

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

May 2022



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

### Volunteering

I would like to thank the Operators who have or plan to operate this year. Currently, we have around 105 active volunteers. This does not fully capture all of the new trainees and some recertification stragglers. There are only 433 shifts remaining to be filled.

As I have done in prior years, I would also like to remind everyone that there is more to making our Museum successful than moving a streetcar and ask that each of you consider volunteering for one or more of the non-operating activities. These activities cannot be done by one or two people. If you are interested in helping with the non-operating volunteer efforts they are listed below, along with a contact person. If you are not able to connect directly with the activity leader, please contact MSM's Volunteer Coordinator [Pat Cosgrove](#) or me, [bruce.gustafson@optum.com](mailto:bruce.gustafson@optum.com)



- Streetcar maintenance — Dick Zawacki
- Track maintenance — Keith Anderson
- Overhead maintenance — Chris Heck
- CHSL Car cleaning — Louis Hoffman
- ESL Activities — Karen Kertzman
- CHSL Gardening — Ben Porter

Many of the activities do not require a lot of time or an ongoing commitment. CHSL car cleaning, for example, which occurs the first Saturday of the month, requires less than 2 hours (assuming a 3 to 4 person crew) to clean the cars and sweep out the depot. The result of the work is well worth your time.

You may notice that a key role is missing from the list of non-operating volunteer activities, the CHSL Right-of-Way foreman. That position is open. We are looking for an individual who is willing to organize and lead the brush cutting, leaf removal, and other efforts that help maintain and beautify the right-of-way. If you are interested, please contact me.

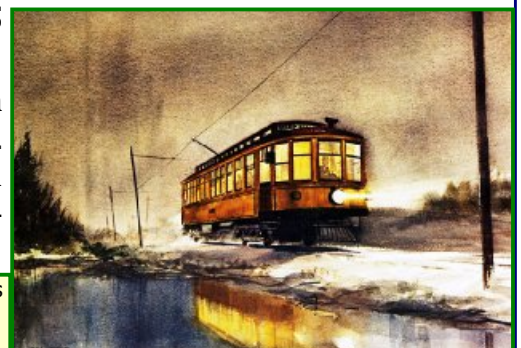
Since the last issue of the *Currents* we have made great strides in training the 2022 operating crew. I would like to thank the significant efforts of our new volunteer training team led by [Bill Pekarna](#) and including [Pat Cosgrove](#) and [Linda Ridlehuber](#) at CHSL and [Karen Kertzman](#) and [Todd Bender](#) at ESL. I would also like to recognize the recertification teams at ESL and CHSL: [Bill Arends](#), [Todd Bender](#), [Rod Eaton](#), [Bruce Gustafson](#), [Louis Hoffman](#), [Karen Kertzman](#), [Bill Pekarna](#), and [Jim Vaitkunas](#) who provided check ride opportunities for all operators at ESL and 34 operators at CHSL. I would also like to thank [Rose Arends](#) who is providing CHSP POS training for all operators.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those returning volunteers in advance for their time and effort.

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For those of you unable to return this season, I look forward to working with you in 2023. Be safe. 🇺🇸

Dust jacket painting by Gil Reid from Russ Olson's book *Electric Railways of Minnesota* which shows a TCRT standard car on the Deephaven Line.





## From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**The Biggest Bequest.** Long time MSM member **Gordon Geddes** passed away in January 2021. A friend of my late father **George Isaacs**, he lived in northern Illinois. He volunteered at the Illinois Railway Museum. A member of the Central Electric Railfans Association, he wrote a history of the Rockford & Interurban that used to run near his home. A licensed pilot, he was active in the Wings & Wheels Museum at the local airport in Poplar Grove, Illinois.

Although he didn't volunteer at MSM, each year he made a donation to the Annual Appeal. Last year I received a letter from the attorney handling his estate notifying us that MSM would be a beneficiary of his estate. They didn't say how much and I expected perhaps a couple thousand dollars. Imagine my shock when we were recently notified that the bequest would be \$131,353.45. This is the largest individual donation in MSM history.

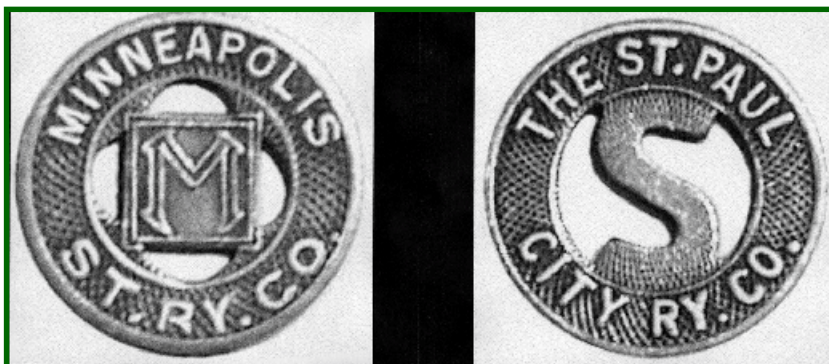
Although we can always use more money, this is surplus to our immediate needs. It needs to be invested so our museum can earn interest and dividends. We've done short term, low interest CDs in the past, but now it's time to go the next step. I've asked Treasurer **Chris Heck** to educate the Board of Directors on our options moving forward. As always with investing, the goal is to make a reasonable return without unreasonable risk.

**Streetcar Tokens.** When CHSL began operations in 1971, we needed some sort of token to run through No. 1300's fare box, so we had special CHSL tokens minted (see photo below). When ESL opened in 1999, we minted separate ESL tokens. A short time later Metro Transit stopped using the original TCRT tokens from the streetcar era and donated about 14,000 of them to us. We stopped using the newly minted tokens and went with the real thing.

The large majority of tokens are for TCRT's Minneapolis Street Railway subsidiary. A small number, with a prominent "S" in the center, are for the St. Paul City Railway. There are two generations of each. Look for the signature on the reverse. If it says D. J. Strouse, it's from the 1940s. If it says E. A. Crosby, it's from the 1930s.

Over the years the tokens have gradually disappeared. We know many fell through the cracks of the Lake Harriet platform and will eventually be found. We can't account for the others. Fortunately, our supply has recently been replenished. Last year a general contractor brought in a jar of several thousand tokens, found in the attic of a house he was renovating. Recently another 117 were donated by a former bus driver who asked to remain anonymous.

Among the tokens are some from other cities. We sell them and the St. Paul tokens for more than the price of a ride. In addition, **Mona Isaacs** makes beaded earrings, bracelets and necklaces, each containing a token, and donates them to the museum. Their sale brings in about \$1000 each year. ☺



**The 2022 Season Has Begun!**



Saturday April 30th was the 2022 operating season's opening day at CHSL. The full crew shown with TCRT No. 1300 in the background are (L to R) **Ezra Strobel, Steve Simon, Bruce Allyn & Pat Cosgrove.** (Louis Hoffman photo)



At ESL, April 30th was a wash-out, so opening day was May 1st. Standing in front of Duluth No. 265 are (L to R) **Pete Cahill, Tim Gephart and Gregg Thomas.** (Karen Kertzman photo)



Here's **Karen Kertzman** giving POS refresher training to **Elaine Love** and **Tim Gephart.** (Jim Kertzman photo)



New Operator training is on-going at ESL and CHSL. Here we see new trainees **Mary Ann Goens-Bradley** and **Neill Shurter** with trainers **Linda Ridlehuber** and **Bill Pekarna.** (J. Vaitkunas photo)



It's dirty work but someone has to do it. **Pat Cosgrove** (L) and **Jerry Betz** are seen here cleaning out a couple of years worth of leaves and dirt from the 42nd Street crossing. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



At ESL, Duluth No. 78 is ready for the 2022 season. The car was built in 1893 by the LaClede Car Co. of St. Louis. (Karen Kertzman photo)

May 27-----MSM Wednesday-Thursday-Friday evening operations begin at CHSL  
 May 30-----CHSL & ESL Special Memorial Day Operations. CHSL early-bird operations start at 9:30 AM  
 June 1 & 3-----Beginning of CHSL Wednesday and Friday afternoon operations  
 June 14-----Beginning of ESL's Tuesday afternoon operations



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

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

**M**SM's Annual Meeting. Our annual meeting of the Museum's members was held virtually using the Zoom application on Thursday evening, March 24, 2022 starting at 7:00 PM. Total attendance at the meeting was 43 MSM members. Board Chair **Aaron Isaacs** presented his State of the Museum report followed by reports from MSM General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** and several other Officers and Superintendents. Both **Aaron Isaacs** and **Dave French** were re-elected to the MSM Board by acclamation. A special report was presented on the museum's Kids Clubs program by **Rod Eaton**. A copy of the meeting minutes and the various presentations made during the meeting can be found at our museum's website:

[www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org)

There's also a wealth of other information on our museum at our website including back issues of the Streetcar Currents, Board of Director's meeting minutes, and most importantly our 2022 operating schedule. Check it out!

**A**ddress Updates. We continue to receive notices from the US Postal Service of address changes for a few of our members. These cost us money. So, if you have changed your address please let us know that. Also, we send the *Streetcar Currents* newsletter to the vast majority of our members as an attachment to an e-mail. So, if your e-mail has changed, we need to know that too. Thanks!

**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**  
 May — 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 May 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)

**Station Agents Wanted at Como-Harriet**

We're looking for some folks who would like to be a Station Agent in the Linden Hills station at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. No experience is necessary. After a short training session on the POS machine with Store Manager **Rose Arends**, you should be all set. This is open to all members, their families and friends. Non-family volunteers would need to join MSM. Call Volunteer Coordinator Pat Cosgrove to sign-up.



Did you know there is a second hole on 1300's front platform for a motorman's seat? It's in front of the fuse box and apparently served two purposes. In the early days the motorman could stow his seat there if he intended (or was required) to stand. The later and probably more common use was a second seat for an instructor training a new motorman.

(Aaron Isaacs photo)