

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

May 2026



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

Opening Day!

Opening Day is finally here. I know everyone is excited to participate in a new season at Como-Harriet and Excelsior. I would like to thank the volunteers who have completed the recertification process and are ready to operate this season, and the new operators who are working their way through MSM's training program. If you have not completed the required recertification steps, I would encourage you to do so as soon as possible. For those of you who have remaining tasks (e.g., quiz, POS training, check ride), please contact the leaders listed below for specific information.



- Check-ride (CHSL): Bruce Gustafson or Bill Perkarna
- POS training (CHSL): Pat Cosgrove
- ESL recertification: Karen Kertzman

Operators meeting/recertification quiz (CHSL). Since there are no more planned meetings, email the complete quiz to me at Hoyas81@gmail.com. The intent of the group meetings is to encourage discussion regarding specific rules and procedures to ensure a common understanding among all operating personnel. As there are no more meetings planned, I will review submitted quizzes and send out comments as part of an upcoming Operations Newsletter.

As we begin the operating season it is critical that all volunteers are proficient in our operating procedures and knowledgeable of our safety policies and practices. Reference materials are available on the Museum's website and specific questions can be addressed to **John Dillery**, MSM's Safety Superintendent, myself, **Karen Kertzman** at ESL or your Shift Foremen. If you have a question, ask. If you see something unsafe—say something.

There is more to making our Museum successful than operating a streetcar and I ask that you consider volunteering for one or more of the non-operating activities. These activities cannot be done by one or two people. If you are interested in helping with the non-operating volunteer efforts, contact the person listed below. If you are not able to connect directly with the activity leader, please contact MSM's Volunteer coordinator **Pat Cosgrove** or me.

- Streetcar maintenance: Dick Zawacki
- Track maintenance: Keith Anderson and Jerry Draeger
- CHSL grounds maintenance: Anthony Lebda
- ESL grounds maintenance: John McElmurry
- Overhead line maintenance: Chris Heck
- CHSL streetcar cleaning: Louis Hoffman
- ESL streetcar cleaning: Eric Werner

Updates: **Bill Pekarna**, MSM's Superintendent of Training, reports that we've had very strong interest in our 2026 Operator training program with 32 candidates attending the initial meetings in March, from which 29 committed to the program. Because of normal attrition, we currently have 22 active trainees at CHSL and 3 at ESL. Car cleaning is an example of critical, behind the scenes work. In preparation for the season opener, **Louis Hoffman** and his crew of **Scott Benson**, **Tim Layeux**, **Eric Werner**, and others cleaned streetcars No. 322, No. 1300

Inside This Issue

<i>From the Front Platform</i>	2
<i>MSM's Photos</i>	3
<i>Coming Events</i>	4
<i>MSM News & Views</i>	4

(Continued on bottom of page 3)



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Carbarn cleanout coming. Museums tend to accumulate all sorts of things. Space in our carbarns is at a premium and sometimes house cleaning just has to happen. We're at that point at Lake Harriet. At last winter's long range planning session we all agreed that a carbarn cleanout was overdue. We'll bring in dumpsters for trash and steel scrap later this summer. Some of the stuff, however, has resale value. By happy coincidence the Linden Hills Neighborhood Garage Sale was May 2d this year, so we signed up for it. It's a big deal, with a published map of some 75 sales.

We set up at the Linden Hills station. From the carbarn we gathered a large selection of surplus hand tools, yard tools, tool boxes, battery chargers, charcoal grills, expired fire extinguishers, and even a kid's bicycle. We added back issues of Twin City Lines magazine, original TCRT overhead wire pole caps that we had salvaged from a Minneapolis scrap yard and electrical gauges from the streetcar company's powerhouse.

Thanks to **Elizabeth Hauck** for helping price them and to **Pat Cosgrove** for heading up the sale day crew. We took in \$283. There are still items left if any of our readers want a bargain.

Carbarn finds. While we were scouring the carbarn from garage sale items, a few unexpected historic items turned up. **John Prestholdt** produced a late 1940s coin sorter/changer that was once used on the streetcars. Designed and manufactured in St. Paul by the Kessler Company, it was a giant improvement over the standard coin changers owned by the motormen and conductors. Standard changers have separate barrels for each type of coin. They have to be loaded one coin at a time through a slot at the top of the barrel. Handfuls of mixed coins can be dumped into the top of the Kessler changer. Turn the crank and they drop into the correct barrels. New shop volunteer **Scott Brar** disassembled, cleaned and reassembled the changer. We're looking to mount it on the dash of PCC #322.

Quite a few of the wood number boards mounted on the front bulkhead were removed from the interior of streetcars about to be scrapped. I thought we had found them all, when **John Prestholdt** produced three from significant cars. They are No. 1230, the double-ender that ran the Fort Snelling Shuttle, No. 4 the last of the Stillwater lightweights and the Fort Snelling Shuttle backup car, and No. 1136, the Minnesota State Fair office car and the last in the as-built body configuration.

Cottage City sign. Last Fall we finally accomplished a small historical improvement I had been wanting to do for years. My thanks to **Scott Benson** for installing a proper TCRT Car Stop sign at the Cottage City stop. 📍



Cottage City stop ca. 1953/54.



Cottage City stop today (Aaron Isaacs)



In the final days of the streetcars, trolley fans, who would eventually become museum members, collected souvenirs. The late **Byron Olsen** took home the wood sign from Henry Wye in North St. Paul. **Aaron Isaacs** found it leaning against the wall of the CHSL's "ready barn" and now it's in the library. The photo on the right was taken in 1951. Note the **Henry Wye** sign in the upper right, and there's a **CAR STOP** sign there as well. (Left photo by Aaron Isaacs)



Here's the first crew of CHSL's 2026 operating season: (L to R) **Ted Rich, Dan Odegaard** and **Pat Cosgrove**. (Aaron Isaacs photo)

Here we see **Rita Martinez** and **Mary Jo Odegaard** staffing the table during May 2nd's Linden Hills garage sale. **John Schnabel** and **Pat Cosgrove** were also on the sales team. (Photo by Pat Cosgrove)



Instructor **Bill Pekarna** paused the training run with trainee **Clo LeRoy** to watch the Artemis II space ship return to earth. (Jerry Betz photo)

Over at ESL, **Bob Geiser** is working on the new section of the car-barn history display wall. (Photo by Jerry Draeger)

(Opening Day Continued from page 1)

and the Linden Hills station's interior. At ESL **Eric Werner** and his crew of **Mike Buck, Jim Kertzman, Karen Kertzman, Gregg Thomas** and **Steve Thomas** cleaned streetcars No. 265 and No. 78 for the May 2nd opening of 2026 ESL service. Thank you all!

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank all new and returning volunteers in advance for your time and effort. Enjoy your experience with the Museum this year. Have fun and be safe. 🍀

What's Happening?

May 5-----All Aboard special event, 5 PM to 7 PM. A calmer, quieter ride for neurodiverse folks, families, & friends

May 10-----Mother's Day. All mothers ride free at ESL & CHSL

May 9 & 10-----Doors Open Minneapolis event 10 AM to 5 PM both days. Car barn tours for interested visitors.

May 25----- Memorial Day operations at CHSL start at 9:30 AM. ESL operates from 10 AM to 4 PM.

**MSM News & Views — Updates on our Museum's Administration and Membership**

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief*

Rest In Peace. We regret to report the passing of long-time member and former volunteer **Bernie Braun**. Bernie joined the museum in 1979 and immediately became a streetcar operator. He has been a member ever since. He ran streetcars for many years, serving as a Foreman. He was active in the 1980s MTM steam excursions and on restoration work at Como Shops, including the restoration of Duluth No. 265. In later years he was active in the Gopher State Railroad Museum. (Aaron Isaacs)

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
May 2026**

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 May 20, 2026.

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



There's a lot of activity going on to get the car barn ready for spring and the beginning of operations. Here we see **Mike Kimitch** (store area) **Carl Floren**, **Tom Heimer**, **Jerry Draeger** (behind ladder), **Howie Melco** and **John McElmurry**. (Karen Kertzman photo)



With the nice spring weather, one of the ESL operations meetings was held on DSR No. 265 in the car yard. Left side F to B: **Michael Buck**, **Steve Thomas**, **Louis Hoffman**, **Bill Pekarna** and **Dave Buckman**. Right side F to B: **Karen Kertzman**, **Gregg Thomas**, **Pete Cahill** and **Eric Werner**. (Jim Kertzman photo)

MSM Motorettes Get-Together

The Motorettes of MSM are holding a special get-together on Friday, May 29th, from 5:45 PM to 8:00 PM. Location is CHSL's George Isaacs car barn. A group photo is scheduled so wearing your MSM uniform is encouraged! Bring a dish or beverage to share. All female MSM volunteers welcome! RSVP to leahharp@gmail.com by May 22.