

Newsletter



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

PO Box 240 • 180 Marina Road
Knife River, MN 55609
info@krhcc.org

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By Paul von Goertz, KRHCC
Board Member

KRHCC WELCOMES MONA LINDEN TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ALSO AS CFO

As mentioned in May's newsletter, KRHCC by-laws state that the KRHCC board of directors can be from five to seven members. At the time our by-laws were written we had six, with a seventh to be added at a later date. We are very pleased to announce that Mona Linden, our volunteer treasurer since February, has accepted both the board position and title of Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Mona has spent her career in the financial services industry, the last 35 years as a loan officer for Two Harbors Federal Credit Union. Bob Entzion, KRHCC board secretary, expressed the feelings of board members, by stating "When we learned Mona was interested in being involved with the KRHCC, we were very excited because none of us had her financial experience, or the ability to understand the non-profit tax and audit requirements. She has shown herself to be an integral part of our team since she started as volunteer treasurer."



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An important aspect of Mona's responsibilities is recording and verifying donations and issuing Receipts For Cash to donors in strict compliance with IRS regs. The KRHCC is exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). Donors may deduct contributions they make under IRC Section 170. The KRHCC is also qualified to receive tax-deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522.

A native of Riverside, CA, Mona attended high school in Spring Lake in the Minneapolis area, and in Two Harbors, where she graduated. She attended UWS focusing on business and accounting. "I like the concept of restoring historical sites and making them of interest to school kids," says Mona. Her other interests include running, gardening and reading.

Mona has three adult children and one grandchild. She resides in Castle Danger.

KRHCC GENERAL CONTRACTOR PLEASED WITH DEPOT PROGRESS

Depot General Contractor (and volunteer) Larry Ronning is pleased with progress on the depot to date. "Gutting the building and getting it stabilized, jacked up, squared and on a firm concrete slab is a lot of work", said Larry. "We intend to pour the slab after the Fourth. The four-inch thick slab will sit on three inches of insulating foam with 1/2" Pex Heat Tube, which will circulate hot water to heat the building if, and when, an electric boiler is installed. We are installing the necessary electrical conduit now to facilitate its installation."

See the attached photo below showing cutting of the electrical chase way into the depot.

"July will see the building on its foundation as well as roof replacement, siding repair, power to the building and a little paint applied."

As an aside note, the depot chimney was found to be nearly perfectly plumb and in very good shape as a result of either being partially on bedrock or very dense clay – or both. A separate concrete footing was poured around the chimney to isolate it from the building slab, in case the slab decides to move.

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Did you know...

The KR RR bridge had a 24/7 sentry during WWII to foil any attempt to sabotage the bridge. The bridge was vital to the war effort by helping provide a steady stream of ore to the steel mills and from there into armaments. Such security proved wise as explosives were found under the RR track at Waldo in 1941. Fortunately, the blasting cap failed to ignite the dynamite when a train passed over it. Evidence showed the culprit was hiding nearby for a second try, but fled when an armed guard appeared.

UNCOVERING KR'S RR HISTORY

As a tangent to restoring the depot, we are also literally uncovering KR's railroad history by clearing the brush and weeds away from the remains of what were prominent railroad structures.

In photo on first page, Larry Ronning skillfully removes vegetation that had grown up over eight cement pads that held a 50' high water tank on the south side of the RR tracks, a hundred yards or so down America Dock road. Water was pumped from the river to the tank and then run under the RR tracks to the north side and a tower from where water could be directed into the boilers of steam locomotives. The pad for the watering tower also exists.

Other remnants of KR's glory days include a turntable now on DNR property south of the river near Scenic 61, the Alger-Smith RR tunnel that passes under the RR right-of-way just a few steps west of the KR RR bridge, and the coal dock from where the Alger-Smith shipped out logs and received coal from the lower lakes.

All or some of these structures could be an extension of the KRHCC as historical walking trails.

Did you know....

In 1943, as German U-Boats were ravaging the North Atlantic, four 110' wooden sub-chasers were built on Park Point using skilled boat builders from the Duluth/Superior area, some from Larsmont and KR. These men

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and other local men and women who served in the Merchant Marine and the more traditional military branches, will be honored with a memorial adjacent to a flag pole near the depot.

VOLUNTEERS NOW HAVE A LUNCH AREA!

Thanks to our Marina View townhouse neighbors Mark and Kari Hokans, we now have a lunch/snack area for volunteers! Mark and Kari donated their gently-used six-place deck table and chairs to the KRHCC and our volunteers. “Knife River is a great community,” says Mark. “And we’re happy to be part of it.”

Many thanks to Mark and Kari! Also thanks to Randy Ellestad and others who brought the set to the depot site and placed it under a shady birch tree.



UPDATE ON THE ORDER BOARD SIGNAL POLE

We will be taking possession of a 30’ order board signal tower sometime in August. It will be nearly identical to the one that served the KR depot and passing trains for many years.

KRHCC board member and ace RR historian Todd Lindahl is in charge of restoring the order board to working condition. David Grong from KR has offered his KR workshop for the restoration as well as his skills as retired owner of a commercial and industrial refrigeration company in the Metro that both sold and repaired the equipment. If all goes well, the rebuild will be done over the winter and the tower installed next spring.

Did you know ...

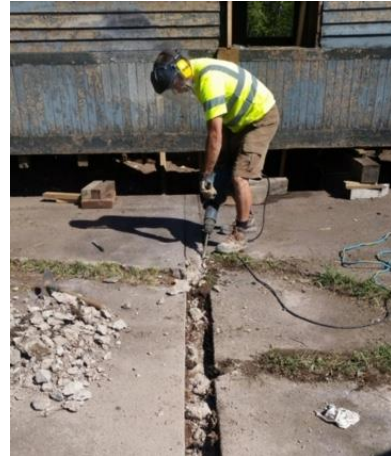
In September of 1915, the steamer ONOKO, carrying 110,000 bushels of wheat, suddenly developed a serious leak about nine miles abreast of Knife Island. The ONOKO was old, having been launched in 1882 and credited

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with being the first iron-hull freighter on the Great Lakes. Because of its age, it is thought a hull plate suddenly broke free, allowing a torrent of water to enter. It sank in 35 minutes in 220 feet of water. All crew were saved. For weeks, if not months thereafter, KR fishermen were frustrated with nets plugged with an oatmeal-like gloppy substance.

SUPPORT FOR THE KRHCC GOES BEYOND KR

We are very pleased to see support for the KRHCC come from beyond what we consider KR proper. In this issue we would like to thank Matt Morris from Finland, MN, who is a friend of Randy Ellestad, for donating his time, skills and concrete saw to cut the chase way for electrical service to the depot through about 15' of 4" concrete. Thank you Matt!



We also want to extend our thanks to Laura Jacobs at the Jim Dan Hill Library at UW Superior. Laura is in charge of materials that tell the history of maritime history relating to communities surrounding Lake Superior. Presently, Laura has been very helpful in obtaining information on the men who gave of their wood boat-building skills to build wood sub-chasers during WWII. We know several were from Larsmont and KR. Part of the mission of the KRHCC is to recognize KR's and Larsmont's commercial boat building activities.

The KRHCC recently received two grants that demonstrate regional support. In March we received a grant of \$1,000 from the Two Harbors Area Fund. The fund was established in 1988 with a mission of enhancing the quality of life for the residents of Two Harbors and the surrounding areas. The funds are to be used for Phase I activities, all of which relate to restoration of the depot.

In April, we received a grant from Co-op Light & Power through their "Round-Up" funds in the amount of \$2,000. These funds are designated for providing electrical service and fixtures to the depot. Thank you CPL and all of us CPL members who allow our monthly statement to be

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“rounded up” to the next highest dollar amount, thereby providing “Round-Up” Funds for worthwhile area causes.

Did you know....

In 1902, an ore boat captain claimed his boat encountered a “Huge fish, an ‘electrical’ sea monster larger than a whale” off Knife Island late one night. He claimed the serpent sprayed his boat with an oily substance while making his compass spin wildly, eventually pointing straight at the monster. He concluded the monster could have been responsible for wrecks



near Knife Island. This bizarre tale appeared in the June 22, 1902 edition of the DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE, but strangely, neither the name of the captain or the boat appeared in the article. So, go figure....

An artist’s rendering of encounter with alleged KR Island serpent!

HELP SUPPORT THE KRHCC

Several people, who are not in a position to provide volunteer services, have indicated they would like to help financially. Please do! We need nine custom windows at \$1,000 each. Do we have nine people who would like to buy one??? Donations are all tax deductible and can be sent to the KRHCC at PO Box 240, Knife River, MN 55609.

Have something to contribute to the KRHCC email newsletter? Please send your suggestion to:

info@krhcc.org