

# THE MUSEUM OF LAKE MINNETONKA



## March 2022 Update from MLM's Board of Directors

### NEW CONDITION & VALUE SURVEY COMPLETED

The Board recently authorized an updated Condition & Value Survey (CVS) for *Minnehaha*. A CVS report is an insurance-industry tool used when determining whether a vessel is worthy of being insured and at what level of coverage. Insurance carriers generally require an updated CVS to assess their potential risk exposure before they will agree to submit their policy/premium. *Minnehaha's* last full CVS was completed in 2004 at the time when MLM spun off from the MN Transportation Museum.

Not just any appraiser, however, is qualified to assess an NRHP-listed 70' wooden hull, steam-powered passenger vessel. The Board vetted numerous marine-accredited surveyors before enlisting Captain Cliff Schmidt. A Minnesota native, Schmidt is now based in Florida and travels the country appraising boats. He came highly recommended by other appraisers with impeccable credentials and his current focus on large vessels fit *Minnehaha's* needs perfectly.

Not only that, Schmidt was already well familiar with *Minnehaha*. He grew up on Lake Minnetonka, served as a member of the lake's Water Patrol, and led Hennepin County's emergency dive response team that was on site when *Minnehaha* was raised! Needless to say, we found the right guy!

Capt. Schmidt's thorough inspection of the boat began with the hull and he worked his way through the boat to the upper deck. Along the way, he systematically assessed every system on the boat, crawled into every available access below decks – all with members of our maintenance and engineering team in tow answering his questions, etc. Simultaneously, we were able to probe Capt. Schmidt's expertise for learnings/suggestions that could help us in our quest to get *Minnehaha* back in the water.

**CVS FINDINGS** The completed survey revealed the boat to be in overall good condition. Schmidt did identify several maintenance tasks that were in order. Many of these reflect best practices adopted by the ABYC since the boat's restoration was completed (American Boat & Yacht Council is the nonprofit that sets standards for the construction and maintenance of boats in the U.S.). One benefit of conducting a CVS is it provides another set of expert eyes on the maintenance needs of the boat. Schmidt's report grouped these items by priority – those needing repair before resuming operation to those that were not essential to operation but recommended. For *Minnehaha*, there were few high priority items listed.

Among Schmidt's recommendations...updating several electrical items including how the batteries are wired to recharge while underway, adding a high water alarm signal at the captain's console, disconnecting two of the boat's three shore power receptacles to allow only one active source at a time, and adding a reverse polarity indicator (to alert the engineer if shore power is incompatible with the boat).

It should be noted that Capt. Schmidt has agreed to serve in an advisory capacity to our search committee on technical matters. His expertise and contacts will prove invaluable to the team!



*Armed with flashlight and camera, Capt. Cliff Schmidt thoroughly inspected and assessed every system on the boat!*

**MAINTENANCE UPDATE** The maintenance team is acting upon the various CVS recommendations, adding these items to its list of projects. Already the team has nearly completed the extensive repair to the rudder system (all that's left to finish is repacking the upper gland). The painting crew, led by Steve Albrecht, has repaired the various spots of wood rot and is at work systematically repainting the entire boat. Typically the boat is repainted over a three-year period. The hiatus, however, has allowed the crew to work ahead and the boat is looking fantastic!

## UPDATE ON THE SEARCH FOR A NEW LAUNCH SITE

As shared at MLM's Annual Membership Meeting last fall, MLM has lost access to the launch site it has used since 1996. The Board has been engaged in a comprehensive search for a new launch site since 2019 – investigating more than a dozen potential sites. This is a daunting task as Lake Minnetonka is nearly completely developed and what property is available is premium-priced. Complicating matters further, MLM only needs access to launch & haul-out two days a year, making it difficult for a nonprofit to justify acquiring property to construct a new ramp. MLM has intentionally focused its efforts on potential partnerships with tax-exempt municipal entities (i.e. parklands, fire lanes, etc.). Doing so would hopefully avoid purchasing and managing property...and paying property taxes. Any new site will need to enable lake access to launch the boat, but also ensure access to a nearby winter storage/maintenance as *Minnehaha* must be maintained in a heated/insulated facility through the winter months. Additionally *Minnehaha* needs a summer berth from which its summer operations can be based, although this can be located separately from the launch site.

MLM has methodically assessed the viability of sites based on several criteria: the site's ability to meet *Minnehaha*'s operational needs, the site's impact on neighboring residents & the environment (any dredging application must demonstrate it is the least impactful option on the lake's environment), permitting challenges, projected timeline and costs to implement.

The bottom line assessment is no perfect site exists. All of the sites have issues or challenges that will need to be addressed. Currently, search efforts are being focused on two sites. We are working to identify the solutions needed to resolve each hurdle as well develop cost estimates. At the same time, MLM is reaching out to update influential individuals in the lake community on our need, approach and status. This has included meeting with mayors, council members, commissioners, and others. It may seem like progress is slow, but a lot is going on behind the scenes!

We remain cautiously optimistic that a solution is possible. Response to our approach has been favorable and support for *Minnehaha* remains strong. We are striving to have a new launch site selected by early to mid-summer. Once in place, we can begin to rally community support/fundraise. Ultimately, the entire Lake Minnetonka community will be needed to return *Minnehaha* to active operation.

## UPDATE ON MLM NONPROFIT ACTIVITIES

Despite the boat being laid up, the administrative tasks associated with operating a nonprofit continue non-stop. Here's a snapshot of activities that have been going on:

- *Insurance Renewals* – MLM's coverage has in the past included coverage on the boat, general liability and a Directors & Officers policy. With the new CVS completed, we were successfully able to add coverage to the Barn (its tools, supplies, etc.) and the trailer (typically covered under an automobile policy). This expanded coverage was added with a slight premium reduction and a drop in our deductible!
- *Application for Permit to Access Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail* – MLM's permit to haul the boat down the LMRT expired some time ago. It was decided to hold off on reapplying until we determine if a future use is needed.
- *Verification of Nonprofit Tax Status with Hennepin County Auditors* – perhaps one of the most bizarre requests! The county's auditors are currently reviewing all nonprofit uses of county property to ensure all such uses are legitimate and entitled to their reduced (forgiven) use fees. Reasonable, but MLM had to provide proof to Hennepin County (which approved

the original application) of MLM's IRS status, its articles of incorporation & bylaws, its HCRRA lease for use of the barn property, etc. Red tape at its finest!

- *Membership Renewals* – Now the life blood of our income, we are being more proactive in urging people to renew or join MLM. All MLM memberships run on a calendar year basis. You can renew online or by mail. Details are available at <https://steamboatminnehaha.org/membership>

If you are uncertain as to whether your membership has expired, please email us at [mail@steamboatminnehaha.org](mailto:mail@steamboatminnehaha.org) and we'll reply with an update on your status. And while you're at it, please consider upgrading your membership as well as gifting memberships to family/friends. Doing so helps us spread the word and continue the maintenance and search efforts that are underway. Thanks!!

Activities that will be upcoming soon include:

- *Tax Filing* – March 31<sup>st</sup> marks the end of our MLM's fiscal year and that means its tax preparation time for MLM too!
- *Annual Charitable Organization Report to the Office of the MN State Attorney General* – All nonprofits are required to submit a report of their financial activities for the fiscal year.

Additionally, we are broadening our outreach to the lake community. MLM needs to maintain its strong awareness and support as it will eventually take the entire Lake Minnetonka community to assure *Minnehaha*'s future. The challenge (for now) is that we're still working to finalize the plan that we'll need to rally community support for. Already, we have participated in three public events:

- *2022 Minneapolis Boat Show* – MLM returned to the January Boat Show at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For several years, MLM has participated as a partner of the Land-O-Lakes Classic Boat Club's in its assigned exhibit space, which this year was located centerstage in the Main Hall. Traffic was terrific and we were able to educate attendees about our status.
- *Wayzata Chilly Open* – In February, MLM returned to frozen Wayzata Bay. Local real estate agent Beth Ulrich sponsored our hole on this winter golf festival. In keeping with the event's theme of the Winter Olympics, MLM created a mini curling event for all to enjoy while they waited to golf the hole. We also set up a photo booth in our tent complete with the boat's life rings that people could use as props when having their photos taken against the backdrop of the boat. Kudos to MLM's Sue Paulson, Liz Vandam, Scott McGinnis & Aaron Person who not only braved the freezing temps all day long to host ~600 playing guests, but who were also awarded a trophy for Best Hole!
- *"When Lake Minnetonka Had Streetcar Boats"* – On March 12<sup>th</sup>, MLM's Aaron Person & Tom McCarthy presented at an event hosted by the Westonka Historical Society (WHS) at Lake Minnetonka Shores in Spring Park. The presentation focused on the past, present and future of Steamboat *Minnehaha* and was well received by the 93 people who attended! All of WHS' programs are recorded by the Lake Minnetonka Cable Commission for rebroadcast and you can view it online at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYlrc\\_LeWyU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYlrc_LeWyU)



Minneapolis  
Boat Show




Wayzata  
Chilly Open



"When Lake Mtkka had  
Streetcar Boats"

## UPCOMING OUTREACH EVENTS

	<p><b>SAVE THE DATE!</b> <b>Gallery Talk Speaking Event</b> July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 7:00 PM Alexandria, MN</p>
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## UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP EXPLORATION

As shared in previous updates, MLM is one of six local historical organizations (Deephaven, Excelsior, Minnetonka, Wayzata, Westonka & MLM) that were awarded a Heritage Preservation Grant (funded by monies from the Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment and administered by the MN Historical Society). The grant was sought to explore ways the organizations might collaborate to better serve the history of the Lake Minnetonka area, now and in the future.

The Joint Committee representing these organizations, with its consultant, Arts Consulting Group (ACG), has completed a survey of members and the community, conducted stakeholder interviews, held town hall meetings, fielded a benchmarking study, and undertaken a financial analysis of each organization.

Minnetonka has since withdrawn from the project feeling the time was not right for their organization. In February, membership of the Deephaven Historical Society unanimously voted to dissolve. Volunteer support had dwindled over time and finally reached the point where the nonprofit organization was no longer sustainable.

Presently, the boards of the project's remaining partners (Excelsior, Wayzata & Westonka) are conducting site visits of each organization while continuing to explore an incremental consolidation model and ACG works to complete its final report (which will be shared with our members and the public). The Joint Committee recently met virtually with representatives of the MN Historical Society to review the process, learnings, etc. MNHS is closely following this initiative as a potential benchmark for others to follow in the future.

MLM has approached this exploration from the perspective that it is open to any solution that can assist with returning *Minnehaha* back to active operation for the community. The prospect of a consolidated organization with expanded reach, resources and visibility could prove very helpful to MLM in rallying needed community support. The Joint Committee is one-hundred percent behind returning *Minnehaha* to the lake, believing she can uniquely connect all the lake's communities. Action to implement any of the project's recommendations will be subject to approval of the partner boards and memberships.

Should you have questions about the process, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Board members.

## MLM BOARD MEETINGS

The MLM Board meets the first Tuesday each month from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Board meetings are open for attendance by members and the general public. Locations vary by meeting – seating is dependent upon the nature of the meeting room. As circumstances dictate, the meeting may be switched from in-person to virtual. We encourage all to verify the location posted on the MLM website under "Meeting Notices". Log-in info will be posted online if being held virtually.

### Upcoming Board Meetings:

**Tues. April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 6-8PM CDT** at the Wayzata Public Library\*

**Tues. May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 6-8PM CDT** at the Wayzata Public Library\*

*\*Subject to changing to a virtual meeting as necessary – check the MLM website beforehand to confirm meeting details.*

## SPRING CLEANING!

This spring we anticipate the boat will be pulled outside the barn so that we can strip the layers of bottom paint from the hull and repaint. Bottom paints are designed to wear away over time and the hull is typically repainted prior to being launched in the Spring. Our CVS survey did note a couple of areas with multiple layers of paint. These could potentially allow water to pocket between the layers which could be detrimental. Given the current hiatus, this is an opportune time to tackle removing the paint from below the waterline and then applying a fresh coat.

While the boat is out of the barn, we plan to replace the heat sensors on the ceiling of the barn (part of the fire detection system) which date back to the barn's original construction. And, as anyone who's been to the barn knows, a thorough spring cleaning inside is long overdue. Needless to say, over time we've amassed quite a collection of leftover materials, etc., but the time has come to clean out and reorganize the barn. Stay tuned for a Save The Date announcement as we'll need all hands on deck to help out!



## MYSTERY SOLVED!

A number of folks have asked about the computer generated image (CGI) on the front page. Who created it and how? No one had a clue. Leave it to Sharon Provost to quickly find the answers on an Affinity bulletin board for CGI enthusiasts. The artist and technical wizard is Mike Fels.

Mike spent the first 18 years of his life in Wayzata – his father worked as a boat builder/repairer at the Minnetonka Boat Works. Mike snorkeled around the lake and became hooked on *Minnehaha* when she was discovered. He was so enamored that when her restoration was complete, his mother presented him with a set of tickets to ride - which they did together, even though she had a fear of lakes.

Now 73, Mike lives in Chandler, Arizona. He completed this project and posted it on the bulletin board in 2016. Being 1,600 miles away, he based his work on his own pictures and those found on the web to construct as much detail as possible. Right down to screws and rivets. Mike's CGI image of *Minnehaha* is the largest drawing he has done. It contains 4,638 layers, all vectors. Zooming from the full image to some of the smaller details requires a zoom of 80,000%. Mike explained that "a pixel is a single point or the smallest single element in a display device. If you zoom in to a raster (pixel) image you may start to see a lot of little tiny squares. Vector images are mathematical calculations from one point to another that form lines and shapes. This allows vectors to be enlarged (or shrunk) to infinity without distortion or breaking up."

Mike has graciously granted MLM the right to use his work for the benefit of the boat. Mike – we salute you!!







# THE MUSEUM OF LAKE MINNETONKA

*Our Navigational Compass*

**Who We Are...** MLM is an all-volunteer membership-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2003.

**Who We Serve...** Just as the Express Boats were originally created to serve each of the communities on Lake Minnetonka, today we remain dedicated to serving the entire lake community.

**Our Vision...** A living future for the past

**Our Mission...** To inspire an enduring connection to Lake Minnetonka's rich cultural heritage by preserving & operating the historic Steamboat *Minnehaha* as an authentic, living museum & community icon.

**Our Strategies...**

- ENGAGE** with passengers via narrated cruises focused on different aspects of the lake's history.
- Welcome young & old into a **HANDS-ON** experience & learn about life in the early 1900's.
- PARTNER** with local historical societies to host special educational history-themed events.
- Serve as a year-round interactive museum to **TRAIN & QUALIFY** volunteers on the care, maintenance & operation of a historic, authentic, wooden, steam-powered vessel.

**Our Core Values...**

- SAFETY-FIRST...**We place the safety of our passengers, volunteers, and community above all else.
- AUTHENTICITY...**We strive to be authentic in everything we do.
- INSPIRATIONAL...**We bring the history of Lake Minnetonka to life through compelling narratives -- providing pleasure and stimulating enthusiasm for learning.
- COMMUNITY-ORIENTED...**We unite all the communities of Lake Minnetonka through our shared resources -- the lake and its heritage.
- STEWARDSHIP...**We ensure *Minnehaha's* future is as valuable as her past. We honor our founders by passing forward the heritage they passed to us.

## MLM BOARD OF DIRECTORS / OFFICERS:

President/Secretary: Tom McCarthy  
 Vice President/Treasurer: Scott McGinnis  
 Members-at-Large: Aaron Person, Liz Vandam, Sue Paulson

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## SHARE WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

Help us spread the word about *Minnehaha's* situation and need for support. Forward this newsletter to family, friends, neighbors. Encourage them to help us preserve *Minnehaha* and continue the search for a new launch site. Becoming an MLM member and/or making a donation is easy – simply use your phone's camera for instant access!



What's the Status? –  
Steamboat Minnehaha  
[steamboatminnehaha.org](http://steamboatminnehaha.org)



Become a Member –  
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Museum of Lake Minnetonka | Donate  
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## INTERESTING READING & VIEWING...

Aaron Person has authored a fabulous article recapping the history of the streetcar boat era that was published online by streets.mn



To read, click on the following link:

[When the Twin Cities Had Streetcar Boats | streets.mn](http://streets.mn)

## “When Lake Minnetonka Had Streetcar Boats”



An entertaining history of the making, launching and scuttling of the cheerful yellow **Express Boats** that plied the waters of Lake Minnetonka from 1906-1926. Take a deep-dive into the raising of the *Minnehaha*, her storied restoration, and return to service.

To view a recording of the March 12<sup>th</sup> presentation by MLM's Aaron Person and Tom McCarthy, click on the following link...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYlRc\\_LeWYu](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYlRc_LeWYu)

A special thank you to **Westonka Historical Society** for inviting us to share *Minnehaha's* story!