

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2014

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



## Bill the Motorman Says:

- *The weather has dried out and our ridership is holding up pretty good so far this summer. So, support your Museum. Come out to ride at both railways—you'll have an enjoyable time.*
- **HELP WANTED**—*No experience required. Come and help us in the shop or out on the line. There's always plenty to do and we sure could use your help.*

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**Masthead.** Our masthead features a photo of Winona No. 10 circa early-1930s and the logo of the Mississippi Valley Public Service Company that operated No. 10 from 1926 until No. 10 made the last run on July 22, 1938. Colorization of the photo of Winona No. 10 and creating the logo from a tracing off the side of Winona No. 10 was done by MSM member **Rod Eaton**.

## Volunteer Stats Tell A Story

Bill Arends—General Supt.

When I received an email about the deadline to submit my contribution to the next edition of the *Streetcar Currents*, I was at a loss for a topic, which is normal (I hope I haven't started with this "at a loss for a topic" before). What should I write about? What can I say that may have a modicum of interest to our members? Should I recognize the long list of people who have contributed so many hours to fill the shifts? Should I focus on the "Oh so many shifts that are in the dreaded RED ZONE" lest they be cancelled? Should I try to "guilt" people into signing up for more shifts so we will not be receiving the emails about the dreaded "RED ZONE" shifts? Instead I wondered why we have so many shifts that go unfilled until the last minute? Has the number of Foremen, Operators and Station Agents dropped so low that we do not have adequate staff to fill all the shifts? Is using ShiftPlanning so difficult that our volunteers do not understand how to sign up? Or is it a matter of priorities?



Interestingly, I came across a roster of volunteers dated July 24, 2001. That was the year just prior to my training as an Operator, so I have no first-hand knowledge about how difficult it was to fill the shifts. At that time we had 9 Station Agents. We now have 11 listed on the roster. We had 26 Foremen. We now have 31. We had 63 Operators on the roster. We now have 61. I remember, after my training ended and I was certified to competently operate a streetcar and given instructions who to call to sign up to operate, I found it difficult to find an open shift. Based on this I guess I can cross "reduction in volunteers" off the list. But that leaves a lot of other questions on my list to be addressed when the planning committee meets this winter.

So next, as a numbers guy (if you saw the Murder Mystery you'll understand how I got cast into my role), I went to the stats to determine the number of riders per day. The first thing I found is that we are having a good year ridership-wise. Through the middle of July we have had nearly 15,000 riders during regular revenue service at the CHSL. In addition we have had over 1,400 charter passengers and over 500 ride the streetcar for special events. We are up over 10% over last year.

In analyzing the numbers I find that over 80% of our passengers ride the streetcars on Wednesday afternoon, Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday. These shifts, except for Friday, are longer than weeknight shifts. I looked at the average number of riders per hour for each of the shifts. Wednesday afternoon, Friday and Saturday all averaged over 50 riders per hour. Sunday was nearly 70. Weeknights were mid-twenties per hour except for Wednesday which was a little higher. Wow! Wednesday afternoon and weekends attract nearly twice as many riders per hour. Yet these are usually the most difficult to fill. Thanks to a group of very dedicated volunteers we

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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**  
 August 2014

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, 2014.

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

13326 Huntington Lane  
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481

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

Dave French — Board Chair

**H**i everyone! At 7pm on July 27<sup>th</sup>, Twin Cities Public Television will air “Transit Stories,” a new documentary on how public transit impacts the Twin Cities. The program opens with our own Aaron Isaacs giving a quick history of the streetcar system, and his interview is interspersed with archival movie footage plus photos supplied by MSM. MSM appears in the credits. The show will be repeated periodically and will be available to watch on-line.

**B**ack in January our colleagues at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL announced that they have acquired former New Jersey Transit PCC streetcar No. 4. This is former Twin City Rapid Transit No. 323 sold to Newark in 1953. Our 322 is former Newark No. 3. IRM has announced that they plan to repaint No. 4 into TCRT colors, so we can look forward to seeing another TCRT car operating in the future. Wouldn't it be great to see our 322 and IRM's 323 run together? How about our TCRT No. 1239 and sister gate car No. 1267 which runs at Seashore Trolley Museum in Maine? Or how about a reunion of our No. 1300 and sister one man-two man car No. 1583 currently running at the East Troy Electric Railway in Wisconsin? You might be thinking, “Oh come on, Dave, you're dreaming. That will never happen because it is too expensive and too complicated to move these cars around the country!” Well yes, you're right, of course. But at the same time, some things are happening right now in the world of rail preservation that I thought would never happen. For just one example, Union Pacific Railroad's “Big Boy” articulated steam locomotive No. 4014 has been transported from California to the UP steam shop in Cheyenne, Wyoming to be restored to operation. Did any of you expect this to happen in our lifetime? Every successful rail museum or restoration project starts with an idea, motivated volunteers, persistent fund raising, and lots and lots of hard work to overcome obstacles both foreseen and unexpected.

**W**hen our No. 1300 was in storage outdoors in Hopkins during the 1950's and 60's, how many members of the Minnesota Railfans Association thought they would never find a place to run it? When Duluth No. 78 was discovered in derelict condition, how many MTM members thought it was crazy to even attempt a restoration? When Duluth No. 265 was found in Northern Wisconsin, No. 1239 acquired in 1987, and Winona No. 10 discovered south of Winona, how many of our volunteers thought it was a

waste of time to even try and put them back into operation? How many thought that we should just concentrate on preserving and running what we have rather than take on these new projects? But we have been blessed with generations of volunteers who had the dream and they did the fund raising and performed the hard work so that we now have a great and diverse collection of operating trolleys to educate and entertain the public for a \$2 fare. Just thinking of what we have accomplished over the last 60 years since No. 1300 was donated makes me very proud of every one of you, and I revere the memory of the hundreds of volunteers who are no longer with us. And yes, thinking of what we have done makes me more than willing to “dream the impossible dream,” as the song goes. So what, I ask, is your “impossible dream” for MSM? Give me a call or an e-mail and share your dream!



*(Continued on page 4)*



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

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

Like most of the people in Minnesota, the summer months equate to vacation times, and the CHSL shop crew usually has a dip in attendance during the summer. Since we can't hold out a car due to our operating requirements during the summer we try to keep all of our streetcars in good operating order, and do miscellaneous work around the George K. Isaacs Car barn and Shop and out at the Excelsior car barn.

Next time you get to Lake Harriett, we invite you to take a look at the new woodwork as well as new paint on the pole (or West) side of Duluth Street Railway No. 265. There are also several re-caned seats and all the seats have been repainted. All the work we did during the winter months postponed the "off-season" preventive maintenance to TCRT No. 1300. **Mark Digre** and **Russ Isbrandt** accomplished that work during July. We should now be able to move PCC No. 322 back into the maintenance barn so that the Wednesday evening operation can run a lot smoother, i.e., no more shifting of cars around to allow No. 322 to be used.

Along with all the woodwork done on No. 265 we also decided to install new window shades on the car. As it turns out we have only two types of shades to look at for examples. The "old" cloth shades that were found in No. 1300 when we acquired it back in 1954 (we replaced them a couple of years ago with some material we had on hand) and what appear to be 'black out' shades from the World War II era. These may have been a fabric of some sort that was covered with something black, like black paint. Since we haven't found any information on shade material, we decided to use a black fabric and found a local company that would make just 56 shades for us. The other 26 will be installed in TCRT No. 1239 in Excelsior when we get all the required hardware cleaned and put onto the new shade material. *(All photos below by Jim Vaitkunas)* ☺



The materials we now have for fabricating the window shades for No. 265 and No. 1239 are shown here.



The work by the shop volunteers is steady but there is a tradition of the mid-morning coffee and donut/cookie break around 10:30.



At the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line it's a rare treat to see all three of our operating streetcars out of the George Isaacs car barn at the same time. This photo was taken on a sunny Tuesday, July 29th and it depicts the "changing of the guard" so to speak. Roughly every 30 days at CHSL, the "standard" streetcar (No. 1300 and No. 265) that provides "base service" at CHSL is switched. On 7/29, No. 265 was replaced by No. 1300 which will now provide the base service at CHSL for the next month or so.

Now that No. 265 is out of service, the car will have basic preventive maintenance checks and services performed on the streetcar over the next couple of weeks so it'll be ready to go when needed.

### PERFECT TIMING!

Go to Google Map's street view and enter this address: 3668 Richfield Rd., Minneapolis, MN 55408. You will be pleasantly surprised to see PCC No. 322 standing at our north platform at Lake Calhoun. Uff da! Great timing, eh? You betcha!

**What's Happening?**

August 9	<b>Family Fun Day</b> at CHSL
August 12	<b>STORY TIME TROLLEY</b> at ESL
August 13-22	ESL will not operate between these dates because of sewer work on the Morse Avenue crossing
August 14	<b>STREETCAR CAMP FOR KIDS</b> at CHSL
August 21	<b>PJ PARTY TROLLEY</b> at CHSL
August 27	Last Wednesday afternoon service at CHSL
August 29	End of weekday evening service at CHSL
September 1	<b>LABOR DAY</b> holiday service at ESL and CHSL

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

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

**M**SM's **2013-2014 Annual Appeal.** We received several donations in the last few weeks for which we are very grateful. Many thanks to Jean Curtis-Neitz & John Neitz in honor of Joe Plante and Eric Neumann; Kristine Horn-Ginthner in memory of Marshall Ginthner; Clark Johnson; Marv Krafve in memory of Marshall Ginthner; and, Glen Bottoms.

**Sad news.** We regret to report the recent passing of MSM volunteer Patricia Bjorklund. Pat was an active volunteer with MSM several years ago, doing a good job as a non-operating Station Agent at our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Our sympathies go out to Pat's family and loved ones. ☹



The platform at CHSL's north end is level with the top of the rail which required a heavy "portable" step box be placed on the platform for each day's operations. General Superintendent **Bill Arends** decided that we needed something more permanent so he built and installed a larger permanent step as you can see here. Good work, Bill! Our backs appreciate the break from hauling the heavy step box around.

**Photo Ops**

At our Excelsior Streetcar Line, the exterior landscaping on the north side of the new but partially finished Hennepin County Library (shown in the background) really adds to the appearance at ESL's Water Street platform as you can see here. Duluth Street Railway No. 78 is awaiting the next group of passengers on a sunny Sunday afternoon on July 27, 2014. (Both photos by Jim Vaitkunas)

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

**A** quick word to our volunteers who operate our streetcars on our Excelsior and Como-Harriet Streetcar Lines. Have you signed up for any extra shifts this summer? Many shifts are still being filled at the last minute and/or are being run with the minimum number of crew people. Can't you help? If everyone who reads this would resolve to work just one additional shift in August, one more than you normally would, that would be a huge help! Please consider helping your Museum. I hope you can and I am confident that you will! Thanks! ☹

**(Volunteer Stats Tell A Story** *Continued from page 1)*

have not had to cancel any of these very important shifts. Next time you see **Mike Buck, Rose Arends, Fred Beamish, Craig Canada, Patrick Desbonnet, John Dillery, Rod Eaton, Ben Franske, Bill Graham, Aaron Isaacs, Russ Isbrandt, Karl Jones, Howie Melco, Jerry Petersen, Dave Norman, Joel Schuweiler, Steve Simon, Jim Vaitkunas** and **Bill Way**. These volunteers, 23% of our Foremen, Operators and Station Agents at CHSL, have done nearly 60% of the shifts. When you see them be sure to thank them for their many hours on the streetcar for these critical shifts. Check your schedules. Sign up on ShiftPlanning early to reduce the "Red Zone" emails. Try a weekend shift. They're busy and fun. See you on the line. ☹