

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Jan-Feb 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- If you haven't done so already, please donate to our Annual Appeal.
- Looking for something interesting to keep yourself busy this winter? Come on down to the Isaacs or Excelsior car barns and help maintain our historic streetcars.
- Plan to attend your Museum's annual meeting on Saturday, March 21st

Winter a Quiet Season? Hardly! Bill Arends—General Supt.

First I want to do a little re-cap of our 2014 operating season. A good season it was. Ridership was up. We had over 40,700 riders. This is only the second time in the past decade that we've gone over 40,000. We had a great charter season with over 2,500 riders boarding the streetcars. Special events were again very successful drawing in over 6,100 riders. Special events and charters accounted for over 21% of our total ridership. Our newest special event, **Vinternaat**, a ride lighted by only the moon, luminaria and Christmas lights, attracted nearly 200 riders during the two-hours of running. And next year it should be even better thanks to the additional 6 reusable Christmas trees that have been donated by **Patrick Desbonnet**.



Now it's the quiet season at MSM. The "off-season." No streetcars are running. Snow is falling on the tracks. Volunteers are kicking back and waiting for spring to get back at the streetcar controls. But is it really quiet? Is there a quiet season? Maybe for the streetcars but not for the volunteers. Even during the winter when the streetcars go idle the work goes on. Stop at the shops at either ESL or Como-Harriet and see how quiet it is. Seats are being re-caned, DSR No. 265 is undergoing extensive maintenance on the body and Winona No. 10 progress continues.

After the operating season ends the work goes on. Merchandise needs to be inventoried to determine what has been sold and what needs to be ordered for next season. This leads to discussion about what are the "hot items" and should be reordered and what is "not so hot" and maybe should be discounted. Of course, there's the annual maintenance on all the streetcars. Maintenance that must be done annually to keep the streetcars running. Not a discussion about "this or that" or "when or how" but maintenance that must be done to keep the historic streetcars running safely. Then there's budgeting—an unpleasant task. Oh! No! It costs money to keep operating and we have to determine where this money is coming from. And we have to figure out how much we have and how much we can spend. Fortunately, with the direction of Treasure **Keith Anderson** and Accountant **Don Nielson** it all gets put together.

And then there's the planning for the upcoming season. What events will we have? When will these events be held? When will Foremen, Operators and Station Agents be re-certified? Who will set up ShiftPlanning so it is ready for the upcoming season? How can we recruit new operators? Who will train new operators?

Quiet? Yes for the streetcars. But the planning and the work that makes MSM a successful museum is a year-a-round effort by a lot of very hard working volunteers. *Twin City Lines* and the *Streetcar Currents* will continue to be published throughout the winter. Maintenance and restoration swings into high gear. Thanks volunteers for all your dedicated time to MSM in 2014. See you on the line soon. ☺

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule

We are now into our Streetcar CURRENTS winter publication schedule. See the notice on page 6 for details.

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Masthead. This is what Winona No. 10 looked like as delivered in April, 1914. The car was painted in four liveries during it's 34-years of providing transportation to the people in Winona. We plan to paint No. 10 in the 1930-38 livery of orange body, buff window sash and red roof. (MSM Photo archives)

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 16509
 Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 January-February 2015

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 March 20, 2015.

Please send items to the 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


From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Dave French — Board Chair

Hi everyone! Since I did not write a column for the last issue of the *Streetcar Currents*, I hope all of you had a great holiday season and will enjoy a happy and healthy year in 2015. As I get older, I find that time seems to go by more quickly, not the individual days but rather the weeks, months, and years seem to fly by me with increasing speed. Because of this I hesitate to wish that time would go faster, but I have to say I am really looking forward to our upcoming operating season and can't wait for the cars to come out of hibernation and start rolling up and down the line again! As I've written before, MSM is not a conventional brick-and-mortar museum. Rather, the operation of our streetcars is by far the most important way we fulfill our mission: "To preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's electric street and interurban railway history." And when we do this by giving folks a chance to ride the trolley, we accomplish our vision: "To provide visitors with a vivid visual and emotional experience that will both educate and entertain them and that will result in their willingness to return, ride again, encourage others to do so, and become members and volunteers."

But the streetcars by themselves are incapable of doing these things. Nope, it's the members and active volunteers who get it done! **You**, who donate money and repair and fix and run the cars and interact with the passengers, who do innumerable behind-the-scenes tasks that are mostly invisible to the public but which keep MSM humming, who do research and search for artifacts and maintain our website and develop displays in the depot and carbarn, and... Well, you get the idea. Just as Twin City Rapid Transit and Duluth Street Railway and all of the smaller streetcar systems in Minnesota and North Dakota depended on dedicated employees to keep the cars running, so does MSM depend on you, except that all of you are volunteers and do everything for **no pay!** I am very proud of MSM and consider my volunteering for the last 17 years to be one of the best things I've ever done. And I am proud and honored to have had the privilege to know and work with all of you. Let's see, is it April yet? Let's get those carbarn doors open!

On January 24th we held our regular Board meeting. As Chairman I was very proud of our Board because at this meeting we had to review, revise, and approve the 2015 budget. I am sure many of you have been involved with organizational budgeting at work or through your involvement in a non-profit such as a church, so you know that preparing and approving the annual budget is no easy task. But because of the hard preparatory work done by our Budget Committee (Treasurer **Keith Anderson**; Vice Chair **Aaron Isaacs**; Bookkeeper **Don Neilsen**; General Superintendent **Bill Arends**; Board Director **Ben Franske**; and, newly appointed Chief Mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki**) our deliberations were made

much easier. We discussed and approved the budget and completed numerous other agenda items in only 1 hour and 50 minutes. Thanks to the Board for a job well done!

As you probably all know, our 2014-2015 Annual Appeal is under way. **Jim Vaitkunas** has a report of recent donations received on page 6 in this issue and the number and the total amount received is really impressive! I have written and mailed over 60 acknowledgement letters so I know we are off to a flying start. As I have written before, **all** donations are important. Sure, it would be great if we all could afford to donate a hundred or a thousand or more dollars but perhaps like me, you have a limited budget. Regardless of size, all donations add up to a good amount of funds to accomplish the carbarn expansion and other important projects. And, of course, it is not too late to make your donation. I have it on my list of personal "accounts payable" to make that donation when I have the money to do it. Thanks to all for your generosity!

Have you ever attended one of our Annual Meetings? If not, I really want to encourage you to try it. Yes, I know annual meetings have a reputation for being somewhat boring, but MSM Annual Meetings are really enjoyable. Honest! You get to hear brief reports about the state of our museum, and plans for the future. You get to ask questions and make

(Continued on bottom of page 6)





Technology and Automation Update — *News of MSM's Technology Advances*

Ben Franske — *MSM Chief Technology Manager*

Last spring we took on two projects at CHSL which anyone who visited or worked last season was sure to notice. First, a team including **Charles Barthold**, **Bill Arends**, **Rod Eaton**, and myself evaluated and replaced the much-maligned cash register with a new easier to use touchscreen model which allowed us to take credit cards and resulted in about a 60% increase in depot sales last year. Second, **Joel Schuweiler** and I installed a multimedia display which allows us to capture the attention of visitors and show many more of the photos from our archives than we can do with static displays. In the future **Aaron Isaacs** and I plan to continue to update and enhance the presentation and to show some of the film footage we have of operating streetcars.

Little did we know when we undertook these projects that it would begin a review of many more of the longstanding processes we have at MSM. **Aaron Isaacs** and I have been working this winter on a comprehensive list of projects where we believe technology can reinforce or enhance the mission of MSM to interpret and educate the public about Minnesota's electric railway history. These projects tend to fall into one of two broad categories.

The first is vitally important, but not so interesting to the casual observer, and that is to use technology to improve many of our internal museum processes. There are many datasets which we maintain at the museum from ridership statistics to volunteer hours, membership rosters, operator certification, financials, maintenance records, and more. Right now all of this data is compiled and stored by individual MSM departments and Managers. There is a great deal of cross-over and double-entry of data as well as increasing chances and real errors in data entry.

As we have grown from a very small museum to a larger organization this problem has only compounded. Additionally, we're spending quite a bit of limited volunteer time on inefficient entry and sharing of data. Therefore, it's time we take a look at many of our processes and ask ourselves why we do things a certain way and what we might be able to do to improve the process and better utilize our volunteers.

Second, it is critical that we continue to think of ways we can better engage, interest, and share our archives with researchers and the public. Over the years we have amassed quite a collection of photographs, film, documents, and artifacts related to electric railways in Minnesota. In the past it has been difficult for a museum with little physical space like ours, to share that information. Luckily, the Internet provides a great opportunity to make more of that publicly available including such things as being able to search our extensive photo database from a website.

In addition, there are many other ways we could interest people in our operations including providing a live webcam feed of our operations, a live "trolley-tracker" map showing current car location along the line, and a special website specifically for mobile device users which could include audio and video history along the line, etc.

Obviously there is much opportunity to use the tools of technology to reinforce and strengthen our mission so we'll be working on these and many more projects in the future but we can't do it alone! I know that we have talented volunteers and potential volunteers who may not fit into some of our existing jobs but if you know someone who might be interested in helping out with these projects please let us know! 🌐

HELP WANTED

Three important positions in the Museum's organization chart have been vacant for a long time, but really need to be filled. As always, we're looking for volunteers.

Chief Engineer. Responsible for the museum's buildings and physical plant (track and trolley overhead). The Chief Engineer will set priorities and help recruit volunteers that will do the work. Training will be provided.

Track Foreman. This person will be responsible for organizing and scheduling crews that will perform track maintenance and repairs. This could be divided into separate jobs for Como-Harriet and Excelsior. Training will be provided.

Volunteer Coordinator. This person would handle the orientation of new volunteers and see that they get placed in a job they like. We want to keep from losing new volunteers because no one paid the proper attention to them.

Video Editor. We're looking for someone who knows the Apple iMovies editing software and can teach Aaron Isaacs how to edit the 2 hours of Twin City Lines digital video in the MSM collection.

Contact Aaron Isaacs (aaronmona@aol.com) or General Superintendent Bill Arends (motormanbill@gmail.com) if you're interested or want to learn more about these opportunities to help **YOUR** Museum.



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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

Another streetcar waiting shelter discovered. We've always known about the Wirth Park streetcar waiting shelter, located at the end of TCRT's Glenwood Avenue line. The Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* newspaper did a short feature on it and noted MSM's unsuccessful effort to relocate it to the Lake Calhoun end of CHSL.

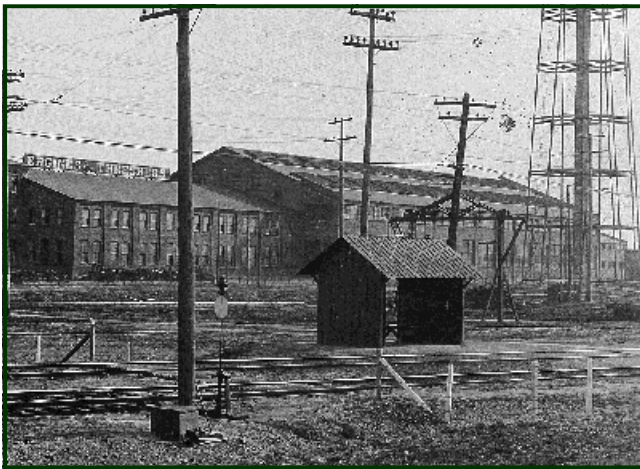
The *Star-Tribune* story caught the attention of a Minnetonka woman, who emailed MSM to say that her neighbors had a former streetcar shelter in their yard. Bill and Rose Arends and I visited to investigate, and it turned out to be the real thing. (See photos below.)

TTCRT built shelters all along its line to Lake Minnetonka. The ones east of Hopkins had one design, while

shelters of a different design were located in Hopkins, at Glen Lake, Clear Springs and perhaps at other stops. We believe the survivor is the Clear Springs shelter, located just south of the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 101. It was probably acquired when the line was abandoned in 1932. It was moved to what was then a farmhouse located a couple of blocks southeast of the former stop.

Today the shelter functions as a detached screened-in place to eat, relax or let the kids play. The end walls have been cut down and replaced with screens, but the roof, roof braces, siding and dimensions all match the original shelter.

Who knows what other surviving artifacts are still out there? 🌀



(Above left) Here's the Hopkins shelter located at 9th Avenue, ca. 1915. That's the Minneapolis-Moline factory in the background. (*Hopkins Historical Society photo*) (Above right) The former Clear Springs shelter is now used as a backyard recreation building. (*Rose Arends photo*)



Here's a great find on Ebay!

The photo on the left is the first one we've seen of Twin Ports Electric Lines No. 265 in service. It shows our No. 265 (former TCRT No. 1791) in its as-built gate car configuration sitting on Duluth's West Superior Street in front of the DSR carbarn.

This appears to be a record shot of No. 265 right after it had an altercation with an automobile most likely. Note the gentleman in the overcoat standing in front of the car (The carbarn Foreman?), the missing people catcher, and while the resolution probably doesn't allow you to see them, there are scrapes along the car's body. **Dave French** saw the photo on Ebay and we won the bidding.

MSM ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

The Minnesota Streetcar Museum will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, March 21, 2015 starting at 10:00 AM. Location of the annual meeting is the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting, 3517 Raleigh Avenue, St. Louis Park, MN (<http://www.pavekmuseum.org/>). This is an important annual event for our Museum as we are required to hold the meeting and conduct the Museum's business in compliance with federal and state law. Having a quorum is important so please plan to attend. The Pavek Museum is a fascinating place to visit and we hope that holding our meeting there is an additional incentive to attend. We will be able to tour the Museum after the annual meeting.



2015 Budget and Isaacs Car barn Addition Update

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Vice-Chair and Car barn Expansion Manager

The 2015 Budget. The Board of Directors has approved the 2015 budget. It projects operating expenses of \$99,888 against income of \$115,180, for a surplus of \$15,292. Please note that this is the operating budget. Capital improvements such as the Isaacs car barn addition and Winona No. 10 are budgeted separately. Winona No. 10 is largely paid for. There are no more big expenses left, just a lot of volunteer time to finish putting No. 10 back together.

At Como-Harriet the fence along Queen Avenue will be extended all the way to the pedestrian underpass, and that should keep most people from crossing the tracks there to reach the station platform.

At Excelsior, track 2 into the car barn will be shifted so any car can fit through the doorway.

The big project is the Isaacs car barn addition, currently estimated to cost \$240,000. The museum currently has funds on hand to hopefully get the job done and still keep a prudent reserve.

In case you didn't know, the budget is prepared by the Budget Committee and approved by the Board. The Committee this year was chaired by Treasurer **Keith Anderson** and included Bookkeeper **Don Nielson**, General Superintendent **Bill Arends**, Board Vice-Chair **Aaron Isaacs**, Board Member **Ben Franske** and Chief Mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki**. Input was solicited from everyone authorized to expend funds.

Car barn expansion. At its January meeting, the Board of Directors approved the 2015 budget, and authorized the construction of the addition to the Isaacs car barn when spring arrives. The City of Minneapolis has also issued the construction permit. This is significant because a few months ago it looked like the car barn construction would have to be phased over two years. That was because of the high cost estimate

for a steel-framed building, and the amount of money in the museum's bank accounts going into last fall.

What has changed? First, construction manager **Glen Sandness** changed the building plan from steel framing to a wood-framed structure, which cuts the framing cost in half. Second, there should be significant savings by reducing the amount of retaining wall replacement on the hillside above the car barn. Third, a very successful series of Halloween and Holiday events combined with strong Annual Appeal donations boosted the cash on hand to its highest level ever. As a result, the building will be complete, but will remain unfurnished until we see what our cash position is after the spring. We're stopping short of completing three tasks:

1. Furnish the interior of the office/library. Hopefully we can get donations of a table, chairs, telephone, computer, file cabinets and shelving. A scanner/printer has already been donated. For shelving we need library-type shelves and one multi-drawer flat file for maps and oversize photos. If anyone can arrange the donation of these items, please contact Aaron Isaacs at 612-929-7066 or aaronmona@aol.com.
2. Stormwater runoff treatment for the existing car barn roof. This involves reversing the flow of the roof gutters to feed a cistern located behind the shop. The cost is about \$30,000, but we have a grant from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District for \$14,000 of that.
3. Repair the leaky car barn roof.

Toward the end of the year we'll see where we are financially and decide when to proceed with those projects. ☺



Winona No. 10 Progress

Here are a couple of photos showing some of the good progress being made on Winona No. 10.

(Left) Most of the interior woodwork is installed and the ceiling panels will go up next.

(Right) The platforms are looking good. Note the air brake stand is installed. Not seen, the under-floor air piping is being connected to the air compressor and brake cylinders.

(Both photos by Dick Zawacki)



What's Happening?

- March 21 MSM Annual Meeting starts at 10 AM at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park.
- April Recertification of operating personnel begins. A separate notice will be sent out in late March.
- April & May New Operator training—schedule to be determined. **You can start recruiting your friends now.**
- May 2 Start of weekend operations at CHSL and ESL
- May 5 Start of Tuesday afternoon operations at ESL.



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

Annual Appeal a Big Success. Our 2014-2015 Annual Appeal fund raiser has resulted in a tremendous response from our members and friends. To date we've received over \$21,000 from over 70 donors. We truly appreciate the following members and friends for their most generous support to our Museum.

General Fund:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Code weavers in recognition of Andy Balfour | Frank Sandberg in memory of Judy Sandberg |
| Ronald Wassem Don Nielsen Stanley Kasal | Bruce Kobs Rod Eaton Phil Epstein |
| Ben Franske Bill Graham Jay Halvorson | K. Foundation Ed McGlynn Nick Modders |
| Russ Olson Jim Otto Bill Preiss | John Reinan Barbara Risken Judge James Rogers |
| Jill Seinola Eric Tratner Tom Vogt | David Bostrom Bruce Gustafson The Head Foundation |
| Roger LeClair Bob Woodburn Dick Niemiec | |

Carbarn Addition:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Thomas Dailey Foundation | Richard Darling | Rod Eaton | Aaron Isaacs | Dennis Stephens |
| Dick Zawacki Jerry Olsen | Earl & Bettye Anderson | Doug Anderson | Bill & Rose Arends | |
| Tony Bauman Doug Beedon | Ray Bensen, Jr. | Glen Bottoms | Bernie Braun | John Cartwright |
| Steve Collin Larry Coulter | John DeWitt | Dutton Foster | Russ Isbrandt | Myles Jarrow |
| Karl Jones Rick Krenske | John Linhoff | Loren Martin | Gary Neunsinger | Jerry Peterson |
| Robert Powell John Prestholdt | Phil Settergren | Mark Sims | Jim Vaitkunas | Gerald Robertson |
| Dave VenHuizen Terry Wagoner | Dennis Fischer | Louis Hoffman | Hal Johnson | Robert R. Johnson |
| Joe Plante & Eric Neumann | Darrell Arndt | Don Nielsen | | |

Winona No. 10:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Scott Heiderich in memory of Judy Sandberg | Eleanor Dollery in memory of Blair Dollery |
|--|--|

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

suggestions to various MSM officers who will be in attendance. You get to enjoy a great presentation on electric railway history from our own **Aaron Isaacs**, and, best of all, you get to see and converse with your fellow MSM members, both old friends and folks you haven't met before. This year our annual meeting will be at 10am on March 21st at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park (<http://www.pavekmuseum.org/>). I am really looking forward to touring this museum as I have never been there and it appears to be a fascinating place. I hope you will join me!

This will be my final Annual Meeting as Board Chair, a job I've held since February, 2009. I will remain on the Board but living 300 miles away has made it difficult for me to perform some aspects of the Chairman job well. As I have stated before, no one should have to do a job at MSM forever. We all want to avoid that dreaded "burnout." Healthy organizations strike a balance between retaining experienced people in positions of responsibility and rotating experienced and new people into various jobs who bring new ideas, new skills, and new energy. **Dick Zawacki** recently stepped up to take the position of Chief Mechanical Officer, a position that has been vacant for far too long. Vice Chair **Aaron Isaacs** will be succeeding me as Chairman (thanks Aaron!). **Bill Arends** will be stepping down as General Superintendent at the end of 2015 and we are searching for his successor. You may not think you are qualified or experienced enough to take a position of responsibility but you are mistaken. You will have a lot of help, and I believe that the process of learning a new job without a lot of pre-conceived notions about the way it should be done or has always been done helps us to come up with new ideas to do the job better, and thus MSM benefits. Please keep this in mind when you see new openings posted. We look forward to working with you! And, I'll see you at the Annual Meeting! ☺

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we continue our winter publication schedule. Each year the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is published every other month from November to May. Therefore, publication of the March-April 2015 issue will be on or about April 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after that date please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com