

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



August—2011

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

40th Anniversary Celebration of Lake Harriet Operations

- *Festivities kick-off at 12 -noon with a special group photo*
- *Come join us and help us celebrate*
- *If you want to help with our 40th anniversary events, please contact Rod Eaton*
- *There are at least five current Museum members who were members in August, 1971, our first year of streetcar operations at CHSL*



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Masthead Photo: August 28, 1971 was the first day of public operations at our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Here is a photo of No. 1300 at the then end of the line just across west 42nd Street. It looks like the car is configured for two-man service, i.e., load at the rear and disembark from the front. Overhead trolley wire won't come until 1973. (Bill Cordes photo)

Plusses & Minuses

Bill Arends—General Supt.

On a recent Saturday evening I had the pleasure of operating one of our streetcars in charter service for a wedding party. How gratifying to have a group of young people choose our streetcar as part of a special day in their lives. They were not just having fun with their friends, riding the streetcar and using us as a photo-op. They were also interested in our operation and our streetcars. One of the first questions asked by a member of the wedding party was: "Are you funded by the state?" What a great question to get me started explaining what MSM is and how it's operated. Which led to questions about our history, the age of our streetcars, etc. Not only was I included in a few of the wedding photos, I was also provided the opportunity to inform a new group of people about what we are. A truly enjoyable charter.

While on the topic of charters, I had Friday, July 29th circled on my calendar, but not because I had a charter scheduled. It was circled because that was the day I turned scheduling charters back over to **Jerry** and **Muriel Olsen**. Panic can best describe my reaction when they informed me they would be taking a trip abroad during much of July. Fortunately the charters on the books were all fully scheduled with operating crews and a detailed schedule provided. Of course there was the charter that wasn't a charter. Having gotten involved with this one on short notice and being unable to schedule a charter, I turned to the foreman scheduled that evening. With the able assistance of **Dave Higgins**, handing a "Harry Potter" themed birthday party during his regular revenue shift, a happy group of kids celebrated a *Hogswart Express* Trolley. And I look forward to the return of Jerry and Muriel. The excellent job they do behind the scenes scheduling charters should not go unnoticed.

July has presented us with some unusual challenges—some positive, some not so much. One positive challenge was our Murder Mystery trolley. Thanks to **Rod Eaton** for coming up with the idea and working with a group of budding actors from Minneapolis Southwest High School. Four successful performances were held over two nights after regular revenue service. Thanks also to our own actors, **Dave French** and **Mike Helde**, for running the streetcar and lending their acting talents. **Dave Irey** provided the classic car with **Ben Franske** back at the car barn making it all happen in the dark by cutting the power at the appropriate time. From all reports it was a very successful event. But the question remains: Who did kill Freddie?

Continuing with the positives, please notice the exterior of the Linden Hills station. **Eric Neumann** washed the exterior, repainted the door and much of the trim in preparation for the 40th Anniversary. Thank Eric. The depot looks great!

So what was not so positive? I need say nothing more than the weather. We have always had our rain-outs. But heat-outs? From Friday, July 15th thru Wednesday, July 20th we cancelled three shifts completely: one for rain and two for heat and humidity. And we had three more shifts cut short because of the heat and humidity. But we persevered and perspired and by Sunday, July 24th all was back to normal with over 700 happy passengers riding with us on that afternoon. 🌀

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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
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 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 August—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 August 20, 2011.

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From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum

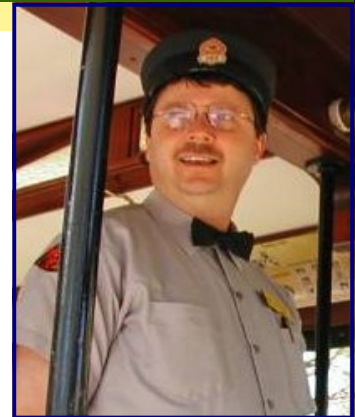
Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

Hi Everybody! In June I had the sad experience of attending memorial services for two of our members and active volunteers, **Tom Fairbairn** and **Roy Harvey**. I really only knew Tom and Roy through MSM, that is I did not know them outside of the museum. Attending their services and listening to the eulogies showed me how much more there was to know about these two outstanding men. Tom was a long-time member of the Richfield Police Reserve and was active in amateur radio. Roy was an usher at his church for over 50 years! These are just examples of all the ways these guys contributed to their communities, and I can't even begin to talk about all they meant to their families as husbands and fathers. This reminded me how lucky we are at MSM to have outstanding volunteers who donate countless hours of service to our museum, not because they have a lot of idle time to spare, but because they somehow make time for us among all the family and outside activities they are involved in. In other words, our volunteers are real busy men and women! On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for serving our community by keeping the streetcars running and preserving the history of mass transit in Minnesota.

As you know, we are celebrating our 40th anniversary of running streetcars at Lake Harriet on August 6th. It will be a happy time and a time to fondly remember all of the volunteers like Tom and Roy who are no longer with us and what they contributed to making MSM what it is today. And we will honor a special group of volunteers who were here in 1971 to get us started and are still with us today to keep us going, despite being over a hundred years old! (*I'm just kidding guys!*) I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Speaking of active volunteers, we have had a few cases where member volunteers suddenly drop out of sight. These are folks who started operating the streetcars or took on some responsibility at MSM, only to stop their activities and then fail to respond to calls and e-mails. Now all of us might curtail or stop our volunteering at MSM for all kinds of good reasons. Your leadership expects and understands that lives change and you might have to take some time off or stop volunteering all together. But it is especially frustrating when volunteers won't contact us and let us know their plans and tell

us why they are no longer able to commit the time to MSM (of course no one is required to tell us their reasons, but it is nice to know if you want to share it). If you leave without communication you leave us in limbo and also concerned for your welfare. Whether you are a 40-year veteran or a brand new volunteer in 2011, will you promise to let us know if you decide to cut back or leave MSM? You can always contact me (651-728-2837 or drfcd152@aol.com), and I will contact the appropriate superintendents to let them know your status. And if you ask me to keep any information in strictest confidence, I will certainly do so. **I'll see you on August 6th!** ☺


MERCHANDISE NOTES

John DeWitt has added a lot of new merchandise to the MSM Store's pages of our Museum's website: www.TrolleyRide.org Take a look. **Remember** that the free shipping of the HO model PCC streetcars shown on page four of last month's **Streetcar CURRENTS**, expires August 15th. Reserve your car and get free shipping today. **Attention new & seasoned Operators:** you can now order conductor's hats through the website. Check it out! Charles Barthold — MSM Merchandise Manager



More photos on *Minnesota Reflections*. MSM has posted another 411 historic streetcar photos on the Minnesota Reflections website. This brings our total to 1547 photos. To see them, go to the MSM website www.trolleyride.org and click on Historic Photos.

This group of photos includes a large number of streetcar company employees who are identified either by name or employee number. The idea is to create a resource for family genealogists. If only the employee number is known, families can put the name and number together by looking through the TCRT employee appointment cards at the Minnesota Historical Society. Those cards were donated by MSM. Last year **Dave French** and I alphabetized them.

Cordes collection arrives. The movie and slide collection of the late MSM member **Bill Cordes** has been received. Beginning in the mid-1950s, Bill took thousands of slides of railroads, streetcars and rail museums across North America, as well as numerous 8mm movies. My thanks to **Peter Albrecht**, **Russ Isbrandt**, **Steve Simon** and **Jim Vaitkunas** for helping with the move.

When a big collection like this comes in, you hope that it will yield a trove of material that our museum will want to keep. Not this time. Bill shot a little film of one of the Minnesota Railfan Association streetcar fan trips. The big find was extensive slide and movie coverage of the early years of the Minnesota Transportation Museum and our Como-Harriet line. He documented the move of No. 1300 from Hopkins to the Minnesota Transfer Railway roundhouse in 1962, the first operations in the Transfer's yard in 1963 and the building of our Como-Harriet line. These photos fill a real hole in the visual history of our museum.

MSM's collection policy is restricted to Minnesota streetcars and electric railways, so we don't keep railroad photos. Twin Cities rail author **Steve Glischinski** is working on a book on Minnesota railroads, and some of the Cordes slides will appear in it. A few have been sent to museums in other states. The rest have been donated to the local *NorthStar* Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The final disposition of his movies is still an open question. All of them are indexed, so we know what their subjects are. We'll have to hold some winter movie parties to see what's on them.

Winona 10's power truck. Thanks to **Russ Olson**, we know that the power truck and trolley pole acquired in the Lake Shore Electric museum sale came from Lancaster, Ohio streetcar No. 6 (photo on right). It was built as a horse car. When the small sys-

tem electrified, the car was kept in service by placing it on a new power truck. After abandonment in the 1930s, No. 6 and another Lancaster street car were stored at a private home, where they were eventually discovered by the Ohio Historical Society. The society decided to restore No. 6 by backdating it as a horse car again. That made the power truck and trolley pole surplus. They found their way into the private Trolleyville collection, which eventually became the Lake Shore Electric museum. When the museum went out of business, we purchased the truck. It was the only available Dupont power truck anywhere, an earlier version of the one that Winona No. 10 had.

The trolley pole itself is an interesting artifact. It's an early design from the 1890s. **Dennis Stephens** and **Howie Melco** are restoring it. It may be installed on Duluth streetcar No. 78, which was built in 1893. Although not the same model of pole as No. 78 carried, it's more appropriate than the modern pole currently on the car. That will free up a newer pole for use on No. 10.

New (actually old) Winona photos. A recent visit to the Winona County Historical Society uncovered 25 Winona streetcar photos that were new to the MSM collection. The staff there, having visited our Winona No. 10 restoration in April, graciously allowed me to scan the photos at no cost. I also copied a history of Winona streetcars written by the late **Clarence J. Vincent**, the town's resident authority on streetcar history who also compiled their collection of photos.

Big Island history in the works. Historian **Paul Maravelas** is writing a book about Big Island for the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society. He recently completed the chapter on TCRT's short-lived Big Island Park, which was open from 1906 to 1911, and asked **Russ Olson**, **John Diers** and me to review his manuscript. Paul has done a terrific job of research, and added much to our knowledge of the park. Because he is still researching the history of the rest of the island, the book won't be published for at least another year. Paul was previously employed by the Bakken Museum, where he worked with MSM on a streetcar exhibit that is still on display there. 📍

Lancaster No. 6 in the 1930s. A tired, old horse car, it's amazing the car still exists.



What's Happening?

August 3 & 6	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL: 8/3, 6 PM & 8/6, 8:30 AM both dates at the Isaacs carbarn
August 6	Gala 40th Anniversary of streetcars at Lake Harriet celebration starts at 12-noon
August 11	Streetcar camp for Kids at CHSL starts at 9 AM
August 16	ESL <i>Story Time Trolley</i> starts at 6:30 PM
August 18	CHSL's <i>Pajama Party trolley</i> starts at 6:30 PM

**Shop Update** — *News from our George K. Isaacs and Excelsior Carbarns*

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

As mentioned in previous *Currents* shop updates, the CHSL Tuesday crew works on operating car preventive maintenance and occasional problems as they crop up. In amongst routine maintenance we have been working to build a driveway over one of the carbarn lead tracks to allow cars and delivery trucks to get close to the barn doors. We also repaired the rear brake valve on No. 1239 at Excelsior that has been an operational problem all year. We brought out the only replacement valve we had ready. This forced us to start work on lapping (sanding smooth) as many brake valves as we have. We now should be ready for any emergency brake valve replacement. We have also repaired the bell cord on No. 1300 several times. This seems to be a problem of yanking the bell cord too hard from both ends of the car. It took the late **Roy Harvey** (see next paragraph) several years to get the proper alignment of all those parts. The answer seems to be to pull in the slack on the line then a light tug will ring the bell at the other end. Pulling the cord too hard will cause a break in the leather cord.

On a sad note, and for the second month in a row, our Museum and the Mechanical Department has lost another hard-working member with the passing of **Roy Harvey**. What did Roy do? It would be easier to list what he didn't do. As a WWII veteran of U.S. Navy service, and a retired phone company employee, Roy would do almost anything around the car barn that needed to be done, except govern the museum.

He kept the barn area clean during summer or winter clearing leaves, shoveling snow, installing our phones, bringing water for coffee (we still don't have any running water) emptying the garbage cans, and a whole lot more. When the bridge over the barns was being repaired by the city, we were concerned that some of the work might set off our then new alarm system. Enter **Roy Harvey** who would arrive early to turn off the alarm, then work on some minor project like build storage shelves, build a storage board in the maintenance barn for clamps, saws and big wrenches, or set up a holding area for dust pans and small brooms. He would even fill in for a missing charter crew when someone forgot they were scheduled. He even filled in a year as a cashier, and 'Did you hear the latest Ollie and Lena joke?' Yes, most of us will miss his jokes. He kept us all entertained. ☺

Roy Harvey — He Did the Little Things, Too

As mentioned in the shop update on this page, another of our Museum's good and faithful volunteers, Roy Harvey has passed away. Here are a few words written by long-time Museum member and volunteer, Bill Graham.

Roy Harvey was a good friend and fellow volunteer. He was the kind of volunteer who helped with the big projects but also liked to do the little things, the things that most of us tend to overlook or not do because the "thing" didn't directly involve a streetcar. Our Museum depends on volunteers who have a strong commitment to making it work. Roy Harvey gave us that commitment. When Roy retired from Northwestern Bell in the early 1980s, he first started as a streetcar Operator on the Como-Harriet line. Shortly, he was a regular at the carbarn on Saturday mornings and later he was a regular on the Tuesday morning crew. He began finding "things" to do at the Lake Harriet car barn. Suddenly, fallen leaves completely disappeared around our site. Bricks got laid between our rails. No matter how light the snowfall, it always disappeared early the following morning.



Brush got cut and floors swept. Roy followed in the footsteps of George Isaacs by insisting that tools be put away and messes promptly cleaned up. Each time we met Roy, he had a new "Ole and Lena" story to tell us, told in an excruciating faux-Swedish accent and often with a slightly risqué content. Roy was good humored, always active and fit, and a good companion to all of us around the shop. We are thankful to his wife, Pat, for letting him put in so much time with us, and we will miss his smiling face. Rest in peace, good and faithful volunteer.

(Left) Here we see Roy in late 2008 doing one of those "little things" that always need doing: raking-up and carting-off dead leaves from in front of the Isaacs carbarn. Our Isaacs carbarn area always looked well-kept and raked, and free of accumulated snow in the winter, when Roy was in charge.