

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

November-December 2023



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Be Thankful

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

At this time of year as we approach the end of the Museum's operating season (some of the Christmas events are not complete as of this writing) I am very thankful for the opportunity to work with a truly amazing group of volunteers. It is your hard work, your dedication, and your ongoing interest in the Museum that makes it a great place to volunteer and a special destination for the tens of thousands of guests we have each year.

The ending roster includes 111 active operators. This compares to 117 in 2022, 103 in 2021 and 117 in 2019. For the year, almost 85% of the certified operators volunteered contributing approximately 3,810 hours – which is an increase of almost 400 hours over the prior year. At Como-Harriet we ended the year with 89 active operating personnel compared to 91 in 2022, 81 in 2021 and 90 in 2019. Star performers included **Bill Pekarna, Rod Eaton, Griffin Lawrence, Bill Arends, Bill Way, Pat Cosgrove, Linda Ridlehuber, Bruce Allyn, Mark Mitchell, Aaron Isaacs, Tom Lind-MacMillan, Tom May, Fred Beamish, Jerry Betz, Katie Barron, and Mike Buck.** These faithful volunteers contributed 50% of the total CHSL operating hours. At Excelsior we have 28 certified operating personnel compared to 34 in 2022, 27 in 2021 and 43 in 2019. Like CHSL a dedicated group of volunteers contributed 50% of the total operating hours at ESL. These individuals are **Tim Gephart, Charles Karver, John Knox, Mike Buck, Karen Kertzman, Pete Cahill, David Downs and Tom Dulebohn.**



An end of year recap would not be complete without some mention of our fall/winter special events, which play a huge part in the Museum's operating revenues and create lasting memories for our volunteers and guests. It takes a lot of volunteers make the special events happen successfully. The work goes well beyond the actual day of operation and includes planning, set-up, and take-down activities. This year at Excelsior with car 265 out-of-service the fall festivities have been significantly modified. The Christmas-themed events were cancelled, and Halloween was limited to a single event. Using car no. 78, the team led by **Karen Kertzman** carried 461 guests and raised almost \$1,200, which was a record ridership day. Como-Harriet thanks to the efforts of a large group including **Bill Arends, Jerry Betz, Rod Eaton, Karl Jones** and a host of others, including Santa Claus (a/k/a **Mike Helde**) along with some very favorable weather, handled over 1,900 paying riders generating almost \$13,000 between the Halloween events and the first weekend of Holly Trolley.

I also recognize a truly specialized group of members who work their magic and contacts to identify needed items and source parts for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the Museum's car fleet. Without their efforts at some point, we would have static displays and not an operating museum. The volunteers at CHSL includes **Dick Zawacki, Dennis Stephens, Russ Isbrandt, Karl Jones, Jerry Betz, Jim Willmore, Aaron Isaacs and John Prestholdt.** In the ESL shop we have **Howie Melco, Dick Zawacki, Carl Floren, Chris Hawver, Dave Buckman, Dave McCollum, Jerry Draeger, Jim Kertzman, Mike Kimitch, Scott Wardrope, Steve Mages and Tom Heimer.**

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Finally, I would like to thank all of the volunteers for a tremendous year and on behalf of all of us in the Operating Committee wish everyone a very special holiday season. 🍷



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

A single landlord for CHSL - done. We now have a single CHSL landlord, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. At their November 15 meeting they approved leasing the City-owned former streetcar right of way, and subleasing it to us. As part of the same agreement, they renewed the lease of the Park Board land that we occupy under the depot, part of the car barn and most of the northern portion of the streetcar line. Our lease is now in place until 2043, with an option to extend for an additional 10 years. All that's left to do is sign the actual agreement, which should happen soon.



The Linden Hills depot platform. Following the end of Holly Trolley operations on December 3rd, we began disassembling the Linden Hills wood depot platform, which has reached the end of its useful life. (See photos at bottom of page and on page 6-Ed) Next year we'll try operating on the original TCRT concrete platform. In the process we removed the wood bench seats, which will be reinstalled next spring on the concrete. As this is written, the wood under framing is still in place, to be removed later. Because the concrete is low relative to the track, we'll build long step boxes for entering and exiting the streetcars. Removing the platform will allow us to harvest the many streetcar tokens that have fallen through the cracks over the last decade or more.

Excelsior car barn repairs. Lester Buildings is scheduled to begin repairing the north wall of the Excelsior car barn during the second or third week in December. The work should take about a week. **Jerry Draeger, Karen Kertzman** and **Howie Melco** are leading the effort on our end.

Welcome MSM's first intern. In January our museum will welcome its first intern. **Meghan Dziengal** is a senior at the University of Minnesota, majoring in history with a minor in museum and curatorial studies. Her coursework requires a 6-hour per week internship at a local museum and she selected us. We've never done an internship, so I met with her on November 4 to determine how it would work. We came up with several projects. She'll be digitizing historic documents, searching online newspaper archives for streetcar-related news stories, researching better storage options for our small artifacts, and helping catalog our backlog of uncatalogued materials.

PCC parts. After PCC No. 322 was damaged running off the end of the track when the brakes failed, a few parts suffered damage and needed to be replaced. It also seemed a good idea to get some spares. The call went out to other trolley museums. There were two responses. **Bill Wall** from Connecticut's Shore Line Trolley Museum has become legendary for facilitating trades between trolley museums that benefit all parties. He found us four torque arms that go on the trucks. In addition, we learned about the sale of a privately owned PCC collection in Pennsylvania. It included a couple of the original TCRT PCCs that later went to Shaker Heights Rapid Transit in Cleveland. We were unable to send anyone to retrieve parts, but the crew from Illinois Railway Museum volunteered to remove parts for us. In exchange we will reimburse them for travel expenses. We're getting an anti-climber (front bumper), controllers for forward and reverse operation, line breakers and electrical relays. ☺



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Dismantling of the old wood platform at the Linden Hills station started on December 4, 2023. The work crew on Monday consisted of: **Miles Anderson, Bill Arends, Pat Cosgrove, John Dillery, Leah Harp, Aaron Isaacs, Karl Jones, Tom May, Ben Porter, Tom Schramm, Dennis Stephens, Greg Taylor, and Sam Van Tassel.**

(Aaron Isaacs photo)

More photos on page 6

MSM's Holiday Operations Were Very Successful

This year, CHSL ran the full slate of holiday streetcar special events starting with Farmer Jan's & Ken's pumpkin patch and then the Halloween specials: Graveyard Ghost Stories; ride with Count Karl; the Late Show; Streetcar Named Expire; and, Trick-R-Trolley. CHSL also ran the Holly Trolley with Santa Claus. Over at ESL we were constrained because No. 265 is out of service and No. 78 isn't heated. ESL did run the Trick-R-Trolley but because of the size of the single-truck car, some passengers had to wait for a few minutes until No. 78 returned to the platform on its run.



Pumpkin patch was very successful with nice weather helping out, except for the day before which was a little wet! The set-up crew consisted of: (Back row) **Bill Arends**, unknown, **Keith Anderson**, **Tom Lind-MacMillan**, **Pat Cosgrove**; (front row) **Linda Ridlehuber**, **Anja Curiskis**, **Glenda Marsh**.



Here's a well-dressed Trick-R-Trolley crew: **Rod Eaton**, **Dan Odegaard** and **Bill Arends**. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



The Streetcar Named Expire featured **Dave French** and the Motor-man is **Bill Arends**. (Photo by C. MacIver)



Trick-R-Trolley runs were often full like this one. (Bill Arends photo)



It looks like a malnourished passenger is trying to avoid paying their fare by climbing the rear of No. 1300. Good luck with that! Our Conductors have good eyes and this interloper was soon bumped off the car down at Lakewood cemetery. (Jerry Betz photo)



Tony Andreason, lead guitar for the legendary Trashmen, reads *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* to passengers on Graveyard Ghost Stories. Guest readers included **Linea Palmisano** and actor **Peter Moore**. (Photo by Linea Palmisano, caption by Rod Eaton)



Did you know that the pit in the Como-Harriet carbarn is sometimes haunted. That was the story told in CHSL's *The Late Show*. There were two sold out performances on Friday, October 27. The cast was: **Katie Barron, Rod Eaton, Mark Mitchell, Mike Helde, Bill Arands, and Elizabeth Hauck**. (Caption by Rod Eaton)



ESL's Trick-R-Treat trolley operating crew: **Jerry Draeger, Jim Kertzman, Karen Kertzman, Mary Amsden, Rich Holz** (in No.78), **Elaine Love, Pete Cahill** and **Charles Karver**. (Photo by Elaine Love?)



Rod Eaton



Aaron Isaacs

Meanwhile Back in the ESL & CHSL Shops



Repairs to the rear truck of TCRT No. 322 are on-going. In the left photo we see **Jim Willmore** and **Mark Digre** disconnecting the motor leads. In the right photo, the truck is out from under the car. That's **Karl Jones** standing on the left. Note that the motors are connected to the axle via a cardan shaft and gearbox which is much different from the "wheelbarrow" axle mounting of the electric motors on all the other streetcars our museum has in its collection. (Dennis Stephens photos)



When you work to restore or repair old streetcars, you can't go to Home Depot to get parts—you have to make them in-house. In this photo we see **Jerry Betz** working on doing just that on a milling machine at CHSL. (Dennis Stephens photo)



(Above Right) **Dick Zawacki**, **Howie Melco** and **Tom Heimer** are discussing strategy for DSR No. 265's rear vestibule roof repair. (Right) **Tom Heimer**, **Carl Floren**, and **Scott Wardrope** removing damaged roof boards. (Both photos by Karen Kertzman)

March -----MSM Annual member's meeting details to be announced.
 March-April----- CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training
 May 4 ----- 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. We have sent out the flyer to all members soliciting donations to our Museum's 2023-2024 annual fund drive. Focus for this year's annual fund is replacing the roof on the ESL car barn and replacing the Linden Hills station platform at CHSL and build a platform canopy. Please consider a generous donation to our annual fund. This is the only time when your museum asks for donations to our important projects, so your support is really needed and most appreciated. Want to save a stamp? You can also donate by going to our website: <https://trolleyride.org/appeal>

Linden Hills Platform being dismantled



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

Streetcar **CURRENTS
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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 February 20, 2024.

E-mail the editor at:

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Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

The **Streetcar CURRENTS** is now in its winter publication schedule. Until May 2024 you'll receive the **Streetcar CURRENTS** every other month. 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: jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org