

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



May 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- *Don't want to learn to operate our streetcars? There are plenty of other jobs that you can help out with. Contact Jim Berry, MSM Volunteer Coordinator for more information: 952-922-2257.*
- *Encourage your friends, neighbors and relatives to come and ride our historic streetcars.*



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Masthead. Duluth Street Ry No. 78 is shown here on May 2, 2015 at the Water Street platform of our Excelsior Streetcar Line. Built in 1893 by the La-Clede Car Company of St. Louis, Missouri, No. 78 operated in Duluth until 1911. Later it was a storage shed in West Duluth until rescued from certain destruction by our Museum in 1971. Restoration began in 1983 and was completed in 1991. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

The "Must Do" list

Bill Arends—General Supt.

As I write this we are just a week away from beginning of our 45th season operating streetcars at Lake Harriet. From running one streetcar, with no overhead line, on less than a quarter-of-a-mile of track, from the car barn to West 42nd Street in August 1971 to operating 5 streetcars at two sites, with a 6th streetcar about ready to be put into operation, is quite an accomplishment for an organization of volunteers.

It is also quite amazing what needs to be accomplished during the month of April to get the operating season underway. Some of the things fall into the "nice-to-have-done" category. Others the "must-be-done" category.

First a couple of things in the "nice-to-do" category. Last year we had a fence installed along part of the right-of-way along Queen Avenue at the Linden Hills station. It looks so good, and to further improve safety, we decided to extend it to the underpass. The fence extension should start by the time we start running.

Another "nice" task completed was straightening up the pile of railroad ties north of the Berry Bridge. **Bruce Gustafson** organized a team of strong, young guys, consisting of his son **Davis**, along with **Jacob Lindfors** and **Emerson Swenson**, to rearrange the ties into a neat stack. Thanks for the muscle, guys.

Now the "must-be-done" list. The Depot must be cleaned and merchandise returned to the shelves. Accomplished by **Rod Eaton**, **Jim Otto** and **Rose Arends**. And there is some new merchandise thanks to **Charles Barthold**.

Another "must" is Foreman and Operator recertification. This requires a lot of coordination, scheduling, planning and presenting. Fortunately we have very qualified volunteers to do this coordination, scheduling, etc. Thanks to **Dave Higgins**, **Bruce Gustafson**, **Jim Vaitkunas**, **Todd Bender** and the cooperation of Foremen and Operators for attending the recertification sessions, nearly all of our returning streetcar operating personnel have been recertified to operate this year.

A really big "must" is training new operators. Each year we have attrition among our operating personnel. Fortunately, every year, people hear about us and want to become operators. This requires scheduling and holding training orientation sessions to explain what is required to become a streetcar operator and explain our organization with a little history thrown in. **Dave Higgins**, **Rod Eaton** and **Jim Berry** have been conducting these sessions and signing up new operator trainees. A good year it is. We've had over 40 people attend these sessions and sign up to get trained. This means it will be a busy month of May with **Bill Graham** in charge of training at ESL and **Dave Higgins** handling it at CHSL.



(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 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
 May 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 May 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

Aaron Isaacs — Board Chair

You're probably thinking, "Isn't this supposed to be Dave French's column?" After seven years chairing the museum's Board of Directors, Dave is taking a well-deserved rest and dropping back to the position of vice chair. Having been the vice chair myself for the past few years, I can tell you it's much easier than heading the organization, but Dave will continue his excellent contributions to MSM.

It's useful to look back to the start of his tenure in 2008 and see what has been accomplished. Winona No. 10 is approaching completion. The Como-Harriet carbarn addition has made it through the planning and approval process and construction is about to start. *Twin Ports by Trolley* has been published. The interior of the Linden Hills station has been rehabbed and rearranged and equipped with a large video screen. We're accepting credit cards, which has given merchandise sales a real boost. Special events and charters bring in more revenue and ridership than ever and new events are being tried every year. Operating crews are now scheduled online. The photo collection has grown dramatically, with the best photos placed online and a third of the collection now digitized.

I'm hoping we can build on this record of solid, incremental growth. MSM, and the MTM Traction Division before it, have always stressed quality over quantity. Our Board of Directors is prudent with money and carefully husbands our resources, thoroughly evaluating all new initiatives before committing. That will continue.

Thanks to passenger fares, merchandise sales, member dues and donations and foundation grants, MSM revenues have always exceeded operating expenses. That money is reserved for large capital projects. For example, we've spent over \$200,000 on the Winona #10 restoration. The carbarn addition will cost over \$250,000, drawing down about 2/3 of our current fund balance. Every year we set aside a general reserve, plus a separate reserve for track and overhead wire work.

I like to tell people that museums like ours perform without a net. Our kind of success only happens because a large and dedicated group of volunteers (and that includes members who donate money, goods and services) has pooled its resources and pulled in the same direction. Let's keep doing what got us here.

In future columns I'll discuss specific areas within our museum. Until next time. ☺

OUR 2015 SEASON BEGAN ON MAY 2ND

Our Museum's 2015 operating season officially began on May 2, 2015 and the weather couldn't have been better. Plenty of sunshine and temperatures in the 70s. The passengers turned out in good number with 447 people enjoying a ride on our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line throughout the day. The photos on page 2 and 3 and on page 4 shows some of the first day goings-on at both railways.

(This page) Here are the crewmembers for the first day's operations at our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. (Left to right) **Russ Isbrandt, Karl Jones, Greg Taylor, Joel Schuweiler** and **Jim Otto**. Karl was the Shift Foreman for CHSL's first shift of the season.

(Page 3 bottom) General Superintendent **Bill Arends** is greasing the rails in front of the Linden Hills Station. The fence posts are in for the safety fence extension along Queen Avenue, South. (page 2 & 3 photos by Rose Arends)





Thoughts From The Vice Chair — News and Ideas of Interest to Our Members

Dave French — Board Vice Chair

Hello everyone. Now that I have assumed the position of MSM's Vice Chair, I won't be writing to you as often as I have been. But I do plan to occasionally write on a subject of interest or importance to you, our faithful Museum members. Here's the first in my occasional updates or musings.

In March your Board of Directors unanimously voted to present Honorary Lifetime Memberships at our Annual Meeting to **Neil Howes**, **Keith Lindberg**, and **Russell Olson** for their innumerable contributions to our Museum. The many years of hard work, meritorious service, and monetary donations contributed by these pioneers has made our museum what it is today. For health reasons, Neil and Keith were not able to attend the meeting and their certificates will be presented to them at their homes. Russ was present to receive his certificate along with a hearty round of applause.

Neil Howes joined the Museum in 1976 and was active in streetcar operations and maintenance in the George Isaacs car barn and shop. His background in electrical engineering was instrumental in designing and installing the traction power systems in the four streetcar restorations finished by the Museum, those being Duluth No. 78 and No. 265, TCRT No. 1239 and PCC No. 322. Neil's legacy in helping to preserve Minnesota's electric railway and transportation heritage will live on when our passengers enjoy a ride on these streetcars.

Keith Lindberg has been an active volunteer since 1970, when the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line was part of the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Traction Division. He was in streetcar opera-

tions from the beginning of MTM and while he retired from streetcar operations in the early 1990s, he continued to volunteer in our shop until just a couple of years ago. His skills and experience as a master electrician was extremely important because much of the electrical work done in the car barn at Lake Harriet was done by Keith at no cost to the Museum other than the cost of the materials.

Russ Olson's accomplishments are many, going all the way back to his membership in the Minnesota Railfans' Association and the founding of the Minnesota Transportation Museum. He joined the newly formed MTM in 1965 and his active leadership in those early days of MTM's Traction Division was an important factor in preserving TCRT No. 1300 and establishing operations at Lake Harriet. His legacy includes the seminal work on Minnesota's electric railway heritage, the book *Electric Railways of Minnesota*. He was a key member of the Traction Division's leadership throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, volunteering for or appointed to key leadership roles such as VP Traction, Treasurer, and Historian of MTM. He later agreed to be the first Treasurer of the fledgling MSM and our Museum's first Historian. These are but a few of Russ' many contributions to MSM. Some may think that Russ has "retired" but in fact he has never stopped researching Minnesota electric railway history, now utilizing 21st century technology such as the Internet. Aaron Isaacs reports that Russ probably has enough new material for a second book! All of his material has been meticulously organized and will eventually be donated to the Russell Olson Library located in our car barn expansion.

Congratulations and thanks to Neil, Keith, and Russ! 🍷



What's Happening?

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
June 3	Wednesday afternoon operations (1 PM to 4 PM) at CHSL begins
June 9	Storytime Trolley at ESL

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

New MSM Members. We had a great group to join our Museum in the last few weeks. All are enrolled in our Museum's Operator Training program and are currently in the first phases. Here are their names: Mike Brenner, Tim Crain, Tom Dulebohn, Jeff Ersbo, Tim Gephart, Curtis Henry, Weston Herman, David Hogan, Richard Holz, Michael Kimitch, Bill Loe, Elaine Love, David McCollum, Wendy Morical, Gary Phleger, Ben Porter, Gary Reins, Connie Robertson, Tyler Schow, Tom Schramm, Michael Shepherd, Michael Steinberg, Anthony Stratton, Greg Thomas, John M. Thompson, and Terrell Towers. Welcome to the MSM family! 🌱

(The "Must Do" List—Continued from page 1)

I also want to thank **Jim Berry** for filling the position of Volunteer Coordinator, another "must" for any volunteer organization. Jim has been in this position for only a month or two and has already been in touch with the new Operator trainees as well as others who have expressed an interest in volunteering in other capacities. If there's an area within MSM in which you're interested and would like to help, please get in touch with Jim.

With our operating season starting on May 2, I'm sure I'll see you on the line soon. 🌱

Excelsior Streetcar Line Opens 2015 Season

The Excelsior Streetcar Line also began its 2015 operating season on May 2nd. As reported on Page 2, the weather was perfect but not very many passengers enjoyed a ride on Duluth Street Railway No. 78, at least not on Saturday. Here are a few photos taken by Shift Foreman, Jim Vaitkunas. Jim was ably assisted that day by Ron Neitzel.



(Left) Here are the first passengers of ESL's 2015 season posing in front of Duluth No. 78 on May 2, 2015.

(Left bottom) The Water Street end of ESL will be looking a lot better once the work shown here is complete. The ticket booth was moved closer to Water Street, repainted and looks really nice. Soon some plants and landscaping will be done in the area and a concrete platform will be installed to allow boarding and alighting from No. 78. The new Hennepin County library building can be seen in the right background across the hiking/biking path.

(Below) Here we see ESL's Superintendent, **Todd Bender** on the left digging out the bottom of an old fence post. The volunteers from the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society are shown in the background working on the area adjacent to the ticket booth.

(All photos by Jim Vaitkunas)

