THE SOUNDER

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Spring 2026

North American Cabooses

PAGE 8

What is a Cloche?

PAGE 5

NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM

Preserving Railway History Since 1957

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **A Note From the Executive Director**
4 **Preserving History**
5 **From the Collection**
6 **From the Archives**
7 **In the Workshop**
8 **North American Cabooses**
10 **Special Events**
11 **Events & Exhibits**
12 **Museum Updates**
13 **Bookstore Highlight**
14 **Volunteer News**
15 **Jr. Sounder**
16 **Stay Connected**

The Northwest Railway Museum acknowledges it is built on the traditional lands of the Snoqualmie Tribe and other Coast Salish peoples. The Museum's railway runs through land and features considered sacred to the beliefs, values, and heritage of the Snoqualmie Tribe and other First Nations.

Summer Train Schedule

Saturday & Sunday — April 2026 - October 2026

North Bend

10:30am	**12:30pm**	**2:30pm**

Snoqualmie

11:00am	**1:00pm**	**3:00pm**

** Prices and schedule may vary on special event dates, visit TrainMuseum.org for more details.*

CONTACT US

Have questions or feedback? We'd love to hear from you.

You may contact us at: info@TrainMuseum.org or 425-888-3030 ext. 7202.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges funding and support received from:

Snoqualmie Tribe · 4Culture King County Lodging Tax · City of Snoqualmie Lodging Tax Fund · King County · Washington Trust for Historic Preservation · dahp

and the many individuals and businesses who give generously each year.

If you wish to give a gift, please visit TrainMuseum.org/Support

THE SOUNDER

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THE NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM MISSION

To operate a nationally significant museum and heritage railway where the public experiences captivating exhibits and educational programs that confront the impactful and challenging history of railways in shaping the Pacific Northwest, actively engaging the community and inspiring future generations to preserve this transformative heritage.

The railway changed everything

NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Birds are Tweeting, but I would enjoy connecting with each of you in person!

Spring has arrived and this new season brings new energy with active school trains, weekend excursions, and milder weather. I thank all our volunteers who have been busy in the Conservation and Restoration Workshop, along the track, in the office, aboard the train, and in the exhibit hall working on a variety of projects to help ensure 2026 is a successful year!

On the campaign front, I am thrilled to announce that the Museum's Board of Directors has collectively built a campaign gift exceeding $840,000 in support of Tracks to the Future. Their commitment to this legacy project is a testament to their leadership, and to the expansion of educational programs and experiences for broader audiences. We are busy building relationships within the community and applying for private philanthropy and public grants. Next year marks the Museum's 70th anniversary, and we have a few key projects as our focus for this campaign:

- **Railway infrastructure:** Since October, crews have been busy upgrading the busiest crossings in North Bend and Snoqualmie. This has been a huge undertaking, but vital for the safety of our visitors and the communities. These improvements were made possible with support from the Washington State Department of Transportation, and in partnership with our colleagues in the Cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie. Related work in the next year will also include bridge and track upgrades, completion of the Snoqualmie Depot renovations, and improvements at the North Bend Depot.
- **Puget Sound Electric Railway Interurban Car 523:** We are just shy of $900,000 to complete the restoration this amazing self-propelled artifact. We aim to get this electric car fully operational by the summer of 2027 to expand train operations between Snoqualmie and North Bend, three days per week on weekdays.
- **Turntable arriving later in 2026:** Weighing 150,000 lbs. and 85' in length, this steel structure marks a pivotal step towards realizing the Museum's long-held dream of a new exhibit gallery and building, The Roundhouse. Transportation is being coordinated with the Washington State Department of Transportation to be conducted at night to minimize disruptions and maximize safety.

I am sharing these updates with you because you are important to us and to our future. This spring, we are launching a listening tour, reaching out to our volunteer and donor community to meet with you personally, share more about our plans, and invite your thoughts. I look forward to connecting with you soon. Please expect to hear from one of our leadership team members about scheduling a time to meet.

The train is arriving,

Richard

Richard R. Anderson
Executive Director

PRESERVING HISTORY

Never A Slow Season at the NRM!

The Advancement team has been hard at work starting the year off with a bang. Our goal is to apply to more than fifty grants in 2026; so as you can imagine, the team has been highly focused on pursuing that objective.

In the past three months, we have heard word from several of our supporters and sponsors about successful grants during this awards cycle. From 4Culture, the Museum has been awarded multiple separate grants: *Curiosity Pass* for K-12 education and field trip support, *Cultural Support* to enhance our partnership with the Snoqualmie Valley School District and creating career pathways into the heritage sector, *Sustained Support* for operational scaffolding, and *Building for Equity* for our Tracks to the Future campaign. From the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, we were awarded full funding from the *Valerie Sivinski Fund* for a window preservation workshop to be hosted in September 2026, led by Sarah Steen of the King County Landmarks Commission.

ArtsWA, Washington state's arts and culture department, also recently awarded us funding to host an America250 program: Keep an eye out for our Eric Ode concert at Snoqualmie Depot on July 1st! This event will feature live music, historic toys & games, arts & crafts, and much, much more.

Additionally, our long-time sponsor Columbia Bank has once again offered their support for our Story Time program, which we host every first, third, and fifth Wednesday of the month. This program is growing, with our turnout topping over fifty participants at our last few events. Since 2023, the education team has grown program visitation by 600% and we look on track to accomplish even greater numbers this year!

You also may have heard a rumor about an Amtrak Cascades Talgo train designer - Cesar Vergara, pictured right - event later this year. We are excited to confirm that Cesar will be presenting a program at the Train Shed Exhibit Hall on Tuesday July 28, stay tuned for more details. The program will also feature a new exhibit for our Amtrak Cascades Series VI Talgo Bistro car, featuring the work of Cesar himself, J. Craig Thorpe, vintage advertisements, and more! Guests will be able to walk inside Talgo and enjoy the immersive environment including the activation of Talgo's iconic lights for the first time in six years! The Advancement team is hard at work fundraising for this event. If you would like to be involved or donate to the project, please contact me at VJ@TrainMuseum.org. Keep an eye on our socials for more information about registration and program highlights.

You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles,

VJ Kopacki
Museum Administrative Officer

What is a Cloche?

By Emily B., Collections Registrar

A cloche is a dome-shaped cover for dishes to keep food warm. One of the Museum's latest acquisitions is a ceramic cloche that matches the plate and bowl currently on display in the Train Shed Exhibit Hall. This cover features pink waterfowl in flight, a design called "Traveler". Though it does not have a maker's mark on it, the cloche does match the dish sets manufactured by Syracuse China.

A modern serving cloche generally has a handle atop it, while this one instead has a hole in the center. While not stated, the most likely reason is that this hole allows steam to escape, keeping the condensation down within. The punch-out holes in a modern takeout container serve the same function.

Each railway company used uniquely designed china to distinguish its brand from other passenger routes, as dining on the train was part of the passenger experience. Syracuse China made the "Traveler" design specifically for the Milwaukee Road dining cars, and it was used on the Hiawatha passenger trains. As part of the "Econo-Rim" line, these dishes were made to fit into the tight space available on dining car tables. The ceramic was also built to withstand being jostled around on a moving train.

If you would like to see more railway dinnerware, including some of the other designs from this series, you can see them on exhibit at the Train Shed Exhibit Hall.

(Above) The pink waterfowl seen across most of the pieces in this china collection. It depicts a Canada goose.

(Below) The reverse side of the cover, the silhouettes of evergreen trees are the other iconic imagery from the Traveler series.

(Northwest Railway Museum Collection 2026.009.001)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Door Seals

A Simple Security Solution

By Laura C., Collections Assistant

In an age where everything is becoming increasingly computerized, sometimes the security devices that have been in use for over 100 years remain the most effective. One such device used on the railway to secure freight is the door seal.

Door seals are a device applied to a rail car, trailer, or container door that helps prevent the door from being tampered with. They are designed so that the door cannot be opened without breaking the seal. The materials they are made out of depend on what level of security is needed. For loads that do not require much security, plastic or tin seals can be used. These seals do not provide any protection from theft and are only used to indicate whether someone has tried to access the car without authorization. For loads that require higher levels of security, seals made with heavier-duty materials such as heavy cast steel are used. These are removed either with a key or an electric cutter.

Every seal is inscribed with the name of the rail company and a unique serial number. As soon as a train car has been loaded or inspected, a seal is applied. Every time a seal is applied, removed, or changed, it is recorded. By checking the seals against the record throughout the journey, the railway company can ensure loads remain secure.

Simple, yet effective.

A selection of six door seals, most from the Chicago, Milwaukee, Saint Paul, & Pacific Railway. (Northwest Railway Museum, 2025.001.100.a-f)

DID YOU KNOW?

The Museum's very own railway line was once used to ship a herd of elk into the upper valley to assist in repopulation efforts.

Winter Workshop Roundup

By Michael H., Educator

The early part of the year may be on the quiet side for the Museum, but that has not stopped the Conservation and Restoration Workshop (CRW) volunteers! They have been working on a variety of projects this winter.

Floyd V. and Ty H. removing windowsills from coach 218.

In January, Spokane, Portland & Seattle coach 218 was moved into the CRW for rehabilitation work on the south side, which is part of the ongoing maintenance required to keep century-old wooden railway cars in service. The siding has been removed, and a new section of side sill has been installed. Once the windows and sills have received attention, new siding will be attached.

As some of the aisle ways next to the bays are very narrow, new narrower scaffolding frames have been created. These frames have already been put to good use while working on 218!

SP&S coach 276 has received a brand-new exterior vestibule door.

Northern Pacific 125's restoration has been moving steadily along. The fuel injector pumps recently returned from being rebuilt and a new sight glass for the coolant in the cab was installed. Inspection of the electrical system is ongoing, and the batteries are being charged. While there is still work to perform before 125 officially enters service, the checklist of items to accomplish before a test start is rapidly shrinking!

New, narrower scaffolding starting to take shape.

North American Cabooses

The caboose was nearing its end when BN 12346 was photographed in Potlatch, ID in September 1984 (NRM Collection 2019.011.1036)

By Michael H., Educator

If there is a defining item of North American railroading, it would be the caboose. No other single item invokes the Golden Age of Railways more so than a caboose bringing up the rear of a freight train. Multiple children's stories involve the adventures (or misadventures!) of a caboose. Many have been converted into cabins or hotel rooms. Some heritage railways even offer the ability to ride in one. But why were they so important?

Before the advent of air braking, railways relied on brakemen to physically set handbrakes atop the cars in all kinds of weather. These workers needed a place to ride between stints. Additionally, the Conductor carried with them documentation for each car's lading. Early crews used any open area aboard a passenger car, but this took up valuable revenue space.

The true origin of the caboose is filled with myth and legend; however, it is generally accepted that the first recorded use of a designated crew car came in the 1840s. Nat Williams, conductor for the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad, took an unused boxcar and turned it into a mobile office. This use quickly caught on, and railways began building their own purpose-built cars.

But these cabooses became more than just mobile offices. Most were assigned to a specific crew, who decorated them like a second home. In remote areas, it was an outpost of supplies for anything that could happen. If a crew was away from their home terminal and there were no railway-supplied lodging accommodations available, their caboose was the hotel.

Oregon, Pacific & Eastern caboose in Cottage Grove, OR, July 1952.
(NRM Collection 2019.011.0694)

Yes, the plural really is cabooses and not cabeese.

Though the Museum does not currently operate a caboose, it has in the past! Here, former Northern Pacific caboose #1203 rolls past Snoqualmie Falls. (NRM Collection 2022.046.018)

Sadly, the venerable caboose was not immune to the march of progress. As trains became faster, the classic wooden design made way for welded steel. Cars went from being crew-assigned to pool availability. Roller bearings reduced the need for brakemen to watch for bearing failures. But it was the computer that doomed the caboose. By the mid-1980s, a little box attached to the rear coupler, transmitting speed and brake pipe pressure, and lineside defect detectors replaced the need for rear-end crews.

Today, the image of a caboose providing the period to a freight train is long gone, but many still do provide service. Most are now designated as "shoving platforms" for long reverse movements. Some carry crews for special cargo. The vast majority, however, cater to enthusiasts who want to experience the romance of the caboose.

"No other single item invokes the Golden Age of Railways more so than a caboose..."

SPECIAL EVENTS

Rock & Roll in the Snoqualmie Valley

All Aboard for a Rockin' Good Time!

Day Out With Thomas: Let's Rock, Let's Roll! Tour is hitting the tracks and bringing the beat to heritage railways across the country! Hop on board a real train ride with Thomas, strike a pose at photo ops, and snag something cool at the exclusive gift shop. Then, keep the beat going at the Music Corner, packed with lawn games, hands-on activities, and music-inspired fun that will have the whole family dancing!

Thomas the Tank Engine has been a Snoqualmie Valley summer staple since 2002 and he isn't slowing down any time soon. Join the Northwest Railway Museum in celebrating music this July as part of the 2026 Day Out With Thomas event! There will be lots of games and fun in store for visitors of all ages, but the Museum cannot do it without help from the dedicated volunteers that keep things running.

As always, the Museum will need many hands to help set up, decorate, and run the event. If you are interested in lending a hand, please reach out to Matt, the Museum's Volunteer and Program Coordinator: **Matt@TrainMuseum.org**!

Day Out With Thomas

July 10-12, 17-19, & 24-26 2026

Thomas the Tank Engine is rolling into the station and bringing the beat to the NRM! Join us for Day Out With Thomas: Let's Rock, Let's Roll! All aboard a real train ride with Thomas, enjoy games, live entertainment, and music-inspired fun!
Tickets live now, get that perfect time slot while you can!
https://TrainMuseum.org/Thomas

Wine Trains

May 8, June 19, & August 21

The Snoqualmie Valley Wine Train rides the rails again this year. Sip local wines, enjoy light refreshments provided by the Museum and local businesses, and learn about the history of the railway in the Pacific Northwest.
Tickets currently on sale for May 8, other dates to follow.

Story Time

1st, 3rd, & 5th Wednesdays at 11am

Enjoy an afternoon out at the Museum's Train Shed Exhibit Hall, meant for rail fans of all ages. Listen to a few stories together, experience a hands-on craft, and take the time to explore what this Museum location has to offer.

As always, Story Time is completely free!

Story Time is sponsored by Columbia Bank this year.

Free Wednesdays

Every Wednesday starting in April

Due to the popularity of the program in 2025, the Museum has decided to bring it back for the 2026 season. Once the Train Shed Exhibit Hall resumes its summer season schedule in April, every Wednesday will be a free admission day for all visitors to the Railway History Campus.

Free Train Shed Wednesdays made possible with support from 4Culture's Doors Open.

MUSEUM UPDATES

Welcome New Board Directors!

Please join us in welcoming not one but TWO new members to the Museum's Board of Directors!

Agnes Kim is a strategy and international market expansion leader at Microsoft within the Xbox organization, where she focuses on growing the gaming ecosystem across global markets. She leads strategic initiatives to expand Xbox's presence in Asia, including China, Korea, Southeast Asia, and India, developing market entry strategies, partnerships, and localized growth frameworks. Her work centers on bringing gaming platforms and services to new audiences through innovative distribution models, international partnerships, and ecosystem development.

Before joining Xbox, Agnes worked across strategy and operations roles focused on scaling digital platforms and consumer businesses. She brings expertise in global market expansion, partnership development, and long-term growth strategy. Agnes is passionate about connecting communities, expanding access to technology and entertainment, and supporting institutions that preserve culture, history, and education.

A multi-generational valley resident, **Cristy Lake** serves as Executive Director of the Snoqualmie Valley Museum and brings more than two decades of professional museum leadership to her work in preservation and public history. She holds an M.A. in Historical Archaeology and previously served as Deputy Director of the Northwest Railway Museum.

Cristy has also served as Chair of the King County Landmarks Commission and is a trustee of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and a member of the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area advisory committee. She brings extensive experience in preservation leadership, interpretive planning, and regional partnerships to the Board.

BOOKSTORE HIGHLIGHT

Come See What's New in the Museum Store

Visit the Depot Bookstore in the Historic Snoqualmie Depot or the Museum Gift Shop inside the foyer of the Train Shed Exhibit Hall to see these new arrivals and so much more!

Historic Artifacts Abound

If you're like some of us and woke up at the age of 30 with perpetual back pain, have spent 30+ years involved with the Museum in some way, or just want to be matchies with your favorite Museum exhibits: This one's for you!

Requested by staff and volunteers alike, the newest addition to the Museum's apparel line is a t-shirt featuring the iconic "PLEASE Do Not Touch Historic Artifact" sign adorning many of the large objects in the collection. The Museum's logo is featured in bold black print on the back of the shirt.

A perfect gift for the historic artifact(s) in your life!

Light at the End of the Tunnel

The Museum debuted a new shirt for the Peak to Peak Express this year. Illustrated by Kacy H. and printed locally by Dark Horse Ink, this shirt features NP 924 enveloped in billowing clouds of steam which coalesce into the shape of a spooky owl. This is the first new long-sleeve tee stocked in a while. It's light and comfortable, perfect for early spring mornings.

And did we mention it glows in the dark?

It gives a new meaning to "that light at the end of the tunnel might just be an oncoming train"!

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers contribute in so many different ways at the Northwest Railway Museum, sometimes for many years. This Sounder features the Museum's volunteers and their stories of connection with and passion for the Museum.

Doug S.

Doug has been a volunteer with the Northwest Railway Museum since his first visit in May 2016.

"When my wife and I first started dating, she introduced me to a friend's husband that worked for BNSF Railway and had been a long time volunteer at the Museum up to that point. I had always been curious about the technical aspects of railroading and he was happy to satisfy my curiosity. For my birthday that year, they surprised me with a steam train ride and I was hooked. I immediately started volunteering for train crew and moved up through the ranks."

Doug S. matching the 4024's bright orange paint scheme in his high-visibility jacket.

"Now that I've worked multiple different freight and light rail positions, I love getting to share my experience with younger generations and see the looks they give when I'm working as a conductor or engineer. It honestly makes me feel like a celebrity and gives me a sense of pride knowing I could inspire others to follow my career path."

PERKS

- **An invitation to the annual volunteer appreciation BBQ in June**
- **10% discount in the Museum's stores**
- **Reciprocal free admission to regional museums during National Volunteer Week in April**
- **Further training and educational opportunities**

Ready to Volunteer?

If you are interested in joining the Northwest Railway Museum's volunteer team, please visit: TrainMuseum.org and fill out an application under the Volunteer tab.

Questions?

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Matt, at Matt@TrainMuseum.org

Volunteer Opportunities

The Museum will soon be back to operating Sunday train excursions in addition to Saturdays. March also marks the start of School Trains if you are looking for weekday volunteer opportunities!

Spring showers bring many weeds and flowers, and summer will be upon us before we know it. If you enjoy gardening, the Museum can always use a hand keeping the Snoqualmie Depot grounds and the Railway History Campus looking neat and tidy.

There are a couple wine trains planned for the spring and early summer season if you are interested in working with staff to assist with food preparation.

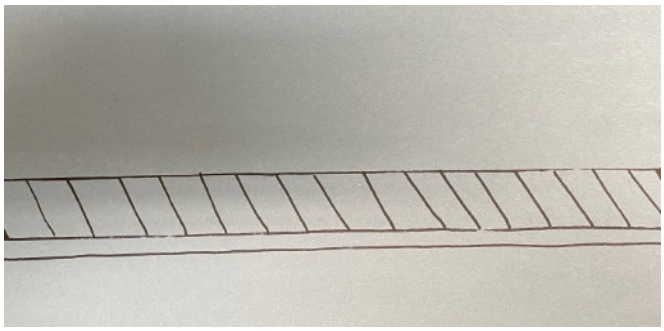
In June we'll need all hands on deck to get ready for this year's rockin' and rollin' Day Out With Thomas celebration!

There is always a chance to help out at the Museum, even if it is as small as picking up trash as you walk by.

Jr. Sounder

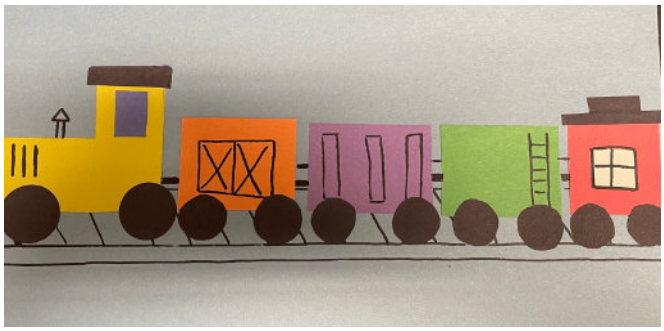
Fantastic Freight

Did you know that trains carry things all across the continent? Historically, trains carried everything from people to animals, food, and building materials. Trains that carried people were called passenger trains, and trains that carried everything else were called freight trains. Freight is goods and supplies that are shipped in large sizes, typically over long distances. Freight trains still run today! And you can make your own freight train at home!



Materials:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers
- Anything you would like your train to carry
    - Ex. Foam shapes, pipe cleaners, and stickers



Instructions:

1. Draw a track for your train to run on.

2. Build the body of your train with different colored construction paper. The more freight cars you make, the more you can haul!

    Tip: Adding different details to each car makes them unique!

3. Glue your train and its wheels to your paper.

4. Now that you have your train, add freight for it to haul! This can be anything you have around the house. From stickers and foam shapes to small sticks and rocks, let your imagination run wild!

5. Add some steam and your freight train is ready to chug down the track!

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Snoqualmie, WA 98065

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THE SOUNDER

The railway changed everything

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