



Streetcar CURRENTS



Jan-Feb 2010

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Spring is Just Ahead!

- **Mark your calendars and make plans to attend our annual meeting on March 11th**
- **Operating Personnel: Take a few Minutes over the next month or so to make sure your uniform is ready for the coming season.**
- **We need your help with streetcar maintenance and restoration—volunteer now**
- **Are you the outdoor type? If you are, we need people to learn the basics of streetcar overhead trolley wire work.**



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Masthead Photo: Right now we're in the middle of winter. So let's dream of warmer weather by gazing upon this image on TCRT No. 1239 crossing Morse Avenue on our Excelsior Streetcar Line in the Summer of 2004. (John Prestholdt Photo)

Facts and Figures

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

In 2009, the Minnesota Streetcar Museum generated a little over \$125,000 in revenue. That includes about \$18,000 in “restricted” contributions--money earmarked for specific purposes like the George Isaacs Car barn Sprinkler Fund. Out of the remaining \$106,000 (give or take) we paid all our bills, maintained and repaired our streetcars, track, overhead and buildings, published *Twin City Lines* and distributed *The Streetcar Currents*, put a bit away for contingencies, and did all of the other things our museum does.

Where did the money come from? Half of our income last year came from token and season pass sales. All in all, 2009 was a relatively good year for ridership—not too many rain-outs, not too many really hot days. We carried just over 41,000 passengers at our two lines. Not incidentally, that pushes our total to over one-point-six million riders since 1971.

As the chart shows, the other half of our operating income came from several sources, from the \$800 or so stuffed into our donations boxes (which just about covers our entire marketing budget) to the more than \$16,000 generated by our various special events.

We don't really have much control over ridership. Weather, the economy, demographics, and the business of today's families all play a part. If we lose a weekend to rain, that's income we won't make up. We've seen that Wednesday afternoon operations at Como-Harriet generate about the same number of riders as Wednesday evenings. Would adding other afternoons do as well? Probably. In general, the more we run, the more we'll earn. But there's a very real practical limit to the number of our volunteer hours.

As noted, we don't spend much on advertising. There's a general feeling that advertising isn't especially effective for us. Even as a former ad person, I have to agree that traditional advertising can't be cost effective for us. So we'll continue to look for productive, less-traditional ways to promote visits.

But there are areas of our business over which we do have control. Last year wasn't especially good for our charter business. Maybe the weakened economy played a role? But charter business is an area that we can potentially grow. And, because it can be targeted, it's an area where spending some promotional money may be effective.

Interestingly, although ESL's total income makes up about 11% of the Museum's

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM 2009 INCOME*



*Does not include Restricted grants and gifts.

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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 2010

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar CURRENTS is a periodic newsletter published 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, 2010.

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

From the Front Platform Dave French — Board Chair

Hello everyone! You may not be aware that I am the Museum's official "mailman." Yes, I'm the one who visits the post office to check our box, usually twice a week. Recently it has been a great pleasure to open up envelopes coming into our 2009 Annual Appeal. It is gratifying to see members going the extra mile and sending us whatever they can afford, in amounts from \$20.00 to thousands. I want to remind you that it is not too late to donate! Remember that donations of any size will help. Maybe you don't have the means to donate as much now when our economy is so weak, but believe me the small donations add up to large amounts. And don't be embarrassed to send it in "late." I haven't made my donation yet either because I'm waiting for my tax refund! If you lost your form, you can find it at www.trolleyride.org or call Jim Vaitkunas at (952) 688-7255. Thanks for your support which makes things happen at MSM!



It is now my pleasure to recognize and thank **Bob Johnson** who has "retired" as Superintendent of the Excelsior Streetcar Line. During the past five years ESL has grown, improved, and prospered in many ways. One measure of success is revenue, and revenue at ESL is up by at least 50%. Every museum railway line has its challenges and ESL is no exception. One of them is that the line is located in a town where a lot of people visit or pass through during the summer, but our line is not *quite* located in a place where people can see us and make that impulse decision to ride the big yellow car. Wouldn't it be great if our terminal was located adjacent to the *Minnehaha's* dock? Rather than wait for people to discover us, Bob went out into the community and **engaged** them. The cooperative relationship between MSM and community organizations has been a great benefit to us, raising our community profile and resulting in the ESL Ghost Trolley, Christmas Trolley, and other events. The bottom line is that people ride our line who might never have done so otherwise. That doesn't just happen all by itself, its taken leadership and hard work by Bob. Plus, Bob didn't do it by himself. By recruiting other members to help him he has made a team of people to keep MSM and ESL going and going and going. The best thing is, Bob isn't "going away." He will still be active and involved, so make sure you say "Thanks, Bob" next time you see him.

I now welcome **Bruce Kobs** who has accepted the job of ESL superintendent and a seat on the Board. Bruce has big plans for ESL and that the line will be in good hands.

I will share one small concern with you. Sometimes I hear things that make it sound to an impartial observer that our two demonstration railways, ESL and CHSL, are really two separate entities or museums. This is somewhat natural, since they are located miles apart in two different communities, with different assets and challenges, and some volunteers (including myself) work primarily at one line or the other. I want to stress that neither line is a "stand alone" operation. Both lines make unique contributions to making MSM successful. Conversely, if the two lines were separated MSM would be much weaker. Please remember that together the two lines make a wonderful partnership. As Red Green says, "Remember, we're all in this together!"

Listen! I think I hear the long, low whisper of approaching Springtime when we can get those cars out on the line. It won't be long now! ☺

MSM News & Views*Jim Vaitkunas*

Annual Appeal Update. We've had a great response to our annual appeal. As of January 22nd we've received \$12,870 in donations. **Wow!** What a great response! Here is the list of those generous folks who have donated to MSM since October 1, 2009.

Unrestricted/General Fund. Bob Deblieck, Ron Wassem, Dave & Diana Ubl, Jan & Ken Albrecht, Jim Otto, Judge Jim and Leanna Rogers, Doug Anderson, Aaron Isaacs, Eric Tratner, Nick Widmar, Chip Welling & Barb Thoman, John Cartright, Bill & M.K. Graham, Dave French, Kirsten & Bob Jacob, Jim Reber, Bob Beyer, Bob Deblieck, John DeWitt, Mark Digre, Bud & Angela Goldstein, George Kotsonas, Ed McGlynn, Dick Niemiec, Muriel & Jerry Olsen, Mary Ann Corbey, Network for Good.

Isaacs Car barn Sprinkler/Expansion Fund. Russ Isbrandt, Bob Johnson, Ray Bensen, Jr., Glen Bottoms, Karl Jones, Jincy & Jim Vaitkunas, Bill Ar ends, Doug Beedon, , Jill & John Prestholdt, Dennis Fischer, Jill Seinola, Floyd Child, Eric Neumann and

Joe Plante, and Andy Selden.

4th 2nd Street Rebuild Fund. Rod Eaton, Louis Hoffman, Russ Olson, Kevin Penne, Scott Heiderich, Judy & Frank Sandberg, Hal Johnson, John Stewart, Dave VenHuizen, Floyd Child, Eric Neumann and Joe Plante, Andy Selden.

Welcome to Our New Members. It has been a while since we welcomed our new members to the MSM family and we apologize for being tardy in doing this. Here are our new members who have joined MSM since May of 2009: Jim Reber, Jim Stoebner, Richard Darling, John Reichart, the Schultz family, Dianne Sly, Gerald Welke, Ann & Conrad Smith, Ed & Josie Taylor, Bill Regan, Bruce Kivimaki, Amy Kost, Rebecca Skupien, Steve Vecerina, Steve Mages, Danny Goddard, Pat Bjorklund, Peggy Stevenson, Norm Larson, Matt Leibel, George Henes, Bob Wetherall, Brad Masson, Roger Carpenter, Bjorn Berntson, John Reinan, Roger Leclair and Jim Lipscomb. Thanks for joining and for your support to **your** Museum. ☺

It's Tax Time!*Suzanne Grace—ARM Executive Director***What Deductions are Legitimate for Volunteers?**

This year you've spent countless hours volunteering for your local railway or streetcar museum. Can any of this free labor and expenses you've personally incurred be deductible on your Schedule A? The answer is **YES** if your museum is a "qualified organization." Most qualified organizations are 501c3's and many museums are organized as such because of their educational purpose. Check with your museum to be sure their IRS designation is 501c3. (*MSM is recognized as a 501c3 organization—Ed.*) If your museum is a qualified organization, what can you deduct?

Did you have to drive or pay for public transportation to the museum in order to volunteer? If so, you can deduct the cost of your gasoline and oil *for the miles you drove to volunteer at your museum.* Be sure to save those receipts and documentation showing how many trips you made and the distance you drove. If you don't have gas and oil receipts, you can deduct 14 cents a mile. You can also deduct parking fees and tolls. If you took public transportation to and from the museum, you can deduct that cost as well.

Were you a delegate selected by your museum to take part in a conference or meeting of another organization? You can deduct *unreimbursed* travel expenses, accommodations, and meals that were directly related to being a delegate to the event provided you spent your time fulfilling the duties you were elected to accomplish on behalf of your museum. You cannot deduct any expenses incurred for personal pleasure such as theatre tickets, optional social events, etc. You may NOT deduct travel expenses to attend an event just because you are a member of that organization. You must be a delegate selected by your museum.

Were you required to wear a uniform when you volunteered at your museum? If so, and if the uniform is not suitable for street wear, you can deduct what you paid for the uniform and its upkeep (cleaning, mending). If all volunteers are told to wear navy polo shirts when on duty, your purchase of a shirt will not qualify. If, however, you must wear an engineer's uniform and hat, that purchase and regular cleaning is deductible.

Did you also pay dues to your museum? You can deduct your dues even if your membership benefits include free admission to the museum, free parking, and discounts in the museum store. Those benefits are considered token and will not eliminate your deduction.

How much of your personal time did you give to the museum in 2009? Though your time and your expertise may be very valuable to the museum, you **cannot** deduct its value. Even professionals donating services that they would normally be paid handsomely for cannot deduct the value of their time and service to their museum. ☺

Shop Update

John Prestholdt—Shop Foreman

Work on our streetcars took a back seat at the Isaacs Car Barn in November and December since we have had to work around Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, water for the sprinkler system, completion of the sprinkler system installation, and a new security system installation. All this and needing to keep No. 1300 ready for our Holley Trolley operations. Even with all of this extra activity going on we still have gotten some of the yearly preventative maintenance completed on No. 1300 and No. 322. We are now working on the leaking transfer valve on No. 1300 and will be starting the rest of our checklist through January.

We hosted the annual holiday party at the car barn on December 16th. There were about 30 people attending and, as we have done in the past, we collected food for a neighborhood food shelf. We were able to donate 42 pounds of food stuffs which I brought to the Joyce food shelf in Uptown. A big thanks to all.

We are looking at some woodwork reconditioning on both of the wooden cars so we should have work for a few more volunteers, and I—no **WE**—need some new volunteers at the barn. With Roy Harvey having leg problems and Neil Howes deciding to “retire” from our Tuesday work force we are starting to get a little thin in the worker ranks. Please feel free to come down any Saturday or Tuesday morning after 9:00 AM to get acquainted and start helping us keep our historic cars operating. There are several advantages to working on the cars including fun conversation, good coffee breaks, learning how the cars operate, being able to borrow some of our tools, and the good feeling of knowing you helped get the streetcars into safe operating condition.

Since I am also the one keeping track of volunteer time, I want to remind all our volunteers in the shops (both CHSL and ESL) to record your time in the books provided. I know there were several people working on Winona No. 10 as well as car maintenance at ESL but there were only three people who completed sheets in the log book, so many of you did not get credit for that work, at least within the museum. Please remember to record your time. ☺



(Above) Here's the new “Christmas tree” installed for the sprinkler system in the George Isaacs car barn. This is the location of the old composting toilet. The system isn't quite ready to be activated just yet—there's a lot of inspections and tests that have to be done first before it can be officially declared operational. (*John Prestholdt photo*)

(Left Top) This photo shows **Ken Albrecht** (left) and **Jim Willmore** consulting on the underframe of Winona No. 10. The dark band you see along the bottom of Winona No. 10's side on the left is the piece of new steel that will shortly be welded to the original side sheet shown in green paint.

(Left) Here's the Winona No. 10 restoration crew taking a little “spot time” after a morning's work. From left to right you see **Jim Willmore**, **Ken Albrecht**, **Marsh Ginthner**, and **Steve Mages**. Standing behind Ken is a mostly hidden **Marv Krafve**. (*2 Winona 10 photos by Jim Vaitkunas*)

ESL Update

Bruce Kobs—Superintendent

A rousing thank you to **Bob Johnson** who has retired as superintendent of ESL after many years of dedicated service. Under his leadership revenue has doubled and ridership has increased by 1,500 annually. Ridership increased by 10% in 2009. Bob added the Halloween and Christmas trolley to ESL. If one subtracts the cost of heat and new tools purchased in the Winona 10 restoration which was charged to ESL this year, ESL generated enough revenue to pay all expenses of operation in 2009—this is a first! Thank you **Bob Johnson** for your leadership, attention to details and your friendly manner of motivating members!

In addition to the 42 foreman and operators at ESL, several members have offered themselves as management volunteers at ESL in 2010.

- General Ops and Management:** Bruce Kobs
- Advertizing and Promotion:** Bob Wetherall & Bruce Kobs
- Bookkeeper:** Chip Kempainen
- Building and Grounds:** Marsh Ginthner
- Car Cleaner:** Teresa Babler and ESL Foremen
- Cashier:** Bruce Kobs

- Charters:** Kirsten Jacob
- Crew Caller:** Marv Krafve
- Displays:** Bruce Kobs
- Recruiting:** All ESL Operators and Foremen
- Special Events-Apple Day, Halloween, Christmas:** Teresa Babler & Todd Bender
- Streetcar Maintenance.**

- Lubrication:** Clyde Stephens
- Car Readiness:** Ken Albrecht, Tom Fairbairn & Jim Willmore

- Trip Sheet Follow Up:** Bob Johnson
- Overhead and Track:** Scott Heiderich
- Repair of rattan seats on No. 1239:** Bill Graham
- Training:** Clyde Hawkins & Tom Fairbairn

The tear down of Winona No. 10 has stopped and rebuilding has begun. Steel is now being riveted and welded, wood framework is slowly being replaced and the truck has been purchased to be delivered in the spring. **Ken Albrecht** announces: “We have a floor model, 15 inch Harbor Freight drill press for anyone who will haul it away with a small donation to MSM.” Contact Ken for details. ⊕



This photo shows the incoming and outgoing Excelsior Streetcar Line Superintendents. On the left is **Bruce Kobs** who is the new Superintendent at ESL and in the middle is **Bob Johnson** the former ESL Superintendent. The gentleman on the right is reminiscing with Bob and Bruce about riding the streetcars “back in the day.” This photo was taken during the 100 year birthday celebration of TCRT gate car No. 1239 MSM held at our Excelsior Streetcar Line in 2007. That’s No. 1239 in the background. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)



MSM Annual Meeting to be held on March 11, 2010

Please mark your calendars now to attend **your** Museum’s annual meeting on Thursday, March 11th, starting at 7:00 PM. This year we will meet at a very special place: the Firefighter’s Hall and Museum, 664 22nd Avenue, N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55418. The formal business meeting will be very similar to past years’ annual meetings: state of the Museum report from our Board Chair, Dave French; reports from our Treasurer and other Museum officers; and, the annual election will also be held.

After the formal business meeting will be several special programs. Member **Joe Metzler** will give a fascinating presentation on the history and architecture of the 1914-1954 “Chalet style” station that was located where our current Linden Hills station is now. We also will show two short videos taken on our Como-Harriet Line. Both videos should prove interesting. We hope to see **YOU** on March 11th.

What's Happening?

- March 11 MSM Annual Meeting, Firefighter's Hall & Museum, Minneapolis, Minn. 7 PM
- April Training and recertification sessions—schedules to be announced
- May 1 Start of weekend operations at CHSL
- May 6 Start of ESL operating season

Behind the Scenes

Jim Vaitkunas—Museum Secretary

While most of us are taking a well-deserved breather from a very successful 2009 operating season, the business of the Museum continues year-round. Bills must be paid, deposits made, membership renewals sent out and received back, reports to state and federal agencies rendered—the list goes on. Your Board of Directors manages the Museum's business and meets once a quarter. The photo on the right shows your Board during its most recent meeting on January 10th. What goes on at these meetings? Well the answer is easy: go to our website and click on the top left button at our home page and then on "organizational documents." There you will find all the minutes of past MSM Board meetings from the establishment of our Museum in 2005 up to the meeting on 1/10/10. Check it out sometime. ☺



Many Thanks to Some Special Members

Our Museum is extremely fortunate to have some very special members. Over the years, **Judy and Frank Sandberg** (shown in the photo with Scott Heiderich on the left—that's George Isaacs behind Judy) have contributed to our Museum in so many ways. Judy and Frank were among the founders of MTM and they both helped build the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and managed it during its formative years in the 1970s and early 1980s. Down through the years Judy and Frank have donated substantial funds to our annual appeal and for various special MSM projects, the most recent examples being their very generous donation to the CHSL track rebuilding project completed in 2006 and their generous donation to the fund to rebuild the West 42nd Street grade crossing. Frank also does other good things for us. For example he has had the company he owns, CONTEK Machine, Inc., do some machining on door parts for the Winona No. 10 restoration project and his company also made the steel plates that we have in several switch frogs to compensate for the narrow wheel treads on some of our cars. All we can say is: **THANKS to you**, Frank and Judy, for your support to MSM down through the years.

(Facts & Figures Continued from page 1)

total gross income, ESL's special events income (Halloween and Christmas) accounts for almost a third of the Museum's total special events income. Special events not only contribute added revenue, they also add interest to our operations, have the potential to attract new members and volunteers, and promote community goodwill. This is in accordance with the goals stated in our long-range plans. And it's another area that we can expand.

We also earn significant income from merchandise sales. And here, too, we have the ability to improve performance. We'll be looking for new items our visitors will like and we'll find better ways to present and display items within our very limited space. All of us can help improve sales by keeping the station neat and clean, being helpful and informative with shoppers.

There's an income category not shown on the chart, and it's an important one. Many of you purchase materials out-of-pocket, pay for museum-related travel, and donate items large and small, without requesting reimbursement—often without even seeking acknowledgement. Thank you all very, very much.

Thanks to **Russ Olson, Bob Johnson, and John Prestholdt** for the facts and figures used in this report. ☺