

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Mar-Apr 2016

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- Spring has come to our fair state and it's time to get ready for the 2016 operating season.
- Come ride our historic cars. Or better yet, come and help us with the myriad of tasks we need to do to get ready for the season.
- Check out our website for our regular operations schedule and those important special events.

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Masthead. Duluth Street Railway (Twin Ports Electric Lines) No. 265 is seen here on a glorious sunny summer day at our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's Lake Calhoun north platform. Built in 1915 by TCRT's Snelling Shops for Twin City service, the car went to Duluth in 1916 because DSR just opened a new line and needed more cars in a hurry. In 1939, No. 265 was sold and became a cabin until rescued by MSM in 1973. (Mike Buck photo)

It Takes A Team Effort

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

To successfully operate our historic streetcar fleet, we need safe and reliable streetcars, well-trained operators, and track, grounds, and buildings that are safe and attractive. It takes dedicated volunteers working as a team to do all this important work. Therefore, with the start of the 2016 season a little over a month away, I would like to recognize some of the Museum's behind the curtain volunteers who provide critical services to allow the streetcars to run.

Streetcar Maintenance.

Dick Zawacki, John Prestholdt and about a dozen other dedicated members who worked countless hours over the winter to have the streetcars mechanically sound and ready for the start of the season.

Training.

March/April is also the time when training begins. The process to get operators starts with **Jim Vaitkunas** distributing recruitment press releases to a number of local newspapers. Many of you may have seen Jim's work as exemplified in a very nice article in the Linden Hills e-newsletter. Individuals expressing an interest in becoming an operator are directed to **Rod Eaton** who answers questions and directs them to CHSL or ESL. **Dave Higgins** and **Bill Graham** have again volunteered to lead the Operator Candidate training at CHSL and ESL, respectively. The new Operator training will begin in early April with a targeted completion around Memorial Day.

For our returning operators **Rod Eaton** is establishing the toughest recertification test we have had in years – at least that is what he tells me. As in prior years, all existing operators have had their access in ShiftPlanning deactivated. A deactivated account cannot sign up for shifts. Recertification is scheduled to start in mid-April. Once an operator has completed recertification their account will be reactivated. Starting in May we will have PCC training, which will be led by **Fred Beamish**. If you are interested in PCC training or in helping with the PCC training please contact me: bruce.gustafson@optum.com or 952.220.5870.

Operations.

Transitioning from training to operations, I would like to recognize **John Dillery**, who has volunteered to be the Superintendent of Safety. John will be responsible to review and recommend policy and operational changes to ensure and/or improve the safety of the operation, guests and members. To do this John will need your help.

Physical Plant.

Regarding the operating infrastructure (track, grounds, buildings, etc.) we are looking to fill a couple of positions. These positions include Chief Engineer, Track Foreman, and Buildings/Grounds/Gardens Foreman. If you are interested in these positions or would like to have more information please contact me. ☺

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—2016

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 April 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

The Year 2015 was a busy one—We made Good Progress on Many fronts.

MSM's annual meeting was held March 19 and members heard a recap of the last year and the plans for this year during my "State of the Museum" presentation. For those who weren't at the meeting, here's a summary.

- Winona No. 10 is being reassembled, the home stretch of a restoration that started over a decade ago and has cost over \$200,000. Specifically, 2015 saw it placed on its rebuilt power truck and the completion of much of the wiring and painting. The interior, wiring and controls are being installed.
- The George K. Isaacs carbarn addition was built, featuring more storage space, a new machine shop and the first ever library/archive room.
- The Linden Hills station at CHSL fence was extended.
- At ESL, the Water Street a crosswalk made from unearthed original streetcar pavers has been installed.
- ESL Carbarn track 2 has been realigned so that any car can enter the barn on that track.
- Ridership was down slightly from 2014. At ESL, Christkindlmarkt set a new record of 1407 riders.
- On the people side of things, 2015 saw the largest class of trainees ever. Twenty-seven graduated as new Operators, greatly improving our ability to cover operating shifts. Excelsior has implemented three-person crews.
- **Jim Berry** came forward to serve as our first ever Volunteer Coordinator.
- **John Dillery** has filled the long-vacant position of Superintendent of Safety.
- **Fred Beamish** will fill the new position of PCC Trainer.
- Several long-time volunteers have stepped down from positions of responsibility. They deserve our thanks for their years of service. Thanks also to the folks who have replaced them.
 - ◆ **Bill Arends**, who gave us five years of faithful service as General Superintendent, was succeeded by **Bruce Gustafson**.
 - ◆ **Charles Barthold**, worked diligently for ten years as Merchandise Manager. **Bill** and **Rose Arends** have assumed this important job.
 - ◆ **Don Nielsen**, did yeoman work as our Bookkeeper, retired and new member **Tim Crain** is performing this critical job.
 - ◆ **John Prestholdt**, has been our Museum's Chief Cashier for an incredible 34 years. **Bill Arends** is now our Chief Cashier.



The Annual Appeal. At the end of every year we ask for the financial support of our members, and we suggest a project for restricted donations, although we welcome unrestricted donations. Last year the annual appeal emphasis was funding for the Isaacs carbarn addition work. This year we're starting the fund raising for rebuilding the trucks under cars TCRT No. 1239 and No. 1300. Doing both will probably cost us an estimated \$200,000, so this will be a multi-year effort. As usual, we'll also apply for grants to help fill the gap. However, it needs to be done, or eventually those cars won't run.

This year's 2015-2016 Annual Appeal has been quite successful, raising over \$20,000 to date. Of note are \$5000 donations from **Frank Sandberg** and **Ray (Casey) Bensen, Jr.** A big list of donors can be found on page 6 of the January-February issue of the *Currents*. Donations received since then are listed on page six.

(Continued on next page)

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

Looking ahead to 2016. There's plenty to look forward to in the coming year when hopefully Winona No. 10 will begin test operations.

Construction of tracks into the "speeder shed" portion of the Isaacs carbarn addition should begin, along with the design of a new tower car with greater reach capability. Gutters will be installed to divert the runoff from the old portion of the carbarn roof into the underground cistern, thus controlling the runoff into Lake Harriet.

ESL will receive new informational and history signage, including a programmable video screen like the one installed two years ago in the Linden Hills station. A "car returning" sign will be placed at the Water Street platform to better inform visitors when the car will return from a run. Back guys will be installed to straighten several overhead wire poles.

The Linden Hills station's roof will be replaced and the exterior repainted. Some new displays will be installed. New items will be offered for sale.

The first-ever refresher sessions for Foremen will happen. The goal is to uncover issues of concern to the Foremen, make operations more consistent and improve safety and the management of unexpected problems.

There will be a greater emphasis on safety than ever before, including a complete review of all operating procedures.

A new Restoration Standards Committee will write new restoration guidelines and will be the forum for settling any disagreements on restoration details.

On a personal note, the new library has made it possible for me to hold streetcar a series of four history classes last month. We teach our volunteers how to drive a streetcar, but need to do more to communicate the history. I'll be working with the trainers to reach this year's new recruits.

Until next time, thank you for supporting your museum. ☺

Goings On in MSM

Your Museum's leaders and volunteers have been busy over the last two months getting ready for the up-coming operating season: The ESL and CHSL shop volunteers are getting the streetcars ready for the season; Chief of Operations **Bruce Gustafson** has *Shift-Planning* loaded with the 2016 Operations schedule; and, **Dave Higgins** has started training a new group of Operators. So, let's get psyched for the upcoming season, the 17th year of operations at the Excelsior Streetcar Line and the 45th year of operations on the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.



(Above left & right) We held our first Operator training session on Saturday, April 2nd. The first group (photo above left) was enthusiastic and ready to start. **Dave Higgins** is in the aisle taking attendance.

(Above Right) In this photo **Dave Higgins** is talking to the group while they toured the George Isaacs carbarn and shop after the orientation session was concluded. A second trainee orientation session is scheduled for April 4th. Formal training starts on April 9th and 10th.

(Left) Our annual meeting, held at the Pavak Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park, Minnesota was well-attended. We thank all members who participated.



MSM Information Technology Update — News of our Museum's Technology Plans

Ben Franske — MSM Information Technology Manager

The Year 2015 was a very important one because our Museum has started a concerted effort to use technology to make Museum work more efficient and accessible. Here's a recap of what we've done in 2015 and what we plan to do in 2016 and in future years.

Looking Back – Completed 2015/2016 Projects:

- Prototype of MSM membership database enhancements completed. The prototype uncovered some bugs which still need to be worked on before further testing.
- Prototype of CHSL cashier electronic reporting system.
- Network and phone wiring installed in CHSL car barn expansion, wireless connection relocated to office area of car barn.
- Purchased, prepared, and installed computer system for office in CHSL car barn expansion as well as storage server system.
- Started archive of scanned and native digital shop manuals, drawings, etc. on server with access from car barn office PC.
- Upgraded software for Twin City Lines publishing and related software.
- Converted photo database to cloud-storage backed system. There are still a few rough edges with this I have on the project list to work on.
- Signed-up for Microsoft Office 365 for non-profits, tested and transitioned e-mail service for trolleyride.org and msmuseum.org to this service. In addition we will receive Office Online and substantial cloud storage space for backing up museum documents. Accounts being rolled out as needed to museum personnel.
- Tested archiving of old, but digital, Twin City Lines files to PDF format.
- Upgraded thermostat and now have remote temperature control of one furnace at CHSL.
- Setup and testing of automated statistical collection of data from CHSL POS system.
- Planning and budgeting for 2016 projects.
- Acquired and installed steeply discounted Autodesk Product Design Suite (CAD, 3D Modeling, etc.) for car barn office PC.

Looking Forward — In-Process 2016 and Future Projects:

- ESL digital history display project similar to the one at CHSL to be installed at ESL car barn.
- Replacement 2-way radios for CHSL and radios for events at ESL to be purchased.
- DSR No. 265 Upgrades:
 - ◆ Purchase and installation of 12-volt converter which will keep battery charged and provide low voltage circuit power. This is the same converter being used on Winona No. 10. Additional backup converter was also purchased. All 12-volt wiring on the car being relocated from pole to gate side.
 - ◆ Ditch lights being upgraded to high output LED lights front and rear to substantially improve nighttime visibility and safety.
 - ◆ Motor start/stop control circuitry undergoing complete redesign and rewiring to enhance safety and reliability of operation. This is a major undertaking involving the design and production of a set of modular custom circuit boards to manage a number of additional sensors on the car including brake handle position sensors, air transfer sensors, door sensors, etc. When complete the car should look and operate (when being operated according to the rules) as previously but will have significant “under-the-hood” enhancements and monitoring.
 - ◆ Additional maintenance and training sensors to be added as time allows.
- Car barn monitoring system for barn temperature and overhead power supply monitoring and logging.
- Website redesign is scheduled for this year to make site easier to use from mobile devices, refresh the website look, and to prepare for 2017 ATRRM convention information.
- Installation of EMV terminal for credit cards once the hardware is available from our credit card processing vendor.
- Consulting on improved ridership statistics project.
- Integration of CHSL POS system with cashier reporting system, testing, and roll-out.
- Continued work on membership database, Office 365 rollout, cloud-backup strategy, and photo database as time allows.

TECH HELP NEEDED

If the above report by **Ben Franske** sounds like a lot of work, you're correct. Ben has been very busy with the projects he's been working on in 2015. And as you can see, there a lot more that needs to be done in 2016 and in the years beyond that If you have the skills and the time, we could sure yuse your expertise and help with these automation and tech projects. If you can help, please call ben at 952-200-8945 or send him an e-mail to ben@franske.com

DSR No. 265 is 100 Years old in 2016.

In 2016 Duluth Street Railway (Twin Ports Electric Lines) streetcar No. 265 will be 100 years old. Restoration of No. 265 was completed in 1981 and was the first streetcar restoration completed by our Museum. To recognize this important milestone, below are a few photos taken of the car while it was being restored at the Como Shops.

The Winter 2016 issue of *Twin City Lines*, our Museum's history magazine, has an excellent article written by MSM Historian, **Aaron Isaacs**. That article has some good photos and all the details on how Twin City Rapid Transit Company standard "gate car" No. 1791 ended up in Duluth and renumbered 265. The last streetcars ran in Duluth in 1939 and most of the cars that were still around were sold for scrap. However, several cars were sold to people for re-use and No. 265 was sold to a family who had the carbody transported to Solon Springs, Wisconsin where it was set-up as a lakeside cabin. There it sat until 1973 when the Museum learned of the car, bought it and arranged for its transport to the Northern Pacific's Como Shops in St. Paul. Inside that unheated building the Museum's volunteers began the hard task of transforming No. 265 back to an operating streetcar.



November 1973—No. 265 arrives at Como Shops

December 1973—Clean-up begins and a young **Steve Sandberg** helps out.

Ca. 1975—Progress being made.



Fall 1980—Almost ready to go to Como-Harriet.

IT'S TAX TIME — PART 2

The January-February 2016 issue of the *Streetcar Currents* contained information on deductions you can take on your 2016 tax return because of your involvement as a member of MSM. For those of us who are of a certain age, there is another way that you can donate to our Museum. Here's a summary of that information provided by MSM Member Judge James Rogers.

The U.S Congress has permanently extended a popular tax-advantaged giving opportunity. The new law allows individuals who are age 70½ or older to make gifts of up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA account to one or more qualified charities, without paying federal income tax on the withdrawal. The extension was made retroactive to January 1, 2015.

- Donor must be age 70½ or older at the time the gift is made.
- Only traditional IRAs are eligible
- Donors must request a direct transfer of funds from their plan administrator to MSM. It is important to not withdraw funds prior to a gift.
- Each donor may give up to \$100,000 per year. For couples, each spouse can give up to \$100,000.
- Distributions under this law can be used to satisfy the donor's required minimum distribution (RMD). The rollover allows for a charitable gift to fulfill the RMD without adding to tax liability.
- See your tax accountant for more details on this. We also have sample letters that you can send to your IRA Trustee/Administrator requesting the direct charitable distribution from your IRA. Call **Jim Vaitkunas** if you need the sample.

What's Happening?

April	New Operator training and Operator recertification — Dates TBA.
May 3	Start of Tuesday afternoon service at ESL
May 7	Start of Weekend service at CHSL and Saturday Service at ESL
May 27	Start of daily service at CHSL

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

Jim Vaitkunas — *MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief*

Annual Appeal a Big Success. Our 2015-2016 Annual Appeal fund raiser has resulted in a tremendous response from our members and friends. Here is a list of donors whose donations were received in the last two months. We truly appreciate the following members and friends for their most generous support to our Museum.

Truck Rebuilding Project: Rolly Ehrenberg, Robert R. Johnson and Ken Holley.

General Fund: Jim Willmore, Dave VenHuizen, Dan Lapham, Bill Graham, Weck Charitable Trust and Carrie McCollum in honor of Dave McCollum.


MSM Annual Meeting Held. The MSM Annual meeting was held on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park. The turnout was terrific with close to 50 members attending. Members heard reports from Chair **Aaron Isaacs**, who gave his annual "State of the Museum" report. Aaron was followed by reports from Corporate Secretary **Jim Vaitkunas** and Treasurer **Keith Anderson**. Additional reports were given by:

- Vice Chair **Dave French**, who reported to the members on the three accidents the Museum had in 2015.
- Information Technology Manager **Ben Franske** reported on our efforts to upgrade our information management systems and what the Museum plans to do in 2016 and 2017. His report can be read on page four of this issue.
- General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** rendered his report on the Museum's 2015 season and plans for 2016.
- Excelsior Streetcar Line Superintendent **Todd Bender** rendered his report on the good season ESL had in 2015 and what's happening in 2016.

Four persons were recognized for their contributions to the Museum during the course of the above presentations: **Charles Barthold** was lauded for the stellar job he did as MSM's Merchandise Manager for ten years; **John Prestholdt**, received big kudos for being our hard-working Chief Cashier for 34 years; **Bill Arends**, who gave us five great years of faithful service as General Superintendent, and, **Don Nielsen** who excelled as MSM Bookkeeper for five years. A hearty round of applause was given for the hard work and dedication these individuals gave to our Museum.

Two Directors were re-elected to the Museum's governing Board: **Aaron Isaacs** and **Dave French**.

At the conclusion of the business portion of the annual meeting, MSM Historian and photo archivist, **Aaron Isaacs** made an excellent PowerPoint presentation on the remnants from the streetcar era in the Twin Cities that you can still see today. These included buildings as well as other signs that streetcars once ran here or there. As an extra treat, Aaron showed a video of raw news film produced by local TV station WCCO of the runs of No. 1300 in July, 1963 on the yard track of the Minnesota Connecting Railroad in St. Paul. Some railfan films were also shown of this historic event.

The minutes of our annual meeting can be found by going to our website trolleyride.org, click on the "Member Information" button on our home page, then on "organizational documents." 

Jan Albrecht — RIP

Ken Albrecht's wife, Janet Albrecht passed away peacefully on March 28, 2016 following a sudden brain bleed on March 22. Jan was well known for her warmth, creativity, acceptance of everyone and for her incredibly caring and generous heart. Born in New Ulm Minnesota, she attended the University of Minnesota where she met the love of her life, her partner of 58 years, Ken Albrecht. She obtained her degree as an Occupational Therapist and worked in several places over the years sharing her healing gifts, including the VA, Immanuel St. Joseph's in Mankato, Sister Kenny, Mayo Clinic, Abbott Northwestern, and Fairview Hospitals. She led a brain injury support group in Mankato and lent an ever-generous and supportive ear to many, many people wherever she went. The family operated a vegetable business for many years and Jan was a master at managing a warm and open home and was the best mother on earth! She had many artistic gifts including photography, weaving, pottery, calligraphy, book illustration, and cooking and was very generous at always sharing these gifts, even with strangers. Everyone that she met came away feeling cared for and better. She honed her professional specialty working with hand injuries and rehabilitation. She patented a splint and wrote a book that continues to receive global accolades entitled "Caring for the Painful Thumb". In recent years she traveled to give presentations of this work with Ken by her side. They especially enjoyed traveling by train.

Jan was very supportive of Ken in his work with MSM, both as an Operator and as the Manager of the Winona No. 10 restoration. Jan also helped with planting and harvesting of the Pumpkins for our annual "Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch" special event held just before Halloween. Jan was well loved by all MSM members who came in contact with her at MSM events and when she accompanied Ken on trips to attend the annual Association of Railway Museums conferences. Jan will be missed.

Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

This is the last issue of the **Streetcar **CURRENTS****, that will be sent to you following our winter publication schedule. Starting in May and through the month of October, you will be receiving issues of the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** in the normal fashion, i.e., o/a the first of the month .