

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



July 2012

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill The Motorman Says:

- Ride the MSM streetcars early and often. Bring your family, neighbors and friends along, too.
- Visit ESL and take a ride on gate car No. 1239. See the progress on Winona No. 10 up close
- Consider becoming more involved in your Museum's operations and administration—we need your expertise and help.



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Masthead. Night photos of our streetcars are relatively rare. Here is a night shot taken by noted rail photographer, Jeff Terry of our PCC No. 322 sitting in front of the George Isaacs carbarn. No. 322 looks great regardless of the time of day. (Photo by Jeff Terry)

Off and Running!

Bill Arends—General Supt.

I'm always pleased, and maybe a little amazed, by what we accomplish as an all-volunteer museum. From what I've seen, the condition of our streetcars is second to none. They are so well maintained mechanically. They're always so clean. They always just look so good. They run so well. When I arrive at the car barn to start a shift I never worry whether the streetcar will be ready to go. There's never a worry that there may be a problem with the track or overhead wire. I never worry that the Depot may not be stocked with merchandise or be left in disarray. I know there will be the correct cash in the bags to start my shift. I know that the people who signed up for the shift will be there. I just open up the car barn and look forward to a fun evening on the streetcar.



It takes a lot of volunteers and a lot of volunteer hours to make MSM such an efficiently run organization and the streetcars so well maintained. Each winter the cars are all inspected thoroughly from top to bottom. Each week, during the Tuesday work session, **John Prestholdt** and **Mark Digre** check the inspection reports completed by the foreman at the beginning of each shift to see if there are any minor repairs that need to be done. Recently John and Mark, along with **Walt Strobel**, took apart one of our TCRT Johnson hand-cranked fare boxes that wasn't operating properly. Not a major mechanical problem, but just one of the things that keep the streetcars operating smoothly.

At the end of each shift the operating crew sweeps out the car before putting it away. But that's not enough to keep our streetcars looking good. On the first Saturday of the month Streetcar Cleaning Foreman **Bruce Gustafson** and the cleaning crew of **Matt Leibel**, **Walt Strobel**, Bruce's sons, **Davis** and **Eric**, and **Tim Layeux** can be found washing windows, dusting, sweeping, washing and polishing all three cars at Como Harriet. This important job is also getting done at our Excelsior line under the leadership of **Todd Bender** and **Bruce Kobs**. They can always use more help. If you have a Saturday morning available and would like to help, please get in touch with Todd or Bruce. They will be happy to provide on-the-job training.

There are many jobs to be done and at MSM they are all being done by dedicated people who are donating their time and expertise. No matter what role each person fills, it's an important one. There are no minor volunteer roles. Our passengers see the Motorman and the Conductor on the car, the Station Agent and the Operator on the platform flagging the streetcar across 42nd street. What they don't see are the people who keep the cars running and looking good. Or the people who keep the shelves stocked in the Depot. Or people who do the bookkeeping or cashiering and on and on. Thanks to all who fill these roles.

And a special thanks to **Karl Jones**, **Keith Anderson** and **Tim Layeux** who this year have earned silver badges for 30 years of service to the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. 🌟

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
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 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 July—2012

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 July 20, 2012.

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 — Thoughts on Our Museum

Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

SAFETY: FIRST — LAST — ALWAYS!

Hi everyone! I must start this month's column with some bad news. During our MSM Board meeting on June 23rd, we received a phone call from the Foreman in charge of the day's operations out at our Museum's Excelsior Streetcar Line. On their first trip, when they took the passengers into the car barn for the short tour, they found veteran volunteer George Ittner on the restoration shop floor. George had been working alone on Winona No. 10 and had somehow fallen, suffering a serious injury. It was fortunate that this happened during regular operations at ESL. If George had been working at CHSL where we do not normally conduct car barn tours, he could have been lying there for several hours. George will have surgery this week and we wish him a speedy recovery and his family all the best.



This incident highlights how important safety should be. MSM policy discourages volunteers from working alone. George's accident clearly demonstrates the wisdom of this policy. If you feel that you must do some work alone on either of our railways, be sure to notify your Superintendent or project leader first so they can arrange to check on you while you are there and confirm that you departed the car barn safely. Always remember that no work is so important that you cannot take the time to do it safely. If that means you have to wait until someone else is available to work with you, then that is the correct course of action.

We have had an enviable safety record at MSM since 1971. George's accident at ESL may be the most serious injury we have ever had to a volunteer. Maintaining the safety of our volunteers, passengers, and equipment requires the constant, I mean all the time every time, vigilance of every one of us and continuous effort to improve our skills and identify unsafe conditions. Will you join me in recommitting yourself to operating and working safely? I thank you for that and together we can make keep MSM fun and secure now and far into the future. Have a fun and safe Independence Day and I'll see you on the car! ☺



STREETCAR CLEANERS WANTED !

Our Museum is noted for the excellent mechanical condition and the cleanliness of our historic Minnesota streetcars. We have earned that reputation by the fine work of our shop volunteers and the hard work of volunteers who clean our streetcars each month. If you would like to help us with this seldom thought about but very important task of car cleaning, please call **Bruce Gustafson** at 952-920-0920 for CHSL or **Todd Bender** at 952-334-4065 for ESL. Cleaning dates are usually shown in the "What's Happening" section on page 6. No experience is necessary and this is the perfect way for you and your family to support your Museum in a tangible way and to meet your fellow volunteers. It is traditional that juice and rolls are served during the morning break for those who help with the monthly streetcar cleaning.


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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

Glenwood Park shelter project shelved. It looks like our attempt to move the Glenwood Park streetcar waiting shelter to Lake Calhoun isn't going to happen. We were blind-sided by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which decided to nominate the entire Minneapolis Chain of Lakes park area to be on the National Register of Historic Sites. This apparently also took the Park Board staff by surprise. SHPO objects to removing an historic structure from its original location. They also say that the shelter is inappropriate for our Lake Calhoun stop because its architecture is rustic wood, while the original Lakewood Cemetery station was stone.

I argued that returning the shelter to its original purpose was as important as its location, but they didn't buy that. The bottom line here is that the Park Board and the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission are unlikely to defy SHPO on this kind of issue, so the shelter move is probably dead. At least they know about it now, and that a tree is gradually pushing it over. Hopefully the Park Board will remove the tree so the shelter won't be destroyed.

Grants. I had secured a \$5,000 grant from the 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation to move the shelter. When I informed the foundation that the project was terminated, they graciously agreed to let us use the money on either Winona No. 10 restoration project or the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's 42nd Street grade crossing replacement.

The 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation also granted us \$5,000 toward the rebuilding of the two traction motors we purchased from the Lake Shore Electric museum for Winona No. 10. To meet the grant's required match, I applied to the Winona Foundation for \$7,985. That application was recently approved, which means that the cost to transport the motors to Maine and to rebuild them should be fully covered by grants.

Two years ago a voter referendum approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the state constitution. It authorizes a new sales tax to benefit the outdoors, clean water, parks and trails, and arts and cultural heritage. MSM is eligible for Cultural Heritage grants, so last fall I applied for money to purchase archival plastic sleeves for the MSM photo collection. It took two tries, but in March we were notified that we had been granted \$3,808 for the sleeves. They have been purchased and, whenever I

have a spare hour, I insert photos. There are 9,500 photos in our archive, so it will take awhile.

One can apply monthly for Cultural Heritage grants, and if the application is rejected, the review panel recommends ways to improve the application. I twice applied for a grant to rebuild Winona No. 10's roof, but both times the application was unsuccessful.

Dave French donates photos. Our Museum's Board Chair, **Dave French** recently donated over 30 Minnesota streetcar photos he had collected over the years. Most were new to our collection.

TCRT employee appointment card project. Some years ago, MSM (then an operating "Division" of the Minnesota Transportation Museum) donated to the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) our collection of Twin City Rapid Transit (TCRT) Company employee appointment cards. The cards are an employment record of every Motorman and Conductor from 1891, the first year of TCRT's existence, to the end of streetcar service in 1954. The reason for the donation was to make them more available for families doing genealogy research.

A couple of years ago, I learned that Metro Transit had retained some of the cards because they were still being used. That function has since been computerized, so Metro Transit donated the cards to the museum. In turn, we donated them to MHS, to complete the TCRT card set and extend it into the bus era.

I volunteered to work at MHS and merge the Metro Transit cards into the ones they already had. What followed was the unpleasant discovery that the cards at MHS were still divided into six alphabetically ordered sets, one for each of TCRT's streetcar stations. (TCRT called it's operating carbarns and storage yards "stations.") There are many thousands of these cards, and all would have to be re-alphabetized.

Thankfully, **Dave French** volunteered to join the effort, and together we were able to complete the job in several months. In the process, we corrected many small alphabetizing errors. We also learned that TCRT hired a huge number of Scandinavian immigrants. There were enormous numbers of Olsons and Johnsons, and plenty of people with names like Sigurd and Hjalmar. The cards will be available soon for use by the public.

Trolleyball. No, not a computer game nor the new James Bond movie. See photos on the next page to see an interesting piece of folk art. 🍷

What's Happening?

- June 30 Streetcar cleaning at Como-Harriet. The fun starts at 9 AM. Juice & rolls are served.
- July 4 Special extended operating hours at both CHSL and ESL
- July 10 Story Time trolley at ESL, with first run at 5 PM
- July 19 PJ Party trolley at CHSL with first run at 6:30 PM
- July 19, 20 & 21 Excelsior **CRAZY DAYS** festival. ESL will run all three days with extended operating hours.
- July 20 & 21 Murder Mystery trolley at CHSL starts at 9 PM



MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary and Superintendent of Operations*

Donations Received. Here are the members and friends who have responded generously to our 2011-2012 MSM Annual Appeal since the last report in the June issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**.

General Fund: Alis and Byron (Barney) Olsen; IBM International Foundation, matching donations from Doug Anderson and Bill Herzog; Mark Digre; and, Rhonda & Jim Ravell.

Winona No. 10 Restoration Fund: Loren Martin.

Many thanks to all donors for your generosity.

New Members. We've had several new members join the MSM family in the last month: Bill Norman; Colin Harris; Diane Hedges; Nicole Lynn Remus; Andy Jacob; Steve Frederickson; Cliff Thomas; and, Deb and Dave Koefod. Steve, Cliff, Colin and Deb and Dave are/were in our Operator training program.

Good PR. Once in a while we get a nice thank you letter from someone who either rode one of our Museum's regularly scheduled streetcars or rode on a charter. Here's a nice letter we recently received.

"[To] Jerry and Muriel Olsen and Mike Buck.

Thank you so much for providing a memory-filled afternoon on the Lake Harriet trolley.

Yes, the weather was perfect. But we appreciated the time you have spent and will spend in refurbishing and in working with your customers. You can be proud of the amazing history and participation that you provide for all of us!

You made the reservation and the actual tour so easy.

Good luck in your future endeavors!

Ann Hutchings, Twin Cities Dalaforening Society"

Address Changes and other Updates. We'd like to give all of you who have sent in changes to me or John DeWitt a big **THANK YOU** for sending in those address changes and phone number updates. We also use your renewal slips to do that and the charges for change of address notices have gone down. ☺

TROLLEYBALL?



Trolleyball? No, it's not a new sport for railroad and trolley fans. The trolleyball is a new piece of public art, one of several installed behind the new Mozaic office building and Lagoon Theater in Uptown Minneapolis. I ran into the artist putting on the finishing touches and he named it. He found the headlight and fare register on Ebay. (Photos by John Dewitt (left) and Aaron Isaacs (right))