



OCT - DEC 2025
Volume 2, Number 4

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Lake Minnetonka Historical Society

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The Excelsior Amusement Park

How the Fun Began 100 Years Ago

By Greg Van Gompel

In the 1920s, the Twin Cities' outdoor amusement industry was quite stagnant. Both Lake Minnetonka's Big Island and Minneapolis' Wonderland amusement parks had closed. The Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway Company had a solid attraction on the far east end of its trolley line in Wildwood Amusement Park on White Bear Lake, but was lacking some type of traffic generator for the west end of its line at Lake Minnetonka. Back then, trolley and railway companies throughout the country were busy transporting people to work during the week. They were looking to provide reasons for people to use their services on weekends to help offset the flat rate they paid for electricity each month. Most often some form of natural attraction or entertainment was used to entice riders to use the trolleys, and those amusement parks that could be accessed by a trolley line became

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LAKE MINNETONKA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Our Mission

Telling the story of Lake Minnetonka by collecting, preserving and sharing its history.

Who We Are

Founded in 2023 through the consolidation of the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, Museum of Lake Minnetonka, Wayzata Historical Society and Westonka Historical Society, our all-volunteer, nonprofit organization maintains one of the largest archival and three-dimensional collections of Lake Minnetonka history available in-person or online.

What We Do

We share the lake's history in our Research Archives in Wayzata and Museums in Excelsior, Mound, and Wayzata, as well as through a variety of public programs and experiences around the lake.

The Society publishes and sells a number of books about the history of the area, and we are committed to returning our historic 1906 streetcar boat *Minnehaha* to active operation on Lake Minnetonka to continue her life as a floating museum.

Lake Minnetonka Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

Board of Directors

Lisa Stevens, President
Sue Sorrentino, Vice President
Tom McCarthy, Treasurer
Liz Vandam, Secretary
Sarah Dibble
Joanie Holst
Jeff Magnuson
Mollie Nygaard
Sharon Provost
John Roth
Tom Skramstad

The Giving Season is Upon Us

Give to LMHS!

As we enter the season of giving, we hope you'll remember LMHS by renewing your membership and making a year-end gift as well! There are lots of ways to give:

LMHS Membership: If you've received a Membership Renewal Letter or email, please renew your membership today. And please consider increasing your membership to the next level to help us reach the next level! Not a Member yet? Join now at LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org/membership.

Give to the Max Day! Give online during Minnesota's Giving Holiday November 20th. Support LMHS at: GiveMN.org/organization/LMHS



2025 LMHS Annual Campaign: While annual memberships fund our mission and give members benefits like discounts on our history cruise tickets, voting privileges, and more, we hope you'll also support us with a generous year-end contribution when you receive our annual campaign mailing this fall.

And yes, you can still give the historic way!

Send a check to:

Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, P.O. Box 672, Wayzata, MN 55391.

Lake Minnetonka Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Don't know your membership status or giving history or have other questions?

Contact us at info@LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org or 952-474-2115.

Give LMHS to Others!

Gift Memberships:

lakeminnetonkahistory.org/store/p32/Gift_Membership

Donate in honor of a history-lover:

lakeminnetonkahistory.org/store/p76/Contribution

Pick up some local history-themed books or gift items at:

- One of our Museums: lakeminnetonkahistory.org/museums
- Our Research Archives: lakeminnetonkahistory.org/research-archives
- Our Online Store: lakeminnetonkahistory.org/store/c1/Featured_Products
- Light Up the Lake in Wayzata, November 21 (see page 4)
- Gillespie Center Holiday Boutique in Mound, December 1-6: gillespiecenter.org or tinyurl.com/y8duv8da

LMHS Welcomes New Board Members

The Lake Minnetonka Historical Society membership elected four new Board members at the LMHS Annual Membership Meeting on September 25, 2025. The new Board members have staggered terms, and will join Joanie Holst, Jeff Magnuson, Tom McCarthy, Sharon Provost, Sue Sorrentino, Lisa Stevens, and Liz Vandam, whose terms end in 2026. Please help us welcome our new Board members when you see them at our museums and events!



Sarah Dibble

(Term ends 2026)

Sarah was born and raised near Lake Minnetonka and has held a passion for its history from a very young age. She started volunteering for LMHS in the spring of 2024 and enjoyed being able to share her knowledge with the public while

hosting in LMHS' museums. Serving on LMHS' Collections Committee has been a great way for her to learn even more about our local history. In her spare time, Sarah enjoys crafting, baking and spending time with her family, friends and dogs. She is excited to continue volunteering in more capacities to help tell the story of Lake Minnetonka.

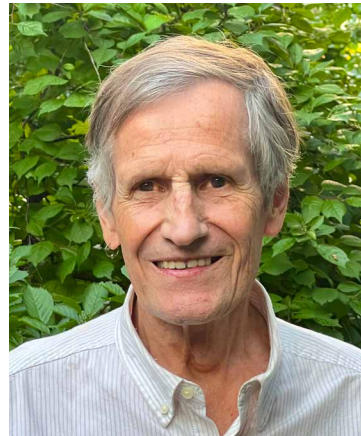


Mollie Nygaard

(Term ends 2028)

Mollie is a local real estate agent/small business owner who lives in Mound with her husband, two sons and German Shepherd. She has a deep appreciation for the Lake Minnetonka area's history, architecture, and community heritage and has been

an active participant within LMHS as a museum host, Art on the Lake booth volunteer, assisting with the quarterly newsletter and general graphic design work. Mollie brings a strong background in genealogical research, historic property advocacy, and local engagement to the LMHS. Her professional expertise in real estate, coupled with her passion for preservation and storytelling, drew her to serve on the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society Board of Directors.



John Roth

(Term ends 2027)

John grew up in Deephaven and loved sailing and cross-country skiing on Lake Minnetonka. He graduated from Minnetonka High School and earned a law degree at the University of Minnesota. John

is an attorney specializing in arts, entertainment, and publishing law. He has also been involved with numerous environmental and land protection matters, securing the permanent protection of thousands of acres of land in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Throughout his career, John has established and managed the ongoing legal work for numerous non-profit organizations. He co-founded and/or served on the Board of Directors (usually as President and Chair) for Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, the Voyageurs National Park Association, Highpoint Center for Printmaking, the Erroll Garner Jazz Project and Foundation, and Concerts for the Environment, among others. For many years John was an assistant professor at St. Mary's University where he taught Master's Degree courses on legal and ethical Issues for nonprofit arts organizations.



Tom Skramstad

(Term ends 2027)

Tom has lived in the Lake Minnetonka area almost all of his life. He served on the planning commission for the City of Shorewood, who then selected him to serve as their representative on the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District.

He represented Shorewood's interests on the LMCD—and on various of the LMCD's committees—for 17 years, including four years as the Board Chair. From 1993 through 2024 he was a volunteer in the Citizen's Lake Monitoring Program (CLMP); collecting environmental information (such as water clarity) about waterbodies. He served as a special deputy on the Sheriff's Water Patrol for several years and has been active in the annual calling of "ice out" on Lake Minnetonka.

A History of the Excelsior Amusement Park

with Greg Van Gompel

Monday, November 10, 7:00 pm

Excelsior Brewing Company
421 Third Street, Excelsior

Free registration requested at
eap100.eventbrite.com

Learn about this iconic “trolley park” which opened 100 years ago and made memories until 1973! Join amusement park historian Greg Van Gompel on a journey through the history of the Excelsior Amusement Park, from 1925–1973. You may learn things about this famous park that you didn’t know, re-learn things you thought you knew, and relive some memories!



Make reservations today! Capacity is limited and seating is first-come, first-served.

Light Up the Lake

Friday, November 21, 4:30-6:30 pm

Wayzata Depot Museum
402 Lake Street East, Wayzata

Free! Learn more at tinyurl.com/59fcfyrn

Wayzata’s annual Light Up the Lake celebration kicks off the holiday season with horse-drawn wagon rides, reindeer, music, a town lighting ceremony, and the spectacular parade of lights.

Make sure you drop by the Wayzata Depot Museum during Light Up the Lake for cider, treats, a children’s activity, and a little Christmas shopping.



Want to be the first in line to sign up for our events?

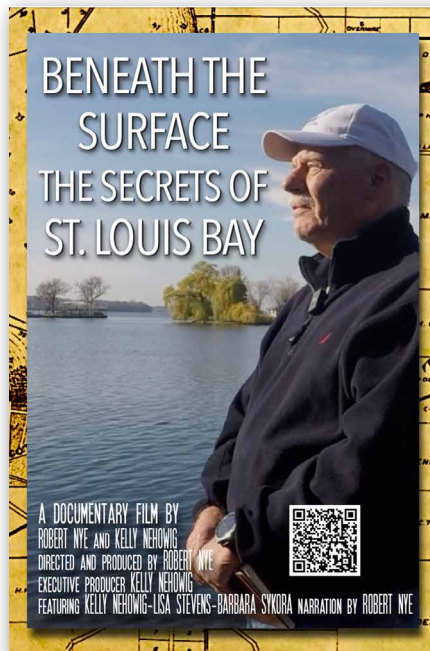
- Join as a member at LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org and opt-in for email communications.
- Follow us on eventbrite at tinyurl.com/aj6rbn6x for immediate notice of tickets going on sale and registration openings.
- Or, learn more about us by subscribing to our emails at tinyurl.com/2s3svnfd.

Beneath the Surface—The Secrets of St. Louis Bay

By Robert Nye

A locally produced 23-minute documentary film on the history of Deephaven's St. Louis Bay is broadcasting on the Minnesota Channel of TPT, the Twin Cities PBS affiliate on November 6. The film, titled *Beneath the Surface—The Secrets of St. Louis Bay*, was produced by local filmmaker, Robert Nye and underwater explorer, Kelly Nehowig.

The film explores the fascinating, sometimes tragic, and little-known history of those responsible for the development of this portion of the lake, including the first large resort hotel on Minnetonka. The film features interviews with LMHS President, Lisa Stevens, and Lake Minnetonka historian, Barbara Sykora, as well as Nehowig who describes the lake bottom



explorations in St. Louis Bay. Many rare historical photos as well as recent underwater wreckage footage bring the late 1800s story to life.

Director and Producer Nye is a Twin Cities native and, as a retired executive of Holiday Companies, has returned to his love of independent filmmaking. Nehowig, also a native of the area, has dived St. Louis Bay over 100 times. He is Chairman of Trident Sciences, a company specializing in marine exploration and underwater technology. He serves as an adjunct advisor to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

For a broadcast schedule of *Beneath the Surface—The Secrets of St. Louis Bay* visit tinyurl.com/4bp7k4dc or view it free on demand at tinyurl.com/y3kud7vf.

Opening the 1976 Westonka High School Time Capsule

By LMHS Board Member Jeff Magnuson

On August 28th, 2025, Dr. Pam Meyers and Jeff Magnuson represented the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society at the opening of a time capsule that had been buried in 1976 in the courtyard of Westonka High School, Minnetrista. Also in attendance were school staff, school board members, and several students. The decision to remove the capsule long before its intended removal in 2076 was prompted by construction work for the high school's renovation project. In addition to school-related things like class assignments, student ID's, etc., there were also books, magazines, phone books, newspapers, and miscellany from the 1970's and earlier. 3-D objects included some rusty Tonka Toys and a pair of shoes belonging to a

former school counselor. Of historical interest, items related to local businesses and organizations, as well as several family biographies, were included.



Some things were too damaged by moisture to be salvaged and were discarded. Others were saved and set aside to be dried out, inventoried and photographed. Some of the more interesting artifacts were put on display at the Homecoming Alumni Breakfast on October 3rd. The school will hold back select pieces to be displayed and then placed in a new time capsule to be buried after completion of the school building renovation. The LMHS Collections Committee will have an opportunity to assess remaining items for the society's permanent collection. ▲

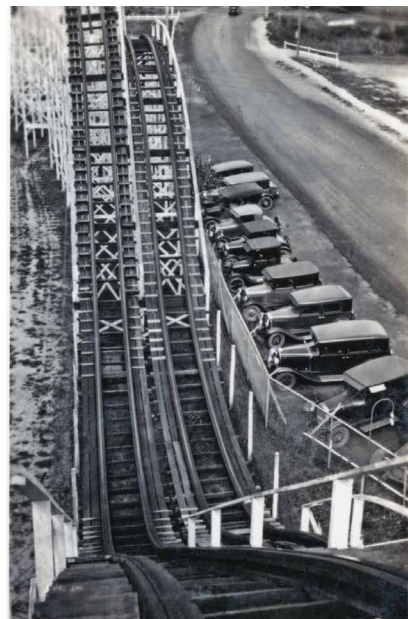


A dredging boat works on the Excelsior Amusement Park site near the roller coaster, looking east, ca. 1924–1925

Amusement Park continued from page 1

known as “trolley parks.” A few of these parks still exist today, such as Seabreeze Park in Rochester, New York and Kennywood Park in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.

By 1920, Minneapolis was the 18th largest city in the United States. Fred Pearce, a veteran in the outdoor amusement industry at that time, was well aware of the lack of amusement parks to entertain the more than half a million residents of the western Twin Cities. Pearce began discussions with The Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway Company to build a park in Excelsior near the end of its western line, where he could utilize the swampland on the far east end of the parcel. At the same time, Pearce was discussing the possibility of managing the Railway’s Wildwood Park and building a new roller coaster for each park. In September 1924, the village of Excelsior approved the proposed plan for the parcel at the south end of Excelsior Bay and work on the roller coasters started shortly afterward. To maximize the Excelsior parcel,



Excelsior Amusement Park roller coaster, looking east on Excelsior Blvd., ca. 1935

Pearce decided to build its roller coaster as well as some of its large buildings through the existing swamp. Pilings were driven into the swamp to insure a solid foundation and dirt was filled in around the pilings. By repurposing some of the existing buildings on the site, including converting the Excelsior Dock Station (originally used for Big Island Park ferries and later streetcar boats) into a restaurant and

Dodgem car building, Pearce was able to complete construction of the park during the winter and spring of 1925, allowing it to open in May.

While many of its contemporaries struggled and folded during the Great Depression, including Wildwood, the solid management team that Fred Pearce had in place from 1930 until

the late 1950s at Excelsior Amusement Park allowed it to succeed and thrive. They brought in free acts to entertain the crowds, while minimizing their costs by setting up revenue-sharing agreements with the entertainment. They also hired well-known musical acts for the ballroom, later known as “Danceland.” Since the park opened with many recent thrilling rides, they did not have to change out any antiquated rides when funds were at a premium. They embraced some of the newer technology like live weekly radio shows from the park as well as appearances by national television stars to effectively market



Children’s TV performer Clellan Card as Axel Torgeson in “Custer Car” hot rod ride, 1960

Excelsior Park to the Twin Cities and surrounding communities. Later they signed an agreement to host the Miss Minnesota Pageant in the park as counter-programming to the State Fair. Park management also was blessed that some of their contestants placed well in the Miss America national event, with one winning the Miss America title. They also had the park host an annual visit by statewide newspaper carriers together with many annual company picnics of some of the biggest companies in the Twin



of the amusement industry.

By creating an environment that was cute, different, refreshing and incorporating touches of things visitors saw in the movies and on their television sets, visitors stayed in Disneyland much longer to see all the art, sculptures and buildings at the park. And because people stayed longer, they spent more money at the park as well. The first year that Disneyland was open, it generated four times more income per person than most of the successful amusement parks and by its second year, the number was six times more. The industry was astonished at Disneyland's success and soon operators began looking for ways to increase length of stay at their facilities.

In the 1960s the success of Six Flags Over Texas and its sister parks, Six Flags Mid-America and Six Flags Over Georgia, provided operators with a blueprint to capitalize on some of Disneyland's qualities. But those qualities would be hard to incorporate into the Excelsior Amusement Park. The park's location on the lakefront and so close to downtown, landlocked it, confining the active park space to 17 acres. While that fact alone was not a complete problem, remember that the initial property on which the park was built was swampland. Pilings were used for the coaster and some large buildings, and the swampland was filled with silt excavated from the bottom of the lake. It would be expensive to build rides up in the air or down through the ground in the east end of the park. With this fact in mind, any new rides that the park might acquire would surely have to replace current rides. The park was built as a trolley park, and its acquisition of parking spaces was erratic at best during the years it operated. By the 1960s it became difficult for the park to acquire acres of land for the space needed to accommodate a large number of

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Cities. And they quickly recognized the Kiddieland trend of providing separate amusement areas specifically designed for the children of new couples after World War II.

Disneyland

What they nor anyone else in the amusement industry could foresee was the phenomenal success of the new theme park built by movie man Walt Disney. When Disney representatives met with top amusement industry operators, the operators predicted that Disney would fail in his park business. Proven money making rides like a roller coaster and Tunnel of Love were missing from the initial map. The custom rides they envisioned would be expensive to build and wouldn't be reliable. The fancy touches like a castle and a pirate's ship were cute, but would not produce revenue and would be expensive to maintain. Disney was told that it was impossible to operate a park year-round and that its single entrance would create a bottleneck for patrons entering and exiting the park. But Disneyland re-wrote the economics



Excelsior Amusement Park carousel, built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company, ca. 1925

Huber Funeral Homes Celebrate 75 Years in Excelsior

By LMHS Board Member Joanie Holst

Seventy-five years. Three locations. Twelve dedicated employees. Over 10,250 funeral services performed. These are impressive statistics, but mostly, they tell the story of Excelsior's longest continuously operating commercial business helping local families get through trying times.



John and Patricia Huber family, Paul Huber upper right, 1982

John Huber and his wife Patricia arrived in Excelsior in 1950 and opened a business that remains active today. John had just graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mortuary Science. The business is, of course, Huber Funeral Home and Cremation Services. This year they celebrate 75 years as a family owned and operated company that has respectfully served the entire Lake Minnetonka community for all these years.

Since his graduation, John had been ready to start his own business and was looking for a location. Coincidentally, friends in the industry told him that



Former William Morse house with Huber sign, ca. 1950s

Bardwell Funeral Service in Excelsior was phasing out of the business as the longtime owner, Elmer Bardwell had recently passed away. So, Excelsior provided the perfect opportunity for John to begin his dream of a small-town, community-minded funeral home.

Huber Funeral Home began with the purchase of an older home at 520 Second Street, that had been built in 1884 by long-time Excelsior resident William Morse. Huber and his family lived in the second and third stories of the house while he ran Huber Funeral Home out of the first level of the house. Huber was proud to provide a full service funeral business for Excelsior, as the Bardwell Funeral Service Company had not been full service. Bardwell had an office in a house located just down Second Street from Huber's location, which in later years became the home of Antiquity Rose. Bardwell had the embalming process done in Minneapolis and funeral services were held in various local churches or chapels

As a full-service operator, Huber conducted all the phases of the business at this location. The space with the bay window was used as the chapel. In 1957 the porch was removed from the front of the house, the hill was flattened, and an addition was added to the front of the building. This addition has remained the current front and side entrances.

According to John's son Paul, the current owner and operator of the business, the values upon which his father established the business seventy-five years ago also remain in place today: caring, compassion, kindness, thoughtfulness and respect. Through the years the success of his business allowed John to expand and later add additional locations in Mound (1983) and Eden Prairie (1994). Paul joined the business in 1981 and purchased the business with all three locations in 1989.

When asked what sets "Huber's" (as it is fondly referred) apart from other funeral service businesses, Paul was quick to answer. They continue to follow the system his father put in place that serves to create a personal touch and caring connection between the business and



Huber Funeral Homes, Excelsior, October 2025

the family it is serving. The same individual funeral director serves the family from the beginning, when the first phone call is made, all the way through the journey to the service and burial. Establishing this continuity has always been and continues today to be important to Huber Funeral Homes.

John was also very active within the Excelsior community. He was part of both the Excelsior Rotary and Chamber of Commerce and was named the Chamber's Person of the Year in 1980. In 2024 Paul was awarded that same honor. As we have been seeing: "Like father, like son."

Although there have been a tremendous number of changes and developments through the last 75 years within the funeral industry, there is one thing that has not changed, and one thing we can still count on—the care that Huber's provides. Paul is proud to continue to carry on his father's legacy, leading with concern and compassion as they provide ministry during one of life's most difficult journeys.

Congratulations Paul and everyone at Huber's for 75 years of unforgettable service to Excelsior and the Lake Minnetonka area. ▲

Amusement Park *continued from page 7*

automobiles or to expand its footprint.

In August 1971, the Excelsior City Council ordered a sewer improvement project that included the Danceland and park properties. Not only were the improvements going to be costly, but they would greatly interrupt the operation of the park. This sewer assessment was in addition to the steadily increasing tax assessment on lakefront property. A feasibility study Fred Pearce Jr. commissioned shortly after these assessments were made on the park parcels confirmed for him that, while the park was profitable at that time, the per capita spending couldn't be significantly increased and that the lakefront property would be more valuable as developed property than as a going concern.

The Pearce family decided toward the end of the 1972 season to announce that the park would close after the 1973 season. Dismantling of the park began in May 1974 and an auction of the park's assets was held in July. The park's roller coaster was completely demolished and, contrary to local legend, was never erected at Shakopee's Valleyfair. While Fred Pearce Jr. became a shareholder of Valleyfair, the management team at Valleyfair did not want any Excelsior Amusement Park concessions and bought only a few of Excelsior's rides, such as the Carousel, Flying Skooters, Scrambler and some kiddie rides. Shortly thereafter, development of the Excelsior Amusement Park land began with the building of condominiums and restaurants, leaving millions of former park patrons with only memories to share with their children and grandchildren to this day.

Learn more about this unique period in Excelsior's history at Greg Van Gompel's presentation about Excelsior Amusement Park at Excelsior Brewing Co. on November 10, and bring your memories to share! See page 4 for more information. ▲

Steamboat *Minnehaha* Update

By LMHS Board Member Tom McCarthy

As presented at our Annual Membership Meeting in September, our efforts to secure a permanent home for the 1906 streetcar steamboat *Minnehaha* continue to move forward. Our goal is to ensure that *Minnehaha*, now in ship-shape condition thanks to our dedicated volunteers and a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Legacy Grant, will have a sustainable



launch site and winter storage building on Lake Minnetonka in the near future.

The launch site used from 1996–2019 is slated for redevelopment and is therefore no longer a long-term option. After an extensive review of 17 locations around Lake Minnetonka, we are working with Three Rivers Park District to explore leasing a

site in Lake Minnetonka Regional Park in Minnetrista. We have engaged WSB, a Minneapolis engineering and design consulting firm, to determine the feasibility and projected cost of using that location for this purpose. Obviously, much remains to be accomplished before this vision becomes a reality, but rest assured that we're proceeding at full steam ahead!

What can you do to help get *Minnehaha* into a sustainable, long-term launch facility and back in service? Help us offset the substantial cost of exploring solutions and housing the boat until she can earn her keep!

What can you do to help get *Minnehaha* into a sustainable, long-term launch facility and back in service? Help us offset the substantial cost of exploring solutions and housing the boat until she can earn her keep!

- Become a Member of LMHS at LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org/membership
- Watch for our upcoming Annual Campaign letter in the mail or give now at LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org/contribute

For more information about this historic initiative, please contact us at info@LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org. We'll keep you posted on our progress. ▲



Volunteers Mark Sloan and Ed Lethert hard at work on the layout, 2025

LMHS' Wayzata Depot Garden Railroad

Updates and Upgrades

By Garden Railroad Volunteers Ed Lethert and Paul Macek

LMHS' Wayzata Depot Garden Railroad continues to be a very popular destination for families and visitors of all ages. Recently our dedicated volunteers have made a number of improvements to structures, landscaping and track.

Landscaping has been upgraded and new plants have been installed around the garden perimeter, requiring considerably less maintenance throughout the season.

Ed Lethert innovated video recording from the trains for a real train's-eye-view! He constructed a small flat-bed train car with a mounting device for holding mobile phones. This allows recording an on-board ride experience. The device has since been improved, is a terrific addition and has been very popular with children, parents and grandparents. You can experience a brief "ride" for yourself at tinyurl.com/yezmr2ud.

In an attempt to address the "finger derailment" issue, the volunteers have installed green duct tape around the perimeter of the layout. This gives parents a reference point for managing their children and volunteers hear "Stay behind the green line!" on almost a continuous basis. Parents have indicated that they really appreciate this approach. It also relieves some of the oversight burden from the volunteers.

Several building additions and upgrades to existing structures were done during the past year. The Wayzata Depot model

was totally restored to better survive in the outdoor conditions, a new bridge and associated trestle work was installed on the upper loop, and some new buildings were added to the layout.

New track on the lower loop was installed this Fall to replace the original 25-year-old track which was essentially worn out. The new track is more robust and should provide years of reliable service. It is expected that the upper loop track will be replaced next year.

And last but not least, a group has convened to develop a plan to redesign the Garden Railroad layout to tell the story of Lake Minnetonka, aligning it with LMHS' mission. The goal is to use the Garden Railroad to interpret the history of the communities around the lake, all of which were connected by rail in one way or another, using Garden Railroad scale "exhibits." We expect a plan to be developed during the Fall/Winter.

It is both encouraging and exciting to see the high level of support for ongoing improvements to the Garden Railroad. We continue to recruit new volunteers and are looking forward to a continued and improved experience for all who visit in the future.

Annual Second Grade Excelsior Museum Field Trip

LMHS was thrilled to once again host 140 Excelsior Elementary School second-graders at our Excelsior Museum September 24. Students were treated to a Minnesota Streetcar Museum trolley ride and museum tour, as well as a tour through our Excelsior Museum with volunteer Kirsten Pardoe. The Excelsior Amusement Park continues to delight just as it has for the past 100 years.

Second-graders enjoying the funhouse mirror from the Excelsior Amusement Park



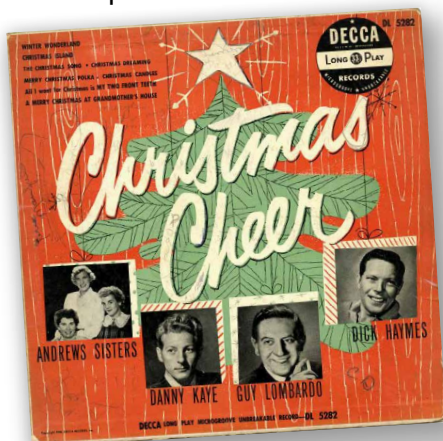


Add a Museum Visit to Your Winter Schedule!

Our Excelsior Museum is now closed for the season, but our Wayzata Depot Museum is open through the end of the year, and our Westonka Museum in Mound is open year round. See our Museum Hours at LakeMinnetonkaHistory.org/museums.

We can't keep our museums open without volunteer hosts! Give the gift of time to LMHS and sign up to volunteer to host at the Wayzata or Mound museums at tinyurl.com/4msehcu2. A customized training for new Westonka Museum hosts will be held on Saturday, November 15, 9:45 am to Noon, with board member Jeff Magnuson.

Whether you visit or host, enjoy the warm holiday charm of the decorated Wayzata Depot Museum and the Andrews Sisters' "J-J-J-jingle Bells" at the Westonka Museum for some seasonal spirit!



Leaving a Legacy through Planned Giving

We understand that many of our dedicated supporters have a long history of charitable giving to the history organizations that previously served our community: Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, Museum of Lake Minnetonka, Wayzata Historical Society, and Westonka Historical Society. Now that these esteemed organizations have consolidated to form the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society and have subsequently dissolved their individual entities, it is crucial to update your estate planning documents.

To avoid any confusion or inconvenience for your loved ones and for LMHS in the future, we kindly request that you name Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, a 501(3)(c) tax-exempt organization, as a beneficiary in your will, trust, or other estate planning instruments. Many of our generous supporters have already taken this important step, but we believe it's worth a gentle reminder to ensure everyone has the opportunity to make this adjustment.

Ways to Give

We welcome a variety of charitable bequests, each offering unique benefits for both you and LMHS, including:

Bequests through Wills: A simple provision in your will can designate a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, or residual assets as a gift to the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society.

Securities: Gifts of appreciated securities can provide significant tax advantages, as you may avoid capital gains taxes while receiving a charitable deduction.

Retirement Account Beneficiary Designations: Naming LMHS as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), 403(b), or other retirement accounts can offer substantial tax benefits, as these assets may be subject to income and estate taxes if left to individual heirs.

Donor Advised Funds (DAF): If you have an existing Donor Advised Fund, you can make grants from your DAF to LMHS.

Trusts: You can establish various types of trusts, such as a charitable remainder trust or a charitable lead trust, that can provide income to you or your loved ones for a period of time, with the remainder benefiting LMHS.

Life Insurance Policies: You can name LMHS as a beneficiary of an existing life insurance policy or transfer ownership of a paid-up policy directly to us.

These gifts, regardless of their form, are powerful expressions of your commitment to preserving the rich heritage of Lake Minnetonka. They will serve as a lasting legacy, sustaining our efforts for generations to come and ensuring that future residents and visitors can connect with the stories and artifacts that define our vibrant past. We encourage you to consult with your financial advisor or attorney to determine the best planned giving option for your individual circumstances and philanthropic goals. ▲

VISIT OUR MUSEUMS



Excelsior Museum

305 Water Street, Excelsior
Closed for the Season



Wayzata Depot Museum & Garden Railroad

402 Lake Street E, Wayzata
Open Noon-4pm, Saturdays through
December

Garden Railroad

Closed for the Season



Westonka Museum

Centennial Building
5341 Maywood Road, Mound
Open Saturdays, 10 am–2 pm



Research Archives

Wayzata Library, Lower Level
620 Rice Street E, Wayzata
Open Wednesdays, Noon–3 pm
Saturdays, 10 am–1 pm
[lakeminnetonkahistory.org/
research-archives](http://lakeminnetonkahistory.org/research-archives)

Sign up to be a Museum Host!

Free training provided!
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