

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



May 2010

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

CHSL's 39th & ESL's 11th Operating Season is about to Begin!

- Please consider volunteering for an extra shift or two in May and June at CHSL to help us with our crew shortage there
- Encourage your neighbors and friends to come and enjoy a ride on our streetcars
- Post the "Ride the CHSL and ESL" flyers and posters when you receive your in a couple of weeks



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Masthead Photo: TCRT gate car No. 1239 displays its "pole side" at the Excelsior carbarn on a gorgeous sunny day in September of 2006. No. 1239 is now 103 years old, and she's a testament to the craftsmanship of the Snelling Shop employees and MSM's restoration crew. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

Getting the Rust Out

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

Over the winter, the carbarn crew at Como-Harriet replaced brake shoes on our standard cars. That was quickly and abruptly apparent to many of us operating TCRT No. 1300 a couple Saturdays ago. It was operator recertification and, at least for me, that first stop was, well, less than smooth.

The start of a new season is a fun time for me, and recertification is a big part of the enjoyment. It's nice to visit with my fellow volunteers I haven't seen since last fall. The easy camaraderie among museum members is one of the best reasons to belong. And, despite a jerky stop, it felt right getting behind the controls again. Running streetcars, after all, was my original motivation for joining.

As our car swung through the switch in front of the station that afternoon, we were greeted by an ear-shattering *screech*, which followed us through the S-curve and into the glen. Over the winter, the rails had accumulated lots of rust making the wheel flanges howl. Fortunately, Erik Schwarzkopf received our squeal-mail from his home across the track and rapidly responded by applying a coating of rail grease.

As operators, we were getting the rust out, too. Many of us pick up bad habits during the year, little ticks that may damage our streetcars, irritate fellow operators, and may even be potentially dangerous. Recertification is an opportunity to fine-tune our performance, review procedure (both established and new), and improve the overall level of our operation. And of course, recertification has implications on museum liability and insurance.

Even after you've been certified for this year's operations, it's a good idea to read through the General Procedures Memorandum, the new MSM Rule Book, the Sequence of Operations for your line (or both lines), and the Foreman's Checklist. Most of these documents have been revised this spring and all of them can be found on our website: All About Our Museum/Operations: Rosters, Schedules, and Instructions/Instructions. There's also a set of Location Exercises, one for each of our operating streetcars, that will refresh your memory as to where things are. Yes, it's a lot of reading. But I'll be surprised if you don't learn something.

We're planning another full season of operations at both Como-Harriet and Excelsior. In addition to our ambitious revenue schedules, we're bringing back most of last year's events and adding a few new ones. The Excelsior Streetcar Line, in partnership with Excelsior Bay Books, will host *Story Time Trolley*, a spin-off of our successful *PJ Party*. At Como-Harriet, we're introducing *Bill the Motorman's Streetcar Adventure*, a Saturday morning family event that combines songs, stories and silliness with trolley history and information. Bayers Do it Best Hardware is our partner. And for the child who really wants to learn, we'll be offering a half-day *Streetcar Camp*.

As always, we depend on our Foremen and Operators to make the season work. So to recognize and publicly acknowledge our museum's "front line," later this summer we'll be introducing new uniform name badges that denote years of volunteer service. The rust is out and it's the start of a new season. I'll see you at the station. ☺

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
 May 2010

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 May 20, 2010.

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

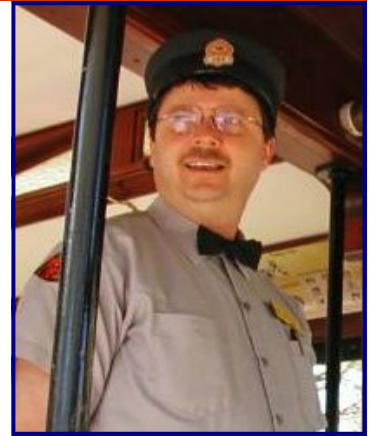
Hello everyone! This month I'm going to dip into the old mailbag and answer some messages we've received from members recently.

A few months ago we were contacted by a gentleman offering us a collection of streetcar items. His wife's grandfather had worked for the Northern Pacific at the Como Shops and her late father had developed a pretty big collection. Her mother had moved out of the family home in West St Paul and they were cleaning it out prior to sale. This collector was not a railroader or streetcar man, he was a dental technician. He

was not known to us as a trolley fan, but it appears he was active in the old Minnesota Railfans' Association that initially saved car No. 1300. **Rod Eaton, Bill Graham**, and I visited the home. I expected to find things like photos, schedules, transfers, along with other paper memorabilia and perhaps a farebox, but this collector apparently had access to the Snelling Shops after service ended in 1954. He had seats, hand rails, interior bell, buzzer box, wood interior parts, a switch rod, various brackets, and yes, he had a fare box. I still can't believe that he had a trolley pole complete with the 7-inch TCRT bronze trolley wheel. Next time you're on the car take a look at how long those things are! The collector had made a replication of the interior of a streetcar along the wall of his basement, with windows painted on the wall above the seats and a view of the Mississippi River from Cherokee Heights (contact me and I'll send you photos). The inventory of parts by John Prestholdt is several pages long. Next time you're at the Isaacs Car barn ask the guys to show you some of this stuff. Included were a few railroad items including lanterns. Some were sold via silent auction at the Annual Meeting, and others will be sold via eBay.

One of our members said to me that he thought these railroad items should be offered to the Minnesota Transportation Museum before we sold them. I can address that issue. The donors specified that anything we were not going to keep be sold to benefit MSM. There were two items that are unique, one of which is a large Northern Pacific RR *North Coast Limited* sign. We have been in contact with the Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association about this sign. They have not been able to identify it but they think it was probably used at a station marking the gate for the NCL.

(Continued on page 6)


STREETCAR CLEANERS WANTED !

Our Museum is noted for the excellent mechanical condition and the cleanliness of our historic Minnesota streetcars. We have earned that reputation by the fine work of our shop volunteers and the hard work of volunteers who clean our streetcars each month. If you would like to help us with this seldom thought about but very important task of car cleaning, please call **Bruce Gustafson** at 952-920-0920 for CHSL or **Teresa Babler** at 612-709-4708 for ESL. Cleaning dates are usually shown in the "What's Happening" section on page 6. No experience is necessary and this is the perfect way for you and your family to support your Museum in a tangible way. It is traditional that juice and rolls are served during the morning break for those who help with the monthly streetcar cleaning.

MSM Historian's News*Aaron Isaacs—Historian*

Glenwood Park shelter project shelved. It looks like our attempt to move the Glenwood Park streetcar waiting shelter to Lake Calhoun isn't going to happen. We were blindsided by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which decided to nominate the entire Minneapolis chain of lakes park area to be on the National Register of Historic Sites. This apparently also took the Park Board staff by surprise. SHPO objects to removing an historic structure from its original location. They also say that the shelter is inappropriate for our Lake Calhoun stop because its architecture is rustic wood, while the original Lakewood Cemetery station was stone.

I argued that returning the shelter to its original purpose was as important as its location, but they didn't buy that. The bottom line here is that the Park Board and the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission are unlikely to defy SHPO on this kind of issue, so the shelter move is probably dead. At least they know about it now, and that a tree is gradually pushing it over. Hopefully the Park Board will remove the tree so the shelter won't be destroyed.

Grants. I had secured a \$5000 grant from the 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation to move the shelter. When I informed the foundation that the project was terminated, they graciously agreed to let us use the money on either Winona No. 10's restoration or the 42nd Street grade crossing replacement.

The 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation also granted us \$5000 toward the rebuilding of the two traction motors we purchased from the Lake Shore Electric museum for Winona No. 10. To meet the grant's required match, I applied to the Winona Foundation for \$7985. That application was recently approved, which means that the cost to transport the motors to Maine and the rebuild them should be fully covered by grants.

Two years ago a voter referendum approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the state constitution. It authorizes a new sales tax to benefit the outdoors, clean water, parks and trails, and arts and cultural heritage. MSM is eligible for Cultural Heritage grants, so last fall I applied for money to purchase archival plastic sleeves for the MSM photo collection. It

took two tries, but in March we were notified that we had been granted \$3808 for the sleeves. They have been purchased and, whenever I have a spare hour, I insert photos. There are 9500 of them, so it will take awhile.

One can apply monthly for Cultural Heritage grants, and if the application is rejected, the review panel recommends ways to improve the application. I twice applied for a grant to rebuild Winona 10's roof, but both times the application was unsuccessful.

Dave French donates photos. Dave French recently donated over 30 Minnesota streetcar photos he had collected over the years. Most were new to the collection.

TCRT employee appointment card project. Some years ago, MSM (then part of MTM) donated to the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) our collection of TCRT appointment cards. The cards recorded service information for every motorman and conductor from 1891 to the end of streetcar service. The reason for the donation was to make them more available for families doing genealogy research.

A couple of years ago, I learned that Metro Transit had retained some of the cards because they were still being used. That function has since been computerized, so Metro Transit donated the cards to the museum. In turn, we donated them to MHS, to complete the TCRT card set and extend it into the bus era. I volunteered to work at MHS and merge the Metro Transit cards into the ones they already had. What followed was the unpleasant discovery that the cards at MHS were still divided into six sets, one for each streetcar station. There are many thousands of these cards, and all would have to be re-alphabetized.

Thankfully, Dave French volunteered to join the effort, and together we were able to complete the job in several months. In the process, we corrected many small alphabetizing errors. We also learned that TCRT hired a huge number of Scandinavian immigrants. There were enormous numbers of Olsons and Johnsons, and plenty of people with names like Sigurd and Hjalmar. The cards will be available soon for use by the public. ☺

Burton (Bud) Goldstein

It is with much sadness that I report the passing of Bud Goldstein, who now resides in that great TCRT streetcar station in the sky. Bud joined the ranks of volunteer Operators at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in 1999. Over the years Bud was one of our most faithful and hard working volunteers. He also was very active during Halloween as he took it upon himself to encourage his Queen Avenue neighbors to decorate their backyards for our ghost trolleys. Bud's health was failing him the last few years but his spirit was strong. Sadly, he succumbed to his health problems on April 19th. Our sympathy goes out to his family and to Angela, his wife. Rest in peace Bud.

Shop Update

John Prestholdt—Shop Foreman

The maintenance crews for both CHSL and ESL have all our cars ready for the start of this season's operations. Of course there will likely be some problems when dealing with three cars over 100 years old, one over 90 and even a "young" PCC car at 62 or 63 years young. I hope the operating crews will keep us informed of any problems that are noticed.

While general car startup maintenance is complete we still have a lot of work around both lines. At Excelsior there is continuing restoration of Winona No. 10. While this is a slow, meticulous process I'm sure **Ken Albrecht** will welcome help as the restoration crew prepare to install the mostly new steel car frame under the car. At Como-Harriet we have a couple of good projects around the line. We are starting to relay the bricked area in front of the car barn which was removed when our sprinkler system water was installed. If the bricks and fill last long enough we are planning on adding more bricks to allow us to get vehicles up to the barn and turn around. This to allow some of our members to get to the barn without using the steps and also to allow for easier transfer of parts and "things" into or out of the car barn. And our passenger platform, built in 2006, is showing wear and we will be replacing many of the wood boards to forestall any passenger safety issues.

We are always looking for members who would be interested in helping around our operating sites—remember, the cars don't fix themselves. We work during most of the day on Tuesdays and on Saturday mornings, and we welcome anyone who wants to help. If you are interested in working on our streetcars, here's a couple of things to consider: 1) the technology we're working with is basically from the 1890s so you do not have to be a rocket scientist to work on our cars; the electrical work is direct current technology, which is very basic; and, a lot of the maintenance on our streetcars entails working with and re-finishing wood, which anyone can do, with few exceptions. So, come and join us. It's fun and the camaraderie is really, really great! ☺

Hot Riveting on Winona No. 10: Continued



This is how its done! Hot riveting on Winona No. 10

(Above) First, you heat up the steel rivets to around 2,100 degrees F in the special forge (see photos in last issue of the *Streetcar Currents*). Then you take the glowing red rivet out of the forge using a set of special tongs and you place the rivet in the hole you drilled in the two pieces of steel being joined together. Here we see **Dennis Stephens** inserting the hot rivet and **Howie Melco** ready to put his bucking tool over the rivet head, showing us how it's done.

(Left) After the rivet is in place, the "bucker" put his bucking tool over the red-hot rivet head and leans into it. Then the fellow with the air operated rivet gun (in this case **Jim Willmore**) places the end of the gun over the glowing rivet end and presses a trigger which then allows the air to operate the gun and form the rivet into the proper shape. As the steel rivet cools, it shrinks and binds the two pieces of metal tightly together. (Both photos by Bob Wetherall)

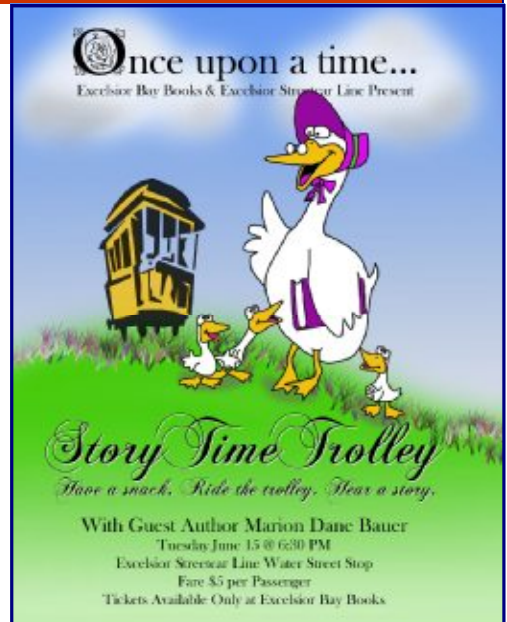
Excelsior Streetcar Line News

Bob Wetherall

Story Time Trolley on Track at ESL The *Story Time Trolley* will be running on our Excelsior Streetcar Line this summer. Excelsior Bay Books will partner with MSM in trolley runs on three Tuesdays this summer: June 15th; July 13th; and, August 17th. One Trolley run is scheduled each night at 6:30 with another added at 7:30 if needed. The *Story Time Trolley* is an evolution of the popular PJ Parties held at our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.

Ann Nye, bookstore owner, has engaged authors Mary Dane Bauer, Nancy Carlson and Phyllis Root to read excerpts from their popular children's books to the tots and their parents. The children riding the *Story Time Trolley* will enjoy treats at the Water Street platform in Excelsior and parents will have an opportunity to buy the author's books.

For Sale: Miller Electric Arc Welder. Miller Dialarc 250P-AC constant current AC arc welding power source. Nema classII(30)—Nema rating EN1-1971, complies with ANSI standard no c87.1-1971. Contact **Ken Albrecht** for details. Make a donation to MSM and this welder can be yours. ☺



Goodbye Mesaba No. 16 and Reminiscences

Bill Graham

Our Museum rescued the carbody of former Mesaba Railway No. 10 (Niles Car & Manufacturing Co., 1912) back in 1975 as a donation from the Gregorich Family. The Mesaba Rwy ran between Hibbing, Virginia, Eveleth and Gilbert, Minnesota, from 1913 until 1927 when it ceased operations, put out of business by paved roads and a bus line that evolved into the Greyhound Bus Co. Since 1975, we have kept No. 10's carbody protected from the weather, intending someday to restore it.

We long had thought that No. 10 was the only surviving Minnesota interurban trolley until we learned about five years ago that the body of Mesaba No. 16 (Niles, 1914) also had survived, built into a lake cabin about 12 miles north of Virginia, Minn. The owners, the four sisters of the Niemi family, wanted to tear down their old trolley cabin and build a new one, but they also wanted to find a home for their old trolley. After much soul searching, the Museum decided we could not acquire No. 16 in addition to No. 10. Nationwide efforts to find a home for No. 16 also did not pan out, and the family arranged to scrap the carbody.

The Niemi sisters, however, invited MSM to remove any parts from No. 16 that might be useful in restoring No. 10. Accordingly, **Mike Buck** and I visited the car in mid-April and salvaged a number of bronze hardware items that someday will become part of restored No. 10. The prize item is a conductor's signal bell bearing the Initials "NCCo" for the Niles Car Company, builder of the car. We wish to thank the Niemi

Family for their efforts to preserve their trolley and for donating valuable parts to MSM. Unfortunately, the dimensions of No. 16's window sash and doors precluded their re-use with No. 10. No. 16 was an all-steel car and therefore of a different design. (See photos of No. 16 "then and now" on next page.)

Mike and I have been Museum members and friends for over 35 years and served on the Board together in the early days. The trip to Virginia was a chance to reminisce about friends we have known down through the years. Among them were Ray Benson Sr., who with his wife Margaret and son Casey, were prominent in the building of our Lake Harriet exhibits. Mike recalled a mid-1970's trip to Solon Springs, WI, to strip out a Twin City Lines carbody that was soon to be destroyed. Ray usually wore his maroon corduroy jacket festooned with dozens of railroad patches, a white engineer's cap and a pair of clean, white cotton work gloves. He always brought his lunch, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich prepared by Margaret. As he sat down to eat, a goat walked up and tried to grab the sandwich out of Ray's hands. Negotiations followed and Ray relinquished half his sandwich to the goat who still thought it was entitled to the whole thing. Ray managed to down a couple of bites, but the goat got the rest. Many of the original parts used in the rebuilding of Nos. 265 and 1239 were gleaned during the many forays to the north woods where dozens of old streetcar bodies met their end. ☺

What's Happening?

May 1	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL, Isaacs carbarn—9 AM to 11 AM. Juice & rolls are served
May 1	Start of Weekend operations at CHSL
May 6	Start of operating season at ESL
May 14	Start of weekday service at CHSL
May 15	Linden Hills Festival at CHSL. PCC No. 322 will run on this Saturday afternoon
May 30	Second annual vintage automobile rally at CHSL starts at 12:30 PM
May 31	Memorial Day—CHSL special early-bird service starts at 9:00 AM
June 2	Wednesday afternoon service at CHSL starts (1 PM to 4 PM)
June 5	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL, Isaacs carbarn—9 AM to 11 AM. Juice & rolls are served

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

(If anyone remembers such a sign at St Paul Union Depot (SPUD) or Minneapolis Great Northern station, please contact me). The NPRHA has their archives at Jackson Street Roundhouse and would like to have this sign for display. Again, we cannot donate it but perhaps we can arrange for a sale or trade with the NP folks and MTM. MSM certainly supports MTM and any railroad item we acquire that is historically important or unique and is not germane to our collection will be considered for transfer to them.

Another member has told us he is not happy about having to recertify every year to continue operating the streetcar, saying that with his knowledge and background it was humiliating to have to recertify each year. Let me explain why we need to recertify every year. First, we are operating a very large and heavy vehicle through a park, over streets, and along a walking/jogging and bike trail. One of our responsibilities to MSM is to make sure MSM can continue interpreting Minnesota transit history for generations to come. I've said before just one serious accident could close our doors. If I was running the car and had that accident, certainly a competent lawyer for the claimant would want to see our training records to find out if MSM had taken all reasonable steps to assure that I was a competent operator. Saying that I had been trained in 1998 would not likely demonstrate to a jury that I was still competent. Second, having an annual recertification helps us to assure that all of our operations will be made safely, and it helps to keep our insurance costs as low as possible. And let's not forget, we're not getting any younger. I'll be fifty this year and I know the day will come when my physical and/or mental capabilities will have declined enough to retire me to a non-operating position. (Some of you are probably thinking I'm already there!) So if you are a long-time Motorman, I ask you to please be patient with our recertification process and help our trainers by coaching the newer operators. I hope you will take pride in passing the test every year and adding to your collection of those yellow license cards! See you on the car! ☺

Goodbye Mesaba Railway No. 16



(Left) Mesaba Railway No. 16 in better days earning revenue for the railway. No. 16 is rounding a corner in downtown Virginia, Minnesota. No. 16 and several of its all-steel sisters were built in 1914 By Niles Car Co., to replace composite wood and steel cars destroyed in the disastrous November 1913 fire of the Railway's main shop and office building in Virginia, less than a year after the full railway opened for service. (MSM archive photo)

(Right) Here's No. 16 now. This photo was taken late in 2009 and clearly shows that the body is in very tough shape. Not shown is the ten-foot section of the car's other side cut-out to allow entrance to a porch or bedroom when the car was converted into a cabin. (Bill Graham photo)