

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

July 2022

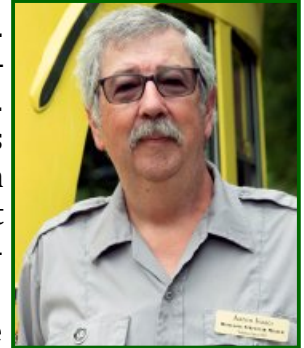


MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

### From the Front Platform

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**W**elcome to our new volunteers. Our museum is not a static organization. Although many of us have volunteered for decades, each year sees new faces. Most come in through our annual operator recruitment and training program. In his latest Operations Report, General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** counts 22 new operators and station agents who have completed or are working through the training program. Others discover us at random and decide they want to get involved. In either case, we're grateful for your interest and participation. Welcome to a pretty well-run, heads-up organization.



I tell people we're in the perpetual preservation business, which is not for the faint of heart. With no paid personnel, we have to staff a labor intensive business. New volunteers may not be aware, but we have an organizational chart that contains every job function you'd find in a medium sized company. It's not for show.

It's more than just the obvious functions like training, operational scheduling, streetcar maintenance and restoration. We need people to run the financial end of things, handle security, deal with computers and technology, maintain physical plant, do marketing and outreach, run a library, put out publications, handle merchandising. That's only a partial list.

We know many new volunteers will depart after a year or two. For them it was something to try and not a long term interest. We understand. But some of you will become long term volunteers. If you're one of those, we want you to think about your career path within the museum. By "career path" I mean both lateral and upward.

"Lateral" means working in other areas beside streetcar operations. Many of us wear multiple hats. "Upward" means getting promoted to a supervisory or managerial job. We're always looking for good operating Foreman candidates. We currently need someone to head up groundskeeping. I assure you that other positions will open up as people age out, move away or otherwise depart. Someone has to run the place and none of us are immortal. If you're interested and want to learn more, please contact me at [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).



**H**eritageRail Alliance annual conference. Our museum is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance, a trade organization for the 200 or so biggest railway museums and tourist railroads in North America. That includes over two dozen other trolley museums. We meet each year to network, attend seminars on best practices and visit other places that do what we do. This year the conference is September 8-10 in Hartford, Connecticut, a state with an unusually high density of railway preservation. There are seminars each morning, followed by a visit each afternoon to a different railway or museum, including two outstanding trolley museums. Go to [heritagerail.org](http://heritagerail.org) for details. It's expensive, however the registration fee includes all meals, events and bus transportation to the various museums and tourist railways visited. If this is your area of interest, it doesn't get any better than this. ☺

### Inside This Issue

<i>One Streetcar Wasn't Enough</i>	2
<i>Around MSM in Photos</i>	3
<i>Coming Events</i>	4
<i>MSM News &amp; Views</i>	4

## One Streetcar Wasn't Enough

By Bill Graham

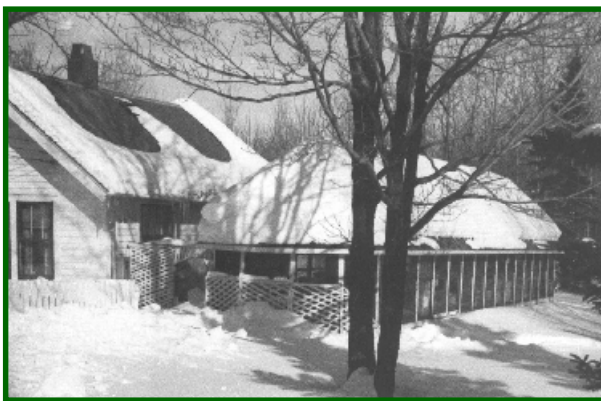
**B**ack in 1972, our old No. 1300 was running pretty well, but some of us wondered if we needed to find a second streetcar. What if 1300 had a serious problem and had to be out of service for a while? How could we find a replacement for 1300 in case we needed one? Back then, there still were dozens of old streetcar bodies out in the woods, mostly filled with junk, chickens, porcupines and lots and lots of mice. Two of our members, **Joel Hutchinson** and **Gene Corby**, knew where all of them were, so Gene and "Hutchie" took us around so we could see them. Some of them looked and smelled like they still ran the Oak-Harriet line, but some were rotting old scenes of devastation. We started thinking about how we could restore a second car for our Museum.

Of all the carbodies we looked at, Duluth Street Railway No. 265 turned out to be our favorite. It was built in 1915 as TCRT No. 1791, and it was sold to Duluth in 1916. Duluth retired it in 1939, and it sat in the woods near Solon Springs, Wisconsin, as a summer cabin. The owner gave it to us if we would get it off his land. It had no seats or hardware inside and no wheels or equipment underneath; it was stripped bare. But it was a solid, old streetcar body in remarkably good condition, with its original paint, interior varnish and passenger signs still intact.

We tore off the false roof, cut down some trees and had a crane lift it onto a flatbed truck. We unloaded it late in the afternoon in St. Paul at the Burlington Northern Railroad's Como Shops and shoved it into the building which BN allowed us to use. It was September, 1973, and it would be nine years before it was "close to done." When we finished our work, though, No. 265 was one beautiful streetcar that still runs to this day in Excelsior. We are quite proud of her.

**A** great many museum members worked on No. 265 over the decades, and by now, quite a few of us have passed on. But how long can an old streetcar stay with us? Well, this year, No. 265 will be 107 years old, and she will have run in Museum service for 40 years. That's 17 more years than she ran in service on the streets of Duluth! Not bad for an old streetcar. ☺

(Editor's note. *This article is the first in a series on the rescue and restoration of No. 265 that will occasionally appear in the Streetcar Currents.*)



(Above Left) No. 265 sits in the snow in Solon Springs, awaiting the crew from MSM to come and rescue it from a certain fate.

(Above) It looks like the museum volunteers didn't waste any time doing some outside body work on No. 265 (photo taken in December 1973). Compare this photo to the photo on the left.

(Left) Having been lifted onto the lowbed trailer earlier in the day, No. 265 arrives at BN's Como shops in September 1973.

(MSM photo archives)

**Around MSM**



Pictured is the first Story Time Trolley at ESL in 3 years. Attendance was low but it didn't stop volunteer **Rich Holz** from amusing the kids as they departed DSR No. 265 with pajamas on and stuffed animals in tow. (Photo by Karen Kertzman)



As part of correctly placing the trucks under Mesaba No. 10, one of them had to be turned around. In the above two pictures the curved brake bar is shown in front. Sometime between the two pictures, the magic of rotating the 12,000 pound truck happened! The crew was **Howie Melco**, **Jim Kertzman** and **Scott Wardrope**. (Photo by Karen Kertzman)



Every year a group of about a dozen service dogs and their trainers take a streetcar ride. The dogs are very well behaved and we look forward to seeing them each year. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



Caught in the act! At the Excelsior Art on the Lakes event last week, Minnetonka Photographer **John Felix Mackey** snapped this photo of MSM volunteer **Jim Kertzman** moving the trolley pole on Duluth Street Railway No. 78. No. 78 had just arrived at ESL's Water Street platform for event visitors to board, admire its beauty, and learn about the 129-year-old streetcar.

(Story by Karen Kertzman, photo by John Felix Mackey)



One of the necessary behind the scenes work that our volunteers do is the monthly cleaning of our historic streetcars. As mentioned previously, this is an important activity to both preserve these vehicles and provide a safe and clean ride for our passengers. In this photo, volunteer **Tim Layeux** is cleaning the windows of TCRT No. 1300, the first streetcar preserved by our museum. (Aaron Isaacs photo)

- July 4 -----Fourth of July operations at both ESL and CHSL
- July 9 -----Special Owl service at CHSL—9:00 PM to 12-midnight
- July 14 -----Story Time trolley at ESL—6 PM & 7 PM
- July 21-24 -----Excelsior's **Crazy Days** festival—ESL operates each day  
*Water Street's merchants sell their wares outside on the sidewalk*
- July 30 -----Streetcar cleaning at CHSL—9:00 AM to 11:30 AM



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

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

**W**elcome to our newest members. We've had a good number of people join MSM since the last report in late 2021. We welcome the following new members to the MSM family: Olin Anderson, Jon Beckstrom, Mary Ann Goens-Bradley, Brent Carlson, Steven Rush, Steele Weaver, Mike Lerdahl,

**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](http://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—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 July 20, 2022.

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](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)

Andrew Utne, John Stein, Peter Johnson, Edward Solstad, Diane Bratvold, Adi Penugonda, Jerry Betz, David Downs, Robert Ryder, Zachary Swenson, Katie Barron, Bob Miller, Lynn Nelson, Don Powell, Neill Schurter, Josh Hisley, Pamela Jewson, Joseph Frey, Charles Karver, Conner Titus, Peter Eide, James Reagan, Robert Milstein, Mikayla Stanek, Eleanor Pederson, and Nathan Smrekar.

Quite a number of these folks are now active volunteers with MSM and we thank them for their interest in our museum. ☺



**Unseen Duluth 265**

Around 1982, MSM volunteer **Karl Jones** heard about a streetcar body lying in the north woods near Lake Itasca, Minnesota. The carbody sat in a grove of pine trees and was in poor condition. It had a few usable seats, most of the pearl "stop" buttons, and some window sash. MSM needed a foot gong for Duluth Street Railway No. 265 and lucky for us this car had a good one. The car had sunk into the mud, so MSM volunteer **Bill Graham** dug out enough space to crawl under the carbody and pry the gong loose. It was quite the messy ordeal. The gong was retrieved, cleaned up, and is now under DSR No. 265's front platform floor. Come and give it a ring the next time you visit the Excelsior Streetcar Line.

*(story: Bill Graham; photo: Jim Kertzman)*



**Owl Service at CHSL**

Back in the day, TCRT provided what was commonly called "owl car" service to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Owl service was typically scheduled between 12-midnight and 6 AM on selected key routes. The way the schedule was written all the "owl cars" would meet at a specified location in the downtowns so that passengers could change streetcars to reach their destination.

Today, we try to replicate this important facet of Twin City transportation history by operating a streetcar once a month on a Saturday from 9 PM to 12-midnight. Here's an excellent photo of TCRT No. 1300 waiting for the next passengers while operating on CHSL's Owl Service.

*(Photo by Jerry Betz)*

