



Streetcar CURRENTS



October 2006

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

It's Ghost Trolley Time!

- The Ghost trolleys are our best fund raising events of the season
- CHSL's ghost trolley will be held on October 27, 28, 29 & 31.
- ESL's Ghost trolley will be held on October 27 & 28
- The ghost trolleys typically attracts over 2,000 passengers
- Please "answer the call" for this year's ghost trolley and SIGN UP!

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Masthead Photo: TCRT gate car No. 1239 is back in service. Here's a shot taken in the fall of 2004 of No. 1239 approaching the Water Street end of the Excelsior Streetcar Line. The car looks as good as always!
Jim Willmore photo

It's GHOST TROLLEY Time!

October's here and Ghost Trolley is just ahead. This year's CHSL dates are October 27, 28, 29 and 31. Hours are 5:30 to 8:30 PM. As our biggest event, Ghost Trolley generates a good percent of our annual revenue. The spooky ride is not only popular with our guests, it's also a favorite with our volunteers. It seems we're never too old to enjoy Halloween.

This year, Ghost Trolley is taking on the classics: our theme is "A Streetcar Named Expire." No, we won't be restaging the Tennessee Williams work. That would make as much sense as a cat on a hot tin trolley roof. But there may be allusions to the play, some obvious, others more obtuse. And there will be a menagerie of sorts, ghostly creatures that assail each streetcar at the north end.

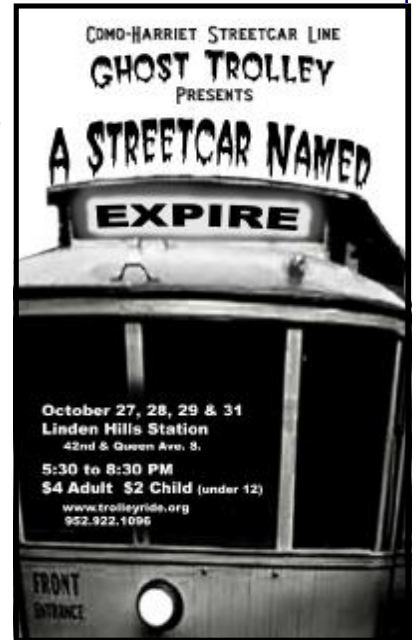
Our "Boo Crew"—**Dave French, Mike Helde, Michelle Manke, and Marcia Sanoden**—is

working up some fun theatrics. And you can expect to see the regular strange fellows around: **Karl Jones'** Count will make an appearance as will **John Prestholdt's** lurking masked stranger (it took me most of an evening last year to figure out who that was). **Scott Heiderich, "Electric" Mike Miller, Chris Heck, and Bud Goldstein,** along with several others, will make important contributions behind the scenes.

To keep Ghost Trolley fresh, we're making some changes from past years. Hot cider will be available for those who want it in the station instead of in the tent. Most Ghost Trolley riders don't visit the station, so this may give them a reason to look and perhaps pick up a souvenir. We may place our fog machines around the station and platform area, and use colored lighting to create a more chilling atmosphere. We won't be needing electricity under the Berry Bridge, eliminating the need to haul a generator down there every night. The performances that add so much to the experience are still being developed, so specific information about car operations will be distributed to crews before the first evening of the event.

Another change this year is the fare. While adults will still pay \$4, children under 12 will pay \$2. And we're strongly considering not using tokens. People will pay as they pass through the tent and join the queue to board a car. The Platform Agent will admit a carload onto the platform for each ride. Exiting passengers will be separated from those boarding by ropes.

Excelsior will also be hosting a Ghost Trolley on Friday and Saturday, October 27th and 28th. Again this year, the bulk of the preparation will be done by our



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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*
 October 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 November 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

Our Museum's Annual Picnic

Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, MTM held an annual picnic for the Museum's members and their families. The picnic venue alternated between the various operating sites. Around 1992 MTM stopped holding this pleasant event for a variety of reasons. This was unfortunate because the events were fun and were one good way to allow members to feel that the MTM was a single organization and gave everyone a chance to meet the other members that they might never see because of the geographic separation of the various operating sites that comprised MTM.

Your Museum's Board has decided to revive this pleasant tradition and your first annual family picnic will be held on Sunday, October 15th. Location will be the Excelsior Streetcar Line. A more complete announcement and specifics on this event can be found below.

Why are we doing this, you might ask? Using me as an example, I'll bet there are at least ten volunteers that have joined our Museum in the last year that I have never met! With a volunteer Operator crew roster totaling close to 70 people it stands to reason that even if you volunteer two or three times a month you still might not meet some of the newer volunteers.

Then there are our Museum's members who are not active volunteers. Approximately 100 of our Museum's non-active members reside in the Twin Cities metro area but we never get a chance to meet these fine people who, while not active volunteers, join our organization and whose dues help support our operations and programs. It would be nice to meet and greet these museum members. We're also holding the picnic so all our members and see and ride beautiful TCRT No. 1239. This special event will give our members a chance to see the "behind the scenes" project that our Museum's restoration specialists are working on—streetcar Winona No. 10.

So, Come one and come all! This picnic should be very pleasant, informative and hopefully fun. Come and meet your fellow Museum members.

FIRST ANNUAL MSM FAMILY PICNIC TO BE HELD AT THE EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE

There is a chill in the air. Fall colors are emerging as we approach the end of the operating season. As our operating schedule shows fewer days to operate, our thoughts turn to relaxing and enjoying each other's company. On October 15 the Min-

nesota Streetcar Museum will have a picnic at our Excelsior car barn. Members and their families are invited to enjoy a day of brats, hamburgers, and fellowship. If the weather is a bit cold, we will have room in the heated car barn so you can warm up.

Parking is available at two locations: The free city lot is on 3rd street across from the new Condominiums currently being built. You may also park in the Lyman Lumber Company's lot adjacent to our track. Enter from Water street. Streetcars will be running to take you to the barn.

Weather permitting, we will have car No. 1239 and No. 78 out for rides.

Date: Sunday October 15, 2006

Place: Excelsior car barn

Time: 12:00 noon until 3:00 P. M.

The cost is five dollars per person. Please call or e-mail to reserve your spot. Rod Eaton 763-576-0608 rpeaton@comcast.net or Bob Johnson 952-937-9378 User18783@qwesr.net

Please let us know the number planning to attend. If you are willing to furnish a desert or salad for 5 people, please let us know when you call.

MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent

N*ew Memberships and Donations.* We welcome new members **Steve Eberly** and **Mr. and Mrs. Tucker Masui**. These memberships bring the total of MSM members to 224.

Many thanks to: **Gary Gustafson** and **Dawn Carlson** for making a donation to the General Fund with their recent membership renewal; **Dave French** for his donation to the Winona No. 10 Fund in memory of **George Meyer**; **Frank and Tillie Cottle** and **John Prestholdt** for their donations to the Carbn Security Fund in memory of **George Meyer**; and, **Jim Otto** for his donation to the General Fund in memory of **Harold Dalland**.

We also received a \$1,000.00 donation from The Spiller L'Chaim Fund. Linden Hills neighbor **Jennifer Herman Spiller** writes: "Each holiday season, we give a charity gift in honor of our friends and loved ones receiving our holiday card. This year, we are pleased to have chosen The Minnesota Streetcar Museum in honor of our son, Tobin Chandler Spiller, and his love of trolleys. We feel your work is a wonderful contribution and another example of what makes our community great."

S*chedule and Fare Notes.* The Board of Directors and General Superintendent **Rod Eaton** discussed scheduling issues generally and as part of an order for 10,000 green brochures, wanting to make sure that the information in the new order will be accurate next year

and beyond. The following decisions were made:

This summer's experimental Wednesday afternoon operations will be made permanent. The hours will be changed from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. to 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. since business is brisker early on and peters out as the dinner hour approaches. With minimal publicity, ridership has been equaling, and sometimes exceeding, a typical weeknight—and the push to get charter and group business isn't yet underway! Another observation of Wednesday afternoon crews is that many children come with their grandparents and souvenir sales have been very strong on Wednesdays!

Operation through the end of November will continue. While ridership is quite modest, we've had no difficulty filling the three-person crews needed on brisk November afternoons.

The closing time in October and November will remain at 5:00 p.m. with the understanding, as sunset becomes earlier and business slows, that foremen can shut down earlier as appropriate.

The children's fare for the Halloween Ghost Trolley will be increased from \$1.00 to \$2.00.

Despite the potential for community-building and increased revenue, the minimal volunteer interest in and weather-related complications of operating Holly Trolley have led to the decision to not repeat last year's experiment this year, pending an increase in interest and resources.

(GHOST TROLLEY Continued from page 1)

friends at the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society while we provide No. 1239 and crews. The Excelsior event runs from 5 to 8 PM each night.

If you haven't already, please volunteer for one or more of our Ghost Trolley nights. **Jim Otto** and **Mark Digre** will be calling you (if they haven't already). If you miss their call please ring them back. We need nine crew people each night, on the cars, in the tent, in the station, and on the platform and crossing. Each

position is important to ensure a safe, well organized, and fun event. Please note that call time for everyone on the crew is 4:45 each night at the barn.

In keeping with the spirit of the evening, you're encouraged to add creative touches to the standard uniform. After all, we're never too old to enjoy Halloween.

Now, who is this "Stella" I've heard someone screaming for?

Rod Eaton — General Superintendent

Harold Dalland: A Great Volunteer and Friend

We regret to pass on the sad news that long-time member and volunteer, Harold Dalland passed away on September 13th. Harold was a motorman for Twin City Rapid Transit Company in the 1940s and early 1950s. He came to the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line as an active volunteer in 1981, not surprisingly as a motorman. He also participated in track and other maintenance work at Como-Harriet. Like so many other Traction volunteers, he pitched in as a crew member on the steam excursions of the early 1980s. Harold had been a consistent streetcar operator, working many charters, and up until his recent medical condition, was a regular member of the car cleaning crew. Harold was one of the best people to train new Operators as he knew how to teach us "newbies" to make accurate and smooth air brake stops with our historic streetcars. Harold received the MTM Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002 for his many years of faithful volunteer service to our Museum. We will miss Harold very much.

Various Topics

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Archivist

TEA-21 Project. The last small pieces of the TEA-21 project are being completed. The City of Minneapolis Public Works crew has painted the bottom railings on the Cottage City stop stairways, and has finished painting all the railings around the pedestrian underpass. Completing the painting has allowed **Ken Albrecht** to install the last of the interpretive signs there, so check it out.

Although the goal of this project has been the historically accurate restoration of original infrastructure, that has run into the realities of modern legal liability. The state and city attorneys would not sign off on the project until the railings around the underpass and Cottage City were brought closer to modern safety standards. According to the attorneys, the space between the railings was wide enough that someone might fall through. In addition, the railing on top of the underpass facing the lake was considered too short to provide safety.

MSM's representatives joined the State Historic Preservation Office in pushing to minimize any changes to the railings. In the end a compromise was achieved. A metal fill-in mesh would be attached to the railings directly overlooking potentially dangerous drop-offs. These have been installed at the underpass, and are supposed also be installed at Cottage City, but only on the stair landings. In addition, planter boxes will be placed at each end of the underpass lake-side railing, to fill the gaps.

The original TCRT waiting platform concrete, some of which remains intact, had a light pink color. The City was supposed paint the new concrete to match that color. The new concrete that was installed as part of the 1997 TEA-21 project had incorrectly been painted a dark red. Well, the City crews made the same mistake this time, painting all the new and historic concrete a dark red. They also painted the new sidewalk at Lake Calhoun, which was unexpected but is not a bad thing.

Attracting Tour Groups. Over the years the MSM Board has made changes to counter the slow decline in ridership and operating revenue. Past changes included raising the fare, lowering the free ride age for children and offering ride passes instead of unlimited free rides for inactive members. Scheduled operations were extended earlier into May and later into November. We started the ghost trolley in 1998 and it has become a major success. Last year's Holly

Trolley was another attempt to bring in more riders.

This year, MSM began an effort to attract bus tours and convention groups to scheduled service. Except for charters, this is a market we haven't tapped. A single car in scheduled service provides about 200 seats per hour, and most of those remain empty. If we can steer busloads of visitors to our scheduled service, revenue and ridership will increase without the additional expense and coordination of a charter.

Assuming that many groups can't adapt to our usual schedule of weekends and weeknights only, we decided to emulate the Osceola practice of running one weekday during the midday. The experimental Wednesday 1:30-4:30 PM shift ran June through August. Although the actual tour group marketing campaign didn't get off the ground until about now, the new afternoon shift proved to be as productive in attracting walk-up business as the traditional shifts, and doesn't appear to have cannibalized existing ridership. The consensus is that it will happen again next year, probably shifted a half hour earlier to 1-4 PM.

In June, MSM joined the Minneapolis Convention & Visitors Association, since renamed *Meet Minneapolis*. Interestingly, MTM had been, and continues to be a member. With this membership comes a great network of contacts in the convention and tourism industry. They provide a list of every convention and large meeting coming to town, with contact info so you can sell your services in advance. **Aaron Isaacs** has taken this information and sent promotional emails to all the tour operators and convention sponsors, including all the conventions listed for 2007.

Meet Minneapolis recommends that attractions put on open houses to give hotel concierges, conventional organizers and tour operators a first hand look at what we do. These people will steer their groups and guests to good attractions, especially those that are conveniently located and inexpensive. A visit to the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line also has the advantage of being quick. A bus tour can drive from downtown, take a ride and return within a hour, which make us a great fill-in activity.

Our open house will be held on Tuesday, October 10th from noon to 3 PM. Invitations have been mailed to 122 members of *Meet Minneapolis*. Even if they can't attend, the invitations can be redeemed for free rides on regularly scheduled service, so please honor them if you see them.

Your Museum Store's Latest Offerings Charles Barthold—Manager

You've seen how sharp the MSM logo looks on the new baseball cap—if not check out the Museum Store at www.trolleyride.org. Now here's your chance to create your MSM clothing wardrobe and do it in time for the holidays.

This limited time offer (orders need to be received by Charles Barthold no later than November 1st) includes four items.

- Black lined windbreaker
- Short sleeved dark blue denim shirt
- Long sleeve dark blue denim shirt
- Short sleeve casual dress shirt "light stone" color

All of these items will have the nice MSM logo embroidered on the left side of the shirts right above the pocket and on the left side of the windbreaker. Your name and if you desire a title, e.g., "Charles Barthold, Trolley fan" can be added to all items for \$5.00 per item. If you order three or more items the embroidery is free.

You will shortly receive more information on these items with the up-coming issue of our Museum's newsmagazine, the *Minne Gazette*. Details and a photo of each item are on the flyer. An special form will also be included for your use in ordering these fine items.

These items really look sharp! The windbreaker would be perfect for wear when you volunteer at Lake Harriet and Excelsior on those chilly early spring and fall days. And remember that after this offering there will not be a repeat in 2007.

Note: the shirts we are offering are not intended to be substitutes for our standard operating crew uniform. Our uniform will continue to be medium gray shirt with shoulder patches and black pants or skirt.

And don't forget the other nice items found at the Museum store section of our website. The ball caps with MSM logo and the cloisonné pin have been very popular. So, check them all out next time you're surfing the web.

Shop Update

John Prestholdt — Shop Foreman

As of Tuesday September 12th, all the siding has been put on the "gate side" of No. 1300, all the window posts sanded and everything on that side primed, ready for the TCRT yellow. The "pole side" should be completed on the 19th or the 23rd at the latest. Once painted (and the number 1300 applied on both sides) there will be a lot of cleaning and the normal pre-season maintenance before it will be ready for operations but we should have our "mother car" ready well before the Ghost Trolley is ready to run.

We are still working on plans for the winter which will include more work on No. 1300 as well as some much needed work on No. 265 and some "catch-up" maintenance on No. 322. This is a lot of work so I would like to start up the Wednesday night work crew again. I am hoping that this night might work for some of the "younger, still working" volunteers who might like to get some background in working on the cars they operate. The time will be from 6:30 PM or so to 9:00 P.M. Anyone interested can either e-mail me or call and leave a message at 952-922-7413. We should start sometime after the November ARM/TRAIN convention.



Men at work! Here we see (from left to right) Ken Albrecht, Phil Settergren and Dick Stoner installing the tongue and groove siding (sometimes called "wainscoting") on the "pole side" of No. 1300. (John Prestholdt photo)



The Lights are On! The shop guys did great work installing the four lampposts flanking the east side of the Lake Harriet pedestrian underpass. Here is a great photo of PCC No. 322 crossing the underpass with dusk fast approaching. (John Prestholdt photo)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

October 5-7	Special Operations at ESL
October 15	MSM First Annual Family Picnic—12:00N to 3:00 PM—Excelsior Streetcar Line
October 21	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL—9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
October 27 & 28	ESL Halloween Ghost trolley—5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
October 27, 28, 29 & 31	CHSL Halloween Ghost trolley—5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Operations Notes

Jim Vaitkunas—Operations Chief

The October operations schedule for CHSL is 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 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.

Ghost trolley "Take Away" slips. We need your help to promote this year's ghost trolley. When you are "pulling" Linden Hills station duty between now and Halloween, please notice whether there are young children with the purchaser. If there are, offer them one of the ghost trolley "take away" reminder slips that are on the counter next to the cash register (extra supply is underneath the cash register). These are excellent reminders to the parents, and especially for the kids, of our biggest annual fund-raising event. Suggest they put it on their refrigerator as a reminder.

Excelsior News

Bob Johnson — ESL Superintendent

September marked the return of TCRT "gate car" No. 1239 to service. A broken flange on an old cast iron wheel required the removal of the trucks so that two wheel and axle sets could be sent to a wheel shop in Milwaukee to have new steel wheels installed. Four replacement wheels from our stock were sent along as replacements for the old wheels. In preparation for return to service, several test runs were completed to determine the new wheels performed properly, and the track was compatible with the new wheels. Some minor adjustments remain to be done on the car, and also in some areas of the track. Recertification of foremen was completed in September and the car began revenue service.

If you haven't ridden No. 1239, make a point to come out to Excelsior and see the result of the museum's latest restoration. The car is beautifully finished. No. 1239 has a very close connection with Excelsior because this type car was a major presence in the transportation scene at Excelsior during the first two decades of the twentieth century when these cars plied the line between downtown Minneapolis and Lake Minnetonka. In those days it took just over 40 minutes to travel from downtown Minneapolis to Excelsior.

In other news, the first stage of fire protection for our valuable cars has just been completed. An

alarm system has been installed which will provide security and fire protection. We have placed orders with a water contractor and a fire sprinkler service for installation of a fire protection system. The sprinkler system will be connected to the security system so that notification can go to the fire and/or police agencies. As soon as funds are available we will install fire protection systems at the George Isaacs carbarn.

If you get to Excelsior you will notice a good deal of building going on. Next to our Water street stop some land has been cleared for construction of condominiums. This has caused some disruption of out facilities there. We have begun talks with our neighbor, the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS) to explore some ideas for a joint effort to beautify the area. The society would like to beautify the entire line if funds and resources can be found. Our goal is to work with the society to make the Water street area a more attractive place. We are also addressing the need to improve the visibility of our stop at Water Street. Other organizations have been contacted to determine their interest in participating in this project. On the water, we are pleased that the *Mimihaha* is back in business. The steamboat folks had a major project this year to replace rotting wood, which put them out of business for most of this season. Show your support by taking a ride on the boat before their season ends on October 8.