

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

July 2021



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

Behind the Scenes

With a successful opening day's operations at Como-Harriet and Excelsior behind us, I would like to extend a special recognition to some of the people that make everything in MSM work. With these individuals we would not be able to operate. Thank you all!

Mechanical: The crew under **Dick Zawacki** has prepared the Museum's streetcar fleet through an extensive off-season maintenance program despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. **Pete Connors, Mark Digre, Karl Jones, Tom Schramm, Dennis Stephens, John Prestholdt** and **Jim Wilmore** worked on the Como-Harriet cars (322 & 1300), while **Carl Floren, Scott Heiderich, Mike Kimitch, Steve Mages, Dave McCollum, Howie Melco,** and **Dick Zawacki** readied the ESL cars (265 & 1239).



Right-of-Way Maintenance: **Steve McCulloch** and his team comprised of **Ben Porter, Gary Sparr, Jill Seinola, Luca Gunther** and **Pat Cosgrove** have started the work required to trim and remove branches and weeds along the right-of-way. This work along with other tasks that the crew performs not only makes the grounds neater, but also protects the car and passengers from stray branches and helps prolong the wood railroad tie's life by allowing better drainage.

Car Cleaning: **Louis Hoffman** has volunteered to lead the car cleaning efforts at Como-Harriet taking over from **Jerry Peterson**, who was car cleaning foreman for several years.

Charters: **Karen Kertzman** for ESL and **Pat Cosgrove** for CHSL have volunteered to take on the management responsibilities for the Museum's charter operations from **Jerry** and **Muriel Olsen**. As mentioned in e-mails to the operating crews, we have moved the operator sign-up process to Humanity/Shift Planning for charters and we plan to automate many of the other administrative and financial steps through **Ben Franske's** work later this summer.

Recertification Training: Several leaders have volunteered their time to recertify our Foremen and Operators at both railways for the 2021 season. Thank you to **Bill Arends, Rose Arends, Fred Beamish, Todd Bender, Rod Eaton, Chris Heck, Dave Higgins, Louis Hoffman, Aaron Isaacs, Jim Kertzman, Karen Kertzman,** and **Bill Pekarna** for their help with this important work.

With the very strong response from our existing Operators letting us know if they'll operate for the 2021 season, the Operations Committee has decided to add two shifts to CHSL's operating schedule effective July 16th. Added to the schedule are Friday afternoons through Labor Day and a second shift on Saturday starting July 17th. The Operations Committee will continue to monitor the interest of the Operators and the public to evaluate adding more shifts.

Finally, I would like to thank all returning volunteers in advance for your time and effort. The Museum could not function without all of you. Be safe! 🍀

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From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

We're back! I pulled my first shift at CHSL on July 4th and it was great to meet the streetcar-riding public again. Let me tell you, they've missed us as well. Based on the first weekend's experience, there appears to be no pushback on our fare increase to \$3 and the elimination of most cash sales.

Among the activities opening up as Covid recedes are the Kids Clubs, which were organized last year but had to stay virtual until now. They had their first on-site get together recently.

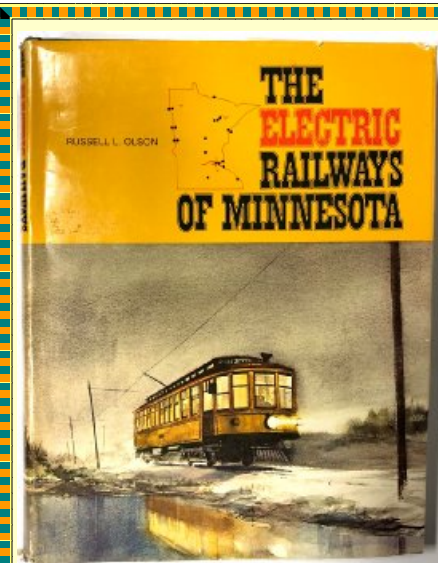
Did you know we have a YouTube channel? Go to YouTube.com, then in the search box type Minnesota Streetcar Museum. **Rod Eaton** has been adding new videos each week. They're recordings of the slide shows I've been doing for our informal Zoom group each Monday. Check them out.

One of the videos is the 1950s Como-Harriet trip, created with the donated help of professional video editor **Bill Olexy**. It was completed just before Covid hit, and we had to stop. Now we've started working again, and the next one will be on the University Avenue line. I'll let you know when it appears on YouTube.

John Prestholdt and I recently catalogued a large number of oversize maps and technical drawings that are stored in the Russell Olson Library flat files. Now they're being digitized, thanks to **Floyd Child**. He has access to the oversize scanner at the City of West St. Paul's Engineering Department.

This year **Jerry** and **Muriel Olsen** retired as the charter agents after many years of excellent service. **Pat Cosgrove** is now the charter agent for Como-Harriet, with **Karen Kertzman** for Excelsior. With the change of agents we've streamlined and computerized the charter booking and billing process. Customers inquire by email and fill out an online form describing what they want. Pat or Karen calls them back to make the arrangements. Invoicing and payment are made online in advance. The charters are entered into the *ShiftPlanning* crew-scheduling system we use, where operators can sign up for them. Como-Harriet charter Foremen are encouraged to open the depot for retail sales either before or after the charter. All transactions are now by credit card, so no need to handle cash.

CHSL *50th Anniversary coming*. Our Como-Harriet Line began running on August 28, 1971. Our 50th Anniversary is coming up, and we're planning a modest celebration. Happily, August 28 falls on Saturday this year. Thanks to **Louis Hoffman** and **Rod Eaton** for setting things in motion, but they need helpers. Please volunteer. ☺



THE ELECTRIC RAILWAYS OF MINNESOTA

A recent donation of pre-owned books included a copy of the classic book *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* written by long-time MSM member and Historian Emeritus **Russell Olson**. I doubt I'd find many who would argue with me if I say that this is the most comprehensive book written about the subject of electric railways in Minnesota. This book, and dust jacket, are in very good condition. The picture shown is a photo of this cover of the book. Very minor handling wear on the dust jacket. This copy has also been signed by the author. Before it is posted for sale on the MSM online store it's being offered in the *Streetcar Currents* to MSM members for \$60 with free shipping. Of course, if you live near the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and can pick it up at either the Linden Hills station or the Isaacs carbarn, it will save MSM the cost of shipping. Please contact **Bill Arends** at 612-419-4930 or send an e-mail to mormanbill@gmail.com if you are interested. And don't forget that the online store at trolleyride.org has a selection of over 80 pre-owned train and trolley books for sale.

MSM Photo Ops



At CHSL, our first day of the 2021 operating season (7-2-2021) featured the CHSL crew of (L to R) **Pat Cosgrove**, **Pat Desbonnet** and **Linda Ridlehuber** shown above. **Rita Martinez** was in the Linden Hills station take care of our passengers. (Brian Long photo))



Here's a full load on No. 1300 on Friday evening, July 2nd. Many of our passengers commented that they really missed the trolley and were glad to have us back operating. (Brian Long photo)



Here's **Gary Sparr** and **Jill Seinola** getting ready for work cutting the brush back along the CHSL right-of-way. (Ben Porter photo)



ESL's first operations day was Saturday, July 3rd. Here's the first day's crew (L to R) **Mike Buck**, **Tim Gephart** and **Gregg Thomas** (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



Here's Karen's Korner, our merchandise shop inside the Excelsior car-barn. It looks well stocked. (Karen kertzman photo)



Passengers take a photo of Duluth No. 265 arriving from a run down the line. A summer tradition. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

- July 16 ----- CHSL begins Friday afternoon (1 PM to 4 PM) service through September 3rd
- July 17 ----- CHSL adds 2nd shift (4:30 PM to 8:30 PM) on Saturdays
- July 17 ----- CHSL Streetcar cleaning 9 AM to 11 AM
- July 24 ----- CHSL Special Owl service 9:00 PM to 12-midnight



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

Streetcar *Cleaning*. We have been known for the great appearance of our historic streetcars. You might ask, how do we do this? Credit goes to our volunteers who give our cars a deep cleaning about once a month, and sweeping out the cars after almost every day's operations. It's not glamorous work, but it's very necessary during these Covid times. And, **you** can help. You don't have to be an operating volunteer to help us keep our streetcars spic-and-span. Anyone can do it including family members and neighbors. If you're interested in volunteering to clean our streetcars please send an e-mail to the following car cleaning leaders:

- CHSL — Louis Hoffman: Hoffman.louis@comcast.net
- ESL — Tom Dulebohn: tbdulebohn@mchsi.com

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
 July—2021

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 July 25, 2021.

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

It is with sorrow that we report the passing of one of MSM's most active volunteers, **Ken Albrecht**. Ken joined MSM in the late 1990s and immediately qualified as an Operator on our streetcars, frequently operating at both railways. Ken became more than an Operator in the early 2000s when the wood siding on TCRT No. 1300 needed replacing and Ken did a lot of work on that project. Next, TCRT No. 1239 was moved into the Excelsior car barn for its five-year restoration. On the 1239 project, Ken demonstrated his skills in woodworking and in metal working. Specifically, Ken took on the project of building the rear steps for No. 1239 which were long-gone, the car having been rescued from its 30-year-plus life as a cabin in Long Lake, Minnesota. Ken built a special jig to replicate the steel open treads of the steps made more complicated because the steps curved towards the rear of the car. Ken then installed the rear gate operating mechanism controlled by the Motorman at the front of the car. Ken's engineering acumen really showed with this important restoration.

Next, Ken focused on the restoration of Winona No. 10, a composite steel and wood single-truck car built in 1914 by the St. Louis Car Company. This truly was a ground-up restoration that was led by Ken. While the car seemed to be in excellent condition when it was rescued in 1998, it turned-out that the under-frame was so corroded that it needed to be replaced entirely, as was the bottom six-inches of the steel side-sheets. What Ken and the Winona 10 crew decided to do was jack up the carbody, cut off the bottom of the side sheets and replace everything below. Once the new frame was built, the car body was lowered onto the frame and the new steel side sheet was welded onto the old upper part. Then work on the interior woodwork began and, again, Ken supervised that, building the wood seat bottoms and backs in his well-appointed workshop in his North Mankato home. **Howie Melco, Mike (Electric) Miller, Dave McCollum** and the other Winona 10 crew worked on the electrical systems.

Towards the end of Winona 10's restoration, Ken was in his mid-80s and time had finally caught-up with him. He became less active until finally he stopped volunteering. Ken did attend the Winona 10 dedication on June 17, 2018. He was a hard worker and a great friend. We will miss him.

Photo: Sitting inside Winona No. 10 on June 17, 2018 Ken is on the left with **Howie Melco** who took over from Ken as Winona 10 restoration manager.

