

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



May-June 2016

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



Bill the Motorman Says:

- *Make plans to attend our Museum's Isaacs Car-barn addition dedication ceremony on June 19th at 12-noon, at CHSL*
- *Come ride our historic cars. Or better yet, come help us with the myriad of tasks we need to do to keep our streetcars rolling down the track*
- *Check out our website for our regular operations schedule and those important special events*

Inside This Issue

From the Front Platform	2
Photo Ops	3
MSM's Operator Training Program	4
Winona No. 10 Update	5
MSM's Activities Calendar	6
MSM News & Views	6
Selby Tunnel Marker	6

Masthead. TCRT No. 1239 is seen here at ESL on a test run in 2004, just after its restoration was completed. Built in 1907 at TCRT's 31st Street Shop, No. 1239 is the only remaining example of a TCRT "standard" streetcar built in the 31st Street shops. The car was converted to one-man or two-man configuration in the 1930s, but our Museum restored it to the way it was built in 1907.
(MSM photo archives)

Season Opener

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

The Memorial Day weekend is the opening of our daily service at Como-Harriet and our extended service at Excelsior. Since weekend service started in early May, we have successfully re-oriented ourselves as Operators and hosts to our guests once again becoming familiar with the sequence of operations and how to smoothly apply the brakes. With the expanded schedule I hope all of you will take the opportunity and sign-up for one, two, three or more shifts per month.

Ttraining. I want to again recognize our training team led by **Dave Higgins**, who is also conducting the training at CHSL. **Bill Graham** is conducting the training at ESL and **Fred Beamish**, is doing the PCC training. All these volunteers are in the process of developing a sizable new class of operators. The training philosophy and structure created by Dave, and described on page four of this issue of the *Streetcar Currents*, is proving to be very successful. Splitting-out the air brake instruction and practice into its own training phase is enabling the new Operator candidates to gain greater competency in one of the most challenging aspects of operating our streetcars. Our first organized PCC training in several years is well on its way to turn out a good number of PCC qualified Operators who will fill the PCC scheduled slots and avoid the number of cancellations (13) that we experienced in 2015. Finally, our annual recertification program lead by me, **Bill Arends** at CHSL and **Todd Bender** at ESL is winding down with about 85% of our operators recertified including the majority of our 2015 new operator class. From a roster perspective we are in great shape to meet the demands of the 2016 schedule.

Safety. Throughout the year, we will continue to emphasize safety in our communications and operations. **John Dillery**, Superintendent of Safety (612-922-9453; john.dillery@yahoo.com) is continuing to collect ideas and is identifying the most impactful ones to bring forward for implementation. Please contact John with your ideas or concerns. I would also like to take this time to remind all Operators to look at the operating rule changes we recently sent to all operating personnel. It is critical that all Operators are aware of and comply with these changes. Specifically, I would like to call your attention to the requirement to perform a rolling brake test each time the streetcar changes direction (section 16.2 of our rule book).

Physical Plant. As I've noted in previous issues of this newsletter, we have the a couple of key positions that desperately need someone to come and take charge of. These are key functions of maintenance of our physical plant such as track, overhead trolley wire system, grounds, buildings, etc. I would like to thank **Patrick Desbonnet** for volunteering to lead the weed and brush control. Not only does this provide a more pleasing appearance for our passengers but it helps extend the life of the track. If you are interested in helping Patrick, or if you're interested in filling one of our open positions, which are Chief Engineer, Track Foreman, Buildings/Grounds/Gardens Foreman, please let me, Bruce Gustafson know: 952-220-5870; bruce.gustafson@optum.com

Here's to a safe, fun and profitable season. ☺

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-June—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 June 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

Thanks to our volunteers, there's plenty happening around the museum. Here are some recent items.

In the last *Currents*, **Ben Franske** listed a large number of technology projects completed in 2015, along with an equally big list to work on in 2016. With help from **Karl Jones**, **Jim Willmore** and **Dennis Stephens**, he has checked off some items, including:

- Replacement of 2-way radios for CHSL and radios for events at ESL.
- All the locks at CHSL are being rekeyed.
- DSR No. 265 has received several upgrades.

1. A 12-volt converter now keeps the battery charged and provides low voltage circuit power. No longer is there any need to plug in the car at the end of a shift. All 12-volt wiring has been relocated from pole to gate side.

2. Ditch lights were upgraded to high output LED lights front and rear to substantially improve nighttime visibility and safety. (*See photo next page*)

3. Motor start/stop control circuitry is being completely redesigned and rewired 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. What this will do is add electronic interlocks that prevent the car from moving unless the controls are reversed properly. This will prevent the kind of unexpected car movement that contributed to the injury of Jerry Olson last year.

Thanks also to Ben for troubleshooting a couple of incidents where the main power supply fuses were blown.

Sometimes projects and priorities change unexpectedly. A good example is the recent inspection by the Minneapolis Fire Marshal, who found a number of items that needed correction. **Karl Jones** stepped up and implemented the following list of improvements:

- Fire extinguishers remounted per code.
- Hazardous materials sheet inventoried and quite a lot of paint and other materials disposed of and recycled.
- Applied for a welding/cutting permit.
- Installed illuminated exit signs at the three exit doors.

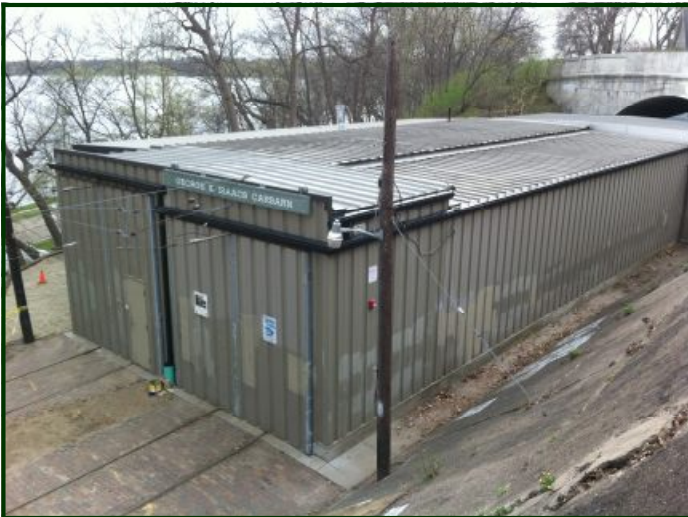
- Purchased (thanks to **Dennis Stephens**) an additional hazardous materials storage cabinet.

Despite the installation of the fence along Queen Avenue, some people still cross the tracks between the pedestrian underpass and the depot. To try and discourage this, **Bill Arends** purchased and installed a sign warning pedestrians not to do so. An identical sign advises pedestrians not to walk the right of way between 42nd Street and the car barn.

On the merchandise front, **Bill** and **Rose Arends** and **Rod Eaton** cleaned the CHSL depot, rearranged the merchandise displays and brought in some new items. Rod created the "Streetcar Village", a set of folded paper buildings that replicate our depot, car barn and several of the businesses in Linden Hills. Rod also came up with the ideas of trolley baby bibs and jewelry that incorporates streetcar tokens. **Mona Isaacs**, who does beaded jewelry, has made a series of necklaces, bracelets and earrings, including donating the materials. There are also



(Continued on next page)



New roof gutters on the Isaacs carbarn. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



Merchandise display area inside the Excelsior carbarn. (Todd Bender photo)



Many of us remember MSM volunteer **Chris Heck** who now lives in Portland, Oregon. Aaron Isaacs visited Portland recently and linked-up with Chris who is a volunteer with the local Willamette Shore Trolley line. (Aaron Isaacs photo)



New ditch lights on DSR No. 265. Are the lights bright enough for ya? (Dennis Stephens photo)

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

three new children's books, new T-shirts, and other items. Foremen, Operators and Station Agents should familiarize themselves with the new merchandise.

Speaking of merchandising, ESL is selling more thanks to an upgraded carbarn merchandise area (*see above photo*) with more items set up by **Karen Kertzman**. **Todd Bender** reports sales already approach the 2015 total at our discontinued outlet in the Excelsior Welcome Center, and we had to pay rent there.

As you may have heard, the Linden Hills station is getting a new cedar shake roof this spring. Work should begin soon. The carbarn crew is recreating the Linden Hills depot sign because the old one was rotted. Also, check out the new depot display on the history of streetcars at Lake Harriet.

Last item: You're invited to the dedication of the new carbarn addition on Fathers Day, Sunday June 19 at noon. This includes the official opening of the Russell L. Olson Library. The carbarn will be open to the public from noon to 4:30. 🌱



MSM's Operator Training Program — Training our Next Generation of Volunteers

Dave Higgins — MSM's Training Coordinator



MSM has had to face the reality of an annual operator turnover rate higher than we would like. There are several likely causes for this. Among them are the debilitating effect of age among some of our older Operators, a lack of lifelong personal involvement with rail transportation

among some of our younger volunteers, and the great expansion of choices in how we spend our free time which affect all of us in the digital age.

To maintain an adequate roster of operators at our two demonstration railways in the face of high attrition we must train more candidates each season. We have adjusted our training methods to meet both this challenge and the need to maintain better documentation of initial and continuing training of our staff for insurance and legal reasons.

We have made some modifications to our traditional training model while preserving its structure. The preliminary step of training is a welcome and orientation session where volunteers are given an overview of our museum, the requirements and opportunities of operator training, and a clear idea of the time commitment required of both the students and instructors to complete the program. Volunteer Coordinator **Jim Berry** explains what the students can expect of us and what we expect of them.

Phase 1 is a pair of presentations by **Jim Vaitkunas** and **Aaron Isaacs**. Jim presents an overview of our procedures and highlights the most critical aspects of our rules and regulations. We still hand out a lot of paper, but now we strongly encourage our new students to make use of our website and the documents available on it as a primary source of information. Aaron follows this up with an illustrated lecture about the history of rail transit with a focus on TCRT and its place in the development of our community. The purpose is to inform and stimulate interest in further research by future end-of-line orators toward greater accuracy and variety of content.

Operating our century-old streetcars requires us to unlearn the experience of operating vehicles we have gained over our lifetime. Making the car run requires the use of the controller, which is not an accelerator, throttle, gear shift or transmission selector. The non-self lapping straight air brake can be a monster

which eats up all the attention of many trainees. So we have devised Phase 2, which is Basic Operation. In it, operator trainees for both ESL and CHSL together face this learning problem. How do you make it go, and more important, how do you make it stop? This phase is based on the notion that our trainees cannot absorb the balance of training until they gain an acceptable skill and confidence level with braking.

In Phase 3, trainees are moved to their line of choice, with instructors who teach how to operate properly, observing the Sequence of Operation and the rules and regs associated with each site. This is when the finer points of customer contact, routine shift and emergency procedures are taught. **Bill Graham** heads this up at ESL, with **Rod Eaton** and **Bill Arends** in charge at CHSL. This Advanced Operation level is meant to refine the skills of one who has learned how to start and stop the car, and with those enhanced skills become a real streetcar Operator. At this time the trainee must pass a safety exam which requires an explanation of the key rules in place to protect our passengers, our neighbors, ourselves and our cars.

Phase 4 is our traditional Revenue Service Training, where Foremen at each line are assigned freshly uniformed trainees to operate on regular shifts with passengers. The training Foreman is expected to be over the shoulder of the student Operator, assessing and refining the safe operating skills of the apprentice. When the Foreman is satisfied, the operator is certified and welcomed aboard.

Any new program requires fine tuning. The suggestions and observations of all Foremen and Operators is welcome by operations and training management as new Operators join veterans on the lines. We are all still learning! 🔄



One of our early training sessions for the class of 2016.

Winona No. 10 Restoration Progress

Progress on the restoration of Winona No. 10 has been steady. Over the past winter, the focus has shifted from restoring the woodwork in the interior of No. 10 to the electrical wiring. Most of the low-voltage wiring such as the motorman's passenger stop signal and the interior lighting is installed. Now the crew is working on the task of installing the lighting fixtures. Meanwhile, **Mike Miller** has been working on the 600volt traction power wiring which is almost complete. Next step is testing of the traction control circuitry with low-voltage DC current to be followed by power from the overhead. During a recent visit, some photos of the activity at the Excelsior car barn and restoration shop were taken and some of them are below. (All photos by Jim Vaitkunas)



(Above) **Mark Brothen, Art Ruder, Dick Zawacki and Howie Melco** work on fitting a piece of trim wood in Winona 10's interior.

(Above left) **Art Ruder, Steve Mages & Tom McGruder** discuss an issue with another Winona 10 worker out of camera to the left.



Winona No. 10's platforms are pretty well finished.



(Above) Here's a shot of the insides of a K-10 controller. The arc chute cover is moved away to show the controller's segments and fingers. Note the 600-volt wires at the bottom of the controller.

(Left) All of the lighting and some other functions for Winona No. 10 will be controlled or monitored by this switch box located at each end of the car.



What's Happening?

June 1	Start of Wednesday afternoon service at CHSL
June 9	Story Time trolley at ESL starts at 5 PM
June 16	PJ Party trolley at CHSL 6 & 7 PM
June 19	Special dedication ceremony at CHSL for the Isaacs car barn extension and the Russ Olson Library
June 25	Special Royale Express event for kids at CHSL
July 4	Independence Day Holiday operations at ESL & CHSL

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

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

Welcome to Our Newest Members. It has been quite a while since we've listed the names of members who have joined MSM. So, here are our newest members: Jeanne Anderson, George Barreto, Tom Kolar, Linnea Sodergren, Tim Layeux, Aaron Bloomquist, Pat Cosgrove, Kathleen Dion, Mike Doyle, Kevin Phillips, Dave Grandpre, Nancy Harms, Allen Johnson, Michael Loscheider, Steve McCullough, Ted Spear, Jeff Storlie, Glen Swanson, James Talley, Dennis Thiesse, Neil Wagner, and Ross Gabrick. Welcome to the MSM family, ladies & gentlemen.

Annual Appeal a Continuing Success. Donations to our 2015-2016 Annual Appeal fund continue to come in, for which we extend a grateful **THANKS** to the following donors.

General Fund: Warren Ahlgren, John DeWitt, John M. Thompson and, John P. Stewart. 🌱

Selby Tunnel Historical Marker is Installed

After several years of hard effort and good coordination, MSM member **Jim White** was successful in getting a historical marker installed on Cathedral Hill in St. Paul to mark the location of TCRT's Selby Tunnel. Jim's idea for the marker gained support from our Museum which funded two-thirds of the cost to manufacture the marker. But he needed approval from St. Paul officials and then to raise additional funds to install the sign. Jim's perseverance paid-off as he worked through the challenges he faced. Finally, the marker is now installed on the walking path just south of the intersection of Selby Avenue and Bishop John Ireland Boulevard in St. Paul. This spot is located just above the east portal of the Selby Tunnel which still can be seen albeit sealed-off.

**George K. Isaacs Car barn & Shop Addition Dedication Ceremony**

You are cordially invited to our Museum's ceremony marking the completion of the George Isaacs Car barn addition. The event will be held on Father's Day—Sunday, June 19th, starting at 12-noon. The Isaacs Car barn and Shop is located at the Museum's Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis. The addition includes a new machine shop room, MSM office and library and MSM's track and overhead maintenance facility. Begun in 2015 the project is now finished with the installation of new gutters.

During this ceremony, we will dedicate MSM's library in honor of Museum member, **Russ Olson**. Russ spent a lifetime accurately documenting and cataloging the extensive electric railway history of Minnesota and surrounding states. The MSM library will be officially named the *Russel L. Olson Library*.

We've invited representatives from the City of Minneapolis, the Watershed District, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, staff people who worked on the project, and the various folks who generously awarded grants to the project. After the brief ceremony, the car barn will remain open for visits and tours until 4:30 PM.

Special streetcar shuttle service will run from the Linden Hills station starting at 11:30 AM until the 12-noon start time for the ceremony. Completing this car barn addition is a major accomplishment for our Museum and we sincerely hope you can come and be a part of this special event.