

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

October 2019



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Social Media Is Important to Our Future

Aaron Isaacs Board Chair

We need social media marketing volunteers. As General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** has reported, our ridership is declining, even when you factor out all the lost shifts due to rain. Less ridership means less revenue, not a good prospect for the future.

There are only so many buttons we can push to reverse that trend. **Rod Eaton** is always looking for the next new event and **Bill Arends** for the next merchandise best seller, but those things alone aren't enough.

The one thing we haven't fully exploited is the potential of online and social media marketing. Yes, we've upped our Facebook presence and have about 25% more followers than last year, but we have only about 2000 followers. Compare that to Minnesota Transportation Museum which has 18,000 followers or *Old Minneapolis* with 96,000. **Chris Heck** has approached *Old Minneapolis* to see if they will accept posts from us. They said yes, so **Brian Long** will start doing so. We hope that their much larger following will become interested in us.

We also need an Instagram presence. We have an account, but no one is managing it right now. We'd like a volunteer to take this on, especially one who isn't already an active volunteer.

Our prime market is families with young children and in those families Mom chooses the activities. There are multiple sites targeted at young mothers. We should be on them. Would you like to take on that job?

Those are just individual pieces of a larger marketing strategy. Ideally we should have someone managing the overall program. I'm hoping one of our members will enjoy such a challenge and volunteer to be our Marketing Manager.

If any of these sound interesting, contact me at aaronmona@aol.com or Volunteer Coordinator **Pat Cosgrove** at pkcosgrove@charter.net

The Baker heater has arrived. TCRT No. 1239 was built with a coal-fired Baker heater on the front platform, behind and to the left of the motorman. It heated water for a hot water system like the one in DSR No. 265. When No. 1239 was backdated to its as-built 1907 appearance, no heater was available, so there's a big vacant space on the front platform.

A couple of years ago I discovered that Pennsylvania's Strasburg Railroad makes replica Baker heaters, so we ordered one and it has arrived. It is non-functional (no innards) but it will make the car's appearance more accurate. It's at the Isaacs carbarn awaiting

painting. Once installed, we also have to fabricate a chimney and some other external piping. (+)

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This photo shows **Karl Jones** removing the screws that tied the Baker Heater to the shipping pallet. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



An All-Motorette Crew

By Linda Ridlehuber

Excelsior has had theirs off and on, but CHSL last had an all-motorette crew in the 1990's (**Kathy Prestholdt** and two others) but they had **John Prestholdt** serve as Foreman. So with the addition of one new Motorette last year (**Barb Gacek**) and two this year (**Kathleen Graber** and **Leah Harp**), it seemed like a good time to set one up again. I trained as a Foreman this spring and the rest of the crew waited patiently while I got my feet on the ground a bit. We compared calendars and came up with Sunday, September 22nd, second shift. I sent everyone copies of the *Minnegazette* articles **Aaron Isaacs** wrote in connection with the 1993 reunion, so we could all tell stories from that material. Hopefully we will have that material in our resource area of the MSM website so all can dig into it, as it has terrific stories. (*It is now on our website-Ed.*)

Like all good snowballs, someone needs to give it a small shove to get it started. Leah suggested we get some PR going for the museum and our shift. **Rod Eaton** made one of his fun flyers for the bulletin board and lined up a reporter from the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. I was able to get the interest of the local *Southwest Journal* editor who also wrote up a nice article. Thanks to **Aaron Isaacs**, SWJ also used one of our vintage photos, a nice one of TCRT Operator Helen Murphy stepping up into her car.

All was pretty well set when, oh no! No. 1300 was pulled out of service for brake work. *And none of us is trained on the PCC.* Okay, there's a moral there and we talked about training on No. 322 next season. Thanks to the George K. Isaacs Shop crew, No. 1300 was back in service well before the 22nd and we were ready to roll. In spite of a rainy start and chilly weather, we had several good runs. The last, so often the best (at least for the sunset), was even more interesting because our riders, a family from Poland who seemed to have limited English, were greeted and welcomed in their own language, thanks to Leah's linguistic experience with her immigrant grandparents. Somehow that seems even more in keeping with the World War II era we were representing! 🍀



(Above) Here's our all-Motorette Crew on September 22, 2019. (L-R) **Leah Harp, Barb Gacek, Linda Ridlehuber & Kathleen Graber.**

(Right) Here's the photo of **Helen Murphy**, one of the World War II Motorettes hired because of the wartime "manpower" shortage. Note Helen's hat badge. TCRT had a special hat badge made for the female operators that designates them as an **Operator** rather than Motorman. The **Conductor** job title is gender-neutral so females wore that on their uniform hat.





TCRT No. 1239s front platform showing where the baker heater will go. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



You can see the top of the Baker heater in TCRT gate car No. 1124. Note the car has a short single-note "peanut" whistle indicating the photo likely was taken prior to 1915 when these whistles were replaced by the more melodious "trombone" whistle due to complaints from the public.



Volunteers at Work Behind the Scenes

(Above) Overhead wire work is very important if we are to operate streetcars. The ESL crew shown here consists of **Howie Melco**, **Ken Blake** and **Scott Wardrope** who are preparing to install a back guy.

(Above left) **Dennis Stephens** (L) and **Keith Anderson** are checking track gauge in the Linden Hills station area and installing gauge bars.

(Left) **John Prestholdt** and **Jim Willmore** are shown here shoring-up the Linden Hills station's waiting benches which have worked loose.

The work being done and shown in these photos is just a fraction of the "behind the scenes" work that is done weekly to keep our demonstration railways safe and operable for our volunteers and passengers.

What's Happening?

- October 12 & 13-----Farmer Ken & Jan's ☺☺☺☺☺☺ ☺☺☺☺ at CHSL—12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
- October 19-----TRANSYLVANIA TROLLEY at CHSL—12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
- October 19-----Trick R' Trolley at CHSL—1:30 PM & 2:30 PM
- October 19-----Trick R' Trolley at ESL—1:30 PM and 2:30 PM
- October 25 & 26-----Ghost Trolley at CHSL: A STREETCAR NAMED EXPIRE —6:30 PM to 9 PM
- October 25 & 26-----Fantastically Spooky GHOST TROLLEY at ESL—6 PM to 9 PM
- October 26-----GRAVEYARD GHOST STORIES at CHSL—9:30 PM
- October 27-----The Late Show: The Phantom Trolley at CHSL & 7 PM and 8:30 PM
- Nov 29, 30 & Dec 1-----North Pole Trolley & Santa at ESL. See schedule on our MSM website for daily times.
- Nov 30 & Dec 1-----Holly Trolley with Santa at CHSL—12:00 PM to 3:30 PM
and Dec 7 & 8
- December 7-----Vinternatt at CHSL. See the Luminaries along our right-of-way—6 PM to 8:30 PM.

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
October—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 November 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

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

New Member. Our Museum has gained one new member since you received the last issue of the Streetcar CURRENTS. We welcome Kerry Barnard to the MSM family.

MSM's 2019-2020 Annual Fund Drive. We will soon be sending to you the flyer announcing our annual fund drive. As you know, around November 1st we ask for donations to our Museum. This is the only time we solicit donations from our members. So, be on the lookout for the flyer either in your e-mail in-box or in a special snail-mail mailing. The primary goal for the 2019-2020 annual fund is to raise funds for work on the overhead trolley wire at CHSL and ESL. As you can imagine, having the overhead trolley wire in good repair is essential to our operations. Over the years the overhead has gone out of alignment at CHSL and especially at the Excelsior Streetcar Line. It's time we spent some funds on getting the trolley wire back in good condition. Please consider a generous donation to our annual fund when you receive the flyer. Your support is really needed and most appreciated. ☺

Come and Take a Ride on Our Special Events

Have you ever come and taken a ride on one of our Halloween or Christmas Holiday special events at CHSL and ESL? We wonder sometime if our members and volunteers come and ride on these outstanding events. While our daytime Halloween events are generally for families and the younger people, at CHSL we also have special Halloween events geared to teens and older folks, including those over 30 or 40 years old, or even older.

When there's the Holly Trolley at CHSL and the North Pole Trolley at ESL both featuring Santa Claus. At CHSL this event features our very own bona fide Santa, Mike Helde. After a short ride to the north platform, the children get to visit with Santa. It's a memorable experience for Kids and grandkids.

Vinternatt is a very special event at CHSL featuring luminaries all along the right-of-way up to the Berry bridge. The run is from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM and the run in the dark down our right-of-way has been described by past riders as "magical." Please, come and ride on our special events.

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule

The Streetcar CURRENTS, is now entering its winter publication schedule. You'll be receiving the Streetcar CURRENTS every other month starting with the November-December 2019 issue. Monthly publication resumes in May 2020. Dates for the "off-season" issues will be on or about: December 1st, 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