

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

July 2025



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Linden Hills Platform Canopy Construction Delayed. The completion of the Linden Hills depot canopy has been badly delayed by unusually wet weather. The roof boards are tongue and groove and swelled due the humidity, so the grooves had to be widened. Since then, there have been few days without rain and almost no opportunities to install the boards. Hopefully things will dry out soon and we can finish it. My thanks to **Miles Anderson** and **Bea Funk** for helping. One positive development was the delivery of the canopy's decorative ironwork. It will be installed after the roof is up.



Excelsior Tie and Runoff Project Completed. In 2024, the ESL shop crew determined that 50 to 100 cross ties needed replacing between Excelsior Blvd. and Morse Ave. A closer examination found 72 bad ties. That freed up money for a safety "runoff" at the Excelsior Blvd. end of the line. If a streetcar overshoots the end of track, its design will bring the car to a halt, minimize streetcar damage, and make rerailing easier. **Keith Anderson**, **Howie Melco**, and **Jerry Draeger** prepared the design.

Railroad Specialties (RRS) won the job bid and proposed 2 days for the work, which would be scheduled as fill in work before the end of October. To stay within budget, ESL staff agreed to provide flag persons on the Three Rivers Park trail, obtain permits, arrange for offsite staging of equipment, and dispose of the used cross ties.

On short notice, RRS called with a 2 day opening in late June. **Karen Kertzman** obtained the Three Rivers Park District's permit, museum member **Charles Anding** agreed to take the used cross ties, and **Jerry Draeger** scheduled flag persons and the offsite staging area. The flag persons worked in 4 hour shifts starting at 7 AM. They were **Dave Buckman**, **Carl Floren**, **Tom Heimer**, **Jim Kertzman**, **John Knox**, **Elaine Love** and **Gregg Thomas**. **Karen Kertzman** provided food for the ESL volunteers. All RRS work, clean up, and demobilization was completed in 1^{1/2} days. There were no safety incidents or inconveniences for the trail users. The evening of the 2nd day, ESL successfully operated 2 "Story Time" trolleys with operations returning to normal.

Stillwater Street Railway History Uncovered. There is still Minnesota streetcar history to be discovered. In June 1889 the Stillwater Street Railway was Minnesota's first non-experimental electric streetcar operation, preceding Minneapolis and St. Paul. We've never known much about it, so I've undertaken a newspaper research project. The results will appear in a future issue of Twin City Lines, but have already revealed a surprise. We thought it ran only within Stillwater. Turns out it extended all the way to South Stillwater, now called Bayport. The line was four miles long, ran through open country and technically qualified as an interurban. The little system entered receivership in 1892 and expired in 1896. After a 3-year hiatus, Twin City Rapid Transit built out from St. Paul and rebuilt the Stillwater local lines, reviving the Bayport line in 1905.

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MSM Hosts Special Visitors

On June 28 the Central Electric Railfans Association, venerable traction fan group from Chicago, chartered streetcars first at Excelsior and then Lake Harriet. By coincidence, as they were boarding PCC No. 322 at the Linden Hills station, a group of trolley fans from the Manchester Transport Museum Society in England arrived to take a ride. The CERA folks generously invited them aboard their charter, which included a carbarn tour. New friendships were made and international relations improved. *(Article by Aaron Isaacs. Photos by Karen Kertzman.)*



ESL Foreman **Jerry Draeger** (foreground) gave the CERA visitors some history of the streetcars at ESL. Your editor is standing on the left.



Here are most of the CERA visitors just before they left ESL for Como-Harriet for their visit there later on in the afternoon.



More Behind the Scenes

Operating the streetcars is very important because the revenue generated by our regular operations and charters allows our museum to preserve Minnesota's electric railway history. Other work that is also important is maintenance of our infrastructure and the streetcars. In these two photos you can get an idea of the different tasks that go into maintaining our track and cars.

(Left) MSM member **Miles Anderson** is doing the hard work of replacing railroad ties along with the photographer, **Keith Anderson** (no relation to Miles—this is Minnesota after all).

(Right) Here are some of our CHSL shop volunteers working on assembling the new sand blasting cabinet (L to R) **Bea Funk, John Prestholdt** and **Ian McCombs**. Also working on the project was **Dan Phillips**. *(Dennis Stephens photo)*



WELCOME!

TO THE
MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM'S

MINNESOTA ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORY FORUM

MSM History Forum on Zoom

The next Minnesota Electric railway history forum will be held on Monday, July 7th at 7:00 PM. We'll again use the Zoom meeting application for the forum. As requested by a couple of the participants at the last forum, the topics for this forum will be TCRT at Fort Snelling and TCRT's overhead trolley wire maintenance vehicles. There will be time for Q&A as well.

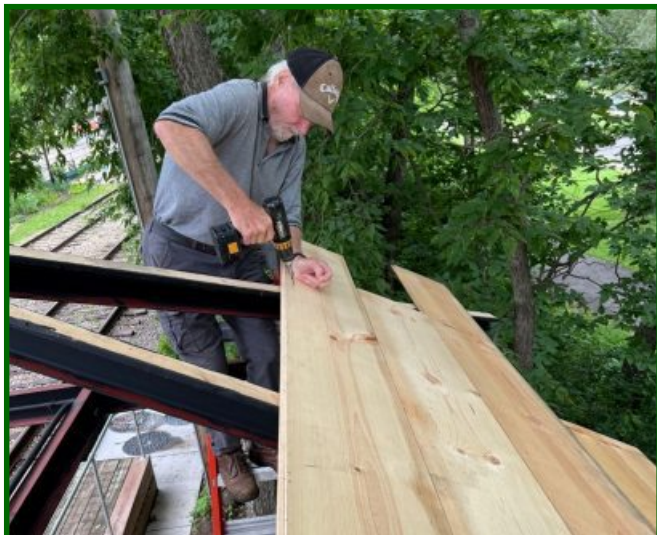
A "heads-up" e-mail was sent on June 30th to those already on the History forum Zoom invitation list. If you want to be added to the forum's e-mail invitation list, send an e-mail to: jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org

MSM Photo Ops

Another never ending task is brush and tree trimming and grounds keeping work. Out on the CHSL line here's (L to R) **Tony Lebda**, **Bob Leininger**, **Ian McCombs** with **Jerry Betz** taking the selfie.



At the Lakewood Cemetery platform, this new sign was made by Eagle Scout **Mason Eberly**, son of MSM member **Steve Eberly**.
(Aaron Isaacs photo)



Now that it stopped raining, at least temporarily, the roof board installation has resumed on the Linden Hills platform canopy. **Glenn Sandness** screws one into place. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



ESL's east end now has a safety run-off track shown here and described in Aaron Isaacs' column on page one. (Jerry Draeger photo)



ESL's June Story Time trolley crew is shown here: (L to R) **John Knox**, **Denny Morrow**, **Miss Debra** (StoryTime performer) and **Elaine Love**. (Jim Kertzman photo)




Gregg Thomas and **Jerry Draeger** (with yellow stop signs) monitoring the trail traffic while Railroad Specialties replaced 72 railroad cross-ties on the ESL line. (Karen Kertzman photo)

- July 4-----Independence Day operations at both ESL and CHSL
 July 6 & 19-----TCRT Motorette days at CHSL commemorating the first hiring of women operators by TCRT
 July 7-----MSM History Forum Zoom get-together—7 PM. See box on bottom of page two.
 July 15-----PJ Party trolley at CHSL—6 PM and 7 PM
 July 19 & 20-----Excelsior's Crazy Days festival—ESL operates from 10 AM to 4 PM both days
 July 24-----Story-Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM and 6 PM
 July 25-----Spirits on a Streetcar at CHSL—The Car barn. See description below.



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

Address Changes. We still occasionally get returned mail from the USPS because of a bad address or changed address. The returns cost your museum money. It'll be even more expensive when a first-class stamp goes up from 73-cents to 78-cents on July 13th. If you renew your membership using the mail-in slip, please note any changes to your mailing address and your e-mail address on the slip. If you renew using MSM's website renewal, please send any address changes to MSM Member Services Manager, **Barb Gacek** at: rhodabump@gmail.com 

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 e-mail address are:

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

Streetcar **CURRENTS** July—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 July 25, 2025.

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



A Motorettes gathering at ESL. Rain kept them from riding on Duluth No. 78, but left time for discussions about the differences and similarities of the two MSM lines. L Front to back: **Anja Curiskis, Ali Riehle, Sarah Dibble, Margie Thompson, Linda Ridlehuber;** (standing) **Katie Barron and Jennifer Gascoigne;** R back to front **Leah Harp, Rena Harris, Nattie Harstad, Karen Kertzman and Mary Amsden.** (Jim Kertzman photo)



SPIRITS ON A STREETCAR

TCRT Streetcar No. 1300 was in service for 46 years. Think of the stories it might have to tell. Take a ride with seasoned paranormal investigators on the historic Minneapolis trolley and see if there are any spirits who join us! We'll be using real investigation equipment to identify any possible paranormal activity on this historic streetcar or in the car barn where it sleeps.

Experienced investigator, **Heidi Steffens**, will show you a few how to's in paranormal investigating. We'll travel past the lakes and along Lakewood Cemetery while the night surrounds us in hopes of speaking to someone from beyond. This is an exclusive 90-minute special event with limited seating.