

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

March-April 2022



Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

Return To Normal

I am pleased to announce that the 2022 operating season, which starts on Saturday April 30th, will look more like the 2019 season than 2021. As noted below new operator training, recertification, and track and streetcar maintenance activities will take place over the next month or so to get the Museum ready for opening day. In addition, we plan to have a full slate of special events at both of our museum's Como-Harriet and Excelsior railways, which we have not been able to do for two years, and which generates a substantial portion of the Museum's annual income.

I am highlighting some of the start-up activities that have or will begin shortly. Please note all requirements. If you have any questions, please send an e-mail to me to bruce.gustafson@optum.com



Recruitment, led by Volunteer Coordinator **Pat Cosgrove**, has identified a strong cadre of potential Operators that have been invited to orientation meetings.

Training this year is led by Training Superintendent **Bill Pekarna**, who will be supported by **Pat Cosgrove** and **Linda Ridlehuber** at CHSL and **Karen Kertzman** and **Todd Bender** at ESL. The program will be similar to the last few years with common streetcar training done as a group and final, line-specific training done by location.

Recertification training (check rides) will start in early April. **Bill Arends, Todd Bender, Rod Eaton, Bruce Gustafson, Louis Hoffman, Karen Kertzman, Bill Pekarna,** and **Jim Vaitkunas** will provide the necessary refresher training.

Chris Heck has volunteered to lead PCC training. PCC recertification and new training will begin in late May.

Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson**, assisted by **Miles Anderson**, will inspect and repair as necessary spikes, switch points, and other track infrastructure to ensure readiness for the opening. Keith is looking for volunteers to help with this and ongoing track maintenance.

Chief mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki** reports that cars 1300 and 322 are ready at CHSL and cars 78 and 265 are ready at ESL.

For special events **Rod Eaton** and **Karen Kertzman** plan to reintroduce some long-time favorites (e.g., Murder Mysteries, PJ Parties) and a full slate of fall and holiday events. In addition, some new events, such as Summer Santa, All Aboard, and an expanded Kids Club, are planned.

In summary, it looks like a great year, and I hope you are as excited as I am to release the brakes and turn on the power for an exciting operating season. I would like to thank everyone in advance for their continued interest and participation in our Museum; whether that is cleaning cars, cutting branches, maintaining the cars or track structure, or operating. Be safe. ☺

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THE TWIN CITY LINES





From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

As we prepare for the first full operating season in two years, I want to discuss how crucial it is to recruit and train new volunteers. It takes about 110 volunteers to staff our streetcar schedule, out of a total membership of just under 300. Every year we lose some operators. They age out, lose interest, move away or have some life change that prevents them from volunteering. If we couldn't replace them, imagine how we would have to shrink.

Although it's so essential, I don't think our members realize how much effort it takes to recruit and train our Operators. The process starts in February. Volunteer Coordinator **Pat Cosgrove** keeps a list of everyone who has indicated an interest in volunteering over the last few years, but had not followed through. Until they say not to, he contacts them each year. He sends a recruitment notice to local media, to every local historical society and posts it on our Facebook page. Everyone who responds is asked to fill out the volunteer interest form on our website.

Bill Pekarna is our Training Superintendent, replacing **Dave Higgins** who did the job for several years. This year Dave is assisting, along with **Linda Ridlehuber** and **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman**.

This year 27 people responded to the recruitment appeal. They attended one of two 90-minute orientation sessions. Next is a "walk around" session at CHSL's George Isaacs car barn to acquaint them with the streetcar. Then comes the first hands-on session, which might be called "learning to start and stop a streetcar." The trainers are available for two-hour periods at least four times a week in order to accommodate the Operator candidates' schedules. They'll offer additional practice times if needed. All this happens at CHSL in southwest Minneapolis. In between the training sessions are homework assignments to learn the operating rules, get a rudimentary acquaintance with streetcar history, and fulfill the requirements to become a museum member.

Typically half of the candidates who initially express interest drop out. Of those who make it past "starting and stopping practice," 80-90 percent finish and get certified. Next comes on the line training at CHSL and ESL to acquaint the Operator candidate with the operating characteristics of each railway. This is particularly labor intensive. The trainer works with only two students at a time. Some learn quickly, some require multiple sessions and a few wash out.

Like everyone else, candidates who plan to operate at CHSL must go through Point of Sale (POS) training with **Rose Arends**, who has scheduled 24 hours of training sessions. At ESL, **Karen Kertzman** does the POS training. Then it's time for the new operators to buy a uniform shirt, affix the sleeve patches, get a member badge and optionally purchase a hat with badge.

The final training phase is operating the streetcar with passengers on board. Each candidate is assigned to a regular shift as an additional crew member and is mentored by the shift Foreman as the candidate rotates through the various positions on a shift. If the Foreman gives a good recommendation, the student is then certified, receives their operator's license and is activated in ShiftPlanning, our crew scheduling web-based application. Being able to access their ShiftPlanning account allows the new Operator to sign-up for shifts. Hopefully that will happen by sometime in June.

This whole process takes about 16-24 hours per trainee. Altogether the trainers put in about 250 hours per year. That's the equivalent of 60 weekend streetcar shifts, one of the biggest time commitments anywhere in the museum. It can be somewhat discouraging because every year some trainees are certified, then don't volunteer at all, or very little, even though they're encouraged to work two shifts per month. Some don't return the next year or the year after. Yet every year we get a small number who become dedicated, long-term volunteers and that's what keeps us going.



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Preparing for the 2022 season



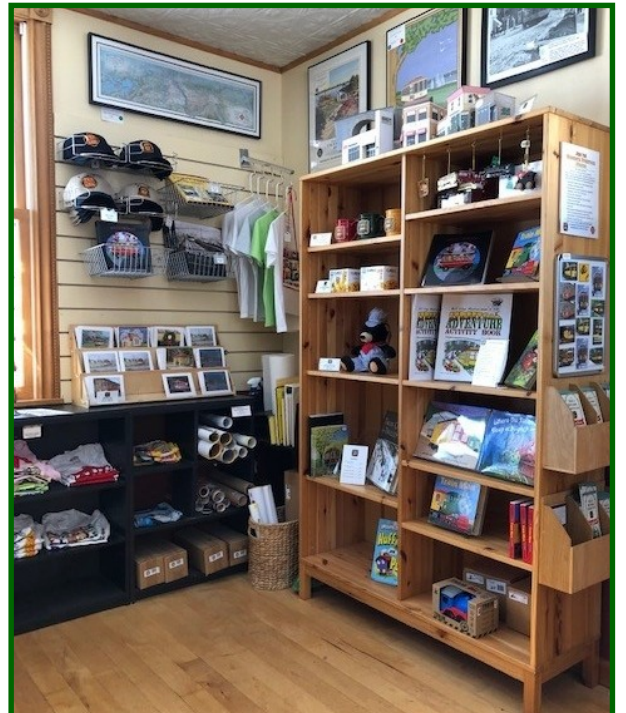
Some of the returning Operators and Foremen at ESL recently attended their recertification training session. The group at the rear of Duluth No. 265 are getting a refresher on how to re-set 265's retriever. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*



Duluth No. 78's roof is being cleaned to prepare it for repainting. **Carl Floren** and **Jerry Draeger** are on the roof, with **Scott Heiderich** in the background. *(Jim Kertzman photo)*



Here's **Mike Miller**, one of our CHSL shop volunteers, doing some touch-up painting on No. 1300's rear bumper. While some in the shop are working on the trucks for No. 1239, others worked to get No. 1300 ready for the 2022 operating season. *(Dennis Stephens photo)*



Looks like **Bill & Rose Arends** have the Linden Hills depot ready for the start of the 2022 season. *(Bill Arends photo)*

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But that's not all the trainers have to do. Second year operators and the 36 Operators who operated a streetcar less than 10 hours in 2021 need to make a round trip test run to be recertified. Seventeen hours of those sessions have been scheduled. When you see the trainers, thank them for making this extraordinary effort. 🌱

April 30 ----- Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations
 May 27 ----- Weekday service begins at CHSL—Wednesday through Friday only through Labor Day
 May 30 ----- Memorial Day service at CHSL & ESL
 June 1 & 3 ----- Wednesday and Friday Afternoon service begins at CHSL through Labor Day weekend



Streetcar Cleaning Dates For 2022 at CHSL

Louis Hoffman — CHSL Streetcar Cleaning Foreman

Among my clearest childhood memories are visits to railway museums and tourist railways. One of the things I remember is my mother's look when we were on a streetcar or train that wasn't clean. Mom would look down in...well, disgust...and, on occasion (mostly in coaches pulled by steam locomotive), take her finger to test the depth and quality of "schmutz" (one of many great Yiddish words, meaning 'dirt or a similar unpleasant substance!').

I relate this story because our goal as a family-oriented museum is to not have schmutz on our streetcars, in our station, or on our property. We want to be a schmutz-free museum. You can help by volunteering to clean streetcars. We meet at 9:00 a.m. on the last Saturday of each month starting in April. We're generally done by about 11:00 a.m. And there's coffee and doughnuts (from A Baker's Wife's Pastry Shop, where the 28th and 34th Avenue streetcar lines intersect) at 10:00 a.m. with the shop crew.

Our top priority is to clean Nos. 322 and 1300. This involves washing the outside of both cars, cleaning every window inside and out (but never touching the green Mylar-coated windows on No. 322) and cleaning all surfaces including the floors and stepwells by sweeping and mopping. Obviously, that's a bigger job on No. 1300 with all of the wood surfaces. If we have time, which we rarely do because we don't have enough volunteers, we can clean the Linden Hills Station. This is, of course, our passengers' first impression of the Museum.

We often have volunteers from our kids clubs helping. So it's a great opportunity to get to meet them – our next generation of volunteers – and their families and warmly welcome them to our Museum family.

These are the dates for 2022, all on Saturday at 9:00 AM:

April 30 — May 28 — June 25 — July 30
 August 27 — September 24 — September 29

Even if you can't help every month, please come when you can. And for all Foremen, Operators, and Station Agents, you can also help without volunteering. There's a cleaning kit on each streetcar and in the Linden Hills Station, Please use them! You can clean kids' fingerprints off of windows, sweep floors, etc. as needed. And, of course, each crew's responsibility includes sweeping the streetcar and the station at the end of the day. ☺



Augie, one of our young volunteers, is seen here last year doing a good job wiping down a wicker seat back on TCRT No. 1300. (Louis Hoffman photo)

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
March-April 2022

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 April 20, 2022.

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