

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



September 2010

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Our summer operating season is almost over

- **After Labor Day the operations schedules for both railways change. See Ops news-letter #10-5 for the details.**
- **Get ready for the special events this fall and winter. Ghost trolley and Santa Claus trolleys are popular at both railways.**
- **Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers about our Museum and CHSL and ESL. Encourage them to come and ride.**



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Masthead Photo: No. 1239 was built by TCRT's 31st Street shops in 1907. After retirement in 1953, it was sold and became a cabin. MSM rescued it in 1989. After 10 years in storage, MSM's volunteers went to work on the car. Its restoration was completed in 2004 and the car now operates on our Museum's Excelsior Streetcar Line demonstration railway. The highway bridge you see in the photo is a replacement of the original TCRT-built bridge that carried the big, yellow cars, and later automobiles and trucks, over the Minneapolis & St. Louis RR tracks through Excelsior. (Mike Helde photo)

Class of 2020

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

"Well, it's not really for catching cows. How many cows do you think lived in the city?"

At just a little past 10 AM on an August morning, **Bill Arends** walked eight boys around DSR No. 265 pointing out its parts. The boys, 8 to 11 years old, were attending our very first Streetcar Camp. After looking the car over, they were given tape measures and, working in pairs, took the car's measure, counted windows and seats, figured out how many passengers it might be able to carry, and recorded it all in their activity book.



The Graduating Class from our first Streetcar Camp

The morning started with a trip down the Como-Harriet line. Following along on a route map, our campers learned what the Motorman, in this case new Museum member **Bill Hubbard**, is doing at various locations as he operates the car. They examined the track and had a close up look at ballast, ties and spikes. They tried to throw a switch and discovered that there's a frog involved. Then it was time for a juice box and bathroom break.

Electrical circuits were explored through the use of batteries, test leads and lamps. Does a copper penny conduct electricity? How about a string or a rubber band? A rock or a bottle cap? What happens when you wire three lamps in series? When we switch the polarity of the electric motor, will it turn the other way? These experiments led the group to the controller in the Linden Hills Station. There, using a small working demonstration model of a controller built for the Museum by **Jim Willmore**, campers saw how resistance affects the electricity sent to the streetcar's motors.

By now it was time for lunch, enjoyed alfresco on the station platform. It also gave our instructors time to catch their breath before beginning the most anticipated part of the day—operating the streetcar! Working under close supervision, each camper had two opportunities to run the car from each end. They followed the proper sequence of asking permission to move the car by ringing the interior bell, setting the controls, ringing the external bells, and notching up power. And of course, tooting the whistle under the William Berry Bridge. Bill and Bill handled the brakes.

The morning passed quickly. At the end of our four-hour streetcar experience, each boy received a Certificate of Accomplishment and an official Minnesota Streetcar Museum patch. Each of them told us they'd be back for Camp next summer. And who knows, maybe they'll return in a short ten years as volunteers? ☺

(More photos of our first Streetcar Camp are on page 4)

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
September—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 September 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

MSM News & Views

Jim Vaitkunas

Welcome to our newest members. We've gained one new member since my last report: Hunter Bill Way. Bill is a graduate of our Operator training program and has become very active. Glad to have you, Bill.

How are we doing this season? Our statistician, John Prestholdt keeps tabs on our ridership numbers at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. (We actually have rider statistics going back to the first month the Museum started operations at Lake Harriet in August, 1971.) Superintendent, Bruce Kobs does the same for our Excelsior Streetcar Line. While I don't have the 2010 ridership statistics for ESL yet, John provides the stats for CHSL shortly after the end of each month. Here's what they look like at CHSL.

MONTH	TOTAL RIDERS	TOKENS SOLD
MAY	5,628	3,942
JUNE	4,149	3,000
JULY	6,754	5,043
TOTAL	16,531	11,985

A quick review of historical data from past years reveals that while May was one of the better months for ridership, June was probably the worst June on record. The reason? Weather and mishaps. In other words, factors that are/were beyond our control. In June we had almost one-third of our operating days (9 days) either rained out totally or the shift was cut short because of rain! This is unprecedented! To add insult to injury (no pun intended), there was the June 27th incident when No. 1300's trolley pole broke, snagging the overhead bracket arm which, in turn, snapped and brought down the wooden overhead line pole, and in the process injuring one of our passengers. That was another day cancelled. Ten days out of thirty in June!

Charters during the period numbered 21 and carried 864 riders. This is about what we normally carry through the end of July. But this is an area that can be improved if someone was willing to take on the task of aggressively marketing streetcar charters on both our demonstration railways.

Over the last 10-15 years, our annual ridership has declined about one-third. While we are not in any financial danger because of this ridership decline, we are doing our best to maintain our current annual ridership of around 35,000 passengers at both railways by holding the special fall events such as the ghost trolleys. We will continue to promote our special events and manage our Museum's assets wisely, while always striving to accomplish our mission to preserve Minnesota's electric railway history.

Special 9/11 Tribute at Lake Harriet Band Shell on Saturday, 9/11/2010



Bob Bayers, one of our CHSL Operators, is again producing the 9th Annual 9-11 Tribute Our Community Remembers on Saturday evening, September 11th at 7pm at the Lake Harriet Band Shell. Here a link where you can learn more about this event: <http://our911tribute.com/> There will be lots of flag waving and patriotic music. Bob is sending out over 1,400 letters to the parents of the elementary schools in the area. He'll suggest that because that is not a school night they might like to take their kids on a streetcar ride that will be operating that afternoon. This is the first time that September 11th has fallen on a Saturday since Bob began holding the concerts. Last year he had a 64 piece orchestra and 58 voice chorus (see photo). An estimated audience of 2,000 to 3,000 people attend each year. The hosts for this year's concert are John Lauritsen and Heather Brown, reporters at WCCO-TV 4 News.

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Historian's Update

Aaron Isaacs-MSM Historian

PCC No. 352 Arrives at Illinois Railway Museum. TCRT PCC streetcar No. 352 was sold to Cleveland's Shaker Heights Rapid Transit (SHRT) in 1953. It was repainted into SHRT colors at TCRT's Snelling Shops in St. Paul, where it, and the other PCC cars sold to SHRT, were equipped with couplers for multiple unit operation. Upon retirement, it went to the privately owned Trolleyville collection, which later became the short-lived Lake Shore Electric museum. When the LSE collection was sold last year, No. 352 was purchased by Electric City Trolley Museum in Scranton, Pennsylvania. However, Electric City changed its mind, apparently due to lack of storage space, and resold the car for \$1,000 to IRM, where it arrived in December 2009.

Like our own PCC No. 322, the car was in rough shape. Later owner Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) had replaced the original glass windows with Lexan, a plastic material which was scratched and barely transparent. By happy coincidence, the East Troy Electric Railway Museum, in neighboring Wisconsin, decided to deaccession its pair of Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) elevated ("L") cars that had been totally rebuilt in the 1950s from PCC cars declared surplus by CTA. East Troy gave IRM a supply of L car safety glass windows, which were promptly installed in No. 352. You may recall that our No. 322 also had Lexan window panes and received L car windows, which are identical. Next, IRM will do an assessment of the car's electrical system. If it's anything like No. 322's wiring, it will need complete replacement. We'll keep you posted. ☺



No. 352 in TCRT service. TCRT No. 352 is rounding the broad curve at 31st Street and Irving Avenue in south Minneapolis. The car is on rush-hour "LOOP" service (note destination sign), meaning that No. 352 will turn around in downtown Minneapolis ("loop" around a city block) and go back out on the **Como-Harriet** or **Oak-Harriet** lines. This location is about 3/4 of a mile north of our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. (MSM Photo Archive)



Ready for Shipping. Here's SHRT No. 63 (ex-TCRT No. 352) in SHRT colors (note SHRT's logo at the rear). **Frank S. Morgan**, TCRT's Superintendent of Power and Equipment, stands next to No. 63. Note the multiple unit coupler underneath the front. The sign in the window says "DO NOT HUMP" which means that the car is ready for loading onto a railroad flatcar, destination Cleveland, Ohio. (MSM Photo Archive)



TCRT's Snelling Shops was a complete shop. These two photos show several TCRT PCC cars in the process of being modified for their service on the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit line in Cleveland, Ohio. All the work to repair the cars, paint and letter them and install the multiple unit controls that SHRT wanted was accomplished by the Snelling Shops artisans. (MSM Photo Archive)

What's Happening?

- September 6 Labor Day early bird operations at CHSL starts at 9:30 AM
- September 11 Excelsior Apple Day festival. ESL starts early operations at 9:00 AM
- September 12 Last day of weekend operations at ESL
- September 25 TCRT employees reunion at CHSL starts at 10 AM
- September 26 MSM Member's picnic at the Excelsior Streetcar Line starts at 1:00 PM
- October 16 & 17 Farmer's Ken's Pumpkin patch at CHSL operates from 12:30 PM to 4 PM
- October 22, 23, 29 & 30 Halloween ghost trolley at CHSL, operates from 6 PM to 9 PM
- October 29 & 30 Halloween ghost trolley & Boo-seum at ESL operates from 6 PM to 9 PM

Photos From MSM's First Streetcar Camp

(All photos by Rod Eaton)



Bill Arends is shown here demonstrating how a streetcar retriever works to some of the campers. Bill is now our retriever expert.



Here's one of the Streetcar Camp youngsters with his hand on the controller handle. **Bill Arends** is his assistant on the right..



(Left) New volunteer **Bill Hubbard** is helping some of the campers with one of the worksheets. (Bill is the one with almost no hair.) **(Right)** The other Bill on the camp crew, **Bill Arends** is supervising a camper as he tries to throw the switch. It sure takes a lot of muscle to do that, as this young fellow found out!

