

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

September 2024



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Behind The Scenes

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

For much of the year, this column is about our direct customer-facing activities and volunteers. But the museum would not be successful, would not be able to operate without the knowledge, skills, and dedication of our mechanical and maintenance crews. To all of them I would like to say: "Thank You!"



- At the Excelsior car barn the dedicated crew of **Jack Bingham, Dave Buckman, Jerry Draeger, Carl Floren, Chris Hawver, Tom Heimer, Scott Ingram, Jim Kertzman, Mike Kimitch, Steve Mages, David McCollum, Howie Melco, Scott Wardrope** and **Dick Zawacki** have been working on a number of projects including:
- Duluth No. 265 Rear Vestibule Repair. The crew completely rebuilt the car's rear vestibule from the floor up, which involved extensive work in identifying and inventorying each individual component. Many of the replacement wood components were fabricated in **Howie Melco's** home shop. **Ben Franske** helped the crew rewire and upgrade the electrical systems and interlocks. The car is expected to be ready in time to support planned Halloween and Holiday events.
- Winona No. 10. Work is progressing to perform the necessary adjustments and maintenance checks to get the car ready for revenue service in 2025. This includes such things as topping up all lubricants, adjusting the controller, verifying bolt torques, adjusting the brakes, checking all safety interlocks for proper operation, and similar tasks.
- Mesaba No. 10. Work continues on cleaning out the car body and inventorying parts and materials.
- Ticket booth. Repairs to the interior are complete, including the first coat of primer. Exterior work has begun.
- Cleaning out car barn/ disposing of scrap materials. Sold 800 pounds of copper for \$3,500.

At the CHSL, the mechanical crew of **Jerry Betz, Mark Digre, Ben Franske, Karl Jones, Russ Isbrandt, Miles Lei, John Prestholdt, Tom Schram, Dennis Stephens** and **Jim Wilmore** have been working on a number of projects including:

- TCRT No. 322 Truck Repair. Each damaged truck was carefully moved from under the car to facilitate the needed repairs. With easy access to the car's underside, the crew capitalized on the opportunity to fix a number of worn or previously damaged parts. Previous modifications to the trucks provided additional, unexpected challenges for the crew. They designed and built several special holding and alignment jigs to ensure everything was disassembled and reassembled safely and correctly. In addition, **Howie Melco** repaired several rusted and damaged areas on the car body. The car has returned to operational service and supports its regular schedule.
- TCRT No. 1239 Truck Rebuild. This project replicates the Baldwin #5 trucks that were originally under the car. Except for the journal boxes and a few minor parts, all new parts have been fabricated for the project. The crew designed new springs, journal bearing castings, and gears for the truck. **Dennis Stephens** devised several methods to machine the journal bearings and related parts. The truck frame is now being welded together in preparation for mounting the journal boxes with new bearings, wheels and axles, springs, and motors.

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From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

More online history. In last month's column I announced that the Russ Olson research papers are now online. This month there's another significant addition to our online history resources, the **Jim Kreuzberger** Duluth Street Railway manuscript. The late **Jim Kreuzberger** was a longtime MSM member who grew up in Duluth on Park Point, the long, narrow sandbar accessed by the Aerial Bridge. Although he spent his career in Kansas City, he spent decades studying the streetcars of Duluth-Superior with the intent to write a book. It was never published, but before his death Jim donated his incomplete manuscript and research notes. They total more than 500 pages and are certainly the most complete history of the Duluth Street Railway. After his death, his widow donated over 500 photos and extensive DSR company records. That donation gave me the material to write the book published several years ago, *Twin Ports by Trolley*.



Now **Floyd Child** has scanned the manuscript and **Ben Franske** has loaded it onto the MSM website. It's a little challenging to read because of all the handwritten notes, but it's another priceless trove of historic information. And it's another step toward my goal of making the history easily accessible to our members and the general public.

Murder Mystery a success. **Rod Eaton** reports that his year's Streetcar Murder Mystery was bofo. Saturday and Sunday sold out with 44 tickets each night and Friday drew 35 passengers. A Thursday performance was added, billed as a Preview with a reduced price of \$16 and 41 attended that show. The average revenue per night was just under \$800. As in previous years, it was split with the director and cast members—they receive 60%. The show was consistently good and we received lots of raves.

Udating the Collections Policy. When MSM split off from the Minnesota Transportation Museum, we drafted a Collections Policy, something all museums should have. It identifies and limits the scope of the collection so you can say "no" to irrelevant acquisitions. It also states who is responsible for the collection. At the time we borrowed stock language from established sources and adopted it. I recently reviewed the policy, saw that it was out of date, and brought changes to the Board of Directors, who adopted it at their August meeting. The original policy had us preserving electric railway history in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. That was too broad, and we've reduced it to Minnesota, North Dakota and western Wisconsin. Although the Board has ultimate responsibility for the collection, the original language allowed them to delegate responsibility to "a committee or the General Superintendent."

We opened our library in 2015, and since then it has become clear that there are two parts to the collection—the streetcars, buildings, track, machinery and tools used for the streetcar operation and the non-operating photos, documents and artifacts that we keep for historic purposes. The revised policy specifies that the General Superintendent is responsible for the operating part of the collection. A new position, the Curator, is responsible for the non-operating history part of the collection. I'm now the Curator, which formalizes the role I've filled since the library opened.

Summer internship ends. **Elizabeth Gray**, our summer intern, has returned to her history and museum studies at St. Olaf College in Northfield. I believe it was a good experience for her, and certainly was productive for us. She digitized almost 1000 photographs and worked 25 shifts as a station agent. She also searched historic online newspapers for streetcar stories. We've now had two interns, **Megan Dziengel** being the first last winter. Both sought us out, and hopefully more will follow.

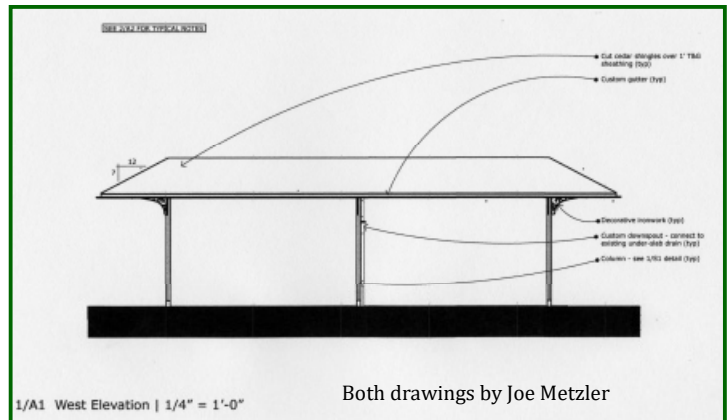
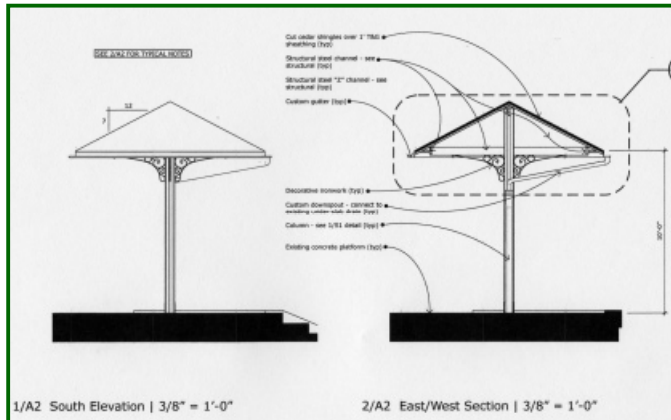
Heritage Preservation Commission. On August 20th, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the design of the Linden Hills depot canopy. It will be a replica of about a quarter of the 1912 "chalet station" canopy, extending from the north

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end of the platform to the stairs next to the Linden Hills depot. The next step is to put the project out for bids. When that happens, we'll learn two things.

- Was our budget estimate close?
- Will construction happen this Fall or next Spring? Stay tuned. 🕒



Excelsior Photos

(Above Left) Celebrating Motorette Day on the Excelsior Streetcar Line: (L to R) **Ann Behning, Paula Callies, Mary Amsden, Karen Kertzman and Elaine Love.**

(Jim Kertzman photo)

(Above) Moving Mississippi Valley Public Service (Winona lines) No. 10, under power, to the warm barn following the completion of repairs on DSR No. 265: (L to R) **Steve Mages, Howie Melco, Carl Floren, David McCollum** (partially hidden), and **Jim Kertzman.**

(Karen Kertzman photo)

(Left) Fellow tractioneers from Wisconsin's East Troy Railroad Museum recently visited our museum and took a ride on DSR No. 78 following a tour of the ESL car-barn. (Karen Kertzman photo)

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- Another behind the scenes, but critical task is that of car cleaning. Thanks to the ongoing leadership of **Louis Hoffman**, the crew at CHSL of **Katie Barron, Jerry Betz, Marcus Corbin, John Dillery, Auggie Lassig, and Tim Layeux** continue to make the cars and station sparkle and welcoming to our guests. Upcoming car cleaning events are Saturday, September 21 and October 12.

As always thank you for your continuing interest and participation in the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. Be safe. 🕒

What's Happening?

- September 13-----American Sign Language free social event at CHSL—6 PM to 8 PM (see box below)
- September 21 & 22-----Excelsior's *Apple Days* festival at ESL—10 AM to 4 PM
- October 12 & 13-----Farmer Jan & Ken's B' *POE'BYQ* at CHSL—12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
- October 18-----Graveyard Ghost Stories at CHSL 8:30 PM
- October 19-----TRANSYLVANIA TROLLEY at CHSL—12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
- October 20-----TROLLEYWEEN at ESL—1 PM, 2 PM & 3 PM
- October 25-----Fantastically Fun Ghost Trolley at ESL—6 PM to 9 PM
- October 25-----THE LATE SHOW at CHSL—7 PM & 8:30 PM
- October 26-----Trick 'o Treat in Excelsior—10 AM to 4 PM
- October 26-----STREETCAR NAMED EXPIRE at CHSL 7 PM to 10 PM
- October 27-----Trick 'r Trolley at CHSL—1 PM, 2 PM & 3 PM
- October 31-----All Aboard Trick or Treat at CHSL for neurodiverse folks, families and friends—4 PM to 7 PM

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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 e-mail address are:

P.O. Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
info@trolleymuseum.org

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Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
Bill Graham—Distribution

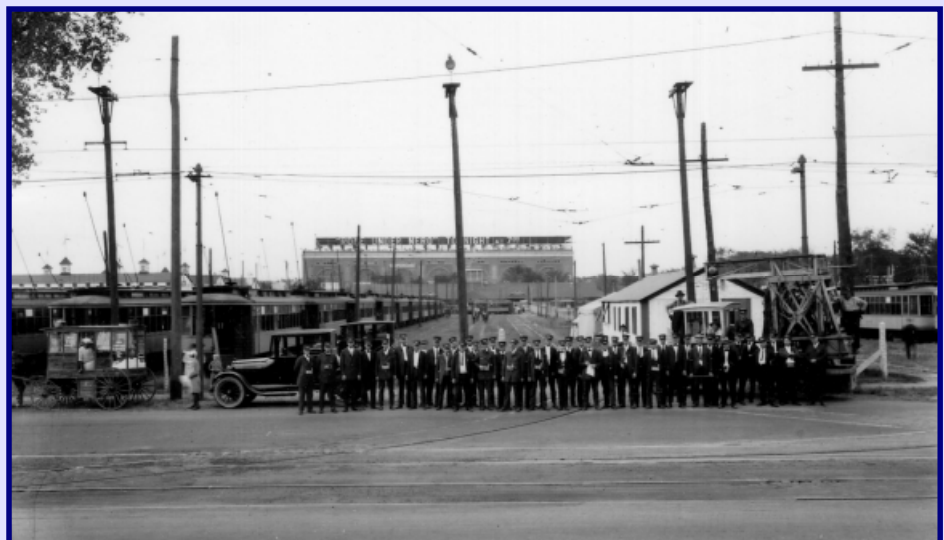
Streetcar CURRENTS is a newsletter published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next edition of the Streetcar CURRENTS is September 20, 2024.

Please send items to the editor at the following e-mail address
jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org

The Minnesota State Fair!

Back in the day, the Minnesota State Fair run was the busiest 10-days of the year for TCRT. To handle the throngs, the company built a special facility to handle fair-goers. The photos below show the large yard which extended almost to the grandstand from Como Avenue. In the top photo note the lunch wagon on the left to feed the operating men who are laying over and the line truck on the right. In the bottom photo, the small car in the center left is the unique emergency car and TCRT's State Fair office is the single-truck car seen in the lower left of the photo. Note this car is not on live rails! A gate car is on the St. Paul side loading passengers. Some great photos!



Friday September 13
6 PM to 8 PM
Free event!

It's your lucky day! Free trolley rides at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line narrated in ASL. A carbn tour at 7 PM interpreted in ASL. Join your friends—all are welcome.

Made possible by the Minnesota Streetcar Museum and People for Parks.