

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

August 2025



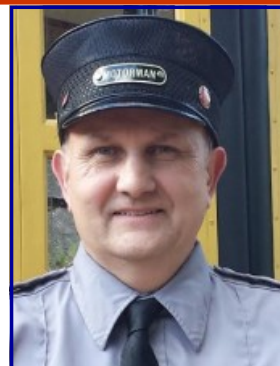
MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Volunteering

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As I have discussed numerous times in this forum, as a volunteer organization we depend on your skills and participation in one or more functional activities that allow the museum to operate safely and reliably in providing an educational and entertaining experience. In addition to the largest activity of operating the streetcars and the ticket booth/depot, there are other ongoing activities that can always use an extra set of hands even if it is only for a few hours a month. A partial list is shown below, along with the primary contact person.

- Streetcar maintenance — **Dick Zawacki**
- Track maintenance — **Keith Anderson**
- CHSL grounds maintenance — **Jerry Betz**
- ESL grounds maintenance — **Jerry Draeger**
- CHSL streetcar cleaning — **Louis Hoffman**
- ESL streetcar cleaning — **Eric Werner**



If you don't have these leaders' phone number or e-mail address, contact me (hoyas81@gmail.com) and I'll provide them to you.

In addition there are a number of administrative or behind the scenes activities such as historian, web master, special event coordinator, training, membership services, etc. that have periodic needs.

What I would like to focus on is operations. This year has been challenging. We have seen a meaningful number of days where the high heat/ humidity has forced cancellations and in several cases resulted in small crowds when we have tried to operate. The other issue has been ongoing difficulties in filling some shifts and in relying on a relatively small cadre of volunteers to handle a significant portion of the schedule. Historically, a small number of volunteers (~6 at Excelsior; ~12-14 at Como-Harriet) provide about 50% of the operating hours. While the names change slightly year-to-year, the concentration of work effort does not. What is different this year is that we are seeing more qualified operators not volunteering, which puts operating shifts at risk of being cancelled, as you have seen in **Jim Vaitkunas'** shift vacancy e-mails showing many Red Zone shifts. I recognize that as a volunteer organization, the museum competes with a host of other commitments many of you have. What I do ask is that if you try to volunteer once or twice a month because any time you can give helps your museum. You may need to book time further out, but if you continue to have trouble finding a shift let Jim or myself—**Bruce Gustafson** hoyas81@gmail.com—know and we will work to find you a shift.

Lastly, the second shift on Sunday at Como-Harriet has always been difficult to find a crew. This year we tried to meet the increased demand for PCC operations and potentially solve the Sunday problem at the same time by scheduling the second shift on Sunday with the PCC, but that does not seem to have worked and we will likely revise the schedule for the 2026 season. If you have any thoughts on how to increase Sunday volunteering, please let me know.

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Regardless of how much time you are able to contribute to the museum, I want to thank you for all you do and the time and effort you are able to provide. I hope you continue to enjoy your experience with our Museum. Be safe. ☺



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

The Stillwater Project. I want to tell the membership about a new project that's in the planning stage. I was approached by member **Bob Kroening**. He grew up outside of Stillwater and his family still owns a triangular sliver of land just east of the intersection of County Road 12 and Manning Avenue. On that land is a short piece of the TCRT Stillwater interurban right of way. It's up on a fill, under which is a concrete cattle pass tunnel. It's also next to a public school that is the successor to a pioneer school. The site is too small for any kind of development. Kroening would like to donate it to some government entity to be converted into a history display.



He approached me to see if our museum wanted to be involved. I said yes, providing it created no expense for the museum. The next step was to find someone willing to accept the property. Kroening approached the City of Stillwater, Washington County, the Washington County Historical Society and Stillwater Public Schools. The school district appears to be the preferred option, since the site directly abuts their property and school history would be part of the display. In May Kroening and I presented the idea to the school board and their reaction was quite positive. They've drafted an agreement and approval is anticipated.

What would the display look like and how would it be funded? The right of way is covered with trees and brush. They would be removed, revealing the old streetcar fill and cattle pass. About 100 feet of track with four poles and overhead wire would be installed on the fill, making clear where the line was and what it looked like. There would be no attempt to restore an old streetcar body or replicate a new one. The track and wire alone will be enough, and will require minimal maintenance. I've seen similar short tracks on abandoned rights of way elsewhere and they do an effective job of making the history understandable. There would also be interpretive signage telling the history of the streetcars, the historic school and the neighborhood. We would help Kroening and the school board apply to local foundations for grants to fund the project. *(See photos on page 4—Ed)*

Immigrant Motorman Genealogy. Hundreds-maybe thousands-of Scandinavian immigrants found work at Twin City Rapid Transit. For the past year I've been corresponding with **Marianne Sunde**, a Norwegian whose grandfather, **Peder Sunde**, was one of those immigrant motormen. I was able to send her a copy of his Twin City Rapid Transit Company employee appointment card from the Minnesota Historical Society. Years ago we donated the cards to MHS so they would be more accessible for genealogical research, and we've made plenty of referrals since then. From the card we learned that he



Peder Sunde

worked at North Side Station, which is still standing. The card also listed three nearby houses where he lived. All are still standing. This inspired Sunde to join a Norwegian immigration tour of Wisconsin and Minnesota. After the tour she stayed over for a couple of days. I hosted her when she visited the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line for a ride on July 30. ☺

(Right) **Marianne Sunde** is shown standing next to TCRT's Northside Station. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*





The Linden Hills platform canopy is coming along. (*Aaron Isaacs Photo*)



The Linden Hill station's garden is looking fantastic due to the efforts of **Ben** and **Mary Porter** and the Master Gardeners. (*Aaron Isaacs Photo*)



(Above) During Excelsior's Crazy Days festival on July 19 & 20, MVPS No. 10 was on stationary display at the Water Street Platform. A group waiting for No. 265 will board No. 10. (*Karen Kertzman photo*)

(Right) Docents **Bill Graham** and **Jim Vaitkunas** with ESL operator **Mary Amsden** on MVPS No. 10 on the 19th. (*Jim Kertzman photo*)



July's Story Time Trolley theme was "Cars, planes and things that go." **Elaine Love**, **Miss Debra** (story teller), **John Knox**, and **Sarah Dibble**. . (*Karen Kertzman photo*)



Change of shift on an ESL Sunday afternoon: **John Knox**, **Karen Kertzman**, **Denny Morrow**, **Logan** (Denny's grandson), and **Eric Werner**. (*Jim Kertzman photo*)

August 7 - - - - - Streetcar Camp I for kids—9 AM to 1 PM
 August 14 - - - - - Story Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM and 6 PM
 August 14 - - - - - Streetcar Camp II for kids—9 AM to 1 PM
 August 19 - - - - - PJ Party Trolley at CHSL—6 PM and 7 PM
 August 26 - - - - - ALL ABOARD! At CHSL A time for neurodiverse folks, families, and friends—5:30 to 7:30 PM
 September 1 - - - - - Labor Day operations at ESL & CHSL

The Stillwater Project

As described in [Aaron Isaacs's](#) column on page two, the purpose of the project is to memorialize a small section of the right-of-way of TCRT's interurban line from St. Paul to Stillwater. The line was completed from Willernie (south end of White Bear Lake) to Stillwater in 1899. Also in 1899 TCRT constructed several local lines in Stillwater. The Stillwater line was unique to TCRT because a portion of the line had automatic color light block signals installed after a head-on collision in 1924. The line from Willernie to Stillwater was abandoned in 1932. ☺

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:

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 Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
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Streetcar **CURRENTS** August—2025

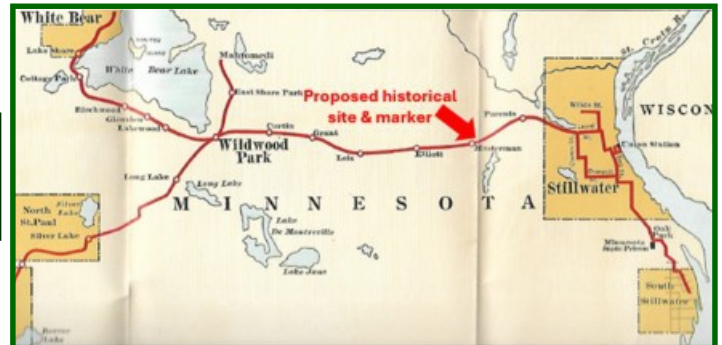
Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

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 August 20, 2025.

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

Map taken from a TCRT brochure showing general location of where the historical site and marker will be located.



The proposed site for the historical site and marker is located approximately 300-400 yards east of the intersection of Manning Avenue and 75th Street north.



Right-of-way with the cattle tunnel in the right center.



Close-up of the concrete cattle pass tunnel. (Both Photos by Aaron Isaacs)