

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



July 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- *Thank an MSM volunteer when you come and ride. They are the lifeblood of our Museum.*
- *You can help our Museum have another successful season. There are plenty of other jobs that you can help out with. Contact **Jim Berry**, MSM's Volunteer Coordinator for more information: 952-922-2257.*



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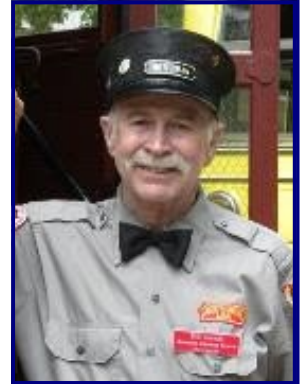
Masthead. Duluth Street Railway No. 78 is still going strong after 112 years! Shown here at the Excelsior Streetcar Line's Water street platform and west end of the line, No. 78 stood in for TCRT No. 1239 for a couple of weeks recently while our shop forces made some needed repairs to the venerable gate car. (Jim Vaitkunus photo)

We Recognize Faithful Volunteers

Bill Arends—Gen'l Supt.

Have you ever noticed that some of our Foremen, Operators and Station Agents have different colored name badges? If you have noticed, have you ever wondered why? Logically, if they're wearing a uniform shouldn't the name badges be "uniform" as well?

There was a time when all MSM operating volunteers wore a yellow name badge with the MSM logo and their name on it. This policy started before my time with the museum. I'm quite sure yellow was chosen because, yes, yellow is the predominant color of all our currently operating streetcars. So then, why are there all those other colors? Red, white, bronze, silver and gold? What does each color signify? Age? Obviously not, or I, along with a few others would have a gray badge.



The badge color signifies years of active service as an MSM operating volunteer. Each new Operator, after they are certified to operate, purchases a yellow name badge which they wear for their first five years of service. After five years they receive a red badge. Five years later, on their 10th anniversary, a white badge is earned. After 20 years of service a bronze badge is earned. Thirty years of service earns one a silver badge. And then, at 40 years of service, they are awarded the gold badge.

This year, joining our already gold badge wearers **Dave Norman, Jim Harrison, Scott Heidrich, Phil Epstein** and **Bill Graham**, will be **Aaron Isaacs, Rick Krenske**, and **Walt Strobel**.

Our new bronze badge honorees, having started volunteering in 1995, are **Jim Vaitkunus** and **Charles Barthold**.

Our ten-year veterans, getting their white badges, are **Bruce Gustafson, Andy Jacob** and **Jim White**.

And lastly, only because they got a later start, are the five-year veterans earning a red badge, **Jim Berry, Mark Brothen, Jason Kirsch, Bill Preiss, Sam Van Tassel** and **Dick Zawacki**.

While on the topic of service above-and-beyond, during the 2014 operating season **Patrick Desbonnet, Rod Eaton, Jerry Petersen** and **Bill Way** each operated over 100 hours. And they're each over 40 hours this year.

The next time you ride, take a look at the name badges and thank each of these people for their years of service. And, in case you're wondering, I'll get my gold badge when I turn 98.

See you on the line. 🚋

Erik Schwarzkopf
MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM
Volunteer Since 2005

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM
Volunteer Since 1999

Dave Norman
MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM
Volunteer Since 1962

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM
Volunteer Since 1963

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** July 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 July 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 — MSM Board Chair

There's plenty happening around the museum. Here's a brief recap of progress in the last month.

The Isaacs carbarn addition is moving forward again. Last month I reported that we were stalled for a couple of weeks because locating the south wall so close to the Linden Hills Blvd. bridge created an unexpected additional cost of \$31,500 to stabilize the slope. We avoided that cost by re-designing the building to be 10 feet farther north, and construction has resumed. As this is written, the grading and backfilling are complete, along with the lower concrete walls and footings. The locations of the two new door openings into the existing carbarn have been marked. The bottoms of the openings have been cut through the wall, which allows the floor height in the addition to be set and poured, along with the thresholds. The floor in the addition may be in by the time you read this. Thanks to **Glen Sandness**, **Dennis Stephens** and **Bill Arends** for their work on this project.



When the Excelsior carbarn was built back in 1998, track 2 was misaligned, and only narrow Duluth No. 78 could fit through the door. That has reduced operational flexibility, so this year we budgeted the money needed to realign the track. Now it can accommodate the wider TCRT "gate car" No. 1239. The work was performed by Railroad Specialties. Thanks to **Scott Heiderich** for coordinating the project.

For the last few years we've been chronically short of operators and filling shifts has often happened only at the last minute. That's not sustainable in the long run, so it was very gratifying when this year's appeal for new operating volunteers attracted 41 Operator trainee candidates, 19 at CHSL and 22 at Excelsior. Attrition has been less than usual and 27 have completed training or will do so in the next two to three weeks. This has made a huge difference in the number of open shifts to be filled. Many thanks to **Dave Higgins**, **Bill Graham** and the other trainers who assisted them.

In a smaller, but still significant development, the Excelsior Welcome Center is now selling MSM merchandise. We haven't had an Excelsior retail outlet until now, so hopefully this will increase our visibility and add some revenue as well. Thanks to **Bill Arends** for stocking the merchandise.

On a personal note, my book *Twin Ports by Trolley* just received the 2014 Northeastern Minnesota Book Award for General Nonfiction. It's always nice to be recognized.

Until next time, take a trolley ride and experience a little time travel. It's good for whatever ails you. ♻️

VOLUNTEERS—WE CAN USE YOUR HELP

Being an all-volunteer organization means that we constantly need more volunteers to help our Museum fulfill our mission and meet our goals (see above box). If you are a new (or not so new) member, please consider becoming active as a volunteer. Our new Volunteer Coordinator, **Jim Berry** has stepped up to help our Museum recruit and retain our volunteers. Please say yes if/when Jim asks for your help on some project or to help with his volunteer work. Our faithful volunteers: **PRICELESS!**

**Volunteers are not paid,
not because they are
worthless but because
they are priceless.**

Isaacs Car barn Addition Progress

As reported in Chair Aaron Isaacs' column on page two, after some delays, the building of the addition to the George Isaacs car barn is now moving ahead with good speed. Below are some photos showing the progress over the last several weeks.

1—Bill Arends & Aaron Isaacs break ground on May 14, 2015. *(Rose Arends photo)*

2—Dirt was removed from east side of the car barn but the retaining wall in the distance caused a delay in progress. *(Rod Eaton photo)*

3—Plans are modified and work begins! Quickly, the concrete forms are built and concrete for the foundation is poured. *(Aaron Isaacs Photo)*

4—Forms are removed and next the floor will be filled-in and leveled. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*

5—Final grading is done and ready for more work before the concrete pour. Gas meter is not yet moved. *(Jim Vaitekunas photo)*

6—Ready for the concrete floor. The office/archive room and machine room will have in-floor radiant heat. *(Bill Graham photo)*



What's Happening?

July 4 Normal schedule applies on both ESL and CHSL
 July 14 Story Time trolley at ESL
 July 16 PJ Party trolley at CHSL
 July 16, 17 & 18 Excelsior **CRAZY DAYS** festival. ESL has extended operating hours.
 July 24, 25 & 26 Murder Mystery trolley at CHSL starts at 9 PM
 July 31 & Aug 1 & 2 Murder Mystery Trolley at CHSL starts at 9 PM



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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Operations Chief

Donations. We are now catching up on reporting donations received over the last few months. We extend a sincere thank-you to the following members and friends for their donation: Denny Morrow, John Dillery, Elizabeth Nelson, Warren Ahlgren, Clark Hoffman, Bob Woodburn, Bill Arends, Tony Bauman, Mike Buck, the Winona Foundation, R.V. Mullen, Byron Olsen, Chip Welling and Eric Tratner. Please remember that all donations are welcome regardless of the time of year. Thanks!

Membership Renewals. We are now into the height of our membership renewal “season.” Close to half of our members renew in the busy late spring and summer months. **John DeWitt**, our Membership Services Manager sends out renewal notices on or shortly after the 1st of the month in which your membership expires. When you receive the notice we ask that you take a few minutes right then to write your check, and put your check and renewal slip in the mail using the envelope we provide to you. It may be saving a first class stamp by delivering your renewal dues to the Linden Hills station; but sometimes it causes much grief and administrative heartburn when your renewal slip gets misplaced sometime between the Station Agent and John DeWitt. ☹

Goings-on in MSM

The summer months are our Museum's busiest months of the year. But summer activities include more than just working our busy weekday and weekend schedules at ESL and CHSL. Here are just a few examples of a busy MSM.



Bill Graham photo

After almost twenty years, track #2 of the Excelsior carbarn has been realigned so it is centered in the door. As the photo on the left attests, a big car like TCRT gate car No. 1239 can now use track #2. Things are still tight inside the carbarn, however, as the photo on the right shows. The object on the right is the body of big Mesaba Railway interurban coach No. 10!



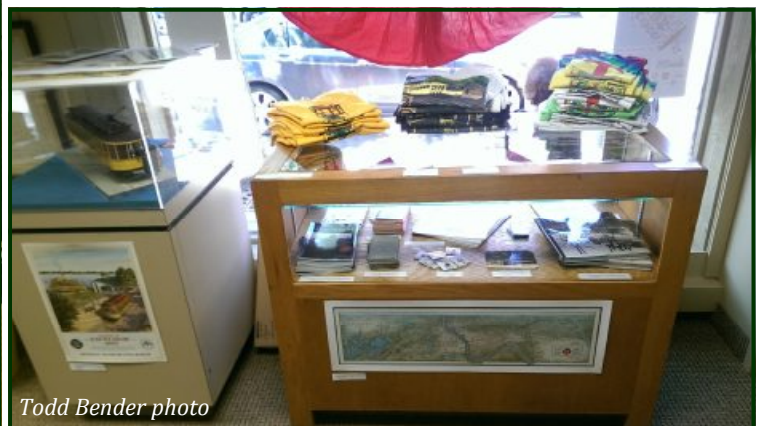
Scott Heiderich photo

(Below left) TCRT No. 1300 is shown being used as a prop for an independently produced movie.

(Below right) We are now selling some of our merchandise inside the Excelsior welcome center thanks to the fine work of **Todd Bender** and **Bill Arends**.



Rod Eaton photo



Todd Bender photo