

COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE



COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS



November, 2003

Minneapolis, Minnesota

KEEP THE STREETCARS ROLLING

- *Our Campaign for Como-Harriet fund raising program has made great progress*
- *So far we've received over \$115,000 in donated cash, pledges and materials*
- *Our Campaign goal is \$175,000*
- *Now is the time to make a generous personal pledge towards the Campaign*

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Masthead Photo: LRV down 5th Street! Hiawatha line LRV No. 105 in front of the Minneapolis City Hall being tested for clearances. No wire up here yet, but it won't be long!
Photo by John DeWitt

HOLIDAY PARTY AND CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

Wednesday, December 10th—7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Last August we held a great get-together in the Linden Hills car barn and shop to celebrate the great success we had up to that time with our **Campaign For Como-Harriet** fund raising program and to honor those Linden Hills shop volunteers who worked so hard on MTM's "mother car" No. 1300 over the 2002-2003 winter.

On Wednesday evening, **December 10th, from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM** we will hold another joint celebration. Normally each December we hold our annual holiday party at the car barn to celebrate the holidays and the end of another successful Como-Harriet season. In 2003 we will hold this annual event on December 10th, but in addition we will use this opportunity to celebrate the continuing success of the **Campaign For Como-Harriet** and especially to recognize all contributors to the Campaign.

Besides the normal dispensing and enjoyment of holiday fellowship and good cheer, we will also prominently display the **Campaign For Como-Harriet "Roll of Honor"** which will list the names of those MTM members and friends who have contributed to the Campaign through the date of the party. Right now this list is, of course, a work in progress as many of you have yet to be contacted regarding your pledge or donation to the Campaign. But by December 1st all of you will have been contacted and around December 9th we'll update the list with the latest names of donors and those who have made pledges and will have the list prominently displayed in the car barn for all to see.

So, please mark your calendars now and come join us for what should prove to be another milestone in the success Como-Harriet has enjoyed over these last 32 years. And, if you already donated or pledged to the **Campaign For Como-Harriet** we especially ask that you attend this event so you can be properly and publicly recognized.

CHRISTMAS SANTA TROLLEY HELP NEEDED

Bill Graham, Scott Heiderich, and I are busy planning the Christmas Santa Trolley, set for Saturdays November 29 and December 6, 13, and 20 from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. If you want to help with the planning or organization, please let me know (612-729-0442 or hamhoff@msn.com). We need the following help above and beyond foremen, operators, platform attendants, station agents, and ticket sellers:

- **Santa Claus or Mrs. Claus**, with red suit and white beard (Santa Claus only, please!). You should be reasonably jolly and be able to say "ho, ho, ho!" in a hearty voice. Must be good with kids. This is an affirmative action/equal opportunity position!
- **Elves**, with "elfish" outfit. We'll need

five or six elves each Saturday. You don't have to be small and don't be shy about pressing your kids or grandkids of appropriate ages into service! Duties include handing out treats on the streetcar and assisting Santa or Mrs. Claus.

- **Car barn hosts.** Purchase, set up, serve, clean up, store, and restock beverages and snacks.
- **Decorators.** The station and tent (inside and out) and the inside of the car barn and streetcars needs to be decorated. We'd also like to have some outside displays along the line. We also need someone to talk to our Queen Avenue South neighbors to

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THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE

Some of you may be wondering about now what all the hullabaloo is about the **Campaign For Como-Harriet**. Don't we have an annual fund raising program each year? Isn't my donation to that every year sufficient? Why are "they" asking for a larger donation this year and what's this about the three-year pledge? What's the big deal?

Well, here's the big deal. **Without good Track the long-term future of CHSL is in doubt.** Our track structure is the foundation, the bedrock upon which our historic collection of streetcars operate. Without good track we cannot operate nor can we accomplish our goals. Our current track is not good. The rails used to build the line in the early 1970s was junk when we bought it but at the time it was the only rail we could afford. The rail came from yard trackage in the Midway section of St. Paul and was in terrible shape—the track hadn't seen maintenance in many years and the rails were really beat down at the joints. Being an all volunteer group trying to build a streetcar line on a shoestring budget meant having to make do with what we could get. So we did. And we've operated for 32 continuous years on that bad rail.

Over the years we maintained the track as best we could but it was a losing battle. In the mid 1990s we put in gauge-bars and close to 600 new ties throughout most of the line to ensure that the rails would remain upright and that we would not derail. We even spent \$15,000 to completely raise and tamp the track along the archery range curve. Basically this was throwing good money af-

ter bad. The joints returned to their beat-down location and the track reverted to its rough condition in two years. The end result is that today we have a rough ride that is hard on our passengers and hard on our wood-bodied streetcars. With our current resources we simply cannot afford to rebuild our track. Did you know that up until 1996, DSR No. 78 used to operate weekly at Lake Harriet? Believe it or not we were forced to take this great streetcar out of service because the ride got to be so rough and the car swayed so badly that passengers heads were banging up against the window glass!

Luckily, the TEA-21 program came along with federal funds earmarked for groups like ours to help us preserve our Twin Cities and our nation's transportation heritage. We put in the grant paperwork and it was approved. That's the good news. The bad news is we need to raise at least \$175,000 in funds to match the federal funds and to pay for the engineering and pre-construction costs that the federal grant won't pay for.

So, what the point of all this? We need each and every friend and volunteer of CHSL to donate, or better yet, pledge a good amount over a three year period so we can accomplish this most important project. See the editorial below for more info on this. [Please, Please](#) help your Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Now is the time to ensure the future of your CHSL by making that generous pledge now. We ALL appreciate your generosity.

Jim Vaithunas—General Superintendent

THE Campaign For Como-Harriet GIVE EARLY, OFTEN AND OVER THREE YEARS!

Louis Hoffman—Senior Superintendent

As they used to say in my home town of Chicago on election day, vote early and often. That applies to **The Campaign for Como-Harriet** as well—except we like to say **give** early and often! If you haven't already done so, we'd also like to suggest that, in addition to whatever donation you've already made for 2003, you also pledge that amount for 2004 and 2005. Of course, we're assuming that all of our volunteers have made a donation already.

Giving early and often means "can you add another donation to increase your gift?" As we approach the two-thirds mark, perhaps you're thinking that additional gifts from the membership aren't needed. **Not true!**

- With the economy still in the doldrums, foundation assets aren't growing and foundation giving is down. We have yet to receive a foundation gift, although we're still in the running for several. What does this mean? We shouldn't assume that a major foundation gift is going to complete *The Campaign*. We're going to have to rely on ourselves.

- It's possible that our administrative, engineering, financing, and fundraising costs will exceed the \$65,000 estimate. It'd be nice to have a little "cushion" instead of hitting \$175,000 on the nose.
- Even if we end up with "extra" money, it's not that there aren't good uses for it – TCRT No. 1300, Wintonia No. 10, the Chalet Station, and Lowry Grove for starters. And then there's bringing city water into the car barn and installing a sprinkler system. Many of you heard of the devastating fire that completely destroyed one of two car barns and the eight streetcars inside of it at the National Capital Trolley Museum in suburban Washington, D.C. in late September.

Remember, all donations to the Museum are tax-deductible. Please send your donation to:

The Campaign for Como-Harriet
c/o Bayer's Hardware
4312 Upton Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55410

LINDEN HILLS SHOP UPDATE - Neil Hawes

The following is an update on the restoration work being done on TCRT "gate car" No. 1239 out at Excelsior.

- The Rear Steps are fully attached to the car.
- The Rear Gates are installed but now the actuation mechanism needs to be fabricated.
- The Rear bumper is complete.
- The Front bumper is complete including the hard rubber piece.
- The "people catcher" (fender) is complete and installed on the car and it needs to be painted.
- The Line Breaker has been remounted. It now needs functional testing.
- The Air Compressor is mounted and tested.
- The safety covers around the grid resistors are installed.
- The safety cover around the Line Breaker will be fabricated after testing of the Line Breaker.

Ken Albrecht and **Jim Willmore** will be working on the gate actuation mechanism through the winter. Neil and Keith will test the line breaker and determine if we need to build an arc chute or not.

The Tuesday crew, effective October 7th, will be working at Lake Harriet. Projects at Lake Harriet for the early part of the winter will be focused on TCRT No. 322. This work will include:

- Rebuild the front truck swing link and bearings.
- Change out the motor-generator set and install coupling diaphragms.
- Complete the HB LifeGuard installation.
- Secure farebox to prevent swiveling.
- Remove rear gong and polish parts.
- Work on the gear clamping of the shaft of the rear section of the front door.

Fargo & Moorhead St, Rwy. No. 28. This historic single truck Birney safety car is now safely tucked-away down in North Mankato where it will hibernate for the next few years. The fantastic crew that helped with the preparation on October 17th and the move on October 18th, included: **Bill Graham, Jim Willmore, Ken**

Albrecht, Bill Arends, Scott Heiderich, Mark Digre, Phil Settergren, Clark Hoffman and Jim Vaitkunas.

No. 28 was located on a farm about half-way between Wolverton and Barnesville, Minnesota (about 20 miles below Moorhead). The above crew congregated on the day prior to the move (Friday, 10/17) to strip all the extraneous wood away from the inside and outside car including the false roof. The crew also removed all glass from the car, some loose interior molding and all except one of the window frames. All the artifacts were properly marked and logged on a master list for reference when restoration of the car will begin. By mid-afternoon the car was completely cleaned out and we started jacking it up to get the car positioned for the next day's move. By the end of the day, the car was jacked up on the cribbing (the body was about 50 inches above the ground) so it would clear the trailer the following day.

Bright and early the next day (Saturday, 10/18), the flatbed trailer provided by R&R Contracting, a railroad builder located in Grand Forks, North Dakota arrived and in short order we lowered the body onto the trailer without mishap. After tie-down we were on the road at 10:00AM. Six-and-a-half hours later we pulled into the yard of Ken Albrecht and the car was safely off the trailer and close to the ground by 5:15 PM. Many thanks to all of the people who worked to prepare the car on Friday and who helped with the loading and off-loading of the car on Saturday and subsequent days.

Now, if you weren't able to give us physical help with the move of No. 28, we can still use your help. The bill for the move of No. 28 is \$500. So far we have only \$175 in the No. 28 fund so we're a little short. If you can send a check for \$25 or \$50 made payable to MTM that would be most appreciated. Send the check to Jim Vaitkunas at the address shown in the box located in the upper left hand corner of page 4 of this issue. We will be sending out a special photo supplement to this issue of the **COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS** in another week or so that will have photos of the move of No. 28.

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT WISH LIST

Now that operations are winding down for the season (with, of course, the exception of the Halloween Ghost Trolley and the Christmas Santa Trolley), I'm sure many of you will jam my phone line offering to help with these tasks on the General Services Department "wish list:"

- **Charles Barthold** has resigned as the Museum's merchandise manager and the Board has abolished the Merchandise Division. That means that we're

now responsible for all aspects of merchandise sales at the Linden Hills Station: purchasing, stocking, and inventory. **Dave French** and I have been keeping the shelves stocked but need someone to step forward to take on the role of merchandise manager. This involves deciding what to order, negotiating with vendors, keeping inventory, and stocking shelves.

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COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS IS A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER FOR THE VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS OF THE COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE, MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE **COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS** IS JANUARY 10, 2004.

PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO JIM VAITKUNAS AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

155 CHAPARRAL DR.,

APPLE VALLEY, MN 55124-9774

YOU CAN SEND INPUT OR INQUIRIES BY

E-MAIL TO: jvaitkunas@msn.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

November 29, Christmas Santa Trolley every day 12:30 PM until
December 6, 13 & 20 4:00 PM
December 10 Combined holiday party and Campaign For Como-Harriet Progress report and celebration

THIS JUST IN!

Preliminary ridership figures for our Halloween ghost trolley shows that we carried 2140 passengers the first three nights! This is very close to our all-time high of 2517 total passengers in 2000 for operations over four nights. Many thanks to all who helped out! And let's hope that this coming Friday night's ghost trolley is also successful!



Next Issue of the **COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS**

Remember that with the end of our regular operating season, the publication schedule of the **COMO-HARRIET CURRENTS** reverts to every other month or so. Next issue will be sent to you on or about January 20, 2004

NOVEMBER 2003 SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS

Included with this mailing is the November 2003 Schedule of Operations. If you see a vacancy on the schedule that needs filling please contact either Jim Vaitkunas or the Foreman for that shift. Please consider filling a vacancy—we need **YOU**.

If you would still like to volunteer to operate on a shift even though there is a full crew shown on the schedule of operations, please call the Foreman and talk

with him/her about it. We can especially use you on those busy weekend shifts. We feel sure that no Foreman would deny you the chance to help out on a shift, especially a weekend shift. So call and sign-up!

Remember that you must inform your Foreman of all substitutions or if you are forced to cancel your shift and **please** inform **both Foremen** if you swap shifts with someone.

(**SANTA TROLLEY HELP NEEDED** Continued from page 1)

encourage them to set up holiday decorations in their back yards.

- **Car Cleaners.** With the possibility that there'll be snow on the ground, we need car cleaners on duty to mop up in between and after trips (carbarn, station, and streetcars).
- **Set up and take down crew.** Some outside decorations and equipment will have to be put away Saturday afternoon and put back out the following Saturday morning. In addition, there's initial set up and final take down after December 20.
- **Master Carpenter.** We need to modify one of our work flat cars into an elves' hut, to be parked under the William Berry Parkway Bridge. It can be simple and will be a place for the elves to wait, out

of the wind, to board the streetcar coming from the Linden Hills Station.

- **Shovelers.** This is an on-call position in case the crossing and platform need to be shoveled out. You'd need to be available on an on-call basis to clean up after any snowfall.

This looks like a long list. In fact, it is a long list. But it's no more complicated than the Halloween Ghost Trolley—and it'll be fun and a nice break from all that pesky baking, cooking, and decorating at home as well as that always troublesome gift shopping. We need everyone's help— every Saturday if you can but only one if that's all the time you have. This is an important year-end fundraiser not only for the Traction Division but in this time of financial distress for the entire Museum. Please lend a hand.

(**GENERAL SERVICES WISH LIST** Continued from page 3)

- The Linden Hills Station needs some work. First, is anyone interested in replacing the window in the front door? Vandals have scratched it and it just needs to be replaced. Second, the inside needs to be painted. Third, the inside, before next May,

needs to be thoroughly cleaned from top to bottom, probably in conjunction with the painting work.

If you can help with either of these important projects please let me know. You can call me at 612-729-0442 or send an e-mail to me at hamhoff@msn.com.

Louis Hoffman—General Agent