



Streetcar CURRENTS



MAY 2007

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

*Let's make 2007 a
Safe & Fun Season*

- *Review the operating rules and sequence of operations*
- *Review the bulletins and notices on the Ops bulletin Board before each shift*
- *Ask your Foreman about any special instructions at the start of your shift*
- *Talk to your passengers and get them involved.*
- *Encourage those who show an interest to volunteer with our Museum*
- **HAVE FUN!**

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Inside This Issue

<i>Excelsior Update</i>	2
<i>MSM News Update</i>	3
<i>Is the Window Clean?</i>	3
<i>Shop Update</i>	4
<i>Merchandise Update</i>	5
<i>Twin City by Trolley Book Update</i>	5
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	6
<i>Operations Notes</i>	6
<i>Streetcar Cleaners Wanted</i>	6

Masthead Photo: DSR No. 265 and TCRT No. 322 are chomping at the bit in front of the George Isaacs carbarn on 4/24/07. They just can't wait for the 2007 season to start—can't you tell?
(Jim Vaitkunas Photo)

General Superintendent's Notes

Here we are at the start of another season of streetcar operations. If you haven't already, shake out your uniform, dust off your hat, and polish your shoes.

Greg Taylor and **Dave French** have been very busy with new operator training and the recertification of returning operators at Como-Harriet. At Excelsior, **Tom Fairbairn** and **Clyde Hawkins** have been responsible for those duties. As our new Volunteer Coordinators, **Kathy Kullberg** and **Mike Helde** are keeping in touch with our new recruits, assisting the trainers with scheduling, answering questions, and generally keeping communications open.

We started this season with a handful of very promising new operator trainees. As our season gets underway you'll probably have the opportunity to work with one or more of them. To make them feel welcome, and to make it easier for all of us to get to know them, Mike and Kathy are planning to post photos with names in the barns.

These new operators are very important to our Museum. As you've probably heard, we have a shortage of operators. Adding new names to our Operator roll is important if we're to continue to maintain our operating schedule.

In a change from previous years, we'll make whatever arrangements are necessary to provide new operator training throughout the season. We have one or two potential trainees who simply were not able to begin training in April. And it can be a terrible waste to have to tell someone who expresses interest that the next training session is a year away. So please continue to encourage people to become museum members and volunteer for operator training. Have them call or e-mail me and we'll find a way to get them qualified.

As a way to give people a chance to try driving a streetcar we'll test the idea of an Operator Open House at Como-Harriet this summer. People can drop in and, under the patient guidance of an experienced Motorman, try their hand on the controller and brake. For many people, it may be just a time to indulge in a few minutes of fun. But for some, we hope it will be the taste that whets their appetite for more.

There are more new events planned. One is "Family Fun Sunday." For some time we've looked for ways to expand on our educational purpose. A major part of Family Fun Sunday will be guided history walks along the Como-Harriet right-of-way. Interested family members will each purchase a Day Pass for \$5, which also gives them unlimited streetcar rides throughout the day. At designated times, a group of Pass holders will ride to the north end, get off, and walk the track back to the barn. The historical photo signs added last year provide the outline for a talk.

Another idea scheduled for early June is a "Moonlight Ride." Scheduled on a Saturday night to coincide with a full moon, the half-hour ride will depart the Linden Hills station at 10 PM. With the car interior lights off, it will be a quiet, romantic chance to experience the nostalgia of times past. We plan to require reservations for the Moonlight Ride.

(Continued on page 2)

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
 May - 2007

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 May 20, 2007.

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

Excelsior Update *Bob Johnson — Superintendent*

Recertification of operating personnel is well under way at Excelsior. By April 22nd, 26 Operators and Foremen successfully completed their check-ride. Safety of the Museum staff, customers and equipment has been a major focus. Special procedures for returning the car to the barn were stressed to the Foremen to reduce the likelihood of trolley pole de-wiring in the yard and the subsequent damage to the overhead that would result.

Work continues on Winona No. 10. The removable sections of the interior have been reconditioned and are ready for installation in the car. The restoration staff has begun to remove the floor of the car. When the frame members have been uncovered restoration of the underframe will begin. This set of tasks includes a thorough cleaning and removal of old paint and rust deposits. After the frame has been cleaned portions of the frame that are too far deteriorated will be removed and new steel replacements will be installed. After restoration of the frame, a new floor will be installed and the other interior appointments will be put in like seats, controllers, etc. Soon we should see work start to fabricate the truck.

Soon after you read this report *Twin Cities by Trolley* will be released. Our plans are to have a book signing event in conjunction with Excelsior's **Crazy Days** festival in July. Look for the announcement and get your copy then if you haven't ordered it yet. Authors **Aaron Isaacs** and **John Diers** will be present to sign your copy and answer questions.

The local scene in Excelsior has changed quite a bit. A new condo development with five units has been built next to our Water Street stop. Depending on the ultimate sale of the units, we hope to see an increase in traffic. Another new building is going up just south of our Morse Avenue crossing. Therefore Foremen and operators should expect more traffic at this street crossing.

We are planning other special events at the Excelsior Streetcar Line. Our neighbors, The Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, report they will most likely be willing to hold the Halloween Trolley again this year. We are also exploring activities with the Historical Society to have more interpretive and educational activities.

This year TCRT No. 1239 will mark her 100th birthday. No. 1239 was completed on March 29, 1907 and was one of the last cars to be constructed at TCRT's 31st Street Shops. The company built the car for the grand sum of \$5,660.04. (Quick, let's order one now before inflation hits!) No. 1239 operated from stations in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The car was taken out of service in August 1953 and was subsequently sold to a family who used the carbody as a cabin in Long Lake, Minnesota northwest of the Twin Cities. We plan to hold a special event to celebrate No. 1239's 100th birthday. We don't have a specific date in mind yet but the celebration plans to be big, with a special birthday cake. We'll keep you informed on the details as we firm-up our plans.

(General Supt's Notes Continued from page 1)

A big event in the works this summer at Excelsior is the 100th Birthday of TCRT No. 1239. Bob Johnson will have more details on this important event in a future **Streetcar CURRENTS**. Ideas are still being discussed, but the event may include cake for 100 people, senior citizens as special guests, local dignitaries, and more.

And to celebrate the publication of their much anticipated new book, **John Diers** and **Aaron Isaacs** will have signing parties for *Twin Cities by Trolley* at both lines this summer.

It looks like a great, fun season. See you at the station! **Rod Eaton—General Superintendent**

MSM News Update*Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent*

New Memberships and Donations. We welcome **Gordon Bassett, Nels Kemppainen, Bill Blewitt, Mike VanOss, Jay Halvorson, Robert Tapper, Bud & Angela Goldstein and Bill Herzog**, who have joined MSM since the last Currents. The total number of members is now 245.

We also thank the following members and friends for their donations to the 2006-2007 Annual Appeal and for other worthy causes that support the Museum's many activities: **Earl and Bettye Anderson** in memory of the late **Corbin Kidder, Teresa Babler, Bud Goldstein, IBM Corporation** matching a donation from **Doug Anderson, Dave Kettering**, and the **Linden Hills Neighborhood Council** for their very generous donation of \$1,000 towards the George Isaacs carbarn sprinkler fund. To date, we've received over \$21,000 from 57 memberships and friends to the Carbarn Security Fund, the General Fund, for the

George K. Isaacs sign above the carbarn doors, and for our membership in the Excelsior Chamber of Commerce: That leaves nearly 200 members from whom we haven't heard! Please give now.

Welcome New Trainees. Our operator training program is now in high gear and we have a good group of new streetcar Operator trainees. We welcome **Liz Rolfsmeier, Floyd Child, Leslie Ellis, Dave Kettering, Larry Rolf, Mike VanOss, Bob Reinhardt, John Bode, Jan Istad, Christine Clayburg, Dennis Daniels, Bruce Gustafson, Dick Loeffler, Larry Wagner** and **Mark Rossi**. Welcome to our MSM family and we hope that you enjoy volunteering and operating our streetcars. When you meet one of the new trainees, please welcome them. We plan to have a photo gallery in the Isaacs Carbarn maintenance barn with the photos of these new Operators and members so you can recognize them.

Is this window clean or dirty and is stuff enough?*Louis Hoffman*

Some of you may have read the May issue of *STRAINS* magazine. Editor **Jim Wrinn's** "From the Editor" column was entitled "Is this window clean or dirty?" Please recall this quote from Great Northern President **John M. Budd**. Budd's opinion was that if the Great Northern ran passenger trains, even at a loss, it would run them well because "[t]he world judges the railways on their passenger services. If this is the window through which we are viewed, we must wash it and shine it or else cover it with a dark shade."

So, as passenger losses mounted in the 1960s, when some railroads like Penn Central and Southern Pacific actively discouraged passengers in all sorts of creative ways, the GN ran clean, punctual, and, in the case of the Empire Builder, luxurious passenger trains. Jim's point is that the same rule applies to railway and streetcar museums. Except that, because modern railroading and rail transit is far less visible than forty-plus years ago, many people judge the railroad and rail transit industries based on what they see at railroad museums.

Also in that issue is **Peter A. Hansen's** article entitled "Is stuff enough?" Hansen's point is that our "stuff"—both trains and trolleys—is meaningless to most people without top-notch interpretation. Sure, pre-schoolers, elementary school kids, and oldsters who remember the heyday of passenger and steam railroading and streetcars will enjoy the ride no matter

what we, as volunteers, do or don't do. But for everyone else, a streetcar is quaint but meaningless—absent our telling them how and why it's relevant to something in their lives.

How does MSM measure up? Certainly, the large corporately-endowed and state-financed railway museums (despite often complaining about inadequate support but with millions of dollars in private and public funding and dozens of employees) have the cash and the people with skills to tell the story of how railroads and streetcars built the United States and influence how and where we live, our language, etc., in spotlessly clean environments. And they do a bang-up job.

My experience, having visited many railway and streetcar museums during Association of Railway Museum conventions and travels generally, is that we do a better job than many volunteer-based museums. Our window is pretty clean and we do have more than "stuff." But we're inconsistent and there's lots of room for improvement. Our end-of-the-line talks are inconsistent. Too many of us simply don't like them or say what we've said for twenty years. Sure, we need to introduce ourselves, note that we need donations and volunteers, and encourage souvenir purchases. Some of us like to tell passengers about our streetcars. But that's all in the green brochure. And when a

(Continued on page 5)

Shop Update

John Prestholdt — Shop Foreman

Work is almost complete on TCRT No. 1300 and it should be ready for operation in May. We have finished all the painting including adding the number 1300 on both sides. Now all we need to do is some final checks to ensure the car's safety and it will be ready for service. This is not the end of our work however. Some of the Tuesday crew will now be working on Winona No. 10 out in Excelsior and the rest of the crew will be working on the necessary daily and weekly maintenance on as they rotate in and out of service. This will include tightening screws, lubricating controller contacts, checking oil and grease levels in the various bearings, checking brakes, and other things that are required to keep these "antiques" running. If you want to see how these cars work, please come around on Tuesday mornings or Saturday mornings. We'd love to have you join us and we really could use your help.

An Important Reminder When operating PCC No. 322

For those of you who qualified and will have the pleasure of operating PCC streamliner, TCRT No. 322 this season, here's an important operational note. When you stop the car for any reason the shaft brakes are engaged to finally stop the car once it reaches about 2-3 miles per hour. Then the shaft brakes hold the car while it is stopped. This is true of most all-electric cars like No. 322. The shaft brakes literally clamp themselves around the drive shaft that connects the four 55 HP high-speed motors to the gear boxes on each axle.

When you remove your foot from the brake pedal (when operating from the front) or when you move the rear control handle from the far right position on the rear controller (when operating from the rear) the shaft brakes should release. The important thing to remember here is that when you proceed from a dead stop, regardless of which way you are going, you must always make sure that the shaft brakes are released.

You can tell they're released in two ways. First the red light shuts off (stops glowing) on the front control panel and on the small light panel in the rear. The other way you can tell the shaft brakes are released is by the "clunk" that you can hear coming from underneath the car. So, whenever you operate No. 322, when you release the brake pedal or move the rear control handle to move No. 322, please make a special effort to check to make sure the shaft brakes are released. If the shaft brakes don't release, the immediate action you should take is to shut off all power to the car by turning off the battery and MG switches, remove the trolley pole from the wire and touch it to the hold-down hook on the roof. Doing this should solve the problem.



Training Season begins.

The left photo shows new operator training going on at CHSL. That's **Dave French** facing us explaining how our training is organized.

The far-left photo shows recertification at the Excelsior Streetcar Line with **Clyde Hawkins** (leaning over) taking care of some paperwork.

(Jim Vaitkunas photos)



Another sure sign of spring! Here's ever faithful **Roy Harvey** doing his spring clean-up of all the dead leaves that accumulated against the retaining wall in front of the George Isaacs carbarn. Roy does a terrific job of keeping our grounds around the station and Isaacs carbarn looking great. Thanks, Roy!

(Jim Vaitkunas photo)



(*1s This Window Clean...* Continued from page 3)

streetcar was built, how many motors it has, where it ran, and the like aren't of interest to most passengers.

What does?

Interpretive exhibits in the station. Mike Buck's fine exhibits, which Aaron Isaacs will be updating this year, can tell a story—riding streetcars to Lake Harriet over the years, working for TCRT, the World War II Motorettes, our restoration work, and the like.

The historic “then and now” picture signs along the right-of-way. Those at Lake Calhoun and at the Linden Hills Station area are easily accessible to passengers. Point them out, tell people what they are, and encourage them to look at them.

A good, thoughtful end-of-the-line talk. All of us have tons of resources. Old *Minnegazettes*, the new *Twin City Lines*, “Motorman Bill” columns in *Streetcar Currents* (all of which are on-line and at your fingertips), *Electric Railways of Minnesota*, various other Museum publications, *Twin City Rapid Transit Pictorial*, and, of course, the new John Diers and Aaron Isaacs book *Twin Cities by Trolley*. How did Thomas Lowry get so rich? Why is Cottage City called Cottage City? Why is there an underpass north of the Linden Hills

Station? What is that funny grey building at 42nd Street? Why are the Los Angeles Dodgers called Dodgers? All of these are stories that we can use to connect to our passengers! And there are many more.

The Classroom on Wheels. We'll be testing this on select Wednesday afternoons without the extra fare. Certainly, there are some things that Museum leadership is spearheading like the Classroom on Wheels. But the best thing that we can all do, right away and with no extra cost, is to beef up our end-of-the-line talks. Get out your *Minnegazettes*, your books, and go online and look at back issues of *Streetcar Currents* for the “Motorman Bill” columns.

And what the heck is a Dodger? The Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team was originally called the Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers. The Dodgers were known for their speed on the bases and in the field. Brooklyn had a huge streetcar system. You had to be fast—a trolley dodger—to cross a street safely in trolley-era Brooklyn. This little tidbit comes in handy in explaining why there's an underpass north of the Linden Hills Station—to get the horde of Sunday lake goers safely under the tracks to the lake so they didn't have to dodge the big TCRT trolleys!

Merchandise Update

Charles Barthold — Mdse. Manager

Time to Order your new Motorman's or Conductor's Hat



We will again be placing a special order for the old-style motorman's or Conductor's hats. Two styles will be offered. A winter version that is made of black cloth material and a summer version that has a close weave mesh on the upper portion of the hat to let the breezes in. The hats will not have the gold braid shown on the sample on the left. The price is

the same for either style—\$55 per hat. **Deadline to send in your order is May 15th.** Please download the special hat order form from our website or call Charles Barthold at 612-529-3428 and he'll mail one to you.

New items have been added to our merchandise inventory for 2007: A new PCC T-shirt in adult sizes; the “T” is for Trolley T-shirt in children's sizes; two Minnesota ornaments; a PCC mug; and, new colors to the popular little wooden trolleys. There is a \$10 clearance price on the Ghost Trolley t-shirts and the one remaining denim shirt. Arriving very soon will be the new trolley pencil.

Twin Cities By Trolley Book is due out in May.

Here Are the Book Signing Dates and other events

For those who ordered this great book in advance, we're still hoping to receive them by the first week of May. Watch for an email announcing the book's arrival. In the meantime here are the locations, dates, and times for the book signing events scheduled so far.

May 10, 7 PM, Mill City Museum press kickoff event for the book

May 19, 1 PM, Linden Hills Depot

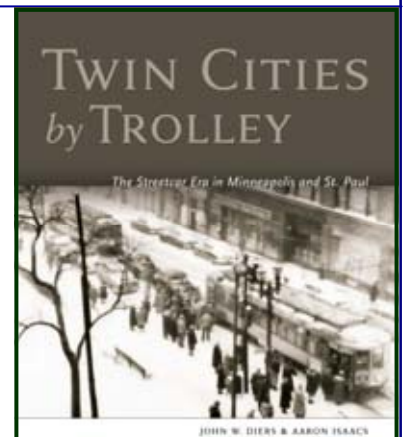
May 20, Books for sale at Linden Hills Park as part of Linden Hills Festival.

May 25, 7 PM, John Diers and Aaron Isaacs appear on Channel 2 Almanac program

June 7, 7 PM, Valley Books in Stillwater

June 12, 7 PM, HarMar Barnes & Noble

July 19, 2-4 PM at the Excelsior Streetcar Line



What's Happening?

May 3	Begin Thursday afternoon operations at ESL
May 5	Begin weekend operations at CHSL and ESL
May 5	Streetcar cleaning at CHSL—8:30 AM to 11:30 AM
May 18	Begin daily operations at CHSL
May 19-20	Linden Hills festival—2-car operations at CHSL both afternoons
May 19	<i>Twin Cities by Trolley</i> book signing at the Linden Hills Station-1:00 PM
May 28	Memorial Day—CHSL special early bird operations begin at 9:00 AM

CHSL & ESL Operations Notes*Jim Vaitkunas—Ops Chief*

The May 2007 Operations Schedule for both CHSL and ESL are included with this issue of the *Streetcar CURRENTS*. If you see a vacancy that needs filling (note that there are several shifts at CHSL and ESL that are in the red or yellow zones) 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

Operating Rules and Regulations. The new operating rules and regulations were given to everyone at the beginning of last season. Now is the time to take out your copy and review this most important document. If you don't have a copy please call me or send me an e-mail (shown above) and I'll be happy to mail one to you. You can also download a copy by going to our museum's website. We also keep a few copies in a box in the bottom shelf of the cashier's cabinet in the George Isaacs carbarn and on the bench next to the bulletin board in the Excelsior carbarn. This is **MUST READING** for all operating personnel so make sure you have a copy.

General Procedures Memorandum. We again ask that all operating personnel read the 2007 edition of the general procedures memorandum which will be sent to you very soon either by e-mail or by regular mail. There is an edition for CHSL and a separate edition for ESL. As with the rule book, copies are available for download from our website or you can get a hard copy by calling me or sending me an e-mail. A few copies will also be at the Excelsior and the George Isaacs Carbarns.

CHSL and ESL Sequence of Operations. Most of us have not operated since sometime last fall other than to recertify. Before your first shift this season, please take a moment to review the CHSL sequence of operations which was extensively revised for the 2006 operating season. The ESL sequence of operations is being revised this year and you should get your copy soon. In any case you can download a copy from our website.

Bulletin Board. All operating personnel must review the operations bulletin board at the start of your shift. The operations bulletin board is located in the maintenance barn at Lake Harriet and in the "ready barn" at Excelsior. For those at CHSL all important notices and bulletins are also in the station agent's binder located below the cash register. It is important that you review the items on the bulletin boards as this is the only way we can easily communicate to all operating personnel these important operations and safety bulletins as well as other important administrative notices.

Wanted! Streetcar Cleaners**First CHSL Streetcar Cleaning Session is scheduled for May 5th**

Our Museum is known throughout the railway and streetcar museum "community" for the appearance of our operating streetcars. We keep our streetcars well-maintained mechanically, we keep the exteriors of the cars looking good, and their cleanliness, both inside and out, is exemplary. The cleanliness of our streetcars is due to the hard working car cleaning crew that comes down to Lake Harriet each month to clean windows, polish woodwork, mop the floors, etc. The leader of our stalwart streetcar cleaners is Maryellen Digre-Mueller. Maryellen arranges for the crew, procures the cleaning materials, organizes the work and brings juice and rolls to reward the crew.

If you want to make a good contribution to your Museum, how about coming down to the George Isaacs carbarn on May 5th at 8:30 AM and help out? Call Maryellen 612-822-2386 so she knows you will be there. I also encourage everyone, but especially our newer members, to come down to the Isaacs Carbarn on May 5th and help out. The work isn't difficult and this would be an excellent time to meet and get to know some of your fellow volunteers and to get to see some of the "behind the scenes" action that always occurring in the carbarn or out on the line.