

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS



May 2013

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

## The 2013 Season starts Now!

- Tell your friends and neighbors about MSM. Encourage them to come to Lake Harriet or Excelsior and take a nice streetcar ride.
- Consider becoming more involved in your Museum's operations and administration
- Renew your membership as soon as you get the reminder notice—save your Museum some money
- It's not too late to make a donation to our 2012-2013 annual appeal. The shop expansion project can use your donation.



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**Masthead.** Two beauties lined up to have their picture taken. TCRT No. 1300 is on the left and Duluth No. 265 is on the right. Photo taken on August 6, 2011 during our 40th anniversary celebration of historic streetcar operations on our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. (Jeff Terry photo)

## Our Season is Here

Bill Arends—General Supt.

Spring? There have been times this year that I thought it was not going to happen. Until a couple of weeks ago we could not get TCRT No. 1300 from the ready barn into the maintenance barn for annual maintenance because of the 4 to 5 inch layer of ice in front of the car barn doors. But she has been moved and the competent shop crew has been working diligently. Along with the annual inspection No. 1300 got a very thorough cleaning, starting on the roof, by **Karl Jones**, **Matt Leibel** and **Ben Franske** (see photo on page 4).

Re-certification of operators, another rite of spring, has also fallen victim to the vagaries of this spring. Twice, on different Thursday afternoons, a number of Operators were scheduled to re-certify. Twice, because of large amounts of wet snow falling, the re-certification had to be cancelled. Finally on a Saturday morning, after shoveling snow away from the car barn doors, the re-certification was completed, but only as far as 42nd Street because the crossing was closed by snow. But now all that snow and bad weather are nothing more than memories. Re-certification is progressing well with most operators and foremen re-certified. If you are an operator or a foreman and have not yet re-certified, please get in touch with Chris Heck as soon as possible so he can cross that off his list and devote his time to scheduling the training of the 18 trainees at CHSL and the 8 at ESL.

Our operating season will kick off at both sites on Saturday, May 4th. And what a busy day it will be. Not only will we be operating, starting at 10 AM at ESL and 12:30 PM at CHSL, but also there are 2 charters scheduled late in the afternoon at CHSL. After a long layoff it will be great to see Nos. 1300 and 265 out on the tracks again. Nothing signals spring more than a **BIG YELLOW TROLLEY** operating at Lake Harriet and Excelsior.

While this newsletter is received by a larger audience than just operating personnel, please bear with me while I devote a paragraph to operations. At CHSL each shift consists of a crew of 4, a foreman and 3 operating personnel. The 3 operating personnel can be either 3 Operators or 2 Operators and 1 Station Agent. When signing up on ShiftPlanning, if the shift you want already has 2 operators assigned, sign up as a station agent. This does not mean you will be the station agent for the entire shift. All three qualified Operators will rotate through all operations as a motorman, conductor, station agent and crossing guard. So if you see the shift you want already has 2 operators but does not have the full complement of 4 personnel, click on the Operator/Station Agent box.

So enough about operations. It's time to get the streetcars rolling. Thanks to **Eric Neumann** the station has been thoroughly cleaned. **Charles Barthold** and **Rod Eaton** have fully stocked the shelves. The cars have been inspected, maintained and cleaned. The Foremen and Operators have been re-certified. Now it's time for fun. Hope to see you all soon. ☺



## 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](http://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**  
 May—2013

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 May 20, 2013.

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

13326 Huntington Lane  
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481

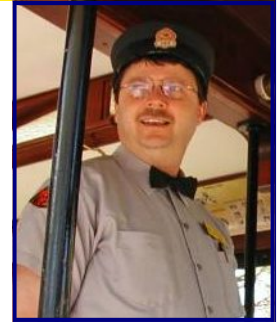
You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)



**From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum**

Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

**H**i everyone! Superintendent of Training **Chris Heck** recently told me that we have a very large class of over twenty pupils signed up for streetcar operator training. This is great and exciting news for MSM and I hope that all of you will join me in welcoming and training these new people. Now perhaps you are thinking that since you are not one of our trainers, it's not really your job. **Wrong!** When I started training fifteen years ago the first thing I noticed was how nice every-



one was to me. Here I was, a brand new member who did not know anything about trolleys, and the first time I walked in through the door everyone treated me like I was someone important. I'll never forget the late, great **George Isaacs** taking the time to talk to me to find out who I was and what I wanted to do at the streetcar and patiently answering my questions. That made an *immediate positive* impression on me and helped me to decide that I really wanted to come back and find out more about this crazy organization. Now whether you've been here forty years or one year, you can do the same with each of our new operators whenever you have the chance. Find out who they are, why did they volunteer, what are they interested in doing here, and tell them the same thing about yourself. Answer their questions and, most importantly, **tell them that you are really glad that they are here.** You will make that great first impression which makes new people want to keep coming back.

**A**nd come to think about it, this is the same thing we should be doing with every passenger. Yes, MSM is a museum with the important mission of preserving and teaching Minnesota electric railway history, but this is not just a job, this is a **fun job.** We do not operate the cars in a vacuum populated only with a bunch of "trolley nerds." We are a customer service organization that must make every passenger happy and determined to come back and ride again. I say we **must** do this because passenger fares are the single greatest source of our revenue and if we do not maintain and grow our ridership, MSM will someday cease to exist. It's that simple. Yes, it does take some effort on our part to entertain our passengers, but gosh, it sure is fun to see the smiles on their faces and it makes me happy too, every time. So that's our mission, ladies and gentlemen, starting May 4<sup>th</sup>: Welcome and teach those new operators, welcome and teach and entertain every passenger, and have fun doing it. Hmm, I think I'll take a look at Shift

Planning and get myself signed up for a shift or two. I'll see you on the car! ☺

**3M Provides Grant to MSM**

The 3M Foundation has donated \$250 to MSM in recognition of Member **Matt Leibel's** commitment to our Museum. Matt donated over 100 hours to MSM in 2012. As a volunteer with our Museum, Matt has been very active as a streetcar ops Shift Foreman and in the shop over the winter. Matt also works on the track during the warmer months. "3M employees like Matt generously give their time and skills to help improve lives," said **Kimberly Price**, Vice-president, 3M Community Affairs. "We are pleased to recognize their commitment to their communities."

As part of the 3M Volunteer Match, the 3M Foundation will donate \$250 to eligible non-profit organizations for which a 3M employee volunteers 25 hours or more per calendar year. Since 2000, Volunteer Matches totaling over \$4.5 million have gone to over 2,700 schools or non-profit organizations in 50 states plus the District of Columbia. For more information on this program, please contact 3M Community Affairs at 651-733-0144 or visit [www.3Mgiving.com](http://www.3Mgiving.com).

3M Community Giving is helping to improve lives in communities around the world. Celebrating 60 years of formalized giving, 3M and the 3M Foundation have invested more than \$1.2 billion in cash and products to education and charitable organizations. These donations were bolstered by thousands of employee and retiree volunteers. In 2012 3M awarded \$56.6 million to non-profit organizations.



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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

**R**ecent acquisitions. MSM's photo and small artifact collection continues to grow. Last August there were 10,637 catalogued items. The new total is 11,366, an increase of over 700. We added the 276 negatives taken by **Norman Rolfe** of California. I've been visiting other historical societies and have acquired copies of photos from the Minnesota Historical Society, Dakota County Historical Society, Northeast Minnesota History Center, Douglas County Historical Society (Superior, WI), Virginia (MN) Historical Society, Iron Range Historical Society and Anoka County Historical Society. Member **Dick Stoner** has kindly shared photos from his collection. A box from the **Jim Kreuzberger** collection contained a group of photos that I had overlooked before. Several photos simply appeared one day, donated by the granddaughter of the president of the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union in the 1950s. In addition, I've catalogued almost all of the interior car cards, as well as a large number of TCRT technical drawings. Finally, **Dave French** continues to purchase photos online from EBay for the museum.

Recently Dave was able to acquire a most unusual document. TCRT president Thomas Lowry idolized Abraham Lincoln. In 1905 he acquired the railroad

car that transported Lincoln's body home for burial. He rehabbed it at the 31<sup>st</sup> Street Shops and put it on display near 37<sup>th</sup> and Central Avenues in Northeast Minneapolis, where it unfortunately was destroyed in a grass fire. Dave was able to purchase a TCRT brochure giving the history of the funeral car, along with directions to visit it via streetcar. It will be reprinted in an upcoming issue of *Twin City Lines*.

**W**here are the car cards? A couple of months ago I removed all the vintage car cards from all of our streetcars. They have now been scanned and copies are being printed on durable vinyl. The copies will be displayed inside the streetcars, while the originals are filed away, protecting them from further deterioration and damage. The only problem is that it's taking longer than I expected to get them reproduced. As a result, we'll have to run for a couple of weeks with car cards missing. Crew members, please explain that to your passengers if they ask about it.

Once the copies are printed, each car will have a more representative set of cards. In the past, some ads from the incorrect time period were placed in some cars, and that will no longer be the case. Also, making duplicates allows us to display some really great ads in more than one car. ☺



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

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

**T**he Lake Harriet Tuesday and Saturday shop crews have been working hard to get all five streetcars ready to operate this season. After the interior lighting problem we had with No. 1300 last year (remember we almost had a fire in the ceiling lights), **Karl Jones** and some of the Saturday crew worked on Duluth No. 265 to electrically insulate the interior lights and paint the interior roof, while the crew started some much needed work on the car's exterior which was showing wear after almost 30 years since it was restored and entered service at CHSL. We have repainted the doors as well as the front green fender, both of which were showing their age. We still have quite a lot of repainting to do which may have to wait until next winter. We will also be repainting all the seats on No. 1300 and No. 265 as time permits while each car gets switched out of service every other month.

**M**any Operators may remember that No. 1300's front door was leaking a lot of air late last season. While we have several replacement door engines

in our spare stock, unfortunately they are all in need of maintenance themselves. So, this winter we rebuilt one door engine as a replacement for the front door one, and are now working on fixing all the spare door engines. This will give us easy replacement parts, as well as a couple we might be able to trade/sell to any other museum that might need a replacement.

**W**e also have been busy working on the streetcars out at ESL, including rebuilding the air compressor governor for Duluth No. 78 and also repainting the seats in TCRT "gate car" No. 1239. Both cars are now ready for training and regular service at ESL.

**C**ashier needed. In my second job as chief cashier for CHSL, I am looking for at least one more individual to help with our cashier duties. This involves picking up the daily receipts, depositing all but the next weeks "seed money," and putting the deposit information in the car barn for the Treasurer. Anyone close to CHSL and interested in helping with this can E-mail me at [jprestholdt@comcast.net](mailto:jprestholdt@comcast.net) ☺

**What's Happening?**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| May 4  | Start of weekend operations at Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and at the Excelsior Streetcar Line |
| May 4  | Streetcar cleaning at CHSL   |
| May 16 | Start of Thursday operations at ESL  |
| May 24 | Start of daily operations at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line                                   |
| May 27 | Memorial Day operations at ESL & CHSL. CHSL early bird service starts at 9:30AM                |

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary and Superintendent of Operations

**D**onations Received. We are still receiving much needed donations to our Museum's annual appeal. Over the last two months, we've received donations from the following people.

**General Fund:** Bernie Braun, Clark Hoffman, Tom & Mary Beaumont, John Dillery, and Barbara Tiede in memory of Bill Olsen.

We extend our grateful thanks to all who have donated to our Museum. See also the box at the bottom of page 2 for a very special donation to our Museum from the 3M Corporation. Many thanks to 3M!

**N**ew Members. We've had several new members join the MSM family since you received the last issue of this newsletter: Dick Mullen, Jerome Samuelson, Ron Nietzel, Mike Mayer, Denny Morrow and Wayne Ahlgren. Welcome all of you to our MSM family, folks!

**C**orrection. In the last issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** the obituary on the bottom of page 4 misspelled the last name of **Bill Olsen**. Bill's last name is Olsen with an "e"—not an "o." We regret the error. ☹

**George K. Isaacs Car barn & Shop Expansion Update**

**N**ow that the George Isaacs car barn bathroom has been installed, work is beginning on the larger car barn expansion project. The goal is an addition to the lake side of the present shop building. It will include a "speeder shed" where the tower car and other work cars will be stored. This will free up space in the "ready barn" for Winona No. 10. The addition will also include an office/library room and more shop space.

**A**t its February meeting, the MSM Board approved a budget of \$10,000 for the first step in the process, design of a storm water runoff system. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District have made it clear that slowing and treating the rain and snow runoff from the building is required before they will approve the addition. We've just hired a consultant to do the design.

**T**o fund this work, I submitted three grant applications to foundations and recently learned that all three had been approved, although two were only partially funded. The grants are:

- \$10,000 from the Winona Foundation
- \$5000 from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Electric Railway Foundation
- \$1000 from the Dailey Foundation

We give a special **thank you** to these foundations for their very generous support to this important project.

**T**he entire car barn expansion project is estimated to cost about \$95,000, so we have a ways to go with fundraising. Your donations will be most welcome. (Report by Aaron Isaacs)



**Spring Cleaning.** On the left photo **Karl Jones** (left) and **Matt Leibel** are using a power washer and scrubbing down the canvas roof on TCRT No. 1300. Don't fret—the power is off in the trolley wire. In the photo on the right, **Ben Franske** (left) and **Matt Leibel** are washing down the wooden sides of No. 1300. Our 2013 Season is now here and the streetcars will be gleaming inside and out. (Jim Vaitkunas photos)