

THE MUSEUM OF LAKE MINNETONKA



January 2023 Update from MLM's Board of Directors

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

As reported through previous newsletters and updates delivered at our 2021 and 2022 Annual Meetings, MLM is one of four lake-area historical organizations that have been exploring ways to ensure our future sustainability. The exploration has been an 18 month process and is now nearing its end. Soon each of the Boards will decide on what, if any, action to take on the recommendations. The following will get you up-to-speed on the journey and steps ahead.

Who are the organizations participating? Besides MLM, three other lake-area historical nonprofit organizations are participants: Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS), Wayzata Historical Society (WzHS) and Westoka Historical Society (WtHS). All are well-established, in good financial health, with stable memberships, and work well together.

What is this strategic exploration attempting to solve? Simply put...Organizational Sustainability. All four nonprofits recognize that their future viability is becoming increasingly dependent on a very small number of dedicated volunteer leaders. Volunteer leadership has shrunk across the nonprofit sector, and new long-term leaders have become increasingly difficult, if not impossible to find. This has left small, local organizations precariously positioned with a small group of volunteers carrying much of the burden with no plan for succession in sight. The pandemic has exacerbated this dilemma even further.

Shouldn't MLM be focused exclusively on getting Minnehaha back in the water? That IS the Board's #1 focus! And the Board's focus is also on independent operations until such time as a partnership might become a reality. In opting to participate in this exploration, MLM chose to leave no stone unturned in its search for solution for a new launch site and resuming operations. If a partnership could get us back in the water sooner, so much the better.

How could a potential strategic partnership help solve MLM's need? A partnership offers several advantages: Consolidating the organizations together will result in greater visibility and awareness of *Minnehaha's* plight. A consolidated organization will be better able to grow membership, donations, volunteers, media attention, etc. It should enable us to compete more effectively for grant monies, state appropriations, etc. Perhaps most importantly, it will enable MLM's volunteers to focus on what we know and do best...run an excursion boat company – and delegate the task of running a nonprofit (membership, fundraising, etc.) to a professional staff.

Why would the other organizations want to partner with MLM?

Originally, we too pondered why anyone would choose to partner with MLM given that *Minnehaha* could not operate and faces a significant fundraising campaign. Happily, each organization shares the commitment of the MLM Board to return *Minnehaha* to her lake community. *Minnehaha* is seen as a critical element given its ability to connect all the lake's communities and historical organizations. And since no solution on a new launch site will be entered into without having first secured the capital necessary, the organizations view the risk of partnering with MLM as acceptable.

How has this exploration been structured? A Joint Committee was formed in 2020 with two representatives appointed by each Board. Tom McCarthy and Steven Tyacke served as MLM's original delegates. Upon Tyacke's resignation from the Board, McCarthy served as MLM's official delegate (Note: MLM directors Liz Vandam, Aaron Person, and Scott McGinnis have also participated as delegates of the other organizations). For 18 months, the Joint Committee worked with a nonprofit consultant, gathering information/feedback from members and the public, and exploring potential partnership alternatives.

Have the Consultant and Committee made a recommendation? In June 2020, a Final Report was issued to the partner Boards with the recommendation to create a new organization that would include the existing societies (MLM, ELMHS, WzHS, WtHS). Once the new entity is established, the four currently existing societies would each dissolve and become part of the new organization.

What is the current status and process moving forward?

Upon reviewing the report and recommendation, the four boards tasked the Joint Committee with an additional assignment: creating a governance and operational framework for the proposed new consolidated organization. The framework's objective is to provide a vision for how the new organization would operate and be governed. The Framework will be presented to the boards in early 2023. Once presented, the boards will be asked to vote on the proposed consolidation to determine if it should be brought to the memberships for final consideration. Should the boards vote to approve, each board will communicate details about its membership meeting and voting process.

Will the Final Report and Framework be made public?

If the boards approve advancing the proposal to the memberships, the consultant's Final Report and data, the framework vision and



other information will be available for members to review before the vote occurs. Additional updates will be shared via newsletters and other mailings as information becomes available.

How will Minnehaha operate as part of a consolidated organization? The vision for how *Minnehaha* and the other museums/collections will operate and be governed will be outlined in the Framework report.

Conclusion

The Joint Committee, as stewards of our shared history, believes it is incumbent on our leaders to be forward-looking and lay a sustainable foundation for the future. MLM's representatives have the added objective of returning *Minnehaha* to active operation again.

We are excited about our future together and confident that this step will 1) allow us to continue to discover, collect, preserve, and share the history of the Lake Minnetonka area with our members and the broader community in our ever-expanding world, and 2) allow us to thrive for future generations.

Please feel free to contact MLM Joint Committee representatives (Tom McCarthy, Aaron Person, Scott McGinnis or Liz Vandam) for more information or any questions you may have at mail@steamboatminnehaha.org.

DEMYSTIFYING THE HISTORY OF MINNEHAHA'S SEATS

Historical recollections are often shared innocently enough, but like fish tales, they sometimes aren't entirely accurate. Such was the case with a recent post on Facebook regarding *Minnehaha's* cane seats and upper deck benches.

The post stated the seats and benches were from one of *Minnehaha's* sister Express Boats and came to the restoration from the basement of the Blue Line Café in Excelsior. Well, the Blue Line Café never had a basement and it burned in 1958 – long before *Minnehaha's* restoration.

Lisa Stevens of the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society recognized the inconsistencies and began asking questions of Scott McGinnis, Aaron Person and Aaron Issacs.

Turns out, the seats were used in an Excelsior restaurant – but not the Blue Line Cafe. Darel Leipold (member of MLM's Hall of Fame) acquired the seats from the Anchor Inn (460 Lake Street, Excelsior). The newspaper clipping below indicates the seats were from a streetcar and used as booths as part of an outdoor seating area.



But were these seats from the streetcar boats? We know the boats were stripped of everything that could be repurposed before some of them were scuttled. Given that Twin City Rapid Transit Co. (TCRT) constructed the streetcar boats to be mirror images of their

streetcars, one could easily assume that TCRT used stock seats for the streetcar boats. However, TCRT expert Aaron Issacs shared the following excerpt from the Winter 1995 issue of MTM's publication *Minnegazette*:

"Streetcar boats used stock streetcar seats, right? As it turns out, not exactly. There were several differences (between streetcar and boat seats). Look under a seat in #1300 or #265 and you'll see that the frame is 3-sided. It attaches to the wall on one side and is supported by a cast iron pedestal on the aisle side. The seatback and cushion are joined by a curved side casting on the aisle side only. The footrest pipe under the seat ends at the wall. And, of course, all four frame members are square."

A few original boat seats have been acquired and they're different. The boat seats aren't square on the wall side. They angle to match the curve of the hull. Cliff Brandhorst, who is building the new frames, believes that the seatback width was standard, and the front of the seat is what varied. That means the aft seats were a couple of inches wider in front, and forward seats were narrower in front. The boat seats didn't attach to the wall, but were free standing, supported on two streetcar-model pedestals. The footrest pipe was shorter, running between the two pedestals. Finally, there was a second curved side casting connecting the seat back and the cushion on the wall side. So, the seats look almost alike, but with those minor differences."



Cane seats pictured in one of TCRT's streetcars

It is believed that the metal frames of the wooden benches on the upper deck are original from the streetcar boats and came from multiple random places during the restoration.

Thank You Lisa, Aaron, Aaron, Scott AND Darel for helping set the record straight. Let's all make sure to share the *real* story moving forward!



The seats as they now appear on the restored Minnehaha.

WORK CONTINUES AT THE BARN...



Have the maintenance crew become contortionists?



Pius Eigemann –the newest addition to the Saturday maintenance crew (above) – and Mark Berno, apply a second coat to the aft section of the upper deck



Awesome Work!



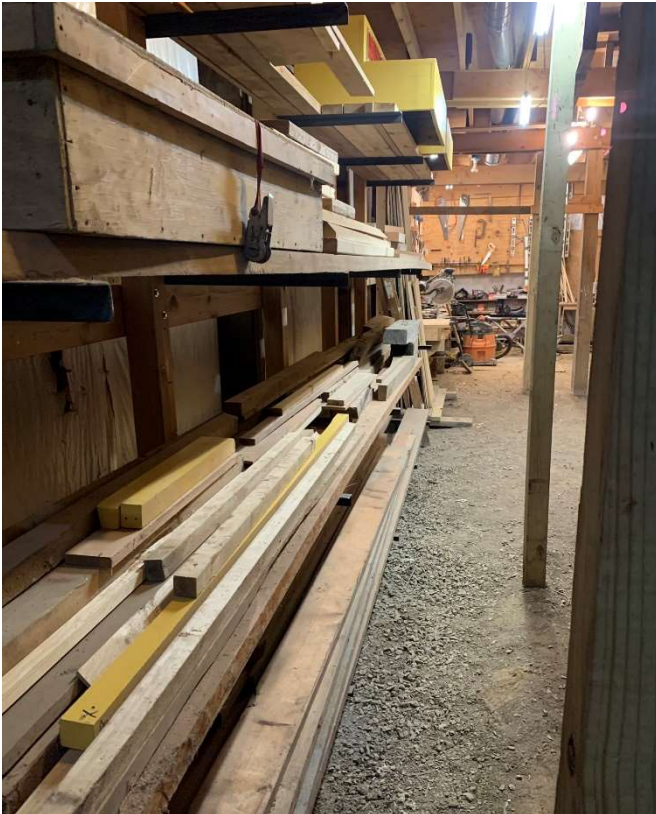
Bob Hagstrom & Rusty Herman have now installed a new Pressure Reducing Valve in the box behind the smokestack (PRV rebuild kit donated by Kevin Holtberg – SPIRAX/SARCO)



Pictured above is Engineer and switch guru Jeff Bipes' latest creation: a new High Water Alarm system that will alert both the Engineer and Captain as well as identify the compartment where the high water is located! The box will be positioned at the Engineer's station and will be connected to float switches in each compartment. If any of the float switches is activated, an alarm will sound to alert the Engineer and a light (above) at the Helm will alert the Captain. The system has been tested and is now ready for installation!

UPDATE FROM THE BARN...

Our dedicated team of regulars continue to gather Saturday mornings at the Barn to work on various boat projects. Painting has now progressed to the upper deck. New fuel hoses are being installed to be in compliance with new U.S. Coast guard requirements. A new Pressure Release Valve has been installed in the box behind the stack on the upper deck. The ropes used to lift the lower deck windows have all been replaced, new restraining lines for the gangways have been made to replace those that were badly fraying (used when the boat is underway). Additionally, Engineer and switch guru Jeff Bipes has designed a new high water alarm system that will alert both the Engineer and Captain as well also identify the compartment where the high water is located!



BARN CLEAN UP

On November 5th, we took the long overdue first step in decluttering the Barn where anything and everything was being accumulated...just in case it might be needed in the future. In the span of four hours, the team filled two trailers with materials to be recycled / discarded. Even the supply of timber was restacked! A good start – now we need to reorganize plumbing, electrical and other supplies so we can readily locate what we have on hand and when we need to order a needed part. We plan to hold another Clean Up Day in the Spring – everyone is welcome!!

BARN LEASE RENEWED

Did you know that while MLM owns the physical structure that is the Barn, we lease the land it sits on from the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA)? The Board has just finalized signed a renewed 5-year lease that will continue last through 12/31/2027.

NEXT MLM BOARD MEETING...

Tuesday, February 7th 6:00 PM
Location: Wayzata Public Library
(620 Rice Street East)

*Need an Escape from
Shoveling?*

Come visit MLM at the



**Thursday, January 19th through
Sunday, January 22nd**

Mpls Convention Center

Be sure to stop by...

You can find MLM at the Vintage Boat Collection!



GRANT PROPOSALS

Importantly, a plan has now been formulated to fund several hull maintenance projects through a series of preservation grants. In addition to removing the flaking antifouling paint below the waterline and then applying new caulk and paint, we also need to replace five ribs in the forward section of the hull and two planks at the stern. Altogether, this work has a price tag of nearly \$60,000. While we have the funds, *Minnehaha's* NRHP listing now enables us to apply for preservation grants to cover some of these maintenance expenses, thereby allowing us to focus our existing cash holdings on work related to a new launch site. Board member Liz Vandam is now leading efforts that should fund nearly 94% of this work from external sources! The initial phase will be to strip the hull of the old paint which should happen in early to mid-May. As quickly as that work is completed, the hull will be re-caulked and repainted. The final step of fixing the ribs/planks will be the focus of a "large grant" that are processed only once a year. That work should be able to start in January 2024 with completion by Spring. A special shout out to Liz for all her efforts to make this process a reality!!

Have You Renewed Your Membership For 2023?

Your membership dues help us keep the barn heated and the boat insured. To renew, simply MAIL your membership statement along with payment to MLM, P.O. Box 178, Excelsior, MN 55331, OR you can renew your membership ONLINE by using a credit card at

<https://www.steamboatminnehaha.org/membership/>

(note: fees apply)

Of course, we gladly encourage new members to join too!!

Act now to get Aboard before your membership expires!

Mark Berno
Brad Blasing
David Brostrom
Jeff Cotter
Tom Dries
Stephen Eckman
Cameron Guthrie
Bob Hagstrom
Lindsay Hannah
Joanie Holst
Aaron Issacs
Nany & Guy Jackson
Richard Jenkins
Keith Knutson
Randy Locke
John Malakowsky
Joseph Mangan

Paul Maravelas
Jill McCarthy
Tom McCarthy
Scott McGinnis
Todd McGonagle
Jack McMullin
Susan Paulson
Charles Rud
Curtis Schiebel
Robert Schulz, II
Robert Torkelson
Charles Tschida
James Vair
Jim Vaitkunas
Elizabeth Vandam
Amy Vermeer
Terry Warner

RECENT DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM...

Anonymous
John W. Anderson
Mike & Ruth Bash Family Fund
Mark Berno
Lynn Brokke
David Brostrom
Brad Buxton
Richard Carter
Jeff Cotter
Linc Deter
Ian Ellis
Kathryn Dumas
Michael Goertel
Kevin Holtberg (PRV rebuild kit)
Keith Knutson
Elaine & Norman Larson
Charitable Giving Trust

Darel Leibold
Meredith Low
Erin Martin
Jill McCarthy
Tom & Darlene McCarthy
Scott McGinnis
Todd McGonagle
John McMillan
William Nesheim
John A. Palmer
Dave Peterson
Bill Rissmann
Curtis Schiebel
Larry Sharpe
Elizabeth Stevens
Stan Straley
Elizabeth Vandam

MEMORIALS / HONORARIUMS:

John & Maureen Drewitz, in memory of John Sechser
John Malakowsky, in memory of Mohawk Class Reunions
John Woodburn & Family, in memory of Bob Woodburn
The Minnetonka Lions Club, in memory of Kermit Stake

Memberships & donations listed were received
between October 1st & December 31st, 2022



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.

Published by THE MUSEUM OF LAKE MINNETONKA

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MLM BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 2022-3 OFFICERS:

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