



Streetcar CURRENTS



August 2004

Traction Division – MTM

Excelsior Streetcar Line Notes

- *Weekend service will now end on Sunday, September 12th*
- *ESL will operate on Thursdays only from September 16th to October 28th*
- *No. 78 will maintain service until No. 1239 is released by the Mechanical Dept.*
- *Keep ESL carbarn tours to between 5 and 10 minutes in length*
- *Streetcar steamboat Minnehaha is now operating from the Excelsior town dock*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Status of the Streetcar Steamboat Minnehaha and LMD</i>	2
<i>Campaign for Como-Harriet Update</i>	2
<i>Announcements and Reminders</i>	3
<i>What's Happening? Upcoming Events</i>	4
<i>August 2004 CHSL & ESL Schedule of Operations</i>	4

Masthead photo: TCRT No. 1300 on July 1, 2004 at the Lake Harriet platform getting ready for the next load of NRHS convention folks.
Photo by Wendy Dunham

EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE UPDATE

We are now into the first season of the Excelsior Streetcar under the full management of the Traction Division. I wanted to give you all an update on where we are right now and where we are going this year, and next year.

First, we are doing well in the ridership department. The cool and wet May that reduced the ridership at Lake Harriet didn't affect the ridership at ESL because the line didn't open for business until Thursday, May 27th. Because the weather was considerably better in June ridership was as good as any previous June. In May, ESL

carried 130 total passengers in four operational days with 99 of those paying the fare. In June ESL carried 464 total passengers of which 244 paid the standard fare. ESL historically carries around 4000 to 5000 passengers annually and ridership statistics were not kept in detail so we do not have any good way to compare ridership to previous years. We always need to work to increase our ridership so please encourage your friends and neighbors to come out and take a ride on a 111-year old trolley car.

As mentioned previously, the 2004 operating season is ESL's first season under management of the Traction Division. We decided at the beginning that we would not make many changes in the way things were done at ESL until we have some experience in dealing with this new part of the Traction Division. We have made some changes, however, that all of you should know.

Duluth Street Railway No. 78 continued to provide ESL service because "gate car" TCRT No. 1239 has not yet been released by the Traction Division's Mechanical Department for general revenue service. However, we do expect that No. 1239 will be released sometime in July and will probably enter service in mid-August after training on this car is underway. We would like to hold a special dedication ceremony for No. 1239 this year and the way it looks right now this will occur sometime after Labor Day.

Changes to ESL Operating Schedule. In past years ESL operated its standard weekend schedule from the last weekend in May until mid-October, which generally coincided with the *Minnehaha's* schedule. However, a review of the ESL rider statistics we do have revealed that after Labor Day ridership falls-off drastically especially on the weekends. Therefore, we have decided to modify the ESL schedule for the remainder of the 2004 operating season as follows:



No. 78 (LaClede, 1893) lays over on the ESL Mainline. Hopefully No. 1239 will soon be able to give "old 78" a well deserved rest. (Wendy Dunham photo)

(Continued on page 3)

STATUS OF THE MINNEHAHA AND LAKE MINNETONKA DIVISION *Jim Vaithunas*

Many of us have been asked by our passengers about the status of the streetcar steamboat *Minnehaha*. We are pleased to tell you that the *Minnehaha* returned to service on Saturday, July 3rd. Because of the late date to enter service, the boat will initially operate a reduced schedule compared to previous years. This schedule is as follows.



burgee in accordance with a formal agreement recently signed and will continue to do so until a formal transfer of that asset is done, if that occurs. If you want to get some background and rationale for what is going on out at Lake Minnetonka, please read Museum Chair Scott Reed's column on page four of the Spring 2004 issue of the museum's newsletter,

- Saturday and Sunday—trips from Excelsior town dock to Wayzata dock depart at 1:00 PM & 4:00 PM.
- Wednesday—6:00 PM departure for the concert at Wayzata.

Telephone number for LMD is 952-474-2115. E-mail is icarus537@hotmail.com. Office hours are 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM Saturday and Sunday and 12:00 Noon to 6:00 PM Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

For the current schedule (it may expand as the season goes on) we suggest calling the Museum's automated information line at 651-228-0263 or visit the Museum's website at www.mtmuseum.org. Please refer passengers to these resources as well. This info should be updated by the time you are reading this notice.

The status of the Lake Minnetonka Division and the proposed Museum of Lake Minnetonka is still unclear. While discussions between the leaders of the MLM and MTM are still on-going, there has been no resolution yet and there might not be for some months. Currently the *Minnehaha* is operating under the MTM

the *Minnegazette*.

Regardless of how you feel about this situation, we all have to be careful when we talk about the LMD situation in front of our passengers. We've received word that some volunteers, as part of their end-of-the-line talk and in conversation with passengers, have been speaking ill of our Lake Minnetonka (Steamboat) Division brothers and sisters as a result of that division's discussions with Museum leadership about separating steamboat operations from the Museum. If true, this is clearly inappropriate and must stop immediately. It reflects as poorly on Traction Division volunteers as it does upon Lake Minnetonka Division volunteers. The end-of-the-line talk and all conversation with passengers should be to (1) provide constructive and positive information about the Museum, its activities, and its exhibit sites; (2) encourage membership and volunteerism; and (3) share information about streetcar and transportation history and technology. Airing the Museum's "dirty laundry" does not serve any of these basic purposes.

CAMPAIGN FOR COMO-HARRIET UPDATE

Here is the update on the [Campaign for Como-Harriet](#) fund raising project to rebuild our track.

- \$ 125,833 – Cash donations
- 36,741 – Outstanding pledges (to be paid in 2004 & 2005)

\$ 162,574 – Total cash donations & pledges

Cash match amounts (this amount applies towards the 20% TEA-21 grant matching funds requirement)

- \$ 42,500 – 1,700 railroad ties already on hand
- \$ 85,000 – Estimated value of materials & labor donated by Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

\$ 127,500 – Total donated matching funds/materials

Donations continue to come in based on the mailing we sent out in late May with Mayor R.T. Rybak's endorsement of our project, albeit not at the great pace we enjoyed in late 2003 and the first 3 months of 2004. If you haven't donated to the Campaign please do so.

Engineering Work. We have received comments from MnDOT State Aid on the Project Memorandum. MnDOT's comments will be incorporated into the final document. This is the capstone document that must be approved before we can put the project up for bids. The two engineering firms we have hired to do the MnDOT paperwork and to prepare plans and specifications for the project have begun work on the final engineering plans, drawings and other construction documents. These should be done by early August. Construction start time? Either late this fall or more likely early next spring.

The necessary preliminary engineering work has cost us much more than we anticipated. That is why we are so very grateful to each of you who donated to the Campaign. We still plan to install a fire suppression system in both our carbarns if there is any money remaining after the project is complete. But, right now there's no way of telling whether we will.

(EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE Continued from page 1)

- Last day of weekend service will be Sunday, September 12th.
- Thursday operations, in conjunction with the Excelsior Farmer's Market, will continue past mid-October through Thursday, October 28, when the Market closes for the season.

For the remainder of the 2004 season we also plan to conduct several special operations which will coincide with fall events and festivals in Excelsior, such as Apple Days, Excelsior's fall festival. These special operations will also hopefully help increase ESL's revenues.

We have tentatively decided that starting with the 2005 season we will make additional revisions to the ESL operating schedule to include starting weekend service on the first weekend in May.

ESL Marketing and Community Outreach. Under LMD control, ESL had a fairly good relationship and visibility with local businesses and the Excelsior community as a whole. With the current dormancy of LMD and the departure of MTM's full-time staff person at Excelsior this visibility noticeably diminished this season. (How soon they forget!) To correct this situation one of our volunteers, **Bruce Kobs** has agreed to be the ESL (and MTM) Ambassador and community liaison with

the businesses and local municipalities in the Excelsior area. We are just now getting organized and have yet to develop a strategy and concrete plans, so no immediate major results are expected this season. But we hope that by the 2005 season we will have re-established ESL as a visible, active partner in the Excelsior community.

Louis Hoffman has done, and is continuing to do, great Excelsior community promotion work. Louis contacted officials with the Village of Excelsior asking if we could place directional signs in several locations and quickly gained approval. In the course of coordinating the sign placement Louis found out that we had not submitted our application to the Village of Excelsior for ESL's annual operating license. This was promptly done. Louis is also working with MnDOT officials to have directional signs installed on two traffic control standards on Minn. highway 7 directing drivers to the Water street end of ESL. These two major activities will hopefully help our ridership, if not this year then definitely in 2005.

Many, many thanks to all of Traction Division's volunteers who are working regular and special shifts at ESL. It is you great people who "make it happen" at ESL. Keep up the good work and remember to tell your friends and relatives to come and visit Excelsior and take a pleasant ride on No. 78 or No. 1239 when it's running.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS

Edina Historical Society "Streetcars In Edina" Exhibit. The Edina Historical Society is opening an exhibit on streetcars in Edina on Saturday, August 7 and will run for several months. The exhibit includes numerous artifacts lent by the Museum and was created with the assistance of the Museum, primarily Louis Hoffman and Aaron Isaacs. Please stop by and lend your support to this partnership. We encourage you to attend the opening on August 7.

The Society's museum is located at 4711 West 70th Street in Edina and is open from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon on Thursdays and 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Saturdays. Please call 952-928-4577 for more information.

Museum Issues Special Passes to Edina Exhibit Visitors. All operating staff at the Como-Harriet and Excelsior Streetcar Lines should be aware of the **PURPLE SPECIAL PASS** that will be given to visitors to the Edina Historical Society's "Streetcars in Edina" exhibit mentioned above. These passes are two-for-one passes enabling the bearer to ride for free when accompanied by a revenue passenger. Procedurally, the motorman must collect the pass after determining that the bearer is accompanied by a revenue passenger (one with a day or season pass, 10 or 25-ride ticket, or season pass). These passes are valid for the rest of 2004 and all of 2005. All passes that are collected should be placed in the Treasurer's Lock Box

at the Linden Hills carbarn or the equivalent area in the Excelsior Carbarn by the foreman. If you have questions about the use of this pass, please contact Louis Hoffman at 612-729-0442 or hamhoff@msn.com.

ADT Alarm and Lake Harriet Carbarn Problems. We still are having problems with persons leaving the Lake Harriet barns and not checking the locks on the service doors especially on the weekend. One Sunday night someone did not even close the SW service door completely resulting in a trip at 23:30 hours.

People are still tracking grease around while walking in the ready barn—please don't step on those grease spots where the motor gear lubricant leaks onto the floor. Again this is a weekend problem.

In addition the end of shift Foreman needs to check that the ditch lights and front platform fan on No. 265 are shut off. In one instance the battery was discharged because the front ditch light was left on (the overnight battery charger is trickle only) resulting in a dead battery during the next day's shift. In another incident, No. 265's fan was left on overnight which also drained the battery completely. Karl Jones also found the money bag left outside the lockbox. Some people just seem to be in too much of a hurry when leaving the barns at the end of a shift.

(Continued on page 4)

Streetcar *CURRENTS* August 2004

Streetcar *CURRENTS* IS A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER FOR THE VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS OF THE TRACTION-STREETCAR DIVISION OF THE MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE Streetcar *CURRENTS* IS 8/20/04. PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO 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



MINNESOTA
TRANSPORTATION
MUSEUM

COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE
EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

July 31	Streetcar cleaning—8:30 AM to 11:00 AM (Linden Hills Car barn)
August 8	Linden Hills car barn open house—12:30 PM to 4:30PM
August 22	Linden Hills car barn open house—12:30 PM to 4:30PM
August 28	Streetcar cleaning—8:30 AM to 11:00 AM (Linden Hills Car barn)
September 6	Labor Day (Monday)—3 shifts with special "early-bird" service starting at 9:30 AM
September 6	Minnehaha <i>Princess Depot</i> Last day of the season

Reminder to all Foremen

- Prepare end-of-shift cash receipts report and put it in the blue cash bag—put the "X" and "Z" reports in the bag as well (CHSL only)
- Shut off all streetcar ditch lights and other appliances at the end of the day's operations.

AUGUST 2004 SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS

Included with this mailing is the August 2004 CHSL Schedule of Operations, and for those of you who also operate at the Excelsior Streetcar Line, the July 2004 ESL schedule of operations. If you see a vacancy that needs filling on either of these schedules, please contact either Jim Vaitkunas or the Foreman for that shift. Please consider filling a vacancy.

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 with someone.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS Continued from page 3)

Excelsior Streetcar Line reminders. A revised Foreman's checklist for operations at the Excelsior Streetcar Line has been produced. This was sent out by e-mail and regular mail to all Foremen and Operators certified to operate at ESL. We ask that you take a moment to read this and to review it just before you report for duty at Excelsior. A copy is also posted on the operations bulletin board for your review while you are operating out at Excelsior.

The amount of change in the ESL blue cash bag was increased this year to \$30 dollars: \$20 dollars in ones and \$10 dollars in quarters. Please make sure that you leave the equivalent amount in change in the next day's blue cash bag at the end of the day's operations. If you have less than \$10 in quarters, put more ones in to make up the difference. Hint to Conductors: when you collect fares encourage passengers to donate that fifty cents to the Museum. Doing this will reduce the likelihood of you running out of quarters during your shift plus we'll get some much needed donations.

Gopher Rail 2004

Friday, August 13th, 2004 — 6:30 PM

The Railroad Club at the University of Minnesota is proud to announce the 2nd annual Gopher Rail multi-media railroad show. This event, one of the first of its kind in the upper Midwest, is patterned after very successful similar events elsewhere in the U.S. (e.g. Winter Rail and other "big screen" railroad shows).

This year's show will be held in the air conditioned comfort of Rapson-Architecture room 100. It starts promptly at 6:30 PM on August 13, 2004. This year's show will feature presentations by local railfans John Hotvet, Steve Glischinski and Greg Smith. Admission is \$7.00.

To get additional updated info and to get directions, go to the following website:

<http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rrclubum/gopherrail.htm>