

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS

Jan-Feb — 2013

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

## Items of Note

- Please make plans to attend our Museum's annual meeting on 3/16/2013.
- The work doesn't stop at the end of our operating season. We can use you during the winter to help maintain our historic streetcars. Please consider volunteering in the shop.
- It's not too late to contribute to our 2012-2013 annual appeal. Winona No. 10 especially needs help.

**Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**  
 We are now in our winter publication schedule of the Streetcar CURRENTS. Next issue will be sent to you on or about (o/a) April 1st.

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**Masthead Photo:** Here's a photo of TCRT snow plow No. 82, doing its best to keep the service running on 3-24-52. The location is St. Clair and Fairview Avenues in St. Paul. Note the autos on the right gently making their way around the plow. There's a dump truck backed up behind the plow but at this late date there's no telling why. (MSM photo archives)

## The Off-Season—Not!

Bill Arends—General Supt.

Looking northward down the track from the George Isaacs car barn it's obvious that no streetcars have been running. The rails are covered with snow. The flangeways at the 42nd street crossing are filled with ice. Except for the footprints, both of boots and dogs, the station and the platform seem forgotten. The streetcars have been idle for over two months. All seems so quiet.

But idle is not a word to describe the activities of our museum during the "off-season." Really there is no "off-season." There may be a season when the streetcars are not running. A time when you don't see the yellow trolleys running up and down our two railway lines. But there really is no idle time.

Before operations ended with the Holly Trolley and TCRT No. 1300 pulled into the car barn on November 25th, annual maintenance had already begun on PCC No. 322. Mark Digre and Russ Isbrandt were already greasy from crawling in, on and under the streetcar to make sure it was ready for next year. And let me assure you it will be.

Then Duluth No. 265 was moved into the maintenance barn. Not just for the regular annual maintenance, but also for some much need TLC. Karl Jones, Matt Leibel, Ben Franske, Walt Strobel, Jim Otto and Bob Smith have been working on scraping paint, polishing brass, painting the ceiling, painting the doors, and just giving it the care it needs to be up to the standards of an MSM streetcar.

There are also the capital improvements to our facilities. Thanks to the leadership of Dennis Stephens, after 41 years, the Isaacs car barn will have a bathroom. A real functioning bathroom with running water and all the amenities. A place where the streetcar cleaning crew can get water without hauling jugs of water up from the pump by the Linden Hills station. Thanks also to John Prestholdt for making sure the contractors had access to the Isaacs car barn.

And then there are the "non-greasy" things during the "non-idle" time. Things like the annual budget. On a cold Saturday morning I got together with MSM's Treasurer Keith Anderson, Don Nielson, MSM's bookkeeper (probably more correctly accountant), Todd Bender and Aaron Isaacs to put together a budget for 2013. With input from various departments, it was determined what to present to the Board of Directors at the next meeting on February 16th, 2013.

Next up will be the annual Operations Committee planning meeting where the schedule for the upcoming season will be set, where and how to administer the annual re-certification, what special events to hold, our hours of operation, etc.

So it's a busy time with much going on, including looking for someone to fill the very important position of MSM's Chief of Operations. After over 14 years, Jim Vaitkunas would like to lessen his responsibilities a little. No—don't panic! I think, and hope, he's still going to very active and will continue to produce the Streetcar Currents in addition to his other duties. Some of the duties of the Chief of Operations are maintaining and updating the MSM Rule Book, managing and monitoring the Shift-

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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](http://www.TrolleyRide.org)

The museum's business address and telephone number is:

P.O. Box 14467  
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467  
 952-922-1096

**Streetcar CURRENTS**  
 January-February—2013

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 March 20, 2013.

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

13326 Huntington Lane  
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481

You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)



**From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum**

*Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors*

Hello everyone! I've mentioned before in this column that MSM is an active buyer and seller on the eBay internet auction site. **Bruce Gustafson** sells items for us on eBay (his seller name is Hoyas81) and I do weekly searches to find possible additions to our collection. I currently do over 30 searches for Minnesota electric railways items. The searches contain key words such as Minnesota streetcar, Duluth trolley, Minneapolis Street Railway, TCRT, and many others which I hope will find any auction items which may be of interest. I see several dozen possible auctions each week, most are common items I see repeatedly or I know we already have it. For items I am unsure of I send links to **Aaron Isaacs** via e-mail and he tells me if we already have it, is it something we need, and how much can MSM afford to pay for it. I also copy this to **Russ Olson** so he can provide further insight on the items from his decades of research. The most common items I see are post cards and photographs and slides. Many of the color slides we already have as scans, but we prefer to have them as slides. And even though we undoubtedly have the most comprehensive Minnesota electric railway collection in the world, we continue to see items we don't have yet. I still get a thrill when I find something that Russ and Aaron have not seen before. So why am I explaining this to you? Well, as in everything we buy, MSM is extremely careful with a buck and we do not have unlimited funds. Sometimes we are the only bidder and the minimum bid is reasonable, which is always good for us. Other times there is spirited bidding for items such as color slides, and the selling price can be very high. Recently we've seen single slides go for well over \$50. Unless it is a real rarity that is far more than we can pay. For those of you who might be patrolling eBay for Minnesota electric railway items, we do not want to get into a "bidding war" with our own members. Please let me know if you intend to bid on something you see. I can let you know if we have it on our "radar."



As I am now on the downhill side of age 50, I find that I do more reminiscing about times past. Did you like trains and/or trolleys when you were a little kid? I sure did and who knows why, but for as long as I can remember I've been fascinated by trains. We lived on the west side of Lake Phalen across from the Northern Pacific "Skally" line to Duluth. I remember my older brother pointing out the lights on a night passenger train visible

across the lake during the early 60's. That was probably NP Train 66 to Duluth due out of St Paul Union Depot at 10 PM. I was very lucky when a little boy moved in three houses down and I soon found out he liked trains too! Billy and I are still good friends. As I grew older I found out that Billy and I were definitely a little unusual. Most kids did not seem interested at all in trains and this was reinforced when I became a teenager in the 70's and Billy moved to Seattle. All of my buddies liked cars very much and thought I was pretty weird to like trains. In fact all through junior and senior high school and college I seemed to be the only "train guy" at school. They could not believe that I actually preferred Amtrak over driving or flying. Now in my 50's I am very pleased to notice not only a lot of kids who like trains, but a number of young adult railfans as well. They are determined to see our country build a viable and reliable rail passenger system, both inter-city and light rail. I have a 19-year old co-worker who is a model railroader and has applied for a Conductor job on BNSF and CP. He is really hoping

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**MSM Historian's Update — We make Minnesota's Electric Railway History Come Alive!**
*Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist*

**Cataloguing documents.** The MSM collection of photos has been catalogued, but we have quite a few documents and other paper items that haven't been catalogued. Included are rulebooks, union contracts, street guides for conductors, numerous different TCRT forms, and all manner of company records. New member **Whitney Tuthill** has volunteered to take on that task. We're adding them to the photo database. It's a big job and will take some time to complete. Eventually, all these items will be available for viewing and research in the library room to built as part of the Isaacs car barn expansion.

**9 Stops project.** MSM photos are now part of an art project celebrating the coming of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line). Artists have been hired to create representations of the area around nine of the LRT stations. These will be displayed at the AZ Gallery at 308 Prince Street in Lowertown St. Paul. Next to each one will be a vintage photo of the TCRT Interurban streetcar at each of the locations. Five of those photos have been supplied by MSM. The opening reception is February 9th, 6-9 PM. It's free to the public and everyone is welcome.

**More items to Minnesota Reflections.** I recently delivered the latest group of items to Minnesota Reflections for scanning. This project includes photos, interior car advertising cards and 87 TCRT technical drawings. The drawings are quite extraordinary. Almost all of them are on velum and show different versions of TCRT streetcars, work cars and components of streetcars. The largest drawings are 36 X 83 inches, so large and cumbersome that they are inconvenient to unpack and view. Scanning them will make them available to everyone. For many years these drawings were in the possession of **Frank Sandberg**, who donated them to MSM.

Included is a complete set of drawings of experimental double deck car No. 1145. There's a drawing of an interurban version of the standard TCRT car that was never built. Also never built is a 1925 plan for a gasoline-powered replacement for the Lake Minnetonka express boats. It could be operated by a one or two-

man crew. There are numerous drawings of the light-weights.

**Duluth Incline and streetcars in color.** Over a year ago, **Bill Graham** told me about a color movie of the Duluth Incline and streetcars that he had seen at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. I followed up with LSRM Executive Director, **Ken Buehler** who referred me to their owner, WDSE the Duluth public TV station. By coincidence, a few months later I was contacted by a WDSE producer, who needed Duluth streetcar and incline photos for an upcoming documentary titled *Lost Duluth*. We worked out a trade. I sent copies of the photos and they sent to us a copy of the movie. Taken on the last day of service in 1939, it's six minutes long and it's in color. **Wow!**

**Como Park Streetcar Bridge.** If you've been to the restored Como Park streetcar station, just east of Lexington Avenue in St. Paul, you've probably noticed the still standing, but derelict, pedestrian bridge that used to span the tracks. Until streetcar service ended in St. Paul 1952, there was an iron fence between the tracks, and anyone wishing to cross had to use the concrete arch bridge that was erected when the line was relocated in 1904.

Next year the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department will restore the 88-foot bridge to its original appearance. It has been closed for many years and is missing much of its original concrete railings. The bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites in 1989. The rehab work will be funded by a \$719,000 federal Transportation Enhancement grant, plus \$448,000 from the city of St. Paul. When you're in Como Park, you can walk or bike the right of way from Hamline Avenue to Horton Avenue, as well as a short segment under Lexington Avenue.

**Obscure fact.** The new biography *Royal C. Moore, The Man Who Built the Streetcar Boats* contains a list of boats built by the Moore Boat Works in 1909. Turns out he built more for TCRT than just the streetcar boats. There were 50 rowboats for Big Island Park and 60 rowboats for TCRT-owned Wildwood Park on White Bear Lake. I wonder if any have survived? 🍷

**(The Off Season—Not! Continued from page 1)**

Planning system to ensure that trained crews are assigned to the operating shifts, sending out news releases to local media to recruit new Operating personnel, general oversight of special events conducted by Special Events Manager **Rod Eaton** and coordinating with Rod and **Todd Bender** out at ESL to ensure that crew requirements for the special events are met. Anyone who is interested in this very important position please give me a call at 612-922-2208 for more information. I look forward to hearing from you. 🍷

## Winona No. 10 Update—Steady Progress Being Made!

The Winona No. 10 restoration crew, led by Project Manager **Ken Albrecht**, meets once a week and usually numbers between six and ten volunteers on any given Tuesday. Some time off was taken during the holidays so progress slowed for about a month. But now we're into February and the pace has picked-up.

The single truck that will propel No. 10 is finished at Lyons Industries in Pennsylvania. We expect that we'll be shipping the truck to Minnesota sometime in April or May. Meanwhile, work continues on both platforms of No. 10 and fabricating the manually-operated door mechanisms. One would think that a manually-operated mechanism would be relatively simple compared to an air-powered apparatus. This doesn't appear to be the case, however, as the total count of individual pieces for the three folding doors on each side of the car (six doors) is over 100 individual parts!

**Funding Update.** We very much appreciate the donations we've received over the years including major financial support from the **Winona Foundation**. If you haven't yet donated, please consider doing so soon—we could use the funds. For example, because of the major work done on the mechanical components of No. 10, in the year 2012 alone we've spent over \$47,000 for various materials and services. This included very expensive rebuilding of the two GE 800 motors seen in the photo below and rebuilding of the air compressor for No. 10. Over the past eight years we spent quite a bit to purchase other materials and services for the project. And, we just received the final invoice for \$35,000 from Lyons Industries for their work rebuilding the truck, which included new steel frame pieces, new wheels and axles, new springs, new gears and other castings. In other words, the truck is almost brand new! So, if you can, please help us replenish the Winona No. 10 fund. Thanks!



Here's a photo of the Winona No. 10 crew taken on a recent Tuesday morning. Standing on the platform is **Scott Heiderich** (left) and **Mark Brothen**. On the floor, from left to right we see **Tom Magruder**, **Ken Albrecht**, **Scott Ingram**, **Steve Mages** and **Carl Floren**. Not shown is the photographer, **Dick Zawacki**. Others on the crew include **Jim Peschong**, **Marv Krafve**, **Marsh Ginthner** and new volunteer **Jim Murphey**. (Three photos by *Dick Zawacki*)

This photo shows Winona No. 10's rebuilt truck. The truck has new wheels, axles, springs and gears. Much of the truck's frame you see is also new steel. The two GE 800 motors shown were rebuilt by AC Electric in Bangor, Maine at major expense. The truck has been so rebuilt that it's virtually brand new. (*Lyons Industries photo*)



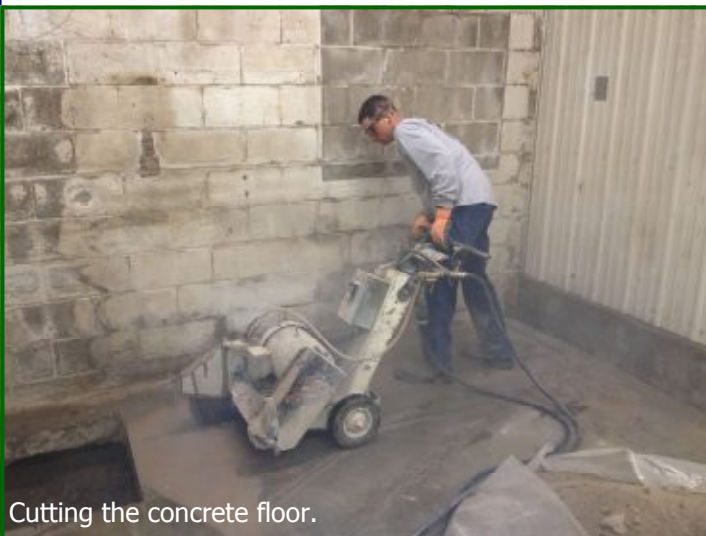
## Shop Update — News from our George K. Isaacs and Excelsior Car barns

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

The Tuesday and Saturday work crews at the George Isaacs car barn have been quite busy this winter. We noticed this past summer that Duluth Street Railway No. 265 has been showing its age with very little exterior work having been done in almost 30 years since it was restored by our Museum. For example, the front and back doors are in need of refinishing and the dark green around the front of the car also needs refinishing. We're also repainting the interior ceiling. If time permits we'll see if we can work on other areas that need attention or at least put those areas on the work list for next winter's shop work.

We are also working on the preventive maintenance checks and services for TCRT No. 1239 and DSR No. 78 out at our Excelsior railway. **Jim Willmore** has been working on No. 78's air regulator which has been a problem for several years. We are also repainting the rattan seats in No. 1239 and will replace those that are so worn that they need to be reupholstered with new rattan fabric.

All this work is being done around our usual annual preventive maintenance to the three operating streetcars at our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line, plus we've been involved with building the new bathroom in the Isaacs car barn. Yes, we are finally joining the 20th/21st century at the Isaacs car barn by having running water and a bathroom. This project has taken quite a bit of time and was not a simple renovation. Many thanks to **Dennis Stephens** who did much of the designing of what we might want and to **Bill Arends** who made the time to let the various contractors and inspectors into the building, almost on a daily basis. We are getting close to completion of this long-overdue project: we still need to get the plumbing fixtures installed; get connected to the water system; and, finish the electrical work. But the completed project is within sight! ☺



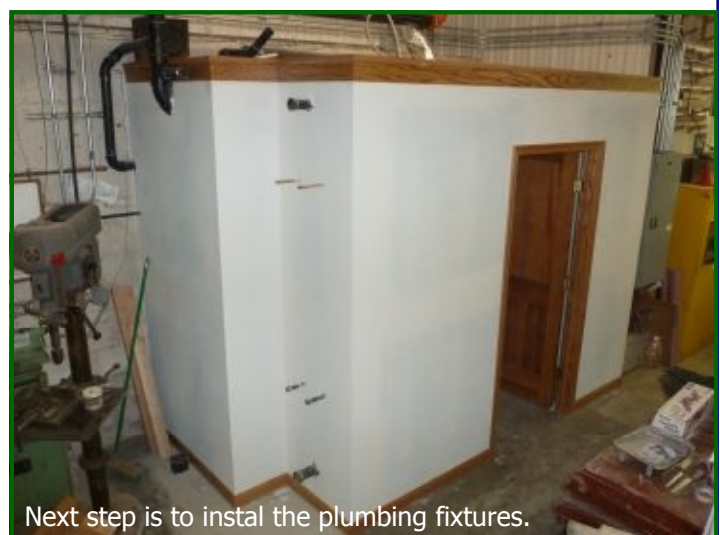
Cutting the concrete floor.



Rough-in of the plumbing



Basic framing and rough-in of electrical is done.



Next step is to install the plumbing fixtures.

**What's Happening?**

March 16	MSM Annual Member's meeting, Mill City Museum, Minneapolis. 10:00 AM start-time.
April-2013	Operator recertification and new Operator training schedule will be announced in early April
May 2	Start of Thursday afternoon operations at the Excelsior Streetcar Line
May 4	Start of weekend operations at both CHSL and ESL

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

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

**W**elcome New Members. We offer a big **WELCOME** to the MSM family to the following new MSM members: **Carl Floren, Patrick Desbonnet** and **James H. Murphey**.

**D**onations Received. Many thanks to the following Museum members and friends who have sent in donations in response to our 2012-2013 annual appeal.

**Carhouse Improvement Fund.** Bill Arends, Glen & Suzanne Bottoms, William Graham, Louis Hoffman, Ray Bensen, Jr., Aaron & Mona Isaacs, Russ & Helen Olson, Jim Harrison, Charlie McCarthy, Jim & Jincy Vaitkunas, Dennis Stephens, John Stewart, Tony Bauman, Russ Isbrandt, Karl Jones and John Prestholdt.

**Winona No. 10 Restoration fund.** Bob Johnson, Cliff Scholes, Doug Anderson, Chic Anding, Louis Hoffman, Russ & Helen Olson, Keith Anderson, Eleanor Dollery (in memory of departed volunteer Blair Dollery), Charlie McCarthy, Richard Darling, Bob Woodburn and Dick Bethke.

**General Fund.** Ken Albrecht, Eric Tratner, Paul & Joanne Beyer, John Cartwright, Steve Collin, Patrick Desbonnet, Louis Dewitt, John Dillery, Rod & Pat Eaton, Rollie Ehrenberg, Scott & Kathy Heiderich, Ken Holley, Bob Jacob & family, Clark Johnson, Charlie McCarthy, Ed McGlynn, Gary & Bonnie Neunsinger, Gerald Robertson, Dick Niemiec, Jim Otto, Bill & Deanna Preiss, Fred & Mary Raiche, Judge Jim Rogers, Professor George & Mary Ann Smerk, Ruehl & Associates, Frank & Judy Sandberg, Jill Seinola, Dave Venhuizen, Bruce & Judy Kobs, Jay & Peggy Halvorson and Marv & Donna Krafve.

**T**he response to our 2012-2013 annual appeal from the above folks has been nothing less than outstanding! Here are the amounts donated to the various funds from 11/1/2012 to date:

- Carhouse Improvement Fund: \$7,320
- Winona No. 10 Restoration Fund: \$1,075
- General Fund: \$6,758

**M**embership Renewals. Over the next several months, close to a quarter of our members will have their membership come due for renewal. If your membership expires soon we ask that you **please** do the following: (1) renew promptly to avoid receiving additional notices which costs your Museum valuable funds in printing and postage expense; (2) enclose the membership renewal form along with your payment; and, (3) consider renewing for two years so you can avoid the hassle at this time next year. Many thanks to all our members for your continuing support to **your** Museum ☺

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

that a Union Pacific "Big Boy" will be restored to operation. And we have some great volunteers at MSM in their 20's and 30's that old geezers like me can mentor. So this summer when you are running the car on our lines, be sure to engage the young adults as well as the kids. They are the proponents for light rail and commuter rail expansion in the Twin Cities and they are interested in the relationship between our historic trolleys and the 21st century trains they ride now and will ride in the future. And you just might plant a seed in their busy life which will someday germinate to produce a member and active volunteer at MSM. It is already February so you know we'll be getting the cars out on the lines before you know it. Finally, I hope to see all of you at the MSM Annual Meeting, 10 AM on March 16th at the Mill City Museum! ☺

**Please mark Saturday, March 16th on your calendars and plan to attend the 7th annual Members Meeting of our Museum. Location of the annual meeting is the Mill City Museum, 704 South 2nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401. Start time is 10:00 AM. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. The Chair of the Board of Directors and Museum officers will report on the state of the Museum and election results will be announced. A short program featuring rare Minnesota streetcar films and videos will also be presented by Aaron Isaacs after the formal business meeting.**