

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

September 2023



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

From the Front Platform

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Replacing the Linden Hills station platform. When we rebuilt our Como-Harriet Line with federal money back in 2005, the decision was made to put ballast under the track to improve drainage. It was a good idea, but had an unintended consequence. The rebuilt track was too high for the original TCRT Linden Hills station's concrete platform. So we built a wood platform and have since rebuilt it when the first one deteriorated.

The platform is again at the end of its useful life and this time we're going to do something different. We're going to remove it and use the historic concrete platform, which is still there. So are the original iron railings. However, we still have to deal with the track being too high. We can't lower the track, so we'll build long step boxes using the wood from the current platform. We should also be able to re-use the wood bench seats.

It's looking like we'll remove the wood platform and build the step boxes next Spring. In the process we'll harvest all the tokens that have dropped through the platform cracks over the years.

But wait—there's more. We've always wanted shade for those hot summer afternoons. Our plan for 2024 is to replicate part of the historic platform canopy from the 1912 "chalet" station. We'll also add a concrete extension at the north end to replace the narrow section of wood platform.

Keith Anderson, Jerry Betz, architect Joe Metzler and I are working on this project.

Our museum's history. Our museum began in 1962, 61 years ago. To put that in perspective, streetcars under the corporate name of Twin City Rapid Transit ran for 62 years. So although our mission is to preserve and interpret Minnesota's streetcar history, we've accumulated plenty of our own. Thankfully it's well documented. We have copies of all the early newsletters, visitor brochures and PR pieces from the 1960s and early 1970s. From 1970 until 2005, the bi-monthly, later quarterly, *Minnegazette* chronicled all museum happenings in great detail. The first *Streetcar Currents* appeared in 2003 as a separate newsletter for the MTM Traction Division. The monthly Currents (every two months in the winter) continues to document all museum activity.

Want to learn more about our museum's history? There's plenty available on our trolleyride.org website. Under Museum History is a narrative history. You'll also find a link to Museum Chronology, a timeline of events in our history. Under Member Resources is a link to all the *Streetcar Currents* issues dating back to 2009. Under Organizational Documents are MSM Board of Directors meeting minutes back to 2013.

There's more online material to come. All the *Minnegazettes* and earlier newsletters have been scanned and at some point will be posted on the website. In the meantime I have digital copies and will make them available on request.



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If you really want to get into it, come visit me in the Russell Olson Library on a Saturday morning. We have a complete set of *Minnegazettes*, old member directories and lots of photos and video of museum activity back in the day. We're now a venerable organization and there's a lot to know about us. ☺



(Above) It's June 19, 1954 and the Minnesota Railfans Association's charter of two streetcars to tour TCRT's trackage that still has live trolley wire pauses on its all-day run for a lunch break the day following the end of service. The Linden Hills chalet station is on the right and our No. 1300 is behind No. 1775.



(Right) This photo shows how the "inside" of the canopy looked. We plan to replicate 3 or 4 poles of it at the north end of the platform. That's the late MSM member **Bob Schumacher** taking pictures. No. 1300 is now in front of the steel-sided No. 1775.



(Left) The most recent issue of MSM's *Twin City Lines* history magazine told the story of **Pat Peterson's** ancestors who worked for TCRT. On August 24th Pat (at right in photo), granddaughter of **Sivert Kvalheim**, took a carbnam tour and received copies of the magazine. With her are her cousins **Kim** and **Mary**, granddaughters of Sivert's cousin **Andrew Kvalheim**, who also worked for TCRT. (John Robinson photo)



(Above) Here's the box of complete transfer pads that were recently found at the Jackson Street Roundhouse and donated to MSM. At upper right are a couple of rare ones from lines abandoned in the 1930s, Merriam Park and Western-Jackson. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



A newly refurbished sign has been reinstalled on the 42nd Street end of our Linden Hills station garden. Master gardeners **Ben** and **Mary Porter** have worked horticultural magic bringing life and color back from years of neglect. And they now enjoy help from Twin Cities Master Gardeners. Our Como-Harriet Lines garden brightens the entire neighborhood. (Jerry Betz photo)



MSM member **Dutton Foster** likes to paint and one of his favorite subjects is TCRT streetcars. Here's Dutton's latest painting that shows a northbound Mahtomedi car at the Willernie stop. The childhood Dutton is at right and a friend of his at left.



It's a murder! On a streetcar! Motorman **Bill Arends** reacts to the sudden death on his car. "I thought this was going to be a musical! Something Hallmarkish!" Our final performance of Streetcar Murder Mystery was sold out. (C. McIver photo)



We have good help! Minnesota Second Congressional district Representative **Dean Phillips** (waving to the photographer) visited ESL recently and interacted with the passengers on an Ultimate Sustainability charter for young adults with Autism. (Mike Buck photo)



Last week's Streetcar Camp celebrated a first-ever event—one of our instructors was a Streetcar Camp graduate. Shown here is **Griffin Lawrence** who attended Camp in 2013. Ten years later he has worked through the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's Apprenticeship Program to become our newest Operator. (Rod Eaton photo)



The ESL shop crew is lowering the MVPS (Winona lines) No. 10's motor into the correct position. (front to back) **Chris Hawver, Dick Zawacki, Carl Floren** (floor), **Steve Mages, potential recruit, Michael Kimitch**. (Karen Kertzman photo)



MVPS No. 10 returning to the carbarn following its first run with the repaired motor. That's **Howie Melco** turning the trolley pole around while the ESL shop crew is down the track by the mainline switch. (Karen Kertzman photo)

What's Happening?

- September 4----- Labor Day operations at both ESL and CHSL
- September 9----- Last evening service at CHSL
- September 16 & 17 - ----Apple Days festival in Excelsior. ESL runs full schedule on Sunday
- October 14 & 15-----CHSL operates Farmer Jan's & Ken's pumpkin patch
- Late October ----- CHSL operates special Halloween themed events. See MSM's website for details.

Back In The Day

Generally, this newsletter contains contemporary information and updates on what's going on with our museum. That includes updates on our streetcars, our two demonstration railways, and also features the great volunteers who make things happen. But occasionally, the Currents includes information of a historic nature including photos from "back in the day." Here, then, are a couple of photos that we hope you'll find interesting and enjoyable.

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
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**Streetcar CURRENTS
September—2023**

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 September 20, 2023.

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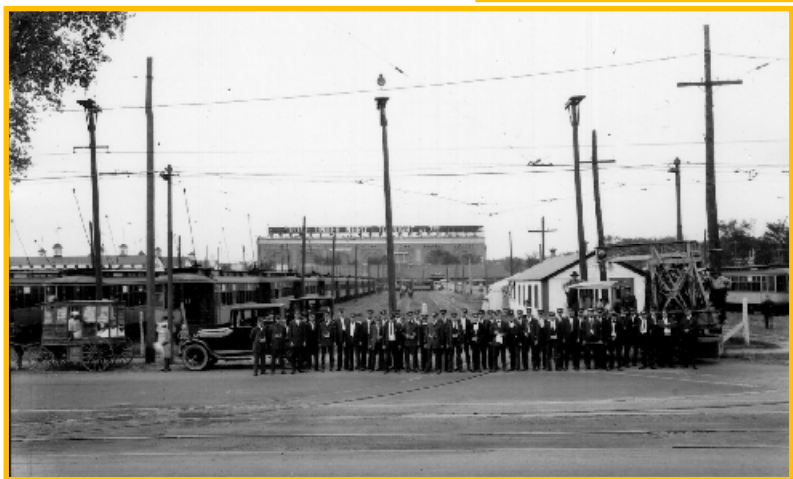
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(Above) This late-1940s photo of PCC 325 was taken by Kirt Blewett, Twin City Lines motorman and streetcar enthusiast, during a test run, and depicts the streetcar at the intersection of Hamline & Hoyt avenues in Saint Paul. This intersection was the northern terminus of the Snelling Avenue line, which served as the major crosstown line in Saint Paul. The Dale Avenue line was also a crosstown line.



(Left) Here is No. 325 today at the Rockhill Trolley Museum in central Pennsylvania, as No. 6 in the livery of the Public Service Coordinated Transportation Company of Newark, New Jersey. (Joel Salomon photo)



It's Minnesota State Fair time! Back around 1920 when this photo was taken, most people going to the state fair took TCRT's streetcars to get there. This photo shows some of the platform personnel posing for their picture. Note the 1920s era food truck on the left that catered to the crews waiting for the end of the day's festivities when thousands of visitors want to go home.