

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

November-December 2019



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Motor projects back on track. We have a backlog of motors that require overhauling. As part of rebuilding TCRT No. 1239's trucks, we purchased five ex-Toronto motors from the Halton County Radial Railway Society, which runs a trolley museum near Toronto, Canada. The plan is to replace the pair of ancient motors under No. 1239 that came from TCRT's Main Steam Station steeplecab switching locomotive No. 20.

The Toronto motors were lined up for rebuilding at L&S Electric, a Minneapolis company, when three things happened to delay the work.

1. One of No. 1300's motors failed.
2. Then one of Winona No. 10's motors failed.
3. If that wasn't enough, Canadian Pacific Railway hired L&S Electric to do a big motor project and our work was pushed back more than six months.

No. 1300 was rewired to run on two motors and successfully made it through the entire 2019 season. It was a little sluggish, but it worked. Winona No. 10 was removed from service.

L&S didn't know what to do with Winona No. 10's 1890s-vintage GE800 motor, so it has been sent to AC Electric in Maine, which did the initial overhaul. AC does lots of work for Seashore Trolley Museum. L&S finally finished the Canadian Pacific job, and gave us a very high bid to rebuild 1300's motor. We're unhappy with the price, but there isn't time to look for another shop. The clock is ticking and we need to return No. 1300 to 4-motor operation for the 2020 season. We gave L&S the green light and work is proceeding.

No. 1239's Truck Rebuild Project. During this hiatus, **Jim Willmore** and our truck rebuild contractor **Rob Mangels** have been designing No. 1239's rebuilt trucks. Because they were originally under Chicago L cars, they aren't historic and can be rebuilt however we wish. Our goal is to replicate the appearance of No. 1239's original Baldwin #5 trucks. Most major frame components like equalizers (side-frames) will be new, and they have mostly been made. Complex components like the journal boxes will be reused. We've received and okayed a quote from L&S to rebuild two of the Toronto motors once 1300's is done.

The plan is to rebuild both trucks to accept two motors each. However, this will exceed the budget by quite a bit, so it will happen in two stages. One truck will receive two motors and the other truck will be unpowered until there is enough money to rebuild two more motors and install them. As No. 1300 has done, No. 1239 can run temporarily with two motors.

In the meantime, **Karl Jones** and **Ben Franske** are rewiring the lighting inside No. 1239 for 120 volts AC instead of 600 volts DC. This is part of rewiring the lighting circuits in all our wood cars to reduce potential fire hazard.

New Administrative Volunteers. **Barb Gacek** has volunteered to be the new Member Services Manager, handling memberships and renewals. She replaces **John DeWitt**, who has done the job since 2005. My thanks to both of them.



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Earlier this year, **Tim Crain** announced he would like to step down as the bookkeeper, a time-consuming job he has held since 2010. Thank you Tim. Replacing him is **Mona Isaacs**. 🍷

CHSL Holiday Ops



At CHSL, pumpkin patch passengers are returning to No. 1300 after picking out their pumpkins. (Rod Eaton photo)



CHSL's Halloween ghost trolley ran well. Here's a full load of happy passengers coming from TCRT No. 1300. (Rod Eaton photo)



Saturday's (11/30) Holly trolley didn't run because of the bad weather. But for those brave kids & their parents who came out, Santa (**Mike Helde**) was at the Linden Hills depot to talk with the children. (Rod Eaton photo)



The new tower car for CHSL is being built by **Dennis Stephens** and some of the George Isaacs shop crew. The top six-feet of the old tower car will be placed on the scissors lift shown in this photo. (Aaron Isaacs photo)

While Saturday's (11/30/2019) Holly Trolley was cancelled, No. 1300 did host Santa and the children the next day. The top photo shows passengers lining up for the next run. The bottom one shows No. 1300 running in a winter wonderland. (Both photos by Rod Eaton)

ESL Holiday Ops



Richard Hadley photo



Operations in Winter Can be Magical
 ESL's North Pole Trolley ran in the snow on November 29th, 30th and December 1st. Operating in a snow storm can create problems like water freezing in the brake pipes. But Duluth No. 265 ran well and the people came out to see Santa, as shown in the photo on the upper right. **Elaine Love** is on the right in the photo showing her happy elf smile.
 The other three photos show the magical setting during the weekend, with the photo on the lower right picture postcard perfect.
 (All photos by Todd Bender unless noted otherwise)



A new fence was installed on the south side of the ESL car barn to hopefully keep the taggers out. (Karen Kertzman Photo)



- December 7 & 8 ----- CHSL Holly trolley featuring Santa Claus — 12 Noon to 3:30 PM
- December 7 ----- CHSL Vinternatt special evening event — 6 PM to 8:30 PM
- December 18 ----- MSM Christmas party at CHSL's Isaacs carbarn starts at 7:00 PM
- March-April ----- CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training
- May 2 & 3 ----- Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations
- May 5 ----- 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

Annual Appeal Fund Raising. We have sent out the flyer to all members soliciting donations to our Museum's 2019-2020 annual fund. Focus for this year's annual fund is the start of a multi-year project to repair and adjust the overhead trolley wire at both the Excelsior Streetcar Line and the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. The flyer describes in some detail the problems we've had over the years with the trolley wire at both railways.

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
November-December—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 January 20, 2020.

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

For starters, the overhead at Lake Harriet is now over 45 years old. Apart from spot repairs and adjustments, no major work has been done at CHSL for decades. There are rotting poles at CHSL that need to be replaced. Both lines need more pull-offs to center the wire over the track and the overhead at both lines needs to be re-tensioned. At ESL the siding frogs need to be relocated and leveled to prevent dewirements. The 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation has approved a \$20,000 challenge grant. We'll receive it when we match it dollar for dollar. That's where your donation to the 2019-2020 annual appeal comes in. Your donation will help us reach that match. So, please give generously to ensure that our historic streetcars can continue to operate and educate well into the future.

CHSL & ESL Overhead Trolley System Improvement Project

The overhead improvement project will be done in several phases.

- Phase 1 is the assessment of the current condition of the overhead at CHSL and ESL. A detailed inventory of what's installed now was partially done at CHSL and needs to be done at ESL
- Phase 2 is a fairly detailed description of the scope of work. This will involve consulting with a commercial utility contractor to determine what specifically the contractor needs from the Museum in order to bid on the project.
- Phase 3 will occur concurrently with phase 2. This involves identifying MSM volunteers who are willing to do some of the overhead work, thus reducing some of the expense that we will pay a contractor.
- Phase 4 is sending out a proposal to several contractors and then hiring a contractor to do the actual work.

A planning team comprised of **Keith Anderson, Jim Vaitkunas** and led by **Chris Heck**, is currently working on this project. The key to the project is whether we have 4-5 volunteers who are willing to do some of the less complicated work, thus saving us from paying the contractor. Replacing rotted overhead line poles is something volunteers can't do. But stringing backbone wire and adding additional pull-offs are easy tasks that a volunteer can do. ☺

MSM Christmas Party

We'll be holding our annual MSM Christmas party on Wednesday, December 18th, starting at 7:00 PM. Location is the George Isaacs carbarn at our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. If you do attend, please bring along a small treat to share. Following our yearly tradition, we'll be collecting canned goods for the local food shelves.

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 2020 issue is published. Publication dates for these issues will be on or about: February 1st, and, April 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after those dates please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com