

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



October—2011

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Fall is Here!

- *Special Events are coming up in October, November and December*
- *Please help us promote the special events by distributing the posters and flyers when you get them*
- *Give a big thanks to the "behind the scenes" volunteers*
- *Renew your MSM membership promptly*

I Didn't Know That!

Bill Arends—General Supt.

As we approach the end of another operating season, and as I look back at my first season as the General Superintendent, two things come to mind. The first is "WOW, that went fast." The second is "WOW, I didn't know that." For those of you in my age bracket, I'm sure you understand the "WOW, that went fast," so no further explanation is necessary. So I'll talk about "I didn't know that."

As a volunteer finishing my tenth year with MSM, what didn't I know? I surely didn't know there were so many "behind the scenes" volunteers—dedicated volunteers who spend countless hours on administrative tasks, planning events, maintaining the streetcars in good operating condition, maintaining the overhead lines, keeping the streetcars clean, keeping the grounds looking great. The list is long, probably too long for me to recognize everyone.



With two sites and two carbarns, we are fortunate to have two great crews maintaining our operating streetcars while continuing to restore another. Thanks to the ESL Tuesday Crew of **Ken Albrecht, Mark Brothen, Scott Ingram, George Ittner, Marv Krafve, Steve Mages, Tom McGruder, Howie Melco, Jim Peschong, Jim Willmore** and **Dick Zawacki**, great progress is being made on the restoration of Winona No. 10. Thanks to **Karl Jones** for installing the wiring for the heaters in TCRT No. 1239 and to **Dennis Stephens** and **Scott Ingram** for fabricating the housings for the heaters.

The Tuesday Crew at CHSL, consisting of **John Prestholdt, Mark Digre, Ben Franske, Neil Howes, Russ Isbrandt, Keith Lindberg, Jim Otto, Phil Setergren, Bob Smith** and **Walt Strobel**, has continued to keep streetcars No. 1300, No. 265 and No. 322 running in top condition. In addition to keeping the weeds in check around the car barn, they have installed a much needed grade crossing so cars can drive up to the car barn to load and unload supplies. Also thanks to the cleaning crew led by **Bruce Gustafson**, assisted by **Cindy Gustafson, Davis Gustafson, Tim Layeux, Matt Leibel** and **Walt Strobel**, the cars are always looking great.

On Fridays during our operating season it's very common to see **Scott Heiderich** and **Mike Miller** out on the line with the tower car trimming branches from the overhead wires and maintaining the overhead line to keep our cars operating smoothly at both of our lines.

Further behind the scenes are our cashiers led by head cashier **John Prestholdt**, assisted by **George Kotsonas** and me, who make sure all proceeds from our operations get counted and deposited in the bank. Thanks to the museum's treasurer **Keith Anderson** for seeing that all bills get paid and bank accounts maintained.

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Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule
 With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we will revert to our winter publication schedule. See the box on page 4 for details.



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Masthead Photo: Here a shot of TCRT No. 1214 ca. 1950 at the Mahtomedi wye and shelter laying over before it makes it's run back to St. Paul. Mahtomedi was the eastern terminus of the Randolph-Hazel Park-Mahtomedi line. The line was abandoned in 1951, one year before all St. Paul streetcar service was abandoned, except for the University of Minnesota's inter-campus line. See Aaron Isaacs' column on Page 3 for a short story regarding a more somber incident involving a Randolph-Hazel Park-Mahtomedi streetcar.
 (MSM Photo Archive)

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 inter-urban 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
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 October—2011

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar CURRENTS is a 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 November 20, 2011.

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 — *Thoughts on Our Museum*

Dave French — *Chair, MSM Board of Directors*

Hi Everybody! I pick up the MSM mail every week which allows me to see all of the member renewals which come in. When we started offering two year renewals, I thought it would be a popular option as folks could write one check and not have to worry about renewing for two years. This would also save MSM some volunteer time and postage by reducing the number of renewals needing to be processed. We have a large percentage of long-time members who are active volunteers and I thought this option would especially appeal to them. But the number of folks choosing to renew for two years has been very small, less than 10%. Now I know that some folks can't afford to write a check for \$60 or \$90 but they can cover \$30 or \$45, and that is perfectly understandable in a difficult and uncertain economy. But I wonder if there is something we are missing? Is there something we can do that might entice you to renew for more than one year? If you have any ideas you can contact me at 651-728-2837 or e-mail drfcd152@aol.com.

We held our MSM "company picnic" on September 25th at the Isaacs Car barn and over 35 members enjoyed perfect weather and delicious food. A couple of photos from this fine event are at the bottom of this page. This special event is a tradition that goes back decades—I saw a "promo" in the *Minneapolis Gazette* for an early 1980s picnic coordinated by **Mike Buck** who was the Traction Division Superintendent at the time. I want to thank all who attended, many of whom brought food. And in typical MSM fashion, members stepped up and offered to help without being asked. For example operators took over the regular car operations for a run or two so the regular operating crews could grab something to eat. Special thanks to **Scott** and **Kathy Heiderich** for handling all of the BBQ cooking.

And, this quick note to all our volunteers. Don't forget to promote the special events coming up at both of our lines to family, friends, and co-workers. And during regularly scheduled streetcar operations, encourage our passengers who ask about the ghost trolley and Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch to take one of the pumpkin colored "refrigerator slips" that are located in two places inside the Linden Hills station. And, I'll see you on the car!




MSM Historian's Update — We make Minnesota's Electric Railway History Come Alive!

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

More photos donated. Last month Dennis D. Johnson walked into the Linden Hills station and donated several photos that show the last day of the University of Minnesota's Inter-Campus line in 1954. Johnson has a connection to the University of Minnesota and its inter-campus streetcar line. His father, Claus Johnson, was the conductor that day and he is pictured. He retired on June 19, 1954, the day after the streetcars were abandoned. Dennis Johnson worked in the U of M's Fine Arts Department, where he supervised the photo lab. Because of this donation, we've discovered several more photos from that series at the U of M Archives and are getting copies made.

State Fair photo swap. I've had a policy of doing photo exchanges with small museums and historical societies. Each makes copies of pertinent photos for the other. The latest exchange is with the Minnesota State Fair Museum. Steve Granger, their curator, has given MSM copies of 28 previously unseen photos of streetcars at the Fair. Most of them view the streetcar terminal from inside the fairgrounds. This nicely complements MSM's photos, most of which view the terminal from outside the fairground gates.

Cordes and Kreuzberger photos get used. The latest issue of *First and Fastest*, the excellent magazine of the Shore Line Historical Society that covers Chicagoland traction, features one photo each taken by Jim Kreuzberger and Bill Cordes. They were among the non-Minnesota photos recently donated by MSM. The Northern Ohio Railway Museum ran a Kreuzberger photo of a Shaker Heights Rapid Transit work motor on the cover of its most recent newsletter. And MSM members have probably noticed the numerous Cordes photos that have illustrated recent *Streetcar Currents* and 40th Anniversary supplements.

Museum in the Streets. MSM has provided copies of 20 photos to the Museum in the Streets project. Sponsored by the Greater Lake Street Council, the project will see about 60 signs erected along Lake Street from the Mississippi River to Lake Calhoun. The signs will tell the story of the street's history. The **Selby-Lake** line was an important part of that

history. In addition, TCRT's Lake Street Station was located at 21st Avenue and Nicollet Station was only a block off Lake Street. Look for the signs to appear next year.

Helping with family history. Recently Candy Anderson of St. Paul called to try and better understand how one of her ancestors was killed by a streetcar. Based on a newspaper article, we determined that he had alighted from a northbound Mahtomedi car at Hyacinth Avenue in the Hazel Park neighborhood. Hyacinth was where the local Hazel Park cars turned back, but Mahtomedi cars continued toward North St. Paul. It was also where double track became single track. The motorman had to leave the car and call the dispatcher on the company telephone in a line-side booth to request permission to enter the single track. Anderson's relative must have exited through the rear door. He was headed west, which required crossing both tracks. He apparently crossed behind the car and stepped blindly into the path of a southbound Mahtomedi car that had just entered from the single track portion. It's a morbid tale, but it was rewarding to use our specialized knowledge to give the family a better understanding of what really happened.

Token Catalog Book. Choo Choo Bob's Train Store in St. Paul has donated something that this rider didn't know existed--the Atwood-Coffee Catalogue of United States and Canadian Transportation Tokens. There are two thick hardbound volumes that include every transit token ever produced. That includes those from Minnesota. The books will help us catalogue MSM's token collection. ☺

This hat badge was discovered amongst the **Jim Kreuzberger** Duluth materials. The initials on the bottom translates to Duluth-Superior Traction Company. This style of badge was retired in the late WW I era.



(I Didn't Know That! Continued from page 1)

The "Behind the Scenes" list goes on. There's event planning, much of which is done by **Rod Eaton**. There's charter scheduling, which is handled very well by **Muriel** and **Jerry Olsen**. There's the *Streetcar Currents*, which **Jim Vaitkunas** does an excellent job of producing. And of course we're all pleased when we receive our copy of our Museum's history magazine, *Twin City Lines* so professionally produced by **Aaron Isaacs**. I've found out there's so much more to our Museum than just operating the streetcars. ☺

What's Happening?

October 15 & 16	Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch at CHSL—12:30 PM to 4:30 PM
October 21, 22, 28 & 29	Halloween Ghost Trolley at CHSL—6 PM to 9 PM each night
October 28 & 29	Halloween Ghost Trolley and Boo-seum at ESL—6 PM to 9 PM each night
October 30	Trick 'R Trolley at both ESL and CHSL
November 25, 26 & 27	ESL's Santa Claus trolley at the Excelsior <i>Christkindlmarkt</i>
November 25, 26 & 27 and December 3 & 4	CHSL's Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus



Shop Update — *News from our George K. Isaacs and Excelsior Car barns*

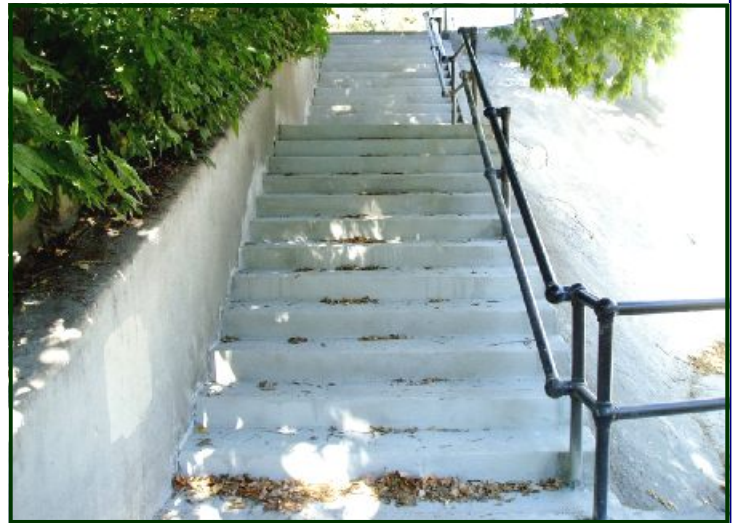
John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

The CHSL Tuesday crew has continued with its “keep them running” program through the summer. Thankfully there have been only a few problems we have needed to address: both wooden cars have had their brake linkage tightened; we replaced the front brake valve on Duluth No. 265; burned out light blubs have been replaced on both wooden cars; batteries for the interior bells and ditch lights have been checked and replaced as needed; and, other lubrication and cleaning has been completed.

Two bigger projects that have been completed are the driveway we have been working on to get vehicles over the maintenance barn lead track was finished thanks to **Phil Settergren's** contact that got us a load of small rock to complete the project. The city also completed patching the south stairs that leads to the rear of the car barn. There were several steps that were breaking up so they were dug out and repaired and we thank the city for improving our safety in going to and from the barn. I also need to thank **Mike Buck** for all his weed and brush cutting and also (St Paul) **Mike Miller** and **Scott Heiderich** for their line work and additional brush cutting. ☺



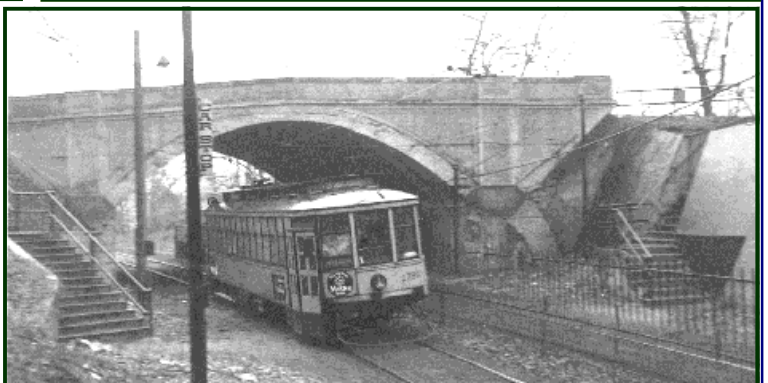
This photo shows the new “crossing” over the Isaacs car barn maintenance barn lead track. Now delivery trucks and automobiles can cross over the rails and snuggle right up to the car barn door without tearing up a tire or two. (*John Prestholdt photo*)



Here's the newly repaired stairs. For those who don't know, these stairs and railings were installed in 1906 when TCRT made major improvements to this part of our right-of-way in preparation for the beginning of service from Minneapolis to Lake Minnetonka. (*John Presthold photo*)

Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

With this issue of the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** we will revert to our winter publication schedule. After this October 2011 issue, you'll be receiving the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** every other month until May, 2012. Publication dates for these issues will be on or about (o/a): December 1st; February 1st; and, April 1st. If you don't receive your issue on, or shortly after, those dates please contact me at:
jvaitkunas@msn.com



Linden Hills Blvd car stop circa 1954. Note the stairs on the left. Our Isaacs car barn now occupies the space under this bridge. (*MSM Photo archive*)