



Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2007

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

The Dog Days of August!

- **Many of us will be on vacation in August. But if you're in the Cities in August consider filling a vacancy or two in the operations schedule**
- **Talk to your friends and neighbors and encourage them to come and ride our streetcars**
- **Mark your shift dates and times on your calendar**
- **Encourage those passengers who show an interest in our Museum to volunteer with us**
- **As Always HAVE FUN!**

Inside This Issue

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| General Superintendent's Column | 2 |
| Herb Pinske Passes | 2 |
| MSM News Update | 3 |
| MSM Shop Update | 4 |
| More Photos | 4 |
| MSM Historian's Update | 5 |
| Let's Keep our streetcars clean! | 5 |
| Upcoming Events | 6 |

Masthead Photo: Excelsior Streetcar Line stable mates, DSR No. 78 (R) and TCRT No. 1239 are taking a breather in front of the Excelsior car barn in July, 2006. They do make a lovely couple, don't they? (Jim Vaitkunas Photo)

MSM Celebrates Birthday of TCRT No. 1239

MSM celebrated the 100th birthday of TCRT streetcar No. 1239 on Thursday, July 19th during the *Crazy Days* festival in Excelsior. The event was planned and executed by the volunteers of the Museum's Excelsior Streetcar Line.

Twin City Rapid Transit Company "standard" streetcar No. 1239 was built in the company's 31st Street shops and released for duty on March 29, 1907. Rebuilt in 1935 for one man/two man operation, No. 1239 remained in service until 1953 when it was stripped of all mechanical and electrical appliances and sold. The Museum acquired the car body in 1988 after the owners who used it as a cabin in Big Lake, MN were ready to remodel their cabin. No. 1239 was restored by Museum volunteers over a six year period, returning the historic streetcar to service on the Excelsior Streetcar Line September 11, 2004. The following Museum volunteers spent many hours restoring No. 1239: **Art Pew, Karl Jones, the late Al Jensen, Bob Dumas, Cliff Brandhorst, Ken Albrecht, George Ittner, Tom Fairbairn, Jim Wilmore, Phil Settergren, Neil Howes, Jerry Olson, Bob Badzinski, Bill Graham, George Isaacs, Howie Melco, Dave Irej, and the late Dave Aune.**

The 100th birthday celebration committee was headed by Excelsior Superintendent **Bob Johnson**. Other committee members were **Teresa Babler, Anne Elise Ware, Bruce Kobs, and Tad Shaw** from the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society. The festivities started with a Barber Shop Quartet singing in the ticket area. Eight senior citizens boarded the car first ranging in age from 95 to 102. They brought several members of their families and staff from the Golden Living Center. Together with Mayor **Nick Ruehl** they took the first ride. After their ride the Mayor declared July 19th, Streetcar No. 1239 Day in Excelsior, the birthday cake was cut and the celebration began.

After passengers rode the street car and toured the car barn they boarded the 1954 GM classic bus graciously provided by the Minnesota Transportation Museum, with **Phil Epstein** at the wheel and **Chip Kempainen**, acting as the dispatcher. The bus had on board a docent from the Historical Society who pointed out the historical sites in Excelsior during the short bus ride. Copies of *Twin Cities by Trolley* were on sale with the authors, **John Diers** and **Aaron Isaacs**, available in Duluth No. 78 to autograph their book and talk trolley history.



Excelsior Mayor **Nick Ruehl** declares July 19th Streetcar No. 1239 Day. (Jim Vaitkunas photo)

John Prestholt and **Charles Barthold** sold other merchandise in their tent. Members of the Historical Society dressed in period dress graced the loading platform

(Continued on page 6)

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 - 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 August 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 enquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com

GS Notes
Rod Eaton—General Superintendent

Streetcar In Fashion. On July 12th Duluth St. Rwy. No. 265 provided the setting for a fall fashion photo shoot. Local photographer Joel Larson was hired to do a layout for the new *Metro*, "Twin Cities Metropolitan" Magazine. In scouting local locations, he fell in love with our vintage streetcars and knew he had to shoot in one.

The very next day Joel, plus a fashion model flown in for the shoot and a crew of art directors, photographer's assistants, wardrobe people, hair stylists, makeup artists, and magazine representatives met No. 265 at the Linden Hills station. They spent the next hour shooting and reviewing photographs until they were pleased with the results. The fashion spread is scheduled to appear in the September issue of *Metro*.

Looking Ahead. Halloween and Ghost Trolley aren't far away and planning will begin soon. This has become our biggest event of the year, and our riders are already asking about it. Since Halloween falls on a Wednesday this year, we'll hold our event the Thursday through Sunday preceding Halloween—October 25 to 28. For the first time, we won't run on Halloween night. Another change: we'll run from 6 to 9 PM (instead of beginning at 5:30). Daylight Savings Time ends later this year, so the 6 PM start will give us a little more darkness. Additionally, it will be a bit easier for our crews to get to the streetcar line after work.

We also plan to operate Holly Trolley again this year, operating on Saturday and Sunday November 24 & 25, and December 1 & 2. This year, kids and their parents will Ride With Santa.

And congratulations to **Bob Johnson** and his Excelsior crew for a terrific 100th birthday party for No. 1239. The planning and preparation that made the day a success will make next summer's celebration of our mother car, No. 1300's 100th birthday celebration that much better.

Herb Pinske Passes
Scott Heiderich

One of the MTM and Como-Harriet Pioneers, **Herb Pinske** passed away on July 13, 2007, at the age of almost 99 years and six months. Herb was instrumental in the start of the trolley line at Lake Harriet. His life's work was as an employee of the Milwaukee Road, mostly working on track gangs. In the 1920's, he owned a truck and hired himself as driver with his truck to the Milwaukee Road to haul "stuff" for them. Later, when the railroad decided they needed their own truck, they hired Herb to drive it for them.

When the founding members of MTM decided to construct the track at Lake Harriet, Herb came by and immediately volunteered to be the leader of our track laying effort. It was his knowledge and instruction, as well as physical labor, that allowed a bunch of volunteers like **George Isaacs** and yours truly to build a reasonable track upon which to operate TCRT No. 1300. George was always complaining to Herb that we didn't need a track that the Hiawatha could run on, but Herb insisted that our well used rail, used ties from the railroads and dirt for ballast, was well installed, and it lasted for over 30 years!

Herb was also instrumental in keeping the Minnehaha Depot in good physical shape and spent many Sundays in the early years days staffing the *Princess*. By the 1990's, Herb was too old to participate in activities at Como-Harriet, but whenever I asked for his opinion on anything involving the track, he was always willing to go for a speeder ride with me to point out areas of concern and what to do about them. He loved the streetcars at CHSL, as well as riding them often on the streets of the Twin Cities. I took Herb for a ride on the express boat *Minnehaha* shortly after it was restored and put back into operation on Lake Minnetonka. It brought back memories for Herb as he had ridden the high-speed cars and the express boats on the Lake in the 'teens and 1920s.

MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent

New Memberships and Donations. We welcome Ted Blank, Michael Burnett, David Dietz, Meredith Johnson, Lewis Josephs, Cheryl Kienietz-Hall and Vern Hall, Jim Kotchevar, Martin Ries, Larry Rolf, Bernard Rossbach, Dudley Swedberg, Vonnie Thomasberg, Eric Tratner as new members and Erik Schwartzkopf as a new life member. The total number of memberships is now 275.

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: **Ted Blank** and **Ming Wang**.

To date, we've received \$32,310 from 65 memberships and friends to the Car barn Security Fund, the General Fund, for the George K. Isaacs sign above the car barn doors, and for our membership in the Excelsior Chamber of Commerce: That leaves nearly 200 members from whom we haven't heard! Until we have enough money to complete the job, our valuable collection of streetcars, along with artifacts, parts, and tools, sits under protected from the twin terrors of fire and vandalism. Better to make a modest contribution now than to respond to an emergency appeal later, right? *Right?* Please remember that all contributions to the Museum are fully tax-deductible - and it's *never* too early to start thinking about your 2007 income tax return!

From the Farebox. Museum statistician and Como-Harriet Chief Cashier **John Prestholdt** reports the following statistics for May and June at Como-Harriet:

| | Total | Paid | Trips | Charters |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|
| May | 4,148 | 3,047 | 291 | 3 |
| June | 5,657 | 3,944 | 443 | 6 |
| Total | 9,805 | 6,991 | 734 | 9 |

"Total" includes all regular (including all pass holders) and charter passengers. "Paid" refers to passengers riding using a token.

Excelisior Superintendent **Bob Johnson** reports the following statistics for May and June at Excelsior:

| | Paid | Free | Total |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| May | 512 | 167 | 679 |
| June | 534 | 106 | 640 |
| Total | 1,046 | 273 | 1,310 |

This includes four rain days, several of which were on Thursdays, the busiest day at Excelsior because of the Farmer's Market crowds. Total revenue was \$2,363.75, \$2,127.00 in fares, \$69.00 in merchandise sales, and

\$197.75 in donations.

Thanks to Bob and John for compiling these statistics.

Tip of the Motorman's Hat. **Tom Beaumont** is stepping down on August 15 as Charter Agent after many years of service in this vital area to more fully pursue his already extensive retirement travels. Charter income is a needed boost to the Museum's bottom line and requires excellent diplomacy skills—fitting customers' needs (and often changing and unsure needs) into our often limited charter capabilities and schedules. Tom has handled the job with great aplomb and will be missed.

Anyone with aplomb who is interested in being Charter Agent (or in finding out more about the job) should step forward and let us know. The main charter booking season runs from late winter into the summer. So we're past it. But it'd be great to orient a new charter agent and have him or her in place for the upcoming season.

After many years of faithful service as both a car cleaner and as Car Cleaning Foreman, **Mary Ellen Digre-Mueller** has announced that she'll step down at the end of the current operating season. Mary Ellen has been a hard-working and tireless leader of this vital yet often overlooked function. She's also raised car cleaning to an art *and* a science, making her successor's job that much easier. Many thanks to Mary Ellen for her years of service and for a job well done.

This, of course, means that Como-Harriet needs a new car cleaning foreman. Generally, crews work once per month on a Saturday morning and clean the floors, windows, and woodwork. While this doesn't get the attention that major repairs and restoration work gets, the work that our car cleaners do helps create our visitors' first impression of the Museum. When visitors board the streetcar, they don't notice a lot of the work that gets done in the shop. But they do notice that the floors and windows are clean and that there's not a layer of grimy dust on horizontal surfaces. So please step forward into this important position.

FROM THE BOARD ROOM

Louis Hoffman, Secretary

The Board of Directors met on May 12, 2007. The Board appointed Linden Hills businessman **Bob Bayers**, owner of **Bayers Our Own Hardware** at Upton and 43rd, to the Board as a community representative. Bob is a long-time friend and supporter of the Museum. Director **Bob Johnson**, also Superintendent

(Continued on page 6)

Shop Update

John Prestholdt — Shop Foreman

If you've ridden either No. 1300 or the now active No. 265, you will notice that the Tuesday crew has been working on repainting the seats. Using six of the seat bottoms that **Clyde Stevens** worked on the past couple of winters we painted them (sorry Clyde) and used them as temporary replacements as we removed six seats at a time to repaint. We now have all the seat bottoms on both cars repainted and are beginning to work on the seat backs. Since we have no bench seat bottoms redone, those will wait until this winter. We also have acquired the metal parts for a depot bench and thanks to **Ken Albrecht** we got the wood to complete the bench, **Dick Stoner** has done some detail painting, and we are almost ready to move it to the depot.

As mentioned last month, the resetting of the trolley retriever on all our streetcars needs to be refined. If the pole de-wires, you need to pull the trolley rope out, but there is a distinct stop about 10 feet out when the spring gets reset. You don't need (or want) to pull the rope completely out, just to that reset point.

With No. 265 now running until mid-August there is a problem that keeps recurring when operating the car from the rear. If the car "just starts" as the brakes are released, and before the start button is pushed, this is because the brake air transfer lever in the front was not set correctly. This is NOT an operator error—the micro-switch in the front just didn't get properly set by the air transfer lever. If the car is stopped, and the lever reset (move to front operation then to rear operation), this should get the micro-switch reset correctly.

A Few Photos



No. 265 used for a fashion shoot. (Rod Eaton photo)



(Upper left) Here's a photo of trackwork at CHSL circa 1970. This photo was taken before No. 1300 was moved to the new car barn shown in the background. **Herb Pinsky** is in the center with the white hat. That our **John Diers** standing on the far left. (George Isaacs photo)
 (Lower left) Some of the Tuesday crew is taking a little "spot time:" (left to right: **Jim Otto, Dick Stoner, Keith Lindberg, Phil Settergren, Ken Albrecht** and **Roy Harvey**) (John Prestholdt photo)

Archives and History Update

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian

Sprinklers for the Linden Hill Station's Garden. One casualty of the TEA21 track project completed in 2005 was the loss of the water line from the old men's room to the Linden Hill station's garden along Queen Avenue. Restoring that line would require considerable expense, more than MSM can afford at this time. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Superintendent **Jon Gurban** has offered another solution, having the Park Board arrange a new water hookup from the line in Queen Avenue. **Aaron Isaacs** and Museum Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson** recently met with Park Board staff to work out the details. The Park Board staff says that the new water line will be installed in late summer of this year.

In other garden news, the new garden crew headed by **Dick Stoner** has held two work sessions. The garden has been largely weeded and pruned. New annual flowers have been planted. A special thanks to **Bill Arends** for watering while we're waiting for the sprinkler connection.

Wirth Park waiting shelter may move to Lake Calhoun. A genuine streetcar waiting shelter still stands in Wirth Park in the western edge of Minneapolis. Until 1954, it marked the end of TCRT's Glenwood Avenue line, where the streetcars wyeed. Later it served buses that looped nearby. For reasons unknown, it was never demolished and has actually been well maintained by the Park Board. It is a large open wood structure, measuring 15 by 24 feet. Under its sloped roof are two back-to-back wood benches.

Park Board Superintendent **Jon Gurban** has been a big supporter of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. In a recent meeting, Gurban offered to have the Park Board move the shelter to the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and install it on a new concrete slab at their expense. It will serve the Lake Calhoun stop. MSM Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson** is the project man-

ager. Member and architect **Joe Metzler** will prepare a site plan. First, the site must be surveyed. Do any Currents readers do surveying? If so, please volunteer to survey the area around the Lake Calhoun platform, so the other work can proceed.

Cooperating with the Bakken Museum. The Bakken Museum of Electricity is located in Medtronic founder Earl Bakken's former mansion on the southwest side of Lake Calhoun. Its mission is to "further the understanding of the history, cultural context, and applications of electricity and magnetism in the life sciences and their benefits to contemporary society." It is not surprising that having an historic streetcar museum nearby would lead to a partnership between our two museums. In the past five years, there have been two streetcar exhibits at the Bakken that were prepared with help from MSM. Now a third is about to happen. Bakken exhibits manager **Paul Maravelas** recently spent an evening at the Como-Harriet Line with **Aaron Isaacs**, and the result is an agreement to mount a new two-year exhibit beginning August 2007.

Podas collection acquired. MSM has acquired the collection of the late **Norman Podas**, a long-time museum member and traction modeler. Though generally not an active member, Norm stepped in to complete the project management of the Linden Hills depot when **Gene Hickey** passed away during its construction. The collection contains 259 Minnesota streetcar photos and a large number of vintage traction books and periodicals.

Minnesota Reflections Website. In the last Currents, I promised that the Minnesota Reflections photos would be available online about July 1st. Alas, they're doing a software upgrade and that has delayed posting our photos. They're telling me now that it will be about August 1st.

Let's Keep Our Streetcars Clean

Maryellen Digre Mueller

The CHSL Cleaning Crew needs the help of all trolley crews. Please enforce the rule of no fluids, food or snacks while riding the streetcars. This rule is important and makes a difference. Here's why.

We cleaned the streetcars on July 21st and No. 265's floor was the filthiest I've seen it in 13 years. Instead of the rare, small sticky spot, there were large sticky spots under most of the seats. The grooves along 265's walls can't be reached or cleaned by the push broom at end-of-shift. That's why the cleaning crew

crawls under 265's seats and cleans the grooves with a small brush. We always found seeds, leaves, and dead insects. On July 21, the grooves had candy wrappers, popcorn, and crackers. I'm concerned that sticky floors and food in the grooves will attract vermin. In addition the sticky floors create more work and slow down the cleaning crew.

Please help us. I thank every Foreman, Operator, and Station Agent for all the work you do for our fine museum.

What's Happening?

| | |
|---------------|---|
| August 18 | Streetcar Cleaning at CHSL—8:00 AM to 11:30 AM |
| August 25 | Moonlight trolley ride at CHSL—10:00 PM |
| September 3 | CHSL Labor Day "early bird" operations begin at 9:30 AM |
| September 3 | ESL Labor Day operations—1:00 PM to 4:00 PM |
| September 8 | Excelsior Apple days festival—No. 1239 operates 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM |
| October 25-28 | Ghost Trolley at CHSL—6:00 PM to 9:00 PM |

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

The August 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 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 at CHSL and the Thursday afternoon and Saturday morning shifts at ESL.

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.

REMINDERS. Foremen—Don't forget that one of your responsibilities is to call your crewmembers 2-3 days prior to your shift to remind them that their shift is coming up. Also, we're running a lot of shifts these days with just a three-person crew. This makes it very important that everyone shows up. Please check the schedule and mark your calendar. If you don't make it, the entire shift may be cancelled.

(TCRT No. 1239 Birthday Party *Continued from page 1)*

while **Sean Van Pelt** played his keyboard during the afternoon. **Karl Jones**, **Anne Elise Ware** and **Kim Lesinski** sold tickets and handed out a commemorative brochure telling the history of No. 1239 and highlighting the day's events written by **Anne Elise Ware**. **Tom Fairbairn** and **Bruce Kobs** operated No. 1239

for the day.

TCRT No. 1239 continues to serve her public as well today as she did 100 years ago. Thank you to all who have preserved, worked and donated parts on our cars so people today can enjoy and relive yesterday! *(Editor's Note: A special supplement with more photos on the No. 1239 festivities will be sent by e-mail in mid-August.)*

(MSM News Update *Continued from page 3)*

of the Museum's Excelsior Streetcar Line, is searching for a community representative to serve on the Board representing the Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka community.

The Board allocated the \$13,500 received from the sale of the Chicago Transit Authority trucks as follows: \$10,000 to the Car barn Security Fund and \$3,500 to the Winona No. 10 Restoration Fund. It also consolidated the two Winona No. 10 funds into a single fund.

General Superintendent **Rod Eaton** reported that all five restored streetcars are operable, that the exterior of the Linden Hills Station would be getting a needed paint job, that there were new merchandise items available in the Station, and that while training was winding down, there were a number of new trainees still in the pipeline and that the new flexible training system was working well.

Rod also reported that Superintendent of Safety and Training **Greg Taylor** is stepping down at the end of the season, Chief Mechanical Officer **Clyde Stephens** has resigned, and Charter Agent **Tom Beaumont** is resigning effective August 15, 2007. Assistant Superin-

tendent of Safety and Training **Dave French** is considering accepting the top job and Rod is considering candidates to replace Clyde and Tom.

The Board affirmed its earlier decision to participate in the federally-funded job training program that would provide the Museum with a half-time employee.

The Board also decided not to pursue the acquisition of Mesaba Electric steel combine No. 16. The Board approved submission of the Museum's annual report to the Attorney General under the Charitable Organization Act. The Board affirmed its policy of not providing passes, tickets, or tokens to other charitable or non-profit organizations for fundraising events and the like. Members involved with such organizations who wish to provide such items to be auctioned off or used as door prizes may purchase such items with his or her own funds and donate them to any organization of their choice.

Complete minutes of all Board of Directors meetings are always available online at the Museum's website, www.trolleyride.org.