

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

August—2018



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Success!

Bruce Gustafson—General Superintendent

What makes a Museum successful? In part it is the result of the vision of the Museum's founders who arranged for the use of attractive operating locations and find, acquire and restore priceless historic relics. But that is only a part of the successful formula for the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. The other important factor in our success is you and your commitment to volunteering with our Museum. Our Museum is not particularly big, but does require a significant amount of volunteer support to keep the cars, track, overhead wires, and grounds maintained, enabling the schedule to operate safely and smoothly. The Museum's leadership, our guests, our neighbors, and our city appreciate all of the things you do each and every day.



I would like to call out a few of the members who have been working diligently to perform tests on car No. 1300 as it makes its way back into the operating rotation. Thank you **Karl Jones, Russ Isbrandt, Ben Franske, Tom Schramm, John Presholdt, Jim Vaitkunas, Dick Zawacki, Mark Digre, Dennis Stephens, Jerry Peterson, Andy Jacobs, Mike Miller, Rob Mangles** (and anyone else I missed) for your efforts. I would also like to recognize a few other individuals taking on activities that are very important to our Museum but seem to go unheralded:

- **Ben** and **Mary Porter** for their stewardship of the Linden Hills station's flower garden;
- **Steve McCulloch** and his grounds crew of **Ben Porter** and **Steve Simon** for their work in tree trimming weed whacking, weed spraying and other activities designed to extend the life of the ties and keep the grounds looking good;
- **Scott Heiderich** for his leadership making repairs to the overhead trolley wire. **Scott** and **Steve Simon** have also been busy removing branches interfering with the overhead wire; and,
- **Jerry Peterson** for leading the monthly car cleaning work at CHSL.
- **Karen** and **Jim Kertzman** for their continuing work at ESL on the new and improved merchandise area and the historic displays.

If you are interested in some of the non-operating volunteer efforts (some of which are listed below) please contact Pat Cosgrove, MSM's Volunteer Coordinator, or me.

Streetcar maintenance
 Car cleaning
 Brush cutting

Overhead maintenance
 Gardening
 Web design

Special event planning
 Grant writing
 Track maintenance

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your on-going enthusiasm for and support of our Museum. I would also like to remind you that if you can volunteer at least twice a month all of our operating positions would be filled and ask that you consider helping with some of the non-operating activities as well.

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THANK YOU!

Mary & Ben Porter in front of the Linden Hills Station garden.





From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

A number of projects are in process and are approaching completion.

Lakewood Cemetery platform. The concrete sonotube platform supports are done, along with the new concrete sidewalk crossing the tracks. The lumber for the platform deck has been delivered. The deck still has to be installed and that should happen over the next month. **Keith Anderson, Dennis Stephens** and I have been the primary volunteers to date. We'll need help moving the planks, which are heavy, and with carpentry. Let me know if you can help out.

TCRT No. 1300. Thanks to **Karl Jones, Ben Franske, Rob Mangels** and the George Isaacs shop crew, No. 1300 has gone through extensive testing. Of critical importance has been the lubrication of bearings in the trucks, and a number of adjustments have been made to guarantee that the lubricants are getting where they need to go. A new trolley pole was installed following dewirements while testing. I've run No. 1300 several times during the tests. It's very responsive and draws noticeably less power than before. The ride is stiffer due to the new springs and there is more gear noise. It is expected that No. 1300 will be released for limited regular service in early August.

Winona No. 10. Winona 10 has had some electrical issues that have delayed it entering regular service. New parts have been ordered to fix the problems, but it will have to undergo a round of testing before we'll know if everything is good to go.

Excelsior Car barn store. Led by **Karen Kertzman**, the ESL store improvements are close to completion. The last change will be the installation of a video screen.

New Operator training. This year's training of new operators is mostly complete. As usually happens, there was attrition among the new recruits. As reported by Training Chief, **Dave Higgins**, we started with 26 trainees and at the end of July, 14 trainees have graduated and entered service, two at Excelsior and 12 at CHSL. Another five could potentially qualify, although three of those are delayed by medical problems.

Welcome to these certified and active new operators:

Como-Harriet: **Seamus Burke, Barb Gacek, Luca Gunther, Brian Long, Gordy Moore, Kyle Olson, Jay Patel, Sam Pingree, Dan Raustadt, Craig Ruhland, Trevor Schwarze** and **Jill Seinola**.

Excelsior: **Mary Amsden** and **John Knox**.

Training is a huge effort each year. **Dave Higgins** was assisted by **Bill Arends, Rose Arends, Pat Cosgrove, Rod Eaton, Bill Graham, Jim Kertzman, Karen Kertzman** and **Ron Neitzel**. ☺



The Last TCRT Run — June 18-19, 1954 — See Article on next Page



No. 1166 & passengers at Como Avenue & Eustis Street. Arthur Orrben can barely be seen through the front window of No. 1166.



The Passengers on No. 1166 are looking mighty grim on this dark night of June 18-19, 1954.

THE LAST TCRT STREETCAR RUN — June 19, 1954

On June 20, 2018 I was operating on CHSL's Wednesday afternoon shift, which happened to be the 64th anniversary of the first day that streetcars would not be seen on the streets of Minneapolis since before the turn of the 20th century.

On June 19, 1954, TCRT streetcars No. 1300 and No. 1175 were chartered and ran on all remaining powered track, which includes our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line where we run today. Numerous stops were made for photos, including at the "chalet" station at West 42nd Street and Queen Avenue South. Does that one sound familiar? One of our current members--Dave Norman--was on that last run.

But that wasn't the last "official" TCRT run—the last "official" run was one day earlier. On Friday, June 18, 1954, TCRT streetcar No 1166 pulled out of TCRT's East Side Station for the last time. It pulled back into the East Side Station about 1:30 AM on Saturday, July 19, 1954. The last official revenue run in the long history of classic electric streetcar service in the Twin Cities had come to an end.

Who was the Motorman who operated that last run? Why was it streetcar No. 1166? Was it random or was it planned? The operator on that last run was Arthur Orrben, a 43-year Twin City Rapid Transit Company veteran and the employee with the most seniority at the time. And, TCRT streetcar No. 1166 was considered to be the oldest streetcar still in operation on that last day.

Fast forward to December 2016 when Brenda Cignatta-Orrben of Hockessin, Delaware walked into our Linden Hills station and told us that her late husband Curtis Orrben was the grandson of Arthur Orrben. She offered to send us miscellaneous "trolley items" that Arthur had owned, providing MSM a windfall of some significant TCRT historical artifacts and memorabilia. The items received included several photos, a couple of coin changers, a transfer punch, a motorman hat badge, a Veteran Employee Club pin, copies of the "Official Street Guide Minneapolis" from December 1913, April 1915, and July 1917 and a pocket-size book titled "Selling Street Car Rides: Some Practical Suggestions on How to Treat the Public." Inside this little book--dated 1917--under the printed line "This book belongs to " is written, in cursive, "Arthur Orrben, Badge No. 1284".

Motorman Orrben was born March 14, 1890. He was hired as a conductor in late 1910 or early 1911 and briefly had badge number 314. As a conductor at the North Side Station he was assigned badge 1284, which he wore from June 24, 1911, to July 18, 1932. He became a Motorman in 1932 and was assigned badge 1205, which he had until his retirement date of June 19, 1954.

TCRT streetcar No. 1166 was built by TCRT in the company's 31st Street Shops in July 1906, when Mr. Orrben was just a lad of 16; still 5 years away from beginning a long career as motorman and conductor. Forty-eight years later No. 1166 would make her last stop at the Brookside Loop shortly after midnight on Saturday, June 19, 1954 and head back to the East Side Station with No. 1166 nearly filled to capacity with railfans out for one last ride. I'm thinking Motorman Orrben had the controller position in notch 8--the Company Notch--after he crossed 42nd Street through the glen area.

Later, on that 1954 Saturday, the Minnesota Railfans' Association chartered streetcars No. 1300 and No. 1775 for all-day runs on all the remaining powered track. I suppose it could be thought of as a joyride, but I doubt that there was a lot of joy amongst the passengers out on that last ride.

The next few days the streetcars from Eastside Station ran to the Snelling shops and the funeral pyre. Cars No. 1166 and No. 1775 suffered the fate of the funeral pyre. Fortunately our Museum's No. 1300 was saved and still runs today on our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line demonstration railway.

Michael Buck has put together an interesting and very nice display in CHSL's Linden Hills station featuring the artifacts and memorabilia received from the Orrben family. Thank you, Mike! Also, thanks to Russ Olsen for the historic info in his book, *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* and to Aaron Isaacs for information regarding car numbers and Motorman Orrben's badge numbers.

Arthur Orrben passed away in March 1963 at the age of 73.

This article was written by Bill Arends.

What's Happening?

August 3,4 & 5 ----- Murder Mystery at CHSL *The Queen Sacrifice*—9 PM performance
 August 7----- PJ Party Trolley at CHSL runs at 6 PM & 7 PM
 August 9----- Streetcar Camp for Kids at CHSL—9 AM to 1 PM
 August 9----- Story Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM & 6 PM
 August 23----- Sleepy Time Trolley at ESL—5 PM & 6 PM
 August 25----- Owl Service at CHSL—9 PM to 12-midnight

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

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

New Members. We're pleased to welcome the following new members to the MSM family: Todd Wojchik, Ken Thielen, and Peter Cahill. Welcome, folks!

Has Your Mailing Address or E-mail Address Changed? We get roughly 2-4 change of address notices from the Postal Service each month. Each one costs the Museum money. An expensive item is when we get the *Twin City Lines* magazine returned to us because the address we have is bad. MSM has to pay the USPS *mucho dinero* when we get one of the magazines returned. Please remember to let your Museum know when you move.

Less expensive, but still something we deal with, is mailing the monochrome version of the *Streetcar Currents* newsletter because the recipient's e-mail address has been changed, deleted, etc. If you have a valid e-mail address but you receive a copy of the *Streetcar Currents* in the mail, please let us know of your new/revised e-mail address. Receiving the *Currents* by e-mail saves your Museum close to 70-cents per issue and you get it in vivid color! ☺

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
August—2018**

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 August 20, 2018.

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

13326 Huntington Lane
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9481
 E-mail: jvaitkunas@msn.com

Excelsior Streetcar Line Charters and more...

ESL has been working with the Excelsior Chamber of Commerce and the local businesses/non profits to promote activities for people to "Spend the Day" in Excelsior. The first event brought folks from the Owatanna Historical Society. They chartered the streetcar for a ride and car barn tour, they visited the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Museum, ate lunch at Jake O'Connors and ended their day with a cruise on the *Minnehaha*. Sad to say, all on a very rainy day. The second event brought the spouses from a convention at Mystic Lakes. They rode with us, toured the car barn and went on to have breakfast at the 318 Cafe followed by a visit to the Historical Museum and shopping in Excelsior. Most recently a group of family and friends chartered the streetcar, they were thrilled with the ride and the car barn tour, ate lunch at the Suburban Bar and Grill, checked out Excelsior and headed towards the lake.

We look forward to partnering on more of these events, it's a chance to increase our ridership, present our history and be an active member of the Excelsior community.

Karen Kertzman

Looks like these girls & boys enjoyed their ESL streetcar ride. This is what it's all about; this is why we volunteer.

