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**SUMMER 2016**  
128th Edition

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#### THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

An Agency of the Nevada  
Department of Tourism  
and Cultural Affairs



#### NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM



*Story By  
Felicia Archer*

The Museum is excited to announce it has a new director. On July 5, Dan Thielen was appointed as museum director of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City.

Thielen was curator of education at the museum for many years before he left to serve full time as an officer in the Nevada Army National Guard. He retired from the Guard in December 2015 as a field grade officer. His service included a mobilization to Afghanistan and the construction of nearly

250,000 square feet of new readiness centers for the Army National Guard throughout the state.

His focus as museum curator was to make the collections accessible for any teaching opportunity. Now, he has set new goals. "I want to make the amazing collection of equipment and locomotives the anchor of the narrative of Nevada. From mining and freight to connecting the coasts, Nevada's railroads are at the heart of Nevada's story," Thielen said.

The Saint Paul, Minnesota, native joined the Navy and, as a boiler technician, began his lifelong relationship with steam. After the Navy he spent two years in Australia as a Mormon missionary. He graduated from Utah State University with a master's degree in outdoor museum management. His thesis included the restoration and operation of early steam agricultural equipment. This will serve Dan well, since the museum is home to several operating steam locomotives. Thielen and wife, Katherine, have been residents of Carson City for 20 years. Proud parents of Patrick, Joshua, Adam and Megan, they also have three grandchildren. Welcome aboard, Dan! 🚂

## VISIT THE MUSEUM

**Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday through Monday  
(closed Tuesday & Wednesday)**

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

### Museum Admission:

Adults 18 & Over - \$6.00  
Children (Under 18) - FREE  
Museum Members - FREE

## STEAM TRAIN & MOTORCAR RIDES

Rides run every weekend May through September with select dates in October, November and December.

See complete 2016 operating schedule on our website at: [museums.nevadaculture.org/nsrmcc](http://museums.nevadaculture.org/nsrmcc)

## STATE OF NEVADA

**Brian Sandoval**, Governor

## DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**Claudia Vecchio**, Director

## DIVISION OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY

**Peter Barton**, Administrator

## NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM, CARSON CITY

**Dan Thielen**, Director

## SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT NEWSLETTER

**Adam Michalski**, Curator of Education: Editor  
**Lara Brown**, Museum Attendant: Designer

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES, FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

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**NEVADA STATE  
RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
2180 South Carson Street  
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**775.687.6953**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE MUSEUM

The Nevada State Railroad Museum depends on the energy and dedication of many talented volunteers to provide the services necessary to make a visit to the museum a memorable and educational experience.

Volunteer shifts at the Nevada State Railroad Museum are usually four to six hours, once a week, Thursdays through Mondays. Museum employees train volunteers in the use of cash registers and other equipment. Opportunities are year-round unless otherwise noted, and include the following:

**Admissions Desk  
Museum Store  
Depot Ticket Sales (seasonal)  
Annex Tour Guide  
Train & Motorcar Crews**

If you have questions about volunteering at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, or you would like to enroll as a volunteer, please contact:

**Museum Attendant Lara Brown at  
775.687.6953 ext. 233, or send an email  
to [lbrown@nevadaculture.org](mailto:lbrown@nevadaculture.org).**





## NSRM Restoration Shop Receives Historic Preservation Award

*By Felicia Archer*

The Nevada State Railroad Museum and its restoration team were honored with Carson City's 2016 Historic Preservation Award presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting on May 19. The award recognizes decades of public service in the preservation, restoration and celebration of Nevada's railroad heritage, centered on the recent completion of the Glenbrook steam locomotive project.

Each May, Carson City recognizes significant preservation accomplishments to celebrate the community's history and heritage in celebration of Historic Preservation and Archaeological Awareness Month. All over the state, activities are held to remind Nevadans of the important historic resources that give meaning and a sense of place



**Second from left, front row — Chris DeWitt, Rick Stiver, Mort Dolan, Lee Hobold and Peter Barton received 2016 Historic Preservation Awards from Carson City supervisors.**

to communities and focus attention on how critical it is to make sure they are preserved.

Chris DeWitt, Rick Stiver, Mort Dolan and Lee Hobold received individual honors for work on the 30-year project to restore the 1875 narrow gauge locomotive that once served the lumber and tourist operations in the Lake Tahoe Basin and later greeted visitors to

the Nevada State Museum in the late 20th century. After 39 years in the courtyard, it was sent for restoration to what is now the Nevada State Railroad Museum in 1982, where the prized piece was painstakingly restored with authenticity and historic accuracy via a generous grant from the E.L. Wiegand Foundation.

A genuine memento of the Comstock, the Glen-

brook sports its original riveted steam boiler, fired with wood, and its original paint scheme, hand lettered and striped. For certification, it was tested and steamed in November 2014 for the first time since 1925, just a short distance from where it started. Today you can see the fully restored and operable Glenbrook on display at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.



## *A Fond Farewell to Brian Sheldon!*

Brian Sheldon, Facility Supervisor at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, retired in July after nearly 24 years of dedicated service. Brian was instrumental in the formative years of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and has been a dedicated and faithful public servant throughout his career in State service. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

*Thank You, Brian!*

## The Last American: A Personal Odyssey *Rescue in the Rockies: Part I*

By Daniel Markoff

Las Vegas resident Dan Markoff is a long-time member of Nevada's Board of Museums and History. This installment continues "The Last American; A Personal Odyssey," Dan's account of his involvement with the Eureka & Palisade narrow gauge locomotive No. 4 *Eureka*. Prior installments appeared in the *Sagebrush Headlight* from Spring 2005 through Fall 2010.

It has been some time since my last missive about our travels and adventures with Eureka. So, it is time to get you caught up on the wanderings of this 1875 locomotive.

A few years ago we returned to the Durango & Silverton to travel once again through the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Eureka's wanderings had been fairly routine in the intervening years. The locomotive ran wonderfully as is usual. But, this time we had a bit of a change. Ron Bunker who has been Eureka's trail boss (trucker) for two decades brought with him a one lugger motor car. I acquired this Northwestern Ca-

sey Jones motor car with Eureka back in 1986 at my father's insistence. My dad, Mike Markoff, saw the motor car sitting lonely and forlorn at Old Vegas back in 1986 sitting on the rails behind the locomotive and thought it would be a great idea to restore it as well. All I

***"All of a sudden  
there was this  
loud BANG!!!"***

could see was a lot more work getting one more piece of equipment to put it back in service. The piston was frozen solid in the cylinder, the frame was a mess, it had no ignition system and the only



Dan Markoff stands next to Eureka, his 140-year-old steam engine, Eureka & Palisade Railroad locomotive No. 4.

things that did not seem to need fixing were the wheels. Nevertheless, over the years I worked on it little by little. I built a new wood frame, took the engine off and tried to free it up. It seemed hopeless.

Over several days I poured lubricants down the spark plug hole in hopes of freeing the rock solid piston. Having no success, one day I hooked up my compressor and opened a valve to admit the pressure. The whole exercise seemed to be hopeless, but what the heck. I had nothing else going for me. I located the engine so that if the piston came out it would not hit anything, pointing it down range in my back yard. The compressor pumped

and pumped and pumped but nothing happened. I decided after a few hours of this to take a break and sit down and relax, but kept the compressor on. After settling down, all of a sudden there was this loud BANG!!!

I ran outside of my shop and lo and behold, the piston shot out of the cylinder like a cannon ball landing on the far side of my yard. Well, how about that! I gathered up the piston and rod and went back to see how the cylinder looked inside. I figured it would be full of rust and corrosion, but instead it was smooth and clean. What luck!

*Continued at top of next page*

Over the next few weeks I honed the cylinder, cleaned the carburetor and fixed several small parts.

But, then the project went on the back burner of my schedule.

Years passed and I did nothing. Then, one day when we were loading Eureka to go somewhere, I looked at the motor car, which had been stored in my shop behind Eureka, and an idea hit me. Would Ron Bunker be interested in finishing the restoration of this historic motor car? I asked Ron and he enthusiastically agreed. So, he loaded up the motor car and took it home.

For the next several months Ron worked diligently on the car. Then one evening he called me and said, "Listen to this!" In the background I could hear the one lugger popping along running like it was supposed to. Ron did a lot of work on the motor car and fully restored it to operation, using the parts I had already made but also putting the whole thing back together with a

floor, seats, ignition system, etc. I could hardly believe it. I went over to Ron's house and there it was, running like a clock. In the intervening time, my father passed away, but Ron had a nice brass plaque mounted on it that said "Minko" along with my dad's full name and the years of his birth and death. I



Ron Bunker, Dan Markoff and Old Minko.

was much honored that he did this. From that time on we simply call the car Minko, which was my dad's middle name.

One year we took Minko to the Durango & Silverton, but everyone was a little hesitant to let it run on the railroad, although we were allowed to fire it up and put up and down a few

lengths of rail. The following year Ron brought it again to Durango, and I asked if we could run it down the line. At that time the North American Rail Car Owners Association motor car club was present for Railfest. The D&S management said if it could pass their inspection then we could run.

Silverton, with the guy who was criticizing Minko right in front of Ron. Down the track they went. The other cars with their fancy engines, and all their bells, lights, and whistles running smoothly as they usually do. Down the line they went, crossed the Animas River and headed into the canyon. Several hours later, here comes Minko popping and snorting, with a motor car in tow. It turned out that the guy who did all the complaining about Minko broke down. And guess what got to haul his sorry hulk back to town. Old Minko.

With that everyone figured Minko was really able to operate successfully. Ron was given clearance to run Minko trailing behind Eureka's train all the way to Rockwood which covered 3/4ths of the Durango & Silverton Railroad. We could not have foreseen what a fortuitous decision this turned out to be.

*To be continued in the next issue of the Sagebrush Headlight.*

Minko was placed at the end of a long string of motor cars running the line for Railfest. One guy in particular was grumbling about Minko being an old antique that had no business running. It had no cab, no lights, no starter, and none of the fancy stuff these other motor cars had. Anyway, the string of motor cars took off from



# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Steampunk 'N' Trains a Hit

*By Rebecca Bevans*

On June 18, Old Victorian met Science Fiction as Steampunk descended upon the museum when the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, in partnership with the Nevada State Railroad Museum, hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Steampunk NqTrains event. The

foods, and jewelry. Curbside food trucks were on hand, including *All Wrapped Up*, *Bibo Freddo*, and *Taste of Chicago*, to keep the guests fortified. There was live music by CW Bayer in the morning and David Mensing in the afternoon. Professional photos

were available with the fully restored Glenbrook, a unique photo opportunity and keepsake from the event.

A fashion show was hosted in the afternoon where attendees could show off their steampunk attire.

Winners were crowned the Steam King, Steam Queen, and Steam Enchantress. The winners were given a cab ride in the #25 around the mu-



seum. Best of all, visitors were able to take a train ride on their choice of the steam train pulled by the V & T locomotive #25, the McKeen motor car, or both. We would like to thank our special guests, members of High Desert Steam, for attending in full steampunk attire. The event helped raise money for the Friends to support future events and projects at the museum. Next year the Steampunk NqTrains event is proposed to last two days with the possibility of a private Steampunk event in the evening. Thank you all for attending and making this 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Steampunk NqTrains event a memorable one. 🚂



Visitors enjoy a ride in the recently overhauled V&T tunnel car #53 at the Steampunk 'N' Trains Event

gathering was a huge success. There were craft booths set up in Gibson Park where people could buy various types of steampunk gear, books, snack



The McKeen Motor Car cruises past Gibson Park, full of vendors and guests enjoying the Steampunk 'N' Trains festivities

## 4th of July Weekend - Big Steam & McKeen Attract Big Crowds

*By Adam Michalski*

On July 2-4, the museum hosted its annual Fourth of July celebration. It's a weekend that staff and volunteers look forward to each year because the star of the museum, the Inyo, comes to life. This year, however, the museum added another steam



Volunteer Arnt Tonnessen guides the McKeen past the #25 at Wabuska depot.

locomotive to the mix, the Glenbrook. It was a treat for our visitors, as well as the staff and vol-

unteers, to watch the two Nineteenth Century wood burning locomotives ply the rails. Another popular tradition, the Parade of Trains, occurred on the mornings of July 3 and July 4.

The Parade of Trains featured the Inyo, No. 25, and the beautifully restored McKeen Motor Car, much to the delight of our visitors. Alternating runs between the No. 25 and the McKeen Motor Car each day topped off a fun-filled Fourth of July celebration.

For the third year in a row the museum offered an all-inclusive wristband for sale. For \$15 each day, adults received admission to the museum and unlimited train rides aboard No. 25 and the McKeen Car. On



The Two Beauties - Glenbrook & Inyo Steamed Up

July 3 alone the museum hosted over 500 visitors, many of whom took multiple train rides, suggesting that the all-inclusive wristband is a great value and encourages visitors to spend the entire day at the museum.

We could not host such an event without the assistance of our extraordinary group of volunteers. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped the museum during the Fourth of July Weekend Celebration! It was such a tremendous success! 🚂

## Upcoming Events at the Nevada State Railroad Museum

### Jazz! & Beyond: Carson City Music Festival - Live Music in Gibson Park

- Lucky Diamond & the Gents O' Jive  
Friday, August 12  
4:00 - 6:00 pm
- Impromptu on the Rails  
Friday, August 19  
4:00 - 6:00 pm

- Nevada Nosh Curbside Café - Both Nights

### Labor Day Weekend, September 3 - 5

- Steam Train Rides
- Glenbrook Steamed-up for Public Viewing

### Harvest Train, October 15 & 16, 22 & 23

- Steam Train Rides
- Pumpkin Patch
- Craft Vendors
- Food Trucks

### Nevada Day Weekend, October 28 & 29

- McKeen Motor Car Rides
- Free Museum Admission



Lucky Diamond & the Gents O' Jive  
Performing at NSRM, August 12!



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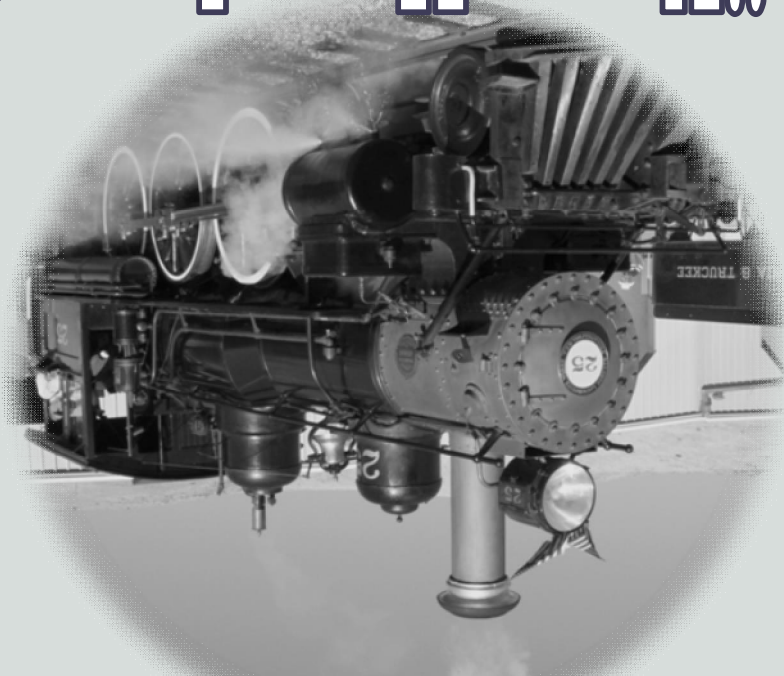
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Museum Members: \$450

Contact: Adam Michalski  
[amichalski@nevadaculture.org](mailto:amichalski@nevadaculture.org)  
775.687.6953, Ext. 224



# "Your Hand on the Throttle"

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