

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

June 2023



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

We Are Off & Running and Doing Great!

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As you know, our ridership performance is due to a large degree to the weather. I like to think it is our friendly volunteers, our special locations, and our magnificently maintained streetcars that bring visitors to our museum, which is true, but we are unfortunately heavily influenced by the weather. This is especially true for our holiday service on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day. Ignoring COVID, the last several Memorial Days have been a wash out. This past weekend was, however, a glorious exception as we sold over 500 fares on Memorial Day at CHSL bringing the total ridership for May to 3,034 (counting both Como-Harriet and Excelsior). This volume makes 2023 the 10th best total for May since 2010.



I would like to thank all of the volunteers who worked to get the streetcars ready and the operators who have volunteered to make May a success. This is also the time of year when the efforts of the training team begin to bear fruit with the graduation of our new operating volunteers. Thanks for the thorough planning and hard work led by Training Superintendent **Bill Pekarna** and his team of trainers: at CHSL **Linda Ridlehuber, Jerry Betz, Andy Jacob, Dave Higgins, Pat Cosgrove, Rod Eaton,** and **Fred Beamish** for PCC training; at ESL **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman**; and for POS training; **Rose Arends**. If we didn't have this great bunch of volunteers, we would not have new, qualified operators. On average it takes 12-18 hours of on-car training per individual to gain Operator certification. Entering the last week of May, the training department has conducted approximately 55 (2-hour) training sessions for the 20 students in the program. In addition to training new hires, the training department has also been active in recertification (required) and refresher (optional) training.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those returning volunteers in advance for their time and effort. If you can, please try and operate once or twice a month. There are only 395 shifts remaining open in the 2023 season. Have fun. Be safe. ☺



Excelsior Prepares For The 2023 Season



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(ABOVE) Scott Wardrope, Jim Kertzman, Tom Heimer and Jerry Draeger are checking the track and lubricating the switches. (Karen Kertzman Photo)

(RIGHT) Recertification on No. 78 with Jim Kertzman, Tom Gephart & Pete Cahill. (Karen Kertzman Photo)



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Doors Open very successful. Our museum was one of 84 Doors Open Minneapolis venues on May 13-14 and it was very successful. Visitors reported to the Linden Hills depot. From there they were given the choice of walking along the track to the car barn, driving up Queen Avenue to the car barn or buying a streetcar ride and being dropped off at the car barn. The large majority took the streetcar, over 800 in all. Total ridership for the two days was over 900, despite losing over three hours of service to rain.

Once at the car barn our volunteer guides showed them around. I'm not sure we were able to give formal tours to all of them, but we tried. Every streetcar dropped off 10-20, while others arrived in scattered groups on foot. I want to thank the shop crew for straightening and cleaning the car barn and setting it up for our visitors. The car barn guides were **Bill Arends, Nick Mainguy, Tom Schramm, Dennis Stephens** and me.

Because the event ran 10 AM to 5 PM both days, an extra 10-12:30 early shift was added. A special thank you goes to Foremen **Bruce Allyn** and **Linda Ridlehuber**, who extended their Sunday shifts when we couldn't fill the 12:30-4:30 foreman slot. That shift also didn't have a station agent, so **Rose Arends** filled in. Put it together and 14 of our volunteers covered a total of 34 shifts during the two days.

One pleasant surprise was the high level of retail sales, about \$1500 of merchandise plus two Mottoman's Certificate charters. Overall it was a good experience and we hope to do it again next May.

ASL event recap. The experimental first American Sign Language event was held at CHSL on May 21. About 40 deaf and hard of hearing persons attended. The format was hourly departures from the depot at 1, 2, 3, and 4pm, alighting at the car barn for a tour and returning to the depot on the following car. They were accompanied by a guide (me) and an ASL interpreter. The goal is to reach out to a population that otherwise would have a hard time accessing our history in person.

Logistically it went pretty well, although it was necessary to hold the car at the depot to hit the departure times. That didn't work for the 3pm trip, because regular ridership was extremely heavy and the car filled to capacity with ten minutes to spare, so we left early. That disappointed some people who arrived after we left and had to wait an hour for the next ASL departure.

The deaf passengers seemed to really appreciate the event. We'll do it one more time this summer without car barn tours, just riding the regular trips. The number of fares by deaf passengers only covered about a third of the interpreter's cost. We received a \$500 grant from the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council so there will be no loss this year. If we do the event next year, we'll have to get new grants or decide to subsidize it. Excelsior 🌱



**Doors
Open
May
2023**



Photos by
Brian Krynsinski

MSM Photo Update



Memorial Day 2023 witnessed TCRT No. 1300 running at near full capacity. Looks like a happy crowd, eh? (Mike Buck photo)



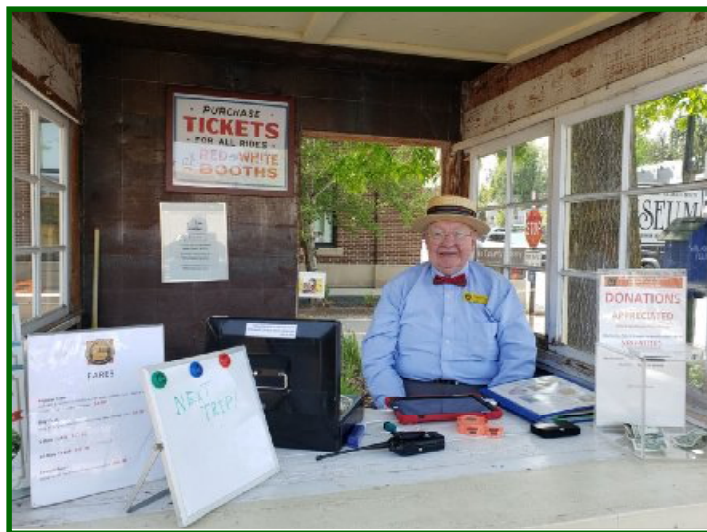
On Memorial Day **Andy Jacob** is seen here giving his end-of-line talk. It must have been good because even the two hounds are paying rapt attention. (Mike Buck photo)



Selby Tunnel in St. Paul. Normally not seen but in this photo we can see the lights placed on top of the running rails. (Nathan Blank photo)



Here's a happy Memorial Day passenger load aboard ESL's Duluth No. 78. **Tom Dulebohn** is in the background. (Karen Kertzman photo)



A smiling **Charles Karver** is staffing the ESL ticket booth. He sure does look the part. (Karen Kertzman photo)



The concrete work at ESL's car barn is finished. It really improves the footing and drainage. (Karen Kertzman photo)

- June 3-----Special Owl Service at CHSL—9:00 PM to 12-midnight
- June 4-----CHSL Motorettes day celebrating the passing of the 19th Amendment to the US constitution
- June 6-----CHSL Summer Santa special event 6 & 7 PM. Come and meet Santa!
- June 10 & 11-----Excelsior's Art on the Lake festival.
- June 15-----Story Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM & 6 PM
- June 18-----Father's Day! Bring dad for a free ride on his special day at ESL and CHSL
- June 20-----PJ Party at CHSL

Scott Heiderich Passes. **Scott Heiderich** was one of our Museum members who "was there at the creation." In the early 1970's, he organized our early track-laying projects and helped erect our trolley wire. He tightened the wire each spring and removed trees that blew down onto it. He helped retrieve the car bodies from which we built our streetcar fleet. He served as Foreman on our operating

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



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—2023

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
Bill Graham—Distribution

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crews for untold hours over many years and he contributed thousands of dollars to help keep us afloat. He and Kathy had no children, and so in a broad sense, the Museum was his family. Scott served for many years on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer where he expressed clear (and usually strong) opinions on the critical issues. He wasn't always right, but he made us think more carefully. He was there to help when it was a need, and he was a friend whose contributions helped hold the Museum together. Only at the end of his life did we learn he had flown helicopters in Vietnam and had rescued wounded G.I.'s under fire. **Scott Heiderich** was our Museum's friend, a personal friend, and we will miss him. (written by Bill Graham) ☺



(Above) Taken about 20 years ago, this is a photo of **Roy Harvey, Scott Heiderich, Loren Martin** and **Russ Olson**. These men were in at the founding of the Minnesota Transportation Museum, which in the early 1970s consisted only of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and TCRT streetcar No. 1300. When MSM separated from MTM in 2005, Scott was an MSM Director and for a number of years the museum's Treasurer. Scott was an MSM Operator and Foreman for approximately 50 years. (Bill Graham Photo)

(Right) Scott helped build the overhead trolley wire system at CHSL in the early 1970s. He continued to maintain the trolley wire at both CHSL and ESL until around 2015. Here we see Scott in June 2013 working on a CHSL trolley wire support pole helping a crew repair damage caused by a big tree falling on the trolley wire. (Chris Heck photo)

