

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Mar-Apr 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- *Your Museum needs volunteers to operate the streetcars. Talk to your friends and neighbors about joining MSM and operating our historic vehicles.*
- *Don't want to learn to operate our streetcars? There are plenty of other jobs that you can help out with. Contact Bill Arends for more information.*



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Masthead. This photo shows our "mother car," TCRT No. 1300 in the beautiful Lake Harriet glen in 2009. No. 1300 started historic transit preservation in Minnesota when it was rescued from certain destruction in 1954. No. 1300 is still going strong after 107 years, carrying passengers on our Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.

(Mike Helde photo)

The new Season is Coming Up

Bill Arends—General Supt.

The new operating season is upon us already. It seems like only 4 months ago that we ran our last Holly Trolley and put the streetcar away in the carbarn for the winter. Oh! I guess it was 4 months ago. It's also been 3 months since Treasurer **Keith Anderson**, along with **Don Neilson**, **Aaron Isaacs** and me, held the annual budget meeting to determine how much, and to where, we should allocate our finances. It's been 2 months since the Operations Committee, consisting of **Rod Eaton**, **Bruce Gustafson**, **Dave Higgins**, **Todd Bender**, **Jim Vaitkunas** and **Dick Zawacki** and me, met to set the schedule of events, determine the when, what, who and how to get our Foremen and Operators re-certified for safe operation for the upcoming season and to establish a schedule for training new operators.



It's also been four months since Duluth No. 265 was put in the maintenance shop for extensive work on the exterior. The maintenance crew, consisting of **John Prestholdt**, **Karl Jones**, **Dennis Stephens**, **Jim Otto**, **Ben Franske**, **Matt Leibel**, **Mike Miller**, **Walt Strobel**, **Pete Connors**, **Phil Settergren**, **Jim Willmore**, **Mark Digre** and **Russ Isbrandt**, have done an outstanding job of removing and replacing deteriorating wood, repainting and reapplying the lettering. When No. 265 rolls out of the shop this spring she will be looking as good as she did when she rolled out of TCRT's Snelling shops for the first time 100 years ago.

So now that all the annual maintenance is done on the streetcars, the operating schedule has been set and entered into ShiftPlanning, merchandise for the depot has been ordered and dates and times for training and re-certification have been established, are we ready for the season? Not quite. Maintenance and planning are drawing to a close. Now it's time for action.

We need to get all Foremen and Operators re-certified. We need to get the depot ready for the season. An idle depot, last occupied by riders tracking in snow during the Holly Trolley and dust settling on the shelves over the winter, means shelves and floor need a thorough cleaning. Merchandise needs to be unpacked and the shelves restocked. The streetcars are very much in need of a complete cleaning after sitting in the dusty carbarn for four months. The track and the overhead lines need to be inspected.

With our schedule set to start on Saturday, May 2, that means April is going to be a very busy month. The "off-season," that period from early December to May, certainly isn't the "idle" season. It takes a lot of effort, dedication, devotion and hard work by a lot of volunteers to keep the MSM running smoothly. Fortunately we have these dedicated volunteers. If anyone is interested in lending a helping hand, please let me know.

See you on the line. 🚲

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 are:

P.O. Box 16509
 Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 March-April 2015

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, 2015.

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! Well, here is my last *From the Front Platform* column for the *Streetcar Currents*. Next month, this space will contain ruminations from our new Chairman, **Aaron Isaacs**. As you know, Aaron is an accomplished author who is a much better writer than me, so I know you will enjoy his columns. I really appreciate the members who have phoned, mailed, or e-mailed comments on my columns over the years, some with accolades, some with suggestions, and some who respectfully disagreed with me. I encourage all of you to give feedback to Aaron and all who write for the *Streetcar Currents*. It is a bit disconcerting to labor on a column and then hear nothing but a deafening silence!

I know I keep harping on this, but I will continue to encourage you to attend our annual meeting in March. This year's gathering was another success as members heard all about the current state of MSM with our successes and our challenges. We also saw and heard a great presentation from **Aaron Isaacs** about the PCC car on Twin City Rapid Transit and beyond. He put together a remarkable selection of photos of these cars, including our own No. 322, in service here, in Mexico City, and in several locations in the US. I had no idea of the great variety of paint schemes used on them. Best of all, they continue to run in museums and a couple of heritage trolley lines, so the legacy of TCRT lives on and not just at MSM. Plus, we got to tour the Pavék Museum of Broadcasting (<http://www.pavekmuseum.org/>) which I had not visited before. You will see many varieties of televisions, radios, and phonographs there that were once a big part of our lives and which have now been mostly replaced by new gadgets. I highly recommend it.

It is traditional to make resolutions around January 1st for things we want to improve or do differently in the New Year. I decided to do the same thing on April 1st except I would focus my resolutions on our museum as we rapidly approach the opening of our 2015 operating season. I challenge you to join me, whether you are an active volunteer or a member who lives far away, in doing something extra to enjoy and serve MSM. Maybe there isn't a lot you can do, but I bet that we all have at least one thing we could do to help MSM and also get more out of our membership:

1. Volunteer more. Last year, I was unable to make it to Minneapolis to participate as a Station Agent at CHSL as much as I wanted. This year I want to go back to coming down one weekend a month.
2. Try to schedule at least one of my weekends so that I can also attend one of our great special events, specifically one which I have not seen before.
3. Make a donation to the Annual Appeal and increase my donation from what I gave last year.
4. Offer encouragement, constructive criticism, suggestions, and offer to help MSM leadership with my active participation.
5. Tell family, friends, and coworkers about MSM and encourage them to visit, ride, and join our museum. Offer to go with them, meet them there, or provide transportation.
6. Learn something new, something which I did not know before about the history of electric railways in Minnesota.



(Continued on bottom of page 4)

Winona No. 10 Update

A recent visit to the Excelsior restoration shop revealed good progress being made on Winona No. 10. The only downside to this statement is that much of the progress isn't particularly obvious. The work being done now involves installing electric conduit for motor and air compressor circuit wires and air brake pipes, all located below the floor. This kind of work takes time. Here are a few photos showing the progress. *(All photos by Jim Vaitkunas)*



(Top left) Body work is pretty much complete and primed in grey paint. Some appliances, such as the headlights, need to be installed.

(Top right) Each platform is complete except for installing the controllers and interior lights. The appliances are from left to right: door handles; air brake valve; and, hand brake. The black item on the floor behind the air brake pipes is an electric heater for the platform.

(Left) The interior wood paneling is pretty much in place. Next step is installing the ceiling panels. The floor can't be installed until all the underfloor electric conduit, wiring and air brake pipes are installed and tested.

(Below) The logo of the Mississippi Valley Public Service Company will be painted on each side of No. 10.

**HELP STILL WANTED**

Three important positions in the Museum's organization chart have been vacant for a long time, but really need to be filled. As always, we're looking for volunteers.

Chief Engineer. Responsible for the museum's buildings and physical plant (track and trolley overhead). The Chief Engineer will set priorities and help recruit volunteers that will do the work. Training will be provided.

Track Foreman. This person will be responsible for organizing and scheduling crews that will perform track maintenance and repairs. This could be divided into separate jobs for Como-Harriet and Excelsior. Training will be provided.

Video Editor. We're looking for someone who knows the Apple iMovies editing software and can teach Aaron Isaacs how to edit the 2 hours of Twin City Lines digital video in the MSM collection.

Contact Aaron Isaacs (aaronmona@aol.com) or General Superintendent Bill Arends (motormanbill@gmail.com) if you're interested or want to learn more about these opportunities to help **YOUR** Museum.

What's Happening?

April	Recertification of operating personnel begins. See the notice sent to all operating personnel
April & May	New Operator training—schedule to be determined. You can start recruiting your friends now.
May 2	Start of weekend operations at CHSL and ESL
May 2	BIG streetcar and depot cleaning session at CHSL
May 5	Start of Tuesday afternoon operations at ESL
May 22	Start of weeknight service at CHSL
May 25	Special Memorial Day service at both ESL & CHSL. CHSL service starts at 9:30 AM

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

Annual Appeal Winding Down. Our 2014-2015 Annual Appeal fund raiser was a great success. Typically the number of donations slows down as we go into the year and that has happened this year. However, we still had several come in since the last newsletter and we'd like to offer a big thanks to the following donors.

Carbarn Addition: Earl & Bettye Anderson; Robert Johnson; Marv Krafve; and, Brother James Wegesin.

General Fund: John Dillery; Brian Krynski; Ron Middlestaedt; Dr. John Stewart; Greg Taylor; and, The Weck Foundation.

Membership Renewals. We have quite a number of memberships up for renewal over the next 3-4 months. It'll be a busy time for our Membership Services Chief, John DeWitt. So, we ask that when you receive your renewal in the mail don't file it away—take care of it right then. That'll help your Museum—a lot! Thanks! ☺

**STREETCAR CLEANERS WANTED !**

Just like a friendly and courteous operator, a clean streetcar has a significant impact on a guest's impression of the museum and their likelihood to return.

At CHSL, once a month a dedicated group of volunteers sets out to wipe away a month's worth of dust, dirt and finger prints. The cleaning takes about two hours and starts promptly at 8:30am. The next cleaning session will be Saturday, May 2. If you have any questions please contact me, Bruce Gustafson:
bruce.gustafson@optum.com, 952.220.5870.

At ESL call **Todd Bender** at 952-334-4065. Cleaning dates are usually shown in the "What's Happening" section on page 6. No experience is necessary and this is the perfect way for you and your family to support your Museum in a tangible way and to meet your fellow Museum volunteers and members.

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

So there are my six resolutions, now what are you going to do? I'd love to hear your ideas and plans!

In the April issue of *Trains* magazine, **Fred Frailey** wrote about four men who were prominent leaders of large railroad companies during the 1950s to 1970s and what they might think about our current railroad industry in 2015. One co-worker of the late **John Kenefick**, who was president of the Union Pacific RR from 1970 to 1983, was quoted as saying Mr. Kenefick "would be somewhat uncomfortable with today's culture of consensus management in which no one can say yes but anyone can say no." Perhaps like me, you might occasionally become impatient with MSM leadership, wishing that the Board Chair or General Superintendent would just make a decision and get on with it. Well, we need to remember that first of all, we are all volunteers. No one can just order someone to do it "my way or the highway" and expect that person to fall into line and comply without question. After all, volunteers are free to leave anytime and much more easily than leaving a paying job. More importantly, even though the process of reaching consensus can be slow and frustrating, we are stronger for it. Our museum has a wonderful mix of capable people, some with many years of experience to draw upon and others relatively new who bring new ideas and fresh "outside the box" thinking. Board Chair **Aaron Isaacs** or General Superintendent **Bill Arends** or Chief Mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki** can't run our museum themselves. I hope that you will continue to support and help our leadership just as you have helped me over the last five years. I will now be the Vice Chair and will continue to welcome your suggestions and critiques. **I'll see you on the car!** ☺

Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

Each year the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is published every other month from November to May. With the May, 2015 issue we will return to a monthly publication schedule. You can expect to receive each monthly issue on or about the 1st of each month through October. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after the 1st of the month please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com