

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

June 2024



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

### Transitions

May is the time when our museum's streetcar operations transitions from its dormant state to its active operating schedule. February, March, and April is all about planning. In May we start scheduled operations and begin to execute and dust off some of the proverbial cobwebs and operate a limited weekends-only schedule. In April we begin training new, first-year operating candidates, teach new skills (PCC training), and complete the recertification process to refresh our returning volunteers on our rules and safety expectations when operating our historic streetcars.



I would like to thank Superintendent of Training **Bill Pekarna** and his dedicated crew of trainers who have been and are working with the new Operator candidates to learn the basics of streetcar handling before being handed over to line-specific trainers. Special thanks to **Linda Ridlehuber**, **Marion Garcia**, **Andy Jacob**, **Jerry Betz**, **Katie Barron**, **Pat Cosgrove** and **Tony Lebda** for their efforts to bring the Operator candidates up to speed. This effort is accomplished at ESL by trainers **Gregg Thomas** and **Tim Gephart**, who provide ESL-specific instruction. The MSM Operator Class of 2024, started with 23 candidates. As of early June, eight have completed training and are now operating, two have decided to be station agents, four have left the program, and the remaining candidates are making positive progress towards qualification. I will include a complete list of the new Operators in future communication.

**Fred Beamish** is again leading our PCC training and recertification efforts. Helping Fred are **John Dillery** and **Katie Barron**, with additional assistance provided by the legendary **Mark Digre** who, as you may recall, was instrumental in repairing the PCC after last year's accident. The team has recertified much of last year's roster and has qualified several new Operators. The training schedule becomes more challenging in June competing for time with the summer operating schedule. However, if you are interested in operating the PCC, please contact Fred directly.

I would also like to congratulate several of our volunteers who have stepped up and accepted the role as operating Shift Foreman. The Foreman is the operating shift leader on the ground who ensures a successful execution of the operating plan in accordance with MSM's operating rules, so that everyone involved—our guests, our volunteers, our neighbors, and the general public—have a safe and enjoyable experience. When you see them, please extend a hearty congratulations to our new Foremen: **Katie Barron** and **Jerry Betz** at CHSL and **Jerry Draeger** at ESL.

I don't normally include operating statistics in my *Streetcar Currents* column, but rather I show that detailed information in the Operations Newsletter which is sent to MSM's operating personnel and where there is more space to dive into some of the details that are likely of little interest to the general membership. However, I do want to tell you that the Museum had a very respectable Memorial Day weekend even with some less than ideal weather. Total gross revenue was \$5,300, including almost \$2,000 in merchandise sales. Over the three days we sold 1,044 tokens and had 1,455 riders.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our new and returning volunteers for their time and effort in making MSM a safe and enjoyable place to volunteer and visit. **HAVE FUN! BE SAFE!** 🍀

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## From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**C**an you believe it? Around midnight on May 10th, someone drove a vehicle onto the tracks at 42nd Street, passed the Linden Hill station's platform, somehow bumped over the rails and knocked over the switch stand of the north siding switch! Trying to back out, they spun their wheels and gouged out the ballast backing up to the pedestrian underpass. We're not sure where they went from there. One of the neighbors across the street says he heard them spinning their wheels in the ballast. That caused a small leak in the water pipe feeding the depot garden. The leak has been repaired.

The flattened switch stand was discovered the next day by **Katie Barron** on her very first trip as a newly qualified shift Foreman. Fortunately the switch still worked and a slow order was implemented. **Karl Jones** righted the switch stand and re-spiked it to the tie. Later MSM's Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson** and **Miles Anderson** inspected the switch, made a couple of minor adjustments and the slow order has been removed.

**D**epot platform update. The last of the platform step boxes has been completed for the rear door of PCC No. 322. By the time you read this, the steps boxes should be painted, with non-skid tape applied to the treads. A yellow Safety Zone has been painted on the concrete. Thanks to **Miles Anderson**, **Keith Anderson**, **Dennis Stephens** and **Pat Cosgrove** for building the step boxes. The design of the replica 1912 canopy has been completed. Now starts the approval process with the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board.

**D**oors Open-Year 2. On May 18-19 we participated in Doors Open Minneapolis for the second year. The car barn was open for free tours. As before, most chose to buy a streetcar ride and get off at the car barn. The Doors Open volunteer signed in 705 people over the two days, but many more who just showed up for a streetcar ride joined the tours. Trip sheet counts show 980 for the weekend. My thanks to **Bruce Allyn**, **Bill Arends**, **Pat Cosgrove**, **Mike Miller**, **Dennis Stephens** and **Jim Vaitkunas** for joining me as car barn docents, and to **Karl Jones** for setting up the car barn.

**A**merican Sign Language Days. Last year we experimented with a publicized event for the deaf community including hiring an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. This year we continue the experiment, coordinated by **Anja Curiskis**. The first one this year was June 1st. Because the fares don't cover the cost of a professional interpreter, we're starting with our own operating volunteer, **Bob Leininger**, who is fluent in ASL. He will be a guide accompanying the deaf passengers, but not an operating crewmember. Anja also plans to involve ASL students from Southwest High School and St. Thomas University.

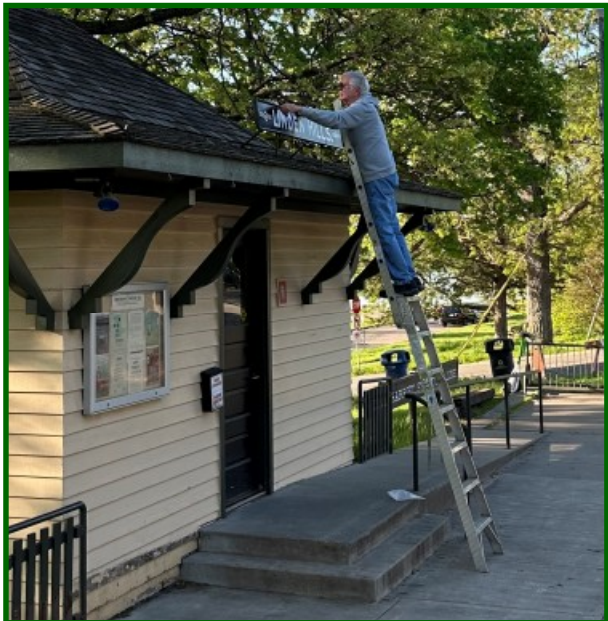
Last year Anja applied for a grant from the Minneapolis Park Foundation to support the ASL program. On May 24 we learned they had awarded us \$2000. This will allow us to hire paid interpreters. The grant essentially is funding a study. We'll survey the participants and determine how paid and volunteer interpreters compare, and also evaluate how best to run the events. A final report will be due to the Foundation next spring. 🌱

The new platform step boxes were put to good use over the Memorial Day weekend's operations. Here we see passengers boarding TCRT No. 1300 at the rear door, which is historically accurate given that we run No. 1300 as a two-man car. (Photo by Rod Eaton)





**MSM Photo Ops**



Here's **Karl Jones** reinstalling the Linden Hills station's sign. The sign was repainted by CHSL shop volunteer **Mike Miller**. *(Jerry Betz photo)*



Every Wednesday morning, Master Gardeners tend the Linden Hills station's garden at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Master Gardeners are required to volunteer a certain number of hours at certified gardens, and the depot garden received that status in 2023. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*



All hands on deck while repairing DSR No.265. From left to right: **Howie Melco, Jack Bingham, Steve Mages, Carl Floren, Dave Buckman, Mike Kimitich** (in car). *(Karen Kertzman photo)*



Old woodworker's saying: you can't have too many wood clamps. From the steamer to the streetcar, **Howie Melco, Michael Kimitich** and **Carl Floren** quickly clamp the header board in place after it was taken out of the wood steamer and clamp it in place so it will retain the curvature on the end of No. 265. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*

**LOST TOKEN CONTEST**

When we demolished the wood platform at CHSL's Linden Hills station, we recovered hundreds of TCRT tokens. To make this find a little fun, we're holding a contest to see who can guess the number of tokens we found. The winner who's guess comes closest to the number of tokens in the jar will get a 2024 season pass or a 2025 pass if they already have a 2024 one.

The MSM Lost Token Contest now has attracted 186 entries in the contest book. The sealed jar containing the tokens is inside the Linden Hills station at CHSL. The winner will be announced at the end of regular service the evening of Sunday June 16th at the depot. Winners need not be present to win.





- June 8 & 9----- Excelsior's **ART ON THE LAKE** festival
- June 16----- Father's Day! Bring dad for a free ride on his special day at ESL and CHSL
- June 18----- PJ Party at CHSL
- June 20----- Story Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM & 6 PM
- June 22----- Special Owl Service at CHSL—9:00 PM to 12-midnight
- July 4----- Independence day special operations at ESL and CHSL
- July 6----- Help us celebrate the historic first hire of a woman by Twin City Lines



**MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership**

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief*

**I**s your membership up to date? Have you received one or two renewal notices and have not responded? Your membership in your museum is important and we hope you stay up to date. Also, if you are an active Operator, you must have a current membership. Please respond to notices as soon as you can either by mail or online at <https://trolleyride.org/member-resources/>. If you want to know when your membership expires or if you have any questions about it, please send an e-mail to **Barb Gacek** at [rhodabump@gmail.com](mailto:rhodabump@gmail.com). ☺

**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](http://www.TrolleyRide.org)

The museum's business address is:

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Jim Vaitkunas—Editor  
 Bill Graham—Distribution

**Streetcar CURRENTS** is a newsletter published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next edition of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is June 20, 2024.

Please send items to the editor to the following e-mail address:

[jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.com](mailto:jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.com)

**A Dream Come True!**

A year or so ago we posted on our Facebook page a photo of a young boy named **Marcus Corbin** playing in a replica of Duluth Street Railway No. 78. It was built by Marcus' grandfather. Grandpa was born on a train in Belarus and told stories of riding streetcars and the old Soviet blue metro trains. Grandpa and grandma would often bring young Marcus to ride streetcars at the Como-Harriet and Excelsior Streetcar Lines. Marcus loved it so much that he dressed as a motorman and would tell people I'm going to drive No. 1300 when I grow up. This past weekend **Marcus Corbin** fulfilled his childhood dream. He took his family, including his grandfather, for a ride on TCRT No. 1300 as a newly certified Operator on MSM's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. *(story & photo by Bill Pekarna)*



**(Above)** Here's Marcus at the controls of No. 1300 with Grandpa. A dream come true for Marcus. *(Bill Pekarna photo)*



**(Above Top Right)** Even at a young age, Marcus was practicing his Motorman skills on a mock-up of Duluth No. 78 on his home's deck.



**(Right)** Marcus in his MSM Operator's uniform is standing on the platform of No. 78 at the Excelsior Streetcar Line. He had to wait a few more years, however to wear MSM's uniform. What enthusiasm! We certainly would like to have more Marcus'.