

YESTERDAY & TOMORROW

Remembering the past... Looking to the future



TOWER-SOUDAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE NO. 2, MAY 2026

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Enjoy an Outstanding Array of Events and Activities this Summer!

As we welcome another spring in Tower-Soudan, I am filled with excitement for what promises to be a jam-packed and meaningful summer for the Tower-Soudan Historical Society.

We have an outstanding lineup of programs and events for folks of all ages. From our ever-popular Train Tales, the newer events – Miner's Breakfast and Lake Vermilion Community Bash – plus the updated Settler's Cabin adjacent to the Tower Train Depot Museum, there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Museum hours will be 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Friday-Monday beginning in early July following restoration project.

This summer also marks two important milestones in preservation. The final phase of the Historic Fire Hall restoration on Main Street is underway, bringing new life to one of Tower's most significant landmarks. As part of this exciting transformation, City Hall will be moving back into its original 1895 City Hall space, and the restored fire hall space will be the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion History Education Center reconnecting our past with our present.

The Historic Train Depot Museum building exterior makeover will begin this summer and the restoration of our historic train cars will continue—projects that preserve the stories that make our community unique, and ensure that these beloved landmarks remain safe, welcoming, and vibrant for years to come.

- We invite you to stay connected throughout the season. Watch for announcements on Facebook, in The Timberjay, and on our website
- <https://towersoudanhistory.com> for updates on programs and special events.
- Most importantly, we invite you to get involved. Whether you are a full-time local resident or a summer visitor who wants to give back to the local community, consider joining us as a volunteer depot greeter this year. Your friendly welcome helps create meaningful experiences for visitors and strengthens our mission to preserve and share the rich history of our community.
- Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you this summer!
- Warmly,
Nancy Larson
- Nancy Larson
- President
-



See Our
Full Summer
Schedule on
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The Historic Train Depot Museum and its historic train cars in Tower will be the site for several delightful events this summer!

TOWERSOUDANHISTORY.COM • TOWERSOUDANHS@GMAIL.COM

TOWER • SOUDAN • TRAIN DEPOT • FIRE HALL • LAKE VERMILION • MINING

HISTORICAL NUGGETS

TOWER TRAIN DEPOT MUSEUM

The Duluth & Iron Range Railroad Company Passenger Station

In the late 1800's, the area around Tower began to emerge as a tourist destination. Roads were not plentiful in the area; rail travel was the best and most reliable mode of transportation at that time. As years went by, tourism was promoted. Word had spread about Lake Vermilion and the other beautiful lakes in the area, where the fish and game were plentiful and the air was healthy. Tourism to the area was given an extra push by extensive promotion by the D&IR, beginning in 1908. The railroad, perhaps sensing an expansion opportunity, was an early and ardent supporter of Lake Vermilion tourism. The D&IR, leading the growth of that industry decades ahead of other Minnesota recreational centers, would play a significant role in Minnesota resort tourism.

The 1916 depot was built specifically as a passenger depot for the cost of \$10,000. As was typical for this style of depot, a ticketing office was centrally located in the building; in Tower, this room also served as the post office, with a central double desk and mail sorting bins on one wall. Tickets were purchased through a ticket window in the main corridor "Ticket Area" which connected the women's and family's waiting room to the southeast and the single men's waiting room to the northwest.

The baggage room was located off the men's waiting room at the northwest end of the depot and had some freight capacity, though presumably larger freight was handled at the terminus of the spurs.



- Tower bolstered this service with a thriving city harbor, adjoining the depot, where passengers could disembark and then utilize boat services to get to Lake Vermilion's busy lakeside resorts, many of which were only accessible by water.

- The booming tourism of the first part of the twentieth century began to decline by the late 1930s- early 1940s. By then, improved road and highway service, greater automobile ownership and usage, and increased leisure time meant that much of the state had opened to tourism, and Lake Vermilion no longer held a competitive advantage. With declining ridership the DM& IR ceased passenger service in 1951 and discontinued freight service for iron ore in 1962 after the Soudan Mine closed.

- The Tower Train Station remained unused until 1966 when DM&IR donated the building to the City of Tower. The depot was added on the National Register of Historic Places June 14, 2013. The TSHS entered into a lease agreement with the City of Tower in 2007 to operate as a historical museum. Displayed on tracks adjacent to the structure is a collection of restored cars associated with uses at the depot, including: a steam engine with a coal tender, passenger car, worker's car, and cabooses.

- The Train Depot Museum at 404 Pine Street is open weekends from Memorial Weekend – Labor Day 10am-4pm. Come and explore the rich history of the area including train museum and old steam locomotive; historical museum highlighting pioneer mining, logging, early settler and American Indian artifacts, photos, historical documents relating to Tower-Soudan and Lake Vermilion area.

- Free admission and donations are welcome, so that we can continue to tell its story.


SUMMER EVENTS
 OF THE TOWER-SOUDAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE

Train Tales, in the Tower Civic Center

June 3 3:15-3:45 pm – “Miners and Trains” – Karel Winkelaar, leader, “The Little Engine That Could.” Cookies from Sulus and free book giveaway.

June 24 – 3:15-3:45pm. – “I Love My Pet” – Linda Haugen, storyteller with puppets. Bring a picture of your pet! Pet treats to take home to cats & dogs and free book giveaway.

JULY

July 13-19 **TSHS Heritage Week** – Visit the newly renovated Pioneer Cabin near the Train Depot Museum!

July 15 3:15-3:45 pm. – **Train Tales** – “Our Community” – “Stone Soup” – Richard Hanson, storyteller. Bring a canned good to contribute to the Food Pantry or pick one out from our supply. Treats and free book giveaway.

July 16 9 am – **Miner’s Breakfast**, in the Tower Historic Train Depot, Passenger Car 81, free hot breakfast

July 16 10 am – **Lecture by Kelsey Cooke** – “The Life of the Housewife in the Old Mining Towns” Train Depot Museum Art Show in the Man Car with 50+ Cream of Wheat ad and vintage apron collection.

July 18 noon – **Old Settler’s Reunion** at McKinley Park. Charlemagne’s 52 Club tickets for sale.

AUGUST

August 1 1-4 pm – **Lake Vermilion Community Bash** at Gruben’s Marina. Food Truck, Wine Tasting, Silent Auction, Lake Trivia Contest, Art Auction, Charlemagne 52 tickets for sale.

August 5 3:15-3:45 pm – **Train Tales** – “Christmas in Summer.” “Twas the Night Before Xmas” with Louise Gately. Surprise visit by Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Candy canes, chocolate milk and free book giveaway.

August 28 2 pm – **Train Tales for Grown-ups** – “Native American Men, Women and Children – Past and Present” – Linda LeGarde Grover, an Anishinaabe author, enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, professor emeritus of American Indian Studies, Uof M

SEPTEMBER

September 4 **Train Depot Museum** closes for the season.

September 8 5 pm – **Annual Meeting Dinner** and program, “The Miner’s Memorial Project,” presented by Elaine McGillivray and Committee. Best Bid Auction, History Trivia Game and prizes.

Lake Vermilion Community Bash

Thanks to everyone who showed up at the Lake Vermilion Community Bash last summer. It was such a fun gathering of folks from the region and from all over the country who call Lake Vermilion their summer home. And it was so successful that we are going to do it again this summer on Saturday, August 1, 1-4 pm. at Gruben’s Marina.

Come enjoy a wine tasting and delicious treats from Emma’s Kitchen food truck while you play a trivia game, earn prizes and bid on some fabulous auction items like a cruise on the Rock Lobster (see photo of last year’s winners below), a one-hour massage, mailboat tickets, original art and many more! And stop by the Charlemagne’s 52 Club table and purchase raffle tickets.

The admission is free! Donations and Tower-Soudan Historical Society membership purchases are welcome!

We have the good fortune of enjoying this magnificent lake and it will live on long after us. Let’s keep telling its story. Come and help preserve our heritage while enjoying a wonderful afternoon with your neighbors and maybe make some new friends. We look forward to seeing you there!



2025 Rock Lobster Cruise winners.

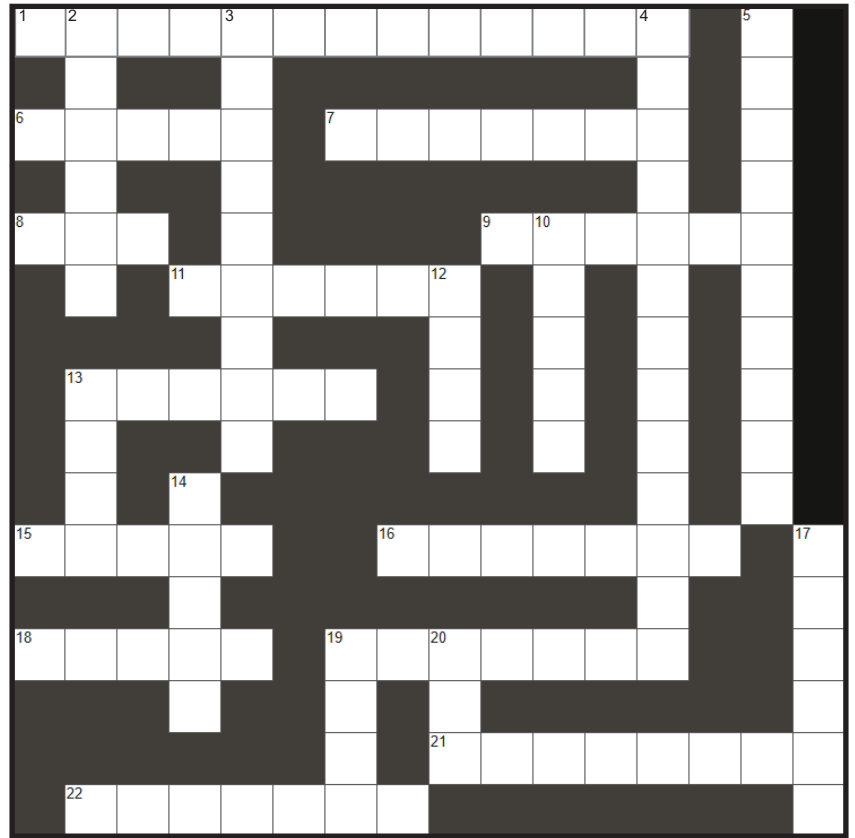
CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

ACROSS

- 1 Launch point from Lake Vermilion to Trout Lake portage
- 6 The Vermilion _____ is the lake's only outflow
- 7 Favored fish by anglers on Lake Vermilion
- 8 Number of lakes within Pine Island
- 9 Harbor for boats
- 11 Lake Vermilion is in the Canadian _____
- 13 Rocky island in Big Bay inhabited by cormorants and gulls
- 15 Length in miles of largest island on the lake
- 16 Fish introduced to the lake in 1957
- 18 Lake Vermilion is the _____ largest lake in Minnesota
- 19 The only island resort on the lake
- 21 How islanders receive their mail in the summer months
- 22 By what marina is the only bridge leading to one of the islands

DOWN

- 2 Tribe that called the lake "the evening sun tinting the water a reddish color"
- 3 Lake Vermilion is in Minnesota's _____ Region
- 4 Only 18 hole public golf course located on Lake Vermilion
- 5 Section of Lake Vermilion that connects the east and west parts
- 10 Lake Vermilion surface water area is approximately 40,000 _____
- 12 Boating structure on the lake
- 13 Largest island on Lake Vermilion
- 14 Maximum _____ of the lake is seventy-six feet
- 17 Bay with boathouses built by employees of the Soudan Iron Mine
- 19 Minnesota's state bird seen on Lake Vermilion
- 20 Structure erected in 1890 to maintain water levels



The Lake of the Sunset Glow by Mary St Onge
Powered by PuzzleMe™

ANSWERS

16 MUSKIES	4 THE WILDERNESS	1 MOCCASIN POINT	ACROSS
15 DAM	20 ARROWHEAD	18 FIFTH	
13 LOON	2 OJIBWE	5 OKA NARROWS	
17 STUNTZ	DOWN	10 AGRES	
14 DEPTH		19 LUDLOWS	
13 PINE	22 GRUBENS	7 RIVER	
12 DOCK	21 MAILBOAT	8 TWO	
11 SHIELD	7 WALLEYE	9 MARINA	
9 MARINA		11 SHIELD	
8 TWO		13 POTATO	
7 WALLEYE		15 SEVEN	
6 RIVER			

Tower-Soudan Historical Society Membership Application

TODAY'S DATE _____

PRIMARY NAME _____

SECONDARY NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP CODE _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

This membership is: New Renewed

Membership Level: Individual - \$15 Couple - \$30

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer? Yes No

Please mail this form with your check to:

Tower-Soudan Historical Society
P.O. Box 465 • Tower, MN 55790

*Memberships support the mission of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society and allow us to preserve, share and celebrate our history with the community to inspire future generations. **Thank you!***