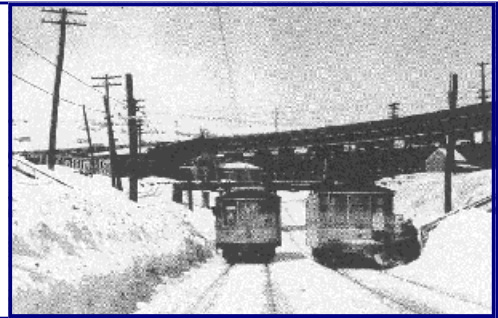


MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec 2014

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.

Busy End of the Season

Bill Arends—General Supt.

October, being a month, with a lot of events, requiring a lot of volunteer hours is also a month which is a lot of fun for all volunteers who assist in our many special events, as well as for the many loyal riders who participate.

First, there's Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch. Next comes two nights of Ghost Trolley at both ESL and CHSL. There's the Transylvania Trolley featuring Count Karl and the Trick 'r Trolley at both ESL and CHSL. All culminating with three performances of the Ghost Trolley Late Show on Sunday night. Wow! Over 4,200 passengers rode our streetcars during these events.

If I had unlimited space in The Currents, I could go on for pages about who made this all possible. Instead I'll limit this to Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch and a little about what goes into the planning of the annual events.

It starts in the winter, January or February, when the Operations Planning Committee meets to decide what events will be held and when they will occur. **Rod Eaton** takes this information, puts it in a format suitable for a two-sided card to be printed, which can be handed out to our riders, and sends it to the printers. Our Webmaster **John DeWitt** sets up the events on our website. Operations Chief, **Bruce Gustafson** handles posting of the event schedules on ShiftPlanning.

So now we have our annual schedule. Beyond this, each event has its own special requirements. So, back to Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch. Farmer **Ken Albrecht** and Mrs. Farmer Ken, a/k/a **Jan Albrecht**, till the soil, plant the seeds and hope that nature provides adequate rain and sunshine. If you're not a farmer, this step takes quite a while. And, if all goes well, a good crop of pumpkins grows.

Then it's harvest time. Farmer Ken and Jan harvest their crop. This means cutting the pumpkins from their vines and hefting them into wagons to be moved from the field. All very labor intensive. Once harvested the call goes out. "The pumpkins are ready for the pumpkin patch. They can be picked up anytime." But there is no "Pumpkin Patch." This needs to be set up. The Park Board is contacted for material for the fence, which they promptly deliver to the north end our line. **Pete Connors**, along with his assistance in putting up the fence, provided the driver for the posts. **Walt Strobel**, **Bob Smith** and I assisted in getting the fence ready for the Pumpkin Patch.

We now have a Pumpkin Patch but the pumpkins are still 80 miles away near Mankato. No problem. **Dennis Stephens** and his wife **Ruth** hitch a trailer to their car. My wife **Rose** accompanies me in my pickup truck to Farmer Ken's farm. We are joined by **John Prestholdt** and his wife **Jill** and **Jim Willmore** (see photos on page 5). The pumpkins are loaded into our vehicles to be transported to the Pumpkin



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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.

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Masthead. Winter in Duluth was a challenge for the managers and working men of the Twin Ports Electric Lines, as this photo attests. Here you see two Duluth standard cars in a trench that is West Superior Street. The dark shape over the cars is a steel trestle that goes to one of the Duluth iron ore docks. Ah, the joys of winter!
(MSM photo archive)

Bill the Motorman: TCRT Was Prepared for Winter Snow



Folks, now that we're into our Minnesota winter, back in my day TCRT's operating and maintenance departments were ready for winter operations. And, by golly, the company certainly was prepared for what lay ahead of it. There were a lot of things that the operating, station and Snelling Shop folks did to get ready for the winter season. Of course, all the coal stoves in the streetcars were cleaned and repaired and made ready. The supply cars also made the rounds to all the stations and other locations on the lines throughout the system stocking the coal and sand bins with their supply to start off the winter. Of course, major preparations were made with the company's fleet of snow plows.

Now while I have spent many an hour operating snow plows, I was curious as to the history of TCRT's snow plowing so I went to visit an old friend of mine at the Snelling Shops, Ole Johnson, who has worked for the company since the mid-1890s. Ole went into the shop's equipment files and here's what he came up with.

As of January 1893 Minneapolis and St. Paul had 37 snow plows and 2 snow sweepers. As of September 1904 TCRT owned 1 double-truck conveyor plow, 19 regular double-truck snow plows and 1 single-truck sweeper (built by the McGuire-Cummings Company). The 19 plows originally did not have a cab for the crew; the controls were out in the open. Brrr! That must have been cold! Later a large cab was built on the front end to house the controls and crew. Later, when the TCRT built the steel underframe plows, some of the 19 remained as plows, but some were converted to work cars.

From 1906 thru 1910 the TCRT shops built 10 large steel-underframe snow plows. Four were conventional single-end snow plows, but six were combination snow plow-sweepers. Ole showed me an article in a 1909 *Electric Railway Journal* that had a photo and description of No. 30. Major items mentioned—steel broom 52" in diameter, wing plows on both sides of the car. The plow is normally the forward end. The plow and wings remove most of the snow and the broom removes the remainder. With side wings extended the car will remove snow from a strip 19 ft. wide including the strip between the tracks, and will throw snow out 12 ft. from the outside rail. If heavy drifts are encountered the car is operated from the broom end and the steel broom cuts through them. The broom assemblies and "pole side" wing assemblies were removed in 1942.

During the winter of 1917-1918 eight additional regular snow plows were built in the company shops. This brought the total number of snow plows in service to 18. These were used until the end of streetcar operations in 1953-1954. The trucks, motors and controls from 18 of the 42 high-speed suburban cars were removed and installed on the 18 snow plows each winter (and removed each spring). (Reduced winter traffic required less cars on the Lake Minnetonka line.) After the Lake Minnetonka and Stillwater lines were abandoned in 1932 the high-speed trucks, motors and controls remained on the snow plows all year. The 18 snow plows were assigned to the various car stations. As of 1921 East Side Station had four (one for the Lake Minnetonka line), Nicollet Station had three, Lake St. Station had two, North Side Station had two, Snelling Station had four, Duluth Ave. Station had two, and Owen St. Station (Stillwater) had one. There were fixed snow plow routes at each station.

Regular motormen operated the snow plows 'tho the company's rule books only hints at this. The TCRT's rulebook effective 11-1-1921, states: "52—Trainmen engaged in the operation of work cars or any other special equipment shall be under the same supervision and governed by all rules the same as in passenger service."

Another friend of mine, and one of your old-time MSM members, Kirt Blewett, who was a regular motorman, told me he also operated snow plows. "All of the snow plows that I worked out of Nicollet Station were of the 75-82 series [probably 77 and 78]. On the plows I worked, and probably on all of them, both the plow and wing blades were air raised and gravity lowered. The wing was pulled out by a motorized winch and chains, pulled in by a rope block and tackle. Due to the short truck centers on the plows all of the normal underbody equipment was placed inside the carbody.

(Continued on next page)

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 interurban 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:

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Streetcar CURRENTS November-December—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 January 20, 2015.

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



Twin Ports by Trolley Book. The big news in my life has been the release of the new book *Twin Ports by Trolley—the Streetcar Era in Duluth-Superior*. Although published by the University of Minnesota Press, MSM was a major participant. Two-hundred twenty-four of the 360 photos and illustrations in the book are from the MSM photo archive, as are all the maps, drawn originally for the out-of-print book, *The Electric Railways of Minnesota*.

As with all new book releases, the author is called upon to do book signings, interviews and presentations. These are all opportunities to do some streetcar history education, and to tell folks about our museum. So far the list of appearances includes the Lake Superior Railroad Museum, Douglas County Historical Society in Superior, the Duluth version of Almanac on public television, KDAL radio in Duluth, Minnesota Public Radio, KFAI community radio in Minneapolis, Magers & Quinn Bookstore and Eat My Words Bookstore. There are probably more to come. The book is on sale at the Linden Hills depot. If you buy it there or through the MSM website, the proceeds go to the museum.

Duluth additions to the collection. One of the primary sources of materials for the book was the North East Minnesota History Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Their collection includes most of the Duluth Street Railway corporate files. However, when we acquired the **Jim Kreuzberger** collection of Duluth-Superior materials, it contained many DSR corporate records. I committed to donate most of them to UMD, so they would all be together in one place. However, I have selectively retained materials that will provide good material for future articles in *Twin City Lines*, so those will be added to the MSM collection. It will take some time to catalogue them.

A big side benefit of publishing the book is that all the photos and illustrations have been digitized. Those will now be part of the MSM collection, including digital copies of many photos from the UMD and Douglas County Historical Society collections. All told, over 100 new photos will be added to our Museum's collection. ☺

(Bill the Motorman *Continued from page 2*)

Therefore if the reverser failed to throw from the controller, you would just go back in the car and throw it with the manual lever on the reverser. Plows had a three-man crew, consisting of motorman, wingman and trolleyman." Kirt also mentioned: "There was a lever [operated by the motorman] that controlled the slides on the bottom of the salt bunkers to drop salt on the track switches when going over them. The linkage was under the raised motorman's platform."

At the end of Twin City streetcar service 12 Snow Plows were dismantled and burned in 1953. The bodies of the remaining six snow plows were sold in 1954. ☺



(Left) A rare color photo of a TCRT plow earning its keep on the private right-of-way in Phalen Park in St. Paul.

(Two photos from the MSM photo archive)



(Right) In 1905 a TCRT plow stops for a few minutes for the photographer on Nicollet Avenue just south of 31st Street in front of Nicollet Station. Everett C. Jones, a TCRT employee, is the Motorman shown in the cab. TCRT was required by its franchise to plow the streets on which it operated. A few years later the company built a fleet of more powerful and fully enclosed snow plows, capable of clearing a street in two passes. Note the open body where the wingman and Foreman must stand while operating—brrrrr. And, the front plow is made of wood slats!



Excelsior Streetcar Line Update

Todd Bender — ESL Assistant Superintendent

On a warm weekend before Halloween, 1,326 riders came out to Excelsior to ride the Excelsior Streetcar Line's Ghost Trolley and visit the Booseum. That's an increase of 122 riders from 2013! And thanks to volunteers from MSM and the Excelsior/Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, both nights were a resounding success.

Don Nielsen, Pat Nielsen and Karen Kertzman took on the challenging role of managing the crowd at Water Street, where passengers waited up to 45 minutes to board the Ghost Trolley. Our operating crew of Jim Kertzman, Ron Neitzel, Chuck Anding, Bill Preiss, Jeff Andersen, and Todd Bender kept both streetcars running safely and on time.

Quite a few folks also worked behind the scenes to make this event possible. Scott Heiderich and Mike Miller set up the batteries for our lights

and safely rerouted extension cords for scenes around the car barn. The decorating crew of Don Nielsen, Jim Kertzman, Ron Neitzel, Bill Preiss, and Todd Bender transformed TCRT streetcar No. 1239 and Duluth No. 78 into Ghost Trolleys. Karl Jones and the Sunday maintenance crew inspected both streetcars to ensure safe and smooth operation.

Each year, a small group of dedicated volunteers come together to ensure special events at ESL are a success. Our next special event for this operating season was the North Pole Trolley, which ran right after Thanksgiving. Photos of that event are forthcoming in a special Streetcar CURRENTS photo supplement.

These events don't happen without YOUR help, so we really appreciate those mentioned above, and those who helped with the North Pole trolley. 🌱

(All photos on this page by Mark Endres)



Numbers 1239 and 78 are all ready for the first load of passengers. Tickets were purchased from the hut on the right. The stage where scary entertainment was provided is on the left.



And when it was time, the people came from miles around. ESL's Ghost Trolley & Booseum has become a very popular event for our Museum, the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka-historical society and the city of Excelsior.



Here are a couple of our "lovely" volunteers who kept our passengers entertained while they rode down the line enjoying the interesting "scenery" along the way.



One of the very creative ghostly scenes that our passengers encountered while they rode along the line.



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

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

Como Harriet's preventive maintenance work sessions begin in September when the Isaacs Shop volunteers start the work on PCC No. 322. When we hit November and operate on Saturdays only, we typically bring in one of the standard cars and begin the winter work on that car. Right now we are working on some of the smaller items on No. 1300 while keeping it in the warmer maintenance barn for use in the November and Holly Trolley season's. Once all operations are completed in early December we will move No. 265 into the warm maintenance barn and begin finishing the exterior work started last winter. Under the guidance of **Karl Jones**, we will replace some of the 30+ year old rotting wood above the windows and continue working on the interior of the car as needed.

We plan to put new rattan on several seats for No. 1300 as well as the curved back seat on No. 265. **Jim Willmore** and **Pete Connors** are reassembling some of our old trolley bases that were taken apart three years ago and refurbished after several years of just sitting around on our shelves. These will increase our readily available spare parts inventory with seats, brake valves, brake shoes, and door openers (door engines) to allow MSM to keep all our cars running the way we all expect them to operate.

In early November **Aaron Isaacs**, **Jim Vaitkus** and I attended the annual fall conference of

the Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums in Tyler Texas. ATRRM is the new trade organization representing most of the tourist railroads and railroad/trolley/depot museums in the US and Canada. ATRRM's stated purpose is "to lead in the advancement of railway heritage." One of the fun benefits of attending the ATRRM conferences (there are two you can attend—the main fall conference and the smaller spring conference) is to visit and get a behind-the-scenes tour of other museums. Attending also provides a great opportunity to learn about new activities, what things are working or not working at other museums/railways, as well as networking—meeting members of other museums from around the country.

This year's conference was especially informative for those of us in the maintenance area. We received a very eye-opening briefing on Memphis, Tennessee's heritage streetcar system. Over the last two years three electrical fires occurred on their cars. The briefing identified several maintenance issues and lessons learned that our shop forces will address over the winter and in future years. One of them that hit me was that the fires started and flared-up inside the controllers. However on most of the cars, the fire extinguisher was mounted very close to the controller so the operator could not use it. When I returned from the conference, the first thing I did was to get the fire extinguisher on No. 1300 moved away from the controller.

These conventions are a great place to learn and I encourage not only our leaders, but any member who can, to attend one or more of them. Jim, Aaron or I will be glad to give anyone information on future conventions. ♻️

Halloween at Como-Harriet



Here are the "Halloween elves" who went down to Farmer Ken's pumpkin patch to bring the pumpkins back to the Como-Harriet Streetcar line. From the left: Dennis & Ruth Stephens, Jill Seinola & John Prestholdt, Rose & Bill Arends, Jim Willmore and the original farmer Ken & Jan Albrecht. (Jan Albrecht photo)



A carload of passengers await their fate on one of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's ghost trolley runs. (Rod Eaton photo)

What's Happening?

Nov 28, 29 & 30	ESL's Santa Trolley runs in conjunction with Excelsior's Christkindlsmarkt —daily times vary
Nov 28, 29 & Dec 6, 7	CHSL's Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus—12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
December 6	Vinternatt special nighttime streetcar operations—6 PM to 8 PM
December 10	MSM Annual Christmas Party at CHSL's Isaacs carbarn—event starts at 7 PM.
March 21	MSM Annual Member's Meeting—Pavek Museum of Broadcasting, St. Louis Park

**MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership***Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary and Assistant Superintendent of Operations*

New Members. We'd like to welcome to the MSM family new members **Blake Lyndon, Roger Krob, Daniel Vandenberg** and **Thomas Traxler**. It's great to have you all climb aboard the MSM streetcar.

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 our 2014-2015 Annual Appeal we're asking you to continue your support for the expansion of the George K. Isaacs carbarn at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. After you've read the flyer, please detach the donation slip and make a generous donation to your Museum's 2014-2015 Annual Appeal. **Thanks!**

Isaacs Carbarn Expansion Update. Building projects always take longer than you expect. It looks like construction of the carbarn addition will have to wait until next Spring. The cause of the delay was because the metal building contractor we selected walked away from the project, but not before keeping us waiting for three months. **Glen Sandness**, our volunteer general contractor, frustrated by the lack of response, finally recommended that we switch from a steel-framed building to a wood frame. The MSM Board approved the change. A new plan was drawn up and presented to the city for approval, and we were hoping to complete the grading and foundation work before winter. Unfortunately, winter arrived early. As I write this, we're still waiting for the city approval. It's still possible that grading could start this year, but I doubt it.

However, there's a silver lining to the delay. A wood framed building will cost less. The steel building cost estimate was so high that we were probably going to have to spread the project over two years. Now I'm hoping we can do it in one push next spring. One helpful recent development is a \$2,000 grant from the **Tom E. Dailey Foundation**, their second grant for this project. However, we still have a funding gap. Your Annual Appeal donations will really help us reach our goal. (*Update from Project Manager, Aaron Isaacs*) 🌟



Please mark Wednesday, December 10th on your calendar and plan to attend our Museum's annual holiday party at the George Isaacs carbarn, 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.

(Busy End of the Season *Continued from page 1*)

Patch where **Rod Eaton** meets us, delivers the straw bales, and helps off-load the pumpkins into the patch.

On the two days of the event volunteers **Joel Schweiler, Steve Simon, Rose Arends, Rod Eaton, Jerry Petersen, Angela Freichs, Jill Presthodt, John Prestholdt, Bill Way, Dave Higgins, Jim Libscomb, Dick Zawacki** and **Patrick Desbonnet** (some of them both days) helped make sure nearly 1,200 riders got to experience the Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch event.

Oh! I don't think I mentioned-not only did Farmer Ken and Jan provide us with about 400 pumpkins, we were also treated to an excellent lunch.

Now it's on to the Holly Trolley and Vinternatt. See you on the line. 🌟

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, 2015. 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