

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



September 2014

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- We are now into our fall operations schedule at both ESL and CHSL. Our website has all the details so come and ride!
- Our fall special event schedule is a real good time to show your support for MSM. You can volunteer to help with the special events or just come and buy tickets to them.

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Masthead. By the time you receive this issue, the great Minnesota Get-Together (Minnesota State Fair) for 2014 will be history. Until 1953, a fairgoer could ride TCRT's streetcars to a special terminal right on the fairgrounds. This photo shows PCC No. 427 on the loading area of the 1953 fair. No. 427 is making one of it's last runs in TCRT service as in a few months it will be gone, shipped to Mexico City for further service. See page three for then and now views of the State Fair arch shown in the background. (John Runk photo)

A Tale of Two Events

Bill Arends—General Supt.

The new and the old. Streetcar Camp and a tie to our roots. What's the connection? Is there a connection? In August 2014, I was fortunate to be part of both.

First I'll talk about Streetcar Camp. For those who are not familiar with Streetcar Camp, this is an event in which kids aged 7 to 12 are given the opportunity to learn a little about electricity, the history of TCRT, how a switch works, what a retriever is, how the streetcar is powered, what is the length and width of the streetcar and other pertinent information about the streetcars. How many windows are there in a Streetcar? But the *coup de grâce* of camp is when each of the campers gets to operate the streetcar.



On a very beautiful morning twelve campers were scheduled to arrive to learn everything five experienced operators could teach them in four hours. First, Head Counselor **Rod Eaton** arrived and readied DSR No. 265 for the day. Shortly thereafter his Assistant Counselors **Jim Berry, Alexandra Howes, Ben Franske** and I, arrived. By 9:00 AM we brought the streetcar down to the Linen Hills station.

At the station we were greeted by Moms and Dads of twelve excited "Streetcar Campers." Waiting to greet us were Henry, Ava, Blake, Henry, Riley, Annabel, Henry, Parker, Beckett, Ian, Mason and Lowell. Who would have guessed that a fourth of our campers would have the same first name? Not to mention two brother/sister combinations and two brothers. One of the brother/sister combinations are returning from last year. This may be the third year for the brother.

The ages ranged from 7 to 11. I won't comment on the total ages of the campers vs the counselors but only say that the total ages of all campers was 100 years. The age of two of the senior counselors topped that by 40 years.

After four hours of learning about streetcars, electricity and a session of hands-on operation, the streetcar and 12 happy campers returned to the station where each camper received a Certificate of Streetcar Operations and a Junior Motorman's Patch.

And then there's the old. I don't mean in age but in history. A few weeks ago a phone call came into the Museum which was forwarded to me regarding streetcar seats that someone wanted to donate to our museum. Key word was "donation." I called back. Little did I know where or to whom this would lead.

On Saturday, August 23, **Will Sulzbach** showed up at the CHSL car barn with four complete TCRT streetcar seats that he had removed from the streetcars when they were being scrapped and burned at Snelling Shops in 1954. These are complete seats with backs, frames and all the hardware. We are fortunate Mr. Sulzbach chose to donate the seats to us to help preserve a bit of streetcar history.

But we are even more fortunate to reconnect with a member of the Sulzbach fami-

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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
 September 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 September 20, 2014.

Please send items to the 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! I'm sorry to start this month's column on a very sad note, but I hope this will serve as a poignant reminder that our *first* and *most important* duty as an active volunteer at MSM, regardless of whether your job is on the car, in the depot, in the carbarn, on the track, up on the overhead, or sitting at a computer, is to *think, work, and act safely*. On July 12th, Linda Rowe, a 66-year old long-time volunteer at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom, Wis., was struck and killed by a train. The investigation is ongoing, but my understanding is that Linda was riding in the diesel locomotive cab on the last trip of the day. When the train stopped at the station, she exited the cab and was struck when the engine moved forward to uncouple from the train. Our hearts and prayers go out to Linda's family and our friends at M-CRM.



Here are my two reminders to all of you: (1) Whether you have been volunteering at MSM for 30 years or 30 minutes, you must be constantly aware of your own safety, *and* the safety of our passengers, your fellow volunteers, pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicles, and (2), if you are doing something unsafe, or if you see someone else doing something unsafe, or maybe you just *think* it is unsafe, it is *your* responsibility to take immediate action. Nope, sorry, it is not just the responsibility of our Foremen, Superintendents, and Trainers, *it's up to you*. And yes, I have taken action when I saw what I thought was an unsafe act, but then I found out that I misunderstood what that volunteer was doing. I felt kind of dumb at the time, but I also knew that I had done the right thing and by taking action I was making sure that everything was OK. On various jobs I've had, I have investigated many accidents. Often when asked why they had not reported a repeated unsafe act or a "close call" or a "minor" accident or injury, employees often say "I didn't want that person to get mad at me" or "I didn't want to get into trouble" or "The supervisor didn't seem to care, why should I?" I always asked that employee, "How would you feel if someone was seriously injured or killed because you did not say something or make a report?" Of course, everyone said they would feel awful. So when you work at MSM, stay alert and pay attention to what you are doing and keep your eyes moving looking for unsafe conditions around you. And as Metro Transit says in regard to safety on the light rail, trains, and buses, "See something? Say something!"

Did you receive your Summer, 2014 issue of *Twin City Lines*? There's nothing I like better than checking my mail at the Crookston Post Office and seeing that large MSM envelope in my box. As I've said before, *Twin City Lines* edited by **Aaron Isaacs** and our *Streetcar Currents* newsletter edited by **Jim Vaitkunas** are second to none among North American railway and trolley museums, and I have read a lot of these publications so I feel qualified to make that declaration.

In the Summer 2014 issue of *Twin City Lines*, there is a photo montage on pages 18-19 showing various metal "small artifacts" in our collection including a union button. As I've written before, I am always on the lookout for these buttons issued by our friends at Division 1005 of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway, and Motor Coach Employees of America which represented employees of Twin City Lines. I currently have two of these buttons, one from January 1937 and one from 1949. Both are different from the button pictured in TCL. The Jan. 1937 button is plainer without the union logo in the center. As I've written before, buttons had

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MSM Goes On



At CHSL, **Ben Franske** is explaining to the Adventure Camp kids how a track switch works. *(Rod Eaton photo)*



At ESL, the sewer work on Morse Avenue is mostly done and our track is back in place. Next step: paving the street. *(Todd Bender photo)*

Minnesota State Fair Week—Then and Now



The original state fair arch stood at the main entrance to the fairgrounds in front of the large complex of streetcar terminal loops and storage tracks. The TCRT standard car on the left is No. 1136 which was reserved for use during the fair as TCRT's office/ops center. Oddly, the car could not operate under its own power and each year was towed to the fair terminal and sits on a section of disconnected track.



Some time after 1953 when the last streetcar ran to the fair, the arch was removed and "lost." In 2012 it was discovered, restored and is now at the east entrance to the fair grounds. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*

MSM FAMILY PICNIC!

ESL to Showcase at MSM Picnic—Sunday, September 21, 2014—12:30 to 3:00 PM

ESL invites all MSM members and families to the family picnic at the ESL car barn (501 Highway 7) on Sunday, September 21, 2014. Because of sewer construction on Morse Avenue in Excelsior, parking instructions will be sent out at a later date.

The chef will again be **Scott Heiderich** who promises a delicious summer picnic menu of brats, hot dogs, hamburgers, condiments, potato chips, water, ice, soda and coffee. We ask you to please bring a chair to sit on. Attendees with a last name A-K bring a salad or relishes to share and attendees with a last name starting with L-Z please bring a dessert to share. Food will be served from 1:00 pm until 2:30 pm. **Deadline for reservations is September 19th, 5 PM. If you plan to attend, please call 651-645-3333 or s-klines@comcast.net giving the number in your party.**

Showcase viewing will include:

- 1) Winona No. 10. The truck was placed under the car on August 12. The windows are in place and much of the interior is finished. The floor might not be installed so you can see the wiring and connections to the trucks. Be sure to say thank you to **Ken Albrecht** and his many volunteers for the many years of dedication to this restoration project.
- 2) DSR No. 78 has a freshly painted roof and floor thanks to **Karl Jones** and his staff of Sunday volunteers. Ride this car to our Water Street car stop.
- 3) View our freshly laid tracks across Morse Avenue as a result to the Met Council's' new sewer line work.
- 4) Continuing on to Water Street notice the freshly painted white picket fence, the mowed roadbed and weed free stop. Phase one of a three phase garden project is complete at Water Street. The new Excelsior Hennepin County Library should be operational by this date. Notice the gardens, trees and landscaping which enhance both the library and our car stop.

What's Happening?

September 7	End of Sunday Service at Excelsior Streetcar Line
September 20	Excelsior's Apple Days festival—expanded service at ESL
September 20	MSM Board of Director's meeting, Linden Hills Park Rec Center starts at 9:00 AM
September 21	MSM Family Picnic at our Excelsior Streetcar Line—12:30 PM to 3:00 PM
October	Multiple pumpkin and Halloween special events at ESL and CHSL—website has list & dates

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary and Newsletter Editor

New Members. We are pleased that the following new members have joined our Museum: Rissa Potter, Rusty Mitchell and Fred Counts. Welcome to the MSM family, folks.

Donations. We received several donations in the last few weeks for which we are very grateful. Many thanks to Eric Tratner, Paul T. Beyer, and Stanley Kasal.

We'd also like to thank long-time member **Barney Olsen** for donating 65 books, mostly streetcar and a few on railroad subjects.

Correction. The donation listed last month from Jean Curtis-Neitz and John Neitz was in honor of the wedding of Museum members and volunteers Joe Plante and Eric Neumann. Your editor failed to include that this was in honor of Joe's & Eric's marriage, and I regret this oversight.

Membership Renewals. When you receive your Museum membership renewal notice, please take a few minutes to complete the renewal slip, write out the check and mail it in to the Museum's business address. Please don't drop it off at the Linden Hills station or Excelsior carbarn. Renewing right away saves a lot of time for our volunteer Membership Manager and others from sending out follow-up e-mails, additional postage for second and final notices, etc. Remember that when you send in your renewal right away you save your Museum funds that can be used for important projects and expenses. Thanks! ☺

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

the month and year on them to signify that the employee had paid his dues that month. At some point, the union decided to just issue one button per year so the 1949 version has no month, a smaller logo, and the words ST. PAUL-MINNEAPOLIS around the top. These buttons are 15/16" in diameter so that Motormen and Conductors could wear them on the right side of their uniform caps. If you would like one of these two to wear, just e-mail me at drfcd152@aol.com or call (651) 728-2837 and I will mail it to you. As before, these are free in exchange for a donation to MSM of \$5.00 or more. You can mail a check to MSM, or just drop it in the donation box next time you are at the CHSL station or the ESL carbarn. And no, you do not have to tell me you made the donation, I trust you. First come first served!

I have often asked you in my column to be sure and promote our MSM special events such as Ghost Trolley and Christkindlmarkt to your family members, friends, and coworkers. **Rod Eaton**, our Special Events Manager, recently told me that he has been carefully observing the audiences at these events for several years and relatively few of our active volunteers attend. We're not sure if this is true of our membership in general because we may not recognize a member who is not a volunteer. But I will say that in addition to promoting these events to others, I ask you to please attend yourself and bring someone along who might enjoy it!

Thanks and I hope to see you on the cars. ☺

(A Tale of Two Events *Continued from page 1)*

ly. **Will Sulzbach** said that his brother **Charles Sulzbach** was a close friend of **Bill Olsen**, a founding member of MSM. Charles was President of the Minnesota Railfans' Association, a group that contained the forbearers of our Museum today. While attending the National Model Railroaders' Association's annual convention in Milwaukee in 1950 Charles, along with nine other NMRA riders, died in the tragic Milwaukee Speedrail head-on collision accident. The late **Ray Norton**, another founding member of our museum, was seriously injured in the accident. A tragic day in rail history for a group of people doing what they loved. Two of our members, **Russ Isbrandt** and **Scott Heiderich**, lived in Milwaukee at the time and remember going to the site with their dads. More about this unfortunate accident can be found at <http://my.execpc.com/~jruss/NMRASpeedrail.html>.

A sad day in Milwaukee in September, 1950 but a fun day at the CHSL in August, 2014. And maybe we have hooked some future operators. See you on the line. ☺