

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec — 2012

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Many Thanks for a Successful Year

- *Despite the uneven weather patterns, the 2012 season was most successful*
- *Many thanks to all our volunteers for your dedication*
- *Thanks to all our members for your loyal support by renewing your Museum membership each year*

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule
 We are now in our winter publication schedule of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**. Next issue will be sent to you on or about February 1st.



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Masthead Photo: Here's TCRT No. 1239 all decked-out and lit up to welcome the kids who believe in Santa Claus. Built in 1907 by TCRT's 31st Street shops, do you wonder sometimes what the shop workers might say if they saw No. 1239 today all lit up in a festive array of lights?
(Jason Kirsch photo)

Special Events & Charters

Bill Arends—General Supt.

Most of us, when we think about the operations of the streetcar, think of regular revenue service. Weeknights, Wednesday afternoon and weekends at our CHSL. Thursdays and weekends at our ESL. But another significant source of revenue is our special events. The PJ trolley, Story Time trolley and Trick 'r Trolleys have become very successful. The Murder Mystery, Streetcar Camp, Pumpkin Patch, and of course the Halloween and Christmas events have become very popular and they are really anticipated by our riders.

Another "Special Event" that goes on quietly during our season is our streetcar charter service. A service that generates significant revenue but operates quietly outside the mainstream of our other revenue operations. With husband and wife team of **Muriel** and **Jerry Olsen** handling the scheduling of the charters and crews, 2012 has been a very good charter season. It has also been a very interesting one.

At Como-Harriet we operated 48 charters with revenue of \$3,925 and carried 1,635 happy passengers. Our Excelsior Streetcar Line operated 8 charters generating \$890 in revenue. Total revenue from CHSL's and ESL's charters was \$4,815.

The types of charters vary from birthday parties, school groups, adult groups to the unusual. At ESL there were 2 birthday parties, 2 school groups and 4 adult groups. CHSL had 21 birthday parties, 12 school groups and 15 adult groups. Several of the school groups are annual charters, one of which comes from Nicollet, Minnesota which is about 80 miles south of the Twin Cities. Some of the school groups are English classes that have just read the popular book *Until They Bring the Streetcars Back* by Stanley Gordon West. These groups always have questions about pulling the trolley wheel off the wire.

One of the most enjoyable charters for me are the Senior groups, most of whom were regular riders back in the day. They share great stories about getting around the Twin Cities, going to college, work, meeting their spouse on the streetcar, etc.

Another regular charter is by a group called the Road Scholars. Its members come from various parts of the country and include a streetcar ride in their travels. **Peter Sussman**, one of our streetcar Operators and a local historian, accompanies these groups as their narrator. This group already has booked 8 dates starting in May of 2013. Hopefully none of their charters in 2013 will have a tree fall across our track as happened this past summer. **Jerry Olsen** and **Charles Fritzen**, with the use of a borrowed hand saw, were able to clear the tracks. However, this happened after the car reached the Lake Calhoun platform and couldn't return until the tree branch was removed. So, their tour bus picked them up at the north end and they were off.

And then there's the unusual. One was a couple from Canada who chartered the APCC for an hour and a half, not to ride the streetcar, but to take photos at various places along the line. There was one scavenger hunt, one romantic charter where a gentleman surprised his wife with an hour-long charter complete with a picnic basket and music, and one marriage proposal. Yes a marriage proposal! The son of

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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 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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Streetcar CURRENTS
 November-December—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 January 20, 2013.

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

Hello everyone! Well, our 41st season of running streetcars is now in the record books. I was very lucky to be able to operate the Holly Trolley at CHSL on the day after Thanksgiving. These shifts had all filled up many weeks ago but one of our Operators got called in to work that day and I was able to be his substitute. I can see why our volunteers enjoy working these events. To see the expressions of joy on the kids and adults when they talk to Santa and hear the excellent singers from Southwest High perform Christmas carols, well, even the most cynical and crabby person would feel a warm glow in their heart. During the “off season” we will be very busy maintaining the cars, continuing the work to restore Winona No. 10, working on the carbarns, including that long-awaited bathroom at the Isaacs Carbarn, and performing a host of administrative tasks. If you can spare some time this winter, won't you help us? Contact **Todd Bender**, **Bill Arends**, **John Prestholdt**, our Shop Foreman or myself and we will connect you with the right person to put your skills and enthusiasm to work.



I suspect that one issue our Operations people will look at this winter is the continuing problem of volunteers waiting until the last moment to sign up for shifts and the resulting frantic e-mail appeals to fill weekend shifts. It appears to me that on paper, at least, we should have enough Operators and Station Agents on both lines to fill all available shifts. But for a variety of reasons, many people on the active roster are signing up for very few shifts. I am one who worked far fewer shifts this year because I live 300 miles away now. When I could come down for the weekend I usually worked both Saturday shifts at CHSL which I think helped us a little. Chris Heck used ShiftPlanning to generate some data for us. From May 1 to Labor Day we had 109 volunteers work shifts at CHSL and ESL. Of these, 28 worked ten hours or less, that is, two shifts or less. And this does not include the people who worked zero shifts and there were a few of those. Some of the 28 were Foremen, some were new Operators, and some with many years of experience. I have to wonder, how can we get at least some of the 28 to work one or two more shifts next year? Chris has done a great job of training large classes of new Operators the past few years, but simply adding more people does not help us much when over 25% of our Operators are only working two shifts or less per season. We usually managed to

fill the weekend shifts at the last minute but there were some shift cancellations this year because we did not have enough crew members. One of these was a Saturday shift in October at CHSL. The following week we received an e-mail from a gentleman in Madison, Wisconsin. He wrote to say how disappointed he was to show up at Lake Harriet on a beautiful autumn day and find a sign on the station's door saying we were not running because of a lack of volunteers. He had been planning this trip to the Twin Cities for some time and had out-of-town guests along. I wrote him a letter of apology saying I hope he will give us another chance and we sent him a 10-ride pass. He wrote back saying he much appreciated our response, but it was painful to know we had disappointed a customer because we were not open despite having over 80 Operators and Station Agents. I wonder how many more people were disappointed but they don't bother to complain, they simply never come back. So what should we do? Should we cut back on our operating days and hours after Labor Day? How can we get you

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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

University Avenue video on Twin Cities Public Television (TPT). On December 18th and 28th at 8 PM, TPT Channel 2 will air a special show entitled *University Avenue: One street, a Thousand Dreams*. It's an hour-long history of University Avenue up to the present day. The street is being transformed by light rail, which is why producer Peter Myer undertook the project. Not surprising, there is plenty of references to the influence of streetcars, light rail and railroads on the corridor. Our museum plays a prominent role in the production. We supplied historic photos. I was interviewed on camera and appear several times. Myer asked if we knew any retired motormen and we arranged for MSM member **Merle Seils** to be interviewed. He worked out of TCRT's Snelling Station and drove the very last streetcar into downtown St. Paul.

I attended an advance showing and saw that Myer had erroneously credited Minnesota Transportation Museum. I brought this to his attention and hopefully the credit will be changed before the December 18th broadcast. Credit aside, it's a good piece and I learned a lot from it.

MSM in new Minnesota railroad book. When we received the **Jim Kreuzberger** and **Bill Cordes** collections, they included large numbers of railroad photos along with the streetcar photos. I in turn donated most of them to museums and railroad historical societies that specialized in that particular railroad or region. However, a few were so good that I hung onto them, in blatant violation of our collections policy.

Most showed Minnesota railroads. I didn't keep the dull roster shots or any that were photographically flawed. A short while later came an opportunity to put them to good use. The University of Minnesota Press, which published *Twin Cities by Trolley*, has recently released *Minnesota Railroads, 1940 to 2012*, by **Steve Glischinski**. Steve is well known in the local railfan community and once, long ago, he labored on the Como-Harriet track crews.

Last year Steve approached me looking for photos to

include in the book. I shared whatever was in our archive and am pleased that he has used 12 photos from Kreuzberger and one from Cordes in the final product, all credited to MSM. Oh, and a few photos from my personal collection ended up in the book as well.

Anyway, the book is beautiful, full of great, well-chosen and often rare photos. It's a must-have for anyone interested in Minnesota railroads since 1940.

Classic Trains special issue. The only non-Minnesota Kreuzberger railroad photos I retained were a large group taken on the Baltimore & Ohio in western Pennsylvania. Beautifully composed, they show the last days of steam on the B&O's former narrow gauge Buffalo & Susquehanna division. I submitted them to *Classic Trains* magazine and 13 are about to appear in one of the magazine's large special issues, titled *Steam Glory 3*. They are prominently credited to MSM. Look for the magazine on a newsstand near you or you can order on-line at: <http://ctr.trains.com/>

New Wayzata book. The Wayzata Historical Society has just published a new book on Royal C. Moore, the man who designed the TCRT Lake Minnetonka express boats. He ran Moore Boat Works, which later became Minnetonka Boat Works. The book jacket photo is from the MSM collection, showing a boat on streetcar trucks about to leave TCRT's 31st Street shops.

Preserving the car advertising cards. Our Operators at Lake Harriet or Excelsior have seen how passengers are fascinated by the vintage advertisements, the car cards. Some of the cards are copies, purchased through the Association of Railway Museums. The rest are original, and those are subject to deterioration by exposure to ultraviolet light and moisture. Good museum practice is to scan the originals, file them away from the light in archival sleeves, and display new copies. That's what I plan to do over this winter. Duplicating the originals gives us an opportunity to make copies for multiple cars. In addition, we'll probably buy more of the ARM copies. ☺

(Special Events & Charters Continued from page 1)

Terry Wagoner, one of our Operators, chartered the streetcar and placed a banner on the front of the streetcar which said: "Emily..." Another banner on the side said: "Will you marry me?"

So yes, we do have the unusual. Thanks to all the Operators and Foremen who volunteer their time to make these charters successful. And thanks very much to **Jerry** and **Muriel Olsen** for the many hours they devote to scheduling the charters and the crews to operate them. Also, thanks to **Andy Jacob**, an operator-in-waiting, as he assists his grandpa, **Jerry Olsen**, on the streetcar.

And, in case you are wondering, Emily did say yes. ☺



Excelsior Streetcar Line Update

Todd Bender — Assistant Superintendent

Many thanks to everyone for a successful North Pole Trolley! We couldn't have done it without you. I hope you all had a good weekend and enjoyed watching Santa work his magic with the kids. While we didn't set any passenger count records this year, we still had a busy (and cold) weekend.

Before I get to the final numbers, I want to send a few kudos out to the following great volunteers.

The Decorating Team. As I'm sure you're all aware, the car didn't decorate itself. Thanks to **Bob Wetherall, Don Nielson, Bill Preiss,** and **Mark and Betty Brothen** for getting No. 1239 and the ticket booth ready for Santa.

Support. You may not have seen them, but there were several people working in the background to keep things going. **Rod Eaton** sent out several emails calling for volunteers. **Scott Heiderich** setup the batteries, chargers, and organized the extension cord mess in the Motorman's cab. **Bruce Kobs** kept an eye on things from afar, sending suggestions regarding the event and operations order. **Jim Vaitkunas** helped clean up the rough draft of the operations order. And **Karl Jones** did a quick mechanical check-up of No. 1239 (and No. 78) prior to the event to ensure safe operation. Did I mention that Karl was also responsible for the most welcome heaters in No. 1239?

Event Operations. I wasn't the only one managing operations from Water Street. **Don Nielson** volunteered to take charge of Sunday's operations, which

was a good thing as we were lacking Christkindlmarkt volunteers for the first hour. While I enjoy being on-site all three days, we need more than one person who is capable of running this event. Don was the first to step up and learn the ropes taught to me by **Bob Johnson**. If you are willing to be the "head elf" for a shift or two, let me know! For those who thought I did a decent job running the event, you should know that **Bob Johnson** ran this event by himself for several years and taught me everything I know.

Operating Volunteers. And of course, a big thank you to all crew members. We had both seasoned veterans and first year volunteers running No. 1239 this year. All crew members showed up on time and kept the car on schedule all three days. There wasn't a single run where No. 1239 lingered for too long, which was greatly appreciated by all customers waiting for the next ride. I hope you all consider signing up for this event next year.

And, please let me know if you have any suggestions to make this event better next year.

Here's the final summary of ESL's 2012 North Pole Trolley from the trip reports:

- Friday — 287 passengers
- Saturday — 564 passengers
- Sunday — 235 passengers

Total revenue was over \$2,620. Not bad for three days of operations.

Finally, below are a couple of photos. ☺



Here's Santa talking with some of the children on No. 1239. The heaters in No. 1239 did their job well keeping the car nice and warm. (Chic Anding photo)



Here's Santa talking with Olivia Kirsch, six-month-old daughter of MSM volunteer **Jason Kirsch**. Little Olivia probably doesn't quite grasp the concept of Santa yet, but she seems to be enjoying herself. (Jason Kirsch photo)





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

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

The MSM shop work crew is beginning our annual preventive maintenance on all our streetcars. We took TCRT PCC No. 322 out of service in October and started its work but had to stop and check out an air leak in the front door air mechanism on TCRT No. 1300. We are still rebuilding a spare door engine to replace the current one but even with this air leak No. 1300 is still operational. We have received springs for our retrievers and trolley catchers (for Fargo-Moorhead No. 28) and are making our spare parts operational. We will be trying to get Duluth No. 265 into the maintenance barn for some long needed paint projects as well as its PM.

For those who remember ‘the old days’ we have finally signed a contract with a plumber to install a bathroom in the maintenance building. This is the third phase of the carbarn improvement project. The first two phases were moving the electrical panel where the bathroom will go and installation of the sewer line. The new bathroom project will hopefully be close to completion by our annual Holiday Party set for December 12th, so please plan to attend this annual party and check out the progress. ☺

CHSL 2012 Holly Trolley



Ebenezer Scrooge isn't a bad fellow after all, eh? Here he is flagging the 42nd Street crossing for Santa's 23-ton sleigh. (All four photos by Rod Eaton)



Photo op with Santa! MSM Operator **Holly Wetzel** is in the beautiful outfit that she made herself, by the way. General Superintendent **Bill Arends** is Mr. Scrooge, and **Bud Lutz** is Santa. Yes, his beard is real.



We provided a nice fire to warm up and marshmallows to roast on the fire. It was a chilly day but everyone had fun, the fire was nice and the marshmallows were yummy!



Here's Santa making his magic with a little one. This young'un seems a little shy.

What's Happening?

December 12 Annual Holiday Party at the George K. Isaacs Carbarn, Minneapolis starts at 7 PM
March 16 MSM Annual Member's meeting, Mill City Museum, Minneapolis. 10:00 AM start-time.
April-2013 Operator recertification and new Operator training schedule will be announced in early April

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary and Superintendent of Operations

Welcome New Members. We offer a big **WELCOME** to the MSM family to the following new MSM members: **Jill Schroepfer**, and **Warren Ahlgren**.

Donations Received. Many thanks to the following Museum members and friends who have sent in donations over the last few months: Rod Eaton, James Foster, the Head Family Foundation, the Seward Group, and Dennis Fischer.

Our **Annual Appeal** was announced in the flyer you will receive soon. As most of us know, we do not bombard our members with flyers asking for donations for this or that project. Our annual appeal is just that—the one and only time that we solicit donations from our members and friends. Please consider giving generously to your Museum. ☺

**Winona No. 10 Progress**

The hard-working volunteers at our Museum's Excelsior restoration shop are making steady progress in reassembling Winona No. 10. No. 10 is a rare steel-and-wood-constructed single-truck streetcar built in 1914 by the St. Louis Car Company. No. 10 ran in Winona until the last streetcar line was abandoned in 1938 at which time it was sold and set up as a cabin several miles south of Winona. We saved the carbody in 1998 and started serious work on it in 2005.

Much progress has been made in the last year. One platform has all its wood back in place and the second platform is now being worked on as shown in these photos taken by **Dick Zawacki**, one of the No. 10 volunteers. As seen in the photo on the right, the platform roof is on and work over the winter will focus on building the manually-operated door operating mechanisms for both ends of the streetcar. We should be getting the rebuilt truck by late spring of 2013.



(From the Front Platform *Continued from page 2)*

to step up and participate a little more in 2013? Send me your ideas and suggestions!

We recently purchased some Duluth Street Railway rule books on eBay, one of them from 1892 and another from 1938. The 1892 book may have been the first one issued after the advent of electric cars on the system and the 1938 edition was likely the last one before trolley service was abandoned in favor of motor and trolley buses. The 1892 book has 30 pages and 81 rules. The 1938 book has over a hundred pages and 346 rules. Operations had become much more complicated in 46 years. Two 1892 rules which I find interesting are No. 13: In case of snow storm all men off duty must report to the foreman for orders; and, No. 17: Employees are forbidden to give any present of any kind to each other. Foreman of stations will not accept cigars or any entertainment whatever from station employees or drivers. I'm not exactly sure what they mean by "entertainment" but if you are on my crew and you want to give me a good cigar, we have no rule at MSM prohibiting it!

Have a great Holiday season, everyone, and thanks for everything you did to make this a successful year for MSM. ☺



Please mark Wednesday, December 12th on your calendar and plan to attend our Museum's annual holiday party at the Isaacs carbarn, Linden Hills (Minneapolis). This fun evening starts at 7 PM—nothing formal planned, just some nice treats (provided by the attendees) and good fellowship. If you join your fellow members, we ask that you also bring some canned goods for the local food shelves—this has been a yearly tradition here at MSM.