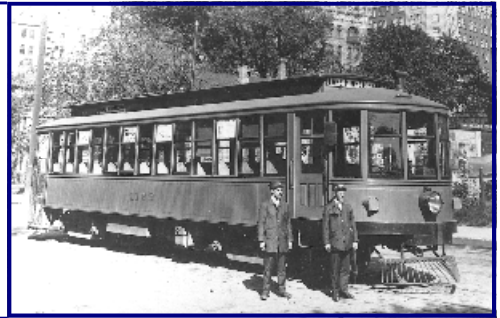


MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec 2015

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

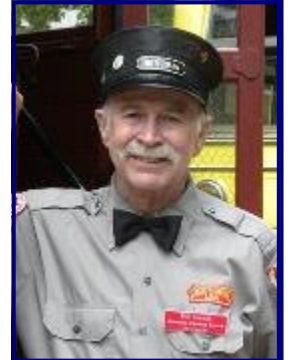
- Come and ride on our last two weekends of the season. Santa on the trolley at ESL and CHSL, and Vinternatt at CHSL. The kids & grandkids will love Santa on the trolley. Go to our website TrolleyRide.org for dates and times.

2015 Season—What a Great Trip

Bill Arends—General Supt.

As I write this we are approaching our final events of the season. But before I get to those events, let's look back at the very successful Halloween events.

October is a very busy month and it takes a lot of volunteer hours to make the events successful. Our first October event is the very popular Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch. Thanks again to **Ken** and **Jan Albrecht** for providing us with a good crop of pumpkins. Thanks also to **Jim Willmore**, **Dennis Stephens** and **Rose Arends** for joining me in moving the pumpkins from Farmer Ken's farm to the pumpkin patch.



Over the course of 2 days during the pumpkin patch event over 1,500 passengers rode the streetcars during revenue service and another 240 passengers as part of a Charter for the Autism Society organized by **Steve Simon** and sponsored by Thrivent Financial, which donated an additional 250 pumpkins.

For the month of October with the Pumpkin Patch, the Ghost Trolley at both CHSL and ESL, the Trick 'r Trolley and Story Time Trolley, the Ghost Trolley Late Show and regular revenue service we had nearly 5,200 passengers ride the streetcars and take part in the special events. Thank you all who help make this a very successful month.

Now on to the Christmas Special Events. At the Como-Harriet Line there are 4 days of Holly Trolley featuring Santa and Mrs. Santa. Thanks to **Mike** and **Kathy Helde** we have the best Santa event in the city (at least in my opinion.) Also on Saturday night, December 6, is our second Vinternatt event. Ride the streetcar at night and see the right-of-way lighted with luminarias and Christmas trees. Bring an unwrapped toy for Toys-for-Tots to place under the Christmas tree in the station, which has been so nicely decorated by **Dave Higgins** and his spouse **Mary Ann**.

ESL will be operating their Santa streetcar during Excelsior's *Christkindlsmarkt* for 3 days, Friday thru Sunday, November 27 to 29. Amazing how he can simultaneously be in two places.

As our operating season is winding down, as some of you may know, so is my time as General Superintendent. I thought about quoting Jerry Garcia and say "What a long strange trip it's been," but then it really hasn't been that long (5 years) and it hasn't been strange. But, it has been interesting and rewarding. Over the past 5 years I've been fortunate to have been part of some major improvements, including a restroom in the Isaacs Carbarn, a fence along the garden, an expansion to the Isaacs Carbarn and near completion of Winona No. 10. I am in no way hinting that I am responsible for any of this but am pleased that I was given the opportunity to be part of it.

Streetcar CURRENTS

Winter Publication Schedule

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we'll revert to our winter publication schedule. See the notice on page 4 for details on the schedule.

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Masthead. A Twin City classic—Lake Minnetonka Line high speed car No. 1153 is seen here laying over at 1st Avenue and 6th Street in Minneapolis, with the crew proudly posing for their photo. While 1153 looks like a typical TCRT standard car, it was equipped with more powerful 75-hp motors and it could get up to 60-mph when it got off city streets. And check out that great pilot on the front. (MSM photo archives)

(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** November-December—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 January 20, 2016.

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

Moving into the carbarn addition. The carbarn addition is basically done. All that's left are a couple of roof gutters—and there's an unexpected roof leak where the addition meets the old shop wall that needs fixing. We've moved into the new space.

All the machine tools that used to crowd the east wall of the shop have been installed in the addition, leaving behind what seems to be a luxurious empty space. The big workbench didn't fit in the new machine shop, so **Dennis Stephens** built a new workbench with repurposed bowling alley wood. It looks great and it's on wheels for convenient relocation.

Sam Van Tassel and I rented a truck and went office furniture shopping at the University of Minnesota Re-use Center. We purchased eight 7-foot high steel bookcases, two 4-drawer file cabinets, eight stackable metal chairs and one rolling chair and it cost us--get this--\$175. Thanks to **Stanley Kasal** for donating a computer desk. **Keith Anderson's** employer, H. R. Green Company, has donated a pair of 5-drawer flat files, perfect for oversized items and drawings. **Ben Franske** purchased and installed a new computer, along with the printer/scanner I donated. Since we had the truck, Sam and I loaded the 500 pounds of scrap steel that have been adorning the area in front of the carbarn and took it to the scrapper. It netted us a whole ten dollars, but at least it's gone.

Now that the library is furnished, I've spent the last couple of weeks moving into it. **Bruce Gustafson** retrieved the 25 boxes of North American traction books that were stored for years. They came mostly from libraries of the late **Bill Olsen**, and from **Norm Podas**, **Jim Kreuzberger** and **Barney Olsen**. It's a very complete collection, and members can check out books. We want you to learn about the history of American streetcars and interurbans. There's a sign-out sheet on the table. The shop records have also moved into the new office.

For years I've been storing back issues of the *Minneapolis Gazette* and *Twin City Lines*, paper items and small artifacts for the museum in my basement. All that has been moved into the library, except for the historic photos and materials I need to publish *Twin City Lines*. These back issues are for sale, discounted for members: \$1 for *Minneapolis Gazettes*; \$2 for *Twin City Lines*. So browse through them and pick up the ones you're missing.

Track into the speeder shed has to be fabricated before the work cars can be moved out of the ready barn. Meanwhile, the new addition is a great improvement over the cramped quarters we've had for so long.

Bruce Gustafson is new MSM General Superintendent. Last spring **Bill Arends** announced that he would step down as General Superintendent at the end of 2015. I want to thank Bill for his tireless work in what is a very demanding job. It seemed like he was on site all the time and in fact pulled a huge number of shifts. He oversaw the construction of the Linden Hills depot fence, assisted with the carbarn construction, and participated in almost every special event, frequently in some sort of costume. He filled in as the charter coordinator when **Jerry Olsen** was injured. He also wrote an entertaining column in every *Currents*, no small feat in itself. Bill led by example. Just because he's stepping down doesn't mean he's leaving. This year he and Rose began assisting **Charles Barthold** with merchandising and overseeing the depot.

Bruce Gustafson joined the museum in 2007. Besides being an Operator and later Foreman, he has been the Operations Superintendent, the CHSL car cleaning Foreman, and our eBay sales manager. He also sells MSM merchandise at the local train shows. A big thank you to Bruce for volunteering to fill this most important job. Please give him

(Continued on next page)



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—This is the east side of the addition. Trees are planted and the erosion control material is in. Grass seed will be sown in the spring.

2—Moving in has been a continuing process over the last few weeks. Slowly but surely things are settling down.

3—Now we have some room to work on the east side of the shop. **Ben Franske** is in the background installing computer cables.

4—**Dennis Stephens** is seen here working on one of the machine tools in the new machine room. Door to the office is on at right rear.



Aaron Isaacs photo



Jim Vaitkunas photo



Jim Vaitkunas photo




Jim Vaitkunas photo

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

all the help and support you can.

We need to fill two important jobs. There are two important positions that have been vacant for too long: Superintendent of Safety; and, Superintendent of Physical Plant (we've been calling it Chief Engineer, but I think this is a more descriptive title).

It goes without saying why we need a Superintendent of Safety. We deal with machinery that can hurt you or worse if you're not prepared and careful. The only thing that could abruptly put us out of business is a bad accident where we were negligent. We can't let that happen. There are well-established best practices that will minimize the risk of injury and property damage, and we need someone whose job it is to school us.

As for Physical Plant, we're living off capital investments that were made years ago when our buildings and tracks were built. Things wear out. The car barn roof leaks. The overhead wire poles at CHSL are up to 45 years old. The Linden Hills depot needs painting. As with safety, these problems are more likely to be handled if someone is in charge. If you are interested in either job, call me at 612-929-7066 or aaronmona@aol.com 

Neil Howes — R.I.P.

Neil was a senior electrical engineer with Xerox Corporation. He also knew his way around a workshop. He could install what he designed, and his work was beautiful. Neil came to our streetcar Museum around 1975 when we were beginning work on Duluth No. 265 at Como Shops in St Paul. He knew Larry Schreiber who in turn was a traction modeling buddy of George Isaacs. Neil worked on the tear down of 265 and also collaborated with Bob Renz and Bill Cordes on wiring Dan Patch Locomotive No. 100. Later, Neil did the wiring on No. 265, TCRT No. 1239 and Duluth No. 78. He collaborated with George Isaacs on revising the wiring of PCC No. 322, and he directed the updating of TCRT No. 1300's wiring. Neil was a good listener and easy to work with, but he had a compelling way of making a point in a way everyone happily could accept. When an electrical issue arose at the car barn, the call would go out to Neil. Everyone knew that he had the answer and would make it happen. *Bill Graham*

What's Happening?

Nov 27, 28 & 29 ESL's Santa Trolley in conjunction with Excelsior's **Christkindlmarkt**—daily times are:
 11/27—10 AM to 7 PM 11/28—10 AM to 7 PM 11/29—11 AM to 4 PM
 Nov 28 & 29 —Dec 5 & 6 CHSL's **Holly Trolley** featuring **SANTA CLAUS**—12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
 December 5 **WINTERNATT** trolley at CHSL—6:00 PM to 8:00 PM



MSM Volunteer Update — News of our Museum's Volunteers

Jim Berry — MSM Volunteer Coordinator

As I conclude my first operating season as MSM's Volunteer Coordinator, it occurs to me that many (most?) of you didn't know that we even had a Volunteer Coordinator, or that I was it! Not surprising since it is a new position and to some extent we are still working out exactly what the responsibilities of the VC actually are. As the title implies I "coordinate volunteers." For example, when potential new members to the museum make an inquiry online, or fill out the online volunteer form, it is forwarded to me. I contact the interested person and help put them in contact with the appropriate person or persons in the areas in which they are interested in volunteering. I also have some significant projects on my agenda to help move forward on some issues that have been on the "back burner" for some time. One of these is to build a Skills Database of our members. I want to be able to document any special skills that people have that can help our operations, such as finance/accounting, computer/technology, mechanical, electrical, public relations, and on and on. Over the course of the winter we will be contacting our members to try and document those skills. So, I ask that you think about what kinds of skills you may have that you would be willing to share with MSM. We will be in contact with you. ♻️



Photos from Around Our Museum



(Left) Progress! Exterior paint has been applied to Winona No. 10 and the car looks fabulous!



(Right) Here's the crew present and working on the car on 11/21/2015: (left to right) **Carl Floren, Art Ruder, Scott Ingram, Steve Mages, Dave McCollum, Tom McGruder, Scott Heiderich** and **Howie Melco**. Crew regulars not present are **Ken Albrecht, Mike Kimitch, Marv Krafve** and **Mark Brothen**. The photographer is **Dick Zawacki**.



CHSL Trackwork on 11/17/2015.

Good track is important for both our railways. Here are a few photos of the recent work done at Como-Harriet.

(Left) **Doug Anderson** (L) and **Phil Epstein** are shown here measuring and recording the track gauge

(Right) **Carl Floren** is in the foreground with spike mall in hand resetting spikes while **Mike Mayer** (black jacket) and **Tom Schramm** are sweeping leaves away so Carl can see the spikes. (*Dick Zawacki photos*)



(2015 Season-What a Great Trip *Continued from page 1)*

I am also pleased to welcome **Bruce Gustafson** as our new General Superintendent. Next time you see Bruce thank him for assuming the duties of General Superintendent and please give him the support, assistance and respect you've given me. And don't expect to see me go away. I'll continue to be a foreman, operator, cashier, etc., etc. You may not see my picture on the front page of The Currents you will see me on the line. ♻️

Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**, we revert to our winter publication schedule. You'll now be receiving the **Streetcar CURRENTS** every other month until May 2016. 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