



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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By Paul von Goertz - KRHCC Board Member

1,416 TRAIN RIDERS, 2,832 RIDER CONTACTS – WOW!



KRHCC site Saturday morning of Julebyen. 11 degrees above at 11 AM.
Photo Credit: Dave Schauer photo courtesy of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

Amazing that a dilapidated depot in danger of falling down 3 ½ years ago could greet 1,416 Julebyen train riders and board them for a total of 2,832 rider contacts! Plus keep them warm and serve them cocoa.

NEWSLETTER

The stats are in. The Julebyen Express brought 444 folks to the festival over the two-day event from Duluth (Photo credit: Marilyn Magnuson, the Viking Lady). While here, the train carried 972 people in five scheduled trains to Troll Canyon in search of trolls. All trains departed and returned on schedule and all riders safely boarded and disembarked. Many thanks to the depot “Platform Agents” (I am learning RR jargon) who sold the tickets and kept those arriving and departing by from bumping into each other, and off the 24’ railroad right-of-way.



Carolers, organized by Sam Black, welcomed Julebyen Express riders and sang at intervals throughout the festival (Photo credit: Marilyn Magnuson, the Viking Lady).

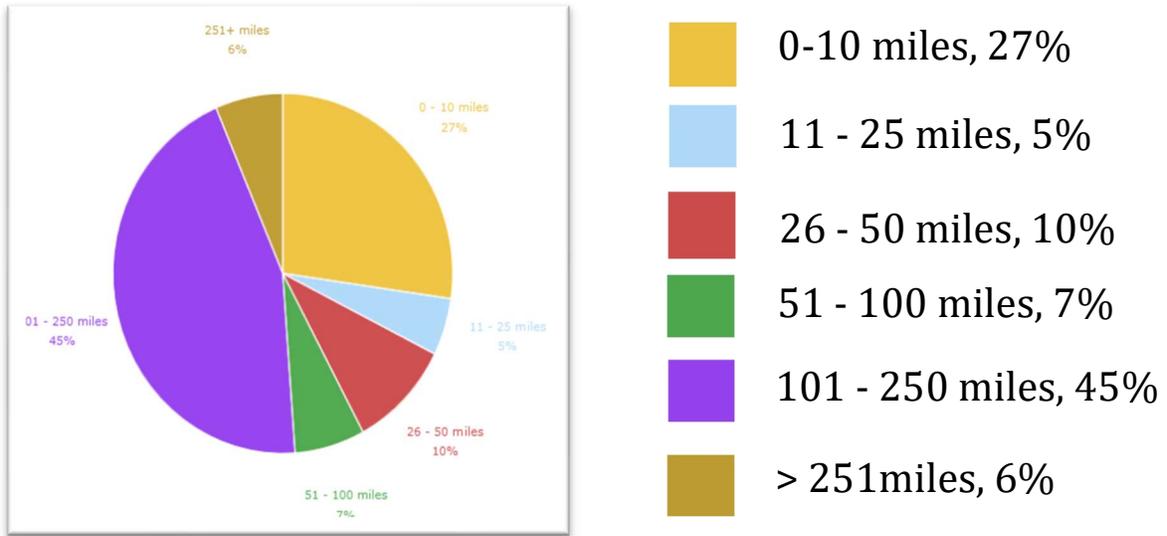


Huge thanks to the North Shore Scenic Railroad for allowing the Julebyen Express to serve as Troll Trains during Julebyen at no cost to us!

IS JULEBYEN BECOMING A MINNESOTA DESTINATION FESTIVAL?

One could think so judging by the zip codes of the 444 who rode the Julebyen Express over the weekend. The North Shore Scenic Railroad shared the following info with the KRHCC and it is quite revealing.

The stats within the colored slices of the pie chart may be too hard to read, so here they are:



Pie chart of Julebyen Express rider zip codes.

Image credit: Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

Amazing just over half lived 100 or more miles away. They may have been in the area for other reasons, of course, but nevertheless Julebyen was something they wanted to experience.

People from out of the area spend money locally and that speaks well to the charge given the KRHCC by the Rail Authority – that our activities support economic development.

“TROLL PATROL” ADDS EXCITEMENT TO TROLL TRAINS.

Recognition of the work of the Knife River “Troll Patrol” is long overdue.

Bob and Mary McDonald live in the Homestead Road area. According to Mary, who is quite the storyteller, about five years ago they were asked by the Governor’s office if they would investigate reported troll sightings that generally occur right before Julebyen, and report back to his office. Apparently, the excitement and all the prep work of an approaching Julebyen arouses the curiosity of trolls.



Being responsible citizens, Bob and Mary agreed to investigate the presence of trolls at Julebyen and organized a “Troll Patrol/Troll Control” (Photo credit: Mary McDonald).

Because they act in an official capacity, they felt it proper to dress in uniforms, display badges and place proper signage on their SUV.

Here's how the Troll Patrol gig works:



The Troll Train slows down at Homestead Road and the McDonald's hop on where the official Troll Patrol/Troll Control squad car is parked (Photo credit: Paul von Goertz).

As the train continues to Troll Canyon they give their report, and no surprise – trolls had been sighted that very morning!

Officer Mary impresses troll seekers with her official “Troll Patrol/Troll Control” badge. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

Mary and Madeline Jarvis, Two Harbors (TH) library Director and Troll Train storyteller, share the train's PA to build excitement for the eminent appearance of trolls.

Meanwhile, Bob McDonald hands out bells to the children, as we all know trolls do not like noise (Photo credit: Paul von Goertz).



Once the train departs Troll Canyon, the McDonalds hop off at Homestead Road - ready to bring the next Troll Train the news of the latest troll sightings.

Says Mary McDonald. “We wanted to help with the Troll Train, to bring in a more interactive element with the folks on the train and the trolls outside. To give an air of authenticity, I guess.

We do it year after year because it is so incredibly gratifying to be a little part of the fantasy - to see the kids become excited and willing to suspend

disbelief for just a little bit. Hearing all the kids ringing their bells is fantastic! We are humbled to be included in the community of Knife River and we so enjoy being able to give a little back!”

WHY DO PEOPLE LIKE THE MCDONALDS WANT TO BE PART OF JULEBYEN?

Festivalgoers often ask volunteers how a small community like Knife River (KR) (Population 350 by zip code) can host a destination festival that attracts 4,000(?) people. For sure it is hard work at times (and stressful), but for most of us, it is fun!

“The best gift is the one that can’t be returned.”

I first heard this pearl of wisdom in a sermon given by Pastor Susan Berge of Knife River Lutheran Church. I was going to give the credit for it to Pastor Susan, but thought I better check to see if it had been said before. It had - by Jesus Christ.

Now whether Christian or not, I believe every Julebyen volunteer finds deep satisfaction by giving the gift of their time and energy to folks that cannot return it. Just look at the happy faces of the children in these images*! If you would like to volunteer for Julebyen 2023, email this year’s chair, Helene Hedlund at hhedlund.dl@gmail.com



The excitement of seeing a troll!



“Three Troll Train tickets please!”

Photo credits: Paul von Goertz

*Each image used with the permission of a parent.

“NICE JOB YOU FELLAS ARE DOING DOWN AT THE DEPOT...”

I have heard variations on this comment many times over the past three years and now let me expand on it.

“Fellas” includes:

- **The many women** who have helped on site and behind the scenes. Two of our best paint scrapers and painters are women and their work is meticulous. Mona Linden is our CFO and keeps our books squeaky clean and provides all the detailed financial information grants require. Anne-Lù Hovis produces the KRHCC newsletter that helps capture KR’s colorful past before it’s lost. The awareness of our past, which we all can share, makes us a more cohesive community.

- **Lake County** has been very responsive and helpful as we work through our building and land use issues. We want to call out Lake County Highway Department, Environmental Services, and County Soil & Water. Also, within the county we want to recognize “Loving Lake County,” the marketing arm of the county, for providing marketing support for our events. This support is a big reason why we can keep our events free to the public.

- **Contractors** who responded to our bid requests (some would not even return our phone call requesting a bid).

We got off to a bad start on our shelter building plans because the last grant was not in place until June 22, well into the building season. A condition of grants is that work cannot be started until the grant is awarded. Nevertheless, we found four contractors that were reliable and did good work: Rowdy Fencing for security fencing, Ostman Trucking for building site prep work, Primetime Concrete for concrete work, and Silver Creek Electric for electrical.

- **Grantors** who grasped our vision and funded about two-thirds of this year’s construction work. They were the IRRB and Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation – slab prep and concrete work; Co-op Light & Power – electrical; and the Wheeler Foundation – interpretive displays.

- **The Regional Rail Authority**, who has always supported us, serves as our liaison with state agencies on issues of funding and permitting – and in general, good advisors to the KRHCC board.

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- **Our non-profit partners**, the KRRC, SOS, and the NSSR. We are thankful for the productive relationships that have developed between them and the KRHCC, and among each other. We know that when one does well, we all do.

- **Volunteers** – our most important and cherished asset. We have a core group that is totally devoted to the vision of the KRHCC which will be evolving for years as any history center does. In their lifetimes they will make a tangible statement to preserving the history of KR.

Among our volunteers the KRHCC wants to recognize Eric Fransen, a KR native who is the founder and CEO of Klik Marketing out of Charlotte, NC, and in TH monthly working with area clients. Eric makes updates to our website (krhcc.org) and places the monthly KRHCC newsletter on it. Eric volunteers his time for this valuable service to the KRHCC.

All “Good Fellas!”

(More on next page)

**IF I LOOK UNHAPPY, IT'S CUZ I DON'T WANT TO GO
THROUGH ANOTHER WINTER WITHOUT A ROOF!**

- A voice heard from CRUSADER II during Dec. 14 & 15 blizzard -

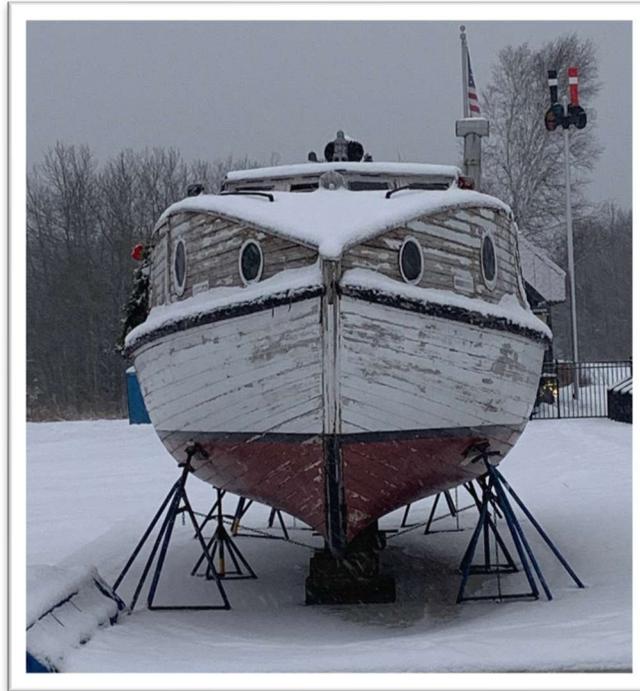


Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

CRUSADER has sat uncovered since launch 83 years ago and it shows. The 35' fish tug had been abandoned by its owner at the KR Marina when, in 1983, the Lake County Historical Society rescued it, freshened it up, and placed it on Lighthouse Point in Two Harbors.

In 2016, the Society gifted the fish tug back to its hometown when they finally acknowledged they could not afford to shelter or maintain it. TH volunteers and donations from TH businesses had given the project a good shot by making needed repairs and keeping fresh paint on it, but left exposed, paint is only temporary.

CRUSADER is now in the hands of KRers and those of us who accepted the gift of the boat on behalf of the KR community, feel a deep sense of responsibility to finish what our well-meaning friends in TH had hoped to accomplish – and that is to place a shelter over it - and through interpretive displays explain its historical significance (see KRHCC April 2022 newsletter).

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The metal roof and open-sided shelter we are planning to build in fall of 2023 will cost about \$45,000. The slab was laid last summer. The KRHCC is eligible for funding from four sources, but the largest funder requires a 1:1 match. They want the KRHCC to have some skin in the funding and that's understandable.

Our goal is to have at least 15% in matching funds or \$6,750. A match of that amount or more (20%?) will improve our chances of being awarded all four grant requests.

We need to raise the \$6,750 or more by April 3, 2023, as that is when we will apply for our first grant. With our application we will need to submit a budget and funding plan. **Will we be able to show a 15 - 20% match?** The KRHCC is an IRS-recognized 501(c3) so all donations are tax deductible. Thank you!

NOVEMBER DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Donations:

- Anne-Lù Hovis: First Aid Kit
- Knife River Marina moving CRUSADER from back of KRHCC site to new home close to Marina Road.
- Donation from 47 Degrees to KRHCC general fund.

The KRHCC is a 501 (c3) non-profit so all donations whether in the form of a memorial, honorarium or sponsorship are fully tax deductible. Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org

If you have family or friends who may enjoy reading this newsletter, they can access the current and all past issues on the "Current News" page of our website at: krhcc.org

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