

# STREETCAR

## CURRENTS

November—December 2017



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

### A Remarkable Year!

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As we close in on the end of the operating season, I wanted to finish where I started the year—thanking you for volunteering. For those of you who volunteer a lot and for those of you who volunteer a little, your contributions do not go unnoticed. Your unheralded work is the solid heart of our Museum and provides the friendly face to our guests or the talented hands that maintain our streetcars, infrastructure and gardens. Your work and accomplishments are noticed by our guests, many of whom visit multiple times per year.

There were several memorable milestones in 2017. In the last issue of the Currents I recognized many of the project volunteers. For a relatively small Museum like ours, to successfully complete the three projects listed below is a tribute to the dedication and capabilities of you, our hard-working volunteers. Here are those three major projects of which I am referring.

- Completion of the restoration of Winona No. 10.
- Completion of the rebuilding of TCRT No. 1300's trucks.
- Successful hosting of the HeritageRail Alliance's 2017 fall conference.

While we had these major projects, we also had a couple of others that should be mentioned. I would like to recognize several other project leaders for their special efforts in 2017. These include: **Dennis Stephens** for his expertise in managing the completion of the CHSL car barn track work; **Pat Kriske** for building improvements at both CHSL and ESL; and **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman** and **Rod Eaton** for their countless hours and creativity in developing our important special events.

From an operating perspective, 2017 is shaping-up to be a good year. I'll give detailed statistics in a future newsletter and at the annual MSM members meeting, but for 2017 MSM will again have over 30,000 riders.

I would like to recognize some of our new Operators, the graduates of the Class of 2017: **Bruce Allyn**, **Scott Buck**, **John Cochran**, **Monica Cochran**, **Ted Colburn**, **Mike Malinoff**, **Dan Odegaard**, **Amrita Prakaashana**, **Carl Prakaashana**, and **Linda Ridlehuber**.

Operators who contributed over 50 hours of scheduled operations this year and collectively represent 53% of the total 3,700 hours through November 26: **Bill Arends**, **Rod Eaton**, **Karen Kertzman**, **Jim Kertzman**, **Steve Simon**, **Jerry Petersen**, **Aaron Isaacs**, **Rose Arends**, **Larry Kappel**, **Pat Kriske**, **Mike Buck**, **Steve McCulloch**, **Greg Thomas**, **Bill Graham**, **Patrick Desbonnet**, **Linda Ridlehuber**, **Bruce Allyn**, **Dave French**, **Pat Cosgrove**, **Rich Holz**, **Russ Isbrandt**, **Elaine Love**, **Bill Way**, and **Tom Dulebohn**.

With the 2017 operating season nearly complete and after a brief break, we will begin planning for next year. The return of TCRT No. 1300 and the introduction of Winona No. 10 will provide us and our guests some new opportunities and experiences.

In closing, on behalf of the Museum's leadership team I wish you all a well-deserved break and a happy holiday season. See you next year!

**Thank you for all you do.**

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### MSM's ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Our Museum has a tradition of holding a Holiday party at the George Isaacs car barn at CHSL in southwest Minneapolis each year. This year the Holiday party will be held on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. Start time is 6:30 PM.

Besides enjoying the treats and fellowship, we also encourage those who attend to bring some canned goods for the local food shelves. So if you attend please bring a treat to share and some canned goods. See you then.



## From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

**Capital project spending.** MSM's annual operating budget is about \$100,000. Our operating cost and revenue don't vary much from year to year, which makes it fairly easy to prepare a budget. Treasurer Keith Anderson will meet with museum officers in January to prepare the 2018 version.

The operating budget doesn't include capital projects, which are budgeted separately, based on available funding. Capital projects include big expenses like the Isaacs car barn expansion and rebuilding No. 1300's trucks. They also include smaller ones like ESL's new concrete car barn floor.

Recent years have seen a high level of capital spending. The Isaacs car barn addition cost about \$200,000. Rebuilding No. 1300's trucks cost \$145,000. Although spread over 13 years, the Winona No. 10 restoration cost \$250,000. Looking ahead, we expect the 2018 rebuilding of TCRT No. 1239's trucks to total \$150,000.

There are also smaller projects that will need funding. Several thousand dollars will probably be needed to build a new CHSL tower car. We plan to build a higher, full-length platform at Lake Calhoun. This will permit loading and unloading through both doors, which is especially important during Memorial Day and the pumpkin patch operations. The new platform will also reduce operator stress about stopping because the platform will be much longer than it is now.

Despite all these expenses, we're in decent financial shape. No. 1300's trucks were completely funded by state and private foundation grants. Foundation grants also contributed \$22,000 to the car barn expansion and \$73,000 to the Winona No. 10 restoration.

We have about \$50,000 lined up for the No. 1239 truck project, including a \$25,000 grant from the 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation. That leaves us \$100,000 short. We can cover that from our cash reserves, but it will shrink those reserves to the lowest level in the last 10 years. That's why we hope you will donate generously during the Annual Appeal.

Looking ahead, there are a couple of other big projects on the horizon. The CHSL track was completely rebuilt in 2005, and we've been living off that capital investment ever since. However, we reused some of the old ties and there are now almost 100 bad ties that need to be replaced. A couple of spots on the line would benefit from lining and leveling. The ESL track dates from 1999, and will have trackwork needs. At some point we'll have to hire a commercial contractor to replace ties and do alignment, and that will certainly cost about \$100,000.

Of equal concern is the life of CHSL's wood overhead wire poles. They date from the 1970s, and at some time they will have to be replaced and the overhead wire re-hung. I have no idea how much that will cost, but it won't be cheap.

Oh yeah, there will be two more car restorations; Fargo-Moorhead No. 28 and (dare I say it?) Missabe No. 10.

For small non-profits like us, there's never enough money. That's why your Annual Appeal donation matters. ☺



When this photo taken on October 18, 2003, Fargo-Moorhead St. Rwy. No. 28 will soon be inside Ken Albrecht's machine shed. Crew that moved the car included (L-R) **Jim Vaitkunas, Jim Willmore, Ken Albrecht & Bill Arends**. Crew not shown are **Mark Digre, Bill Graham, Scott Heiderich and Phil Settergren**.

### New MSM Treasurer Needed

**Keith Anderson** has informed us that he will have to step down as Treasurer next spring, so it's time to start looking for a replacement. The Treasurer pays the bills, deposits revenues in our accounts, moves money around as needed and oversees the annual budget process. The books are kept by **Tim Crain**, our Bookkeeper. He produces the financial reports and works closely with the Treasurer on accounting matters. Accounting experience is NOT necessary to be the Treasurer. Please contact **Aaron Isaacs** (aaronmona@aol.com) if you're interested.

### MSM's Holiday Operations Were Very Successful



Our special events do take a lot of time and effort, but they're well worth it on many levels. Here we see **Patrick Desbonnet**, **Rose Arends** and **Bill Arends** getting jack-o-lanterns ready for CHSL's ghost trolley. (Photo by Rose Arends)



Here we see **Aaron Isaacs** handling two of the props for CHSL's ghost trolley. **Rod Eaton**, **Dave Higgins** and others in the background are doing likewise. (Photo by Rose Arends)



At CHSL, passengers lined up to get their tokens for the Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus. (Photo by Rod Eaton)



ESL's Halloween ops ran story time trolley featuring Harry Potter. Here are some happy passengers in Duluth No. 78. (Photo by Karen Kertzman)



TCRT No. 1239 was lit up like a Christmas tree, appropriately enough, for ESL's Santa trolley operations. (Photo by Todd Bender)



ESL's Santa Trolley featured a real Santa! Here he is in his element with some happy children. (Photo by Karen Kertzman)

## BILL THE MOTORMAN



## TCRT Was Prepared for Winter

Hi folks. Now that we're past Thanksgiving, thoughts turned to one thing in the TCRT's operating and maintenance departments—Getting ready for winter operations. And, by golly, the company certainly was prepared for what lay ahead of it. There were a lot of things that the operating, station and Snelling Shop folks did to get ready for the winter season. Of course, all the coal stoves in the streetcars were cleaned and repaired and made ready. The supply cars also made the rounds to all the stations and other locations on the lines throughout the system stocking the coal and sand bins with their supply to start off the winter. Of course, major preparations were made with the company's fleet of snow plows.

Now while I have spent many an hour operating snow plows, I was curious as to the history of TCRT's snow plowing so I went to visit an old friend of mine at the Snelling Shops, Ole Johnson, who has worked for the company since the mid-1890s. Ole went into the shop's equipment files and here's what he came up with.

As of January 1893 Minneapolis and St. Paul had 37 snow plows and 2 snow sweepers. As of September 1904 TCRT owned 1 double-truck conveyor plow, 19 regular double-truck snow plows and 1 single-truck sweeper (built by the McGuire-Cummings Company). The 19 plows originally did not have a cab for the crew; the controls were out in the open. Brrr! That must have been cold! Later a large cab was built on the front end to house the controls and crew. Later TCRT-built the steel underframe plows. Some of the original 19 plows remained as plows, but some were converted to work cars.

From 1906 thru 1910 the TCRT shops built 10 large steel-underframe snow plows. Four were conventional single end snow plows, but six were combination snow plow-sweepers. Ole showed me an article in a 1909 *Electric Railway Journal* that had a photo and description of No. 30. Major items mentioned—steel broom 52" in diameter, wing plows on both sides of the car. The plow is normally the forward end. The plow and wings remove most of the snow and the broom removes the remainder. With side wings extended the car removes snow from a strip 19 ft. wide including the strip between the tracks, and throws snow out 12 ft. from the outside rail. If heavy drifts are encountered, the car is operated from the broom end and the steel broom cuts through them. The broom assemblies and "pole side" wing assemblies were removed in 1942.

During the winter of 1917-1918 eight additional regular snow plows were built in the company shops. This brought the total number of snow plows in service to 18. These were used until the end of streetcar operations in 1953-1954. The trucks, motors and controls from 18 of the 42 high-speed suburban cars were removed and installed on the 18 snow plows each winter (and removed each spring). (Reduced winter traffic required less cars on the Lake Minnetonka line.) After the Lake Minnetonka and Stillwater lines were abandoned in 1932 the high-speed trucks, motors and controls remained on the snow plows all year. The 18 snow plows were assigned to the various car stations. As of 1921 East Side Station had four (one for the Lake Minnetonka line), Nicollet Station had three, Lake St. Station had two, North Side Station had two, Snelling Station had four, Duluth Ave. Station had two, and Owen St. Station (Stillwater) had one. There were fixed snow plow routes at each station but we know details of only three routes and I won't go into those details here. Maybe in the next issue?

The regular motormen operated the snow plows although the company's rule books only hints at this. The TCRT's rulebook effective 11-1-1921, states: "52—Trainmen engaged in the operation of work cars or any other special equipment shall be under the same supervision and governed by all rules the same as in passenger service."

Another friend of mine, and one of your old-time MSM members, Kirt Blewett, who was a regular motorman, told me he also operated snow plows. "All of the snow plows that I worked out of Nicollet Station were of the 75-82 series [probably 77 and 78]. On the plows I worked, and probably on all of them, both the plow and wing blades were air raised and gravity lowered. The wing was pulled out by a motorized winch and chains, pulled in by a rope block and tackle. Due to the short truck centers on the plows all of the normal underbody equipment was placed inside the carbody. Therefore if the reverser failed to throw from the controller, you would just go back in the car and throw it with the manual lever on the reverser. Plows had a three-man crew, consisting of motorman, wingman and trolleyman." Kirt also mentioned: "There was a lever [operated by the motorman] that controlled the slides on the bottom of the salt bunkers to drop salt on the track switches when going over them. The linkage was under the raised motorman's platform."

At the end of Twin City streetcar service 12 Snow Plows were dismantled and burned in 1953. The bodies of the remaining six snow plows were sold in 1954.

# TCRT Snow Plows were Important



Did you ever dream about being a Motorman? Not in the 1890s, that's for sure! Here's a photo of a Minneapolis single-truck No. 393 taken in 1892, which is much like our Duluth No. 78. See the Motorman on the open platform who's dressed for the weather! I'll bet you he was still cold with all those clothes on. Note the lack of houses in the background. They'll get built soon enough.



This photo came from the collection of Everett Jones, a TCRT employee who is shown operating the snow plow. This photo was taken in 1905 on Nicollet Avenue just south of 31st Street. As a condition of its city franchise, TCRT was required to plow the streets on which it operated. A few years later, the company built a fleet of more powerful snow plows, capable of cleaning a street in two passes.



Here's one of the Snelling Shops built plows that lasted until the end of streetcar service. Looks like a dump truck is backed-up to the car to load more salt into the plow. Taken on 3/24/1952 Fairview & St. Clair in St. Paul.



A rare color photo of a snow plow in Phalen Park, St. Paul.



Here's seven corners in St. Paul. Boy, has this scene changed, eh? I'd wager operating a PCC car in such slush and muck was very challenging given that PCCs had four 55-hp motors powering a relatively light 17-ton streetcar. Slippery starting and stopping, I'll bet!



Occasionally Duluth gets snow too! Taken on West Superior Street, in the background are the overhead leads to two of Duluth's ore unloading docks. With snow this deep, snow plows were not effective. Undoubtedly, this section was dug out by a lot of men who were temporary hires using mostly picks and shovels.

**What's Happening?**

March 10 or 24-----MSM Annual member's meeting, 10 AM in Excelsior—specific location to be announced.  
 March-April-----CHSL & ESL new operator recruiting and training  
 May 1-----Beginning of ESL's Tuesday afternoon operations  
 May 5-----Beginning of ESL's & CHSL's weekend operations

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

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

**MSM's Annual Meeting.** Our annual meeting of the Museum's members will be held on Saturday, March 10 or 24, 2018 starting at 10 AM. Location of the meeting will be Excelsior, Minnesota. This will be the first time our annual meeting will convene in Excelsior. Exact location of the meeting will be announced as soon as arrangements are final.

**Annual fund.** We have sent out the flyer to all members soliciting donations to our Museum's 2017-2018 annual fund. Focus for this year's annual fund is rebuilding of the trucks under TCRT gate car No. 1239. Please consider a generous donation to our annual fund. Your support is really needed and most appreciated. 🍵

**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**  
November-December 2017**

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, 2018.

Please send items to the editor **Jim Vaitkunas** at the following address:

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**Obituaries****Marv Krafve.**

Marvin (Marv) Krafve passed away on October 6, 2017 at age 89. Marv graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1954 with a degree in civil engineering. He worked at General Mills where he met his wife Donna (Zaleski). He then spent most of his career as a civil engineer with several construction companies until he retired at age 80. Marv's first experience with streetcars was when he was at the U and worked part-time as one of the high school student conductors hired by TCRT during World War II. Marv got the historic restoration bug when he joined the team restoring the streetcar steamboat *Minnehaha* in 1990. He collaborated with Bob Dumas on designing the boat and he worked with the crew who installed the new hull planks. Marv worked on maintaining seats and organized re-covering them with rattan. He helped re-install the upper deck and lifebelt boxes. Marv started volunteering with our Museum 1997, helping with the car barn expansion project and operating streetcars at CHSL. In 1998 Marv was on the list of the top ten CHSL operators in volunteer hours. When the Excelsior Streetcar Line started operating in 1999, he also volunteered there both as an Operator and crew caller. Marv used his engineering experience and skills to help MSM with the installation of the water line into the Excelsior car barn for the sprinkler system being installed there. All in all, Marv made a huge impact on the success MSM has enjoyed since he became an active volunteer with us. RIP Marv.

**Jim Harrison.**

Jim Harrison passed away on October 20, 2017 at age 80. He was the second longest serving volunteer in the Museum's history. He first appears on a volunteer roster in 1963. He served on the Board of Directors and was the newsletter editor during the mid-1960s. The Minnesota Transportation Museum (which had our No. 1300 as its only artifact) spent the 1960s looking for an operating site. He headed the site selection committee in 1967 and became museum President in 1968. He worked on the Como-Harriet track crews, and was an early Minnehaha Depot agent. He was among the first operators at Como-Harriet and ran continuously until health issues sidelined him in 2015. He received an MTM Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002. Jim was always a friendly, easy-going presence at CHSL.

**Dave Grandpre.**

We just learned that Dave Grandpre passed away on November 22, 2017. Dave started volunteering with MSM in 2016. All who worked with Dave really liked him and enjoyed working with him. He was a credit to MSM and will be missed.

**Streetcar **CURRENTS** Winter Publication Schedule**

The **Streetcar **CURRENTS****, is now in its winter publication schedule. You'll be receiving the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** every other month until the May 2018 issue is published. Publication dates for these issues will be on or about: February 1<sup>st</sup>; and, April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after those dates please contact me at: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)