

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

May 2020



Waiting!

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

For those of you who were able to attend the Museum's Annual Members meeting on Saturday April 25th, you know that the Museum remains closed for the month of May and that the Board will consider the June schedule in mid-May, with the focus and priority on the safety of our volunteers, members and our guests. Although the museum is closed, several activities continue. I have summarized below some creative and outstanding work that **Leah Harp** is spearheading with help from **Steve Simon**, who has led the Autism sponsored Halloween event for the past several years. Leah's and Steve's goal is to enable MSM to become an Autism Society certified Autism friendly business.



While the specific concept is still evolving, the Museum would follow established guidelines around the treatment of light, sound, fragrance, and movement. Given the nature of the Museum and its operations, the standard practice of the Museum appears to fit well with the Autism Society's guidelines. If MSM pursues this opportunity, it would require each operator to watch a short, free video presentation. It has not been decided if there would be special events or if we would include the program in normal streetcar operations. In either case, the opportunity allows an under-served population the opportunity to have a safe, enjoyable experience that fits within the Museum's mission.

As Leah explained in her initial proposal to Museum leadership: *"While the certification is specifically about Autism, to me (Leah) this would indicate a more general acceptance of neurodiversity. Neurodiversity is a term that asserts there is a huge variation in human brain functioning. Individuals may identify as neurodivergent for many reasons, including having received a diagnosis of a neurological difference such as Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia and Tourette Syndrome, and mental health disorders such as Bipolar Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. There remains lack of resources, supports, and acceptance that can make life challenging and stressful for neurodiverse people and their families.*

Autistic kids like trains. In fact, so many Autistic people like trains that it has become a stereotype! MSM can find ridership and membership among neurodivergent populations. Autism certification would allow marketing opportunities to target these populations. The National Autism Society's certification is a great place for MSM to start."

This would take little effort and make MSM an even more Autism-friendly destination than it already is and provide an opportunity for some good public relations for MSM. Autism Society certified businesses are included in their national and local listings. The status would be a valuable addition to our website and signage.

In these uncertain times, be safe. **Thank you** for your ongoing interest in and support to our Museum. 🍀

Inside This Issue

From the Front Platform	2
TCRT's "Wye Bulges"	3
Coming Events	4
MSM News & Views	4
The CARES Act and Donating to MSM	4

MSM's 2020 Annual Member's Meeting

Our Museum's annual member's meeting went very well using the web-based application **Zoom**. If you couldn't log-on, a recording of the meeting was made by Zoom and you can view it at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0JY3bVK2VM&feature=youtu.be>



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Looking ahead. Will we run streetcars in 2020? That's the big question for which we currently have no answer. May operations have been cancelled. The Board will meet in mid-May to decide whether to cancel June's schedule. I can tell you that the safety of our volunteers and the public is our top concern, and we won't risk either to run streetcars.

Here's the good news. We're in good financial shape. Unlike so many other businesses and institutions, we don't have to weigh a health risk against the need for revenue. Being all-volunteer, we don't have to worry about laid-off employees.

It is true that if we're shut down for the entire year (hopefully that won't happen) we'll lose about \$80,000 net revenue after expenses. If we are able to resume by October, we can still take in about one-third of our annual fare revenue. That's how productive our Halloween and Christmas events are. Of course that assumes we can resume running full streetcars and social distancing is no longer necessary.

To be cautious, I created a worst case budget scenario that assumes no operations in 2020. It also assumes we can reopen the shops and proceed with streetcar restoration and maintenance.

- We currently have \$392,000 in the bank. To do what I just described will cost about \$40,000 for the rest of the year. That leaves a "balance" of \$352,000.
- We are committed to spend about \$112,000 to rebuild TCRT gate car No. 1239's trucks with two operational motors. That work is progressing as this is written and I hope we'll see it completed this year.
- We are committed to repair Winona No. 10's bad motor. That's \$28,000.
- We are committed to at least \$55,000 to repair the overhead wire at both CHSL and ESL. In fact that money is in a restricted fund and can't be used for another project.
- Finally, we're committed to \$5,000 of miscellaneous technology improvements by **Ben Franske**.
- After meeting the above commitments we'll have \$152,000 left over. Our policy is to retain at least \$100,000 in cash reserves.

We're putting the following projects on hold because they don't need to be completed in 2020.

- Refurbish two additional motors for TCRT No. 1239.
- Concrete paving the rest of the Excelsior carbarn.
- Realign the Excelsior carbarn's tracks 2 and 3.

With these budget changes we can easily make it through this year and beyond without worrying about money. 🍀



A Nice Discovery

Recently, Museum Historian and photo Archivist, **Aaron Isaacs** was using the Covid-19 stay-at-home isolation to scan a large number of photos that are in the Museum's photo archive. This includes negatives, which always yield surprises. Here's a new view of TCRT No. 1239 Aaron didn't know we had. No. 1239 is at Hennepin Avenue and 6th Street in downtown Minneapolis, running on the COMO-HARRIET line as a State Fair extra.

TCRT's Wye Bulges

By Aaron Isaacs

My list of streetcar remnants has always included the half block of Penn Avenue north of 50th Street in southwest Minneapolis, where the OAK-HARRIET cars wyeed-out before proceeding to the other end of the line at Oak and Beacon Sts. The street is wider where the wye was, so autos could clear the streetcar sitting in the middle of the street (see photo). Beyond the wye the street narrowed and so it remains to this day.

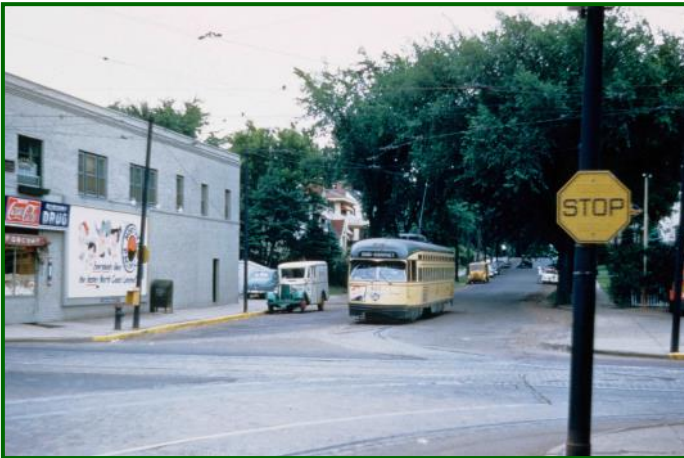
While out biking recently, I passed the former wye on 4th Avenue S. at 48th Street--and noticed that the street narrowed just beyond where the wye track would have ended. The light bulb went on and I wondered if this had happened anywhere else. At home I dug out the track map in Electric Railways of Minnesota and went on Google Earth and streetview.

I discovered nine more, which I have dubbed "wye bulges," all in Minneapolis.

54th St. & France Ave. 38th St. & Bryant Ave. 50th St. & Bryant Ave. 48th St. & Nicollet Ave.
 58th St. & Nicollet Ave. 48th St. & 4th Ave. S. 48th St. & Chicago Ave. 33rd St. & Johnson Ave.
 27th St. & Washington Ave., NE.

In every case the leg of the wye occupied a narrow residential street. The wye bulge was usually only on one side, not both sides as at 50th St. & Penn Ave. Arterial streets were wide enough that no bulge was required. There were also residential streets with wyes that didn't have bulges, and I have no idea why not.

For some reason these wye bulges in the streets didn't happen in St. Paul, although the south curb of Ivy Avenue leading to Rice Street is still angled where the track used to cut the corner. 🕒



(Above) Here's the Wye bulge at 38th Street and Bryant Avenue.
(Photo by Aaron Isaacs)



(Above Left) The wye at 50th Street and Penn Avenue, South with PCC No. 425 laying over on Penn Avenue. The curved tracks in the foreground were used by BRYANT-JOHNSON cars with the line's terminus a few blocks to the south at 54th Street and Penn Avenue, South.. Note the yellow stop sign. *(MSM photo archive)*

(Left) Here's the Wye bulge at 50th Street and Bryant Avenue.
(Photo by Aaron Isaacs)



What's Happening?

May 2Should have been the beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations!! ☹️



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

Welcome to our newest members. It has been some time since we've welcomed new members to our MSM family. So, we would like to extend a hearty welcome to the following new Museum members: Tom Hanson, John Flynn, Monica & Corey Olson, Sean Cahill, Fred Maloney, Bill Gardner, Myrle Mackenzie, Braydon Strobel, Doug Fuerst, US Rep. Dean Phillips and Michael Quackenboss.

As a segue to our new member welcome, we're pleased to report that many of our current members took the suggestion in the March-April issue of the Streetcar CURRENTS to renew their membership on-line at our Museum's website www.trolleyride.org. Over twenty-five members used the on-line renewal feature. Thanks to each of you who saved us time and money by re-

newing 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

The museum's business address and telephone number are:

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

Streetcar CURRENTS
May 2020

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 May 20, 2020.

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's Annual Meeting. Our annual Member's meeting was successfully held on Saturday, April 25th. This year's meeting was unusual in that it was held using the Zoom web-based application. Peak attendance at the meeting was seventy members, which is a record for an MSM annual meeting. While using Zoom had its limitations, all the information normally presented at a "live" in-person meeting was presented by Museum officers and others. We thank those members who participated in the meeting because your participation made the meeting a great success. See the box at the bottom of page one for a link to the recording of the meeting. ☺️



New Tax Incentive to Donate to MSM.

The need for your contributions to MSM have never been greater, and the tax incentives for you do donate have never been better. The CARES Act, which is the Covid-19 pandemic recovery funding passed by Congress in March 2020, specifically creates charitable giving incentives for donors to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Section 2204 of the CARES Act includes a new above-the-line deduction (universal or non-itemized deduction that applies to all taxpayers) for total charitable contributions of up to \$300. The incentive applies to contributions made in 2020 and would be claimed on tax forms next year. Section 2205 of the CARES Act lifts the existing cap on annual contributions for those who itemize, raising it from 60 percent of adjusted gross income to 100 percent.

Needless to say, MSM has monthly bills to pay even when we're not operating. While we can't predict when operations will start at our demonstration railways, our shops at Como-Harriet and Excelsior will hopefully soon resume work on restorations and other important projects, some of which are mentioned by Board Chair Aaron Isaacs in his column on page two. In addition, we'll need to start inspections and maintenance on our historic streetcars to get them ready for the start of the 2020 season, which we hope will happen this summer. Please take this opportunity to save on your taxes while donating to MSM by going to the following link: <https://trolleyride.org/annual-appeal/>