

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

November-December 2021



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

Thank YOU!

Most of our members don't get to see my Operations Newsletter. In the November issue I said to our Operating Personnel that "We made it" through a very difficult 2021. In fact, thanks to all of our volunteers, we worked through an unusual year and ended with a solid performance. The resilience and creativity of the organization showed through in some of the following 2021 accomplishments.

- Completed thorough recertification training for over 100 operators, most of whom had not operated in over a year.
- Successfully tested a new schedule offering at CHSL; Friday afternoon service based on the historically busy Wednesday afternoon schedule. Ridership was sufficiently strong that we plan to include Friday afternoons in next year's schedule.
- Sold over 11,000 regular fares. While this is about half as many paying passengers as we had in 2019, it is a respectable number given the shortened season and abbreviated schedule.
- Implemented a new charter system to streamline bookings, volunteer opportunities, and payment. Our crewmembers could now volunteer for charter crew opportunities directly through Humanity/Shift Planning. Thank you **Pat Cosgrove** for leading the effort, and **Karen Kertzman** and **Ben Franske** for your efforts. For the year 2021, 63 charters were operated generating almost \$7,000 revenue. For ESL, 2021 was a record year with 24 charters operated.
- As weather and Museum policy permitted, we had a number of very successful special events at both CHSL and ESL. Thanks to **Rod Eaton**, **Bill Arends**, **Karen Kertzman**, and many others for working hard to organize operations for the Halloween Art & Apples on the Lake, Night Owl Service, and Streetcar Camp events that we operated and executed flawlessly.
- The Point of Sale system was operational in 2021 and provided significant insight into the Museum's sales activity. In 2021, the Museum sold \$12,400 of merchandise, with the big contributors being Toys (\$3,900), Souvenirs (\$3,400), and Books (\$1,800).
- Implemented some new preventative maintenance activities including the overhead line improvements and tie replacement at CHSL thanks to **Keith Anderson** and **Miles Anderson**.



In closing, thank you all for your work and continued support for our Museum. It is through your hard work and dedication that our track is in good shape, our equipment operates well, our buildings and right-of-way look inviting, and our guests have an enjoyable experience. On behalf of the Museum's leadership team I wish you all a well-deserved break and a happy holiday season.

See you next year!

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This year's big event was our celebration of 50-years of historic Minnesota streetcar operations at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.

(Mike Buck Photo)





From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Two important stalled projects are moving again. Winona No. 10's failed motor had been languishing at AC Electric in Maine where it was originally rebuilt. Despite repeated attempts, AC had been unable to determine the correct way to rewind the armature. They sent the armature to Swiger Coil in Ohio, who feel confident they can do the repair. After some delay, **Dick Zawacki** and AC made the joint decision to ship the rest of the motor to Swiger. Hopefully there will progress soon.

Construction of the new CHSL tower car has restarted, thanks to **Dennis Stephens**. If you're unfamiliar with this project, here's the background. When the speeder shed-machine shop-library car barn addition was planned, the Park Board would not permit it to be as tall as the adjacent shop. That means the current tower car won't fit through the door. One reason for building the speeder shed was to make the tower car, currently stored in the back of the Ready Barn, more accessible. The overhead wire crew won't have to switch out two streetcars to access it.

The solution is to build a new tower car that is collapsible. An electric scissors lift has been purchased and placed on an existing speeder flat. The missing component was the work platform that will sit on the scissors lift. The original plan was to fabricate it in-house, but that never came together. Instead, we hired Truax Company which has fabricated components for the 1300 and 1239 truck rebuilds. They've delivered the pieces for the support framework, which has now been assembled. The final step is to install the work platform from the old tower car.

Also moving is the rebuild of No. 1239's trucks. The CHSL shop crew met with contractor **Rob Mangels** and everyone agreed to lease a shop truck from Illinois Railway Museum. The truck has arrived and has been placed under No. 1239, allowing one of the old trucks to be removed for disassembly. That happened on November 20th. While that's happening, No. 1239 can still be moved around the car barn, so it won't sit on blocks, tying up the shop.

On October 20, lightning struck near the Linden Hills station, damaging the depot's wireless feed and power supply. **Ben Franske**, MSM's Info Technology Manager and keeper of much specialized knowledge (not to mention spare parts), was able to diagnose the problem, find the parts and fix it before the last scheduled weekend of service began on October 23rd. Good thing, too, because 500 people came out that day to ride the Transylvania Trolley with Count Karl.

The Annual Appeal. It's that time of year, the one time we ask for donations. In case you're wondering how important the Annual Appeal campaign is, last year's brought in \$30,000. That make a huge difference in what we can accomplish. This year we have three priority projects:

- Rebuild No. 1239's 3rd and 4th motors, projected to cost over \$50,000.
- Pave the rest of the Excelsior car barn floor and realign track #3, costing about \$25,000.
- Install underground fiber optic cable between the Linden Hills station and the George Isaacs car barn to provide reliable WiFi to the Isaacs Car barn, costing around \$20,000.

Or you can donate to the General Fund, and the money can be used for any expense. Donations can be made online at Trolleyride.org, or by mail. We appreciate whatever you can do. ☺

Here's a photo of the shop truck that MSM is renting from the Illinois Railway Museum. It will be used to support one end of the car while the removed truck is rebuilt. An excellent photo story of No. 1239 and the truck swap will be sent to you as a photo supplement in a week or so. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



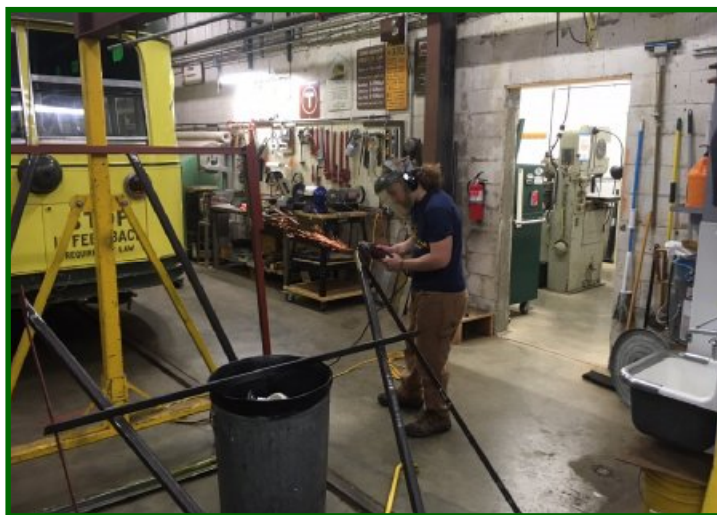
CHSL Goings-on



The shop truck from the Illinois Railway Museum was delivered on November 17, 2021. No. 1300 towed it up to the Isaacs carbarn. (Dennis Stephens photo)



What better way to spend a fall afternoon than to replace bad cross-ties at CHSL! Here's CHSL track Foreman Miles Anderson and Keith Anderson (the photographer) who replaced 10 ties in a morning.



We're well on our way to having a good and accessible tower car at CHSL. (Above Left) Isaac Trockman is seen doing some finishing work on the new steel tower. (Aaron Isaacs photo) (Above Right) the tower is now on the scissors lift. Next step is to fabricate the platform and railings to the tower. (Dennis Stephens photo)

(Left) The area in front of the Isaacs carbarn is used regularly for deliveries from cars, trucks or trailers. We've put down some trap rock to bring the grade up to the level of the rails. Seen in this photo are (L to R) John Prestholdt, Dennis Stephens and Russ Isbrandt. The wood at the switch protects the switch point rail tie rods and throw rod. (Right) Lying down on the job? No way! Russ Isbrandt is taking notes while Mark Digre is under PCC No. 322 assessing what needs to be done to the car's under-floor mechanical components. (Both photos by Bill Arends)



March -----MSM Annual member's meeting. Exact date, time and location to be determined
 March-April -----CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training
 May 7-----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*

Annual fund. About a month ago, we sent out the flyer to all members soliciting donations to our Museum's 2021-2022 annual fund. Projects for the annual fund are: refurbishing two motors for TCRT gate car No. 1239; track-work in the ESL carbarn; and, running fiber-optic cable between the Linden Hills station and the Isaacs carbarn. If you didn't get the flyer, please let me know and I'll send it to you. Please consider a generous donation to our annual fund. You can use the slip at the bottom of the flyer you received, or you can go to our website and donate on-line.

<https://trolleyride.org/appeal/>

Your support is really needed and most appreciated. ☺

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:

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 952-922-1096

**Streetcar CURRENTS
 November-December—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 January 20, 2022.

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

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ESL Update

Activity continues at ESL now that the operating season has concluded. Work has shifted to mechanical projects with the work being done in the "warm barn." Here are a couple of photos of that activity.



Carl Floren (L) and **Scott Heiderich** are seen here working on an upgrade to Duluth No. 78's ditch lights.

In this photo, the ESL shop crew of (L to R) **Scott Wardrope, Howie Melco, Dick Zawacki & Scott Heiderich** are bending a bent frame member that was interfering with the free rolling of the Baldwin 75-A-25 truck. This truck will go under interurban car Mesaba Railway No. 10. Mesaba No. 10 is the only Minnesota interurban car preserved. It ran in Minnesota's Iron Range from 1912 to 1927, a short fifteen years. It was later used as a home until rescued by MSM in 1977. There are no immediate plans to restore Mesaba No. 10 to operation.



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 since September 2020. Publication date for the next issue will be on or about February 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after that date please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com