

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS



July 2016

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



**Bill the Motorman Says:**

- Check out our website for our regular operations schedule and those important special events
- Volunteers are our Museum's bedrock. We wouldn't exist without YOU.
- We can always use help in the shop or out on the line with basic maintenance tasks.
- Family members and friends are always welcome to help us with the behind the scenes work.

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**Masthead.** On June 21st, Winona No. 10 was outside for the first time in 12 years! The restoration crew wanted to mount the trolley pole on the trolley base and the headroom inside the shop didn't allow that. So, here's Winona No. 10 outside the Excelsior car barn. See page 6 of this issue for some more photos.  
(Howie Melco photo)

## Volunteerism

**Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.**

While it is hard for me to believe we have finished the first third of our summer schedule I think it is appropriate to reflect on what we have done and what is left to do this year. The perspective as General Superintendent is much different than other positions I have held over the last few years. In many respects the job is a lot harder; or maybe more complicated than **Bill Arends** let me know. As I have mentioned in previous columns, there is A LOT to do in keeping the museum operating.

Whether it is: planning (**Todd Bender, Jim Vaitkunas, Dave Higgins, Jim Berry, Rod Eaton & Bill Arends**); training (**Dave Higgins, Bill Graham, Fred Beamish, Rod Eaton, Bill Arends, Todd Bender**); maintenance (**Dick Zawacki, Dennis Stephens, Howie Melco, Karl Jones, John Prestholdt, Ben Franske, Jim Willmore, Mark Digre, Jim Otto, Russ Isbrandt, Pete Connors**, and several others a/k/a the Tuesday and Saturday CHSL shop crews); brush clearing (**Patrick Desbonnet, Norm Larson**); charter scheduling (**Jerry Olsen, Jim Kertzman**); car cleaning (**Bill Way, Jerry Peterson, Carmelle Abrahams, Steve McCulloch**, my sons—**Davis** and **Eric**); overhead trolley line work (**Scott Heiderich, Steve Simon**); merchandise and station work (**Bill & Rose Arends, Rod Eaton**); the daily operations or the myriad of other tasks done by many others—it is a lot of hard work.

What **Bill Arends** also did not explain, or more likely I did not fully appreciate is the great group of volunteers our Museum is fortunate to have working for it. Being involved in more activities with the Museum has been a great opportunity for me to meet and engage with more of you. You are the life blood of the museum and without you the museum would not be able to operate.

I would like you to consider volunteering for an additional shift or activity each month during the summer. So far this season we have had to cancel only one Sunday PCC shift, but we have a couple of shifts (most notable CHSL's Sunday operations) that routinely fill very late. There are a number of our recertified Operators who have not signed-up for a shift this season and the season is close to the half-way point! We recognize that summer means vacation trips and time "up north" at the cabin or lake. If you have not yet operated this season, if you picked up just one or two shifts a month, all of our open spots would be filled.

For other activities, consider helping with a non-operating task. For example, if you can wash windows, handle a broom, maneuver a vacuum cleaner or mop you are qualified to help with car cleaning. We are trying to do a better job advertising the non-operating activities and, hopefully, over the summer we will be able to post opportunities—there are plenty of them.

If you are interested in helping some of the non-operating activities in one time or on-going fashion please let me know—**Bruce Gustafson** (952-220-5870; [bruce.gustafson@optum.com](mailto:bruce.gustafson@optum.com)) Finally—**Thank you for all you do.** 🌀



## 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](http://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—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 July 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](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)



### From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

On Father's Day Sunday June 19, we officially dedicated the addition to the George K. Isaacs Car barn and held an open house that afternoon. Minneapolis City Council Member **Linea Palmisano** attended, along with a good contingent of MSM members and their families.

The highlight of the brief ceremony was the naming of the new library in honor of **Russ Olson**, the dean of Minnesota streetcar historians. I cannot think of a more deserving recognition. I asked Russ when he first began studying the history of Twin Cities streetcars. He said 1945! He and the late Ed Nelson produced the first TCRT history in 1953. In 1976 our museum published Russ' book *Electric Railways of Minnesota*. He added the ERM Supplement in 1990. I can tell you with confidence that the book *Twin Cities by Trolley* and much of the content of our Museum's quarterly history magazine *Twin City Lines* would not have been possible without Russ' research. It is the essential resource.

Although that was the extent of his published output, Russ has never stopped researching. In the past several years new searchable online resources have opened up a whole new avenue of inquiry. This includes the historical Minneapolis *Tribune* (1867-1922) and trade publications such as the *Street Railway Journal*. Russ has mined them extensively.

Russ worked for TCRT briefly during the early 1950s. He single-handedly preserved company records that were about to be discarded. Decades before there was any hint that MSM would have its own library, Russ donated many of these to the Minnesota Historical Society. He retained multiple TCRT valuation reports, extensive multi-volume inventories of everything the company owned, and donated them to us years ago. They are now in the new library.

For the past several years Russ has been compiling and organizing his research into a set of three-ring folders, which he donated to us in May. They now fill a couple of shelves in the library and I encourage our members to look through them. They contain a wealth of information, including much that is new to me.

Beyond his comprehensive research, Russ has contributed greatly to this museum. He is one of the original founding members from 1962. An accountant by trade, he was the treasurer on and off for many years, and served stints as president and *Minneapolis* editor. And of course he operated streetcars.

Russ' work has made the new MSM library possible, and having the library gives us an important tool to educate our members and the public about the history of Minnesota's street and interurban electric railways. I've already used it to hold history classes for volunteers and will do more of that in the future.

While restoring, maintaining and operating vintage streetcars consumes most of our museum's energy and money, knowing and preserving the history and communicating it to the public is what legitimizes our efforts. That's what puts a ride in a quaint old machine into context. We're showing you this because it shaped the city and was a crucial part of people's lives. It was operated by a large, complex organization with its own operating culture that survives today as Metro Transit.

You have to know the history in order to communicate it to the public. For that we can thank **Russell L. Olson**. 🍷





## Dedication of Russell L. Olson Library and Isaacs Car barn Addition — June 19, 2016



Board Chair **Aaron Isaacs** presided at the dedication ceremony.



**Russ Olson** discussing an item with family members in MSM's Russell L. Olson library.



**Russ Olson** stands in the doorway to the MSM library named for him and dedicated in his honor.



**Russ Olson** with his family standing in front of Duluth Street Railway No. 265.



Throughout the rest of the afternoon, passengers visited the car barn.





Leading in the  
Advancement of  
Railway Heritage

## Association of Tourist Railroads & Railway Museums (ATRRM)

*What is it? What does it do? Why be a member?*

*Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary, Assistant Operations Chief and ATRRM Director*



As some of you know, our Museum is hosting ATRRM's Annual Railway Heritage and Preservation Conference on October 5 to 7, 2017. Work on organizing the conference has been ongoing since late last year and many key decisions and arrangements

have already been made. To help you to know and understand what ATRRM is and what it does, we've written this brief overview of ATRRM. We hope this information show why ATRRM is important to our Museum, and to all the other tourist railroads and railway museums in North America. The fall and spring meetings are important to ATRRM and its members because it fulfills the association primary goal and objectives and is an important member benefit.

### Some Background and History

The Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums (ATRRM) is a new organization, created through a merger of two venerable associations with a combined history of nearly 100 years. The Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums was formed in 2013 by combining two separate organizations.

- The Tourist Railroad Association or TRAIN was formed in 1972 as a trade organization dedicated to the support of and information sharing among its members. TRAIN conducted periodic seminars and conventions in various parts of the country to disseminate information about various issues affecting tourist railways, such as insurance, regulations, fund raising, marketing, operations, volunteers, passenger car restoration, maintenance, and safety programs. TRAIN was also involved with disseminating to its members rules and procedures issued by federal agencies such as the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and the ICC's successor, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- The Association of Railway Museums (ARM) was formed in 1965 and ARM's purpose was similar to TRAIN's. ARM also held periodic conferences in various locations around the U.S. and Canada to share information among the member organizations. Issues addressed included insurance, regulations, fund raising, marketing, operations, volunteers, restoration, maintenance, safety and recommended museum practices.

Early in our current century, it was apparent to several TRAIN and ARM members that both organizations had very similar goals and objectives and many services and activities the organizations were doing were the same. Since there was obvious overlap in the interests of railway preservation and tourist railroads, the ARM and the TRAIN began a program of holding joint conferences. First begun as a pilot program with the 2006 ARM-TRAIN conference hosted by the California State Railroad Museum, beginning in 2010 all Spring and Fall meetings were held jointly.

The general thought was that a combined organization could offer better support to the members while reducing costs for the members belonging to both organizations. Another benefit of a merger would be reduced expense of the administrative overhead resulting from the new organization. During this time both groups hired a professional organizational management company and it was clear that paying one management and administrative support fee was better than paying two fees.

In 2011 ARM and TRAIN members voted to combine the organizations but it took some time to complete the legal merger. The first fall meeting of the new organization was hosted by the Orange Empire Railway Museum at Riverside, California in October 2013.

### ATRRM—What It Is and Why Be a Member?

So, that's the historical background. Now, how about the new organization today? Why have such an organization and why is our Museum a member. Here are a few of the whys.

- ATRRM members who want to expand their knowledge of rail history, rail operations, restoration and preservation, management strategies, safety, and best practices will find in ATRRM like-minded friends and a wealth of information available nowhere else.
- Companies and organizations providing services and products to tourist railroads and railway museums are also invited to join ATRRM. They are a vital part of ATRRM, are appreciated, and receive full member benefits. They receive discounted advertising rates in ATRRM's on-line magazine, priority choice of booth space at the annual conference, and are listed on ATRRM's web site.

*(Continued on page 5)*



- ATRRM offers its members multiple opportunities for growth. ATRRM's **Annual Railway Heritage and Preservation Conference** provides seminars on a broad range of topics from social media to streetcar restoration to marketing. In addition, this conference and a shorter spring event give all members a chance to get to know one another, share experiences, and ask questions.
- ATRRM's online magazine, *TRRM Online*, (edited by our own **Aaron Isaacs**) is a great source of information about activities at member museums and tourist railroads, information on grants and awards, updates on regulation and legislation, as well as articles on restoration and rail history.
- The ATRRM web site is visited regularly by members for information on regulation, upcoming events, past issues of the magazine, to locate a part or piece of equipment, and for help with specific questions.
- ATRRM strives to help members pass on the love of rail travel to younger generations by listing member locations on our web site and by publishing a list of members offering discounts to associates of fellow museums and tourist railroads. ATRRM supports the efforts of the American Alliance of Museums to promote museums and to encourage all citizens to visit museums and historic sites.
- The association is actively involved in advocacy efforts on both legislation and regulation. We hold a seat on the FRA's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee and we publish current information about proposed regulation on our web site and in our on-line magazine. We support Museums Advocacy Day in Washington each February where ATRRM members have an opportunity to visit their members of Congress to discuss legislation and to provide them with education on tourist railroads and railway museums.
- Large and small, volunteer and professional museums and tourist railroads recognize the value of membership in ATRRM. Members are dedicated to the preservation, restoration, operation and display of historic railroad and street railway equipment, related artifacts and archives and to providing scenic railway travel experiences to the public.
- Every railway heritage organization has something to contribute to the railway preservation move-

ment. And every organization can gain from the experiences of others.

Can you, as a volunteer join ATRRM? Actually, ATRRM doesn't have a personal or individual membership category. However, you are already a member of ATRRM by virtue of MSM being a member. You can access the ATRRM website and, more importantly, you can go to *Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums*, the official name of ATRRM's on-line magazine, that our **Aaron Isaacs** edits. Here's the URL:

<http://www.atrrm.org/blog/> And you are eligible to attend the semi-annual conferences.

#### ATRRM Conferences

Because you are a member of ATRRM you can attend the spring and fall conferences at the reduced member's rate. MSM supports attendance by our volunteers by setting aside funds to help defray some of the cost of attending the conferences. We hope that more of our volunteers attend the conferences as one of the huge advantages of attending is to learn the "nuts and bolts" of Museum administration, operations, education and marketing. The networking and knowledge gained that occurs when you are among your peers is priceless and has helped our Museum, as mentioned previously.

For those of us in MSM who have been involved with ARM and now ATRRM over the last twenty-plus years, we know that virtually every one of our streetcars has received work and improvements to it based on what we learned by attending the semi-annual conferences. In addition to that, attendance at the conference has forged a network of Museum people who trade streetcar maintenance and restoration best practices, and more importantly, sources for scarce streetcar parts that has helped MSM maintain our cars while restoring other cars such as Duluth No. 78 and currently Winona No. 10.

#### ATRRM 2017 Fall Conference – Minneapolis, Minnesota

So, that's what ATRRM is all about. We hope this overview answers the question why is MSM a member of ATRRM and why MSM is hosting the 2017 annual ATRRM conference. Later on this year we'll be reaching out to you, our volunteers, to help with the logistics of the conference. Hosting the fall conference is a big job and to quote the old phrase: "Many hands make easy work." Therefore, when we put out the call for help in this newsletter or by special e-mail or snail-mail, or call you direct to help out, please sign-on to help with this exciting project. ☺

**What's Happening?**

- July 4..... Independence Day Holiday operations at CHSL, with ops starting at 12:30 PM
- July 9..... Special event at CHSL **SUPERHEROES TO THE RESCUE**—12:30 to 3 PM
- July 14..... StoryTime Trolley at ESL
- July 15-17 & 22-24..... **MURDER MYSTERY** special event at CHSL
- July 21-23 ..... Excelsior **Crazy Days** special operations—see MSM website for days and times
- July 21..... PJ Party trolley at 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.** In the last issue of the *Currents* we inadvertently left out the names of three of our newest members. Therefore, we give a belated **WELCOME** to Kevin Burgstahler, Larry Kappel and Patrick Kriske. Larry and Pat are in our Operator training program and should graduate soon.

**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: Stanley Kasal and Byron (Barney) Olson. 🍷

**Winona No. 10 Restoration Progress**

On June 21st, and for the first time in over twelve years, Winona No. 10 was outside the shop and in the Excelsior carbarn yard. No 10 was outside because the restoration crew needed to put the trolley pole into the trolley base on top of No. 10. There is very limited headroom in the restoration shop so no room to accomplish the task. Here are a few photos of this event.



Duluth No. 78 pulled No. 10 out of the carbarn.  
(Photo by Dick Zawacki)



(Photo by Howie Melco)



Howie Melco and Dave McCollum mount the trolley pole on the trolley base. (Photo by Dick Zawacki)



The proud restoration crew poses for a photo.  
(Photo by Howie Melco)

**STREETCAR CLEANERS WANTED !**

Our Museum is noted for the excellent mechanical condition and the cleanliness of our historic Minnesota streetcars. We have earned that reputation by the fine work of our shop volunteers and the hard work by the volunteers who clean our streetcars each month. If you would like to help us with this seldom thought about but very important task of car cleaning, please call **Bruce Gustafson** at 952-920-0920 for CHSL or **Todd Bender** at 952-334-4065 for ESL. Cleaning dates are usually shown in the "What's Happening" section on the last page of the Streetcar Currents. No experience is necessary and non-members and non-volunteers of MSM are always welcome to come and help out. This is the perfect way for you and your family to support your Museum in a tangible way and to meet your fellow volunteers. It is traditional that juice and rolls are served during the morning break for those who help with the monthly streetcar cleaning.