



Streetcar CURRENTS



July 2006

Minneapolis & Excelsior, Minnesota

What Makes you Volunteer with Our Museum?

- What turns you on and makes you volunteer with MSM?
- Tell your friends why you volunteer with MSM. They may feel the same way.
- Mention the fun you have during the end of the line talk or while you are pulling platform or station duty
- Welcome our new Operator Trainees and make them feel at home on your next shift

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Masthead Photo: Two beauties on a gorgeous day! What more could one ask for, eh? No. 265 (left) and No. 322 operating on a beautiful Lake Harriet Sunday afternoon—June 18th to be exact..
Jim Vaitkunas photo

Interpretive Signs Installed at CHSL

Last year **Louis Hoffman**, **Rod Eaton** and **Aaron Isaacs** agreed that MSM should try to do more than just run streetcars. We've attended plenty of seminars on the value of historic interpretation at Association of Railway Museums (ARM) conferences. Interpretation covers a whole range of methods to better communicate our historic message to the visiting public. We're a museum and that's what good museums do. So, we decided, and the Board concurred, that we would place a series of interpretive signs that show the streetcar line when it was still in service.



This photo shows one of the interpretive signs located approximately where the photographer was standing in 1905 when he took the photo of the original Linden Hills station shown on the sign. *(Jim Vaitkunas photo)*

The Museum then successfully applied to the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHNC) for a \$750 grant to install the interpretive signs along the Como-Harriet right of way. LHNC is responsible for distributing City of Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds. It solicits proposals twice a year and disperses several thousand dollars in grants, usually no more than \$1000 per grant.

There are 12 aluminum signs, each 2 x 2 feet. One side of each sign is coated in vinyl, and on the vinyl is printed an historic photo of the Como-Harriet Line in service. The photos on the signs range from 1905 to 1954 and are displayed so the viewer is looking at the historic view and simultaneously at the same view today. It is immediately obvious what has changed. Below each photo is an explanatory caption, and below that the words "Como-Harriet Streetcar Line" bordered by the MSM and TCRT logos.

The signs are attached to overhead wire poles, stairway railings, and to the fence along Queen Avenue overlooking the car barn. By the time you read this, 10 of the 12 signs will be installed. The two near the pedestrian underpass will wait for the city to finish painting the railings—hopefully soon.

Here are the sign locations, moving from south to north:

1. At the stop of the stairs leading from Linden Hills Blvd. down to the car barn.
2. On the fence along Queen Avenue overlooking the car barn. This is the only 2-sided sign, with views looking both north and south.
3. Halfway between the car barn and 42nd Street, facing north.

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From the Front Platform

Jim Vaitkunas—Chair of the Board

Why do YOU volunteer with MSM?

For an all-volunteer group such as ours, recruiting and retaining our members is a constant job that all of us need to consciously work on. We don't have any paid employees so of necessity we rely on you, and your fellow volunteers, to make anything and everything happen in MSM. Some of us are less visible in our volunteer work because what we do isn't done on the Linden Hills Station's platform. But regardless of what you do, and where or when you do it, your contribution is vital to the success of our Museum.

The eternal question! What motivates **YOU**, our faithful volunteers, to work for nothing on a sometimes very difficult job and smile the whole time? If someone could write a book with sure-fire ways to recruit, motivate and retain volunteers, they could easily retire on the sales of that book!

Some of us do what we do because it's truly fun to operate the streetcars. Some of us like to be with people and what better place to meet nice people than on the streetcars. Others may have a more altruistic reason for volunteering. Some of us work at ESL and CHSL because we realize that we are keeping alive skills and techniques that have long since been forgotten by the mainstream transit industry. Some of us want to try to preserve a past that only a dwindling few can remember today. Some of us do what we do to educate our passengers and our future passengers.

So, why do we volunteer to operate and maintain the streetcars and our physical plant? Perhaps a review of three of our MSM goals may help us answer the question why do we do what we do.

GOAL #1: *Acquire, catalog display, and properly store artifacts that assist the Museum in developing and maintaining a collection that interprets and represents the broad spectrum of electric railway vehicles that operated in Minnesota and for the Twin City Rapid Transit Company, and other Minnesota traction/transit operators.*

GOAL #2: *Educate the Linden Hills and Excelsior, metropolitan, and statewide communities, members, passengers and volunteers about the history and historic significance of the electric street railway and public transit generally, especially as they relate to Minnesota.*

Goal #3: *Preserve the methods and skills that were necessary to build and maintain electric street railways and public transit systems while authentically, economically, and safely interpreting maintaining operating and restoring the museum's streetcars and other physical assets.*

Are you doing something that would help us meet one or more of our goals? I'm quite sure you are. Operating the streetcar in a safe manner and wearing an appropriate Operator's uniform educates our passengers on what it was like to travel on the streetcars. Maintaining and repairing our streetcars and work on our track and overhead wires preserves rare skills and techniques. Restoring our streetcars helps educate and interpret our electric transit history.

It is necessary and downright good to have fun volunteering with MSM. And if having fun is what motivates you to volunteer with CHSL, that's OK. If you aren't having fun we will quickly lose you as a volunteer anyway! We encourage you to have as much fun as you can stand.

So, when we do the "behind the scenes" things like crew calling, checking and tightening track bolts, totaling up the volunteer hour statistics, even composing this short editorial, all of this work contributes to meeting our organization's goals. And we all should be proud of what we are doing to meet our goals. No contribution is too small when we all pull together to preserve Minnesota's transportation history and to educate our neighbors and passengers on what is was like 60 years ago to ride a streetcar.

Want to learn more about our goals, objectives and plans? If so, call me at 952-688-7255. I'll be happy to mail you a copy of our goals and objectives and long-range plans and our annual work plan. This might prove enlightening to you and help you better understand why we do what we do at Lake Harriet and at Excelsior.

Welcome to Our New Volunteers

Our new group of Operator trainees have now graduated from training and are being integrated into our operations at both ESL and CHSL. So, we'd like to formally welcome the following new Operators.

Excelsior Streetcar Line

Teresa Babler	Claire Luxford	Ann Elise Ware
Jim Clifford	Bill Robinson	
Marsh Ginthner	Dan Schwizer	
Kim Lesinski	Gary Vars	

Como-Harriet Streetcar Line

Rick Anderson	Charles Fritzen	Marcia Sanoden
Floyd Child	Chris Heck	Joe Scala
Beth Cochran	Vic Lauren	
John Diers	Michelle Manke	

Welcome to each of you!

MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman — Senior Superintendent

Membership news. We welcome new member **James Clifford**. Total membership since inception is now 205.

Scout Saturdays and Tuesdays. This is an important reminder to operating crews at both Como-Harriet and Excelsior about the Museum's cooperative arrangement with the Northern Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Please remember that every Saturday is "Scout Saturday" at Excelsior and every Tuesday is "Scout Tuesday" at Como-Harriet.

On Scout Tuesdays and Saturdays any Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Explorer, or Venturer in uniform, in a unit t-shirt (identifying the pack, troop, post, or crew by number, such as "Pack 120"), or with other official BSA identification such as a card may ride for free *with another paying passenger*.

Just to let us know how this is working, if foremen could let me know if you have any Scout groups. Please e-mail me at hamhoff@msn.com. There's no need for details; I'm just curious to know whether Scout units are taking advantage of this. I do know that two units have ridden at Excelsior and one at Como-Harriet.

Minnehaha season to open July 4. We've received information that the Museum of Lake Minnetonka's steamboat *Minnehaha* will begin its 2006 season on Independence Day, July 4. Passengers wanting to verify the operations schedule for the Minnehaha or to obtain more information about the Minnehaha should contact MLM at 952.474.2115 or www.steamboatminnehaha.org. We hope to have brochures and a poster available at both Como-Harriet and Excelsior.

Sprinkler and Alarm System Update. After many intensive weeks of research, phone calls and coordination with several vendors, the first step in our George Isaacs and Excelsior carbarn protection efforts is now complete. The Board has approved the expenditure of over \$3,000 to have new intrusion detection and fire alarm systems installed in both carbarns and in the Linden Hills Station.

Here's the background on this decision. New alarm systems are required because of the planned installation of the sprinkler systems in both carbarns. The effort to find a new alarm system was led by **Bob Johnson** and **Karl Jones**, both of whom did excellent work, and focused on getting bids from our current provider, ADT-TYCO and from three other firms. After comparing the bids from the various firms your Board decided to go with the Silent Knight Company, a local Bloomington

firm, rather than our current one, because the installation and equipment bids were the lowest and the monthly charges were much less than with our current vendor at Lake Harriet.

The new alarm systems will be capable of full integration with the sprinkler systems when they are installed and will be fully compliant with current US Fire Protection Association standards.

We will keep all of you informed as the installation of the systems progresses. Undoubtedly we will need some kind of training with key holders once the systems become operational. This may require a series of short training sessions at the carbarns, so when you receive notice of the training in the mail or by e-mail, please try to make a special effort to attend one of them.

Vote for the Toonerville Trolley! We've received word from the Toonerville Collectors' Club that the National Toy Hall of Fame in Rochester, New York is considering the Toonerville Trolley for election to the Hall this fall. The Toonerville Trolley, created by artist **Fontaine Fox**, was a tin wind-up toy originally made in Germany and manufactured for some forty years. It was featured in seventeen two-reel live action motion pictures filmed between 1920 and 1922 at the Betzwood Motion Picture Studio in Pennsylvania and became a Hollywood star in 1936, appearing in three animated color movies.

How does MSM fit in? The Club is contacting trolley museums nationwide to ask them to ask their members to vote for the Toonerville Trolley's election to the Hall! You can vote online: please go to www.strongmuseum.org, click on National Toy Hall of Fame, find the nominating form, type in "Toonerville Trolley," and submit. The Strong Museum, which houses the Hall, bills itself as "the museum of play!"

The Toonerville Collector's Club has about 100 members nationwide. Its purpose is to keep alive the whimsical spirit of **Fontaine Fox's** Toonerville Folks and the Toonerville Trolley. It produces a quarterly newsletter called the *Toonerville Times* filled with great colored pictures and stories about the Trolley and artist Fontaine Fox. If you're interested in finding out more or in becoming a member, you can contact the Toonerville Collectors' Club at 198 Halpine Road, No. 212, Rockville, Maryland 20852 or the Club's president, **Bill Tait**, at wtaite@vzavenue.net.

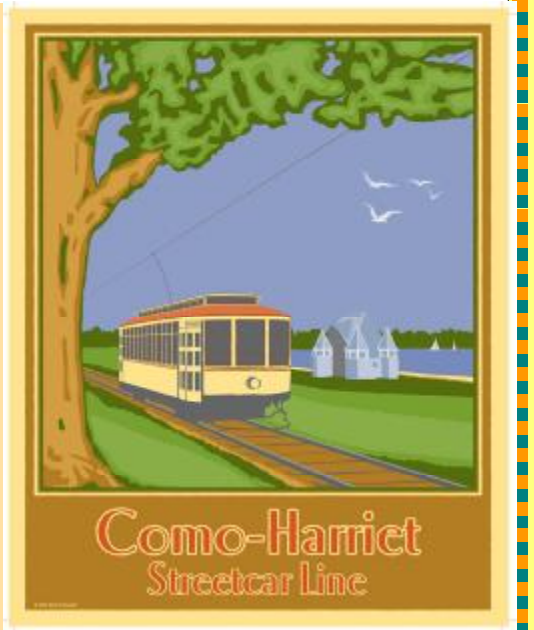
Museum Store Update

Charles Barthold—Merchandise Manager

- The yellow streetcar t-shirts are now available in all sizes from child XS through adult XXL. Note that the adult XXL is \$2 more than the other adult shirts and is priced at \$16.00.
- We will not be reordering the ghost trolley T-shirts this year, so when we're out of a size that's it. Now is the time for you to get yours if you haven't already purchased one.
- A reminder—There should be no need to take items from the display area of the cabinet, unless it is the last one. There is a supply of pins and patches in a plastic container beneath the display area. Magnets are also found there. Other items should be out on the shelves to the right.
- What are those folded up boxes located behind the counter? When a poster is purchased, make one of the flats into a box and you have a poster carrier.

A colorful new Como-Harriet Streetcar Line poster is available for sale at the depot or by mail order via our website. Measuring 16 x 20 inches on heavy paper stock, it depicts streetcar No. 1300 passing Lake Harriet, with the band stand in the distance. The artist is Rick Schuster, Senior Graphic Designer at Metro Transit. You've seen Rick's work before—he drew the poster showing a Hiawatha LRT train slicing through the night, based on a famous advertisement for the French National Railways.

This time Rick based the drawing on the classic 1920s travel posters created for the Chicago, South Shore & South Bend Railroad. They were celebrated in the book *Moonlight in Duneland*. If you like that look, you'll love this poster. Rick generously donated his labor, including recommending a printer and reviewing the proof. Our thanks to him. Aaron Isaacs was the project manager, working with Rick on the design and overseeing the printing. Charles Barthold acquired folding boxes to hold the rolled posters and is overseeing sales. The posters are on sale at the depot for \$5.00. *Get yours today.* Aaron Isaacs



Como-Harriet Update

Rod Eaton — General Superintendent

Many Thanks to Karl Jones

After serving as Shop Foreman at Como-Harriet for more than fifteen years, **Karl Jones** has decided that he's ready for a rest, and a well-deserved one I would say. Karl did an outstanding job as our Shop Foreman, establishing a methodical preventive maintenance program for our operating streetcars and keeping the shop organized, clean and running smoothly. The fact that our fleet of historic cars operates as reliably as it does is a clear tribute to Karl's vigilance.

Karl's presence was felt around the barn in many other ways. He replaced light bulbs, stocked the refrigerator, swept the floors, and cleaned the toilet. We all owe Karl our thanks. The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is blessed with a lot of very dedicated volunteers, but none more so than Karl.

Fortunately, Karl is remaining active in the Museum. He continues in his roles as Foreman at CHSL and ESL, Keeper of the Keys, and -- most notably -- The

Count during ghost trolley operations.

John Prestholdt is our
New Shop Foreman

We're also fortunate that **John Prestholdt** has accepted the position of Shop Foreman. John brings considerable experience to the position, and we appreciate his willingness to assume the duties and responsibilities of shop Foreman.

The Business Side of Things

As many of you know, John has been keeping ridership statistics since the inception of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. He just shared numbers for May, and they're a little disappointing.

We all know how much our revenue business is affected by weather. It seems to defy logic, but revenue lost to a rainy (or too hot, or too cool) week is

(Continued in the middle of page 5)

(Interpretive Signs Continued from page 1)

4. Just south of 42nd Street, showing the “chalet” station.
5. Just north of 42nd Street, showing the 1900 Linden Hills station.
6. At the north end of the boarding platform, facing south.
7. At the pedestrian underpass, facing north (to be installed after railing painting completion).
8. At the pedestrian underpass, facing south (to be installed after railing painting completion).
9. At the S-curve in the Glen, facing south.
10. Just south of Cottage City stop, facing north.
11. At the Lake Calhoun end of the line, showing the Lakewood Cemetery station.
12. At the Lake Calhoun end of the line, facing north.

Aaron Isaacs proposed the project, secured the grant, laid out the signs, oversaw production and installed most of them. **Ken Albrecht** designed and fabricated mountings for the two most difficult sites.

So next time you're at Lake Harriet, take the time to walk the line and check them out.

Aaron Isaacs — Museum Historian



Above. Cottage city, then and now. The 1906 photographer was standing almost exactly where the sign is now placed.

Below. The Lakewood Cemetery interpretive sign shows the Harry Wild Jones station formerly located just east of the sign.

*(Como-Harriet Update Continued from page 4)*

lost forever. And we realize that there are many other factors that affect the number of riders we carry, from increasingly busy family schedules to the price of gas. And while there isn't anything we can do to change the weather, or any of the myriad other things that affect our ridership, there are things we can do.

Not long ago, Jim Vaitkunas sent promotional posters to those of us with e-mail accounts. He suggested we print them and post them at work, in your neighborhood--anywhere folks will see them. Print and post. It's a simple way to increase visibility and awareness of our two operations.

Talk us up. Many people I talk to say things like “Oh, we haven't ridden the streetcar in years--not since the kids were little.” Or, “We've been meaning to do that.” Sometimes a simple reminder may be all it takes to generate a visit.

Don't overlook our charter business. Do you know an organization that would enjoy a streetcar outing? Give them a call. Do you belong to a group looking for something different? Suggest a charter. Every token counts.

Shop Update

John Prestholdt — Shop Foreman

Maintenance work. Work on No. 1300 was suspended the first of April so that the platform could be built at Lake Harriett. This took over 5 weeks, stretching into early May. Four of the Tuesday crew then went to Excelsior to work on the trucks of No. 1239. They are **Tom Fairbairn**, **Jim Wilmore**, **Ken Albrecht** and **John Prestholdt**. Since Ken is in charge of all three of these projects, No. 1300 is still waiting for work. The work on No. 1239's trucks should be done in 3 to 4 weeks and then we'll resume work on No. 1300. Currently No. 1300 has the “gate side” nail boards put on and is ready to have the siding installed. The pole side still needs the nail boards applied. This will take 4 to 6 weeks to complete. The rest of the Tuesday crew has been working of various small jobs around the Isaacs Car barn.

Car barn Foreman. I have accepted the position of Foreman for the Isaacs Car barn. Initially my main duties will be

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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**
July 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 July 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?

JULY 4 EARLY BIRD SERVICE AT CHSL BEGINS AT 9:30 AM
JULY 15 STREETCAR CLEANING AT CHSL 8:00 AM TO 11:00 AM

Operations Notes

Jim Vaitkunas—Ops Chief

The July Operations Schedule for both CHSL and ESL are included with this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**. If you see a vacancy that needs filling, and please note that there are several shifts at CHSL that are in the **red zone** in early July, please contact Jim Vaitkunas ASAP by either a phone call (952-688-7255) or e-mail: jvaitkunas@msn.com

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

New CHSL Sequence of Operations. You should have received a copy last month. You can also download or print out a copy from our website. It's very important that we have uniform operating procedures at both our railways so please read this document and follow the procedures described in it.

Wednesday Operations. Our new Wednesday afternoon operations (1:30-4:30 PM) started on June 14th and for the first two Wednesdays we carried a little over 150 passengers. This new service is strictly a test of the market but so far looks promising. We are also contacting local day care centers and tour bus companies encouraging them to come and take a ride on Wednesday afternoons. We still need crew for certain dates so if you are available and willing to help out on Wednesday afternoons, please call Jim Vaitkunas.

Special Thanks. We want to thank **Jim Willmore** and **Jerry Olsen**, who on June 14th diagnosed and repaired a controller problem on No. 265, thus saving the day's—and the evening's—operations (and perhaps then some). It was pure luck that they happened by the Isaacs carbarn but the timing was impeccable! **Thanks guys!**

(Shop Update Continued from page 5)

to insure that maintenance to the operating cars gets done in a timely manner. This will include trip report problems and any lubrication needed. As for the running of the car barn I want to let everyone know that "The Ghost of George

Isaacs" will be in the car barn. As one of the people who grew up under George in working at CHSL, I intend to keep two of his rules. **1. PUT THE TOOLS AWAY!!! 2. CLEAN UP BEFORE YOU LEAVE!!!**

Both rules make good sense. If you put the tools away you know where to find them next time. If the shop work areas are kept clean it'll be safer for everyone and also makes our shop look more professional for our visitors.

I think its a good idea to start the Wednesday night work sessions again (or any other night if there's a better one). The reason for this is that we need to get more younger people into the restoration and maintenance of our cars and sometimes Saturdays and during the day on Tuesdays just doesn't work. I'll be working with those people running projects to allow the Wednesday evening group to help get these projects completed on time.

I also want to try to get our supplies and car colors into a central location so we know where to get things and what color to paint parts of our cars. This includes, but is not limited to, where we store our Journal oil, bearing grease, car bulbs, specific car and depot paint and where we get the paint, stain colors and urethane finish for the interior wood work, roofing canvas, hand soap, shop florescent bulbs, etc. The list goes on and on and on.

I'll need a lot of help and will look forward to working with everyone.