

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



Streetcar CURRENTS



May 2006

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

The new season is fast approaching

- Check out your uniform to make sure it looks good
- Order those patches from Rod Eaton (see page 4)
- Tell your friends, co-workers, neighbors about our two railways. Encourage them to ride.. Tell them when you are operating.
- Try to learn how to operate that pesky cash register.

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Masthead Photo: Special operations are always fun. Here No. 1300 awaits the arrival of a busload of NRHS convention attendees on July 1, 2004. PCC No. 322 waits in the background across W. 42nd Street to load the next group after No. 1300's departure.

Wendy Dunham photo

A BRAND NEW SEASON

This year marks our 35th year of continuous operations at our Lake Harriet operating and exhibit site and our 8th year at the Excelsior Streetcar Line site. The start of operations at our Como-Harriet and Excelsior streetcar lines is just days away so it's time to take a look at how we look. Most of us haven't had our uniform out of the closet since last fall. Let's hope the pants still fit!

Last year we removed the MTM patches from our uniforms. We now have new Minnesota Streetcar Museum patches to fill that empty spot on your left shirt sleeve. You'll find them in the station for \$4 each--\$5 for nonmembers. And we have new Twin City Lines patches, also \$4 to members. The new TCL patch looks a bit different from the old ones--it's closer to the original logo, and it's stitched around the edge so it won't unravel in the wash. By the way, both patches would look great on a cap, jacket or the coveralls that you wear while working on our streetcars.. (See the scans on page 4 to see what the new patches look like and how to order them.)

Before you sew on the new patch, ask yourself if it might be time to buy a new uniform shirt. The way we look says a lot about us as a museum. A nice uniform, clean, pressed, and neatly worn, not only makes a professional statement but tells people we take pride in who we are and what we're doing. And remember, your out-of-pocket museum expenses are tax-deductible. You can purchase medium grey shirts and black pants at any of the uniform shops throughout the Twin Cities area.

While we're on the subject of cleaning up and making good impressions, let's not forget the streetcars and station. Our car cleaning crew does a great job, but operating crews should share the responsibility. Don't wait for the Foreman to ask you to sweep out the car at the end of your shift--grab a broom and get started! The same goes for the station. Sweep the floor (it just takes a minute), empty the trash, and straighten up the counter top and merchandise displays.

Merchandise sales play an important role in our annual income. Take a few minutes to see for yourself what we have and where it is. There's a sheet next to the cash register that shows merchandise prices. If there isn't a dedicated register key for an item, enter the number of items (1), press the "Quantity" key, enter the price (4.00), then press "Other." A "Cash Register Instructions" sheet is on the reverse side of the merchandise prices to help you through the transaction.

Speaking of the cash register, I know that many of us find the cash register intimidating. ("Intimidating" is pretty tame compared to the more colorful language I've heard used!) Well, maybe this should be the year we come to terms with it. Like any other machine, the register works fine when you follow its logic. Take your time, even when it's busy. Most problems are caused by rushing, and it takes a lot longer to fix an error than to avoid making one in the first place. It's sometimes more fun to operate a streetcar than to work the register, but the information and cash security the register provides are very important to us.

Rod Eaton—GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

From the Front Platform

Jim Vaitkunas—CHAIR OF THE BOARD

On March 14th, The Minnesota Streetcar Museum held its first annual meeting. Attendance was very light but we hope that in future years we can find a better location for the annual meeting and perhaps make it a social event as well to encourage attendance by more of our members.

Starting with this issue of the *Streetcar Currents* I will try to convey to our members who could not attend the annual meeting what was done and said. I will try to keep it short but I think that all members need to know the state of our Museum. Much of the detailed information to which I will refer can be found in the “member’s only” section of our website www.trolleyride.org (A fairly lengthy description of what you can find in the members’ only section can be found on page six of the last issue of the *Currents*.) To save space in this newsletter, the official minutes of the annual meeting and the financial reports presented at the meeting can be found at our website. I also will have the slides of the “State of the Museum” slide show posted on our website for your review. Please take a few minutes to review all this information so you can be well informed on our current status.

Election of Directors and Appointment of Museum Officers

Before I get to some of the highlights of the annual meeting here is some information that you all should know. At the annual meeting results of the election by mail of the six Board members of your Museum, was reported by Bill Graham, Vice-Chair of our Nomination and Election Committee. Here are your new Board members and the length of their terms.

Jim Vaitkunas—3 years
 Scott Heiderich—3 years
 Louis Hoffman—2 years
 Bob Johnson—2 years
 Bill Arends—1 year
 Dave French—1 year

This election was the first ever for our Museum. Our by-laws specify that Directors serve three-year terms. To get into the normal schedule of electing two directors every year we had to shorten the terms for certain directors. In another couple of years all Directors will have full three-year terms.

Immediately after the annual meeting, officers of the Museum were appointed during a special Board meeting. Here is the list of your MSM officers for the next year.

Jim Vaitkunas—Chair of the Board
 Dave French—Vice Chair
 Louis Hoffman—Secretary
 Scott Heiderich—Treasurer
 Rod Eaton—General Superintendent and Chair of the Railway Operations Committee

The State of the Museum

During my presentation to the members I reported that the state of the Museum is good. While the year was very trying in some ways (as I describe later in the report) your Museum made good progress in many areas and the year was successful. Here are some of the accomplishments our Museum enjoyed in 2005.

- Successful separation from MTM
- Incorporation as a non-profit organization and 501c3 recognition by the IRS
- Successful conclusion of the Campaign for Como-Harriet that raised over \$170,000.
- Track rebuilding project is finished
- Successful Halloween ghost trolley
- Conduct of first Holly trolley
- Successful operations at CHSL and ESL

Our financial profit and loss statement and the balance sheet for fiscal year 2005, which were passed-out to all present at the meeting (these can also be found at our website), I think supports the assessment that 2005 was a good year for our Museum financially. Considering our Como-Harriet Streetcar Line railway was shut down in the summer for almost three months at the height of our operating season, with the resultant considerable loss of revenue, the fact that we had an adequate surplus of cash at the end of the fiscal year was definitely good news for our Museum. This positive cash position was, to a great extent, due to the generosity of those MSM members who donated to the Founders Fund and those members who joined our Museum at the Lifetime Membership level. Ridership was good both at CHSL (when we operated) and at our other demonstration railway, the Excelsior Streetcar Line.

There is no doubt in my mind that the main strength of our Museum lies with the many, many people who volunteer their time and energy in all of the various tasks and areas such as railway operations, crew calling (our unsung heroes!), cashier

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MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman — SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT

New members and donations. We welcome new members **David Gepner, Thomas LeFebvre, Fred Oakland, James Quale, John Stewart, Tom Ulmer, and Gary Vars.** Total membership is now 201. With initial memberships now coming up for renewal, we'll stop publishing information about membership income since the statistics have less meaning. Suffice it to say that the generosity of our nearly 200 members and the generous donations of many of them to the Founders Fund during MSM's first year helped smooth, considerably, the rocky financial road through a challenging 2005 what with the costs of separation and establishing a new non-profit corporation and the lost income because of construction at Como-Harriet that shut the line down for close to three months during our prime season.

Annual Appeal update. Thanks to new member **John Stewart** and an anonymous donor for additional donations to the Annual Appeal totaling \$370. The total amount in the Car barn Fire Suppression System Fund is now \$40,021—close to enough to complete the work at the Excelsior Car barn but only about forty percent of the way to completing the work at both car barns. Have you made *your* contribution yet? If you did in 2005, how about another one in 2006?

We also thank Mr. Stewart, now a Pennsylvanian but who grew up in the Midway and attended the University of Minnesota, for a fine photo of our own No. 322 eastbound on Washington Street S. E. from the old footbridge at the U. of M. Mall.

Board to name car barn after Isaacs. The Linden Hills Car barn and Shops have been renamed after the late **George K. Isaacs.** Henceforth, the building will be known as the George K. Isaacs Car barn and Shops. The formal renaming and dedication, along with an exhibit featuring a cast plaque donated by MTM member and former Jackson Street Roundhouse leader **John Robinson,** will be scheduled later this year—please watch for details.

More memorials. We've received additional memorials in honor of **George Isaacs** from **Carl Barthelemy** and **Bud Goldstein** and **Angela Frerichs** bringing the total to \$4,219 and in honor of **Kathy Prestholdt** from **Ken Albrecht, Bill Arends, Dave and Betty Culver, Rollie Ehrenberg, Bud Goldstein** and **Angela Frerichs, Roy and Pat Harvey, Hugh and Penny Hestad, Florence Isaacs, Russ Isbrandt, Bob Johnson, Mike Miller, Jerry and Muriel Olsen, Fred Rhodes, Phil Settergren, Walt Strobel, Jim and Sue Willmore** totaling \$950.

MSM Is a Museum

Louis Hoffman — SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT

We're a museum and donations made to MSM are considered tax-deductible by the Internal Revenue Service because we're an educational organization. Now that the separation from MTM, the establishment of the new corporation, and the TEA-21 project are behind us, it's time to consider what being a museum means and whether we're doing the best we can to educate our passengers.

Currently, we have the end-of-the-line talk, which varies in quality. All of us who operate streetcars should think about what we say. Look at the suggested talk in the General Procedures Memoranda that are issued every spring. Consider what you can do to do a better job—and let us know if we can provide additional resources to help.

We also have exhibits in the Linden Hills Station, including the interactive computer and video exhibits. But do people use these and is this the best use of that space? A small group of members will be thinking about how to better use the inside of the station to better serve our passengers. Do you have an

interest or expertise in education, exhibit design, and historic interpretation? If you want to get involved, please contact **Rod Eaton, Louis Hoffman,** or **Aaron Isaacs** (the station also needs a thorough cleaning, exterior and interior painting, and to have its floor refinished – if you can help with this – or organize it, please contact **Rod Eaton**).

At Excelsior, we have car barn tours on every trip and, at Como-Harriet, on two Sundays per month. At Como-Harriet, we have a guide for car barn docents. At Excelsior we have a general guide for all crew members. As with the end-of-the-line talks, consider what you can do to do a better job—and, again, please let us know if we can provide additional resources to help.

This year, you'll see "then and now" signs along our right-of-way showing what it looked like at key points along the line "back then." We're hoping that these can be used to start the "Classroom on

(Continued on page 4)

(MSM is a Museum Continued from page 3)

Wheels” project that has been talked about for several years. And we’ll be seeking a small grant to make similar signs with information about each of our streetcars. It’s about a \$500 project – does anyone want to underwrite all or part of it?

Finally, longtime member **John Diers** has volunteered to create a curriculum guide and presentation for school groups. This fits into our goals of ramping up our educational efforts and growing our charter business. But we still need someone to reach out to schools and other youth groups. With all that’s out there, schools and youth groups won’t fall into our

lap, at least not in great numbers. We need to tell them that we’re here, that we’re affordable, that we fit into their program, and that we’re fun. Who will do that?

Many of us point out deficiencies in how the Museum is run or have ideas on how to improve it and hope that “someone” will fix the problem or implement the idea. I’ve looked through our membership list and there’s no one with that name. Who will step forward to be “someone?” Will you? We welcome your ideas. But we really need your time and talent.

The New MSM & TCL Patches are in!

Rod Eaton—GENERAL SUPT.

Many of you have been asking when we’ll get the new MSM patches for our uniform shirts, our ball caps, etc. Rod Eaton reports the good news that the new patches have arrived! Scans of both the MSM and Twin City Lines patches are shown on the right. They look great and are much higher quality than the old patches. Here’s how you order your patches by mail.

- 1) Clip the order form below (or print the order information on a separate sheet of paper) and complete the information on it.
- 2) Costs for MSM Members: \$4.00 for each MSM patch and \$4.00 for each TCL patch.
- 3) Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope (SSAE). If you order more than four patches put extra postage on the envelope (a 24 cent stamp for 5-8 patches another stamp for 9-12 patches, and so forth).
- 4) Mail the order form, the SSAE and your check (made payable to Minnesota Streetcar Museum) for the total amount for all patches shown on the order form to:

Rod Eaton:
11201 Red Oak Court, N.
Champlin, MN 55316

You can order patches through the mail until May 15th. After that date, the stock of both patches will be located in the Linden Hills station and you can get your patches there whenever the station is open.



MSM & TCL PATCH ORDER FORM

NAME: _____

MSM patches: Quantity _____ Total: \$ _____

TCL patches: Quantity _____ Total: \$ _____

ORDER TOTAL: \$ _____

THE TWIN CITY LINES



(From the Front Platform *Continued from page 2)*

operations, streetcar maintenance and restoration, track and overhead maintenance, publicity and promotion, training and safety, and so forth. Our Operators are the backbone of our Museum. Without them we would not generate the revenue that allows us to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage for future generations. In addition there are the other folks who do the behind the scenes things like grounds keeping, building maintenance, streetcar cleaning, etc., that has given our Museum the well-earned reputation as a well-managed and good looking historic streetcar operation. A lot of this work is not noticed by most of us but the work done "behind the scenes" is very necessary if we are to provide a historically accurate setting to entice people to ride our streetcars and to encourage them to come back to ride again and especially to tell their friends, neighbors, relatives, etc., about our historic streetcar operations.

We did have our trying moments in 2005, there is no doubt about that. Here are just a few of the challenges that the officers and volunteers of your Museum we had to overcome in 2005.

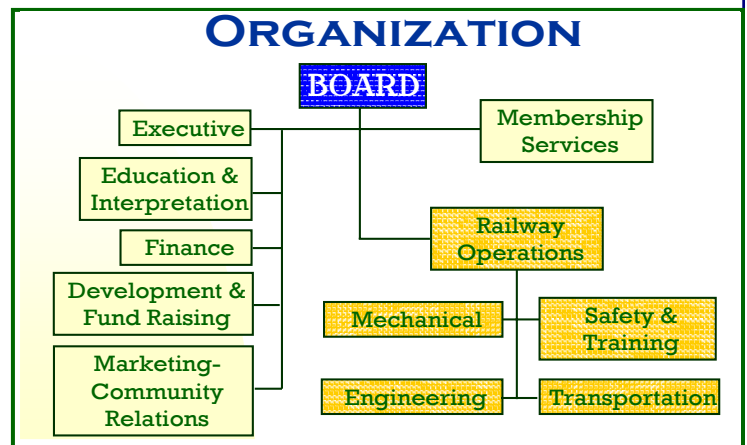
- Managing and coordinating the track rebuilding project with our consultants and the contractor turned out to be more time consuming and nerve wracking than we expected. However, the work is done and the track is now rebuilt thus giving our passengers and historic streetcars a smooth ride that will no longer damage our streetcars.
- The separation from MTM and the creation of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum turned out to be distracting, very time consuming and expensive for your Museum. Negotiations over finances and other separation issues seemed to take longer than necessary and our payment of expensive legal fees cut deeply into our cash reserves. But we are now an independent museum, recognized by both the State and Federal governments as a non-profit organization, and the savings in insurance and administrative overhead expenses made all the hard work worth it.
- This unexpected problem of the broken flange on TCRT No. 1239 resulted in this fine car being out of service the entire year. Our shop forces could have easily and quickly sent the wheels off for repair and probably would have been able to put the car back in service by the fall of 2005 if it wasn't for other priority projects like the track rebuilding project.

New Management Structure for the Museum

The chart at the bottom of this column shows the new management structure for your Museum. Up until 2005 most of the functions shown on this chart were performed by our parent organization, MTM. When we became a separate, stand-alone organization we were then required to perform these functions ourselves. Some of these functions we have already mentioned such as holding the annual meeting, conducting a formal election of Board members and the creation of a management structure to support the museum and perform those functions required of an independent corporation. Rather than the informal Traction Committee, we now have to hold formal Board meetings to meet statutory requirements. This new structure does create more work for all of your Board members and Officers but the advantages of being an independent organization outweighs the extra work involved.

Much credit and thanks certainly must go to those individuals who agreed to assume the responsibilities and duties inherent in the functions performed by our new committee structure. **Rod Eaton** has done outstanding work in managing our railway operations as General Superintendent of Railway Operations. **Bob Johnson** has done super work as Superintendent of the Excelsior Streetcar Line. **John DeWitt** has preformed the daunting task of membership services extremely well. Throughout 2005 **Bill Graham** was outstanding as our Treasurer. Now **Scott Heiderich** is our new Treasurer and we're already making good progress in the finance area. **Russ Olson** has done an outstanding job as our accountant **Louis Hoffman** keeps the administrative matters tied together by doing superlative work as our Corporate Secretary. I know I missed many people who all contributed to the success we enjoyed in 2005. To everyone I say: "Thanks for a job well done."

.....**Next issue.** What might be in our future?



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
 May 2006

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, 2006.

Please send items to editor 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

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

APRIL 29	STREETCAR CLEANING AT COMO-HARRIET: 8:30 TO 11:00 AM
MAY 4	START OF THE ESL OPERATING SEASON
MAY 6	START OF THE CHSL OPERATING SEASON WEEKEND SERVICE
MAY 19	START OF CHSL DAILY SERVICE
MAY 20 & 21	LINDEN HILLS FESTIVAL
MAY 20	TRACK REBUILDING PROJECT DEDICATION CEREMONY
MAY 29	CHSL MEMORIAL DAY EARLY BIRD SERVICE BEGINS AT 9:00 AM

Operations Update

Jim Vaitkunas—OPS CHIEF

Normally, each issue of the *Streetcar Currents* published during our operating season (May-November) will have the upcoming month's schedule of operations and other related operations instructions, rosters, etc., included with the issue. For this issue, however, we will delay issuing the schedule. The new schedule should be sent out to everyone either by e-mail or USPS mail no later than May 1st. Please be on the lookout for this information.

You're getting these materials a little late mainly because of the amount of materials that need to be prepared for all operating personnel. Here's a "head's up" on what to expect in this mailing.

May operations schedules for CHSL and ESL. We are still calling people to fill the vacancies in the May operations schedules for both our demonstration railways. Back-up crew caller, **Marv Krafve** still has about 10 people he needs to call. If you haven't been called yet by any of our crew callers **please** call Marv as soon as you read this at 763-478-2767.

New Operating Rules and Regulations. For the first time in over 20 years we will issue new rules that will govern our streetcar operations. You will learn more about this in the up-coming operations mailing.

General Procedures Memorandum. The general procedures memos for both railways are complete but copies have not yet been made. While there are not any substantive changes to these procedures from past years, reading this year's general procedures memo will refresh your memory on our standard operating and administrative procedures.

Special Operating Instructions. While most of us became familiar with our new sequence of operations last August when we began operating on our rebuilt track, some reminders are in order at the start of this season. This special instruction information will be included in the mailing.

TRACK REBUILDING PROJECT DEDICATION CEREMONY ON MAY 20TH

Please mark Saturday, May 20th at 1:00 PM on your calendars. This is when we will hold a special ceremony to signify the completion of our track rebuilding project that was mostly completed last year. The intent of the short ceremony is to honor and recognize those who helped with the project and also to recognize and thank the donors who contributed over \$170,000 during our very successful fund raising effort, the *Campaign for Como-Harriet*.

The day should be very festive. We have scheduled a Dixieland band to come and play starting around 12:30 PM or perhaps a few minutes earlier. Then at 1 O'clock we'll have a series of short speeches basically thanking all who helped with the project, those who donated to the Campaign, etc. After that we'll have a ceremonial driving of a gold-spike (not real gold of course). Then all in attendance will take a ride on both No. 265 and No. 322 to the north end of our railway to see how great the ride is on our new track. After the ride we'll have cider and cookies up at the car barn and the car barn will be open for tours.

We hope so see as many Museum members and friends as possible attend this gala event.