

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

November-December 2018



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

### As the Year Draws to a Close!

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As we close in on the end of the operating season, I wanted to finish where I started the year, thanking you for volunteering. For those of you who volunteer a lot and for those of you who volunteer a little your contributions do not go unnoticed. Your unheralded participation is the heart of the Museum and provides the friendly face to our guests or the talented hands that maintain our streetcars, infrastructure and gardens. Your actions are recognized with the continuing stream of visitors, many of whom visit multiple times per year.



From an operating perspective 2018 was an off year. Ridership at both CHSL and ESL was lower than 2017. While some of the year-over-year fluctuations can be attributed to weather impacting key days (i.e., Memorial Day, Labor Day, etc.) the ridership decline has some underlying issues, which the Operating Committee will address during the off-season. Our guests fall into three large categories: 1) season pass, 2) special event, 3) general public. Every group including season pass holders was down. How can you help? The answer is to continue to provide the best experience for every guest, every day. While special events represent a large part of the ridership and revenue at both railways, the majority of our guests are casual visitors—those who purchase a single ride. Make their experience memorable so that they return and so that they tell their friends.

I would like to recognize several leaders for the special work they did during 2018. These include **Aaron Isaacs** and **Keith Anderson** for their leadership and work in building CHSL's north end platform, **Steve McCulloch** for his leadership in enhancing CHSL's right-of-way, **Ben** and **Mary Porter** for their work with the station garden, and **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman** and **Rod Eaton** for their countless hours of hard work and creativity in developing our special events.

I would also like to recognize our Class of 2018 operators who contributed approximately 10% of the total operating hours for this season. Thank you all for volunteering.

**Mary Anderson, Vito Bongiorno, Seamus Burke, Jim Dockendorf, Carol Frey, Barb Gacek, Luca Gunther, John Knox, Brian Long, Gordy Moore, Kyle Olson, Jay Patel, Sam Pingree, Dan Raustadt, Craig Ruhland, Trevor Schwarze, Jill Seinola and Gary Sparr.**

Operators who contributed 50 hours of scheduled operations this year and collectively represent about 50% of the total 3,430 hours worked through November 13: **Rod Eaton, Bill Way, Bill Arends, Karen Kertzman, Mike Buck, Jerry Petersen, Bruce Allyn, Linda Ridlehuber, Jim Kertzman, Steve Simon, Brian Long, Pat Cosgrove, Tom Dulebohn, Gregg Thomas, Pat Kriske, Ben Porter, Aaron Isaacs, Rich Holz, Dave Higgins, John Knox, Rose Arends and Bill Graham.**

In closing, on behalf of the Museum's leadership team I wish you all a well-deserved break and a happy holiday season. See you next year! **Thank you for all you do.** ☺

### CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Are you looking for a special gift for a family member, friend or neighbor? Please consider giving them an item from the MSM Store: <https://trolleyride.org/store/>

We've got lots of items for sale in our Museum store including: *Twin Cities by Trolley* history book; *Twin Ports by Trolley* history book; nice coffee/tea mugs; prints & posters; jewelry and ornaments; and, hats and T-shirts. A special gift to consider is the MSM annual season pass which allows the bearer and their family unlimited rides at CHSL and ESL for the entire 2019 year.

#### Inside This Issue

<i>From the Front Platform</i>	2
<i>MSM's Special Events Photos</i>	3
<i>Coming Events</i>	4
<i>MSM News &amp; Views</i>	4
<i>Obituary—Phil Settergren</i>	4



## From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**M**arketing the Museum. This winter will see a push to do a more effective job of marketing our museum. It will be a two-pronged effort.

1. Upgrade our social media presence.
2. Target group sales.

Both of these efforts are designed to be low cost. We'll spend very little money and we'll try to minimize how many volunteer hours we expend.

**S**ocial media. Thanks to **Elizabeth Hauck** for researching the potential of social media and making the following recommendations.



1. **Increase our Facebook presence.** That means more frequent posts designed to attract viewers, who will share them with their Facebook friends. We'll create a frequent posting schedule so there's always something new to see. Besides the usual posts on coming events and museum news, we'll greatly increase post-event recaps, history content, marketing of store items, rider profiles (especially some of our regulars), profiles of our volunteers, and quizzes (where was this historic photo taken?). **Brian Long** has volunteered to do history posts. If anyone else is interested, please contact me at [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).
2. **Start using our dormant Instagram account.** **Ben Franske** has linked it to the Facebook account so Facebook material is simultaneously displayed on Instagram.
3. **Add social media links to our website home page,** and add social media addresses to our paper brochures and depot signage.

**G**roup sales. We haven't begun to tap the potential for group sales. A good example is school groups. I'm a tour guide at Target Field (*home field of our Minnesota Twins-Ed.*) and each May, June and September thousands of school kids tour the 'Twins' stadium for \$10 a head. We could offer something much less expensive. I'm hoping we can reach out to local teachers of social studies, history and geography to fold a streetcar visit into their curriculum.

Other potential groups include day cares, summer camps, senior residences and bus tour operators. We would concentrate on filling empty seats during scheduled service, but also market our charters.

**H**aven't volunteered before? We need you for marketing and social media. In any volunteer organization it's easy to think of more things to do. The trick is finding someone to do them who isn't already stretched thin with other work. If you've never volunteered, don't feel like running a streetcar or turning a wrench, but want to contribute, please help us with these marketing initiatives. Contact me at [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).

**S**treetcar History Saturdays at the Isaacs Car barn. On Saturdays at 9 AM starting December 15, I'll give a history presentation in the Russell L. Olson Library. A discussion group will follow and (hopefully) we'll start to put together a library working group to catalogue our uncatalogued artifacts. 🍷

### 2018-2019 Annual Appeal

**A**t this time of the year, we give thanks for many things. So, we hope you'll thank our Museum for the great things we do to preserve Minnesota's transportation heritage by donating to our 2018-19 annual appeal. Most people today don't realize that it was the streetcar system formed by Thomas Lowry in the 1880s and 1890s that created what we know today as the great Twin Cities. What we do today as a Museum is preserve this Twin City history for future generations.

**S**o, what can you do to help us to continue to fulfill our mission? Many of us contribute to the mission by volunteering. Other Museum members and friends can't volunteer but can certainly help our Museum by donating to our annual appeal. A flyer has been sent to you by e-mail recently describing the major projects that need your help. For those without e-mail, a copy of the annual appeal flyer is enclosed with this copy of the *Streetcar Currents*. Please clip the bottom of the flyer and send in your donation. And starting this year, you can donate on-line using your credit card by going to our MSM website:

<https://trolleyride.org/annual-appeal/>

Here are a couple of final things to consider as you contemplate your donation. Our Museum operates pretty efficiently since we have no paid staff. The low overhead means that all our farebox revenue goes towards operating expenses such as traction power, car barn heating and lights, insurance, streetcar maintenance, right-of-way maintenance, etc. What our farebox revenue doesn't cover are major expenses such as car barn improvements, major work on trucks and motors, other infrastructure projects, etc. That's where your donation to our annual appeal comes into play. With your help, we can continue to keep our streetcars safe and trouble free while preserving Minnesota's transportation heritage for years to come. **Thanks for your help!**

**MSM's Holiday Operations Were Very Successful**



Here's the CHSL crew unloading the pumpkins for the Farmer Jan & Ken's Pumpkin Patch: (L to R) **Mike Malinoff, Monika Kopet** (Autism Society), **Jill Seinola Prestholdt, Rick Krenske, Jon Dehn** (pumpkin grower), **John Prestholdt, Ben Franske, Linda Ridlehuber, Bill Arends, Aaron Isaacs, Rose Arends, Mark Digre, and Ben Porter.** (Photo by Rod Eaton)



The Pumpkin Patch is all set up and ready to greet the first carload of pumpkin seekers. The new North platform really helped this year with passenger flow. (Photo by Rose Arends)

**ESL's Ghost Trolley** was a huge success despite the rainy weather on Friday night. Over the two nights we had a total of 786 riders, most in fun costumes, board the Ghost Trolley at Water Street for a ride to the enchanted car barn. Once there they had many activities to choose from. As in past years they could play games, win prizes, hear ghost stories, partake in the Harry Potter adventure on Duluth 78 and be thrilled by the Mesaba 10 Haunted Trolley. New this year was an updated spooky cemetery, the addition of Mad-Lib stories and two competitive outdoor games for the older kids. While Saturday night was busy, there were 13 full capacity runs back to back, the many volunteers kept the visitors busy and showed them all a fun time. A big THANKS to all who volunteered, the MSM members along with friends and family. It took 23 volunteers each night to make it happen.



**(Top Left)** ESL's Halloween crew during the ghost trolley was very big. There were lot's of things to see and do both inside the car barn and outside.  
**(Top Right)** Here is the outside cemetery with a couple of wary visitors.  
 (Photos by Karen Kertzman)



Inside the ESL car barn were more scary scenes including a dead vampire who wasn't so dead. Count **Karl Jones** was in his coffin each night and would occasionally growl and raise his head to startle those who were nearby. And startle them he did! (Photo by Karen Kertzman)

**What's Happening?**

December 1 & 2 -----CHSL **HOLLY TROLLEY** with Santa Claus—12:30 PM to 3:30 PM  
 December 1 -----CHSL **Vinternatt** special event—6:00 PM to 8:30 PM  
 March-April-----CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training  
 May 4-----Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations  
 May 1-----Beginning of ESL's Tuesday afternoon operations

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

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

**N**ew **MSM Members.** We would like to welcome to the MSM family the following new members: Ford Bennett, Jamie Heidt, Andrew Punch and returning after an absence of several years, Mark Lawrence. Welcome, Folks!

**M**SM's **Board Meetings.** The meetings of MSM's Board of Directors are scheduled three to four times a year. Usual schedule is early in the year to approve the budget, then around mid-May. Later meetings usually are held in late summer and then in the late fall. We try to schedule the meeting so that at least one of them is held at Excelsior. The remaining meetings are held in the Russell Olson library at CHSL. While the meetings are open to any member, we rarely have members come to sit-in on the meetings. What the Directors and Museum Officers say and do at the meetings is no secret. Soon after the meeting is concluded, a draft copy of the minutes along with any handouts and attachments presented at the meeting are posted on our Museum's website:

<https://trolleyride.org/member-resources/organizational-documents/>

So, if you are interested in the nuts and bolts of governing and managing our Museum, you can go to the above website and read the minutes as well as financial reports, reports from the Superintendents and other documents.

**M**embership **Notes.** At this time of the year, not many memberships come due for renewal. The "crunch time" for renewals come in the late spring and into the summer and early fall. Our procedure is to send each member their renewal notice at the beginning of the month in which their membership expires. A second notice is sent if the membership has expired. If the member hasn't renewed two months past their expiration date, a final notice is sent. During the time your membership has expired you will not receive the *Twin City Lines* history magazine although for a few months you'll continue to receive the Streetcar Currents via e-mail. So, if you want to receive *Twin City Lines* and enjoy all the benefits of your membership, please renew your membership as soon as you receive that first renewal notice. You can also go to our MSM website and renew on-line:

<https://trolleyride.org/about/become-a-member/>

**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 and telephone number are:

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

**Streetcar CURRENTS  
November-December 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 January 20, 2019.

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](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)

**Phil Settergren Passes**

It is with sadness that we report the passing of one of the Isaacs carbarn and shops' faithful volunteers, Phil Settergren. Phil began his involvement with our Museum back in the early 1990s when he helped with the restoration of TCRT PCC No. 322. After the car arrived at CHSL, Phil continued to volunteer most notably by his willingness to do anything in the shop that needed doing. Phil was a true jack of all trades. Phil was an inexhaustible supplier of paper towels and paint brushes from his hardware store, Settergren Hardware. However, he was quite skilled as a glazier and repaired a number of streetcar windows with broken glass. He happily pitched in where needed. Phil was quite inquisitive, routinely questioning why an operation was done in a particular manner but not suggesting that he knew a better way. He was an affable guy. As a successful businessman, he liked people and knew how to treat them. We could all take lessons. In addition to the shop work, Phil also worked on one of the carbarn expansions, helped clear up storm damage to the overhead, and on Winona No. 10. In general, he was an essential part of the shop crew, doing what was needed. We could use several more Phil Settergrens.

**Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

The **Streetcar CURRENTS**, is now in its winter publication schedule. You'll be receiving the **Streetcar CURRENTS** every other month until the May 2019 issue is published. Publication dates for these issues will be on or about: February 1<sup>st</sup>, and, April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after those dates please contact me at: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)