

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS



June—2017

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



**Bill the Motorman says:**

## IT'S A PRETTY BIG DEAL!

As most of us know, our Museum is hosting the annual fall conference of the Heritage Rail Alliance (HRA), formerly known as the Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums (ATRRM). Our Museum has been a member of HRA/ATRRM and a predecessor organization, Association of Railway Museums (ARM) since the early 1980s. Down through the years, we've had a long and fruitful association with the railway museum and tourist railroad community/industry as members of these organizations.

In 1995, our Museum, which was then a "division" of the Minnesota Transportation Museum, hosted the annual meeting of the Association of Railway Museums, along with the members from MTM's "railroad" division. As I recall we had around 150-175 ARM members attend and, if memory serves, it was a very successful conference. (*I started volunteering with our Museum in 1995.* —Ed.)

It's been a while since our Museum has hosted one of these conferences, so about a year and a half ago your Museum's leadership decided that it was time to step forward and host the conference. MSM leaders also felt that this would be an excellent opportunity to showcase our Museum, given the tremendous progress we've made in the last ten-plus years. We also felt that it would be a good thing to offer HRA/ATRRM members the opportunity to visit and enjoy the many local rail museums and rail-themed sites and to explore the interesting and beautiful Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The purpose of this column isn't to give you the intimate details on the conference, other than the brief summary of the conference information and general activities schedule that follows. You are invited to go to one of the following websites to get much more detail on the conference and to get the registration forms.

[www.TrolleyRide.org](http://www.TrolleyRide.org) or [www.atrrm.org](http://www.atrrm.org)

Click on the registration form and you'll see what the

entire conference schedule looks like.

Here is an overview of the conference schedule. The trips on October 3 and 4 are pre-conference trips.

**Tuesday, October 3.** Bus tour of Twin City rail attractions not covered during the conference, including a ride on the Northstar commuter line.

**Wednesday, October 4.**

- 1) Trip to Duluth to visit the Lake Superior Railroad Museum and a ride on the North Shore Scenic Railroad to Two Harbors behind Duluth & Northeastern steam locomotive No. 28.
- 2) Alternate tour of Twin City streetcar history sites with guest operations of the Museum's streetcars at CHSL in the afternoon.

**Thursday, October 5.**

- 1) Seminars in the morning until 12-Noon.
- 2) In the afternoon, we'll ride on MTM's Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railroad.

**Friday, October 6.**

- 1) Seminars in the morning until 12-Noon.
- 2) In the afternoon, we'll take a ride on our Excelsior Streetcar Line and the streetcar steamboat *Minnehaha*.

**Saturday, October 7.**

- 1) In the morning we visit our Museum's Como-

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A view of some of the vendor displays at the 2016 HRA/ATRRM Conference held in Savannah, Georgia.

## 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 interurban 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 are:

P.O. Box 16509  
 Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509  
 952-922-1096

**Streetcar CURRENTS**  
**June — 2017**

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 edition of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is July 20, 2017.

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

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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**W**hat's happening with TCRT No. 1300?

Everyone wants to know when No. 1300 will be back in service. The answer is we aren't sure yet, but the work is progressing. Like all restorations to vintage hardware, unexpected problems surface that cause delays. Here's where we're at. Thanks to **Dennis Stephens** for providing the details.



The trucks have been completely disassembled. The motors have all been sent to L & S Electric in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Inspection revealed three pretty solid motors but one in an advanced state of armature bearing failure. Excessive motor bearing wear caused the armature to drop and chafe the stator laminations and begin to scuff the field winding insulation. We dodged a bullet and suffered only cosmetic harm. The motor passed the megger (meg-ohm) insulation test.

Recently, L & S reported a misalignment of the motor spindle bearings and the motor suspension (a/k/a motor support) bearings. This causes the pinion gear to bind when run against the bull gear. Apparently, the sloppy condition prior to repair allowed the gear teeth to move about and mesh without damage. Additional machining steps must be undertaken to rectify the problem and insure that the motor spindle is perfectly (or near perfectly) parallel with the axle. L & S apparently has a repair strategy.

**O**ne of the truck frames was found to be out of tram, meaning it was not square. The G.K. Isaacs Car barn shop crew has bent it back into tram. The front and back transverse members of both truck frames were bowed. MSM's shop crew straightened both using heavy duty pullers and application of heat. Worn bolt holes still need to be repaired.

**Jim Willmore** arranged plasma cutting of eight new equalizers (the lower part of the side frames) at Truax Company. We specified a somewhat stronger grade of steel, one typically used in bridge construction. The cost difference was negligible, appearance is identical to the originals and reliability will be enhanced. **Jim Truax** has donated the considerable cost of raw material in this and other cases.

We initially thought the four axles would have to be sent to a railroad wheel shop for the treads and flanges to be turned. It was a pleasant surprise to discover that L & S has a lathe that can turn wheels. Our contractor **Rob Mangels** brought them one of the axles and they have successfully turned the wheels. Thanks to **Jim Willmore** for providing the profile. The other three axles have been transported to L & S and should go on the lathe soon.

**T**he original truck coil springs were found to be broken or fatigued. **Dennis Stephens** worked with Carolina Coil to determine the correct spring strength. The eight pairs of coil springs (inners and outers) have been manufactured and are about to be delivered.

**N**umber 1300 was removed from service when one of the axle roller bearings became detached and failed. The rest of the bearings were OK. A nationwide search by **Tom Schramm** and **Mark Digre** located 10 sets of the identical vintage Hyatt bearings. These are rare and spares will be needed eventually, so we bought them all. They weren't cheap, but that's insurance for the future. Sixteen new steel pedestal liners and 16 journal box liners were fabricated at the Truax Company. **Jim Willmore** has generated CAD files for replacement parts.

*(Continued on next page)*

**(It's a Pretty Big Deal** *Continued from page 1)*

Harriet Streetcar Line and take a few rides.

- 2) In the afternoon we'll visit MTM's Jackson Street Roundhouse and the St. Paul Union Depot.
- 3) In the evening is the annual meeting of HRA/ATRRM and the conference banquet.

Busy schedule, eh? Yes, it is! And, based on the schedule alone, the conference is a **PRETTY BIG DEAL**.

**T**here's more! The conference hotel is the Loews Minneapolis Hotel, located on 1st Avenue, North, a block south of the Blue/Green light rail line's Warehouse District-Hennepin station.

On Thursday and Friday mornings, we'll be accomplishing one of the primary conference goals, which is to educate conference attendees with seminar content that will, hopefully, help them manage their organizations better and make their volunteer jobs easier, more efficient and fun. This is an extremely important goal and a major benefit of attending these conferences because the vast majority of HRA's members and conference attendees are volunteers. Nowhere else can these hard-working volunteers attend seminars that focus specifically on what they do in their museums and tourist railroads. It is important that we select seminars that are useful to the conferees.



Field trips are designed to be educational as well as fun. Here we see a docent at the Harris Tower Museum, operated by the Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS describe and explain to conferees the workings of the ex-Pennsylvania Railroad interlocking tower. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

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

**R**ob Mangels has done some repair of cracked pedestal castings (straightening and welding) as well as miscellaneous other cast steel brackets. Journal box liners must be secured by drilling and tapping new holes in both the liner and journal box castings. That work is about half complete. The truck bolsters are in Rob's shop as are the coil spring brackets. All require repair.

In summary, the project is at least half completed. I expect the second half to go much faster. ⊕

So, for the attendees, the annual HRA conference is a **PRETTY BIG DEAL**.

**H**ow many people do we expect will attend this year's fall conference? This is always a critical guessing game and we estimate that at least 200 people will attend, but we hope even more will attend. For our all-volunteer Museum being the sole hosts of the 2017 HRA/ATRRM fall conference, the conference is a **PRETTY BIG DEAL**.

I suspect that you've figured out by now that I'm trying to make a point. You are correct.

**B**ecause this conference is a pretty big deal both for our Museum, for HRA/ATRRM, and for the attendees we need help from all of you—operating and shop volunteers and from our MSM members. To use an old phrase, many hands make for easy work. Here's a list of the most important volunteer requirements.

- Registration table: at least two volunteers for each scheduled shift starting on Monday, October 2 and continuing until Friday.
- Buses: hosts for all field trips, both pre-conference and field trips taken during the conference.
- Seminars: four seminar room hosts each day on Thursday and Friday mornings (October 5 & 6).
- Operators: for the visits to Excelsior (October 6) and to Como-Harriet (October 4 & 7).
- Pre-conference activities: preparation for field trips and special operations, assembling conference packets, etc.

**F**or our Operating personnel, most of the personnel and volunteer requirements in support of the conference are already shown on Humanity/Shift Planning. For those who can log-on to Humanity, right now you can see the registration table shift schedule as well as the operating personnel requirements for the special operations at CHSL on Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning and at ESL Friday afternoon.

For non-operating MSM members, we will send you more on what we need and how you can help your Museum in a separate letter later on this summer. If you want additional information, please contact Aaron Isaacs at [aaronmona@aol.com](mailto:aaronmona@aol.com).

**W**ith your help, the conference will be a huge success. Thanks! ⊕

**What's Happening?**

- June 8 -----Story Time Trolley at ESL starts at 5:00 PM
- June 15-----PJ Party trolley at CHSL starts at 6:00 PM
- June 18----- Fathers ride for free when accompanied by family at CHSL & ESL
- June 24----- Night Owl Service at CHSL — 9:00 PM to 12-midnight
- July 4-----Independence day operations at CHSL & ESL follows standard Sunday schedule



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

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief*

**N**ew members. We welcome to the MSM family Grace & Tim Raducha and the Ehlert family. We also want to gratefully acknowledge the upgrade of Paul Beyer's membership to Lifetime status.

**A**nual fund. We are always grateful for donations received during the year. Many thanks to Paul Beyer for his most generous donation and many thanks for the donations from Ron Linebarger, Tony Bauman, Mike Brenner and Doug Beedon. 🍷

**MSM PHOTO OPS**



May 6 was Train Day at the St. Paul Union Depot (SPUD) and MSM had a table in the main concourse. At our table we were selling books and merchandise as you can see in this photo. On the left is **Jim** and **Karen Kertzman** and on the right, **Bill Arends**. It was worth it as we sold a good amount of "stuff" throughout the day. *(Jim Vaitkunas photo)*



Here are three of the four axle-wheel sets ready for transport to L&S Electric in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. The other axle and wheel set was shipped to L&S previously to see if they can re-profile the wheels. The answer to that question was yes. *(Jack Bacon photo)*



Maintaining the track is an important task at the Museum. Here we see the crew working on tightening track bolts and pounding down loose spikes. *(Keith Anderson photo)*



On June 6, 2017 good progress was made building the track into the speeder shed. Ballast stone was put down and spread and initially tamped. Soon the short curved track will be built up to the speeder shed door and the switch stand will be installed. *(Dennis Stephens photo)*