

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2008

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota



We need you as a Volunteer!

- Volunteer to help fill the many vacancies on CHSL's August operations schedule
- If you are not an active volunteer right now, we can use you in our Linden Hills station and to help with special events
- Even if you can volunteer only one or two days a month, please join us



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Masthead Photo: Here's a photo of TCRT No. 1300 taken in 2004. This is the "official" 100th birthday portrait that we have been using on our various materials promoting the car's 100th birthday events.
(Mike Buck Photo)

Moonlight, Pumpkins, Ghosts and Santa

Rod Eaton

A regular feature on the Linden Hills station's bulletin board this summer is a poster for our Moonlight Streetcar Ride. Since we have one scheduled each month, the posters change with each new date.

We started doing Moonlight Rides last summer, and since they were moderately successful, decided to offer them again this year. They're scheduled on the Saturday night closest to each month's full moon and depart at 10 PM. The ride is a half hour long—we make two very slow round trips. On a clear night the full moon over the lakes is a real treat. But even when the moon isn't visible, the quiet ride along our right-of-way is very romantic. And that's the whole point. As we tell our Moonlight Ride passengers at the beginning of the trip, people not only rode TCRT streetcars to work, to school and to shop, they also used them to date.

The Moonlight Ride isn't just for couples, although most of our passengers do come with a significant other. But we had some children on a pajama party outing (they rode in their jammies) and we've also had the occasional solo rider. What we really need now is to find ways to better publicize this monthly event. Any ideas? The next ride is Saturday, August 16.

Lately you may have noticed the Coming Attractions poster on the bulletin board. It previews this year's Ghost Trolley, Holly Trolley and something called Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch. Here's what these events are all about.

Ghost Trolley this year will feature *The Return of the Son of Frankentrolley*. The event will be held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 24, 25 and 26, and Halloween night, Friday, October 31. That's an awkward schedule, but I think we can make it work. We always have great support from our volunteers and the community.

Holly Trolley this year will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 28, 29 and 30, and the following weekend, December 6 and 7. Santa Claus will again be our special guest, greeting children and handing out candy canes. Even more than Ghost Trolley, weather plays a big role in Holly Trolley's success. A little snow adds a lot to the holiday feeling, but too much causes major headaches and even cancellations. You'll be hearing lots more about Ghost Trolley and Holly Trolley soon.

The Pumpkin Patch event is new this year, so we'll all be learning as we go. The basic idea is a streetcar ride to visit Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch where children pick out a pumpkin they can take home. Our pumpkins will come from—you guessed right!—Farmer **Ken Albrecht**. He's growing them just for this event. Sometime in early October we'll be looking for a few volunteers to help harvest and transport the pumpkins to Como-Harriet.

Our "patch" will be at the north end. There'll be a few bales of straw, a scarecrow, and about 200 pumpkins. Children with special Pumpkin Passes will get off the streetcar, find a pumpkin they like, then ride back to the station. We plan to charge \$4 for the ride plus the pumpkin, regardless of the child's age.

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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*
 August 2008

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

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, 2008.

Please send items to editor Jim Vaitkunas at the following address:
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 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774
 You can send input or enquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com

From the Front Platform *Dave French — Board Chair*

Hello everyone! One of the pleasures of serving as MSM Chair is that it requires me to attend special events. I confess that I've missed several of them over the years, and my work prevented me from enjoying our classic car event in June, which made me very determined to attend the big birthday party on July 13th for our favorite streetcar and Grand Old Lady of MSM, No. 1300.

Perhaps, like me, you find it difficult to explain to the uninitiated *why* anyone would make a big deal of the 100th birthday of an inanimate piece of equipment. I tried to explain it as best as I could to my family and people at work. Perhaps it was just my imagination but I think I detected a roll of the eyes from most non-trolley fans. Well, I ended up telling them it's a "trolley nerd thing" but if they went to the party, they might get it. I think it's safe to say that most, if not all, of our passengers did, in fact, get it. If you were there, I bet you'd agree!

Saturday evening I had the opportunity to give a short talk promoting the event at the Lake Harriet band shell before the Minneapolis Pops concert. There were several hundred people there and I told them about our museum, the big event tomorrow, and about our favorite book *Twin Cities by Trolley*. I can tell you it was exhilarating to hear the cheers and applause when I told them I represented MSM, the people who run those big yellow trolleys just up the hill. They were not applauding me, you understand, but *all of you*, the people who make MSM a reality.

Sunday morning I arrived early to make an appearance on the local television news to talk about No. 1300 and our party. Unfortunately we were preempted by a late-breaking story on Lake Minnetonka but I found many people already working hard to get the party set up. I want to thank everyone who spent many hours planning and running the event, especially **Bob Bayers** and **Kathy Kullberg**. I hope Bob didn't get carpal tunnel syndrome from spending several hours scooping ice cream to go with the cake!

At the appointed time I spoke to the gathering and introduced the "guest of honor" and we sang Happy Birthday with gusto as No. 1300 came around the curve from the car barn carrying several of our honored restoration craftsmen who've worked for more than 38 years to keep No. 1300 in tip-top shape. It was a special moment and I confess it brought a tear to my eye. Perhaps you felt the same way?

We enjoyed the cake and ice cream and listened to a fine barbershop quartet who donated their performance to MSM. From what I could see, ridership was excellent all day. Unfortunately No. 322 came down with a brake problem and could not run, but No. 265 filled in admirably. By the way, I heard many comments from visitors who said they were disappointed they could not ride No. 322. Perhaps the PCC will never be as popular as our wood cars, but I think No. 322 is developing a following all her own.

Our passengers enjoyed **John Diers'** streetcar history presentation at the car barn. We also had Twin City Lines GM bus No. 1399 on hand to give passengers a classic bus tour of Linden Hills, ably driven and conducted by **Mike Buck**. We thank **Phil Epstein**, and the Minnesota Transportation Museum, for making No. 1399 available. It was certainly apropos to have one of the busses that replaced No. 1300 present at the party.

I arrived home tired and happy from a long day, counting it as a highlight of my summer. I hope one or more of *your* summer highlights involve a big yellow streetcar! ☺



MSM News & Views*Louis Hoffman—Senior Superintendent*

N*ew members and donations.* The Museum welcomes the following new Museum members.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Christa Anders | Darcy Anderson | Tom Balcom |
| Todd Bender | Jason Bowles | Steve Brown |
| Pat Connoy | Alan Dale | Denn Evans |
| Greg Flekke | Roger Forman | Lynn Gabriel |
| Gregg Guider | Steve Hamborg | Jan Hennefield |
| Paul Herzog | Mike Huck | Clark Johnson |
| Ben Kennedy | Samir Khariwola | Mike Lamatsch |
| Ethan Manthey | Judith Moore | Greer Nielson |
| Dick Niemiec | Henry Norton | John Schnabel |
| Ed Peters | Chris Then | Steph Untiedt |
| Davidson Ward | | |

We offer many thanks to Earl and Bettye Anderson, Bill and Rosalie Arends, Charles Bates, John Dillery, Blair Dollery, Dennis Fischer, Bill Olsen (in commemoration of the 100th birthday of streetcar No. 1300), the Onan Family Foundation, Eric Tratner, and Martin Van Horn for their generous donations to the General Fund and to the Car barn Security Fund. A special thanks to **Jerry** and **Muriel Olsen** for upgrading their membership to life membership.

In picking up the Museum's mail, I notice that a lot of members who live in multi-person households choose individual membership over household membership. Some have even downgraded from household to individual. Now I know that it's a difficult economy, that a lot of members' spouses aren't particularly interested in streetcars, and that it would take eight spousal streetcar rides to get your money's worth out of upgrading to a household membership (actually, 7-1/2, but that'd mean leaving the missus at the end of the line...). But that extra \$15.00 per year (or *only* \$1.25 per month, to use the public radio and television tactic for increasing member pledges) for a household membership (which is tax-deductible, don't forget) sure would help support continuation of publishing *Twin City Lines* four times per year!

And speaking of money, we're *so* close to having enough funds on hand to move ahead with the car barn security enhancements. Sure, it's a tough economy. But if every member gave a little, even \$5.00 or \$10.00, it'd really add up in a hurry. And, again, all donations to the Museum are tax-deductible. It's never

too early to start building up those tax deductions for your 2008 income tax return. Even if you don't need to worry about your 2008 tax liability (in which case, please consider a larger gift. . .), *do* worry about our fleet of historic streetcars suffering the same fate as those at the National Capital Trolley Museum (fire) or those at the Wisconsin Trolley Museum (vandalism). Yes, it *could* happen here. Don't let it be because the project was delayed for want of *your* gift to the Car barn Security Fund!

M*ay and June ridership.* May ridership was strong, with 4,226 regular passengers (3,419 tokens) and 275 passengers on five charters for a total of 4,501 passengers. This despite two rainouts, one day on which rain hindered ridership, and generally cool and damp weather. Memorial Day, typically the heaviest day of the year with ridership to and from the many activities at Lakewood Cemetery, wasn't an ideal day for either a streetcar ride or for outdoor activities at the Cemetery. Still, we carried 813 passengers.

June ridership was good as well, with 6,110 regular passengers (4,994 tokens) and 302 passengers on eight charters for a total of 6,412 passengers. This includes 774 passengers who rode on June 1 during the annual classic car show, just slightly less than our Memorial Day rider numbers.

T*he Classic Car Show* on June 1 was new this year and was a big success. Thanks to **Dave Irey** for spearheading this event. Let's hope it turns into an annual event (there are no official plans for it to be annual—this is, again, the “views” part of “News and Views!”). Hopefully our friends at the Minnesota Transportation Museum will again allow a Twin City Lines bus (or two?) on display? And **John Hotvet's** Greyhound *Scenicruiser* would sure look nice parked on Queen Avenue South! Certainly, it was fun for our passengers and volunteers and it was well received by car owners as well. Any other ideas? A vintage airplane flyover? Classic boats on the lake?

S*pecial events have become more important.* With flat regular ridership (and this is a common theme at railway museums nationwide), we've seen more of our income coming from special events. Logic, then, dictates that we have better and more special events. This, too, is a common theme at railway museums nationwide.

During the Halloween Ghost Trolley, we have two

(Continued on page 4)

Shop Update*John Prestholdt—Shop Foreman*

The Tuesday and Saturday work crews have been working on several small projects as well as keeping all three cars in operational order. It looks like our changing of trolley bases has solved our de-wiring problem, at least so far. The only noted dewirement was by someone named Prestholdt (?).

We attempted to solve an electrical problem with turning on the power from the front but a switch George Isaacs installed in the early 1980's now seems to need replacement. Of course this switch was turned on and off over 4000 times (it was probably designed for only a couple of times a year), so we have to leave it on and use the original power switch in the back barn until we locate and install a new (or newer) switch.

We have cleaned up most of our trolley catchers, created spring drawings and are getting these ready for either Winona No. 10 or Fargo & Moorhead St. Rwy. Birney car No. 28, or trade material with other museums. We are also doing the same work on our trolley retrievers to be used as replacements on our TCRT cars or as trade material with other museums.

I also want to publicly thank **Jerry Olsen, Andy Jacob** and **Tom Fairbairn** for a charter they did on Saturday July 12th. As it turned out this was a birthday party, and the Grandmother just happens to sit behind me in church. She made a special attempt to corner me and express how pleased the kids and their parents were at how they were treated and the charter and car barn tour were conducted. Yes we get these frequently and this is how we always try to present our selves, but I felt I needed to pass on this **GREAT JOB** response. (Editor's note: See text of the letter below. Great job, guys!)

Reminder—Check all the George K. Isaacs carbarn doors. A couple of people have noticed that the rear door in the Maintenance barn has been left unlocked. Remember that that door, when unlocked, can be opened from the outside (we have lots of copper in the back of the ready barn) so the Foreman needs to be real sure to check that door is locked before they leave for the day/night. ☺

(MSM News & Views Continued from page 3)

fully decorated streetcars and a decorated platform and station. One operates during the day for regular operations anyway. So why not a Pumpkin Patch Trolley? Come to Como-Harriet from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26 and take a ride to Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch for *your* pumpkin! Bring your kids, your grandkids, your neighbors' kids, kids from church—get the idea?! A huge thanks to **Ken Albrecht** for his generous donation of the pumpkins.

Last year's rebirth of the Holly Trolley was a success. This year, we're expanding it from four to five days by operating on Friday, November 28, the day after Thanksgiving, in addition to Saturday and Sunday, November 29 and 30 and the following weekend, Saturday and Sunday, December 6 and 7. If we start filling up the car on these five days, we can expand to later weekends (two-car operations would probably be too hard on Santa). Too bad no one thought to ask TCRT to donate a plow in addition to No. 1300! Again, bring your kids, your grandkids, your neighbors' kids, kids from church, etc. to see Santa Claus. We're told that Santa, enjoying the comfort of a TCRT standard car so much last year, will be looking to restore one to replace his sleigh!

But special events take work: decorating streetcars, stations, and platforms; putting on a Santa suit;

clearing the platform of snow and the flangeways of ice; and, just operating the streetcar during these extra shifts, sometimes in less than ideal weather. So when you hear about these special events, you can think "What a great idea!" *or* you can think "What a great idea—that sounds so fun; how can I help?!"

We get letters. One of the best things about picking up the mail is reading some of the nice letters that we get. And sometimes, they even come with checks! Look for this card on the ready barn bulletin board. It's from **Amy and Joshua Jonsson** of Vincent Avenue South, who chartered the streetcar for their son's birthday on July 12.

"We just wanted to say thank you to *all* of the wonderful volunteers who helped with the trolley charter and carbarn tour. Our son, the guests, *everyone* had a fabulous time! [Charter Agent] Kirsten [Jacob], thanks so much for all of your help and willingness to be so accommodating! Jerry, Tom, and Andy, thanks so much for a fun ride, excellent history and *fun!* Ringing the bells, buzzers, and whistles was a highlight for *all*. The carbarn tour was top-notch too! Rod, thanks for your help with the favors—they were a hit with the guests also! Our hope is that our guests came away with a little appreciation for the history of Minneapolis and the Streetcar Museum (we sure did!)." ☺

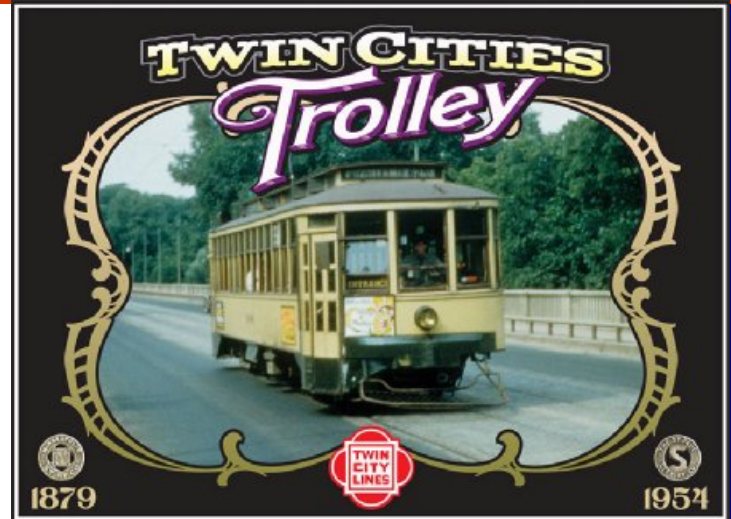
Historian and Archives Update

Aaron Isaacs—Historian

More donated photos. In June we received a group of 38 TCRT photos from member **Greer Nielsen** of Seattle that are new to the collection. He loaned the originals and I made copies. Also in June, **Art Peterson** of Chicago loaned about a dozen photos, all new to us, for copying. And **Dave French** keeps finding interesting photos on eBay. The latest is the first shot of the Jackson Street line north of downtown that I've ever seen. It was part of a package that included some vintage views of Jackson Street Roundhouse, also a rare subject. They were shared with the Minnesota Transportation Museum.

ARM experts list. MSM is a member of the Association of Railway Museums (ARM). Much of the benefit of ARM comes through networking with our peers at other museums and sharing knowledge. To assist the information exchange, ARM is starting a program called the "Experts List". Member museums are invited to name their most capable people, who will then be available to offer advice and help to people from other museums. We have many skilled volunteers. If you'd like to nominate someone else to be on the list, contact **Aaron Isaacs** at aaronmona@aol.com.

More Minnesota Reflections photos, more traffic. The latest group of 128 photos showed up on Minnesota Reflections in mid-July, bringing the total number of MSM photos and documents to 803. MSM's collection continues to be the most viewed, and the number of hits keeps growing at an almost fright-



ening pace, as shown in the following table.

| Month | Pages viewed | % increase |
|-------|--------------|------------|
| March | 130,895 | 22.9 |
| April | 165,023 | 26.0 |
| May | 241,534 | 46.4 |
| June | 314,931 | 30.4 |

38th & Nicollet mural. The weekend of July 25-27 saw the creation of a series of murals along Nicollet Avenue in south Minneapolis. One of the them, on the rear of 3801 Nicollet, depicts a Nicollet streetcar crossing the Minnehaha Creek bridge (see final draft above). It's a copy of a color slide I provided from the MSM collection. Check it out. ☺

Happy Birthday No. 1300

The birthday celebration for TCRT No. 1300, our Museum's "Mother Car," came off very well. The weather cooperated, we enjoyed good attendance by members and passengers and a great time was had by all. Many thanks to all who had a hand in making this very special day a big success. Below are just two photos taken on that day. The photo on the left shows No. 1300 and Twin City Lines GM classic bus No. 1399. On the right is the welcoming tent. We'll have more photos and a complete story in an up-coming photo supplement.



What's Happening?

| | |
|--------------|---|
| August 16 | Moonlight Trolley ride at CHSL. Special run starts at 10 PM. |
| September 1 | Labor Day "early bird" operations at CHSL starts at 9:30 AM. |
| September 5 | Last day of weekday CHSL service. Weekends only until the end of November. |
| September 6 | Excelsior's annual "Apple days" festival. ESL streetcar ops begin at 9:00 AM. |
| September 7 | Last day of weekend ESL service. Thursdays only thru the end of October. |
| September 13 | Moonlight Trolley ride at CHSL. Special run starts at 10 PM. |

Excelsior Streetcar Line News & Notes*Bruce Kobs—Asst. Supt.*

The footings at the ESL car barn are lighter since **Jim Willmore** and **Ken Albrecht** spear-headed a clean up day. **Bob Johnson, Marsh Ginther, Tom Fairbairn, Scott Heiderich** and **Bruce Kobs** assisted, as a trailer was backed into the ready barn and loaded with all metal to be sold for scrap. Old lumber and trash were hauled to the Lake Harriet dumpster. Paints, oils and recyclable materials were taken to the Carver County recycle center on county road #41.

The clean up was followed by the installation of a pictorial history display of streetcar transportation in Excelsior and the Twin City Lines. With the help of **Aaron Isaacs**, the archives of Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, **Darrel Leipold**, and *Twin Cities by Trolley*, **Bruce Kobs** was able to laminate reprints of special historical events along with descriptive narrative for this display at ESL. Six thousand passengers tour the ESL car barn each year so this history board allows our crewmembers to follow a chronological history of the streetcar as they give talks to our passengers. **Bob Johnson** installed the halogen lights to illuminate this display. Also located in the ready barn is a second display which shows pictures of DSR No. 78, TCRT No. 1239 and Winona No. 10 before, during, and following restoration. This display also highlights charter trips, the Halloween Trolley, and the Santa Trolley at ESL.

The Excelsior Fire Department conducted an hour long fire safety lecture followed by a burn which showed how overhead sprinkler systems extinguish a fire. This session was attended by **Karl Jones** and **Bruce Kobs**. Karl (MSM's safety officer) will implement this new knowledge at the car barns.

Marketing at ESL this season has included three exhibits. The first was at Mt. Calvary Nursery School Fun Night attended by 450 students and their families. **Bob Johnson** and **Bruce Kobs** staffed our booth which featured **Bill Olson's** operating streetcar display, and we handed out many brochures. The next event was at Bay View Event Center located at the Excelsior Blvd end of the ESL trackage. **Johnson** and **Kobs** with the same exhibit talked to the 250 registered travel agents and corporate event planners about charter services. Art by the Lake followed with all-day Saturday and Sunday displays at the Excelsior Commons. The event is attended by thousands so many good contacts were made.

The streetcar steamboat *Minnehaha* has included the ESL in their advertising and promotions. We are working closely with the Museum of Lake Minnetonka on brochures and promotional exhibits.

The Excelsior Downtown Business Group held their June monthly meeting aboard TCRT No. 1239 as a charter. Coffee and rolls were served at 8:15am, they rode the car, toured the car barn and continued their meeting at our Water Street stop until 9:30am.

Thursdays continue to be our heaviest ridership at ESL. The Farmers Market is open from 2-6pm at Lyman Park which helps boost our passenger count. We also operated all four days of Excelsior Crazy Days. Thank you to our foreman, veteran operators, and our newly graduated Operators so that ESL operates on a full schedule. **You are the LIFE BLOOD OF MSM.**

Dave Irely and **Tom Fairbairn** report that all rail bonds have been welded. **Scott Heiderich** and **Bob Johnson** are cutting the grass along the right of way. ☺

(Moonlight & Pumpkins... Continued from page 1)

The Pumpkin Patch will run afternoons on Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26. Ghost Trolley runs both of those evenings, so it will be a busy weekend. But one of the best things about the Pumpkin Patch is that it requires only a couple volunteers over the regular revenue operating crews. We're looking for storytellers and face painters to add addition fun to the Pumpkin Patch event. If you or someone you know might be interested, please let me know. If someone asks you about any of these events, you now have all the answers. ☺

A special photo supplement, with photos supporting some of the articles in this newsletter, will be sent to all who have e-mail addresses in a week or so. Be on the lookout for it.