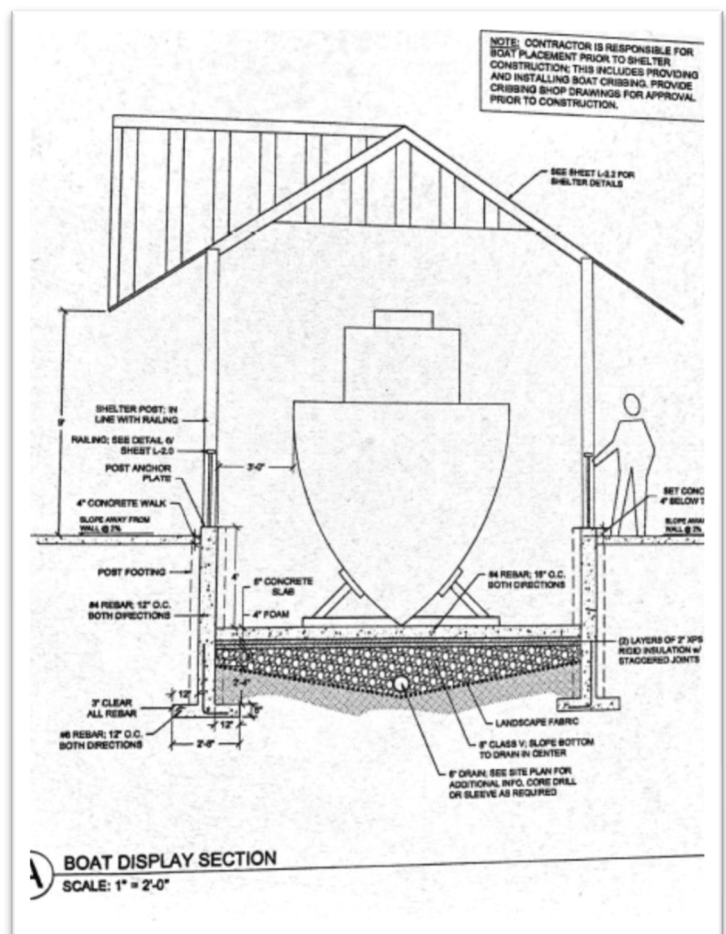
We are very pleased with what the design team came up with and you can see the final site plan on our website **krhcc.org**.

One of the innovations of the shelter design for CRUSADER is recessing the hull from about the waterline down into the ground or “tub” as we came to call it but still visible from a viewing ramp that runs the length of the boat. See image: A cross section of CRUSADER II shelter illustrating “bath tub” feature. Drawing courtesy Krech Ojard & Associates and SAS & Associates Architects, Duluth

This idea has several benefits. First, it reduces the height of the ramp that allows people to look into the interior of the boat. Second, it reduces the overall height of the shelter. The shelter roof will keep most of the water out of the tub, any water will be drained off into a drain field.

The tub idea was a good example of how the KRHCC worked with our architects to arrive at a very practical and functional boat shelter.

KRHCC board members Randy Ellestad, Larry Ronning and myself at different times noticed the tub idea as it was used by the National Park Service in the Apostle Island National Lakeshore at Little Sand Bay WI, where the fish tug TWILIGHT has been restored and on display.



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We suggested this idea to Luke Sydow, lead architect at SAS, and he incorporated a version of the TWILIGHT shelter for CRUSADER.

It's good to be giving some attention to CRUSADER now as we have been focused for the past three years on its counterpart icon – the depot. It is the intention of the KRHCC to take the bid-ready plans developed by our design team to qualified contractors for bids this fall, with a start date for construction of shelters and site landscaping summer of 2022. This is all contingent upon receiving funding, which we are already pursuing.

...AND WITH A TUG, A MARRIAGE IS UNDERWAY!

And here's your happy news for the day:



On Saturday, May 22, 2021, Elrose Lucille (“call me *Pixie*”) Lindberg of French River and Bruce James Wright of Larsmont, were united in marriage on the tugboat NELS J. in the Two Harbors harbor.

Photo credit: Dave “Jake” Jacobson

Both Pixie and Bruce had lost their spouses to cancer. By divine intervention, they met through mutual friend, Mike Ojard. Pixie is an engineer for Mike’s tugboat company, Heritage Marine, and

spends her time in the engine room, which is as neat as a pin. Bruce is a lifelong friend of Mike’s and retired from the nursery business.

It was a very special day for Pixie and Bruce and all their family and friends who love them. To add to the festivities, summer 2021 arrived on their wedding day and left later than night.

Tugboat NELS J. of Knife River, alongside tugboat EDNA G., provided the perfect setting for the wedding party, given the ties many in the wedding party have to tug boating.

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The wedding couple! Congratulations and may you have many, many years of happiness together!



Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

MAY DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships:

- Express Wagon by Joe and Barbara Russell
- Depot stove by Bill Berg in memory of Terry Berg

Donations:

- Depot ticket counter cages (2) by Dale Burton
- Air compressor by Bruce Wright
- 300' of 1/2" rebar for depot apron by Bruce Wright
- Undesignated donation by Bruce Wright

Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org If you have family or friends who may enjoy receiving it, please forward to them, or send their email addresses to same email address and they will receive their own copy.

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