

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- *Take an afternoon or evening streetcar ride at ESL or CHSL to cool off like your forebears did in 1910!*
- *There are plenty of behind-the-scenes 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. Hah! Fooled you! I'll bet you thought this was a photo of Winona No. 10 but it's sister car No. 15. Built by the St. Louis Car Company in 1916 for service in Winona, No. 15 wears the last paint scheme of solid traction orange body without the white "hour glass" on the ends. Note the operator is reversing the trolley pole at the west end of the "Main" line, the only line left after the late 1920s. (MSM Photo Archive)

Volunteering is Rewarding—Really

Bill Arends—Gen'l Supt.

Have you ever stopped to think about what it takes to keep a historic streetcar line running smoothly? How about keeping two lines running smoothly? We all know it takes many Foremen, Operators and Station Agents. Just to fill every shift at ESL and CHSL during a week takes more than 50 volunteers.

Then there's the maintenance crew in our two shops. The streetcars are old. They need constant TLC. And they need to be kept clean. The money from each shift needs to properly counted, deposited and accounted for. There's scheduling, weed-whacking, merchandise ordering and shelf stocking. There are charters to be scheduled and operated at various times of the day. There's track work to be done and tree branches to be trimmed. Many of us wear many hats. And sometimes we just stumble across something, while wearing one of these hats. This happened to me on a Friday afternoon in mid-July.

On a recent weekday, I stopped at the Linden Hills Station to make sure the depot's shelves were adequately stocked for the upcoming weekend. While coming up the stairs from the basement with my arms full of merchandise, I encountered three people, three generations of one family, peeking through the glass in the door of the station. Grandpa, Dad and two-year-old Logan were looking for something "train related."

I explained we started operating at 6:30 PM. It being only about 1:00 PM, they knew Logan couldn't wait around that long. I invited them into the station to give them a brochure listing train-related places. The dad looked around and selected an engineer hat for Logan, \$2.50. Grandpa gave me a \$10 bill. I had no change. They selected a Thomas the Tank Engine Pez dispenser—now the tab was up to \$5.50. Grandpa said it was good enough and keep the change.

I was finished in the station so invited them to walk up to the carbarn with me so I could at least let them see something "train-related." We went into the carbarn and I powered up TCRT No. 1300 and explained that I could not take the streetcar with only one operator but they could look around. First Logan got to toot the whistle. Next it was the foot gong and then the signal to request permission to get off the streetcar. All the bells and whistles for Logan. While Logan was enjoying his day on a "train," I was able to give a very long "end-of-line" talk.

After about 15 minutes, three very happy guys thanked me profusely, said this was a way better train event than they ever expected and walked back down the right-of-way happy. But probably not as happy as one volunteer who just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

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:

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Streetcar **CURRENTS** August 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 edition of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is August 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

Carbarn Addition Update. Since the last issue, here are the latest developments in the construction of the Isaacs carbarn addition. The gas meter has been moved. The floor of the new addition has been poured and the pipe for in-floor heating has been installed. We've hired the contractor to install the underground cistern that will treat the roof runoff.

Now the framing is underway. As I write this, the walls are framed and the first rafters are in place. This week should see the framing completed and the plywood siding attached. (See photos on page 3—Ed.)

Several additional MSM members have stepped forward to help with the construction. **Steve Eberly** works for an insulating company and developed multiple options for insulating the building. The two-man carpentry crew needs helpers, so **Bill Arends, Dave Gepner, Bill Graham, Russ Isbrandt, Rick Krense, Michael E. Miller, Ben Porter, Tom Schramm, Steve Simon, Andy Selden** and **Tom Traske** have all signed up to lend a hand. Volunteer construction manager **Glen Sandness** also put in quite a few hours on the framing crew.

Once the building is sheathed in plywood, a metal skin similar to the current barn will be added to the exterior.

Park Board planning. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is doing a comprehensive plan for Lakes Harriet and Calhoun. As part of that effort, I was recently invited to participate in a focus group discussing the future of the two lakes. It was an opportunity to bring the Park Board staff up to speed on who we are, what we're doing, and our plans for the future. I made a valuable new contact, **Lisa Beck**, the Park Board's Director of Park Operations. There had been some staff turnover and she is fairly new to the job. She agreed to be our point of contact for any maintenance issues. My takeaway from the meeting is that our museum is well regarded by the Park Board staff. They view us as a positive addition to the park, and as a well-run operation that's easy to deal with. Needless to say, it feels good to get that kind of feedback.

Join Us at the ATRRM Conference. MSM is a member of the Association of Tourist Railroads & Railway Museums (ATRRM), but our involvement goes even farther. **Jim Vaitkunas** is an ATRRM Board member and I'm their magazine editor. Every year ATRRM holds a big Fall conference, hosted each year by a different tourist railroad or railway museum. This year the conference will be September 17-19 at the Illinois Railway Museum near Chicago. IRM is North America's biggest railway museum, with 500 pieces of rolling stock, including dozens of operating streetcars. We want to encourage as many MSM members to attend the conference. There are

three very good reasons to go: (1) You get to see an excellent museum and as a bonus, there is a pre-conference trip to visit the East Troy Electric Railroad and the Fox River Trolley Museum; (2) There will be plenty of informative seminars on all aspects of railway preservation and museum operation; and, (3) you get to meet and learn from your peers and the railway preservation field, including the best trolley museum people from across North America. To download the conference program, go to www.atrrm.org. You can get there by train, or we'll be organizing carpools, which will reduce the cost. Contact **Jim Vaitkunas** or me if you're interested in attending.

Renewed emphasis on safety. The recent serious injury of an experienced MSM volunteer reminds us that we can never take safety for granted. Before operating any piece of museum equipment, think through what could go wrong and mentally prepare for how to avoid accidents and injury. It is an old adage, but a true one—when in doubt, take the safe course. Until next time, take a trolley ride and experience a little time travel. 🚗



This year is the centennial of the Thomas Lowry Memorial, which now sits at 24th Street and Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis. MSM Member **Peter Sussman** will be giving a talk about the memorial's history on Tuesday, August 18th, 7 PM at the Minneapolis Central Library, RKMC Meeting Room.

Isaacs Car barn Addition Progress

Continuing with our coverage of the work on the George Isaacs car barn addition, here are some more photos showing the progress.

- 1—Concrete delivery trucks loaded the concrete pumper up on Queen Avenue and the concrete was pumped down to the work site.
- 2—The Foundation is done and the floor was just poured. Here a worker smooths the floor's surface.
- 3—Concrete has set and now we need wood for the structure. PCC No. 322 was pressed into freight service because the building material delivery truck couldn't unload at the work site so it dumped some of it's load on Queen Avenue across from the Linden Hills station!
- 4—The building is coming along nicely with materials storage on the left.
- 5—East and south walls are up.
- 6—Wall framing is finished and the roof rafters are up. Next step is putting the plywood on the roof and walls (photo taken on 7/27/2015).



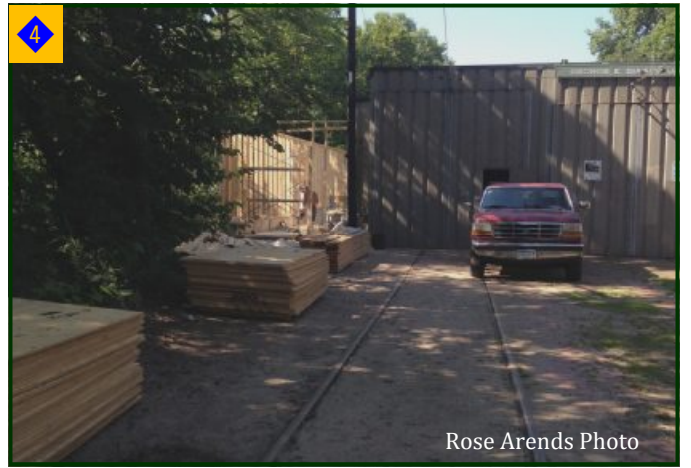
Rose Arends Photo



Jim Vaitkunas Photo



Jim Vaitkunas Photo



Rose Arends Photo



Rose Arends Photo



Aaron Isaacs Photo

What's Happening?

- July 31 & Aug 1 & 2 **Murder Mystery Trolley at CHSL starts at 9 PM**
- August 8 **Model Train Day at CHSL**
- August 11 **Story Time Trolley at ESL**
- August 13 **Streetcar Camp at CHSL**
- August 20 **PJ Party trolley at CHSL**
- August 26 **Last day of Wednesday afternoon service at CHSL**
- September 4 **Last day of weeknight service at CHSL**
- September 7 **Labor Day holiday service at CHSL (12:30 PM to 8:30 PM) and ESL (1 PM to 4 PM)**



Volunteer News & Views — News of our Museum's Volunteers & Volunteer Opportunities

Jim Berry — MSM Volunteer Coordinator

Congratulations to all of our newly trained Operators and new members. One of my projects as Volunteer Coordinator is to build and maintain a skills database of our members. As a first step I ask that every member (that's new members and veteran members) to sign on to our website, fill out the Volunteer Information form, and mail it to the address on the form. I am especially interested in the section that asks for any special skills you have. If you are a computer wiz, advertising maven, love to paint, or have any other skill you think the museum can use and you are willing to share I would like to know that. So you don't forget, go to the website rolleyride.org NOW and fill out the Volunteer Information Form and mail it. You can also scan and e-mail the form to me: goldengopher72@gmail.com Thanks for your help and support! **Jim Berry** ☺

Excelsior History is in the Ground (Article By Todd Bender)

When TCRT's line to Excelsior and on to Tonka Bay was built on Water St in 1906, the double tracks down the middle of the street were paved with special granite paving blocks. These pavers remained in place after the line was abandoned in 1932, buried under layers of asphalt, until Water St. was reconstructed in 1990. As part of the reconstruction project, the granite pavers were removed and disposed. But not all of them. Local historian, **Bob Bolles** rescued as many of them as he could and they were eventually reinstalled near the ticket booth on the leased land of the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS).

In 2015 the pavers were removed when the ELMHS updated the landscaping around their ticket booth at the Water Street (west) end of ESL. With no immediate plan to reuse the pavers, an agreement was worked out between **Kathy Endres, Bob Bolles**, and me to reinstall them as a path between our Water St. loading area and the new Hennepin County library. Bob and I spent the day installing the new path. While we had plenty of pavers, we didn't know how wide the path would be. That's because we had to use the coped pavers specifically designed for installation along each rail's flangeway. After sorting through the entire pile for coped pavers, it turns out we had plenty! See the photos for a better idea of what we're doing to restore some local history in Excelsior. (All photos by Todd Bender)



(Above) MSM member **Bob Woodburn** and Excelsior historian **Bob Bolles** have marked where the TCRT pavers will go. Next step is to dig out the grass, put down a bed of construction sand and lay the pavers.

(Right) Here's **Bob Bolles** laying the walkway.

(Left) This photo shows the finished product, for now. We have a sufficient number of the pavers that the walkway will be made wider by at three courses of the granite pavers.