



Streetcar CURRENTS



October 2009

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Please Help Out if You Can!

- Halloween, pumpkin patch and Santa trolleys are real money makers for our Museum. Please support them by volunteering when you get the call from your crew caller
- Encourage your friends, neighbors, co-workers and relatives to come and ride the trolley this fall and visit the pumpkin patch



Winter Publication Schedule

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**, we will revert to our normal winter publication schedule. You'll be receiving the **Currents** every other month until May of 2010.

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Masthead Photo: TCRT Gate Car No. 1239 was all dressed-up last October for the Halloween ghost trolley and Booseum, jointly sponsored by MSM and the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society. Behind No. 1239 is Duluth St. Rwy. No. 78. I'll bet No. 1239 was never dressed-up like this when TCRT ran it. (MSM photo)

Beware!

Rod Eaton—General Superintendent

Passengers hold their collective breath as the loaded streetcar pulls out of the Linden Hills station. What lies in the darkness ahead? As you approach the William Berry Bridge you find the track barricaded are there zombies ahead? Heading for the safety of the carbarn seems the best course of action. But when you reach the barn, you find the doors wide open and an abandoned streetcar.

Suddenly you're surrounded by zombies! Is there no escape?

"I'll probably start picking up make-up for the zombies soon," Mike Helde reports. "All it'll be is basically white hair and skin, black eyeliner, black lipstick, black fingernail polish, and fake blood. I also want to pull a car out of the barn one night next week to look at some lighting and strobe light effects."

Mike and Dave French are busy working on this year's Ghost Trolley show, "Streetcar Zombies." We'll be incorporating the carbarn this year, which provides a surprising variation from past years' shows and gives our zombie cast a reasonably comfortable "off stage" area. Sorry Dave—it looks like you'll be out in the cold by the bridge—again!

We still need volunteers to play zombies on each of our five nights of operation: Friday and Saturday, October 16 & 17, 23 & 24, and Friday the 30th. It's fun and everyone is welcome. Recruit your teenagers and their friends, grandchildren and their friends, your friends and neighbors. No formal acting experience is required. All we need is a few hours of your time and your enthusiasm. Give Mike a call. He and Kathy Helde will begin doing make-up at the barn at 5 PM each night.

Be Prepared. We're adding something else new to some Ghost Trolley nights this year—a concession stand. Louis Hoffman will be leading Scout Troop 185 as they serve up hot coffee, chocolate and cider. Proceeds will go to the troop. The scouts will also tend a bonfire to add to the Halloween ambiance (I'm told they have some expertise in this area). If the business is successful, concessions could become part of Holly Trolley. Louis claims to have invented a new and much improved version of the traditional campfire s'mores.

Be good, for goodness sake. Again this year, children will be able to take a ride with Santa at Como-Harriet's Holly Trolley and Excelsior's Chriskindlsmarkt. Both events run Thanksgiving weekend, November 27, 28 & 29. CHSL's Holly Trolley continues the following weekend, December 5 & 6. Chriskindlsmarkt is a major event for ESL and, with day-long operations, offers lots of flexibility for volunteering. Get the holiday spirit and sign-on for a shift or two at either line. It will be your last chance to run a streetcar in 2009. ☺

STREETCAR ZOMBIES



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:

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 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
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Streetcar *CURRENTS*
October 2009

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar *CURRENTS* is a periodic 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 November 20, 2009.

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

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 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 everyone! I really enjoyed Aaron's article in the most recent issue of our history journal, *Twin City Lines* describing TCRT's practice of using Notices to Trainmen to encourage, cajole, and require employees to follow the rules. My interest in streetcars is not so much about equipment but more about the people who worked for the company and the passengers who rode the cars. Streetcar and railroad companies tended to be military-like in their management style. This is probably because many officers of these companies in the late 19th century learned to manage big operations and



large numbers of men as army officers in the Civil War. In the army, you tell people what to do and how to do it and expect compliance. You don't ask for opinions of your subordinates, you expect them to follow orders.

MSM is run a little differently, of course. We are all volunteers and you can't treat a volunteer like an employee or a soldier. At the same time, we have some rules about running our streetcars that have to be done safely and consistently. These rules should not be subject to an individual's opinion about how useful it is to follow it or them. Then again, if we start severely disciplining volunteers for violating the rules, we will likely start losing volunteers. Our Superintendents tread a fine line between requiring compliance and also asking people to comply without threatening them. In case you think that's easy, think again! We cannot afford to lose a lot of volunteers but we need to run the cars safely to protect the public and MSM.

Some volunteers tell me that we have too many rules at MSM. I say that every rule we have is necessary, and if we are trying to interpret the operation of streetcars in Minnesota, having operating rules is certainly representative of what it was like running the cars "back in the day." To run the cars safely, efficiently, and consistently TCRT had hundreds of rules. Many of you probably have a copy of the 1950 rule book which is for sale at Lake Harriet for only \$5.00. It details a lot of regulations for Motormen, Conductors, and Bus Operators. I have a copy of TCRT's Transfer Rules for the Minneapolis Division from 1923. It has 164 pages and the St Paul Division rules were nearly as long. What are these rules like? Here's Rule 3 for the Como-Harriet line: "Transfers from the Dale-Forest line, punched "Grand

Avenue" and east for direction, or "Front Street" and west for direction, shall be accepted either at Dale and Front Streets, or at any regular stop within two blocks of Dale Street. However, if transfer is not presented at Dale Street, passenger shall be permitted to ride only in the same direction as he has walked away from Dale Street. Additional transfer shall be issued on request for Snelling Avenue, punched in blank space following the words "Snelling Avenue," or for loop, punched in blank space directly following the words "Dale Street." Got that? And there are hundreds of rules just like this that are different for each line. How the Conductors kept them all straight I'll never know! My 1921 copy of the Operating Rules which was issued to Conductor George Wygant, Badge No. 1858, has 211 rules which seem to cover every possible situation encountered while running the car, and explicitly identifies the Conductor's and Motorman's responsibility. Rule 87 covering Accidents is 7 pages long. Rule 190 says "Funeral processions have right-of-way over Street Cars. Under no circumstances

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Historian & Archives News & Notes

Aaron Isaacs —Historian

TCRT PCCs in San Francisco. Most MSM members are aware that San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) purchased eleven former Twin City PCC cars from New Jersey Transit in 2004. They were intended to help solve the perpetual shortage of streetcars on the wildly successful F-Embarcadero line. The carbodies were rehabbed by Brookville Equipment. Like previous PCCs, each car received the color scheme of a previous PCC operator. Not surprisingly, one received TCRT yellow and green.

When placed in service, it quickly became clear that the cars were electrically unreliable. As MSM discovered when it restored car No. 322, the wiring was badly deteriorated. After repeated service failures, Muni recognized the need to re-wire the cars, although two remain in service at this time.

On October 1, Brookville Equipment was given formal notice to proceed with the repairs. They'll cost an average of \$736,000 per car. Completion of the first car is expected by the end of 2010. Five PCCs originally built for San Francisco will accompany the ex-TCRT cars through rehab. Source: Market Street Railway newsletter and Muni Board Member Cam Beach.

Kreuzberger donates research notes. For the past three decades, member **Jim Kreuzberger** has been researching the history of streetcars in Duluth-Superior. The result is a three-ring binder that contains a detailed text relating the history of all aspects of the Duluth system, along with extensive research notes. He has now donated the binder to MSM. The timing is fortuitous. **John Diers** and I are submitting a proposal to the University of Minnesota Press for a new book on Duluth-Superior streetcars.

The proposed title is *Twin Ports by Trolley*, following the successful format established in *Twin Cities by Trolley*.

Northstar Commuter Rail Line Set to Open. Saturday November 14 marks the grand opening of the Northstar Commuter Rail line. The Hiawatha LRT extension to the Twin Stadium/Northstar Station will also open the same day, starting with the first LRT of the day.

From 10 AM to 5 PM there will be a big activity area located on the plaza at the northeast corner of the Twins stadium, opposite the LRT station. It will feature musicians, a railroad book signing, rail history displays, a children's toy train play area, model railroads, food vendors and display tables for interested local organizations. MSM will be one of these. If you're interested in staffing the MSM table, please contact Aaron Isaacs at 612-929-7066 and aaron-mona@aol.com.

Sometime between 10 AM and 10:30 AM, the official opening ceremony will take place, with speeches by various politicians.

Each hour during the day will see a train board at a single suburban station and run non-stop to the downtown station, located next to the new Twins stadium. Each train will carry up to 700 passengers, who will spend an hour at the downtown station before re-boarding the train for the trip back. Then the next train will arrive and so on. Here's the schedule:

Originating Station	Arrive Downtown	Leave Downtown
Fridley	11:15 AM	12:15 PM
Big Lake	12:25 PM	1:25 PM
Elk River	1:35 PM	2:35 PM
Anoka	2:45 PM	3:45 PM
Coon Rapids	3:55 PM	4:55 PM

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

shall motorman “run through” funeral processions, unless ordered to do so by someone in authority or by a police officer.” I’m sure this rule originated from funeral director complaints of streetcars “running through.”

The next time a Foreman or Superintendent reminds you to follow a rule, please be understanding and cooperative. We aren’t trying to embarrass or scold you, we want to improve your skills and our operation. Thanks for following the rules! ☺

Volunteers Needed

Preparations for this year’s ghost trolleys at ESL and CHSL and *Farmer Ken’s Pumpkin Patch* at Lake Harriet are progressing well. However, we still can use more help for the ghost trolleys at both railways and for *Farmer Ken’s Pumpkin Patch* at CHSL. If you are not an active volunteer we still can use you for the many non-operating jobs. This especially includes being a zombie at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line’s **Streetcar Zombies** trolley we’re running there this year. I mean: how much acting experience do you need to be a zombie? No acting experience is necessary and it should turn out to be a lot of fun. If you are interested in becoming a zombie please call Chief Zombie, **Mike Helde** at 612-724-7364.

What's Happening?

- Oct 16, 17, 23, 24 & 30 CHSL's Ghost trolley operates 6 PM to 9 PM
- Oct 23 & 24 ESL's Halloween ghost trolley operates 6 PM to 9 PM
- Oct 24 & 25 CHSL presents *Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch* Operations from 12:30 PM to 5 PM
- Nov 27, 28 & 29 ESL's special Santa trolley operates with Excelsior's *Chriskindlsmarkt*
- Nov 27, 28 & 29 and Dec 5 & 6 CHSL's Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus operates 6 PM to 9 PM

Shop Update

John Prestholdt—Shop Foreman

This summer the shop crew continued to focus on keeping all three cars operational so we can meet our operating schedule. While July saw compressor problems on No. 265 these are now resolved and No. 265 is running with no problem. We know the replacement compressor is noisy but the mechanics seem to feel everything is OK. We plan to put the old compressor back on the car this winter.

September's mechanical problems turned out to be mostly electrical or battery related. Over the Labor day weekend there was a problem when several Foremen stopped the PCC 322 on the insulator at the car barn door while moving the car out of the barn. Since all were very experienced the Tuesday crew went to work and found that the four 8-volt batteries that No. 322 has were run down: two were OK giving about 8 volts each; one battery was at 6 volts; and, the fourth was only 4 volts. Since we need at least 28 volts to start the motor-generator set (MG set) and the batteries were about 10 years old we decided to get all new ones. This took over a week since the 8-volt batteries are a non-standard truck type battery. While No. 322 is now serviceable we are keeping it out of service to allow the shop crew to get the yearly maintenance started. With all of that, TCRT No. 1300 started acting up. The battery charger for No. 1300 failed early in September and that battery got drained requiring a new charger and battery.

Now the good news, as those who were at the picnic saw we got rid of quite a bit of scrap on Tuesday the 22nd. Thanks to ALL the Tuesday crew for a great job of cleaning out all that junk.

On a personal note, for those not at the car barn a couple of weeks ago, and may have wondered about me thinking of other things, it's nothing serious. I'm getting married again on October 11th so that is were my mind may have been. ☺

Annual Family Picnic Photos

We had a very good turnout for our fourth annual family picnic held this year at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Over 40 members and their families enjoyed the food and fellowship. Thanks to all for being with us and having a good time. (All photos by Darel Leopold)



John Prestholdt and the shop guys did a good job of getting the shop ready for the picnic. There were lots of good things to eat.



Many thanks to Master Chef Scott Heiderich (above) for doing a lot of the organizing for this year's picnic as well as doing the brat and burger procurement and cooking same.

The weather cooperated nicely. Here are some of our members enjoying their brat or burger and the other goodies.

