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MSM Operations Newsletter

Issue No. 19 -3
June - 2019



LOOKING FORWARD

At this point in the season, the two issues that are most on my mind are 1) passenger volume and 2) volunteers for leadership roles. Much like the last two years, it has been a “weather-impaired” spring, which impacts ridership. This year Memorial Day was a complete washout. While I would like to say one day is not a big deal, losing one of our marquee holidays or special events is a big deal. Memorial Day can be almost 1,000 riders. Compare that to a typical week night when we might see 70 or 80 guests. This means that we need to work hard to cover all of our other shifts. So please, if you can, volunteer twice a month during our core summer months.

The need for leaders is an ongoing issue and opportunity as this Museum, like most organizations, has a continual churn in leadership needs. I would like to thank those who currently fill the countless behind the scene, critical roles and our current and new foreman for their willingness to help. I specifically would like to ask for individuals to step forward and take over the leadership of our special events from Rod Eaton, who after many years, has asked to step down. These activities, like our major holiday operations, are the backbone of the Museum’s operating income. The events requiring leadership are primarily activities are around the Halloween and Christmas holidays. Rod has extensive instructions and is willing to help with a transition. If you are interested, please contact me or Rod.

- New Foreman
 - Louis Hoffman
 - Elaine Love
 - Bill Pekarna
 - Linda Ridlehuber
 - Eric Werner

Finally, I would like to encourage all of our Operating Crew members to sign up early for operating shifts. This relieves much of the pressure in determining if a shift should be cancelled and allows the foreman to contact the crew in advance.

OPERATIONAL REMINDERS

GENERAL

1. **Braking.**

When applying the brakes on our standard cars, holding an application rather than a series of sharp applications and releases is the preferred braking process. While this does require the operator to be more thoughtful on when to start applying the brakes it will result in a significantly smoother ride for our guests.

- As one of our trainers noted earlier this spring *“I’ve seen quite a bit of “sloppy brake work” where operators start in the lap position (good!), then begin wildly swinging between “apply” and “release”, rarely pausing in the lap position (bad!). I can literally hear the brake piston in the car going back and forth. I’ve also seen a tendency that, once the car is approaching the end-of-the-line at a walking pace, to jump to “full apply” at the stopping point, bringing the car to an abrupt / harsh stop (bad!).”*
- Rolling brake tests are not required on the PCC

2. **Control Transfer Lever.**

Please remember that Operators at the front of No. 1300 (and No. 1239 when it is operational) must ensure that the air transfer lever is fully engaged when changing direction. This is important safety reminder because failing to lock the lever in place will result in lack of control at the opposite end of the streetcar.

3. **First Trip of the Day.**

Foremen are asked to conduct an inspection of the line and identify any potential problems by operating the front end of the car in both directions for the first movement of the day.

OPERATIONS BULLETINS IN EFFECT

CHSL

○ **19C-1 - Operation of Cars under the William Berry Street Bridge.**

Due to loose wire under the William Berry Street Bridge, until further notice all cars operating in either direction are REQUIRED to proceed at a slow walk speed when moving under the bridge. The wire has not been repaired and "normal" speeds under the bridge may cause damage.

All operations shall be done at 5mph or less (slow walking speed) for:

- *Northbound cars from the span wire just south of the bridge (Cottage City Platform) to the span wire just north of the bridge, identified with the red and white flyers.*
- *Southbound from the span wire just north of the bridge identified with red and white flyers, until the rear of the car passes the span wire south of the bridge with the green target attached.*

○ **19C-2 - Operation of Cars at 42nd Street.**

In an ongoing effort to simplify car operations and eliminate unnecessary or redundant steps, the motorman on a northbound trip and the conductor on the southbound trip do not have to request permission to move forward from the other operator once the car has come to a complete stop at 42nd Street.

The revised sequence of operations is summarized below:

- *Approach 42nd Street and come to a complete stop at the location indicated by the stop sign.*
- *As appropriate ensure that the flagman is stationed in the correct position and has established control over any nearby traffic.*
- *The leading operator (motorman on southbound trips, the conductor on northbound trips) can move the car across the street when he/she determines that it is safe to do so. The leading operator does not request permission to move.*

ESL

○ **19E-1 - Operation of All Streetcars in the Excelsior Car barn Yard.**

The Foreman is the only crewmember authorized to operate a streetcar within the ESL car barn yard. The ESL car barn yard is defined as all track leading from the mainline switch into the yard lead with two left-hand switches, and all three yard tracks including the tracks inside the ESL car barn. Track #1 is defined as the track nearest the ESL mainline with the other two tracks numbered 2 and 3 in a southward direction.

While operating a streetcar within the ESL car barn yard, Foremen must observe the position of the switch points to ensure that the switch is correctly set for the track onto which the streetcar should go. After determining that the switch is set correctly, the streetcar can then proceed.

○ **19E-3 - Movement of DSR Car No. 265 in/out of the Car Barn.**

Extreme care must be taken when moving Duluth Street Railway (DSR) car no. 265 in or out of the car barn.

When returning Duluth 265 to the car barn on Track 1, the Trolley wheel will stay on the overhead for Track 2 after passing through the overhead frog. The foreman must stop the car after passing through the overhead frog and move the Trolley wheel back to the overhead for Track 1.

EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE – KAREN KERTZMAN

The Tuesday crew has been busy at ESL working on several maintenance items. More work is planned once these activities are complete.

- Repairing the broken north half door on track #1. The door is now fully functional
- Adjusting the south half door on track #2 so it moves well
- Repaired the fastener on the south side of the door on track #2
- Installed the first side guy wire east of the carbarn, plans are to continue to install an additional half dozen more

SAFETY REMINDERS – JOHN DILLERY

We are continuing to emphasize several critical operational and safety issues.

- Operating Through Switches. Please make sure that the alignment of the set switch point is properly set before entering the switch. In addition, power must be shut off when going through a switch (except the CHSL carbarn switch) to avoid arcing occurs which damages the frog and pits the trolley wheel. Be ready to stop fast if the points appear off set or malfunction as the streetcar passes thru the switch.
- Opening and Closing Car Doors. Motormen and Conductors must watch the doors when opening and closing them please. The operator should watch the door until it is completely closed. Recently one of our operators, after he had signaled to close the door had a young child (4 or 5) suddenly darted toward the door. Fortunately, he was able to stop the child before they got to the door. *Be alert!*

TRAINING – NEW HIRE – DAVE HIGGINS

As a recap to the 2019 training season:

Fewer people attended our New Operator Training Orientation in 2019. 18 people were in attendance or excused from attending (16 new and 2 former attendees). Orientation requires no commitment, nor does it require membership. The next step, the Classroom session, requires membership and a preliminary commitment (non-binding) to a specific site for later training. 14 volunteers attended, with 4 having chosen to withdraw after the orientation. After the classroom session, 2 more withdrew. The six volunteer, who chose not to go forward, listed schedule demands or physical disqualification as their reason for leaving.

Phase 1 of on-the-car basic training is held at CHSL for all trainees regardless of their chosen site. We began and ended with 12 trainees. Upon P1 completion 7 chose to continue training at CHSL and 5 elected ESL. At CHSL, all 7 completed advanced training (Phase 2), moved on to and completed Revenue Training (Phase 3) and graduated, having completed training and been certified. At ESL, two have graduated and the remaining ones are actively working with their training.

OVERHEAD MAINTENANCE (CHSL) - CHRIS HECK

We have had three work sessions so far this year on the overhead. One has focused on straightening the overhead near the carbarn switch after a tree fell on the wire, while the other two have focused on tightening up the overhead north and south of the William Berry Bridge. These fixes have largely been “band-aid” in nature due to the limited number of hours that the line is vacant and the time-consuming nature of overhead work. The biggest problem we have yet to solve is the amount of slack in the line, which will be a large undertaking to fix.

Jim Vaitkunas, Keith Anderson, and Chris Heck completed a survey of the overhead system in early June and are working to develop a prioritized list of jobs to complete (which includes deciding which fixes MSM volunteers can complete, and which we should try to have a contractor complete).

We hope to have the line in shape to drop the slow order later this summer. Thank you to Nick Fuqua, Gordy Moore, and Kyle Olson for helping with the overhead work sessions: without their manpower, we would not be able to move

forward with this important work. If you would like to be help with the overhead work, please contact Chris at chris.heck@trolleyride.org or 651-249-5358.

SPECIAL EVENTS (CHSL) – ROD EATON

We are expanding our line-up of special events in 2019 with two new offerings.

1. “Camp II” is the continuation of our original Streetcar Camp for kids 6 to 11. Camp II is for kids 11 to 15. We will be spending more time operating the car, including braking. This Camp is designed as a way to keep kids interested in the Museum in hopes they will become volunteers. This is planned for August.
2. We are planning to add an additional Halloween event Saturday, October 26 at 9 PM (following Ghost Trolley). Graveyard Ghost Stories will be an adult-themed ride featuring well-known Twin Cities personalities reading classic ghost stories. We are still assembling the four story readers.

SPECIAL EVENTS (ESL) – KAREN KERTZMAN

June was a great month for ESL special events. We successfully introduced two new events and increased ridership on our annual June special events.

1. Minnehaha Shuttle. On June 10th ESL partnered with the Excelsior Lake Minnetonka Historical Society and the Steamboat Minnehaha to present a historical evening. Folks could visit the Historical Society Museum at Water Street, board the Streetcar for a ride to the Minnehaha dock, enjoy a historic themed cruise on Lake Minnetonka and top the evening off by riding the Streetcar back to Water Street. The weather was perfect and there was a lot of excitement as people stepped back in time for an evening of fun. The best part is we get to present it again July 8th and August 12th.
2. ESL also partnered with the Excelsior Public Library, our next door neighbor, at their June Book Sale. To help encourage kids to read, and also to ride the Streetcar, our joint venture offered a discounted Streetcar ride with the purchase of a book. All the riders had to do was "Show us your book" to receive a discount. The increase in ridership was good and we are already talking about additional ways to build our partnership with the library.

This year the annual Excelsior "Art on the Lakes" event was moved from The Commons, on the shore of Lake Minnetonka, to Water Street in downtown Excelsior. ESL took advantage of the event being so close to our Water Street Platform by matching our hours of operations with the events hours. We also had an operator (Mary Amsden) volunteer to wear a sandwich board and walk the streets of the art fair to drum up more business. It worked! Our weekend ridership and merchandise sales increased over last year. We hope next year it will be on Water Street again.

June StoryTime Trolley was a sellout. Thank you to Bill Arends and Rob Eaton for the assistance with online ticket sales. Author Phyllis Alsdurf read her book "It's Milking Time". To add to the event we had a cow (cardboard) on the cow catcher for kids to pose with for pictures. A good time was had by all children and parents.

Upcoming event:

- July 4th in Excelsior. ESL will be running 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- July 11th StoryTime Trolley
- July 18 - 21 Excelsior Crazy Days
- July 23rd two 50 rider charters from Stillwater MN at 11 A.M. and 2 P.M.

EQUIPMENT REPORT – DICK ZAWACKI

TCRT 1300

Repairs on 1300's motor have been pushed down the priority list at L&S Electric due to a big job they have from CP Rail. It will be at least a month until they can start repairs on our motor. Meanwhile, we continue to run the car with 2 motors. Of course, it has a little less power, but, otherwise, the car doesn't seem to be experiencing any major problems because of this change.

Fargo-Moorhead 28

The car body was moved from Ken Albrecht's farm in North Mankato to the ESL carbarn. It has been put on a shop truck that was fabricated by the ESL crew using wheels that were originally part of the shop truck that supported Duluth 78 during its restoration. The car body is temporarily being stored on track 1 between the warm and cold parts of the ESL barn. Plans are to move it to track 3 for storage before the cold weather arrives this fall.

Messabi 10

Plans are to remove and store or scrap all the stuff that is currently stored in and under this car. Then it will be put on trucks and moved to track 2 at ESL for display and limited, long-term restoration. The move will be done in conjunction with moving Fargo-Moorhead 28 to track 3.

Winona 10

Because of the backlog at L&S Electric and their inexperience with motors like the one on Winona 10, we have decided to send the motor to AC Electric in Bangor, Maine. AC Electric is the company that originally worked on the motor when it was refurbished for our truck in 2012. We determined that the work they did at that time did not contribute to the current problem. We are in the process of preparing the motor to ship to Maine, which should happen in the next 2 or 3 weeks. Repair and transportation will take about 6 weeks, so we plan to have the motor back at ESL in the fall for reinstallation in the car.

Remainder of the Fleet

Other cars not specifically mentioned in this report continue to undergo seasonal maintenance or repairs as needed.

POS (CHSL) – ROSE ARENDS

The new POS seems to be working well, although there have been several overages/shortages in cash received, including a recent shortage of \$65 which was directly traceable to more fares having been rung up than were actually paid. There have also been some obvious errors in sales; i.e., someone rang up a Holly Trolley fare which, of course, we do not sell until the day of the Holly Trolley.

Errors in both cash and ring-ups can be easily caught and corrected before you touch the "Charge" button. Simply look at the list of what you have sold:

- Does it make sense?
- Is it accurate?
- Have the right number of fares been rung up?

If the answer to any of these question is "No," stop right there and correct the sale. Remember, you can always use the "Clear Items" button to start over with the sale. (Touch "Current Sale" at the top right of the screen, then touch "Clear Items.")

Thank you to all foremen/operators/station agents who've called us when they've had questions during their shift. We're almost always able to assist you over the phone.

If you are still not feeling comfortable with the POS, Rose can arrange for another training session for you. Contact her at rosearends@gmail.com.

POS (ESL) – KAREN KERTZMAN

It has been an interesting season implementing POS at ESL. Moving from a manual system of counting change and handing out tokens to a full blown POS system ringing up individual cash and card sales has introduced some challenges. The ESL POS requires 2 tablets and 2 card readers, one for the Ticket Booth and one for the store. Each system has to be set up prior to service and connected to charges after the last shift of the day.

The two biggest challenges to date are:

1. Station Agents are not completing the cash sale in POS before accepting the customer's money and giving them change.
2. Initiating the hotspot at the beginning of the shift to establish connectivity to the Square application.

We continue to learn and improve with each shift

GROUND AND BUILDINGS (CHSL) - STEVE MCCULLOCH

We continue to work on line maintenance including lawn mowing (which was taken over from a contractor), weed control, and brush cutting. The maintenance crew meets Monday mornings from 8:30 to about 11:30.

Ben and Mary Porter are busy keeping the new plantings in the expanded station garden alive and plant eating critters at bay.

Other CHSL line improvements:

- Removed wood tie planters at north end
- Leveled ground and planted grass seed at north end
- New stairs to depot basement

GROUND AND BUILDINGS (ESL) – KAREN KERTZMAN

Bender, Scott Heiderich, Smoke Amsden (husband of operator Mary Amsden) and others have been busy keeping the grass mowed and weeds trimmed along the rails and in the car yard.

CANCELLATION OF SHIFTS – JIM VAITKUNAS

Cancelling Shift Procedures:

- Foremen should immediately call their crew when a shift is cancelled account bad weather.
- For cancellation of services at CHSL and ESL for any reason (weather, lack of crew, etc.) an email should be sent to Ben Franske (ben.franske@trolleyride.org), Rod Eaton, and Bill Arends. The three of us all have access to put a rider alert notice banner on the website. Any given day chances are one of us can get to it fairly quickly. Perhaps someone can post it on Facebook too. I don't have access to that yet but I think Bill does and Rod should. If not us than there should be some other team of 3-4 people who will post on Facebook and the website if we are closed
- (CHSL) Foremen should then call Bill Arends, Aaron Isaacs or Steve Simon and ask them to put the “SHIFT CANCELLED” sign in the Linden Hills Station's door window.
- There are other circumstances that might result in a shift having to be cancelled including lack of a Foreman or a minimum number of crewmembers, mechanical problems with the streetcars, overhead, etc. Whatever the circumstances, the steps should always be: call the crew then get the sign in the depot window.
- If you wish to receive detailed instructions on what to do in various scenarios that may involve cancelling a shift, please contact Jim Vaitkunas: jvaitkunas@msn.com

As an ongoing reminder and to emphasizing the importance of safety has been on-going discussions with the Board and Officers of the Museum. I am closing with a prior Board meeting summation emphasizing safety:

Running the streetcar at MSM is a lot of fun, but we must keep in mind at all times that SAFETY is the most important part of our job. We are operating very large, very heavy vehicles in close proximity to people and your first responsibility is to protect yourself, your passengers, the public, and fellow volunteers. No matter the circumstances, NEVER hurry or rush, always ask yourself, "What is the safe way to do this?" and if you have ANY uncertainty about it, STOP and get help. Foremen and crew members must work together as a team to ensure safe operations