

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

September 2019



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

### A BIG Thank You!

As I have mentioned previously, our Museum could not exist and would not be as successful as it is without you, our faithful volunteers. It is hard to believe that another month has passed and that the State Fair is here signaling a wind down of our season. There are so many people who have helped make the 2019 season successful. I would especially like to identify some of our Operators who have contributed a significant number of operating hours during the 2019 operating season:

**CHSL – Bill Way, Rod Eaton, Brian Long, Bill Arends, Linda Ridlehuber, Pat Cosgrove, Patrick Desbonnet, Bruce Allyn, Mike Buck, Louis Hoffman and Jerry Petersen.**

**ESL – Karen Kertzman, John Knox, Jim Kertzman, Greg Thomas, and Rich Holz.**

I would also like to thank the new Operators from the class of 2019 for their willingness to join and their contributions, which represent about 6% of the total hours operated year-to-date.

**CHSL – Louis Hoffman, Tim Flemming, Al Halaas, Leah Harp, Kathleen Graber and Jeremy Stomberg.**

**ESL – Pete Cahill, Rich Hadley, and Zach Osmundson.**

It's also great that many of these member/volunteers have also been very active in other, non-operating activities, such as car cleaning, gardening, tree trimming and depot operations. As I have mentioned in previous columns, these behind the scenes functions are critical to making our customer experience positive.

Speaking of behind the scenes work, I would like to acknowledge several members who have volunteered to take over the responsibilities from our creative genius in residence **Rod Eaton**, to lead/coordinate our Museum's special events: **Steve Simon** (Pumpkin Patch); **Barb Gacek** (Trick r' Trolley, PJ Parties); and, **Patrick Desbonnet** (Vinternatt). We still are looking for leaders to coordinate Transylvania Trolley, Ghost Trolley, and Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus. As you know, these special events are a big revenue generator for our Museum. If you are interested in helping please let me ([bruce.gustafson@optum.com](mailto:bruce.gustafson@optum.com)) or Rod Eaton know.

I would like to recognize a few members for other non-operating roles. **Steve McCulloch** for taking on the responsibility for maintaining our buildings; **Bill Arends** and **Karen Kertzman** for their roles in managing merchandise activities at CHSL and ESL; **Steve McCulloch, Ben Porter, Steve Simon, Luca Gunther, Linda Ridlehuber,** and **Bruce Allyn** for their work on brush clearing at CHSL; and, **Chris Heck, Nick Fuqua, Gordy Moore,** and **Kyle Olson** for their work on the CHSL overhead (see photo on the right).

While the season is winding down, it is not over. We continue to run full weekend service for another month and a half at which time we begin to focus on the special events of Halloween and the Holly Trolley. If you have not participated as a volunteer or as a guest in the special events I would encourage you to try those activities.



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Thank you for all you do.

**Volunteers Hard at Work!**  
 This photo shows our CHSL overhead wire crew adjusting the wire at the William Berry Parkway Bridge that had been giving us problems. From left to right we see **Kyle Olson, Gordy Moore** and crew leader **Chris Heck**. Their repairs removed a slow order that was in effect for around two years.





## From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**Fixing the overhead.** After at least three years, the slow order under the William Berry Parkway bridge has been lifted. It was put in place because slack overhead wire had caused a couple of bad dewirements that damaged trolley poles and snapped the overhead at the bridge. Thanks to the efforts of **Chris Heck, Nick Fuqua, Kyle Olson** and **Gordy Moore**, the wire has been tightened and repositioned at the bridge and the slow order has been lifted.

However, there's much more overhead wire maintenance needed at both CHSL and ESL. At CHSL there are about a dozen poles that should be replaced. The wire needs to be tightened, centered, the height adjusted and more pull-offs added. It's a similar story at ESL, except we shouldn't have to replace poles.

This is a big enough undertaking that we'll need some outside contractor help. For that reason, overhead wire work will be top priority for the next Annual Appeal.

**Library and Archive update.** Things have been progressing on the history and archives front. Thanks to assistance from **Brian Long, Gordy Moore** and **Jamie Heidt**, most of the artifacts in the Russell Olson Library have been labeled and catalogued into the database.

I've added 567 photos to Minnesota Reflections, where they can be accessed online. There are now 2,546 historic Minnesota streetcar photos online. Go to [trolleyride.org](http://trolleyride.org), click on Historic Resources & Photos and scroll down to Historic Photos. Because the new ones are mixed in with the previous ones, you'll also see a downloadable list of those newly posted.

A few years ago I completed the digitizing of about two hours of film showing Twin City streetcars in operation. Because the film came from many sources, it jumped all over the place geographically, and organizing it was going to be a major challenge. Then one day last summer I was operating at CHSL and happened to meet **Bill Olexy**, a professional video editor. He volunteered to help me rearrange the video into geographic order, which is the first step to creating programs that will eventually be posted on Youtube. That phase is now complete. In the process we weeded out duplicate footage and Bill has worked with some overexposed portions to make them look better.

Although this is an improvement to one of our streetcars, it qualifies as a history upgrade. When TCRT No. 1239 was backdated to its 1907 as-built appearance, it was missing the large coal-fired heater that sat on the front platform behind and slightly to the left of the motorman's stool. It was a Baker heater, somewhat like the one in Duluth No. 265. A couple of years ago I attended a HeritageRail Alliance meeting at Pennsylvania's Strasburg Rail Road. Inside one of their wood coaches was a Baker heater. I inquired and it turns out to be a replica made in their shop. They agreed to make a non-functioning replica for 1239. It is now complete and we're working on the shipping arrangements. We have to paint it, then installation will happen while 1239 is getting its trucks rebuilt. ☺



### Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway No. 28 Needs a Temporary Home

As reported in detail in the August issue of the *Streetcar Currents*, Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway No. 28 has been moved to the Museum's Excelsior carbarn. This was done because we were asked to move the single truck Birney car out of Ken Albrecht's machine shed in North Mankato. While we thought that moving it to Excelsior was good all around, it turns out that storing No. 28 in the ESL carbarn has caused all sorts of major operational problems. Therefore, until Winona No. 10 is moved to CHSL, we need to find a temporary storage facility for No. 28.



We are asking all our members if you know of a suitable location, preferably under cover, that we can use to store No. 28 for up to two years. If you do, please contact Chief Mechanical Officer, **Dick Zawacki** and let him know the who, what, and where of the storage facility. In its current body-only state, No. 28 weighs approximately 9000 pounds. Dimensions are: 29 feet long (actually 28' 4"); 9 feet wide (actually 8'6"); and, 12 feet high with the shop truck underneath or 9' 6" high without the shop truck. We would not need a lot of access to it, so putting No. 28 in the back of a storage shed would not be a big problem for us. Dick can be contacted as follows: 952-215-4572 or by e-mail to [dickzawacki@gmail.com](mailto:dickzawacki@gmail.com)

Goings-on at CHSL & ESL



(Top Left) The Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society holds their June, July and August "Tapping History Series" on the steamboat *Minnehaha*. This year ESL partnered with them to provide streetcar rides to and from the *Minnehaha*. Starting with a tour of the ELMHS Museum the participants rode on DSR No. 265 to the east end of the ESL line, followed by a Lake Minnetonka cruise on the *Minnehaha* and ending with a return ride on the streetcar. A great time was had by all.

(Top Right) The Excelsior "Art on the Lakes" event was held on Water Street this year, putting it closer to the ESL ticket booth. With **Denny Morrow** in the ticket booth looking on, Operator **Mary Amsden** put on a sandwich board and walked the event, engaging potential riders along the way. It was a very successful weekend at ESL.

(Left) As part of WCCO TV's "Goin' To The Lake" feature, **Jason DeRusha** rode on DSR No. 265 and interviewed **Mike Buck**. The filming and interview took 90 minutes and produced a 2 minute TV segment. Mike did an excellent job providing the history of MSM and ESL. In this photo, Mesaba No. 10 is the backdrop rather than the TV angle with the beautiful Winona 10 behind them. (All photos by Karen Kertzman)



CHSL held two sessions of the Streetcar Camp for Kids in August. On the left **Bill Arends** is instructing on the "people catcher" during the 6 to 11 year old kids camp. On the right **Dick Zawacki** is mentoring an advanced camp boy who's operating No. 1300. (Both photos by Rod Eaton)

September 2-----Special Labor Day operations at both ESL and CHSL  
 September-----ESL and CHSL goes to weekend-only operations. ESL continues to operate on Tuesdays.  
 September 21-----ESL provides service during Excelsior's Apple Days festival.



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

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

**M** *MSM's New Members.* We would like to welcome the newest members to our MSM family: Luke Swanson and Edward Copeland.

**M** *Membership Renewals.* We ask all our members for help with membership renewals. When you receive your renewal notice in the mail, please take a few minutes right then to write your check and use the envelope we provide to send your renewal dues to us. Doing it as soon as you can really

saves us time and money when we have to send you a second and then the final notice. You can also renew your membership by logging onto our website at the following URL:

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

Note that while the form you see appears to be a "join the museum" form, simply check the "renewal" bullet at the bottom of the form to renew your membership. ☺

**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  
 September — 2019**

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 September 20, 2019.

Please send items to the editor **Jim Vaitkunas** at the following address:

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 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481

E-mail: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)

**Bye bye Minnegazettes**

**O**ur Museum's history was chronicled in the *Minnegazette*, which was published from 1970 to 2007. Initially it was a simple newsletter that appeared every two months. In 1981 it was upgraded to a slick paper magazine format. Feature articles began appearing in the mid-1980s. In 1990 the page count expanded and publication switched to quarterly. The need for more internal communication spawned divisional newsletters (*Streetcar Currents* for the Traction Division, the *Semaphore* for the Railroad Division and *Steamboatin' News* for the Steamboat Division) and the *Minnegazette* was no longer essential for reporting on museum developments. It went history-only in 2005.



**W**hen MSM split from MTM in 2005, both organizations agreed to keep the *Minnegazette* going as a joint effort. That ended in early 2007, when editor Aaron Isaacs decided to start *Twin City Lines* as a streetcar-only history magazine. MTM published a few more *Minnegazette* issues but wasn't able to keep it going.

**S**ince then MSM has stored hundreds of *Minnegazette* back issues in the Russell Olson Library. They take up a lot of space which we can better use to store back issues of *Twin City Lines*. We don't need them anymore because **Dennis Stephens, Andy Stephens and Aaron Isaacs** have scanned them all. We'll keep a couple of paper reference sets, but the rest will be discarded by October 1st. If you want any for your personal collection, contact Aaron at [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).