

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

March-April 2018



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

2018 Operating Season Preview

Bruce Gustafson—General Superintendent

Our continuing success as a living history Museum depends on reliable streetcars, well-trained Operators, and dedicated volunteers who work on our track, overhead trolley wire, grounds, and buildings that are safe and attractive.

With the start of the 2018 operating season a little over a month away I would like to recognize some of the Museum's behind the curtain volunteers who provide critical services to allow the streetcars to run. I would like to recognize **Dennis Stephens, Jim Wilmore, John Prestholdt, Karl Jones, Tom Schramm, Pete Connors, Pat Kriske, Russ Isbrandt, Mark Digre, Ben Franske, Michael E. Miller, Jack Bacon, and Rob Mangles** for their work on car No. 1300; **Howie Melco, Scott Heiderich, Art Ruder, Steve Mages, Tom McGruder, Carl Floren, Dave McCullom, Mike Kimitch, Michael J. Miller** (a/k/a "Electric Mike" Miller), **Mark Brothen** and **Dick Zawacki** for their work on Winona No. 10; and **John Prestholdt, Todd Bender, Jim Kertzman** and a host of other dedicated volunteers who worked on general streetcar preventive maintenance over the winter and spring to have the streetcars mechanically and electrically sound for the start of the season.



March/April is also the time when training kicks into high gear. **Pat Cosgrove** is again working as our Volunteer Coordinator, distributing recruitment news releases to a number of local newspapers and acting as the initial point of contact to answer questions and get prospective volunteers to the orientation sessions lead by **Dave Higgins**. Dave will again lead a highly qualified team of trainers including **Bill Arends, Todd Bender, Rod Eaton, Bill Graham, Jim Kertzman, and Ron Neitzel**. New Operator training will begin in early April with a targeted completion around Memorial Day.

For our returning operators **Rod Eaton** is trying to outdo himself and establishing the toughest recertification test EVER. As in prior years, all existing Operators have had their access in ShiftPlanning deactivated.



Volunteers are the heart and soul of our Museum.

A deactivated account cannot sign up for shifts. Recertification (test and in some cases a check ride) is scheduled to start in mid-April. (Detailed information will follow in separate communication.) Once an Operator has completed recertification their account will be reactivated. I would also like to recognize **Chris Heck** who has volunteered to lead PCC training, which will start in May. If you are interested in PCC training or in helping with the PCC training please Chris at chris.heck@trolleyride.org or 651-249-5358.

Transitioning from training to operations, I would like to recognize several members who fill critical roles. **Keith Anderson** as Chief Engineer, **Pat Kriske** as Foreman of buildings and grounds, **Dennis Stephens** as CHSL Mechanical Projects Coordinator supporting **Dick Zawacki, Ben** and **Mary Porter** as the CHSL Garden Foreman, leading efforts to maintain and upgrade the station garden., and **Steve McCulloch** as Foreman of right-of-way, who will be coordinating brush cutting and other efforts to control mother nature's relentless encroachment on the Museum's right-of-way. 🌱

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From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Car swap 2.0. In the last issue I wrote that streetcars No. 265 and No. 1239 would be swapped between Excelsior and Lake Harriet and speculated that would happen in March. That was a bit premature. First, the CHSL shop crew had to service No. 265, which hadn't been over the pit in the last year while No. 1300 was up on blocks. That work is done now. However, we're not sending No. 265 away until everyone is confident that No. 1300 is bug-free. That will happen in the next week or two.

We're also waiting for the snow to melt and the soft ground to dry, so the truck doesn't tear up the grass by the Lake Calhoun end of track. The good news is that we've found a trucker with a low boy trailer that has tracks on the deck and loads from the rear.

So when will the move happen? That's still to be decided. I'll keep you posted.

The Lake Calhoun platform. Keith Anderson, Dennis Stephens and I have been working on the design of the new Lake Calhoun platform. We're proposing that it be 48 feet long, plus a ramp down to ground level. The rear 32 feet of it will be 5 feet wide, while the front 16 feet will be 8 feet wide so two streams of people can pass each other by the streetcar's front door. There will be a safety railing along the platform's east and south sides. We're proposing that concrete-filled sonotubes will support a wood deck. We'll meet with the Park Board staff on April 6 to start the approval process.

The new electric speeder. You may recall that a track speeder was donated to our Museum that had been converted to battery power. The CHSL shop crew, headed by Tom Schramm, is completely rebuilding it, including installation of a new motor and chain drive. When the speeder is done, it will replace ETS1, the small speeder, which will go to Excelsior. That will make the Excelsior gas speeder surplus, and it will be sold.

The Annual Appeal. The Winter 2017-2018 Annual Appeal has really helped our financial situation. As this is written, 66 members have donated \$20,915, plus we received a \$5000 grant from the Onan Family Foundation. The General Fund received \$8915. The remaining \$17,100 was designated for rebuilding 1239's trucks. Thank you to everyone who donated. It really makes a huge difference in what we can accomplish.

Internet Service Upgrades. Thanks to Ben Franske, MSM's Information Technology Manager, the CHSL internet service has been upgraded and ESL now has internet access. At CHSL the fiber Internet access will improve reliability over the old DSL service, which experienced some outages last season due to deteriorating phone lines in the area. It will also provide a speed boost to the existing service.

At ESL, the DSL Internet access will be used immediately to allow for an upgraded security system, and for access in the shop to look up information and parts as well as to access our electronic archive of repair and maintenance documents which have been scanned at CHSL. We are also investigating the ability to take credit cards at ESL though we have not made a decision on how best to do that.

Thanks to new contract negotiations it's only expected that the overall telecommunications cost for the museum will increase a few dollars a month over what we were paying previously. The same was true when we originally added Internet service to CHSL four years ago so we are only paying nominally more than what we were paying five years ago and now have Internet access at all locations and fiber optic access at CHSL. ☺



New Merchandise — Coffee & Tea Mugs

Bill & Rose Arends, our Museum's merchandise Managers, reports that new pottery mugs that are now available for sale on the museum's webstore. They are 12 oz pottery mugs made by Grey Fox Pottery in Minneapolis. They are lead free and microwave and dishwasher safe. They'll be available in the depot at the beginning of the season. We have 25 of each color in our current inventory. They are \$21 each.

If anyone wants one and wants to save the \$7.50 shipping let Bill or Rose know and they'll make other arrangements to get it to you one way or another.



Goings-On at Como-Harriet



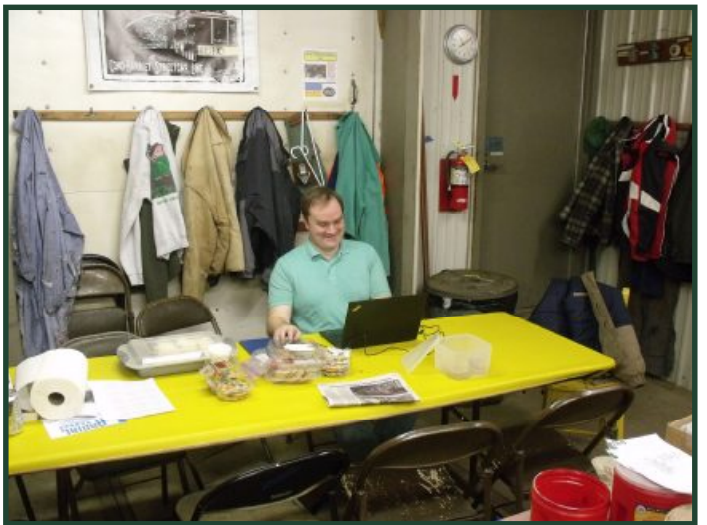
Here we see the new electric speeder's basic frame and propulsion drive. The car will be battery powered using a golf cart motor. **Dennis Stephens** (L) and **Jim Willmore** are probably discussing the triple-reduction chain drive. (Photo by Jim Vaitkunas)



Tom Schramm is working on a part for the electric speeder while **Dennis Stephens** is rooting around in a tool box in the background. (Photo by Jim Vaitkunas)



Jim Willmore & **Tom Schramm** working on the speeder's chain drive while **John Prestholdt** is working on the motor in the background. (Photo by Jim Vaitkunas)



A smiling **Ben Franske** is working at the back of the Isaacs carbarn heated area. I guess he's happy at the progress in getting the fiber optic cable into the Linden Hills station, which should happen in the next two weeks. (Photo by Jim Vaitkunas)



(LEFT) The fiber optic cable will be underground and run under Queen Avenue, our garden and track and connect in a junction box mounted on the outside of the station. This photo shows the plastic flex conduit that'll be underground in which the fiber optic cable will be run. (Photo by Ben Franske)

What's Happening?

April-May -----	CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training
May 5 -----	Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations
May 22 -----	Beginning of ESL's Tuesday afternoon operations—2 PM to 5 PM
May 25 -----	Beginning of weeknight (evening) service at CHSL
May 28 -----	Memorial Day Monday operations follows Sunday schedule at both ESL and CHSL

**MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership**Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief*

New **MSM Members.** We've had quite a good number of new members join our Museum since the last issue of the Streetcar Currents. We'd like to welcome the following to the MSM family: Kyle Olson, Robert Crosby, Timothy Flemming, Frank Loetterle, Chuck Lavallo, Brian Long, John Knox, Richard Harrington, Craig Ruhland, and Dan Nash.

We also thank the following members who upgraded their regular memberships to the Lifetime category: Jim Otto, Coleen & Mike Eckman, Jeff Ersbo, Ed Rapoport, Matt Leibel, and John Dewitt & Paula Denman. These members took advantage of our early renewal offer discussed in the text box below.

Obituaries. Sadly, our Museum has experienced an unusual and unfortunate spate of deaths of some of our hard working volunteers over the last few months, and here are three more.

Jim White passed away after a valiant battle with cancer. Jim was a U.S. Air Force Veteran and a faithful member of our Museum for several years. While Jim couldn't operate because of poor eyesight, he volunteered in the Linden Hills station where he greeted our passengers with a friendly smile. Jim also spearheaded the effort to place the historical marker adjacent to the lower end of TCRT's Selby Tunnel in St. Paul, which can still be seen, complete with rails in the concrete pavement.

Jim Harrison passed away recently. Jim started volunteering in the mid-1980s and was a faithful and good streetcar Operator until recently.

Bettye Anderson was not an Operator, but she and husband Earl worked as a team on their usual Saturday & Sunday shifts, with Bettye in the Linden Hills station and Earl on the Streetcar. Bettye's friendly smile and manner will be missed. ☺

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:

P.O. Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
952-922-1096

**Streetcar CURRENTS
March-April—2018**

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 April 25, 2018.

Please send items to the editor **Jim Vaitkunas** at the following address:
13326 Huntington Lane
Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481
E-mail: jvaitkunas@msn.com

Changes to MSM Membership Dues and Basic Fares

A letter was sent to all MSM members on March 13th to tell you of the recent decisions made by your Board of Directors to increase our membership dues and raise our streetcar ride fares.

After a considerable amount of research and financial analysis, the Board decided that effective **May 1, 2018** our membership dues will increase as follows.

Individual: \$40.00 — Household: \$60.00 — Lifetime: \$750

Individual dues had been \$30 since 1998, and household dues had been \$45 since 2005. Because of inflation, today dues barely cover the cost of printing and mailing *Twin City Lines* magazine and the *Streetcar Currents* newsletter. In addition, our Museum needs to raise additional revenue for streetcar restorations and other infrastructure projects because large grants have become increasingly hard to get.

The Board also decided that with the start of the 2018 operating season, our basic streetcar fare will be increased to \$2.50. To put it in perspective, the \$2.00 fare dates back to 2004. Our special multi-ride tickets and the season pass will be priced accordingly. The rates for half-hour charters will also increase to \$65.00 for members and \$85.00 for nonmembers.

Special Early Membership Renewal Offer

To soften the blow for membership renewals, MSM members whose memberships are due for renewal between May 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 can renew in advance at the old rate of \$30 for an individual membership and \$45 for a household membership. But these early renewals must be received by the Museum no later than May 1, 2018. After May 1st, all members who did not take advantage of the early renewal offer will renew at the new rates.