

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

March-April 2025



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Spring Training

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As I have mentioned in previous years, this is a fun time of year for me as the Museum begins its journey out of hibernation and prepares for our 2025 opening day. While most of our Museum's volunteers have been pursuing other interests over the winter, some critical work has been occurring.

Mechanical. Dick Zawacki and his team of miracle workers has been busy fixing and performing annual preventive maintenance on the streetcar fleet. The Mechanical Department crew includes at CHSL **Jerry Betz, Mark Digre, Ben Franske, Karl Jones, Russ Isbrandt, Miles Lei, John Prestholdt, Tom Schram, Dennis Stephens** and **Jim Willmore**. Over in the ESL shop we have **Jack Bingham; Dave Buckman, Jerry Draeger, Carl Floren, Tom Heimer, Mike Kimitch, Steve Mages, Dave McCollum, Howie Melco** and **Scott Wardrope**.



Training. **Bill Pekarna** is leading our talented team to train new volunteers and help enhance the skills of our existing operating members. Bill's team includes assistant Superintendent **Linda Ridlehuber** and instructors **Katie Barron, Jerry Betz, Marion Garcia, Pat Cosgrove, Tony Lebda, Andy Jacob** and **Fred Beamish** (PCC trainer). At ESL **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman** are the instructors. The recently completed Operator trainee orientation sessions resulted in a preliminary pool of 27 trainees of which 18 will plan to operate at CHSL and 4 at ESL. Five trainees haven't decided yet.

Planning. The Operations Committee—**Keith Anderson, Bill Arends, Katie Barron, John Dillery, Rod Eaton, Aaron Isaacs, Karen Kertzman, Bill Pekarna, Jim Vaitkunas, Dick Zawacki** and me—met to plan for the upcoming 2025 operating season. We added a third PCC shift on Sunday afternoon, replacing the standard car to accommodate increased interest from our PCC Operators. Specific areas of focus, including safety, will be covered in the required recertification meetings in April.

For returning operating volunteers the recertification process will essentially be the same as it has been the past few years. More detail will be provided in an up-coming Operations Newsletter.

- All volunteers will be deactivated in Humanity/Shift Planning. This is being done so we can track who has completed the necessary recertification requirements.
- All operating volunteers must attend a recertification meeting at CHSL or ESL. I am asking that station agents attend the meetings to hear the safety messages and gain a general understanding of the operations.
- All Operators and Foremen must complete the recertification quiz. This will be sent to you electronically and you will complete the quiz prior to attending the meeting where it will be discussed.
- All second-year Operators and veteran Operators who volunteered less than 10 hours in 2024 are required to complete a streetcar check ride. As was done last year, for CHSL you will be able to sign

up for a check ride through Humanity/Shift Planning by signing up as a "helper". For ESL's check rides please contact **Karen Kertzman**.

In closing, on behalf of the Museum's leadership team I would like to thank you for your continued support of the Museum and your interest in making 2025 a great year.

Thank You for all you do for our museum. 🍀

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From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Linden Hills Station canopy scheduled. About the time you read this, construction should have started on the canopy. Approval took longer than expected, which is why it's happening in April instead of last fall. There are five contractors. First, Hage Concrete will excavate the original 1912 column footings and prepare them to receive the columns. Next, National Steel Fabricators will deliver the steel canopy structural pieces, which High Five Erectors will assemble and erect. Then Midwest Electric will install the electric power and video cable from the station basement to the canopy, including re-powering the light and outlet on the wood pole just north of the platform. There will be lighting, outlets and cameras under the canopy. Finally, Kaufman Roofing will install the roof boards and cedar shakes, matching the historic canopy. Construction is scheduled to be complete before we start operation in May. I want to thank general contractor **Glen Sandness** who donated his services, running the bidding process, selecting the contractors and providing much needed project management assistance.



The CHSL north end runoff. When PCC car No. 322 lost its brakes and ran off the north end of our track in 2023, it encountered an abrupt one foot drop to the ground and suffered some damage to the truck and other components under the car. The drop also made rerailing the car quite challenging. The previously unknown brake problem has been diagnosed and repaired, but all agreed that the end of track needed to be reconfigured in case this ever happens again.

Working with contractor Railroad Specialties, **Keith Anderson**, **Miles Anderson** and I came up with a design that should do the job. The last several feet of rail will be bent down, ramping the car to ground level. On the ground, guardrails spaced wider than normal track gauge will prevent sideways movement. Deep ballast placed between the guardrails will stop the car. The design has been approved by the City. Keith is working with the contractor to get the job scheduled, hopefully soon. A similar facility is being planned for the Excelsior Boulevard end of ESL.

New Board Members. I want to welcome longtime member **Andy Jacob** who was elected to a three-year term on MSM's Board of Directors. Andy is a Foreman and trainer at CHSL. Also new to the Board is **Katie Barron**, who has been appointed as Class B Director to a one-year term. Katie is also a CHSL Foreman, Training Instructor and the Special Events Coordinator. The other three Class B Directors appointed following the Annual Meeting are incumbents **John Dillery**, **Dave French**, **Darel Leipold** and **Elaine Love**. I was also elected to another term.

MSM's Board of Directors. This is probably a good time to remind everyone of the Board's role. It sets long-term plans for the future of the Museum, approves major policy decisions, sets fares, approves the annual budget and appoints the General Superintendent. As a rule it doesn't get involved in operational matters, unless those rise to the level of requiring a change in policy. Operations are delegated to the General Superintendent and the managers who report to the GS. Keeping the Board away from operational issues prevents a decision making bottleneck at the top of the organization, and would undercut the General Superintendent. ☺

WELCOME!

TO THE
MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM'S
MINNESOTA ELECTRIC

MSM History Forum on Zoom

Our museum's first Minnesota Electric Railway History Forum in March using the Zoom application was a success with over 30 members and friends participating.

The April forum will be on Thursday, April 3rd at 7:00 PM. If you are interested in participating please let Aaron know by e-mail to aaronmona@aol.com. If you let Aaron know for the March forum no need to tell him again—you're on the invitation list already.

MSM Photo Ops



ESL shop volunteer **David McCollum** is training the ESL shop crew on MVPS (Winona Lines) No. 10 low voltage controls. Pictured L to R: **Dave Buckman**, **Howie Melco**, **Steve Mages**, **David McCollum**, **Carl Floren** and **Dick Zawacki**. (Photo by Jerry Draeger)



Pull and push! At ESL, Duluth No. 78 is moving the speeder and cart from track 1 to track 2 for storage in the car barn. **Scott Wardrope** and **Jerry Draeger** are pictured. (Photo by Howie Melco)



At the Excelsior car barn mainline to yard switch, **Jim Kertzman** and **Howie Melco** (on the streetcar) bring MVPS No. 10 safely through the switches and into the car yard. **Carl Floren** watches the trolley wheel on the overhead wire as the rest of the shop crew rides on the streetcar. (Photo by Karen Kertzman)



Winter is usually a time for our car barn maintenance crews to tackle large scale maintenance and improvement projects to our streetcar fleet. This year was no different as the CHSL crew replaced the air compressor and associated piping on TCRT No. 1300. Often, however, our car barn maintenance crew members will pick a specific, individual project to work on during the winter. This past 2024/25 "off-season" **Mike Miller** took on the task of giving the metal cover of TCRT No. 1300's General Electric K-43F2 controller a "facelift". First, he stripped the old black paint from the casting. Then Mike cleaned around each individual letter to remove the last vestiges of the old paint and prepared the cover for finishing. A worn spot on the controller cover gave Mike a good sample of the original color. To duplicate it he mixed Smoke Gray Rustoleum paint, aluminum paint, and a brown stain to get the desired color. Mike then brushed the mixture on and wiped it off three times to get the correct effect.

The original cast information (patent dates, etc.) as well as the stamped information with model and serial numbers is now clearly readable on the controller top and LB-2A line breaker control box. All of Mike's work was done with the controller in No. 1300, which meant that he had to protect all the surrounding woodwork and other components from his efforts. The result enhances No. 1300's overall look and feel, brightens the operator's area, and adds another note of historical correctness to the car. Thanks again to Mike for his efforts and willingness to improve and add historical accuracy to our museum's "mother car," TCRT No. 1300. (Photo by Dick Zawacki)



THE ST. PAUL SOUTHERN ELECTRIC RAILWAY CO.
IN EFFECT APRIL 30, 1916 UNTIL DECEMBER 1, 1916
Schedule of Trains Subject to Change Without Notice

Hastings	St. Paul
Leave	Leave
6:15 a.m.	5:40 a.m.
7:15	6:40
8:15	7:40
9:15	8:40
10:15	9:40
11:15	10:40
12:15 p.m.	11:40
1:15	12:40 p.m.
2:15	1:40
3:15	2:40
4:15	3:40
5:15	4:40
6:15	5:40
7:15	6:40
8:15	7:40

*Cars leaving Hastings at 7:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. connect with Inner Grove car for St. Paul at Inner Grove.

Lake St. Croix Summer Resorts
Trains leave Hastings over Milwaukee at 7:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for Ilwaco Springs and other summer points along St. Croix Lake. These trains do not run on Sunday.

Boat Service Between Hastings and Prescott
To make complaints, offer suggestions, or for further information kindly telephone Cedar 5741, St. Paul, or write
J. J. McDonald, Supt., Hastings, Minn.

We recently added to the museum archive the Saint Paul Southern's timetable card shown on the left. It shows hourly service between downtown St. Paul and the Dakota County seat of Hastings, Minnesota.

March-April----- CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training
 May 3----- Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations
 May 18 & 19----- Doors Open Minneapolis--carbarn tours 10 AM to 5 PM on both days
 May 27 (Memorial Day) -- Operations at CHSL & ESL. At CHSL, shuttle service to Lakewood cemetery starts at 9:30 AM



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

MSM's Annual Meeting. Our annual meeting of the Museum's members was held on Thursday, March 20. The meeting minutes, and presentations made during the annual meeting, will be posted on MSM's website by early April.

Streetcar Cleaning. At CHSL, we'll be cleaning streetcars every four weeks at the Isaacs Carbarn on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. These are the tentative dates. Check and sign up at Humanity/Shift Planning: April 26—May 24—June 21—July 19—August 16—September 13—October 11.

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** March-April 2025

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 April 20, 2025.

Please send items for the Currents to:
Jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org

During the operating season, most crews are good about sweeping the streetcar out at the end of the day. But there's lots of glass, open windows, and wood on No. 1300 and there's that ridged rubber floor on No. 322. So we need to do a thorough cleaning of both cars at least once per month. Typically, we aim for cleaning glass inside and out, cleaning the seats and non-glass and non-wood surfaces, polishing the wood on No. 1300, and thoroughly sweeping and mopping the floor. If every foreman, operator, and station agent volunteered just once per season we'd have plenty of people to get the job done thoroughly and quickly. We also encourage families, non-operating members and friends to come and lend a hand and help your museum. ☺

Obituaries

We note with sadness the passing of volunteer **Chris Hawver**. Chris has been an active member of the ESL shop crew. A willing and involved volunteer, Chris was always curious to learn how streetcars operated and the history of the TCRT system in the Twin Cities. He brought an infectious enthusiasm and spark to MSM and would often come up with new ideas to help market and improve the Museum. Beyond MSM, Chris's interests were known to range from being a state certified motorcycle instructor to a lover of opera. He also volunteered his time with the Red Cross and several local food shelves. Chris had a wide-ranging professional career as an entrepreneur, motivational speaker, and businessman before his involvement with MSM. He drew on the contacts he developed from this experience to greatly benefit MSM. He brokered several donations of materials and outside labor to help us complete projects for our Winona 10 streetcar and other projects at ESL. All of MSM's volunteers offers our sincere condolences to Chris Hawver's family. He will be missed.

We also regret to report the passing of **Art Abrahams**. Art was a faithful volunteer at CHSL and he also volunteered on the steamboat *Minnehaha*. His work career was in the automotive and machine tool industries. Art was a pilot and traveled with his wife Bonnie on trips through the American West, Canadian Rockies, and Mexico City. He loved dogs, Canadian duck hunting, international travel and sailing.

Streetcar **CURRENTS** Regular Summer & Fall Schedule

This is the last issue of the the Streetcar **CURRENTS** you will receive following the bi-monthly publication schedule. The **CURRENTS** will be issued monthly effective with the May issue which you will receive on or about May 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after that date please contact me at: jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org