

# MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



# Streetcar CURRENTS



April 2005

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

## 2005 Season Highlights

- Our season starts on April 30th
- CHSL will be shut-down for 45 days or perhaps longer this season
- We plan to have the Linden Hills station open during CHSL's regular operating hours
- We are going to encourage our visitors at CHSL to ride the Excelsior Streetcar Line
- We plan to have a big member's picnic when the track project is finished.

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**Masthead Photo:** Excelsior stable mates Duluth No. 78 and TCRT No. 1239 will operate at ESL again this year.  
Howie Melco photo

## OUR 2005 SEASON BEGINS ON APRIL 30TH!

Our 2005 season officially begins at both the *Como-Harriet Streetcar Line* and the *Excelsior Streetcar Line* on Saturday, April 30th. This will be the 34th season for CHSL and the 7th season for ESL. While the 2005 season might not be full of the variety of activities and events that we experienced and enjoyed in 2004 (e.g., the opening of the Hiawatha light rail line), this season certainly looks like it will be busy.

Arguably the biggest event in the history of the *Como-Harriet Streetcar Line*, other than its opening in 1971, has to be the rebuilding during this operating season of our track using the TEA-21 federal funds. This will result in the total shut-down of the CHSL for at least a month and probably longer. I won't go into details here. Please read the TEA-21 project update on the top of page 2 for more information on the project and our proposed plans to deal with the disruption construction will certainly cause. Operationally, at CHSL we'll continue our early bird service on the major holidays (subject to the line being open) and we'll operate the popular Halloween ghost trolley again this year but perhaps with a slightly different format.

At the *Excelsior Streetcar Line*, we are planning to operate both DSR No. 78 and TCRT No. 1239 (see above photo) in regular service. At ESL we will have a large highly visible banner on the west end of the car barn and special directional signs throughout the town to direct passengers to the Water Street end of the line. We have also entered into a cooperative agreement with our friends at the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society to have their museum's hours generally coincide with those of ESL. This should help both our organizations. In addition, subject to the availability of operating crew, we plan to have three people on the crew on Thursday farmer's market days. Start time on Thursdays will be 2:00 PM rather than 3:00 PM.

For the first time in 34 years CHSL will not operate for a lengthy period of time during the operating season. This is unprecedented in our history. As the 2005 season begins and progresses it will certainly be a stressful time for all of us and I'm sure some of our passengers (and us) may not like the disruption. As we work our way through this most unusual season, we ask that you remain flexible, cooperative, dedicated and that you maintain your sense of proportion and humor as all these disruptive activities happen around us. Actually, it'll be up to you to make this season a success. If we all pull together, it can be nothing less than a success.

*Jim Vaitkunas—Chair of the MSM Board*

## SEASON OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Typically, at the start of a new operating season this newsletter contains lots of updates, reminders and information concerning the coming season. This year is no exception.

**Annual General Services Memorandum.** Much of the administrative information you need to successfully be a crew member is found in the annual General Procedures memorandum put out by the Passenger Traffic Department. You'll be able to get your copy when you report for your first shift at CHSL and ESL. Those of you who have the capability should already have your copy as this was sent as an e-mail attachment just prior to your receipt of this newsletter.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## TEA-21 Track Rebuilding Project Update

Well, folks, we're finally getting close! At the bid opening held on April 5th, a contractor's bid was below the maximum amount of federal TEA-21 funds allocated to our project. The bid has been certified and right now some side issues are being worked on (federal requirements and all that!). Then we'll need about two weeks to get the contract put together and signed, then we schedule a pre-construction meeting, then the contractor starts construction. All together, we estimate that this process will push the construction start out to late May at the earliest. What? You mean they'll start work that soon? Yep, that's right. We have heard that the contractor wants to start "right away." The scheduling is pretty much out of our control. Regardless of the start date, that means that it's possible that we'll miss anywhere from 4 to 8 weeks of revenue operations during the height of our season. And, while we will certainly try to convince the contractor to start work right after Memorial Day, there's no guarantee that will happen. Memorial Day is by far our most profitable day—if the weather cooperates we carry at least 1,100 passengers on that day alone. Bottom line is that our line being out of service will be a major blow to our revenue flow this season.

So, what are our contingency plans? There's nothing we can do to alleviate the revenue shortfall situation Lake Harriet. No operations equals no revenue—that's pretty straight forward. But we do have some preliminary plans to try to reduce the negative effects of our not operating at the height of our season. Here are some of the things we'll be doing.

- We will have our Linden Hills Station staffed daily during our normal operating hours. We're doing this so people who have come to ride can have a friendly person explain to them why we're shut down and to answer questions they might have.

- We're going to send out news releases to all the local media explaining what's happening.
- We're going to distribute a special informational flyer to all our neighbors in the Linden Hills neighborhood telling them what's going on.
- We're going to strongly encourage people to go out and ride the Excelsior Streetcar Line.
- We're going to have a handout for visitors who come to the Linden Hills station. The handout will have ESL's schedule, a map showing where ESL is located and a short list of the other nice features that the visitors can find in Excelsior.
- We're going to encourage charter business to have their charter at ESL if that's possible.
- We're reducing the cost of the season pass to \$35.
- We prepared a bare-bones 2005 budget with the shut-down in mind.

Do you have some thoughts or ideas on any of this? If so, please contact General Superintendent **Rod Eaton**.

This will certainly be a stressful time for all of us. Our passengers probably won't understand why our line is shut down, especially when they drove all the way from Eden Prairie, or Rogers or some such remote location, just to ride our streetcars. That's why it'll be doubly important to have someone at the Linden Hills station during normal operating hours. If you are asked to do this, we hope you say yes. As someone said recently: "It's always cheaper to keep a customer than to convince one to return." The job of the station agent will be to explain what's happening to those who visit, to encourage them to come back once the line has reopened and to encourage them to travel to Excelsior to ride our streetcars there. It'll be an important task. Please help us. Thanks!

*Jim Vaitkunas—Chair of the MSM Board*

## SAFETY AND SECURITY REMINDERS

Our Transportation Department issues special bulletins regarding safety or operational rules that are posted on the ESL and CHSL car barn operations bulletin boards. We are required to read the bulletin board every time we come on duty. Here is a summary of the current operational safety and security rules and procedures that all operating personnel need to follow.

- Each time you approach a facing point switch look at the switch points and make sure that the switch stand handle is completely down and locked. If it looks like a switch point is not firmly against the running rail stop the car and make sure it is. Speed limit while going through all switches in any direction is 5 miles per hour.

**Be sure rather than sorry!**

- At CHSL, when you approach the W. 42d Street crossing and the Linden Hills Station platform area, slow the streetcar down **so that you are going no faster than 5 miles per hour**.
- Turn off the controller when you are traveling over all switches to eliminate trolley wheel arcing.
- Watch for pedestrians, joggers, bikers, dogs, etc., especially in the area between the car barn and W. 42d Street and in the "glen" area at CHSL and along the entire line at ESL. Warn people and dogs with the foot gong. Slow the car down if you even have a hint that they don't notice the streetcar is coming up to them.

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(OPERATIONS AND ADMIN UPDATES Continued from page 1)*

**M**SM Shoulder Patches. Now that we are officially the Minnesota Streetcar Museum we need to remove the MTM shoulder patches from our gray or white uniform shirts. We have not yet decided on a final design for a new MSM shoulder patch. It will most likely be similar to our current logo as shown on page 4. We'll keep you informed on this issue.

**N**ew Name Plates on Order. With the restructuring of MTM and the birth of The Minnesota Streetcar Museum, one of the things that have to be changed is our nameplates. The Museum has ordered a new nameplate for each volunteer Foreman, Conductor, and Station Agent (generally, the volunteers who regularly meet the public). If you are not in this group and would like a new MSM nameplate, please contact **Louis Hoffman** at hamhoff@msn.com or 612.729.0442. As always, these will be produced by Awards by Hammond on University Avenue in Saint Paul and we will have them available by the start of the season. The cost is \$8.50 per nameplate. You can mail your payment to MSM, P. O. Box 14467, University Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414-0467. Please use the enclosed order form.

**T**elephone Roster. Also enclosed with this issue is the CHSL & ESL crew telephone rosters. Please take a moment to review this to make sure that the information on you is correct. If it is not, please call **Jim Vaitkunas** (952-688-7255) with the correct information.

**C**rew Calling. This season, the crew calling will remain unchanged for CHSL. **Mark Digre** will call the Foremen and **Jim Otto** will call Operators, Station Agents and the car barn Docents. In a change from past years' procedure, Mark and Jim will also call to fill those slots in ESL as well. We figured that since Mark and Jim talk to virtually everyone on the joint Foreman and Operator roster to fill the CHSL schedule anyway, they can also fill the ESL slots. That freed-up **Marv Krafve** to be our full-time back-up crew caller. Marv's main job is to fill those vacancies left after Mark and Jim have done their

work. This modified crew calling arrangement seems logical but is an experiment to see how the new system works. If it doesn't work well then we'll go back to our former method of crew calling. We do ask that you help our three crew callers with their most important jobs by doing the following.

- When you get a message on your answering machine from the crew callers please return it as soon as you can. This really helps our crew callers out.
- Call our crew callers around the first of the month rather than waiting for them to call you. Doing this really speeds the process up while also giving you a better choice of slots.
- If you can fill a vacancy as it appears on the schedule when you get it either via e-mail or snail-mail, call **Marv Krafve** right away. After the 15th of the month he is the one who keeps track of what vacancies remain on next month's schedule.

**B**ulletin Board. All personnel are reminded that they need to review the bulletins and notices posted on the operations Bulletin Board in the CHSL and ESL car barns. This is important as this is the only way we have to relay vital time-sensitive information to crewmembers during the operating season. Foreman should remind their crew to do this at the beginning of their shift. Bulletins and notices are also placed in the Station Agent's binder located under the cash register in the Linden Hills Station.

**C**all for car cleaning volunteers. One of the reasons our passengers return to ride our historic streetcars is that we keep them clean. This year we need volunteers on the car cleaning crews at both of our operating sites. If you can help clean our cars at CHSL, call **Maryellen Digre-Mueller** at 612-822-2386. **Bob Johnson** has agreed to lead the car cleaning efforts at Excelsior. You can call Bob at 952-937-9378. It only takes a couple of hours once every 4 to 5 weeks or so and by being a part of the cleaning crew you are doing your Museum a great service.

*(SAFETY AND SECURITY REMINDERS — Continued from page 2)*

**A**nother area that needs our close attention again this year at CHSL is proper operation of our ADT security system in the Linden Hills Station and in the car barn. **PLEASE** make sure that all doors are **securely** closed before you activate the alarm system. Make sure the upper latches of the car barn doors are **completely** latched. Please make sure that the wooden wedge is put in the handles of the car barn doors. Remember that an inadvertent activation of our ADT security system costs us money. Please take the time to make sure that all doors and latches are securely closed before you activate the alarm system and leave the station or car barn.

## **Bob Johnson Appointed Excelsior Streetcar Line Superintendent**

We are pleased to report that Bob Johnson has graciously agreed to be the new Superintendent of the Excelsior Streetcar Line. Bob, thanks for your willingness to pitch in and take on this important leadership position. We ask that each of you thank Bob when you see him next.

## Streetcar *CURRENTS* April 2005

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, 2005.

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

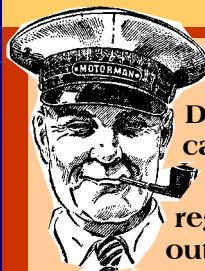
E-MAIL TO: [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com)



MINNESOTA STREETCAR  
MUSEUM

COMO-HARRIET  
STREETCAR LINE

EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE



### Bill the Motorman Says:

Don't forget to send in your membership application and dues to join the new MSM.

For insurance purposes all volunteers who regularly work on the streetcars, in the shop or out on the line need to be members.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- April 30 Streetcar cleaning, Linden Hills carbarn 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM
- April 30 Opening Day for 2005 season at CHSL and ESL—beginning of weekend service at CHSL & ESL
- May 16 Beginning of daily service at CHSL
- May 21 & 22 Linden Hills festival weekend
- May 27 & 28 Special Operations for the *Central Electric Railfans' Association* at CHSL (27th) and ESL (28th)
- May 30 Special Memorial Day "Early Bird" service to Lakewood Cemetery begins at 9:00 AM at CHSL

## MAY 2005 SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS

Included with this mailing are the May 2005 CHSL and ESL Schedule of Operations. If you see a vacancy that needs filling, please contact Marv Krafve. Each CHSL shift has a normal complement of four crewmembers. ESL shifts have two crewmembers. PCC shifts have only two crewmembers. If you see a space with no name on a shift on the schedule of operations then there's a shift 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

## MERCHANDISE UPDATE

You'll notice some new items for sale in our station this year. We have two different wooden streetcars. One is yellow and green with Como-Harriet lettered over the windows. The other is smaller, has Minnesota Streetcar Museum engraved on its sides, and is designed to run on Brio and *Thomas the Tank Engine* track. This trolley comes in two versions, a yellow Number 78 and a green Number 10. We are selling a wood track set for these toys which makes a circle.

Also new this Spring are long-sleeved blue denim shirts with "Como-Harriet Streetcar Line Linden Hills" embroidered over the left pocket. We have only ordered about a dozen of these as a test and I'm hoping they'll be a hit in the neighborhood.

Take a few minutes on your first shift in the station to look things over and become familiar with what we have and where things are. To make life easier, you'll find a picture Price List near the cash register. The two different wooden streetcars, of course, have

different prices. The pictures will help keep them straight. And there's a dedicated key on the register for almost everything we sell—fares and passes as well as merchandise.

As you move from the streetcar into the station, you change hats from Motorman to Shopkeeper. When things aren't too busy, take a look around your shop. Does the top of the display case need a quick clean? Do merchandise displays need straightening? Should some of the shirts be refolded? Candy jars refilled?

Merchandise sales have the potential to make up a larger share of our operating profit. This season especially, when we'll lose revenue while our track is rebuilt, every dollar we get in merchandise sales becomes important. As Shopkeeper, you have the ability to make a positive impact on merchandise sales. Like all of you, I'm looking forward to the start of this year's operations. Let's have a great season and let's have fun.

*Rod Eaton*—General Supt. & Chief Shopkeeper