

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



Nov-Dec — 2010

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

Many Thanks for a Successful Year

- *Despite the uneven weather patterns, the 2010 season was most successful*
- *Many thanks to all our volunteers for your dedication*
- *Thanks to all our members for your loyal support by renewing your Museum membership each year*

Streetcar CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule
 With this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** we are now in our winter publication schedule. Next issue will be sent to you on or about February 1st.



Inside This Issue

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>From the Front Platform</i> | 2 |
| <i>MSM Historian's Update</i> | 3 |
| <i>MSM News & Views</i> | 3 |
| <i>Upcoming Events</i> | 4 |
| <i>Shop Update</i> | 4 |
| <i>CHSL Pumpkin Patch Photos</i> | 4 |

Masthead Photo: Here's TCRT No. 1239 all decked-out for ESL's 2008 North Pole Trolley, featuring Santa Claus. In 2009 the ground was bare but this year, there will be snow on the ground for the North Pole Trolley, thus giving our riders the proper atmosphere. (MSM Photo Archive)

An Eventful Year

Rod Eaton—General Supt.

It's been an interesting and eventful 2010 operating season. It began with two broken trolley poles, a snapped trolley wire support pole, erratic weather, and mediocre ridership. But our season has recovered nicely with an endless Fall, a new 42nd Street crossing, and very successful special events in October.

The last three weekends in October were dry with unseasonably mild temperatures—perfect conditions for our annual Halloween events. Our own Farmer **Ken Albrecht** enjoyed the fruits of his labors watching children choose their future Jack O' Lanterns from the pumpkin patch. Pumpkin wranglers assisted Ken, while **Angela Frerichs** spent the weekend patiently applying temporary tattoos to children's arms.

Then, on October 18th and 19th, CHSL's track crossing West 42nd Street was ripped out and replaced. By the end of the week, the City of Minneapolis had laid new asphalt to complete the crossing. Many thanks to **Keith Anderson** and **Scott Heiderich** for managing this long over-due project.

CHSL carried 2,000 riders over the four nights of the Ghost Trolley. **Kathy Helde** managed our Alien Invaders, while **Dave French**, **Mike Helde**, and Mike's friend, **Travis Bay** and his family, provided the theatrics. Many of our riders told me they attend Ghost Trolley every year to enjoy these talented people. A large group is required nightly to make the event run flawlessly and we had four terrific crews. Several people volunteered more than one night, and **Karl Jones** and **Bill Ardens** managed to do all four. ESL's Halloween events were also very successful.

As it did last year, Trick 'r Trolley sold out all three trips on Halloween Sunday. This Wild Rumpus Books sponsored event is a must-have ticket for the preschool set. All in all, October was a busy, fun, and profitable month. My thanks to all the volunteers who participated.

At the end of this year I'll step down as MSM's General Superintendent. It has been a really interesting five years and now it's time to let someone else enjoy the ride. The General Super's job is to keep the streetcars running. I think I've managed to do that, but I had a lot of help. At one time or another, just about every member of the museum has lent a hand—often without my asking—making my job easy and pleasant. Many thanks to all of you.

The General Superintendent's job is greatly simplified by our museum's Board of Directors. The Board does an outstanding job that I think goes mostly unrecognized and under-appreciated. Our Museum is extremely well managed and remains financially sound. So I offer thanks to all the Board Directors, and especially Board Chair **Dave French**, Vice-Chair **Aaron Isaacs**, Secretary **Jim Vaitkunas**, and Treasurer **Scott Heiderich**.

As I write these lines, we still have Holly Trolley ahead of us, weather permitting. After that, our 2010 operating season will come to a close. We can all look forward to a few months of rest and recuperation. Next spring I hope you will, again, help your Museum work towards another interesting and eventful year. ☺

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 inter-urban 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
 November-December—2010

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar CURRENTS is a newsletter published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is January 20, 2011.

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



From the Front Platform — Thoughts on Our Museum

Dave French — Chair, MSM Board of Directors

As I write this Thanksgiving is just five days away. All of us could spend hours listing all of the things we are thankful for in our country and our home. One big part of my life for which I am grateful is MSM. Are we the perfect museum? Not by a long shot, there are plenty of things we could improve, myself included. It is always easy to focus on the negatives of any organization. But if you take a step back and look at the big picture there are many more good things about MSM than bad.

We still attract many thousands of passengers every year and we are financially sound, despite a struggling economy. We have beautiful streetcars to maintain and operate and we have great people to work with. When you think back to your MSM experiences this year, whether as an active volunteer, or a member who supports the Museum, I bet there were at least a few moments that made you really happy. Maybe it was that great article and photos in our fine history publication, *Twin City Lines*. Maybe it was when you finally hit the platform just perfect at the end of ESL or CHSL. Maybe it was when you completed that small part of the restoration of Winona No. 10, or when you got the Museum's books to balance at the end of the month.

One of my favorite moments happened just today at CHSL. It was about 30 degrees with a brisk wind. I had considered canceling our shift figuring few people would be out today. But we had canceled operations last weekend due to the snowstorm and I decided we should run the car today. We sold 26 tokens and carried 41 passengers, about what you'd expect when the weather is like this. But we did sell quite a bit of merchandise and earned almost \$200. We sometimes can get obsessed with numbers, and certainly 41 passengers in 3½ hours could be considered a poor performance. But I can tell you that while the numbers were small, we made 41 friends for the Museum today. I mean, what they lacked in numbers these people made up in happiness at being out and riding the streetcar. Right before our last trip, a group of three developmentally disabled adults and their care attendant arrived to take a ride. After I sold them their tokens and they were ready to board, one of these guys gave me a big smile, took my hand very gently and kissed it. Well gosh, that's something that doesn't happen

every day! All I could do is give him a big smile back and a hug. So I am thankful for MSM and the joy it brings me and to many others and I hope all of you are as glad as I am to be involved with the trolleys.

Soon it will be 2011 and every month we will have members renewing their memberships. If you are an active volunteer, you might think it is easiest to simply pay for your membership on-site, or if you are working with a new volunteer, get their money and membership form right now, before they get away! In reality, that procedure doesn't work too well for your Museum. This year we again had a few memberships that were apparently paid for at the station or carbarn, but money and membership forms did not get properly recorded. I will ask all of you to do us a favor and mail your renewal or ask a new member to mail their form and payment to our PO box. Here's the way it works. I pick up the mail at least once a week. Membership payments go to our treasurer **Scott Heiderich**, who deposits the funds and communicates with **Russ Olson** who makes sure the payment is recorded on the monthly accounts. I send the membership forms to **John DeWitt**, who updates the master

(Continued on bottom of next page)





MSM History & Archives Update — News on Museum Historical & Archives Activities

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Historian and Photo Archivist

Updates from the MSM photo collection. In the October *Streetcar Currents*, I noted that the MSM photo collection had 9,460 catalogued images. That number has now increased to 9,614. The reason? I finally entered the remaining 150 color slides into the computer. They had been in the collection for a long time, but I had never gotten around to entering them. This means that almost all the images currently in the collection have been catalogued, the end of a process that has taken many years. The next step will be to enter selected documents, plus any additional photos that happen to surface.

MSM's photo collection continues to be of educational use to the public. Here's a recent example. On page 248 of *Twin Cities by Trolley* is a photo of a Chicago Avenue car passing the Nokomis Theater just north of 38th Street. The building was converted to an auto repair shop in 1951. Now, it is being renovated as an arts center, and our photo is one of only two the new owners have found of the building in its theater days. So they called us up to request a copy for display in the lobby.

Twin Ports by Trolley in the works. John Diers and I are now well into writing the sequel to *Twin Cities by Trolley*. Titled *Twin Ports by Trolley*, this new book will cover the streetcar system of Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin. We've made three research trips to Duluth and discovered a wealth of photos and Duluth Street Railway corporate files at the University of Minnesota-Duluth's North East Minnesota History Center. We also found much more than we expected at the Douglas County Historical Society in Superior. We've also acquired the extensive research notes of MSM member **Jim Kreuzberger**, and of course, we are relying on **Russ Olson's** classic book, *Electric Railways of Minnesota*.

Even though the last Duluth streetcar quit in 1939, much earlier than in the Twin Cities, there is plenty of material to produce a very thorough and heavily illustrated history. Like *Twin Cities by Trolley*, the new book will be published by the University of Minnesota Press. Publication will probably occur in 2012. ☺



MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Operations

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Secretary and Superintendent of Operations

Donations Received. Many thanks to the following Museum members who have sent in donations over the last few months: **Pat Bjorklund, Scott Ingram, Charlie McCarthy & Lauren Ricketts, Davidson Ward,** and **Ron Wassem**. Our Annual Appeal is now on as announced in the flyer you have received. Please consider giving generously to your Museum.

Welcome New Members. We offer a big **WELCOME** to the MSM family to the following new MSM members: **Mark Brothen, Jesse Starbuck, Sam Van Tassel, Dave Larson, Dick Zawacki, Jim Peshong, Tom McGruder, Scott Ingram, Robert Taylor,** and **Darryl Streeter**.

ESL's 2010 Halloween Events a Great Success. Ghosts and goblins haunted the Excelsior Streetcar Line's tracks for two nights as our Museum's ESL volunteers again partnered with the Excelsior Historical Museum for the annual Booseum festivities. A record 1700-plus tots, parents and grandparents rode our streetcars, toured the museum and took in the stage show at the Water street station. ESL operated No. 78 and No. 1239, running in tandem nonstop from 6 PM until 9 PM both evenings. The weatherman cooperated by providing crisp but clear conditions. In addition, our first annual Halloween Storytime Trolley passengers got their money's worth thanks to outstanding performances by the Main Street Players from the Hopkins School of Performing Arts. Some 50 passengers enjoyed the event, co-sponsored by ESL and the Excelsior Bay book store. The Hopkins students dressed in costumes and recited a variety of Halloween stories—much to the delight of tots and their parents. Halloween-themed treats and juice were distributed at rides' end. ☺

(From the Front Platform Continued from page 2)

membership roster and communicates changes to **Jim Vaitkunas**, who updates the mailing list. So you see, we do have a process to keep things organized and functioning smoothly. When membership forms and payments go directly to a superintendent, trainer, or station agent there's more chance of the required information not being correctly recorded and communicated to Scott, Russ, John, and Jim. So please, make the extra effort to mail your renewal direct to MSM and help us stay organized.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, allow me to wish you and yours all the best for the upcoming Holidays and a happy and healthy New Year. ☺

What's Happening?

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| November 26-28 | North Pole Trolley featuring Santa Claus operates at ESL |
| November 26-28 & December 4 & 5 | Holly Trolley featuring Santa Claus operates at CHSL |
| December 14 | Annual Holiday Party at the George K. Isaacs Carbarn, Minneapolis starts at 7 PM |
| March 17 | MSM Annual Member's meeting, Firefighter's Hall & Museum, Minneapolis. 7 PM start-time. |
| April | Operator recertification and new Operator training schedule will be announced in early April |

**Shop Update — News from our George K. Isaacs and Excelsior Carbarns**

John Prestholdt — MSM Shop Foreman

The MSM shop crew has begun its yearly preventive maintenance program on our three streetcars at CHSL. We took PCC No. 322 out of service at the end of September and have been working on it since then. While there are still several electrical checks to do, we have moved No. 1300 into the warm barn for the remainder of the season to keep it warm for the Holly Trolley and to do some initial preventive maintenance.

A recent event of note is that we finally received the streetcar parts and other items we acquired as a result of the disposal of the Lake Shore Electric Museum items. This included the Dupont two-axle truck for Winona No. 10 and other items that we have moved to where we need them. We received a drill press that was moved from Excelsior to CHSL and our old drill press was sold to a member. We are in the process of cleaning and testing about 20 electric heaters most of which will be installed in No. 1239 at ESL next year. While we hoped to get those installed this year there is a lot of testing of the heater strips to be done. And then we'll have to install the conduit and wires and fasten them under the seats (we need help with this project—interested?). We also have a milling machine formerly used at the University of St. Thomas that **Dennis Stephens** acquired.

We still have three special projects for the winter: paint the floor on No. 1300; paint and stain the windows on No. 265; and, begin to learn, again, how to “re-cane” several of our streetcar seats with new rattan. Yes, we have several seats available as replacements but we have had to replace some seats this year and our supply of good spare seat backs and bottoms is shrinking. We are always looking for more help for all these projects so everyone is welcome either Tuesday mornings or Saturday mornings to help with maintenance and other projects. You can check out our shop at the Holliday party to be held Tuesday evening December 14th.

CHSL 2010 Pumpkin Patch A Most Successful Event

(Above Left) TCRT No. 1300 is pushing a trailer loaded to the brim with pumpkins. (Above Right) TCRT No. 1300 pulling up to the Linden Hills station platform with waiting passengers eager to board. Note the platform's decorations courtesy of **Karl Jones**. (Both photos by Dawn Holmberg)



Please mark Tuesday, December 14th on your calendar and plan to attend our Museum's annual holiday party at the Isaacs carbarn, Linden Hills (Minneapolis). This fun evening starts at 7 PM—nothing formal planned, just some nice treats (provided by the attendees) and good fellowship. If you join your fellow members, we ask that you also bring some canned goods for the local food shelves—this has been a yearly tradition here at MSM.