



Streetcar CURRENTS



June 2009

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Can You Help Out?

- **Volunteering for an extra shift or two in May and June at CHSL will help us with our crew shortage there**
- **We can always use some extra hands with several projects including the gardens and weed removal at both rail-ways**
- **Do you know of a friend or two who is experienced in carpentry or electrical work? If so encourage them to volunteer with MSM**



Inside This Issue

From the Front Platform	2
Excelsior News & Notes	3
Upcoming Events	4
Winona No. 10 Update	4

Masthead Photo: Winona No. 10 on a Winona street in the early 1930s. In 1930 the Winona streetcar "fleet" was repainted into a scheme of orange body and letter-board, white or off-white window and upper door area with a red stripe separating the orange and white colors. The white hourglass shape on the front was gone by the mid-1930s and the front was then solid orange. See some photos of No. 10 today on pages 3 and 4.
(MSM photo archive)

Inquiring Minds

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

In my corporate life, we conducted a yearly employee attitude survey. And every year, one of the major concerns among the work force was lack of information. In any organization, people like to know what's going on. So where I worked, we held frequent employee meetings where information could be passed along. In the Minnesota Streetcar Museum, where we work mostly in small groups, holding a mass meeting for all our volunteers would be virtually impossible to do on a recurring basis. But we do have several very good, very effective communication vehicles that we have come to rely upon over the last dozen years or so.

First, there's *Streetcar Currents*--you're reading it now. Over the years, I've been associated with many groups that relied on newsletters for passing information to its membership, and the *Currents* is about the best I've seen. The credit for that goes to **Jim Vaitkunas**. Each issue of the *Currents* contains news, reports, schedules, important dates, and editorial comments. Jim makes all of it look attractive with crisp graphic design and good photos. These days, the majority of us receive the *Currents* electronically, making it timely, extremely cost effective, and environmentally friendly.

When crews report for their shifts, each crew member should check for current Operational and Safety Bulletins. At both CHSL and ESL, you'll find these Bulletins on a bulletin board in the respective ready barns. When I'm foreman, I like to start a shift with a two-minute crew meeting where, as a group, we review these Bulletins to ensure a safe and sane shift.

In the Linden Hills station you'll find the Station Agents' Binder; it's in the cubby below the cash register. The binder has been reorganized and simplified this year, making it easier to find what you're looking for. Inside you'll find copies of current bulletins, the monthly crew schedule, and crew phone numbers. There are sections on cash machine operation, using our radios, the Sequence of Operations, and Foreman's Checklist. The bulletin board we hang on the outside of the station is also a source of information on upcoming events. And if a guest asks about one of those events, you'll find the answer in the Station Agents' Binder (look in the back).

The ultimate source of information on the museum--past and present--is our web site. Several years ago, **John DeWitt** became our webmaster. He retained much of the material that had been there and added lots of new things. If you have a question about just about anything, you'll likely find the answer at www.trolleyride.org. There's information about each of our streetcars, our history as a museum, copies of all relevant organizational documents, even back issues of *Streetcar Currents*. There are photo collections, videos of our cars in action, and a really fun, interactive 360-degree view of the Linden Hills station. Plus there's an on-line store where you can buy any of our museum merchandise on your credit card. If you've never visited our web site, plan to spend some time there 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 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** June 2009

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar CURRENTS is a 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 June 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

Dave French—Board Chair

Hi everybody! Well, it's our favorite time of year, the season of running the streetcars and educating our riders on Minnesota transit history. Or wait, maybe I should have said *entertaining* our riders instead. Yes, MSM has a deadly serious mission of preserving and interpreting history, but the plain fact is if we don't entertain people too they're not likely to come back and ride again. Now when I talk about entertainment, I don't mean a song and dance (although if you buy me a couple of drinks you just might convince me to do my Al Jolson imitation), I mean telling people a story that entertains as

well as informs. I know many of us are shy of public speaking, but I bet all of us can tell a story. Reciting facts about MSM and streetcar statistics can get a little dry, especially for the majority of our passengers who've ridden before and in some cases have heard dozens of end-of-line speeches. When I am the Conductor I observe our riders closely to see how they react to the Motorman's speech. It's amazing how they perk up when they hear something they haven't heard before. As many of you know, all rail museums face the challenge of making themselves *relevant* to their 21st-century audiences. Most of the people you're speaking to were born after 1954 and never rode the streetcars in regular service. Many have never even ridden a transit bus! How do we relate to an audience that thinks public transit is a good idea for *someone else* to ride? How can we open their eyes to a world where streetcars were a vital and essential service in the Twin Cities?

Well, one way is to talk about it on a *human* level. What I mean is, try to get them to picture themselves on that car a hundred years ago. Where were they going? What were they talking about? What were they thinking about? How were they dressed? **Mike Helde** did a little research on the year 1909 and he tells passengers about what was happening in the US that year. A hundred years ago people got their news from the newspaper and Mike tells them what they would be reading about. I heard another Operator suggest they pretend they were going to the grocery store on the car and he recited some prices from years ago such as how much a loaf of bread cost. This season I plan on talking about working on the cars as a trainman. How much did they make? How long was their day? What were they worried about? In the 1920's they were concerned with increasing auto-

mobile traffic as a hazard to their safety and their livelihood, and the movement of streetcar companies to institute one-man cars as a cost-saving measure. Last weekend I showed passengers that fold-up bracket on the right of the motorman's seat on No. 1300 and explained that it was used to hold the brake in full release with your knee while you made change and punched transfers. I tried to get them to imagine how difficult it was to drive the car in street traffic and collect change at the same time.

Rod and I were thinking that maybe we need to rebuild No. 1300 into something that looks similar to a familiar blue British steam locomotive (that shall remain nameless) to appeal to the younger generation (NOTE: We were just kidding, so please don't surround my house with your torches and pitchforks!) See the photo of this mythical streetcar produced by Rod Eaton using Photoshop on page 3. My point is, we do need to

(Continued on bottom on next page)



Excelsior Streetcar Line News

Bob Johnson—Superintendent

May has been a busy month at ESL. Progress on the Winona No. 10 seats includes five coats of tung oil, which is producing a beautiful finish. A total of five coats on the seats will produce a durable result. Much progress was also made on Winona No. 10's steel underframe. See Dennis Stephens' report on page four for more details and more photos of the restoration of Winona No. 10.

Streetcars No. 1239 and No. 78 are now operational. Tom Fairbairn has rebuilt three controllers that proved to be a challenge. Many contacts are in the controllers and most needed careful rebuilding. During this activity Tom found mechanical as well as electrical issues that erratic operation on occasion. Those of you that operate at Excelsior will find the controller's performance is greatly improved.

Advertising and promotion has been high on our A-to-do lists during May. We have applied to the Bayview event center for a booth at their upcoming tour and travel Expo. This event is an invitation for tour operators who will be able to review some of the venues available in the Twin City and Lake Minnetonka areas. This event has resulted in several charters for our streetcar line.

We have worked hard to develop cooperative relationships in Excelsior. Two excellent examples are our participation with the Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Historical Society in the "BOO-seum" and the "Christkindlsmarkt." This year is our first collaboration with the Old Log Theater. The Old Log hosted a tour group of 62 senior citizens in an afternoon that included a luncheon and a boat trip.



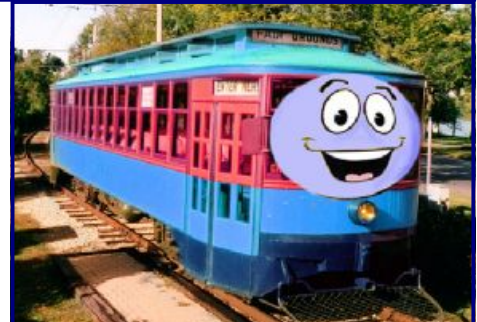
(Above Left) Winona No. 10's upper body is now suspended and supported by the trusses running through the window openings. The frame is separated from the body and rests on blocks about one foot below.

(Above Right) In this photo you can clearly see the Winona No. 10's steel frame sitting on blocks with the body hanging above. What this photo doesn't show is how deteriorated the steel frame members really are. We didn't realize how badly the steel was corroded until the wood flooring was removed about a year ago. The entire frame and the bottom 6 inches of the steel side sheets will have to be replaced.

(Left) By the early 1930s the Winona streetcar system was operated by the Mississippi Valley Public Service Company, which also ran the streetcars in the down-river sister city of Lacrosse, Wisconsin. The cars featured the MVPS logo on each side. Note the orange body paint. The green paint you see in these photos was applied by the owners while the carbody was used as a cabin. *(Three photos by Jim Vaitkunas)*

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

stretch ourselves a bit to "grab" the audience and keep them coming back for more. I bet you can do a little research on-line or at your library and come up with your own fascinating little-known trivia of the past. Won't you give it a try and jazz up your speech this year? We have wonderful displays in the CHSL station and interesting things to look at in the ESL car-barn, but for most of our customers they get their interpretation of transit history from *you* during that short speech. What kind of story can you tell? I'll see you on the car! ☺



What's Happening?

May 31	Second annual vintage automobile rally at CHSL starts at 12:30 PM
June 3	Wednesday afternoon service at CHSL starts (1 PM to 4 PM)
June 6	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL, Isaacs carbarn—9 AM to 11 AM. Juice & rolls are served
June 6	Moonlight trolley ride. Streetcar leaves the Linden Hills station at 10 PM
June 18	Pajama Party Trolley leaves Linden Hills station at 7 PM
July 4	Special holiday <i>early bird</i> service start at 9:30 AM

Winona No. 10 Update*Dennis Stephens*

Good progress is being made on restoring single truck streetcar, Winona No. 10. Several Tuesdays ago, the steel sides just above the side sills were cut into using a special circular saw with a metal-cutting carbide saw blade. This released No. 10's underframe in it's entirety from the upper body of Winona No. 10. As the photos on page 3 show, the streetcar's body is now supported by transverse beams made of wood passing through the window openings. The cancer-stricken underframe and underpinnings were lowered to the Excelsior shop floor. The underframe will be replicated in new steel, elevated into position and welded back onto the carbody by our ace welder **Howie Melco**. The Milwaukee metal cutting circular saw was a loaner from Jim at Amble's Metalworking in Minneapolis. (Curiously, even though **Ken Albrecht** and **Jim Wilmore** visit frequently to schmooze with the cigar chomping Jim, neither seems to know his last name. Typical engineers!)

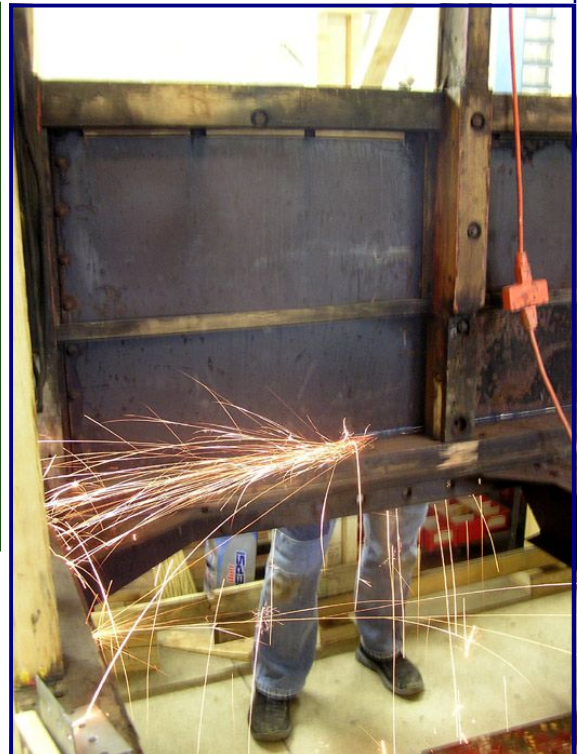
The photos below illustrate the fireworks as our resident woodworker cum-steel worker, **Ken Albrecht** applies his tools and technology in the ferrous arena. Actually, the carbide tipped blade is intended for this purpose, but cutting a simple channel or angle in the shop is not the same as two continuous cuts of 20 feet through 3/16 inch steel. The thermal overload cutout was tested frequently. **Ken** said he discovered muscles he forgot he had the following day. He and **Marv Krafve** did most of the work, with a couple others of us giving it a whirl. The noise was worse than **Karl Jones** with a needle scaler.



(Left) Ken Albrecht is using the special steel-cutting saw to cut through the steel side of Winona No. 10. The metal angle on the bottom is being used as a guide to keep the cut straight.

(Right) This is what the cutting looks like from the other side, i.e., from the inside of the passenger compartment. When the cutting was done, the underframe was free of the body and lowered to the shop floor. The old frame will be used as a guide to fabricate the new one.

(Dennis Stephens photos)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE — ADDRESS CHANGES**

The post office has informed us that some of the bulk mailing rules have changed. One change affects our bulk mailing permit we use to send you our Museum's *Twin City Lines* history magazine. As you'll notice when you receive your next issue, the magazine will now be addressed to you or to "current resident" meaning that if you move and don't let us know your new address you won't receive your issue but the "current resident" will. So *please*, let us know your new address as soon as you move.