

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

June 2022



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Keeping The Fleet Rolling

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

I would like to thank our growing group of operators who have or plan to operate this year. Currently, we have 110 active volunteers up 5 from last month as the newly trained operators move into active service. There are only 374 shifts remaining to be filled.

Operations so far this year have gone well, not great. Weather, which is always a key determinant on the number of riders we serve at both Como-Harriet and Excelsior, is even more important this time of year as our operations are limited to weekends. On Memorial Day at CHSL we can serve around a 1,000 riders if the weather cooperates. The year we had ~500 guests – which is good, not great. Overall, however, operations could have been a lot worse had it not been for the heroic efforts of our mechanical team members who have quickly and without material impact to our schedule resolved several mechanical issues which threatened to take cars out of service. Brake problems with car No. 1300 and electrical concerns with PCC No. 322 have occurred over the last 1-2 weeks. I would like to recognize the team at CHSL who responded quickly to several problems: **Pat Cosgrove, Mark Digre, Ben Franske, Karl Jones, Russ Isbrandt, Mike Miller, John Prestholdt, and Dennis Stephens.** Thank you all!



The mechanical team at Excelsior of **Jerry Draeger, Carl Floren, Scott Heiderich, Mike Kimitch, Steve Mages, Dave McCollum, Howie Melco, Scott Wardrope, and Dick Zawacki** also have been very busy working on some longer-term improvements. Some of the activities have included working on Mesaba Rwy No. 10's trucks, including degreasing, re-greasing, and preparing them to be placed under No. 10 so the car body can be moved around in the cold barn as part of the track 3 alignment and concrete floor projects, rebuilding the shop welder, repairing the two rail bonds damaged by winter plowing, repairs and improvements in the sales and displays area of the cold barn, restoring an old streetcar bench for a display in the carbarn, overhead wire and track inspection and maintenance, and preventive maintenance work on No. 265, No. 78, the speeder, and the grounds equipment.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those returning operating, shop and track/overhead maintenance volunteers in advance for their time and effort. For those of you unable to return this season, I look forward to working with you in 2023. Be safe!



Duluth No. 265 flanked by crab apple trees in bloom. Nice!

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Karen
Kertzman Photo



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Unexpected small pleasures. What I really enjoy about running the streetcar are the unexpected small pleasures that seem to happen on every shift. Last week I worked a charter for 2nd graders from Nicollet, Minnesota. It was their 21st annual visit. As conductor **Louis Hoffman** was backing up the grade from the archery range to the Berry Bridge, he suddenly stopped the car. A mother duck was trying to lead her newly hatched brood across the track to the stream that runs from Bde Maka Ska to Lake Harriet. The ducklings couldn't climb over the rails. Louis left the streetcar, scooped them up and set them down on the other side, to the delight of a carload of excited witnesses.



I was first shift foreman on the Sunday before Memorial Day. Looking across Queen Avenue I saw our neighbors setting up a lemonade stand for their kids. Problem was, there was no traffic, so they weren't getting any business. I walked over and invited their mom to set up at the depot, next to the bicycle rack. They did and business was brisk. Not only did we make friends with another neighbor, but they insisted on donating some of their proceeds to the museum.

We received a letter from 5-year old Ella, who lives in the neighborhood and rides regularly. But she had a complaint. "I am disappointed that there are not any women streetcar operators. I think you should change that—this summer. I'll be checking to see if there are any girls." I forwarded the letter to **Linda Ridlehuber**, who wrote back to Ella and explained that we do have women operators, and told her when some were scheduled so she could see for herself. We haven't met Ella in person yet, but expect it to be memorable.

Kudos to the shop crew. Recently the Como-Harriet shop crew saved the day when both of our active streetcars broke down at the same time. PCC No. 322 suffered a voltage drop, rendering it inoperable. Turned out to be a new battery that had lost its charge and had to be replaced under warranty. The next day Car 1300's air compressor quit, due to a bad motor brush. This left the car without brakes. The compressor also powers the doors, whistle, gong, rail sander and windshield wiper. In both cases the shop guys diagnosed the problem and fixed it within a day. We lost only one shift. That kind of technical knowledge, combined with the willingness of our volunteers to interrupt their other activities, made all the difference. Special thanks to **John Prestholdt, Mark Digre, Pat Cosgrove, Russ Isbrandt, Karl Jones, Mike Miller** and **Ben Franske**.

Tokens postscript. The item on tokens in my last column brought a response from member **Robert Crosby**. He has a family connection to the tokens from the 1930s. He wrote, "You mention E. A. Crosby for the '30s. He was (TCRT) Treasurer. He hired D. J. Strouse, who became president. 'Uncle Ed' was my great uncle." He then offered to swap a few of his D. J. Strouse-signed tokens for some signed by E. A. Crosby, which we did. Once again this affirms my belief in time travel. 🕒



Be Kind To Our Web-footed Friends!

Here's **Louis Hoffman** gently putting one of the eleven (!) ducklings over both rails just North of the William Berry Parkway bridge. See the story on this kind act in **Aaron Isaacs'** column above. (Aaron Isaacs photo)

Excelsior Update



At ESL we often partner with the Excelsior Lake Minnetonka Historical Society. It just makes sense since we share a location and we both are historical museums. This photo is from their open house celebrating their 50th Anniversary on May 25th. The folks are all current ELMHS volunteers or board members. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*



Here's (L to R) **Jerry Draeger, Dick Zawacki, Howie Melco, Scott Heiderich** and **Scott Wardrope** contemplating what's next for this Baldwin interurban power truck that will go under Mesaba Rwy No. 10. *(Karen Kertzman Photo)*



Who knew? Mesaba No.10 has a floor. After many years of being used for storage, **Howie Melco, Jim Kertzman** and crew are cleaning out Mesaba No.10 in preparation to move to track 2. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*



Dick Zawacki put his woodworking skills to use building a farebox stand for a carbn display . *(Karen Kertzman Photo)*

- June 11-----CHSL Owl Service—nighttime ops from 9:00 AM to 12-midnight
- June 25-----CHSL streetcar cleaning from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM—George Isaacs carbarn
- July 4-----Special July Fourth service at CHSL and ESL
- July 9-----CHSL Owl Service—nighttime ops from 9:00 AM to 12-midnight
- July 23-----Story Time Trolley at ESL. See MSM website for run times and sign-up

WORTHY OF NOTE

Streetcar Cleaning is important to our Museum's streetcars for a host of good reasons but especially because a clean car provides our Museum with a good image, i.e., it's good PR. Anyone can come to help with streetcar cleaning, including family members and friends. Next session is Saturday, June 25th. It's not hard work and can be fun.

Owl service at CHSL is very special. There's something about riding No. 1300 in the dark through the glen and it seems, well, romantic! The streetcar is lighted and gently rocking, rail joints clicking and the slight odor of ozone from the motors may not bring back memories, but it can make memories for the right people. Try it—you'll like it. 📍

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization with the mission to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's electric street and interurban railway history. To accomplish this mission the Museum operates historic streetcars at two demonstration railways.

COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE
Excelsior Streetcar Line

For more information on our Museum, our collection of historic streetcars and our demonstration railways, visit our website: www.TrolleyRide.org

The museum's business address and telephone number are:

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Streetcar CURRENTS
 June—2022

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
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Please send items to the editor **Jim Vaitkunas** at the following address:

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Owl Service at CHSL

Owl service at CHSL begins on Saturday, June 11th. Here's a scene from one of 2021's Owl Service nights. Looks like fun!
 (Rod Eaton photo)



Kid's Club Event

Louis Hoffman (L) and **Rod Eaton** (Center) show some of the Kid's Club members how a railroad switch works and then let the kids try it out.
 (Anja Curiskis photo)



MSM at SPUD Train Day

We had a sales table at the train show in the concourse of the St. Paul Union Depot (SPUD) during the Train Day festival on June 5th. Staffed by **Bill** (shown) and **Rose Arends**, we sold a good number of the surplus railroad history books donated to MSM over the years.
 (Rose Arends photo)