



Streetcar CURRENTS



Mar-Apr 2009

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

It's Spring!

- Choose a date for re-certification and mark your calendar
- Need uniform items? Go to the Museum Store to get what you need www.trolleyride.org
- Training starts soon. Talk to your friends and neighbors about how fun it is to volunteer with MSM
- Check out the new merchandise at our Museum Store found on our website.
- Get ready for an exciting 2009 operating season



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Masthead Photo: A long time ago, PCC cars roamed about in the Twin Cities. Here's a photo of Twin City Lines PCC No. 359 on a Como-Harriet run. Location is the right-of-way approaching the Linden Hills Blvd. stop. This is where our George Isaacs car-barn is now located. (MSM Photo Archive)

Spring is Here!

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

Although as I write my column, the temperature is several degrees below freezing and there's new ice on my little garden pond, I know that spring is here—mostly. And that means another streetcar season is about to start. Well, what's new, what are we planning, and what needs doing?

In this issue of Streetcar Currents you'll find information on our recertification schedule on the back page. Recertification is a bit like that annual trip to the doctor for a physical exam—necessary but not necessarily fun. Our Superintendent of Training, **Clyde Hawkins**, Training Assistant **Tom Fairbairn**, and a couple of additional volunteers put a lot of time and effort into the recertification process. Let's all pitch in, sign up, and arrive on time for our session.

Clyde has a growing list of new Operator Trainees. We still have a shortage of Operators, so pass the word. Do you have friends, neighbors, relatives, or work associates who might like to become museum members and operate our historic streetcars? Put them in touch with Clyde. There's a poster on our web site www.trolleyride.org-- "You Can Be a Streetcar Operator." Print it out and put it up.

This season we're not planning any changes in our operations schedule on either railway—CHSL and ESL. However, after much discussion we will make some changes to our crew scheduling procedure. **Mark Digre**, **Jim Otto**, and **Marv Krafve** will still be our crew callers. But we'll be experimenting a bit, and perhaps at some point this summer trying out a calendar program that allows you to schedule shifts on-line. Stay tuned.

There are a few fix up/paint up projects we're looking at this summer. At Como-Harriet, our station may need a new roof. The cedar shakes are showing signs of mold and rot. Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson** is getting professional estimates of their condition. If we need to re-roof, we'll consider replacing the shakes, but **Aaron Isaacs** notes that the original Linden Hills station appeared to have a more traditional asphalt shingled roof. We'll get bids both ways. But we could save on installation if we have any members with some roofing experience willing to volunteer to lead a small roofing party. With the small area involved, it should be a job quickly accomplished.

Last year the station got a needed interior and exterior paint job. This year the wood floor could stand to be sanded and refinished and we'll be looking for bids. But again, if any of you have some experience, we'd welcome volunteers. It may be helpful just to have a recommendation of someone you know who does this kind of work. Either way, we'll need some help moving things out of the station, then back when the job is done. If you interested in either of these station projects, please let me or **Keith Anderson** know.

If you have a green thumb, or just enjoy playing in the dirt, consider helping out in our Queen Avenue gardens. Give **Aaron Isaacs** a call. A lot of progress was made last year reclaiming the plants from the weeds.

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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 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

The museum's business address and telephone number is:

P.O. Box 14467, University Station
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 March-April 2009

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar CURRENTS is the periodic newsletter for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is April 20, 2009.

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

155 Chaparral Dr.
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774
 You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com

From the Front Platform

For those of you who missed our annual meeting in March, I hope you will try to make it next year. Now I know what you're thinking, "Annual meeting? Boring!" Well, I can tell you that our annual meetings are actually pretty fun. Yes, there is some business to attend to but we move through it pretty quickly and it gives those in attendance a snapshot of MSM's condition right now. Plus, everyone has a chance to ask questions and make suggestions for the betterment of good old MSM. I am so pleased that these questions and suggestions are put to the Museum officers in a positive way, not in a negative "you're doing it all wrong" manner. There is coffee and treats to enjoy, and of course everyone looks forward to the evening's entertainment, which invariably centers on our favorite topic. **Aaron Isaacs** has been digging through piles of old newspaper photographs and he showed us 50 or more fabulous shots from the Pioneer Press-Dispatch and the Star-Tribune photo morgue. I don't think anyone there had seen any of these before and it was a real joy to see not only the streetcars, but what the Twin Cities looked like in the 40s and 50s. Now some of these shots will undoubtedly be used in future issues of our history magazine *Twin City Lines* but if you had been at the meeting, you could have had a sneak preview! I thank Aaron and also **Kathy Kullberg** and the congregation of St Paul's Episcopal Church for providing us with a lovely meeting room.



Some of you know that I collect Minnesota streetcar "stuff." I've come across some photos and other things that MSM did not have and I've donated these to the museum. Other things I keep for myself, and I find myself with a surplus of union buttons from TCRT. What are those, you ask? Well, if you look at the photos of streetcar trainmen from 1930 or later (see photo), you'll notice they wear a hat with a MOTORMAN badge on the front, and on the side (the right side, so



the passenger could see them) they have a round button with their badge number and another small round button. This button was issued by Division 1005 of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America. (Whoop! Aren't you glad that MSM has a nice short name?) The button signified that the employee was a union member and was current on his or her dues. I think this was because the union was responsible for collecting the dues, they were not withheld from your paycheck as they are now. The buttons were originally issued monthly, each button bearing the name of the month but no year. The employee was supposed to turn in his button when he paid his dues each month so it could be reused next year but they had a problem getting the buttons rounded up (I saw an article in the union's "Motorman and Conductor Magazine" where they threatened to charge you 25 cents if you didn't turn in your button at the end of the month.) In

(Continued on bottom of next page)

MSM News & Views*Jim Vaitkunas & Bob Johnson*

Annual Appeal donations continue to be received. We are still receiving donations from our members and friends to our 2008-2009 Annual Appeal fund raising campaign. As of the end of March a total of \$14,305 has been donated to the various funds by our generous members and friends plus one anonymous donor. Many, many thanks to each of you for your generosity.

Here is the list of people who have donated to these projects since the last report rendered in the January-February issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**.

Carbarn Improvements & Sprinkler System

Fred Raiche	Eric Tratner	Marv Krafve
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Winona No. 10 Restoration Project

Fred Raiche	Eric Tratner	Marv Krafve
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General Operating Fund

John Levin	Bob Schneider	Bill Herzog
Brian Krynski	Howie Melco	Jim Harrison
Jim Otto	Dennis Stephens	John Stewart
Onan Foundation	Bruce Gustafson	
Bettye & Earl Anderson		
Ray Newton & Sportsmen's Barbers		

ESL Report—Bob Johnson. With the advent of spring activity at ESL is picking up. One of the early signs is preparation of the building and streetcars

for the new season. On March 20 we had our fire sprinkler vendor conduct tests on our sprinkler system to make sure it is ready for the start up of our operating season. This procedure also tests the fire and intrusion alarm system assuring museum management will know immediately if a fire occurs. Another vendor has checked and re-certified our fire extinguishers for the new year.

Work on Winona 10 has turned to the seats that will be installed on the car. Progress on No. 10 is reported elsewhere in this issue. A big challenge on this project is the removal and replacement of the steel frame from the body of the car.

We are preparing some additions to our storyboards in the car barn. Late last year we obtained two display cases which will be put in place this year. We think you will find the content of the new displays we are planning to be a worthwhile addition to our car-barn.

Annual meeting Reports. If you missed our annual meeting on March 12th, the minutes of the meeting, along with the reports rendered during the meeting, can be found in our website in the "Organizational Documents" section. ☺

(Spring is Here Continued from page 1)

For several years, we've looked at the overhead in Excelsior and agreed it needs attention. In some areas the wire is dangerously low, and in many places the wire meanders back and forth across the track center line, putting strain and wear on the trolley wheel. The project seems overwhelming, and maybe that's what keeps us from getting started. So this summer,

we'd like to at least begin phase one of the job—attaching back guy wires to about 8 line poles. Although not all that difficult, this kind of work is physical and not well suited to many of our older members. But if you're reasonably healthy, like to work outside, and want to learn more about the arcane science of overhead trolley wire, we'll welcome you on a work crew. Call **Bob Johnson** to sign on. ☺

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

the mid-30s they went to a yearly button, with just the year on it. Then they went to a button with the year and the month on it. Finally, around 1940 or so they went to a button with just the year and they kept that format at least until the early 70s.

OK, so what does this have to do with you? If you want an original authentic union button for your uniform cap, I've got over twenty available from the early 30s to 1953. Send me your address and a check for

\$5.00 made out to MSM and I'll send you one. The money will be put in the MSM carbarn improvement fund. It may not seem like much but if I can sell them all that will be over \$100.00 for the fund, and we all know that large amounts come from many small donations! If you are looking for a particular year, e-mail me at dfrench@mmcd.org or call me at 612-369-3525. You can send your order to me at 524 Idaho Ave E, St Paul, MN 55130. I'll look forward to seeing these buttons on your hats this year! ☺

Address Changes

Please remember to let us know when you have a change to your address, telephone number or e-mail address. A quick note addressed to the Museum's business address, ATTN: Membership Services, will do the trick. Or you can send Membership Services Chief **John DeWitt** an e-mail with the change(s) to: jdewitt@comcast.net

Shop Update

John Prestholdt & Dennis Stephens

Several Winona No. 10 projects are progressing simultaneously:

- Winona No. 10 had folding steps that were manually actuated with the doors by the operator. The original components are long-gone. **Jim Willmore** and **Ken Albrecht** have been replicating the many parts that make up the mechanism. Much machining work still needs to be done but good progress is being made by **Dennis** and **Andy Stephens** and many thanks to them for their work on these items.
- **Ken Albrecht** has delivered oak seat frames and slats to the Lake Harriet shop for sanding and finishing with tung oil. **Bill Arends** and **Phil Settergren** have been working on this project. The original builders added full width steel end straps, resulting in a unitized bench seat. Hot rolled steel straps have been sheared, deburred, drilled and countersunk to accept wood screws. Cooperative Plating of St. Paul liked our story—perhaps the part about TCRT’s Snelling Shops being located a block from their facility—and graciously consented to prep and zinc plate 37 straps at no cost, thus improving paint adhesion and assuring that scars will never result in rust.
- Walk-over seat hardware is also progressing. A number of 5/8" cold drawn steel rods are being machined at Lake Harriet, which consists of facing the ends and boring cross holes at precise locations. **Ken Albrecht** and **Dennis Stephens** will preassemble the components for media blasting and painting.
- **Jim Wilmore, Dick Stoner, Jim Otto, Roy Harvey** and **John Prestholdt** are working on various projects including complete rebuilding of several trolley bases. That crack team is making progress, while tying up 25% of the workforce, 50% of the machine tools and 100% of the work benches.

The Tuesday and Saturday crews have been steadily working on pre-season maintenance of the streetcars at CHSL. **Tom Fairbairn** has been inspecting and reconditioning the controllers of No. 265 and No. 1300, buffing off any burn marks and tightening all the connections. **Walt Strobel, Mark Digre** and **Russ Isbrandt** have been doing the “dirty work” of cleaning the gunk off the greasy areas as well as checking and adding oil and grease as needed.

Neil Howes and **Keith Lindberg** are working hard to complete the re-wiring of our 600-volt trolley power supply. They did give us trolley power for a couple of hours to switch the wooden cars on Tuesday March 3rd so we could get started on Duluth No. 265's maintenance. Both cars looked great in the fresh white snow, but unfortunately no cameras were available. ⊕



Above. Tom Fairbairn takes a quick break so the photographer can snap a picture. Here you see Duluth Street Railway No. 265's controller cover removed and the arc chutes swung aside to reveal the interior. While a streetcar controller is a relatively simple device, it still requires constant inspection and maintenance to make sure it operates properly. Our shop workers do an excellent job in taking care of our historic streetcars. (John Prestholdt photo)



Above. Bill Arends is seen here working on some of the wooden slats that make up one of Winona 10's walk-over (flip-over) seats. Winona No. 10 is a true double-end car with duplicate controls at each end. At the end of the line, to prepare for the return trip, the Motorman swung the trolley pole around, took his control handles to the other end and flipped the seat backs over so the passengers could sit facing the front. (John Prestholdt photo)

Merchandise Update

Charles Barthold—Merchandise Mgr.

MSM Embroidered clothing offered again. The last time we offered the MSM embroidered clothing was in 2007. This year we will again be accepting orders for these fine looking clothing items. The clothing items include a black windbreaker, denim shirt with both long and short sleeves, a short sleeve casual dress shirt in light stone color and polo shirts in yellow or dark blue. Go to our website to see what we're offering and to print out the order form. [Deadline for submitting your order is May 10, 2009](#)—so don't procrastinate!

Uniform hats will be ordered. If you would like to purchase one of the "pillbox" style Motorman's or Conductor's hats, we will be sending in a bulk order for them in mid-May. Again, go to our website and printout out the uniform hat order form and mail it in with your payment. Make sure you have the correct hat size on the order form. [Deadline for hat orders is also May 10th.](#)



New Item—Stadium Blanket. This is a 13 ounce R-Tek fleece stadium blanket with MSM's logo embroidered in one corner and the Twin City Lines logo in the other. The blanket is made of 100% filament polyester with an anti-pill finish. It is 50" by 60" with contrasting stitching. The blanket is priced at \$35.

You may add your name for an additional \$5. With this offer only it will be available in 6 colors—Royal blue, Navy blue, Red, Midnight heather (gray), Dark green, Black. Please indicate color in the size column. Order yours from the Museum store on our website www.trolleyride.org.

Year-end Report. Total sales were \$17,205 for the year, which includes store sales, online sales and EBay/train show sales of surplus artifacts. Store sales brought in \$13,975, against a restocking cost of \$6,986. The remaining \$3,230 came from eBay and train shows. Thanks to **Bruce Gustafson**, our Ebay agent who also sells at train shows.

The \$17,205 for 2008 is down from \$34,027 the previous year, but 2007 was unusual because of the high number of advance sales of *Twin Cities by Trolley*, a one-time situation. Even at this lower level, merchandise is an important part of the museum's revenue stream, equal to a third of passenger fares.

Of all our merchandise categories books brought in the most money—\$6,101. We sold 123 copies of the Como-Harriet book, 76 copies of *Twin Cities by Trolley*, 50 TCRT rulebooks and 25 copies of *Trackside Around the Twin Cities*, which only appeared in November.

Clothing was the second biggest category, totaling \$3,306. We sold 89 children's T-shirts, 84 adult T-shirts and 22 hats.

Sales of miscellaneous items brought in \$1,494. Included in this category were 144 Chugga Chews, 56 pencil sharpeners, 51 wood trolleys, 26 Como-Harriet Scoots, 25 wood whistles, 13 mouse pads, and 12 motorman hat badges.

Christmas ornaments brought in \$970. We sold 50 No 1300 ornaments and 15 No. 322.

Jewelry sales brought in \$381. The top selling items were 29 MSM pins, 13 "I Love Trolleys" pins and 10 Twin City Lines pins.

Thirty-three mugs were sold, totaling \$370. The best sellers were No. 1300 (20 mugs), and PCC No. 322 (7 mugs).

One-hundred thirty-eight pens were sold totaling \$289. No.1300 pens outsold No. 322 pens two to one.

Large prints and posters brought in \$270, led by 25 Como-Harriet posters and 21 Change at Excelsior. For 2009 we've added the 1909 TCRT System Map.

Postcards are popular. Visitors purchased 784 of them, including 331 of No. 1300, 180 Change at Excelsior, 129 of No. 322 and 73 of No. 78 at night. Sales totaled \$209.

We sold \$170 worth of videos, with the Fabulous Trolleys DVD the most popular.

The online store provides only a small percentage of total sales, but still accounted for 143 items sold. ⊕



Membership Renewals

Over the next four months close to 50 percent of our members renew their annual memberships. Consequently, this is a busy time for our Membership Services Chief, **John DeWitt**. To help him with the workload, and to save your Museum some money, please send in your dues [and member renewal slip](#) as soon as you get it. We always include a return envelope with the first notice so all you have to do is write your check and put a stamp on the envelope and drop it in the mail. Prompt renewal avoids extra work and extra postage expense to send out the second and third notices. **Thanks much!**

What's Happening?

April	Training and recertification sessions—see article in this issue and schedule
April 30	Start of ESL operating season
May 2	Start of weekend operations at CHSL
May 15	Start of weekday operations at CHSL
May 25	Special Memorial Day Operations at CHSL and ESL

Training Update*Clyde Hawkins & Tom Fairbairn*

Recertification. It's that time of year again. Spring is just around the corner, and its time to get geared-up for MSM's 2009 operating season. Our goal this year is to get everyone recertified before the operating season begins. See the flyer sent to you on March 26th for the recertification schedule. If you get information from MSM in the mail the recertification notice is with this issue of the *Streetcar Currents*.

New operator Training. New operator Training this year will include:

- First meeting on Street car with hands-on introduction to the controls;
- Second meeting will be a classroom session;
- Follow-on sessions will involve hands-on practice operating the streetcar; and,
- The final phase of training will involve working on revenue runs as an extra operator.

A Date for the first training session will be set after we see how many new operator trainees are signed

up. This year each trainee will be required to pay a \$30 training fee at the first training session. If they successfully complete training the fee will then be applied towards their membership dues.

PCC No. 322 training. If you are interested in training to operate PCC streetcar No. 322 please let one of the trainers know and we will schedule some No. 322 training sessions.

Cash Register Refresher. If you want some training on operating the cash register or just need a refresher on how to operate the register please let one of the trainers know and we will schedule some cash register sessions.

If you have question about recertification or any training please contact:

- **Clyde Hawkins:** Phone 763-544-5963 e-mail: chawkb@yahoo.com
- **Tom Fairbairn:** Phone 612-866-8295 e-mail: tnfairbairn@gmail.com ☺

Crew Calling Changes are Coming*Jim Vaitkunas—Ops Chief*

As many of our veteran Foremen and Operators might have noticed, over the last few years our calling system for crew scheduling has not kept up with the changing times. Here are some of the challenges our crew callers have had to deal with during the last few years.

- More people have answering machines or voice mail, which is fine. However we increasingly face the problem of our crew callers not getting a return phone call when they leave a message.
- Our Operating personnel tend to have busy personal schedules and cannot project their availability much beyond a week or two.
- Most Operators have computers at home, or easy access to one, so they wait until the first schedule is issued before signing-up for their shifts.

Several weeks ago **Jim Vaitkunas**, **Rod Eaton** and our crew callers **Mark Digre**, **Jim Otto** and **Marv Krafve** met to discuss these issues. We really didn't come up with and good solutions (if any even exists) but we did decide to slightly modify the way we would fill the monthly crew schedules at both CHSL and ESL railways. These changes will still involve our hard working crew callers but the burden of scheduling a crewmember on a given shift will now be on **YOU**, a member of the MSM Operating Department. We will have full details on the changes in a special Operations newsletter that you will be receiving in early April.

We are also investigating a promising crew scheduling computer program that can be accessed on our website. Stay tuned for further information on this intriguing possibility. ☺

Address Changes

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