



# Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec 2007

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

## Happy Holidays And Happy New Year!

- **A BIG thanks to each of you who helped with the ghost trolleys at both lines, the Holly trolley at CHSL and the Santa Trolley at ESL—GOOD JOB!**
- **Have a safe holiday season**
- **Visit our Museum store on our website to get those stocking stuffers**
- **Please join us on Wednesday, December 12th at the Isaacs carbarn for our annual holiday drop-in**
- **Take a look at our organization chart and consider filling one of the vacancies**

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**Masthead Photo:** The Holly Trolley returns in 2007! Here's Duluth St. Rwy. No. 265 doing the Holly Trolley honors in 2005. We skipped the Holly Trolley last season but we're doing it again this year, featuring the jolly, old elf, Santa Claus himself. The kids will love it!  
*(Jim Vaitkunas Photo)*

## CHSL Ghost Trolley A Success

Here's the bad news: this year's Ghost Trolley ridership was down. Here's the good news: this year's Ghost Trolley was fun for all and still very profitable. And the best news is the continuing enthusiasm and participation of our members. We had more-than-full crews, with several volunteers showing up all four nights. All together, about 40 of you were directly involved in making Ghost Trolley successful.

A few deserve extra kudos. **Scott Heiderich** was responsible for organizing the tent setup, and with the help of **Dave Irey** set out all the wooden barricades. Scott also did most of the post event pick up.

When not dressed as **The Count**, **Karl Jones** decorated the station. He's the guy who put all those little ghosts in the trees and carved our jack-o-lanterns. The pumpkins, by the way, were grown by **Ken Albrecht**. **John Kennedy** spent most of two days decorating our wooden cars. He was still sticking things up as the first night's crew pulled out of the barn.

**Keith Anderson**, **Jerry Olsen**, **Karl Jones**, and **Jim Willmore** were this year's Lead Foremen. **John Prestholdt**, who many didn't recognize in his "weird old man" mask, deposited our receipts promptly. And **Kathy Helde** spent each night hiding in her car, triggering the strobe lighting at the Park Board maintenance building.

As Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Wye, **Dave French** and **Mike Helde** performed their two act morality play brilliantly. Each spent many hours preparing for their roles -- organizing their costumes, props and makeup, and writing and rehearsing their lines. Mike again this year contributed the creepy graveyard props, arriving early each day to set them up. Dave also arrived early to light and set out part of his lantern collection. I contributed the inflatable Grim Reaper used at the tent entrance.

**Dave Irey** and **Jerry Olsen** share the Future Streetcar Operator Mentor Award for encouraging the participation of their grandsons, **James** and **Andy**. Both boys are frequent honorary crew members throughout the year.

This year was unusual in the fact that we didn't operate on Halloween night itself. Next year, Halloween falls on Friday, creating interesting scheduling questions. But whatever we decide, I'm confident we'll have no problems filling crews. Ghost Trolley is the kind of event that can only work when a volunteer organization completely supports it. Look what we can do when we work together.

**Rod Eaton, General Superintendent**



## Join Us at Our Annual MSM Holiday Drop-in.

We'll be holding our annual Holiday drop-in at the George Isaacs carbarn at Lake Harriet on Wednesday, December 12th starting at 7:00 PM. All members, their families and friends are invited to come and enjoy the fellowship, cider and other goodies. Please bring a treat to share and some canned goods for the local food shelves. This year's drop-in is again hosted by our hard-working shop volunteers. Thanks, guys!

## 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](http://www.trolleyride.org)

The museum's business address and telephone number is:

P.O. Box 14467, University Station  
Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467  
952-922-1096

### Streetcar **CURRENTS** November-December - 2007

Streetcar **CURRENTS** is a periodic newsletter for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is January 20, 2008.

Please send items to editor Jim Vaitkunas at the following address:

155 Chaparral Dr.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774  
You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)

## From the Front Platform

Jim Vaitkunas—Board Chair

### Why We need **YOU** as a Volunteer

(This month's column continues my "train of thought" with regards to volunteering with our Museum.)

If you take a look at our Museum's organization chart you'll see that we have quite a few vacancies. Most of these have been reported to you already in previous issues of this newsletter—we need volunteers to take the lead as: Chief Mechanical Officer; Linden Hills Stationmaster (or Stationmistress?); streetcar cleaning Foreperson at CHSL; etc.

And there are other important non-operating jobs that aren't listed on the chart but that are essential to keep our streetcars rolling. These jobs include volunteers on track maintenance crews at both railways, overhead trolley wire maintenance at both railways, assistant trainers and inspectors, and of course, work on streetcar maintenance or streetcar restoration. All these jobs are more than just necessary—they're vitally important to the well being of our Museum. If the overhead wire fails then no streetcar operations are possible. Same holds true for streetcar maintenance. You get the picture, I hope. We need **YOU** to help out in these areas if you're willing and able.

The time you can commit to one of these non-operational jobs will be up to you. If you can help on an overhead wire maintenance crew on a Saturday morning just once a month, that's OK. Let us know. If you can work twice a month on a Saturday morning that's even better. If you can schedule your volunteer time on a regular basis along with perhaps 2-3 others that's ideal. That way we can plan work and get the most "bang for the buck."

If you are asked sometime next spring to work on any of these critical work crews please say **YES**. If you'd like to take on one of the leadership positions shown as vacant on our organization chart (it's shown on our website) please call **Rod Eaton** and let him know you're ready to help out.

The success of our Museum requires more than just running streetcars and gaining revenue from our operations. Even though we are an all-volunteer Museum we are also a business and have to do those things that any business typically does and sometimes some extra stuff given our non-profit status. As the old saying goes, many hands make for quick (and easy)

work. So, as a New year's resolution why don't you make a commitment to doing one of these extra jobs that have made our Museum a success for the last thirty-six years.

You will note in **Rod Eaton's** column on page one of this newsletter that there are around a dozen people who did some extra work that made this year's ghost trolley a success. However, one name is obviously missing—and that is the name of **Rod Eaton**, the Museum's General Superintendent. So, let me tell you a little about Rod's work with this year's ghost trolley. Rod did a masterful job in planning and organizing this year's ghost trolley at Como-Harriet. You didn't notice Rod's involvement while it was being done, of course. In this case it's the end result that showed the hard work that Rod did in virtually all aspects of the 2007 ghost trolley. The ghost trolley is actually a pretty big deal to coordinate. While there are a lot of people who do the work, these people need leadership in their course of their work and that's what Rod provided very well from late August thru the end of the ghost trolley. Rod also did a lot of work himself especially making the "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Wye" promotional poster and flyer. Thanks, Rod for your dedication and hard work!



**MSM News & Views***Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent*

**N**ew Members. Since the last issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we gained 8 new members. A big welcome to the **Singer Family, James F. Foster, Diana Ubl, Merle Seils** (former TCRT streetcar Operator), **Christine Clayburg, Joseph Reuter**, and the **Colorado Railroad Museum** library. And a big **THANK YOU** to **John Neihart**, who joined MSM as a Lifetime Member. John is a friend and neighbor of **Earl Anderson** another former TCRT Motorman.

**A**nnual Appeal report. The 2007-2008 Annual Appeal kicked off recently. The goal: to complete the new fire suppression and security systems at both carbarns, protecting our priceless collection from the twin terrors of fire and vandalism. You may say, "How likely is fire or vandalism that it's worth spending this much money? After all, it's never happened in nearly forty years!" Not here it hasn't. But one of the National Capital Trolley Museum's carbarns, with eight streetcars, about half of their collection and including one streetcar just fully restored was destroyed by fire. And a major vandalism attack at the Wisconsin Trolley Museum happened just this year! True, it hasn't happened here. But is it a risk worth taking? Certainly, it's not a risk that your Board of Directors is comfortable taking. Hence, this continuing fund drive.

Installation of water and sewer service at the Isaacs Carbarn will happen in the spring. There's enough money in the Carbarn Security Fund to go ahead with the next phase of the project now, assuming that the early donations to the Annual Appeal will fill in the small gap between the Fund balance and the cost of the project. But to ensure that construction of the small machine building won't preclude possible carbarn improvements and expansions and to allow the permit and approval process to run its course, it was decided to defer the work until the spring to allow for conversations with the Park Board and with architects and engineers about what's possible in the limited amount of space available. Since the remainder of the work won't be until at least next spring, there seemed to be no sense in rushing the water and sewer work to completion as winter descends.

We need about \$40,000 to complete the job— installation of the fire suppression system and the new security system at the Isaacs Carbarn which includes the addition to the carbarn. That's a \$130 donation from every member. We know that not every member is in the position to make an \$130 donation, or any donation. But we know that many members are and are in

a position to make even larger ones. Your Board of Directors asks you to consider a donation of whatever amount you believe is within your means. Please remember that all donations to the Museum are tax-deductible under the IRS's Code.

Since the last issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we've received donations from **Shari Deblieck** in memory of **Harold Dalland, Mike (St. Paul) Miller, Barb Thoman** and **Chip Welling, Phil Settergren**, and the **Spiller L'Chaim Fund**.

**R**idership Update. Museum statistician and Como-Harriet Chief Cashier **John Prestholdt** reports the following statistics for Como-Harriet:

	Total	Paid	Trips	Charters
<b>May</b>	4,148	3,047	291	3
<b>June</b>	5,657	3,944	443	6
<b>July</b>	7,263	5,193	373	10
<b>August</b>	4,885	3,553	339	5
<b>September</b>	3,678	2,762	265	1
<b>October</b>	2,967	2,650	169	3
<b>Total</b>	28,598	21,149	1,880	28

We had a strong September. Despite the lovely fall colors along the glen line, Como-Harriet is a summer experience and ridership falls once school starts. Generally, business drops dramatically after Labor Day weekend. This year was no exception. But the month's numbers were buoyed by a strong Labor Day weekend and generally good weekend ridership. Ridership would have topped 4,000 had the last weekend not been a complete rain out.

**G**host Trolley Wrap-up. We didn't break any records this Halloween. Because Halloween was midweek, the decision was made to operate Thursday through Sunday, the traditional four-day run but not run on Halloween night itself. Thursday ridership was surprisingly low and Friday was good but not great because of the draw of the community Halloween party at nearby Linden Hills Community Center (note for next year: coordinate with community center staff to cross-promote!). A very strong Saturday and Sunday couldn't bring ridership up to record years. Still, ridership was strong and our cashiers made good bank deposits. The key to success was the wonderful *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Wye* routine of **Dave French** and **Mike Helde**, on whom the Museum should take out life insurance policies!

On tap for next year is the traditional schedule— Friday to Sunday and Halloween night, which falls on the following Friday. In 2008 we also plan to operate a

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Historian & Archive Update

Aaron Isaacs — Museum Archivist

**More MSM historic photos online.** The Minnesota Reflections website now features 232 additional historic photos from the MSM archive, plus ten historic promotional brochures for TCRT and Duluth-Superior Transit. That brings the total number of historic Minnesota streetcar and interurban items from MSM's archives on the website to 685. The new material includes color postcards, color slides and vintage advertisements. The brochures include Twin Cities Today, Wildwood Park and Big Island Park, as well as others of that vintage. To access them, go the [www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org) and click on Historic Photos.

**Twin Cities by Trolley nominated for award.** The new book *Twin Cities by Trolley*, authored by **John Diers** and **Aaron Isaacs** has been nominated for a Minnesota Book Award in the category of Minnesota non-fiction. The book awards are held annually and winners will be announced on April 12, 2008.

**Bruce Gustafson is our new EBay agent.** In response to the appeal in the last issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**, **Bruce Gustafson** has volunteered to be MSM's new EBay agent. Already an experienced EBay seller, Bruce will strive to convert surplus MSM items to cash. If you have items that might be worth selling (railroad models, books, photos, artifacts) please contact **Aaron Isaacs** 612-929-7066 or by e-mail to [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).

**Streetcar Negatives Donated.** Member **Gordon S.C. Bassett** has donated 74 negatives of Twin City streetcars in the 1940s and 50s.

**Twin City PCCs Sidelined in San Francisco.** You've probably heard that eleven of the ex-Twin City, ex-Newark PCC cars were purchased from New Jersey Transit by San Francisco Municipal (Muni) Railway for operation on the *F Embarcadero* line. All received a partial rehab that consisted mostly of body work. Each is painted in the color scheme of a different city that ran the streamlined PCCs, including Minneapolis-St. Paul. All were delivered over the summer, but soon were removed from service due to multiple wiring failures. We gleaned this intelligence from the newsletter of the Market Street Railway, the volunteer organization that functions as a "friends" group to Muni. The rehab contract did not include wiring. Reportedly it is so deteriorated that parts of it crumble when handled. This is no surprise to our volunteers who worked on No. 322, which had major work done to its wiring. Muni is deciding what to do next.

**More Streetcar Artifacts Donated.** Streetcar materials from the collection of Joseph Zalusky are now part of the MSM archive, thanks to **Michael E. Miller**, who received them several years ago when he was MTM Chair. There are several scrapbooks of vintage transfers and other TCRT paperwork, reports on the early days of TCRT, newspaper clippings, a few photos and a couple of early Twin Cities maps. Of particular interest is a set of 20 TCRT promotional pamphlets, including Big Island, Twin Cities Today and several that we did not have.

## Get Your Stocking Stuffers

Charles Barthold — Merchandise Mgr.

Merchandise Manager **Charles Barthold** reminds members that the Linden Hills depot and MSM online store offer some great holiday gift items. If you've been planning to give someone a copy of the new book *Twin Cities by Trolley*, they're available, along with the **Como-Harriet Streetcar Line** book, now reduced to \$10.00.

For prices and order form go to [www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org) and click on **Museum Store**.



Decorate your tree with two Minnesota streetcar ornaments. In addition to the PCC No. 322 ornament (\$20.00 each), there is a new No. 1300 painted brass ornament (made in China and certified lead-free). The No. 1300 ornament costs only \$13.00.



Need a really good looking calendar? We carry both the **American Streetcars** and **Midwest Traction** calendars. The May photo in the Midwest calendar shows a great photo of TCRT No. 1242 exiting the south end of the Selby Tunnel on a *Selby-Lake* run. Each calendar sells for \$14.00.



**Excelsior News and Notes***Bruce Kobs—Assistant Supt.*

Three hundred additional riders on the 2007 Excelsior Halloween Trolley helped make two days of running more successful this autumn. ESL, in partnership with the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, sponsored the fourth annual Halloween Trolley and Booseum. Seventy-five museum volunteers wearing costumes decorated the museum and roadway along our track. The roadway had seven different stations where TCRT “gate car” No. 1239 would pass slowly to allow the riders to view these displays.

The first station was a boating party complete with boat and water skier who were returning from the dead but couldn’t find the lake—all set to a dry ice smoke. Next the car moved along to a cemetery complete with open coffins in which live bodies arose and a living Dracula wooing the streetcar. The reenactment of an old time baseball game played at the Commons field done in a mime fashion was the next display as the car passed Morse Avenue. The hobo village with a blazing fire pit was housed under the first bridge. Several homeless people reenacted their lifestyle when No. 1239 passed. No. 78 was parked outside the barn as a stationary ghost car with skeletons and ghost figures hanging inside and in the vestibule. This car was illuminated inside and outlined outside with orange colored lights. Strobe lights enhanced the white ghosts at sundown. Hay bales and large pumpkins decorated the ground area where zombies danced in costume in front of the car. No. 78 was decorated by **Ann Elise Ware, Teresa Babler, Mike Corbett, Kim Lesinski, Bob Johnson** and **Bruce Kobs**. Across from the car barn on the senior apartment building property a display of bingo players would come alive as the car passed gesturing at the car for disturbing their bingo game at the home. The final display was a witch’s coven. A dozen ugly witches had two fires with cast iron kettles “cooking body parts captured from their victims.” No. 1239 stopped there while the riders switched from left to right side of the car to better view the displays on the return trip to

Water Street. Costumed museum volunteers rode the car and played their roles with the riders.

**Bill Graham** lent his face painting talents to the Operators for the two nights: **Bob Johnson, Ann Elise Ware, Teresa Babler, Mike Corbett, Marv Krafve, Bill Graham** and **Bruce Kobs** all looked scary. The ESL staff acted as operators, crowd control and starters at Water Street. Ticket sales were handed by the museum in the museum’s Water Street ticket booth. One thousand four hundred and four (1404) tickets were sold for the two nights. Advertised hours of operation were 5:30 to 8:30pm however operations lasted until 9:15 because of the crowds.

While the riders waited to board No. 1239 they were entertained on a stage with lights and background by six professional actors who were reenacting historical persons who had untimely deaths from the Excelsior past.

Plans are already being made by ESL and the Museum for an enhanced 2008 celebration probably using No. 78 in tandem with No. 1239 to help transport the large number of riders.

ESL superintendent, **Bob Johnson**, was instrumental in adding two new events for the ESL line before year’s end. The Excelsior Downtown Business Group is initiating “Christkindlsmarkt,” an open air German style Christmas market staged in Lyman Park on Water Street. No. 1239 will be decorated by **Theresa Babler** and carry Santa and Mrs. Claus. Children and their families will board at Water Street and interact with Santa during the ride to the Excelsior Boulevard stop and return. The dates are November 23, 24 & 25. Car operations are from 10 AM to 7 PM Friday and Saturday; 12 Noon to 5 PM on Sunday.

The South Lake Chamber of Commerce celebrates a day long All Excelsior Open House culminating with a Christmas pageant at the Excelsior grade school auditorium followed by the outdoor Christmas lighting ceremony at 4 PM. The streetcar will operate from 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, December 1st.

**Railway Museum Quarterly Magazine—Check it Out!**

MSM is a member of the Association of Railway Museums (ARM), a professional and trade organization that includes all the major rail museums in North America. ARM’s official journal is *Railway Museum Quarterly*, which is edited by MSM’s own **Aaron Isaacs**. The Quarterly is the best single source for general rail preservation news, news items from selected railroad and streetcar museums, articles on museum governance and best curatorial practices of every sort. Annual subscriptions are a modest \$15.00. To subscribe, write to: ARM, 1016 Rosser Street, Conyers, GA 30012

**What's Happening?**

December 8	MSM Board Meeting, 9 AM—Lynnhurst Recreation Center, Minneapolis
December 12	MSM Holiday party at the Isaacs Car barn-7 PM to 9 PM
March 13	MSM Annual Membership Meeting

**CHSL & ESL Operations Notes***Jim Vaitkunas—Ops Chief*

Now that our Museum's operating season is almost over, I want to thank each and every one of you in the Museum's Operations Department for your dedication, patience and tolerance as we worked as a team through our busy operating schedules at both railways. As far as I know we had no shifts cancelled because of a lack of a crew, although we did have some PCC shifts that were cancelled because of a lack of the required two Operators on the car. What an achievement considering the number of shifts and crewmembers required to meet our intense schedule.

Did you know that in each of the summer months (i.e., June, July and August), on average our crew callers need to fill shift vacancies on at least 42 shifts (more counting holidays). This requires that around 200 individual crewmember vacancies be filled by you, our volunteer Foremen and Operators, in any given summer month. Whew! That's a lot of people, isn't it? You betcha! My hat is off to our three crew callers, **Jim Otto**, **Mark Digre**, **Jerry Olsen** and **Marv Krafve** who do an absolutely terrific job as our crew callers. Thanks, guys!

After the first of the year **Rod Eaton** and I will be calling some of you to talk about our operations schedule, how we call crews, how we can improve our internal procedures and operations, etc. So, please be thinking about some ways that you think these areas can be improved and be honest when we ask you the questions.

A photo supplement featuring photos from our CHSL and ESL ghost trolleys, our Holly Trolley and Santa Claus special and other special events will be sent to all who have an e-mail address on or about December 15th. Check it out!

**(MSM News & Views** *Continued from page 3)*

special Pumpkin Patch trolley on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

**E**xcelisior Superintendent **Bob Johnson** reports the following statistics for Excelsior:

	<b>Paid</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>May</b>	512	167	679
<b>June</b>	534	106	640
<b>July</b>	811	206	1,017
<b>August</b>	754	189	943
<b>September</b>	678	106	784
<b>October</b>	1,455	0	1,455
<b>Total</b>	4,744	774	5,518

Bob says that the Saturday night ridership of 735 was a one-night record for Excelsior's Ghost Trolley.

**F**rom the Boardroom. The Board welcomed Linden Hills businessman **Bob Bayers** to the Board and appointed and welcomed Excelsior businessman **Darel Leipold** to the Board as community directors and discussed the role that it hopes that they will fill as community directors.

The Board directed General Superintendent **Rod Eaton** and Treasurer **Scott Heiderich** to obtain input from department heads and supervisors and prepare a draft 2008 operating budget.

The Board appointed **Jim Vaitkunas** as delegate and **John Prestholdt** as alternate delegate to the Association of Railway Museums' 2008 annual meeting in Washington, Pennsylvania on October 7, 2007.

The Board decided to hold its quarterly meetings on set dates: the second Saturdays of March, June, September, and December.

The Board authorized **John Diers** and **Aaron Isaacs** to explore permanent locations to house the Museum's photographic and other archives, much of which is now stored in members' homes.

The Board accepted **Jim Vaitkunas'** resignation as project manager for the restoration of Winona No. 10.

**Bob Johnson** reported on the ongoing process of installing fire suppression and security systems in the Excelsior and Isaacs Car barns. The Board authorized **Keith Anderson** and **Aaron Isaacs** to work with Bob and contractors on the design of the annex needed to house the sprinkler equipment and authorized Bob to ask the contractor to proceed with the water and sewer work at the Isaacs Car barn this fall if possible. The Car barn Security Fund has sufficient funds to pay most of the cost of the work. The Board determined that there were sufficient funds in the General Fund to cover the remaining balance.

**Sympathies.** We regret to report that the father of **Maryellen Digre-Mueller**, Walter Mueller, died November 9th at age 85. He was a mechanical engineer at Honeywell and a frequent MSM Annual Appeal contributor. He and **George Isaacs** worked at the Stinson Plant for a year and he recognized George during a visit several years ago. We extend our sympathies to Maryellen, Mark and their families on his passing.