



Streetcar CURRENTS



Jan-Feb 2008

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

2008 will be a **BIG** year for MSM

- Attend our annual members meeting on March 13th
- We'll be celebrating the 100th birthday of TCRT No. 1300
- We'll have water installed in the Isaacs carbarn (hopefully)
- Please send in your volunteer surveys as soon as you receive yours
- Get ready for Operator training and recertification in April
- Donate generously to our Annual Appeal if you have not yet done so
- Keep warm!

Inside This Issue

From the Front Platform	2
MSM News Update	3
What do you think?	3
Shop Talk	4
Excelsior News & Notes	5
Upcoming Events	6

Masthead Photo: There's something magical about operating in the cold and snow at CHSL. Normally we don't do it because of ice in the flangeway at the 42nd Street crossing. But in January 2005 we had yet to see a heavy snowfall so Duluth No. 265 ventured out to do some snow plow work. Here No. 265 has run under the William Berry Parkway bridge. (Russ Isbrandt photo)

TCRT Was Prepared for Winter Snow

BILL THE MOTORMAN



Folks, now that we're deep into our Minnesota winter, back in my day TCRT's operating and maintenance departments were ready for winter operations. And, by golly, the company certainly was prepared for what lay ahead of it. There were a lot of things that the operating, station and Snelling Shop folks did to get ready for the winter season. Of course, all the coal stoves in the streetcars were cleaned and repaired and made ready. The supply cars also made the rounds to all the stations and other locations on the lines throughout the system stocking the coal and sand bins with their supply to start off the winter. Of course, major preparations were made with the company's fleet of snow plows.

Now while I have spent many an hour operating snow plows, I was curious as to the history of TCRT's snow plowing so I went to visit an old friend of mine at the Snelling Shops, Ole Johnson, who has worked for the company since the mid-1890s. Ole went into the shop's equipment files and here's what he came up with.

As of January 1893 Minneapolis and St. Paul had 37 snow plows and 2 snow sweepers. As of September 1904 TCRT owned 1 double-truck conveyor plow, 19 regular double-truck snow plows and 1 single-truck sweeper (built by the McGuire-Cummings Company). The 19 plows originally did not have a cab for the crew; the controls were out in the open. Brrrr! That must have been cold! Later a large cab was built on the front end to house the controls and crew. Later, when the TCRT built the steel underframe plows, some of the 19 remained as plows, but some were converted to work cars.

From 1906 thru 1910 the TCRT shops built 10 large steel-underframe snow plows. Four were conventional single-end snow plows, but six were combination snow plow-sweepers. Ole showed me an article in a 1909 *Electric Railway Journal* that had a photo and description of No. 30. Major items mentioned—steel broom 52" in diameter, wing plows on both sides of the car. The plow is normally the forward end. The plow and wings remove most of the snow and the broom removes the remainder. With side wings extended the car will remove snow from a strip 19 ft. wide including the strip between the tracks, and will throw snow out 12 ft. from the outside rail. If heavy drifts are encountered the car is operated from the broom end and the steel broom cuts through them. The broom assemblies and "pole side" wing assemblies were removed in 1942.



Here's a photo taken in 1905 of my good friend, Everett Jones operating a plow on Nicollet Avenue just south of 31st Street. This is a good shot of the early plows. Later plows were fully enclosed—see the fellows on the back—that was a cold job!

During the winter of 1917-1918 eight additional regular snow plows were built in the company shops. This brought the total number of snow plows in service to 18. These were used until the end of streetcar operations in 1953-1954. The trucks, motors and controls from 18 of the 42 high-speed suburban cars

(Continued on page 6)

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

The museum's business address and telephone number is:

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

Streetcar *CURRENTS*
 January-February 2008

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 March 20, 2008.

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

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 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774
 You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com

From the Front Platform

Jim Vaitkunas—Board Chair

Our Museum's 2008 Annual Members Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2008 starting at 7:00 PM at the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis, one of the finest Museums in the state. At this meeting you will hear reports from Museum officers on the state of the Museum and you'll get other good information concerning your museum. You'll be receiving a flyer shortly reminding you of the meeting. Please make plans to attend—and let us know how many will attend so we can make sure we have a large enough meeting space. The Mill City Museum is a neat place and there will be time to enjoy the Museum after the meeting.

Our annual volunteer survey will be sent to you along with the next issue of our Museum's history magazine *Twin City Lines* within the next 10 days or so. This survey is where you can tell us your preference for working on some of the important "behind the scenes" jobs such as streetcar cleaning, track and overhead work, streetcar maintenance, etc. These are jobs that are absolutely essential to the well-being of your Museum. In addition, for those who are not yet actively involved as a volunteer with our Museum, sending us your survey is your chance to tell us if you'd like to operate our historic streetcars or help us out in some other volunteer capacity. As is the case with museums like ours, there are more jobs than people to do them. Make 2008 the year **YOU** become actively involved in your Museum.

We'll be celebrating the 100th birthday of TCRT No. 1300, our Museum's "mother car," at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line this year. We know that we need to do something but we're not sure what we should do or how extensive we should celebrate. Will we have a simple birthday party with a cake and some speeches? Or something more elaborate? What we'd like to have is a small committee comprised of three or so Museum members who can brainstorm what we should do and then help implement the plan. Are you willing to spend a couple of hours each month helping to arrange for the events as they are scheduled? We have some exciting ideas including the possibility of having a relative of Thomas Lowry help us celebrate No. 1300's birthday. Please, help us make the 100th birthday of No. 1300 a history making event by calling **Rod Eaton** and tell him you'd like to help out.

Many thanks to **Eric Neumann** for his fine efforts to procure a new TV/DVD player combo for the Linden Hills station. Eric was able to secure the new color TV/DVD player from his team at Griffin International Companies where Eric works. Eric says that he hopes the new TV/DVD player is helpful to the Museum as it tells its story and displays the various DVD products it has for sale. Thanks, Eric!

Are Your MSM Members' Dues Coming Due Soon?

Our current policy is that a member of the Museum receives three dues renewal reminders. The first one is sent to you around the 1st of your membership expiration month and two more the next two months. If you haven't renewed after the third renewal notice, you stop receiving the *Twin City Lines* history magazine and the *Streetcar Currents*. Sending out the 2nd and 3rd renewal notices costs us for the postage and printing. So, if you plan to renew your membership **please** send in your renewal form and dues as soon as you get the first renewal notice. Doing that will save your Museum the expense of mailing out those additional renewal notices. **Thanks!**



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

Welcome new Members. We welcome seven new members to the MSM family: **Bruce Smith, John Cartwright, Larry Coulter, Ward Winston, Dick Niemiec, Tom Balcom and Ed Peters.**

Annual Appeal report. To date, we've received \$11,356 toward the Car barn Security Fund and \$2,030 towards the General Fund from 46 members and friends (a total of \$13,286) as part of the 2007-2008 Annual Appeal. Here are donations received since the last *Streetcar Currents*: General Fund donations from **Ken and Jan Albrecht** and from **Carl Barthelemy** in memory of **Walter Mueller, Maryellen Digre-Mueller's** father. Car barn Security Fund donations from **Douglas Anderson, Bill Arends, Carl and Jane Barthelemy, Tony Baumann, Tom and Mary Beaumont, Douglas Beedon, Paul Beyer, Mary Anne Corbey** in memory of longtime member and volunteer **Gene Corbey, John DeWitt, Rod and Pat Eaton, Rollie Ehrenberg, Gordon Geddes, Bud Goldstein and Angela Frerichs, Roy and Pat Harvey, Scott and Kathy Heiderich, Bill Herzog, Russ Isbrandt, George Ittner, the Jacob Family, Robert R. Johnson, Bruce Kobs, Marv Krafve, Keith Lindberg, Thomas H. Lowry, Charles McCarthy and Flauren Ricketts, Ed McGlynn, Ben McPheeters, Russ Olson, Robert Powell, Gerald Robertson, Judge James and Leanna Rogers, Excelsior Mayor Nick Ruehl, Frank and Judy Sandberg, Phil Settergren, Mark Sims, Bruce Smith, Dennis Stephens, Greg and Linda Taylor, Eric Tratner, Mike Van Oss, Br. James Wegesin, FSC** and one anonymous donor.

The Museum has about 300 members. Can we expect to hear from the other 250 of you soon? And please remember that all donations to the Museum are tax deductible under the United States Internal Revenue Code (although, at this point, next year for your

2008 income tax return).

From the Boardroom. Here's a summary of the minutes of the December 8, 2007 meeting of the Museum's Board of Directors:

Ken Albrecht updated the Board on the status of the Winona No. 10 restoration. The Board approved transferring funds from surplus 2007 General Fund monies to the Winona No. 10 Fund to pay for lumber and seats. It directed the Winona No. 10 restoration crew to identify a project committee or foreman to the Board by January 2, 2008 and directed them to revise and update the current restoration plan by the March 8, 2008 Board of Directors meeting.

The Board adopted a balanced budget for 2008 that sets aside ten percent of income into the Reserve Fund and \$5,000 into the Track Fund.

The Board decided to focus the March 8, 2008 meeting, its winter planning meeting, on ways to recruit additional leaders, operators, and shop personnel and on improving marketing and public relations, focusing on charters, groups, and special events.

Chief Engineering Officer **Keith Anderson** and Director **Aaron Isaacs** reported on the status of the Car barn Security improvements at the George K. Isaacs Car barn, primarily focusing on the east side grading needed for installation of water service and the fire suppression system and the possibilities for expanding the shop to the east. They also reported on the status of the Wirth Park shelter. The site is close to being final and it will be moved in the spring.

As always, complete minutes of this and all Board of Directors meetings, agendas of upcoming meetings, other important corporate documents, back issues of *Streetcar Currents*, and most anything that you need or want to know about the Museum are available at the Museum's website 24/7 from the comfort and convenience of your home computer!

What do you Think?**Rod Eaton—General Superintendent**

What do you think? Is it too early to think about this year's Como-Harriet and Excelsior operations? Some of us don't think so. We've begun talking about dates for events like Ghost Trolley—Halloween falls on Friday this year, creating scheduling questions. Should we run the Friday through Sunday before and Halloween night a week later? And what about Holly Trolley? There's no doubt Santa was a hit this past Christmas. Should we plan to run the day after Thanksgiving or just stick with two weekends?

There's been some discussion of adding a new Halloween event. Families would ride to the north end where they'd get off at our "pumpkin patch" and select a pumpkin to take home. Other rail museums have had success with similar events, and **Ken Albrecht** has volunteered to grow the pumpkins for us. Since we'd normally be running on October weekends anyway, adding this event shouldn't require too much additional effort. **What do you think?**

(Continued on page 6)

Shop Talk

John Prestholdt—CHSL Shop Foreman

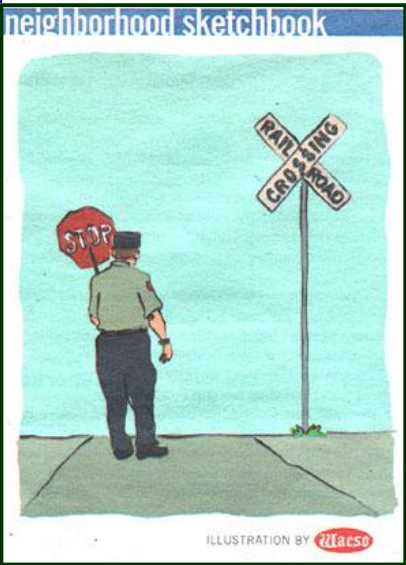
As we start 2008 I would like to review what your maintenance crews did in 2007. Our biggest accomplishment has to be finishing the exterior of No. 1300, under **Ken Albrecht's** supervision, making it ready for its 100th birthday later this year. Unfortunately No. 1300 also gave all of us a first hand lesson on how everything on the roof and wire must work together as No. 1300 started to de-wire. We learned about pole tension, changing trolley wheels and several other things before we finally got the car to run smoothly. We also did a lot of work repainting the rattan seats on the standard cars, we fixed the fuse-blowing problems on PCC No. 322, worked on cleaning up the Isaacs car barn, and did some more sorting on our parts inventory.

We also worked on creating/fixing parts for Winona No. 10. Some people worked out at Excelsior installing new lights on the Hwy 7 side of the heated barn, installing a new air compressor and piping as well as performing needed maintenance on all of our operational cars. Some of the shop forces are also beginning to work on restoration of Winona No. 10. One project which is still in progress is **Neil Howes'** complete rewrite of our yearly preventive maintenance procedures to our cars. Using **Karl Jones'** current procedures, a file **Tom Fairbairn** found from Kenosha Wisconsin, and a book Ken and I got at the 2006 ARM meeting from San Francisco, Neil is creating new "how to" documents that will describe completely what needs to be checked/tested. This is needed since everyone working on car maintenance, except for one or two of us, is into their 70's or 80's. We need to capture their knowledge before we lose it. Again anyone wanting to help, we work Tuesdays during the day (retired people take note), Saturday mornings, and I'll set up any evening if people want that as an option.

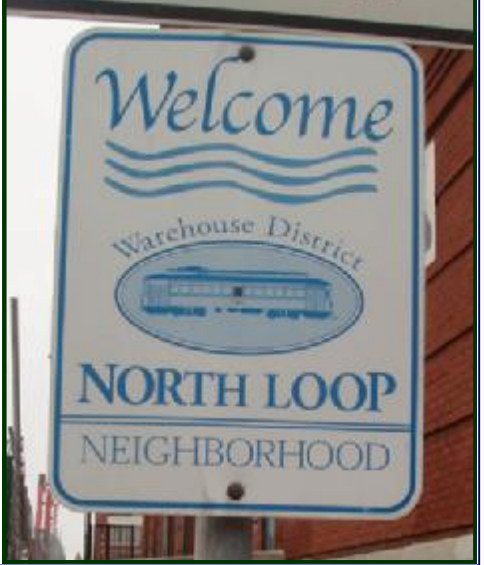


Shop Crew Hard at Work. Streetcar maintenance is a year-round job. From left to right you see **Jim Otto** (background), **Roy Harvey** and **Russ Isbrandt** refinishing Duluth No. 265's windows. In the background is **Keith Lindberg** working on heaters for DSR No. 265. (John Prestholdt photo)

Winona No. 10 work. Our shop guys are making steady progress on Winona No. 10. Here you see brass grab handle brackets that have been machined and polished. These will look super on No. 10 when it's in service. (John Prestholdt photo)



(Left) Does this view look familiar? If you operate at Lake Harriet it should. This was scanned from an item that appears periodically in the **Southwest Journal** weekly newspaper. Of course it shows one of our volunteers faithfully guarding the West 42nd Street crossing as one of our streetcars nears the crossing.
(Right) This is a new sign that has appeared in the "North Loop" neighborhood located along the south bank of the Mississippi river to the west of Hennepin Avenue. The streetcar shown in the oval is our No. 1300. This is the second Minneapolis neighborhood logo that features No. 1300, the other being the logo for the **Linden Hills** neighborhood. (Both from Aaron Isaacs)



Excelsior News and Notes

Bob Johnson—Superintendent

If you didn't attend the *Christkindlmarkt* the weekend after Thanksgiving in Excelsior you missed a very festive beginning of the Christmas Season. This event, sponsored by the Excelsior Downtown Business Group featured almost 20 vendors of goods from German cuisine to jewelry and items for the home. The Lyman park site next to our Water Street terminus was decorated with a large Christmas tree and lots of lights. A grand parade kicked off festivities with a ceremonial lighting of the Christmas tree installed on Water Street. A couple of real reindeer grazed contentedly and stood patiently while the children admired and were given a chance to pet these regal animals. Santa and Mrs. Claus rode with the riders on gate car No. 1239, and the kids (and maybe an adult or two) had a chance to tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas. A wonderful time was had by all!

It is through the cooperation and support of the Excelsior Downtown Business Group (EDBG) and the Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS) we have had such a successful year. These organizations are a true asset to the city of Excelsior and form a cornerstone of our outstanding year. Take

time to visit the city of Excelsior and be sure to visit the museum run by the ELMHS. The museum hours are seasonal and coincide with our streetcar schedule. The hours are the same as the streetcar and they are usually open on Thursday and Saturdays. Our thanks also go out to the City of Excelsior and the merchants who make us welcome in Excelsior.

The year just ended has been the Excelsior Streetcar Line's best financial performance in four years. Our revenue increase of 73 percent over a four-year period of operations is largely due to our cooperative ventures with these organizations.

Special thanks go to **Teresa Babler, Bruce Kobs, Ann Elise Ware, Chip Kemppainen, John Bode, Michel Corbett, Kim Lesinski, and Bill Graham.** Without your dedicated efforts in planning and preparing for these special events, we would not have enjoyed the success that we did.

Thanks also to **Charles Barthold** for setting up a merchandise sales tent. We were able to sell several copies of the new *Twin Cities By Trolley* books and a good number of streetcar oriented gifts.

TCRT Snow Plows Hard at Work



(Upper Left) A rare color photo of a TCRT plow earning its keep on the private right-of-way in Phelan Park, St. Paul.

(Lower Left) A TCRT plow rounds the corner on Hennepin Avenue in front of the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis. *(Two photos from the MSM photo archive)*

(Below) Here's a typical snow plow route for snow plow No. 22 assigned to and working out of the Duluth Station in St. Paul in 1918-19. Each snow plow had a specified route it would follow.



DULUTH STATION

Routing of Snow Plow No. 22 Route No. 1
Winter of 1918-19

Duluth Station
to 7th & Broadway (Wye)
to 8th & Wabasha
to Stryker & Annapolis
to Cortland & Maryland
to 5th & Robert
to Rice & South
to Inver Grove
to 5th & Robert
to Robert & Annapolis
to 3rd & Robert
to 3rd & Sibley
to Duluth Station

What's Happening?

March 8	MSM Board of Directors Winter Planning Retreat
March 13	MSM Annual Membership Meeting—Mill City Museum, Minneapolis, Minn.
April	New Operator Training and recertification Training. Dates and times to be announced
May 3	Start of Weekend operations at ESL and CHSL

(What do you Think? Continued from page 3)

Our Moonlight Rides were memorable for the few who came. There's real romance in seeing a full moon rise over Lake Harriet or a deer watch as you quietly pass through the woods past the Berry Bridge. Scheduling is easy—when is the moon full? But how can we attract more riders? **Got any ideas?**

Then there's the 100th birthday for our "mother car," TCRT No. 1300. Excelsior had a great 100th birthday party for TCRT No. 1239 last summer. But what if we scheduled a series of birthday events throughout the summer? We could tie into Minnesota's sesquicentennial and the 125th anniversary of the Minneapolis Park system. Each event offers the opportunity to present aspects of our streetcar system's history. There's no shortage of fun ideas, but there is a need for people to plan, coordinate, and publicize.

Excelsior had a very good year, with another successful Ghost Trolley (in cooperation with the

Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Historical Society) and a terrific Santa Trolley. Are there other events that will promote community participation and increase ridership? **What do you think?**

Looking beyond events, do we want to continue running PCC streetcar No. 322 only on Sunday afternoons? Maybe we should add a regular week night as well? That would provide more operating time for those who enjoy running the car and more time to train new PCC operators.

And what about those second shifts on Saturday and Sunday? Are they too long? Should we end the evening earlier? Or maybe we could adjust the shifts in some other way? For example, we could run the PCC by itself for a half hour or so during the standard car crew change.

What do you think? I'd really like to hear your opinions and ideas. You can e-mail me at: rpeaton@comcast.net or call me at 763-576-0608.

(Snow Plows Continued from page 1)

were removed and installed on the 18 snow plows each winter (and removed each spring). (Reduced winter traffic required less cars on the Lake Minnetonka line.) After the Lake Minnetonka and Stillwater lines were abandoned in 1932 the high-speed trucks, motors and controls remained on the snow plows all year. The 18 snow plows were assigned to the various car stations. As of 1921 East Side Station had four (one for the Lake Minnetonka line), Nicollet Station had three, Lake St. Station had two, North Side Station had two, Snelling Station had four, Duluth Ave. Station had two, and Owen St. Station (Stillwater) had one. There were fixed snow plow routes at each station. A description of one of the routes can be seen on page five of your newsletter here.

Regular motormen operated the snow plows 'tho the company's rule books only hints at this. The TCRT's rulebook effective 11-1-1921, states: "52—Trainmen engaged in the operation of work cars or any other special equipment shall be under the same supervision and governed by all rules the same as in passenger service."



Snow Plow Interior. Here a photo of a typical snow plow crew: **Trolleyman** on the left, **Motorman** in the center and **Wingman** on the right. On the lower right is a bin full of salt. (MSM photo archive)

Another friend of mine, and one of your old-time MSM members, Kirt Blewett, who was a regular motorman, told me he also operated snow plows. "All of the snow plows that I worked out of Nicollet Station were of the 75-82 series [probably 77 and 78]. On the plows I worked, and probably on all of them, both the plow and wing blades were air raised and gravity lowered. The wing was pulled out by a motorized winch and chains, pulled in by a rope block and tackle. Due to the short truck centers on the plows all of the normal underbody equipment was placed inside the carbody. Therefore if the reverser failed to throw from the controller, you would just go back in the car and throw it with the manual lever on the reverser. Plows had a three-man crew, consisting of motorman, wingman and trolleyman." Kirt also mentioned: "There was a lever [operated by the motorman] that controlled the slides on the bottom of the salt bunkers to drop salt on the track switches when going over them. The linkage was under the raised motorman's platform."

At the end of Twin City streetcar service 12 Snow Plows were dismantled and burned in 1953. The bodies of the remaining six snow plows were sold in 1954.