

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Mar-Apr 2013

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Its Spring—Time to get ready for the 2013 Season

- *It's not too late to make a donation to our 2012-2013 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 10th*



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Masthead. High Speed line to Excelsior! This photo shows one of the high-speed suburban cars passing the Excelsior substation inbound to Hopkins and Minneapolis. The car has left TCRT's Excelsior depot and has just crossed over the Minneapolis & St. Louis railroad's tracks through Excelsior. Judging from the look of the right of way this photo was taken perhaps within a year of the opening of the line in 1906. (MSM Photo Archive)

What "Off Season?"

Bill Arends—General Supt.

Have you ever sat down to write and the muse abandoned you? Left you staring at a blank computer screen or a blank sheet of paper? Well that's what hit me as I approached my next article for the *Streetcar Currents*. But then, I got to thinking about the many things that the volunteers are asked to do, maybe expected to do, to keep the Minnesota Streetcar Museum operating smoothly as has been done for nearly 42 years.

Running our Museum takes a lot of planning. Planning that is mostly done during the "off-season" or, more appropriately, the "non-operating season." To keep the streetcars maintained and operating properly there is no off-season. This is the time that the "behind the scenes" volunteers work on maintenance of the streetcars, preparing an annual budget, ordering merchandise, planning track and overhead work, scheduling training and re-certification, and putting together the operating schedule for the upcoming season.

The Operations Planning Committee, consisting of **Chris Heck, Rod Eaton, Todd Bender, Jim Vaitkunas** and me, met in March to lay out the schedule for the 2013 operating season. Much of the schedule will remain the same; however, there will be some changes in the hours of operation at CHSL after Labor Day.

The opening of the season at ESL will be Thursday, May 2, with Thursday operation running through October 24. The hours of operation will remain 2 PM to 6 PM. Saturday operation will began on May 4 and run through October 12. Sunday operation will be from May 5 through September 1. A new special event planned at ESL this year is a Streetcar Camp. No specific date has been set but it will probably be in August.

Weekend service at CHSL will began on Saturday, May 4, with daily service beginning on Friday, May 24. Daily service will continue through Labor Day, Monday, September 2. The hours of operation will remain 12:30 PM to 8:30 PM on weekends and 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM on weeknights. Wednesday afternoon service will began on June 5 and run through August 28. Hours of operation will remain 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

After Labor Day CHSL will offer weekend service only during September. The operating hours will be 12:30 PM to 7:30 PM with the first shift ending at 4:00 PM. During October one shift only will operate on both Saturday and Sunday from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM. In November only Saturday service will be offered running from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM.

Several new special events will be offered at CHSL this year including a Fathers' Day event, a Moonlight Ride, Family Fun Day, Transylvania Trolley and a Ghost Trolley Late Show in addition to the regular special events.



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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
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 March-April—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 April 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



From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum

Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

Hi everyone! Would you like to do MSM a big favor, one that requires little effort and no extra money? Of course you would! When you receive the membership renewal form in the mail, I ask that you fill it out, write a check, and mail it back to us immediately. Our faithful Membership Services Manager, **John DeWitt** spends quite some time every year sending the renewal notices to members. After a few months a “final stop signal” letter is sent by **Jim Vaitkunas**. All of this takes time and expense for printing and postage. Remember, you now have the option of renewing for two years, which means we won't have to send you a notice for 24 months and you won't worry about it for two years. More importantly, if you are an active volunteer we cannot allow an expired member to run a streetcar or work in the carbarn because our insurance will not cover you. So, if that renewal is sitting on your desk or hanging on the refrigerator door, send it in today, okay? And please, do not drop your renewal off at the depot or carbarn. Mailing it ensures that it will be handled promptly and credited properly. I thank you for helping us out!

Did you attend the MSM annual meeting on March 16th? That was a good one, wasn't it? The reports were brief and informative, and members had ample opportunity to ask questions and make comments. And the presentation by Aaron Isaacs was really great. He showed us 1939 8mm color film of Duluth streetcars including the incline railway, and an interview with former TCRT Motorman **Merle Seils** reminiscing about running the cars. Merle was an MSM member who passed away in 2012. I want to thank the 30 or so members who attended, and I apologize for the difficulty in parking and accessing the Mill City Museum. Unfortunately we did not know that there was a large St. Patrick's Day event going that morning (I sure am glad I took the light rail downtown). Next year we'll make sure we do not schedule the annual meeting on the same day as that event.

I was reading an article by Frank E. Schaffer in the October, 1967 issue of *Trains* magazine comparing the Pullman service available in 1927 with 1967 Pullman service. The author stated that 1967 intercity passenger service had “been whittled almost to the vanishing point” and “in the light of the starvation diet of trains in 1967, the 1927 timetask almost staggers the imagination.” Well, compared to the 2013 Amtrak system timetable, I would sign up for that 1967 “starvation diet” in a heartbeat. Isn't it true

that compared to our perception of years past, the present day always seems to appear inferior to “the good old days?” As Mr. Schaffer wrote “Those who look back [to 1967] with fond memories over the last four decades are in the same shoes as the veterans of 1927 who, in that era, were longing for the good old days of 1890 and 1895, before interurbans and automobiles and electric lights changed their way of living.” This reminds me that when I talk to customers on the streetcar, I need to remember that while MSM's mission is to preserve the past, there are many good things happening right now. Next year we will have our second light rail line open and we will be able to transfer from one train to another. The St. Paul Union Depot has reopened to serve as a train, light rail, and bus terminal. We have one commuter train line and hopefully we will have more. Twenty five years ago I didn't think any of those things would happen in my lifetime. So let's all try to remember and interpret the past fondly. Let's connect those wonderful electric railways of the past with the good things happening now and our hope for a better world tomorrow. I'll see you on the car! 🚋





Excelsior Streetcar Line Update

Bruce Kobs — Superintendent

Farmer's Market Returns to Water Street. At the request of the Excelsior Lake Minnetonka Chamber of Commerce and the merchants along Water Street, the Excelsior City Council has agreed to allow the Thursday Farmer's Market to be staged on Water Street. Water Street will be closed between Second and Third from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Thursdays for eight weeks starting on May 2nd. If no complications arise as a result of the closing of Water Street, the Market will continue at this location until late October.

In light of this change in location of the Farmer's market, our streetcar will operate from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Thursdays to start the season. If good ridership indicates extending our hours to 7:00 PM we will consider doing that.

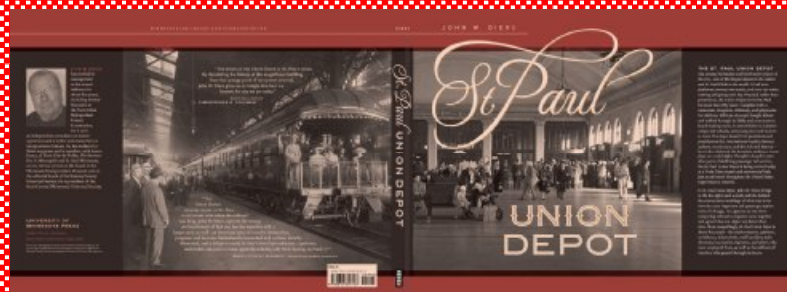
For the last two years the Thursday farmer's market has been located several blocks from our Water Street stop. We are optimistic that with the change in location of the farmer's market to within eyesight of our operating streetcar, Thursday ridership will increase by several hundred passengers. 🌱



Duluth No. 265 received much attention in the Isaacs car-barn over this winter. In this photo **Matt Leibel** (left) and **Karl Jones** are working on the interior of the car which was restored by our volunteers in the early 1980s.



Here's what Water Street in Excelsior looked like in the early 1920s. This photo shows the intersection of Water and Second Streets. Third street is in the distance. TCRT had a wye located here to turn the streetcars around.



St. Paul Union Depot (SPUD) Book will be available soon!

Written by MSM member, **John Diers** this long-awaited book is hardcover, 304 pages with 235 B&W photos. The list price is \$39.95. However, there is a \$28.00 special offer effective through June 1st, if you order directly from the University of Minnesota Press at www.upress.umn.edu, or by calling (800) 621-2736. Mention discount code MN73780. Copies should be

arriving from the printers around April 15th. John will have a book signing on May 11th at the depot. The book will be available at our Linden Hills station and all the other major Twin Cities book stores.

(What "Off Season?" Continued from page 1)

So the planning has been completed. Now it's time for re-certification and training. Watch for more info on this from our Chief Trainer, **Chris Heck**.

I also want to welcome a new member to the Operations Committee. **Bruce Gustafson** has volunteered to become the Superintendent of Operations replacing **Jim Vaitkunas**, who has decided to step down after over 15 years in the position. Thank you Bruce for volunteering to take on this position. Also thank you Jim for your many years of service in this position. Oh! And I want to add—Jim is not going away. He will still be on the Board and he'll continue to edit the *Streetcar Currents*. He will still operate the streetcars. He just wants a few less duties. Jim will also continue to manage our ShiftPlanning crew scheduling system. 🌱

What's Happening?

April	Operator recertification and new Operator training schedule will be announced in early April
May 2	Start of Thursday afternoon operations at Excelsior Streetcar Line
May 4	Start of weekend operations at Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and at the Excelsior Streetcar Line
May 24	Start of daily operations at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line
May 27	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. We are still receiving much needed donations to our Museum's annual appeal. Over the last two months, we've received donations from the following people or foundations.

General Fund: John & Barbara Risken, Earl & Bettye Anderson (in memory of Bill Olson), the Weck Foundation and the Hickory Tech Foundation (match for volunteer work done by Eric Neumann).

Carbarn Improvement Fund: Daniel Grobani and a matching grant resulting from a donation from Jan and Ken Albrecht.

Winona No. 10 Restoration Fund: John Heintl.

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

New Members. We've had no new members join the MSM family in the last couple of months. However, we have had two current members upgrade their membership to lifetime member status. These members are **Howie Melco** and **Dick Zawacki**. Many thanks to these two stalwart members for their support to our Museum.

Did You know? That our Museum's website contains a wealth of information on how it is administered and governed. Go to TrolleyRide.org, click on the "More About our Museum" button on the left side of our home page and then on the "Organizational Documents" link. All the Board of Director meeting minutes, annual member meeting minutes and presentations, financial reports and All federal tax returns (IRS form 990) going back to 2005 are in this section of the website in addition to all of our approved policies. You can also read back issues of our Museum's newsletter, the *Streetcar Currents* going all the way back to 2003 when the newsletter started to be published as a PDF document. Check it out sometime. ☺

**Bill Olson—RIP**

One of the founders and pioneers of our Museum, Bill Olson passed away on February 11th at the Walker Methodist Home in Minneapolis. Bill had suffered from Parkinson's disease for some years and it gradually caused weakness, loss of motor skills and impaired communication. His wishes were to not have any life support systems employed in his care and wished to pass on naturally. He celebrated his 85th birthday last December 9th.

Bill rode on the famous Minnesota Railfans' Association's last run charter of TCRT standard streetcars No. 1300 and No. 1775 on June 19, 1954 the day after the end of all TCRT streetcar service. The photo on the left was taken during the lunch break on that historic charter and shows Bill in front of TCRT's Linden Hills station with Mrs. Sulzbach, mother of Charles Sulzbach an MRA member killed in the 1950 Milwaukee *Speedrail* crash. Bill was one of the MRA members who looked after No. 1300 while the car was stored at the Minneapolis-Moline plant in Hopkins in the mid-to-late 1950s, as shown in the photo below of Bill. In the early 1960s he was one of the founders of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and MTM and was an active Operator when CHSL began operations in 1971. He was a major donor to the Museum, funding the purchase of the Brill 21-E truck that is now under Duluth No. 78.

Bill was the kindest, most gentle guy I have known. I never saw him angry and whenever things were not going right his usual comment was "Oh dear God!" He willingly gave of his time, skills, and money to many causes and was a generous supporter of his church and of our Museum.



Bill was an accomplished O-scale trolley modeler. He helped many new modelers with information, guidance, parts and kits from his vast stock of trolley stuff. All of us local modelers often gathered at his house for model work, videos and treats. He was the driving force behind the building of our twenty section O gauge trolley modules. He was very social and loved going out for lunch and sometime during the meal he would remark "My, this is good." Yep, food was a delight to Bill and oh yeah, dessert (which he called a trifle) was always part of the occasion. We will miss him. *Submitted by MSM member Dick Stoner.*