



Streetcar CURRENTS



July 2005

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

TEA-21 Track Project

- *The Track Rebuilding project is about 55-60% complete*
- *Both historic TCRT car stops are nearly re-stored*
- *The Linden Hills Station will be open in July on a voluntary basis*
- *We expect to resume CHSL service on or shortly after August 1st*
- *We will hold a project completion ceremony in Mid-September*

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TEA-21 Project is On Track!

The TEA-21 track rebuilding project is making good progress. Here is an update on the latest at Lake Harriet.

- All of the old track is gone and about half of the new track is down and spiked but not surfaced or aligned. The ballasting will be done later on in July.
- The abutments for the pedestrian underpass are repaired and the deck will be poured sometime the week of June 27th.
- The Cottage City stop restoration work is almost done. The sidewalks and stairs are repaired and the whole area under the William berry bridge has been cleared out and leveled (see below photo)
- The three new switches have arrived and are in place. They have not yet been placed in their final positions, however.

When will the project be done and when will Como-Harriet begin operating again? Those are good questions. Right now the project is a little over half finished. We estimate that with good weather the project will be finished on schedule which is July 31st. That means that Como-Harriet could be operating as early as August 1st. But, and it's a BIG BUT, there still will be a lot of work that needs to be done after the contractor leaves the property before we can start operating again. Just a few of the things that are on our "to do list" to get CHSL back in service are:

- The rail bonds have to be welded to the outside of the railhead at the joints to establish the electrical return circuit back to our power supply.
- The passenger platforms at both our Linden Hills station and at the north end need to be rebuilt.
- The overhead trolley wire has to be aligned and adjusted because in some spots the alignment of the track has been changed significantly.
- Other myriad but necessary preparations and details need to be taken care of before we can get our operations back on track.

We'll really need your help with the above projects. As we need work crews Keith Anderson, or someone else from our Engineering Department, will be calling crews for Saturdays to help get our line up and running again. If you get the call please sign up for one of the track or overhead work crews. We'll need you maybe only once or twice but those work sessions will be absolutely critical to ensuring our ability to get CHSL back in service as soon as possible—and, by the way, to start collecting revenue again! And, remember that you can check on the progress and see the latest photos of the project by going to our website, www.trolleyride.org

Masthead Photo: She may be lame but she's still a beauty! No. 1239 at the Water Street platform
Jim Vaitkunas photo



Jim Willmore photo

From the Front Platform

Who will do the work of MSM? For many years, we've seen our founders grow old, retire, and die. We've seen our numbers ebb and flow. We've seen fewer and fewer people with strong backs to do the heavy work of maintaining a railroad. And this year, it seems, we've seen more than the usual number of retirements and more trouble filling the schedule (although it's still been years since a shift was cancelled). What will happen ten, twenty, and more years down the road when there's no one around who remembers the pre-1954 days when streetcars trundled down the streets of Minneapolis and Saint Paul? Will some of the children who ride the streetcar come back? Or will we rely on retirees? Either way, we need to make sure that we're having fun, that our visitors know we're volunteers, and that they know that they can help – now, in ten years, or in twenty years.

Our passengers see us doing much of the work of running an electric railway. Certainly, they see us running streetcars. Many, especially those who live in Linden Hills, frequent Lake Harriet, or live in Excelsior, see

us working on the buildings, gardens, grounds, overhead wire, and track. Those who happen by either carbarn or come for a carbarn tour see us maintaining and restoring our streetcars. Invite them in. Welcome them warmly. What you're doing is vitally important to us. But take time from that work to chat and tell them what you're doing and why. You might have made a member or, better yet, a volunteer.

Changes Coming to the Streetcar *CURRENTS*

Aaron Isaacs reports that the content of the *Minnegazette*, MTM's quarterly publication, will change after the next issue (due out in a few weeks). After this next issue the *Minnegazette* will drop all division news and become strictly a history-only publication. To compensate for the lack of general MSM news that we used to get in the *Minnegazette*, **Louis Hoffman** has graciously agreed to continue to write the MSM news updates, but they will now appear in the monthly MSM newsletter, the *Streetcar CURRENTS*. We'll have more on these changes in the next several issues.

Jim Vaitkunas — CHAIR OF THE BOARD

MSM News Update – *Louis Hoffman* — SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT

More new members and donors recognized. Welcome to new members **Doug Anderson, A. J. (Tony) Bauman, Douglas Beedon, Glen Bottoms, Joe Chisler, John and Marcia Diers, Mark Digre and Maryellen Mueller, Bud Goldstein and Angela Frerichs, James Hahn, Judy and Tony Harnold, Andy Inserra, Forrest Johnson, Stanley Kasal, George Kotsonas, Andrew Koval, Jim Kreuzberger, Jim LaHaye, Ron Linebarger, Gary Lovegren, George Martin, Gary Neunsinger, Byron and Alis Olsen, Scott Pankow, Fred and Mary Raiche, Curtis Ramlet, Philip Schramm, Andrew Selden, James and Ellen Snoxell, Gary Sparr, Peter Sussman, John Webster, Sven Wehrwein, and Carl Wessel** for a total of 161 memberships. Total membership revenue is \$10,790.00, donations are \$1,980.38, and total income from memberships and member donations is \$12,400.38. Thanks to **Mark Digre and Maryellen Mueller** and **Andrew Koval** for their donations to the Founder's Fund and to **Andy Inserra and Thomas Lowry** for joining as a lifetime member.

The following were named honorary lifetime members of MSM in honor of their contributions to the former Traction Division and the current MSM: **George and Florence Isaacs and Art and Judy Pew.**

Annual Appeal Roundup. It's been awhile since we reported on the Annual Appeal. This Annual Appeal's proceeds will help fund the installation of a secu-

rity system at the Excelsior Carbarn, water service to the Linden Hills Carbarn, and fire suppression systems for the Excelsior and Linden Hills Carbarns. Total donations are \$7,810.00 from **Bud Goldstein and Angela Frerichs, Louis Hoffman, Brian Krynski, the Onan Family Foundation** (many thanks to this longtime supporter), **Phil Settergren, and Warren Weck** among others. Your tax-deductible donations to the Annual Appeal may be sent to: The Minnesota Streetcar Museum, Annual Appeal, P. O. Box 14467, University Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414-0467.

MSM Online. **John DeWitt** has done a fine job getting the attractive and functional MSM website up and running. Thanks, John! Please check it out at www.trolleyride.org – including up-to-the-minute construction reports.

ERA and CERA visits MSM and MLM. The New York City-based Electric Railroaders Association and the Chicago-based Central Electric Railfans' Association visited the Como-Harriet and Excelsior Streetcar Lines and the CERA group also sailed on the *Minnehaha*. The ERA group visited on May 15, riding the Como-Harriet (two-car operations with No. 265 and No. 322; **Aaron Isaacs** staffed the Carbarn) and Excelsior Streetcar Lines (No. 78 only; No. 1239 was out of service on account of the cracked wheel flange) during regular operations. The CERA group visited on May 27 and 28,

(Continued on page 3)

(MSM News Update *Continued from page 2)*

featuring a special three-car operation of the Como-Harriet line, as part of a five-day Memorial Day weekend visit to Minnesota and Iowa traction museums. Car barns were opened for both groups and volunteers reported brisk sales, both of regular souvenir items and special "flea market" items (traction memorabilia donated by members). Many thanks to ERA Vice President **Raymond Berger** for his kind letter of thanks for our efforts.

A total of 29 CERA members enjoyed a Friday morning tour of the Hiawatha Line, including a guided tour of the line and the Operations and Maintenance Base courtesy of **Aaron Isaacs** and **Steve Legler** and free time to explore, followed by a visit to Como-Harriet, where all three cars were in service. That evening, **Aaron Isaacs** hosted CERA's monthly meeting (they stayed, appropriately, at the Marriott Courtyard Inn at the Milwaukee Road Depot in downtown Minneapolis), graciously opened to MSM members, featuring a photographic tour of Twin Cities transit history. On Saturday, the group visited Excelsior, where they sailed on the Minnehaha and rode No. 78 before leaving for Iowa. We received this letter from CERA's Activity Chair **Dan Joseph**:

"Thank you for all the assistance that you provided us for our visit to the Como-Harriet and Excelsior Streetcar Lines during our. . . visit over Memorial Day weekend. Your efforts. . . made our visit a success. We were impressed with the skill of the operators and the high degree of maintenance devoted to the cars. We know it takes a tremendous amount of work to keep them up and running. We wish you every success as an independent organization and hope that many more railfans will visit your locations. We will certainly encourage our members to do so."

Most new signs finally here. The new directional and informational signs are finally up. In Minneapolis, they're at Sheridan Avenue South and West 39th Street, directing motorists down Sheridan, and at Sheridan and West 42nd Street, directing southbound motorists down the hill to the Linden Hills Station. In Excelsior, they're on Oak Street (County Road 19) at Water Street, at the end of the ramp from westbound Highway 7 and on 2nd Street at Water, all directing motorists to the Water Street platform. There are new informational signs as well at the Linden Hills Station and at the Twin City Model Railroad Museum, with more to be installed on the carbarn, at the Lake Calhoun platform, and at the Water Street and Old Excelsior Road platforms. Thanks to 13th Ward City Council Member **Barret Lane, Dennis Morris** of the Department of Public Works, Deputy Excelsior City Clerk **Cheri Johnson**, and Linden Hills

residents **Bill** and **Linda Lundborg** of West 44th Street Design and **Frannie Douglas** of SignSource for their assistance. The Museum has also installed a large vinyl banner promoting the Excelsior Streetcar Line on the Highway 7 side of the Excelsior Carbarn. Because of the City of Excelsior's sign ordinance, it's limited to 90 days so it'll be up from mid-May to mid-August. Thanks to Deputy City Clerk **Cheri Johnson** for donating the fee for one of the three thirty day permits.

MSM to host ARM spring conference. The Association of Railway Museum's Board of Directors has selected The Minnesota Streetcar Museum to host the Association's annual spring conference. Dates are April 7 and 8, 2006 with the ARM Board meeting on Friday, April 7, nighttime visits to the Museum's Como-Harriet and Excelsior streetcar lines on Friday and Saturday nights, and seminars during the day on Saturday, April 8. We're also in discussions with the ARM Board about hosting an annual ARM convention, the larger and longer fall event, in either 2008 or 2011.

COMO-HARRIET UPDATE

Memorial Day with Lakewood Cemetery. Memorial Day weekend was a busy one. No sooner had our CERA friends left than Lakewood Cemetery's daylong Memorial Day commemoration was upon us. By riding the streetcar from the Linden Hills Station, Lakewood visitors on this busy day can avoid the crowds at the cemetery's main gate at Hennepin and 36th. On Memorial Day, May 30, streetcar service began at 9:00 a.m., shuttling visitors from Linden Hills Station to Lakewood's "streetcar gate" at the Lake Calhoun platform for the 10:00 a.m. ceremony. A second car was added for the 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. shift to handle the heavy crowds (streetcar rides from the Lake Calhoun platform are part of the day's attractions and there are signs throughout the cemetery directing visitors to the streetcars) along with a token seller at Lake Calhoun platform to speed boarding and departures. All in all, 1,202 passengers, 1,011 paid, were carried.

May Ridership. Remember how nice the weather was in April? May (including the first day of service on Saturday, April 30) was terrible. Fortunately, summer-like weather arrived for Memorial Day. We carried a total of 4,044 passengers in regular service, 3,148 paid, plus six charters carrying 277 passengers, for a grand total of 4,321 passengers. Not the best May on record. But a big finish over Memorial Day weekend, especially Memorial Day, made it respectable. On Memorial Day weekend, we carried a total of 1,983 passengers: 264 on a cool and gloomy Saturday (221 paid), 540 on a much better Sunday (450 paid), and 1,202 (1,011 paid) on a picture-perfect Memorial Day.

Streetcar *CURRENTS* July 2005

Streetcar *CURRENTS* IS A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE *Streetcar CURRENTS* IS JULY 20, 2005.

PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO JIM VAITKUNAS AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

155 CHAPARRAL DR.

APPLE VALLEY, MN 55124-9774

YOU CAN SEND INPUT OR INQUIRIES BY

E-MAIL TO: jvaitkunas@msn.com



MINNESOTA STREETCAR
MUSEUM

COMO-HARRIET
STREETCAR LINE

EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

August 1	CHSL resumes regular service (tentative date)
September 5	Special CHSL early bird service starts at 9:30 AM.
September 10	Excelsior Apple days festival at ESL.
September 11	Last day of weekend service at ESL
September 17	Tentative date for CHSL grand re-opening ceremony

August CHSL Operations Schedule

Because the TEA-21 track reconstruction work at CHSL is on schedule right now we are going to call CHSL (and ESL) operating crews for August. Our stalwart crew callers, Jim Otto and Mark Digre will start making their calls soon after you receive this issue of the *CURRENTS*. Remember that it's much better for you and our crew callers if you call them rather than wait for them to call you.

JULY 2005 SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS

Included with this mailing is the July 2005 ESL Schedule of Operations. If you see a vacancy that needs filling, please contact Jim Vaitkunas.

If you would still like to volunteer to operate on a shift even though there is a full crew shown on the schedule of operations, please call the Foreman and talk with him/her about it. We can especially use you on

those busy weekend shifts. We feel sure that no Foreman would deny you the chance to help out on a shift, especially a weekend shift. So call and sign-up!

Remember that you must inform your Foreman of all substitutions or if you are forced to cancel your shift and **please** inform **both Foremen** if you swap shifts

OTHER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSM Name Badges. All name badges that have been ordered have been received from Awards by Hammond. Those ordered by Como-Harriet and Como-Harriet and Excelsior certified Foremen and Operators are at the Linden Hills Car barn and Shops (on the food service table on the south end of the west wall of the maintenance barn). Those ordered by Excelsior-only certified Foremen and Operators are at the Excelsior Car barn and Shops (on the table immediately to your left as you enter the ready barn) or, in the case of those ordered recently, will be there on July 7. If your badge is unaccounted for, please contact Louis Hoffman at 612.729.0442 or hamhoff@msn.com.

If you still haven't ordered your MSM name badge (old name badges are no longer to be worn), please send \$8.50 per badge, your check payable to MSM, to MSM Name Badge, P. O. Box 14467, University Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414-0467. Please indicate whether you want a pin-on or pocket version and, please, **neatly** print your name **exactly** how you want it to appear on the badge. Also, some of you also have

asked about MSM shoulder patches to cover over that large dark grey area on your shirt sleeve. The Board hasn't agreed on a final design for the MSM logo yet so new MSM patches have not been produced. The Board should make a decision on the patches in the next few months.



This photo of PCC No. 322 was taken on May 27th by CERA member Henry Petermann during that group's visit to Como-Harriet. When the work now being done on the pedestrian underpass is complete this scene will look very different.