

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

September-October 2021



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

VOLUNTEERS PRESERVING MINNESOTA HISTORY FOR FIFTY YEARS!

On August 28, 1971 the first streetcar in seventeen years to run in Minneapolis for the public left the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's platform at Lake Harriet and went south one-quarter mile to the museum's single-bay car barn. Before that first run, a bottle of Lake Harriet water was broken across the front tow bar of TCRT No. 1300, with [Judy Sandberg](#) doing the honors. The crew on that first run for the public was [Judy Sandberg](#) and her husband [Frank](#). After that brief ceremony, streetcar rides were offered to all passengers on that short round trip. The power supply was a towed trailer that had a trolley bus motor connected to a gasoline engine providing 300-volt current to No. 1300, the first Minnesota streetcar preserved by the museum.

In the ensuing years steady progress was made in extending the original Lake Harriet tracks, putting up the electric overhead to eliminate the need for the gas-generator "goat," rescuing and restoring additional historic Minnesota streetcars, and additions and improvements to the museum's buildings and infrastructure. All these advancements were documented in [Aaron Isaacs](#) column in the last issue of the *Streetcar Currents* and in the issues of the museum's then periodical, the *Minnegazette*.

We celebrated fifty years of preservation on August 28, 2021 with a short ceremony at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's Linden Hills station. The principle reason why our museum has had success in making these improvements are our volunteers. Holding Board meetings, taking care of the finances, restoring and maintaining our historic streetcars, maintaining the track and overhead—all this is accomplished by volunteers. Over these fifty years, hundreds of volunteers have worked to preserve this small slice of Minnesota's history. Without our volunteers, past and present, nothing would get done and the museum would fade into history.

So, let us celebrate the successes resulting from our volunteers. And let's look to the future when the current pandemic is hopefully in our rear-view mirror and we can operate our streetcars and educate our passengers on the rich heritage of electric transit in the Twin Cities and Minnesota. ☺

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The Gang's All Here! Well, almost. There's about 40 people in the group photo taken on August 28, 2021. This accounts for maybe 40-percent of the total number of MSM's volunteers who work either in our shops or in streetcar operations. The weather was somewhat soggy but we successfully made it through the day's festivities.

(Photo by Scott Streble)



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

As you know, the history of Minnesota streetcars is my area of concentration, and making that history available to everyone has been a high priority. This month we took a giant step in that direction, thanks to **Ben Franske**. Ben has linked MSM's website (trolleyride.org) to a whole new set of scanned publications, maps and videos. Click on Historic Resources & Photos and you can now directly link to scanned versions of these history documents:

- *The Electric Railways of Minnesota*, by Russ Olson (1976)
- *The Electric Railways of Minnesota Supplement*, by Russ Olson (1990)
- *An index to The Electric Railways of Minnesota*
- *Interurbans #14: Electric Railways of Minneapolis & St. Paul*, by Russ Olson and Ed Nelson (1953)
- *Twin City Lines: The 1940s* (1995)
- *The Como-Harriet Story* (1997)

As they say on the TV infomercials, "But wait, there's more." A whole series of historic streetcar maps have been posted.

Click on Video Presentations and link directly to the videos on MSM's YouTube channel, including:

- A 1950s trip on the Como-Harriet Line (revised version posted July 8, 2021)
- A 1950s trip on the University of Minnesota Inter-Campus Line (posted August 25, 2021)
- A 1950s trip on the University Avenue Line (the Interurban) should be posted by September 17, 2021
- A 10-minute video of Duluth streetcars from 1926 and 1939 will be posted by October 1st.

Since this time last year, I've prepared a narrated history slide show every Monday for the MSM Zoom meeting. **Rod Eaton** started posting them earlier this year and there are 13 up so far, maybe more when you read this.

More to come. Thanks to the efforts of **Dennis Stephens** and his son **Andy**, all the *Minnegazette* newsletters and magazines from 1962 to 2007 have been scanned. Ben will be posting them over the next several months. Once that is done, we'll start preparing issues of the *Twin City Lines* magazine from 2007 to 2019 and post them to our website.

Duluth No. 78 is back! Number 78 has been out of service since 2019 because it had a controller fire. Well, the 1893 single-trucker is back. Thanks to ESL shop Foreman **Howie Melco**, No. 78's damaged controller has been completely rebuilt, the other electrical wiring has been gone over, and the car is back in service. 🚲



This photo of venerable Duluth St Rwy No. 78 was taken on September 6, 2021. Built in 1893 by the LaCledde Car Company of St. Louis, Missouri it was one of the first cars built after the Duluth horse car lines were electrified. It lasted in service until 1911 when it was moved to a West Duluth property and initially used as a garden shed. Acquired in 1971, No. 78 was the second car to be added to the museum's collection. Restoration began in 1983 and the car was completed and entered service on the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in 1991. The car was moved to our museum's Excelsior Streetcar Line in 1999 to establish historic streetcar service there.

(Todd Bender photo)



Fifty years of Streetcar Operations at CHSL

August 28, 2021 was a cloudy, and later in the afternoon, a soggy day. Likely because of the predicted bad weather and Covid19, attendance by our members and our neighbors in the Linden Hills neighborhood was not as expected. In spite of the weather, the group photo went well, short speeches were made, everyone present introduced themselves and reported how long they've been volunteering with our Museum, and a ceremonial ride was taken by the members. All in all, a good day for our museum. Photos taken on August 28th are on this and the next page.



The group of MSM members and volunteers posed for the first photo with just TCRT No. 1300 as the backdrop. (Mike Buck photo)



The brief ceremony began with a short statement from Board Chair **Aaron Isaacs**. Then everyone present introduced themselves. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



John Stein who helped build the Como-Harriet railway in the 1970s made some brief remarks. (Rod Eaton photo)



After the brief comments and introductions, the group took a ride on No. 1300. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



John Stein showed us that after 40 years he still knows how to run No. 1300. (Rod Eaton photo)



Here are most of MSM's active "Motorettes": (Left to right) **Jill Seino-la-Prestholdt, Linda Ridlehuber, Leah Harp, Anja Curiskis, Karen Kertzman, Lisa Rottach and Barb Gacek**. (Scott Streble photo)



Here's the group photo shown on page 1, but taken from a different perspective. (Mike Buck photo)



After the festivities on August 28th regular operations continued for a time but eventually halted account rain. (Scott Streble photo)

Ken Albrecht Memorial Gathering

A special memorial gathering was held on Monday, September 6th at the Excelsior Streetcar Line to honor the memory of **Ken Albrecht**, one of the most active and dedicated volunteers MSM has known. Ken was involved in almost all of the major projects that the museum undertook between 2000 and 2015. These included restoration of TCRT No. 1239, major exterior work on TCRT No. 1300 and building of the wood platforms at CHSL twice in ten years. Ken's major achievement was the complete restoration of Winona No. 10. All three cars were on display outside at the Excelsior car barn. Inside the car barn were other displays and a video presentation showing the projects in which Ken was involved. Ken's two daughters with their families were there as well as many of their family and friends and MSM's volunteers. Here are some views taken during the gathering.



(Above) All of ESL cars were outside for display. (Todd Bender photo)



(Right) Inside the car barn, attendees viewed the historic photos on the wall and the special slide show put together by one of Ken's daughters. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



(Above) Duluth No. 265 provided shuttle service to the parking lot at the Water Street end of ESL. (Todd Bender photo)

(Right) Winona No. 10 was placed outside for everyone's viewing. It was a hit to all who attended. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



Goings-on Around MSM

(Left) As reported in Chair Isaac's column on page 2, the controller on Duluth No. 78 has been repaired and the wiring underneath the floor replaced. Here we see **Howie Melco** working on replacing the underfloor wiring on the car. The car is now cleared for operations.

(Right) **Dave McCollum** and **Howie** discuss the controller wiring under the platform of No. 78.

(Both photos by Karen Kertzman)



(Left) **Steve Mages** (L) looks on as **Dick Zawacki** trims a wood piece in the ESL warm barn.

(Photo by Karen Kertzman)



Dick Zawacki explains to the Streetcar Adventure Campers in early September how a railroad switch works. (Rod Eaton photo)



Here's **Pat Cosgrove** working on a project in CHSL's George Isaac shop. The shop sees volunteers working on various projects during the week and on Saturday morning. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

The Baker heater in TCRT No. 1239 is finished. Here's a photo of the good looking work by the shop crew.

(Jim Vaitkunas photo)



What's Happening?

October 16-----Streetcar cleaning at CHSL — 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM
 October 16 & 17-----CHSL Pumpkin Patch trolley — 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
 October 22-----CHSL Graveyard Ghost Stories — 8:30 PM to 10:00 PM
 October 23-----CHSL Transylvania Trolley — 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM

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

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

Welcome to our newest members. We've had a fair number of new members join MSM since the last report in June. We welcome the following new members to the MSM family: Raven Pyle-McCrackyn, Erik Neu, Lynn Meyer, Eileen Oh, Malia Kessler, Amy Ann Lassig, Eric Sitiko, Adam Gare, Carrie Steenlage, Jerry Draeger, Leslie Mann, Guy Terhaar, Bonnie LaDuca and Wayne Axelson.

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
Sept-Oct—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 November 20, 2021.

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

Holiday Events Cancelled for 2021. Some of the Halloween and the Santa Claus trolley special events have just been cancelled. The decision was made because of the resurgence of Covid-19 and the Delta variant. The events that are cancelled include the Halloween Late Show, Streetcar Named Expire, the Holly Trolley and Vinternatt that were to run right after Thanksgiving. The closed car added to the likely cold weather were the prime factors considered in finally deciding to cancel these special events.

From the Como-Harriet Car Cleaning Department. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped keep our streetcars clean and presentable to the public at our monthly car cleaning sessions - including our kids' club volunteers and their parents. And a special thanks to crews who diligently and thoroughly sweep the car out at the end of each day. A clean-swept car makes our Saturday morning labors that much easier!

A word to our operating crews: In addition to sweeping, there's a cleaning kit behind the partition by the fuse box on No. 1300 with window cleaner, wood plush, cloths, and paper towel. Please don't be afraid to use them! The bulkhead windows should be cleaned pretty much every day. It has a handle and can easily be moved into No. 322.

For next year, please consider volunteering at least one Saturday during the season. If everyone did this we'd be inundated with volunteers! You can sign up on Shift Planning. Don't forget there are always doughnuts!

Membership renewals. More and more, our members are renewing their museum membership by going to our website www.trolleyride.org/about/become-a-member/. Don't let the wording of the link fool you. If you check the block at the bottom of the website page that says "Renewal of Existing Membership," that will save you time and a first class stamp. Renewing via our website is the easiest and quickest way to renew your membership. And, we hope you do renew as your support is important for our museum. ☺

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule

The **Streetcar CURRENTS**, is now in its winter publication schedule. You've been receiving the **Streetcar CURRENTS** every other month. Publication date for the next issue will be on or about December 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after that date please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com