

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Mar-Apr 2011

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Its Spring (I think!). Time to get ready for the 2011 Season

- **It's not too late to make a donation to our 2010-2011 annual appeal**
- **Consider becoming more involved in your Museum's operations and administration**
- **Get Your uniform out and get it ready for the coming season**
- **Renew your membership as soon as you get the reminder notice—save your Museum some money**
- **Recertification instructions will be published on or about April 1st**



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Masthead Photo: When are they going to invent that time machine? Wouldn't you love to go back to 1900 or so and take photos of TCRT cars. The date of this photo is unknown but it was probably taken before Snelling shops was built. The unidentified supervisor in the foreground looks proud of his cars. (MSM Photo Archive)

The 2011 Season is Upon Us

Bill Arends—General Supt.

My first article as the General Superintendent appeared in the January-February edition of the *Streetcar Currents* along with my picture. One thing I failed to do in the article was introduce myself. I've been a volunteer with the museum since spring 2002 when I was trained as an operator. Now, in addition to being your General Superintendent, I'm an Operating Foreman, a cashier and a member of the Tuesday and Saturday morning car barn maintenance crews. I'm a Linden Hills resident of over 33 years, married with one daughter, who I'm excited to say, will be getting married in June. Not sharing the same passion for streetcars as her dad, the wedding will not be on the streetcar.

Enough about me. It's the museum and the streetcars that you really care about. As this long winter has dragged on, a winter which started with the canceling of the last two days of our Holly Trolley, the urge to get behind the controls of the streetcar has become greater by the day. But winter does not mean that the many volunteers of the museum aren't active. There are many things that go on behind the scenes the year around. The winter season is no exception.

As you know, there's preventive maintenance to be done to each of the cars. This requires many hours of checking the controller, adjusting the brakes, lubricating all moving parts starting at the motors under the car and on up to the trolley base on top of the car. This year, the car barn crews have also been doing other less frequent maintenance. They've removed the seats and repainted the floor of TCRT No. 1300. Duluth No. 265 has had its window sash removed and repainted. All of this was made more difficult this winter because of the inability to interchange the cars from the cold barn to the heated barn due to the abundance of snow. But on a Tuesday in March, with the assistance of the Park Board and their front end loader, large piles of snow outside the car barn down to the switch were pushed aside. Thanks to the Tuesday crew of **Neil Howes, Keith Lindberg, Walt Strobel, Mark Digre, Russ Isbrandt, John Prestholdt, and Bob Smith**, the remainder of the snow was removed from the rails and flange ways and No. 265 was moved into the maintenance barn to undergo its annual preventive maintenance.

Winter is also the time for planning next season's schedule. We will be starting service on Saturday, May 7th and weeknight service on Friday, May 13th. We will again be running two-car service on Sunday afternoon but PCC No. 322 will start its runs at 1:30 PM and will run until 5:30 PM.

April and May is a busy time for us. During April we need to get our Foremen re-certified. The Operators also need to get re-certified. Our hard-working Crew Schedulers need to fill the monthly operations schedules. New Operator orientation and training begins. Schools schedule streetcar charters before the school year ends. There's a lot of work behind the scenes. When you receive a notice or call about scheduling re-certification, please respond to it promptly. When your Crew Scheduler contacts you to schedule shifts for the month, please return their calls and e-

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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 inter-urban 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—2011

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar **CURRENTS** is a 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 April 20, 2011.

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

155 Chaparral Dr.
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774

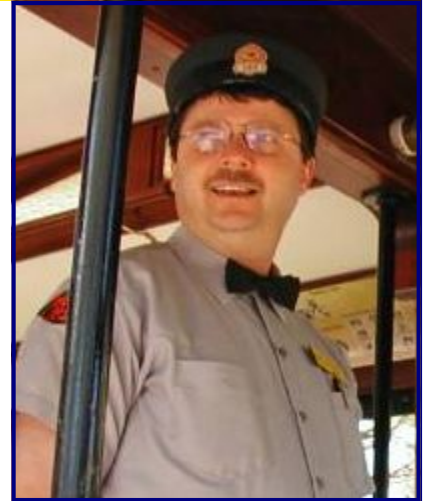
You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com



From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum

Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

Hi everybody! Like all of you I am anxiously awaiting spring weather and engaging in nice-weather activities, including volunteering at MSM. We had a meeting of the Board of Directors in February and I was offered the opportunity to serve another term as Chairman of the Board which I gratefully accepted. It is an honor to serve MSM in any capacity because I get to work with so many great people giving rides to thousands of people each year, providing them some inexpensive fun and teaching them a little bit about “what used to be” in public transportation in Minnesota.



All of us should be trying to improve whatever we do in this life, and there are many things I can improve as your Chairman. Your Board members are **Aaron Isaacs, Jim Vaitkunas, Scott Heiderich, Chris Heck, Bob Bayers, Darel Leipold, and Bruce Kobs** (who will be succeeded by **Todd Bender** in March). Your Board has accomplished much during the past five years but I want to make some changes to the way we do business in 2011. First of all, the Board has been a little too involved in the Museum's regular operations. We spend too much time discussing these operations and sometimes are asked to approve them, when they should be managed and approved by the Superintendents. For example, replacing two damaged line poles at Excelsior, installing heaters on car 1239, and holding the Classic Car Show at Lake Harriet do not have to be discussed and approved by the Board. The General Superintendent, Excelsior Superintendent, and Mechanical superintendents can oversee and approve those things. This has been my fault because I have not had a good understanding of what the Board's responsibilities are. Now, don't get me wrong, we are very interested in everything MSM does, but the Board only meets four times a year and nobody likes a meeting that is longer than two hours. So starting with our next meeting in late May I will take a more active role in forming and managing the agenda. If you wish to present something at the meeting, I ask you to contact me first so we can discuss it. Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings and I do not wish to suppress discussion, but again I want the Board to focus more on what it should be doing.

So now you ask, well what *should* the Board be doing, Dave? The Minnesota Secretary of State provides us with some very helpful rules for how a nonprofit corporation like MSM should be managed. The following is based on their “Responsibilities and Position Descriptions for Nonprofit Board Members.”

- Board directors are trustees who act on behalf of MSM's constituents, including service recipients, founders, members, the government, and taxpayers. The Board has the principal responsibility for fulfillment of MSM's mission and legal accountability for its operations.
- The Board should review and approve MSM's financial goals, annually review and approve the budget, and approve major policies.
- Appoint, monitor, appraise, advise, support, and, when necessary, change superintendents.

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MSM Historian's Update —We make Minnesota's Electric Railway History Come Alive!

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

Updates from the MSM photo collection. The entire MSM photo collection is now housed in archival, acid-free sleeves. Funded by a \$3,800 Minnesota Legacy grant, this is a long-term investment to preserve the photos for the future.

In the last issue of the *Streetcar Currents*, I noted that the MSM photo collection had 9,614 catalogued images. That number has now increased to 9,808. I've been cataloguing a large backlog of digital images and making hard copy prints of them for the file. Photos continue to be acquired, mostly on eBay through the generosity of **Dave French**, who buys them and donates them. We also purchased copies of some photos of Evansville, Indiana streetcars from the Indiana Historical Society and the Evansville Museum. Why? These cars were built at Snelling Shops by the Lightweight Noiseless Electric Street Car Company. **Russ Olson** has donated a number of modern day views of historic infrastructure remnants of the TCRT Stillwater line. Several years ago **Mike Buck** donated slides he had made of Minnesota streetcar postcards and I'm finally cataloguing those and making prints. See page four for a couple of these rare photos. Thanks to **Jim Vaitkunas** for scanning them.

More photos for Minnesota Reflections. The Historic Photos button on our website is a link to Minnesota Reflections, where small museums and historical societies can post their photos. MSM currently has 1,136 photos posted, but that will soon increase by 414 (36 percent) to 1,550. I just handed them over to the Minnesota Historical Society for scanning, which will take a couple of months. When complete, 34 percent of the MSM collection will be

digitized.

Ad Signs for Duluth No. 265. The Spring 2008 issue of *Twin City Lines* ran four photos of Duluth streetcars displaying ad signs on the left front of the car. The signs promoted riding the streetcars. Our No. 265 still has the clips that held the ad signs in place, so it seemed like a good idea to replicate a couple of the signs. We hired **Forrest Wozniak**, a sign maker who specializes in replicating vintage signs by hand, using traditional sign painting techniques. I gave him black and white photos of two signs. We had to guess at the colors. The signs are painted on fiberboard that is flexible enough to bend to the curvature of the car dash. Forrest completed them over the winter. See photos on page four.

Digital projector. Museum members receive periodic requests to do history presentations. In the past, that meant a slide show using our old reliable Kodak Carousel projector. While the selection of slides is rather limited, any of the photos in the MSM collection can be scanned. So we've bought a digital projector (thanks to **Jim Vaitkunas** for arranging the purchase). It will be available to any museum volunteer who needs to do a presentation. Just contact **Aaron Isaacs** at aaronmona@aol.com or 612-929-7066 to make arrangements. You'll have to provide a laptop computer.

University Avenue documentary. A documentary on University Avenue is in production for eventual airing on public television. The producer taped an interview with me, as well as MSM member **Merle Seils**. Merle was a Snelling Station motorman. He worked University Avenue regularly and ran the last regular service car into downtown St. Paul in 1953. 🔄

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

- Approve major actions of MSM, such as capital expenditures and major program and service changes.

Some upcoming business of the Board will include development and approval of a written Financial Policy for MSM, filling several vacant leadership positions (including Superintendent of Safety and Training, Chief Mechanical Officer, and Chief Engineer), preparing grant applications to fund the Winona No. 10 restoration and the George Isaacs Car barn expansion, and moving forward with obtaining necessary permits for car barn sewer and bathroom construction.

Finally, I have the pleasure to thank **Scott Heiderich** for his service as MSM Treasurer, **Russ Olson** for serving as Bookkeeper, and **Bruce Kobs** for completing **Bob Johnson's** term on the Board. And I thank **Keith Anderson** for stepping up to the Treasurer's job, **Kristin Bender** for taking the Bookkeeper position, and **Todd Bender** for joining the Board of Directors.

See you on the car! 🔄

Post Cards From the Past



Here is a fine line-up of TCRT standard streetcars awaiting the evening rush hour at Northside Station in northeast Minneapolis.



This bucolic scene appears to be taken at the Phalen Park loop in Saint Paul. Note the proprietor of the confectionary on the left.



Duluth Dash Signs

We have no way of knowing what colors the dash signs were, so we gave it a good guess. They do look striking and authentic, wouldn't you say?

Left. Note that this car still has the high pitched "peanut whistle." In Minneapolis, citizen complaints resulted in TCRT replacing these with the more pleasing-sounding "trombone-style" whistle.

Lower Left. Considering the scrapes on the sign and body, and the broken windows, it appears that this car was involved in an altercation somewhere out on the line. Ironical that the sign was damaged given its message, eh?

(Photos by Aaron Isaacs)



Winona No. 10 Restoration Progress



Above. Here we see (left to right) **Steve Mages**, **Ken Albrecht** (Winona No. 10 project manager) and **Dick Zawacki** working on replacing roof boards. (Jim Vaitkunas Photo)



Above Right. This photo shows the interior of Winona No. 12, sister car to our No. 10. This is the official St. Louis Car Company photo taken just prior to shipping the car to Winona. The cars (Numbers 9 to 12) were delivered in 1914. We will restore the interior of No. 10 car as shown in this photo. (MSM Archive Photo)



Above. These two pull rings were made by **Scott Ingram**. These go on the single folding leaf door located to the left of the Motorman at each end of the car. The doors were not controlled from inside the car by any kind of lever or linkage, so these pull rings were the only way to close the doors. While the doors were functional when the cars were delivered, the cars were always one-man operated. The odd doors were permanently closed and sealed only a couple of years after delivery of the four cars to the Winona system. (Photo by Ken Albrecht)



Above. This photo shows the initial work by Ken Albrecht to fabricate the grooved floor running down the middle of the aisle of Winona No. 10. This happens to be a part of a trap door to allow shop forces to do maintenance on the motors. The purpose of the grooved aisle was to allow dirt to fall between the wood runners. Women wearing shoes with any kind of heels hated this type of floor. (Ken Albrecht Photo)

(The 2011 Season is Upon Us Continued from page 1)

mails promptly. The Crew Schedulers are volunteers too. Please help make their jobs as easy as possible. **Think about this:** If each Operator and Foreman signs up for only two shifts a month, every shift would be filled with a full crew of four. Early sign-up makes the process so much easier. I'm looking forward to seeing you during our 40th season of operation. ☺

What's Happening?

April	Operator recertification and new Operator training schedule will be announced in early April
May 5	Start of operations at Excelsior Streetcar Line
May 7	Start of weekend operations at Como-Harriet Streetcar Line
May 13	Start of daily operations at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line
May 30	Memorial Day operations at ESL & CHSL CHSL early bird service starts at 9:30AM

**MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership**

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary and Superintendent of Operations*

Donations Received. Our annual appeal kicked-off in mid November and we've had a terrific response from our members and friends. Here are the members and friends who have responded generously to our 2010-2011 MSM Annual Appeal since the last report in the January-February issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**.

General Fund: Rod Eaton, Steve Eberly and Jan & Ken Albrecht.

Carbarn Improvement Fund: Carl Wessel

Winona No. 10 Restoration Fund: Mike Helde

Our donations usually slow down around February 1st as you can see. But we still had an excellent response from you. Many thanks to all donors for your generosity.

New Members. We had several new members join the MSM family in the last couple of months. We'd like to welcome: Sandy Demaria, William Schiebler, Robert Racine, and Anne and John McClurg, who joined as lifetime members. Rolly Ehrenberg also upgraded his membership to the lifetime level.

Membership Renewals. We don't really have the time to do an analysis of how much it costs the Museum to send out second and third notices for membership renewals. But it does cost us extra, both in terms of time and postage. We don't want to lose you as a member, so we send out reminders. But it would really help us out if you sent in your renewal as soon as it's received. Also, joining for the two-year period saves us time and postage as well. Think about when it's time to renew your membership. ☺

Bill Cordes RIP

We regret to report that Bill Cordes, a founding member of our Museum passed on several weeks ago. Bill was a member of the Minnesota Transportation Museum and MSM since the 1960s. His interest in streetcars went way back to the early 1950s when he rode many excursions as a member of the Minnesota Railfans' Association. Bill also rode the last TCRT excursion on June 19, 1954. A well-known Midwest railfan, Bill took lots of slides and movies. He also held a degree in Chemical Engineering.

Bill was a very active volunteer with MTM and served on the Board of MTM. His primary interest was streetcars which mean he was very active on the Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. But he also volunteered at MTM's other locations including the NP No. 328 steam excursions the Museum ran in the 1980s, and he was active at the Princess Depot located in Minnehaha Falls Park. He was a CHSL Crew Foreman but he did much more than operate the streetcars. He did track work and streetcar maintenance for many years. He became knowledgeable on overhead trolley wire systems and he led the crews installing the wire at CHSL in the early 1970s and in maintaining the overhead trolley wire over a 20-year period.

Unfortunately, Bill suffered a stroke in 1995 and lived in an assisted living home or nursing home until his death. Bill was known for his vans, which were the SUV's of their day. Bill always had one and kept it for years. He loved classical music, symphony orchestras and pipe organ music. Bill will be missed by all who knew him. (*Many thanks to Scott Heiderich and "Electric" Mike Miller for the biographical information on Bill and the two photos*)



(Left) Bill Cordes (left) and George Isaacs at CHSL's north end on 3/3/84. They were probably out inspecting the track and overhead trolley wire to get ready for the 1984 operating season when Mike Miller took this photo.



(Right) Crew Foreman Bill awaits boarding passengers on 10/6/85. Bill volunteered frequently on the cars at CHSL.