



Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2006

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Learn More about Transportation History

- What do you know about general urban transportation history?
- Have you read any transportation history books?
- Have you purchased a copy of our Museum's Como-Harriet book?
- Have you visited the library and see what it has on Twin City transit history
- Ask one of our seasoned volunteers a lot of questions

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Masthead Photo: TCRT gate car No. 1239 stretches her legs on July 11, 2006. The new wheels are on and the car runs. However, there are still adjustments to make before we can place her in regular service. See the story on page 5.
Jim Vaitkunas photo

General Superintendent's Notes

Virtual Store Opens. In sharp contrast to the streetcar technology of the early twentieth century, our virtual Museum Store is now open for business. Visitors to The Minnesota Streetcar Museum's web site -- www.trolleyride.org -- can browse and select from the 40 items offered on-line.

Our virtual store model is extremely simple by today's internet shopping standards. We have no interactive "shopping cart" that allows you to select merchandise with a mouse click, pay via credit card, and submit your order electronically. In our Museum Store, you print out an order form, fill it out, and mail it to us with a check to cover your purchases and shipping cost.

The internet store is the work of our Webmaster, **John DeWitt**. John built our site, keeps it up to date and is continually adding things to make it more inviting and more useful to members and visitors alike. John's partner in our on-line retail enterprise is **Charles Barthold**. When mail orders come in, it will be Charles who handles the fulfillment, packaging the merchandise and mailing it out to the customer. Charles views this as an extension of his merchandising duties.

An internet store is an easy way to expand our merchandising beyond the guests who ride our cars. Thanks to John and Charles for making it happen.

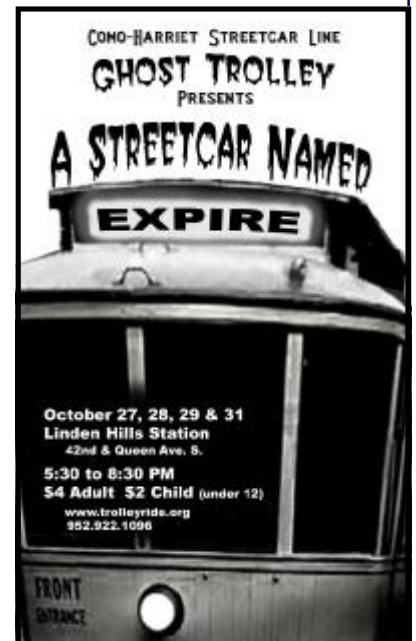
License To Drive. Some of you have inquired about receiving your 2006 Operators' License. If you were recertified this season by a Foreman, your license should be waiting for you in the station.

Wednesday Afternoons. So far this summer, our Wednesday afternoon shift has proven fairly successful. As we had hoped, the operation is attractive to families with young children out for an afternoon adventure, smaller groups for whom charters are not viable, and those just visiting Lakes Harriet and Calhoun.

The nice feature story on the Museum that ran in the *Star Tribune* a couple weeks ago definitely boosted Wednesday ridership. **Aaron Isaacs** and **John Diers** confirmed the story's impact through an informal riders' survey. But the Wednesday afternoon before the news story also saw more than one hundred riders. We'll continue Wednesday afternoon shifts through the end of August.

A Streetcar Named Expire. The 2006 Ghost Trolley will be here before we know it and it's not too early to begin preparations. We could use some "behind the scenes" volunteers to create spooky effects and help with logistics both before and on the evenings of the event. If you're interested in helping out, please give me a call.

Rod Eaton — General Superintendent



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 is:

P.O. Box 14467, University Station
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
 952-922-1096

Streetcar **CURRENTS**
 August 2006

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 August 20, 2006.

Please send items to editor 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

From the Front Platform

Jim Vaitkunas—Chair of the Board

Education of our Volunteers

I think we are all generally agreed that MSM is a Museum. According to dictionary.com, a museum is defined as: *A building place, or institution devoted to the acquisition, conservation, study, exhibition and educational interpretation of objects having scientific, historical or artistic value.*

MSM certainly does most of what is stated in the above definition—some of it well and some of it not so well. How do we respond, then, when one of our passengers asks us: “Who was Tom Lowry? When did the streetcars go out to Lake Minnetonka? How fast did the streetcars go?”

Our responses to these questions, and those posed in the recent *Star Tribune* newspaper feature, are to be expected from our visitors/passengers since we're a living history museum and each one of us is a museum guide or docent (whether we want to be or not). How we respond to our passengers questions says a lot about whether we are fulfilling our mission and goals.

Some of our artifacts weigh more than most Museum artifacts (23 tons in some cases!). But our artifacts, exhibits and our streetcars don't even begin to tell the vivid story of how urban transportation literally changed the fabric of American (and Twin City) society. The change in the general populace was even more profound and dramatic when electricity was applied to urban transportation. As a Museum how do we tell this story? Answer: Through

YOU our volunteer streetcar Operators and Station Agents. Did you know...
Generally from the 1820s to the 1840s rudimentary horse-drawn so-called omnibuses, a sort of elongated wagon with interior bench seats along each side, provided basic transportation along more-or-less fixed routes in the larger eastern US cities. Starting in the 1850s omnibuses were replaced by horse-drawn streetcars. In some larger cities starting in the 1870s cable-powered street railways, and steam-powered “dummy lines,” like the Motor Line that ran from downtown Minneapolis to Lake Harriet in the 1880s, provided transportation on heavily patronized lines. (Did you know that St. Paul had a cable railway? That **Chicago** had the second largest cable railway system in the US?) With the adoption of horse and cable railways ordinary city people no longer had to live within walking distance of work. They could live 3-5 miles away and still get to work in a reasonable amount of time. What a fantastic change in the lifestyle of the average worker!

When Frank Julian Sprague's application of electric power to a streetcar system proved successful in Richmond, Virginia in 1888, a true revolution

occurred. Now people could live in areas that even the slow horsecars were not able to reach. Suburban areas such as Robbinsdale, Saint Louis Park, Columbia Heights, the neighborhoods south of Lake Street, all of a sudden became “bedroom communities,” to use a more contemporary phrase, for the workers who toiled in the mills, factories, offices, railroad yards and warehouses—and yes, on the streetcars—in Minneapolis and St. Paul. As the electric streetcar became common everyone, not just the wealthy, could enjoy increased leisure time by taking the cars to the country and enjoy a day's outing at Big Island park or Wildwood on White Bear Lake.

OK. Enough! Where is all this leading? If the information in the above paragraphs was unknown to you until you read them just now it leads to the conclusion that for many of us our knowledge of both local and national transportation history is very limited. How can we answer questions from our passengers when we don't know much more about streetcars than they do? Your Museum officers have been discussing this whole issue of volunteer knowledge. One idea is to conduct short training seminars. If you have some ideas on how we can solve this “knowledge gap” please call or talk with any of your officers when you see them next.

MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent

Fact versus fiction. I've recently heard from a member that, on recent streetcar trips, he's heard varying numbers for the peak route mileage of the Twin City Lines system (and, yes, you grammarians, although grammatically incorrect, the correct name of the company is "Twin City Rapid Transit Company" or "Twin City Lines"). I've also heard a variety of dates given for the construction years of our fleet of streetcars.

We are a museum. The information that we provide to the public should be correct and we should do it as consistently as possible to maintain our credibility as a museum and as a source of accurate information. How? Here are some easy ideas:

- Use the recommended end-of-the-line talk on the last page of the Como-Harriet and Excelsior Streetcar Line General Procedures Memoranda. These convey the basic information that we want our passengers to know accurately and consistently.
- If you don't know the answer, don't estimate or guess. If you must estimate or guess, make it clear that you're doing so. And don't estimate or guess about things that are easy to find out (see next item).
- Look at the green MSM brochure available in the Linden Hills Station and aboard each operating streetcar in our fleet. It has a lot of the basic factual information about each of our streetcars (like when they were built and retired). You'd be surprised how many end-of-the-line talks have inaccurately given information that's right in the **free** green brochure!
- Visit the Museum's website and explore. There's a wealth of information—and, again, it's free!
- Buy a copy of **Bill Graham's** and **Aaron Isaacs'** Como-Harriet book that's only \$12.75 in the Linden Hills Station. Or browse through a copy during a slow time in the station.

Being accurate about basic facts isn't hard. As you can see, there are many sources at your fingertips, mostly free, that you can use to be right and ensure that we're consistent.

Also, how many of us can answer the thirteen "Ask the Motorman" conversation starters in **Maria Baca's** *Star Tribune* article?

1. How did Twin Cities residents use the streetcars way back when?
2. How did the streetcar help build the metro area?
3. What happened to the streetcar system?
4. What powers the streetcars
5. What is a truck? A trolley? A trolley pole? A retriever?

6. What's the difference between a motorman and a conductor?
7. What's the story behind the tokens?
8. How old is this streetcar? Where was it built? Where does the museum get its streetcars?
9. Who are Thomas Lowry and Fred Ossanna?
10. How fast can this streetcar go? How fast did the fastest streetcar go? How do you control the speed?
11. How does the farebox work?
12. What's your favorite streetcar story?
13. What are the sounds the streetcar makes?

Can **you** answer these questions? Look for laminated cards with this information later this summer.

Membership news. We welcome the following new members: **Maria Baca** (the *Star Tribune* reporter who wrote the excellent article about our Museum in the July 7 paper), the **Goldberger Family**, **Don Gooley**, **Hal Johnson**, **Bob Miner**, the **Patton Family**, **Barbara Risken**, **Christine Rowe-Wallraf** and **Joseph Wallraf**, **Jennifer Sommersness**, and **Jimmy Tobyne**. Total memberships since inception are now 214.

Carbarn Security and Sprinkler System Fund. Many thanks to longtime member and overhead wire expert **Mike Miller** and longtime Museum supporters the **Onan Family Foundation** for recent generous donations to the Carbarn Security and Sprinkler System Fund totaling \$4,500.00. Is there anyone who'd like to join them? The funds on hand will upgrade the current security system at Como-Harriet, install security at Excelsior, and fund the water supply and sprinkler system at Excelsior. It won't cover the most expensive part—water supply to and installation of the sprinkler system in the *George K. Isaacs Carbarn and Shops*.

With funds on hand, the Museum will replace the current security system at the *George K. Isaacs Carbarn and Shops* and the Linden Hills Station with a more up-to-date system that can support a sprinkler system and will install the same system at the Excelsior Carbarn and Shops. Despite the hefty capital costs and the addition of dedicated telephone lines, the system, even with additional telephones, will lower the overall operating costs of the system (and will be brand new, to boot!). A special thanks to Excelsior Superintendent **Bob Johnson** and security system maven **Karl Jones** for all their work on this project.

(Continued on page 4)

(MSM News Update Continued from page 3)

MTM membership cards. It appears that recently issued Minnesota Transportation Museum membership cards are using older stock with the streetcar icons on the back. This is just a reminder to all volunteers that MSM **does not accept** MTM membership cards for free or discounted rides on the Como-Harriet or Excelsior Streetcar Lines. The only persons who may ride the Museum's streetcar lines for "free" are MSM members with MSM membership cards, holders of Season Passes, and holders of ten and 25-ride tickets (in which case the motorman must "x" off the appro-

priate number of rides). In the event a MTM membership card is presented for a free ride, politely tell the bearer that MSM has not accepted MTM membership cards since the end of the 2005 season.

Free stuff! **Louis Hoffman**, in cleaning out his house, has left a small box of miscellaneous railroad books, many about British railways, on the back table of the Isaacs Car barn. These are free to anyone who'd like them. Also, a good place for unwanted railroad paper items, like old *TRAINS* magazines and the like, is the library of our friends at the Railroad Club of the University of Minnesota.

Good Business Practices are a Must

Scott Heiderich & Russ Olson

The mark of a good organization, whether it is an all-volunteer group like our Museum, or a major Corporation, is the prudent use of resources. Up to now our Museum has done well in spending our scarce resources wisely and in keeping track of all expenses we've had to make. However, with all the projects that are currently on-going, from the continuing restoration of Winona No. 10, to the work being done on No. 1300, to painting the Excelsior car barn trim, many people are purchasing materials that they need and we're now running into problems keeping track and accounting for these purchases. We will be issuing written instructions (which are probably long overdue) on how we will purchase needed materials and how we will approve and account for these purchases. Until these written policies and procedures are drafted and approved by the Board our Treasurer, **Scott Heiderich** and our Accountant, **Russ Olson** requests that ALL purchases be handled in the following manner.

- Except for routine small purchases of such things as nuts, bolts, cleaning supplies, etc., **all** purchases must be approved **in advance** by the appropriate Department Superintendent, i.e., the person who developed and approved that portion of the Museum's budget. This approval can be obtained by a phone call, an e-mail or eyeball-to-eyeball discussion of the need for the item(s). While the Superintendent can certainly delegate this approval to a subordinate manager (e.g., the Shop Foreman) the Superintendent still is responsible for ensuring all purchases charged to his department's account are legitimate and necessary.
- The volunteer will turn in a receipt for any purchases, regardless of whether the purchase is made against one of MSM's charge accounts or you used your own money and will later be reimbursed. If

there is any other paperwork that goes with the transaction attach that to the receipt/invoice. For CHSL these receipts and paperwork will be placed in the marked basket hanging inside the wooden Treasurer's cabinet in the George Isaacs maintenance barn. For ESL a special receptacle for receipts will be hanging next to the bulletin board in the maintenance and restoration shop. On the receipt/invoice for each purchase shall be printed the name of the approval authority and the name of the volunteer doing the purchasing. In addition the items must be identified as to what they are and for what project or purpose they will be used.

- Volunteers who use their own money to purchase items will submit the request for payment form with original invoices/receipts and any other paperwork on the items purchased. The request for payment must be approved by the appropriate department Superintendent/Manager or an officer of the Museum. If the person approving the initial purchase is different from the approval signature on the form that must also be stated. Requests for payment, after signatures are complete, can be sent directly to the Treasurer for payment.
- Particular attention should be placed on marking the invoices or cash register receipts that one gets from one of the approved vendors where MSM has a charge account. The treasurer attaches this paperwork to the invoices MSM receives in the mail from the vendors, all of which provides the necessary documentation showing proper accountability for MSM's cash resources.
- There are only five approved vendors where MSM has a charge account, i.e., you can purchase materials without having to pay cash. These vendors are:

(Continued on next page)

(*Good Business Practices* Continued from page 4)

- Bayer's Hardware
- Settergren's Hardware
- Allegra Printing in Edina.
- Hirschfield's Paints
- Praxair for acetylene and oxygen

If you purchase materials [from any other vendor or source](#) you must either obtain a purchase order or pay with cash and be reimbursed later.

- MSM is exempt from paying state sales tax on all purchases. If you pay sales tax on a purchase you will not be reimbursed for that tax. Copies of the sales tax exemption paperwork are posted on bulletin boards in both carbarns or you can download and print the exemption letter and form from our website (by far the easiest way to get the forms).
- Many stores, such as Menard's, Home Depot, Office Depot, etc., give good discounts to non-profit

groups such as ours. If you consistently make purchases in these kinds of stores ask at the store's service desk if they have such a discount program.

- Recently MSM volunteers charged purchases at vendors where the Minnesota Transportation Museum had charge accounts. Hence, statements were sent to MTM for payment for items purchased by MSM. Obviously this has to stop. Please do not charge any purchases to MTM and charge purchases only at the above approved vendors.

While these procedures might appear complicated in reality they are basic and pretty much a necessity if we are to wisely conserve our resources, comply with generally accepted finance and accounting practices, and continue to make Minnesota's electric railway history come alive!

Shop Update

John Prestholdt — Shop Foreman

The wheel replacement on TCRT No. 1239 has been completed and the car is down on the tracks waiting to be certified for service. There are some concerns about the narrow gauge on the two axles with the new wheels. Our shop people are working on this issue. We also need to get new ESL operators trained on the big car since anyone who has only operated in Excelsior the last year has only run DSR No. 78. While the sequence of operation is basically the same, practice and getting oriented to the "big car" certainly is needed.

Work has started again on No. 1300 at the *George Isaacs Carbarn and Shop* with the work focused on getting the nailing boards onto the pole side so that we can start installing the tongue and groove. Work should be going on Saturday mornings and Tuesday during the day. **Ken Albrecht** is in charge of this phase of the project and should be able to keep 6 to 8 people busy on this project.

(*Editor's Note: Photos of the work on No. 1239 will be put in an up-coming Streetcar Currents photo supplement.*)



A tribute to George. This photo shows the employee gate leading from the Hiawatha line's Franklin Avenue station northbound platform to the line's Operations & Maintenance facility. In the gate is depicted the likeness of George Isaacs crafted by Howie Melco of Metro Transit and one of our volunteers. It's amazing what Howie can do with cutting torch & MIG welder!

(*Howie Melco photo*)



Tree on the Trolley Wire! This is the scene that greeted the crew on the first run on Sunday, July 16th. The previous night's thunderstorm felled a tree right onto our right-of-way. After about three hours of hard work operations were restored. We'll have a more complete story with photos in an up-coming photo supplement. (*Howie Melco photo*)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

AUGUST 12	STREETCAR CLEANING AT CHSL 8:00 AM TO 11:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 4	LABOR DAY EARLY BIRD SERVICE AT CHSL BEGINS AT 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 8	LAST DAY OF DAILY SERVICE AT CHSL
SEPTEMBER 9	APPLE DAYS FESTIVAL AT EXCELSIOR
SEPTEMBER 9	STREETCAR CLEANING AT CHSL 8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 10	LAST DAY OF WEEKEND SERVICE AT EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE

Operations Notes

Jim Vaitkunas—Operations Chief

The August operations schedule for both CHSL and ESL are included with this issue of the *Streetcar CURRENTS*. If you see a vacancy that needs filling, and please note that there are several shifts at CHSL that are in the **red zone**, please contact Jim Vaitkunas ASAP by either a phone call (952-688-7255) or e-mail: jvaitkunas@msn.com

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 with someone.

Address and phone number updates. Last month you should have received a copy the updated crew telephone roster for both CHSL and ESL. You can also download or print out a copy from our website. If you haven't done so already please take a look at this phone roster and make sure your phone number is correct.

Wednesday Operations. Our new Wednesday afternoon operations (1:30-4:30 PM) started in mid-June and will end on August 30th. We will wait until the end of the season to evaluate this new operation but so far it looks promising—on July 12th we carried over 160 people! We still need crew for dates in August so if you are available and willing to help out on a Wednesday afternoon, please call [Jim Vaitkunas](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com).

History & Archives Update

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Archivist

The Tuesday crew (probably [Jim Otto](#)) will paint the four pedestrian underpass lamp posts a dark green before installation. The light fixtures and globe tops for the lamp posts have been on order for a couple of weeks and delivery should occur soon. Then [Keith Lindberg](#) will install them.

Member [Jim Kreuzberger](#) has donated an original TCRT trolley wheel as well as over 100 black and white photos he took of TCRT streetcars from 1949 to 1954. There are also about 15 photos of iron range electrified ore haulers.

Aron Isaacs and [John Diers](#) have initiated a photo sharing arrangement with the Hopkins Historical Society. We loaned them MSM's Hopkins photos to copy and they loaned us their streetcar and railroad photos to copy. The result is 39 new streetcar photos added to the MSM collection, including many good scenes of the great S-curving Hopkins viaduct. A similar arrangement is in the works with the Robbinsdale Historical Society and we'll try to do more such swaps in the near future.

Ever wonder where all those great *Minneapolis* photos come from? From the MSM Archive,

that's where. Want to buy copies of streetcar (or steamboat or railroad) photos from the huge MSM collection? [Aaron Isaacs](#) will make a high resolution scan for you on a CD at a special members-only rate of \$5.00 per photo. Buy ten for \$40.00. We're going to start marketing the photos to the public on the MSM website at \$10.00 per photo, so this is a really good deal. Contact Aaron to see what's available.

Other recent photo acquisitions: over 40 views of the TCRT Main Steam Station, hydro stations and substations from the collection of [Charles Camitsch](#), retired TCRT steam plant employee. A large group of scanned photos from the St. Anthony Water Power Company, showing the Main Steam Station and the construction of the TCRT Lower Dam hydro station. These photos are in the collection of the Hennepin County Historical Society and were provided free of charge.

New museum member, [Jimmy Tobyne](#) will spend the next month before returning to college doing computer restorations of a dozen or so very faded, marked up or deteriorated historic photos from the MSM collection.