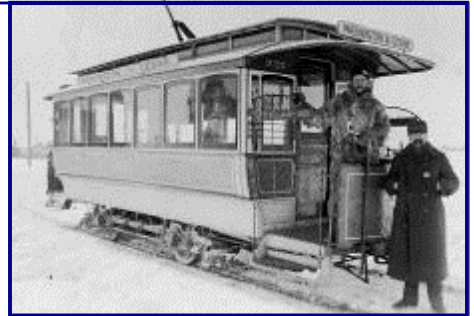


MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec 2013

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- Our season is drawing to a close. Many thanks to all our volunteers for another successful season.
- Annual Appeal flyer is being sent to all members and friends. Please give generously.

Streetcar CURRENTS

Winter Publication Schedule

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we revert to our winter publication schedule. See the notice on page 6 for details on the schedule.

Inside This Issue

From the Front Platform	2
Historian's Update	3
ESL Update	4
CHSL Halloween Report	5
Upcoming Events	6
MSM News and Views	6

Masthead. It's 1892 and in the dead of winter this Minneapolis Street Railway crew has stopped to have their photo taken. Note the Motorman in the ankle-length "buffalo robe" overcoat. He's probably wearing a couple of trousers and a sweater or two underneath that overcoat. And they pay you 20-cents an hour. Boy, what a great job, eh? (MSM photo archive)

Let Us All Give Thanks

Bill Arends—General Supt.

As I sit down to write my final article in 2013 for the *Currents* I think back to April and re-certification of Foremen and Operators, training new operators and the seemingly never-ending winter that made scheduling of these so difficult. I remember having to conduct a re-certification session between the Car barn and 42nd Street because of the large amount of snow blocking the crossing plowed there by the snow plows. Our season got off to a challenging start. But it picked up quickly. Very quickly, thanks to our Superintendent of Training, **Chris Heck**.

This year 16 new operators completed training and became certified streetcar operators. A lot of hours go into training. Before I talk about the trainees, I want to thank the many foremen who work many hours on the streetcar to make sure these new trainees are ready to safely operate a 46,000 pound historic streetcar. It's been a pleasure to work with **Chris Heck, Mike Buck, Rod Eaton, Bill Graham, Mike Helde, Dave Higgins, Karl Jones, Greg Taylor, Bruce Kobs, Todd Bender** and some others that I've likely missed. Thank you all for your hours of training.

Our graduating class this year included **Craig Canada, Pete Connors, Franz Cordes-Eklund, Patrick Desbonnet, Joshua Freeze, Devin Hogan, Andy Jacob, Jeff Larson, Jennifer Labadie, Mike Mayer, Denny Morrow, Brandon Murphy, Ronald Neitzel, Lenn Nelsen, Joel Schuweiler** and **Chuck Weber**. This class accounted for over 480 hours of operating time during the 2013 season. Special recognition needs to go to **Patrick Desbonnet** (91 hours), **Joel Schuweiler** (81), **Craig Canada** (53), **Lenn Nelson** (36), **Chuck Weber** (36), **Denny Morrow** (24) and **Andy Jacob** (22). What a difference this class made in filling our shifts this summer. Thank you all very much.

For those of you who are still with me, I'd like to continue on with a few more numbers and some more recognition. There's a small group of seven people who each volunteered over 90 hours of service operating the streetcars during 2013. **Steve Simon** (134 hours), **Rod Eaton** (127), **Don Nielsen** (113), **Bill Way** (104), **Bruce Kobs** (92) and **Patrick Desbonnet** (91). This group of seven accounted for 23% of the operating hours worked. Oh! The seventh member of this group? You'll have to go to ShiftPlanning to find out.

Thanks to the Murder Mystery, Family Fun Day, Story Time Trolley, PJ Trolley and beautiful weather, during the period from the middle of July to the middle of August we had over 10,000 passengers. So 2013 has been a good year. But it has also been a little bittersweet for the maintenance crew at the George K. Isaacs Car barn. Sweet because there is now a restroom in the car barn. Not so sweet because two long-time volunteers, **Keith Lindberg** (member since 1970) and **Neil Howes**



(Continued 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 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
November-December—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 January 20, 2014.

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 — Board Chair

Hi everyone! As I am writing this we are approaching the end of our 2013 operations. After *Christkindlsmarkt* and Holly Trolley are finished we'll put the cars away and start our many "off season" activities of maintaining the cars, making plans for 2014, formulating the 2014 budget, and dozens of other activities large and small.

It gives me great joy to say "thanks" to all of you for another successful year at MSM. All of our members contribute to our success. Some of you work one or a few or many shifts in regular, charter, and special event operations. Some of you work on the cars or tracks or car barns or overhead keeping things running smoothly. Maybe you were able to make an extra monetary donation this year, or you "spread the word" about MSM to your family and friends and coworkers, or you processed renewals and kept our membership rolls updated, or you picked up and distributed the mail, or you updated our Facebook page, or a hundred other jobs large and small. All I can say on behalf of the Board of Directors is "thank you" for everything you've done and continue to do. I am already looking forward to another big year in 2014 which will present us with many opportunities to grow and also many challenges. As noted in the up-coming events info on top of page 6, we've scheduled a special planning meeting on December 14th at Metro Transit's Fred Heywood building, during which we'll discuss ideas on how to proceed in 2014 with several large projects and expenditures. I look forward to seeing you there and hearing your ideas!

Aaron Isaacs recently gave me a few dozen newsletters from several railway museums and tourist railways in the US and Canada. I have mentioned before how all of us in the historic rail preservation community are facing challenges, some unique to our individual organizations, and some that are shared by many of us. One challenge we all share is enhancing the customer experience when they decide to visit our museum or ride our streetcars or train. I'm sure that all of you have heard compliments from visitors about car No. 1239 or No. 1300 or Winona No. 10. But I always remember that by themselves, those vehicles mean nothing. Without the volunteers to interact with visitors and provide some interpretation about why these historic trolleys are important and describe their history and how the

electric railway industry played a vital role in making our state what it is today, even though almost all of that industry has completely disappeared. Yes, what we do when we interact with our customers is we make those beautiful vehicles relevant to people most of whom know nothing about this history. The year 2014 will be the 60th anniversary of the last run of the streetcars in Minneapolis. I've noticed that every summer I speak to fewer people who remember riding the cars as children and young adults. Before we know it, all of those people will be gone and instead of hearing them reminisce about riding the trolley, we will perhaps hear their descendants talk about how their parents or grandparents used to talk about riding. That is the inexorable march of time.

One thing that all of us can do to improve our performance as docents at MSM is we can continue to study and learn more about this history. How lucky we are that we have our quarterly magazine *Twin City Lines*



(Continued on bottom of page 6)



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

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

Last summer I added more photos and other images to the **Minnesota Reflections** website. We now have 1979 images that can be viewed online. Thanks to some newly available computer reports from Minnesota Reflections, we now know how many times our photos are being accessed. It happened 447 times in August, 412 times in September and 498 times in October. Among the over 150 photo collections on the website, ours always ranks about 5th highest in the number of images viewed. To see them, go to the MSM website and click on Historic Photos. http://www.trolleyride.org/CHSL_Main/reflections.html

Since the cataloguing of photos is basically up to date, cataloguing of paper documents has begun. These include numerous timetables, rulebooks, union contracts and all sorts of company forms such as time reports, accident reports and trip sheets. There's still a big backlog of cataloguing to do, but it's good to get started.

For a while I've wanted to expand the MSM collection policy to include La Crosse, Wisconsin streetcars. There are two reasons:

1. La Crosse is just over the state line from Minnesota.
2. Mississippi Valley Public Service ran the streetcars in La Crosse and Winona. They wore the same color scheme and the company even moved streetcars between the two cities as needed.

In November **Louis Hoffman** and I drove to La Crosse and visited the La Crosse County Historical Society, the La Crosse Public Library Archives, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Area Research Center. We copied numerous historic photos and newspaper stories from those collections and greatly expanded what we know about the system. Combined with Russ Olson's previous research and a number of photos we've collected in the past, we now are beginning to preserve the history of this small streetcar system that remained in operation until 1945, outlasting all the small Minnesota streetcar systems.

Last winter I arranged for all the advertisements inside the streetcars (car cards) to be scanned and vinyl copies made. This permitted us to catalogue and store the originals, so they won't deteriorate further. The copies are good enough that everyone thinks they're original. After copying all the ones in the cars, **John Prestholdt** and I found some additional ones in the car barn that had been donated later, so we copied them as well. Meanwhile, **Dave French** was able to buy on Ebay a 1920s vintage car card for Big Jo Flour, made in Wabasha, Minnesota. I searched the Minnesota Historical Society's website and found a beautiful 1930s ad for the Glass Block department store in Duluth. A copy of that ad is now inside streetcar No. 265. As part of this project I removed from the cars any ads that were inappropriate to the period the car ran. This included some from the 1970s (Hines and Bergland on WLOL for example) that were really out of place. Having more local ads made it possible to reduce the number of "generics" that we purchased from the Association of Railway Museums. So next time you in one of the cars, check them out. ☺



Please mark Wednesday, December 18th on your calendar and plan to attend our Museum's annual holiday party at the George Isaacs car barn, Linden Hills (Minneapolis). This fun evening starts at 7 PM. Nothing formal planned, just some nice treats (provided by the attendees) and good fellowship. If you do join us for this festive evening, we ask that you also bring some canned goods for the local food shelves—this has been a yearly tradition here at MSM.



Winona No. 10 is Here!

Winona No. 10 has arrived at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line! Well, at least the ornament version has. A perfect companion to the TCRT No. 1300 ornament, the Winona 10 is again a product of Jackson-Pacific, and while manufactured in China, it is certified to be lead-free. The ornament is available at the Linden Hills Depot and on-line at:

http://www.trolleyride.org/MSM_Store/index.html

And don't forget that our on-line Museum store has lots of other nice gift ideas for that streetcar fan in your household. Check it out.





Excelsior Streetcar Line Update

Bruce Kobs — Superintendent & Todd Bender — Assistant Superintendent

Congratulations and **THANK YOU** to all ESL volunteers who made the 2013 season a success. Under the leadership of **Todd Bender**, whose attention to planning and execution went beyond the call of duty, the Ghost Trolley and the BOO-seum was fun, safe, and carried on the tradition of excitement in Excelsior. Below is a more detailed report from Todd summarizing the two ghost trolley nights; we made 18 runs with 67 riders each, operating cars No. 78 and No. 1239.

For perspective, here's a re-cap of past ghost trolleys ridership: 2005, 1132 riders; 2006, 1204; 2007, 1404; 2008, 1304; 2009, 1474; 2010, 1510; 2011, 1715; 2012, 1034; and, 2013, 1202.

During our operating season, many riders commented that: "Ghost Trolley night is a tradition in our family and we wouldn't miss the event." Thank you to the many ESL volunteers who made these two evenings fun times for everyone. MSM-ESL, in conjunction with the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, ran our Ghost Trolley and BOO-seum event on October 25th and 26th. This event is the one of the largest fundraisers of the year for ESL and ELMHS and highlights our connection with the community.

This year 1,202 riders rode Excelsior's Ghost Trolley and visited the BOO-seum. Riders on the Ghost Trolley were entertained by ELMHS hosts,

who presented various scenes along our right-of-way as MSM members operated the Ghost Trolley down the line. Riders waiting in line were entertained by playwright **Jeffrey Hatcher**, who presented an authentic reproduction of Orson Welles' 1938 War of the Worlds radio broadcast featuring local well-known broadcaster **Don Shelby**.

The crew who decorated the streetcars included **Ron Neitzel**, **Jim Kertzman**, **Don Nielsen**, **Jacob Milner**, and **Todd Bender**. **Don** and **Pat Nielsen** put in extra time decorating the speeder, and **Mike Helde** lent his collection of head stones and props to create a makeshift grave yard. All of their hard work paid off as the streetcars, speeder, and scenes looked great!

Operating volunteers for the Ghost Trolley were **Ron Neitzel**, **Chuck Anding**, **Jeff Anderson**, **Bill Preiss**, **Kim Lesinski**, **Jim** and **Karen Kertzman**, **Don** and **Pat Nielsen**, and **Todd Bender**. Jim, Karen, Don, and Todd worked both nights to ensure safe operations and the entire event went off without any major glitches.

Scott Heiderich and **Howie Melco** also chipped in to setup the batteries and run extension cords. **Karl Jones**, **Don**, and **Todd** spent numerous Sundays working to ensure both streetcars were operating properly. **Bruce Kobs** handled the logistics with the City of Excelsior to keep our streetcars running.

Kudos to all MSM and ELMHS members for another successful Ghost Trolley and BOO-seum event. Your hard work and dedication is truly appreciated! ☺



While riders waited to ride the ghost trolley down the ESL track or enter into the BOO-seum, a group of thespians recreated the famous Orson Welles 1938 War of the Worlds radio broadcast. Local broadcast veteran **Don Shelby** is shown in the front of the other actors. (Todd Bender photo)



Here's a photo of our own volunteers who certainly are dressed for ESL's Ghost Trolley. From left to right: **Bill Preiss**; **Jeff Anderson**; **Todd Bender**; **Pat Nielsen**; **Don Nielsen**; and, **Jim Kertzman**. And in case you didn't know, TCRT "gate car" No. 1239 provides the backdrop. (Pat Nielsen photo)

HALLOWEEN EVENTS AT CHSL

October's special events at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line kept us busy and offered something for everyone.

Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch was an unqualified hit with close to 1,200 riders and 500 pumpkins sold at \$3 each. These may be record numbers for the event, thanks in part to very pleasant weather and **Ken Albrecht's** bumper crop.

Attendance for the first weekend of Ghost Trolley was less than 400. The second weekend wasn't a lot better, with numbers around 500. A slightly higher fare (\$4 for everyone versus \$4 for adults and \$3 for kids previously) somewhat offset the lower than anticipated ridership. **Mike Helde** was Dr. Brown, a fearless vampire slayer, in "Revenge of the Streetcar Zombies." Mike was assisted by his wife **Kathy** and a cast of volunteer zombies made up of museum members, their families, friends, and students from Southwest High School.

Our Trick 'r Trolley event with Wild Rumpus Books was again a three-trip sell-out. The extreme popularity of the Wild Rumpus events continues to amaze. This time tickets were awarded through a lottery. Well known children's author Nancy Carlson read from her books and showed the young audience how to draw her famous animal characters.

Two new events—the **Transylvania Trolley** and the **Ghost Trolley Late Show**—were quite successful. Over 300 people came to ride on the Transylvania Trolley with Count Karl the Vampire Motorman, about 200 over our typical October weekend day attendance. Children came in costume and were given a Halloween treat by The Count himself, **Karl Jones**. This event is designed

to appeal to children too young for Ghost Trolley.

The **GHOST TROLLEY LATE SHOW** was the biggest surprise. We ended up selling out two shows (48 tickets each at \$5 per). The event was featured on the Museum Meetup Group's calendar and their members made up almost all of the audience for the first show. But the 9 PM show we added to meet the demand managed to sell out through our online ticketing system and strong station ticket sales over the weekend. **Dave French** told "The Motorman's Tale", a ghost story based loosely on Scandinavian mythology and TCL history. Despite some first time flubs, the shows were fun, a little chilling, and to quote one of the Meetup members, "unique." Their website awarded The Late Show its highest five star rating.

Many thanks to **Ken Albrecht**, **Mike Helde**, **Karl Jones**, and **Dave French**. Without their time, talent, dedication and generosity, these events wouldn't be possible. Also, thanks to the many other volunteers who worked in a variety of capacities throughout the month: **Bill Arends** was there for almost every minute of every event; **Scott Heiderich** and **Pete Connors** installed fencing for the Pumpkin Patch; **Angela Frerichs** applied about a thousand tattoos; **John Kennedy** decorated both standard cars for Halloween; **Ben Franske** and **Alexandra Howes** played important parts in Ghost Trolley; **Jerry Olsen** worked all four Ghost Trolley shifts (as did Karl); **Bernie Braun**, **Aaron Isaacs**, **Andy Jacob**, **Joel Schuweiler**, and **Rolly Ehrenberg** all pulled Ghost Trolley double-shifts; Joel, Ben, and Bill and **Rose Arends** assisted in The Late Show; **Charles Bartholdt** and **John DeWitt** managed our online ticket sales; and many other volunteers filed out event crews, wrangled pumpkins, or became zombies. October is a busy and profitable event-filled month. It couldn't happen without all out terrific members. **Rod Eaton — Special Events Coordinator**



John Lombardi Photo

(Above) The Ghost Trolley Late Show was very well received.

(LEFT) From left to right, **Mike** and **Kathy Helde** and Kathy's sister **Karen Lewis** all ready to scare our riders. (Kathy Helde Photo)

(Right) **Karl Jones** is **THE COUNT** who scared and entertained our riders on the Transylvania Trolley.



Jeff Stubblefield Photo

What's Happening?

Nov 29, 30 & Dec 1	ESL's Santa Trolley runs in conjunction with Excelsior's Christkindlsmarkt —daily times vary
Nov 30 & Dec 1, 7 & 8	CHSL's Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus—12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
December 14	MSM Board meeting & Planning Session—Metro Transit's Fred T. Heywood building, Minneapolis
December 18	MSM Annual Christmas Party at CHSL's Isaacs carbarn. Evening starts at 7 PM.
March 22	MSM Annual Member's Meeting—Mill City Museum, Minneapolis

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary and Superintendent of Operations

New Member. We'd like to welcome to the MSM family new member **Aaron Westendorp**. It's great to have you jump on the MSM streetcar, Aaron.

MSM's 2013-2014 Annual Appeal. As most of you know, our Museum doesn't pepper its members with flyers for this project or that need every other month, as some museums do. Rather, we conduct a single fund raiser each year starting in late November. Typically we request donations for only one or two projects during each annual appeal. As described in the flyer enclosed with this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**, during this Annual Appeal we're asking you to support the critical expansion of the George K. Isaacs carbarn at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. The enclosed flyer has the details regarding the need and what we plan to do, so that won't be repeated here in this newsletter. After you've read the flyer, please detach the donation slip and make a generous donation to your Museum's 2013-2014 Annual Appeal. **Thanks!**

Isaacs Carbarn expansion update. The carbarn addition approval process continues to move forward. It cleared the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on October 16th and was approved by the Minneapolis City Council on November 12th. The only hurdle remaining is the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. They are requiring that we slow runoff from the new roof to minimize erosion and silting into Lake Harriet. The solution to this problem looks like it will be an underground tank.

In addition to the requirement to treat runoff from the addition, we're proposing to treat runoff from the existing roof as well. Currently it pours out of the down-spout at the northwest corner of the ready barn, which is why we have the huge ice buildup against the retaining wall each winter. I'm hoping to get grant money to offset the additional expense. If we can get the Watershed District approval by February, we'll go out for bids and build next summer. ☺

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

and the really good book *Twin Cities By Trolley*, written by MSM members **Aaron Isaacs** and **John Diers**, to read and learn more. **Russ Olson's** *Electric Railways of Minnesota* has been out of print for many years but used copies are available out there if you look. So come on, let's keep learning so we can enjoy our experience at MSM even more, and provide our customers with more enjoyment so they will come see us again.

I still have a few TCRT union buttons available. If you see photos of TCRT Conductors and Motormen during the 1930-1954 period, you will notice they almost always have a small union button on the right side of their uniform cap, next to the round badge number button. These union buttons were issued monthly during the 1930's and then annually during the 40's and 50's to signify that your dues were paid up. Back in those days, the company did not deduct union dues from employee wages. If you would like a button for your uniform hat, just let me know and I will send you one in return for a donation of any size to MSM.

I am very thankful for MSM and the most important component of MSM, our members and volunteers. I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and all the best for the Holidays! ☺

(Let Us All Give Thanks *Continued from page 1)*

(member since 1976), have decided to step away from the fun of keeping our historic streetcars running. Their hard work, expertise and dedication are missed by all the guys at the Isaacs carbarn. Thank you Keith and Neil for your many years of volunteer service to our Museum.

See you on the Holly Trolley. You surely don't want to miss our new Santa. ☺

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we revert to our winter publication schedule. Starting with this issue you'll be receiving the **Streetcar CURRENTS** every other month until May, 2014. Publication dates for these issues will be on or about: December 1st; February 1st; and, April 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after those dates please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com