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25th. The tunnel boring machine was taken apart and hauled back to the starting point to begin the second tube.


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NORTHSTAR NEWS



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Minutes of the July 20th, 2002 Membership Meeting of the Northstar Chapter, NRHS

The July membership meeting of the Northstar chapter of the NRHS was a picnic, held at the Newport signal tower on Saturday, July 20th. There was no business meeting.

Picnic tables were set up outside the tower. A number of trains went by while people were eating. Members and guests were able to tour the signal tower, which is being restored. They were also able to visit the adjacent HO gauge model railroad layout of the Greater East Area Model Railroad Club.

The Northstar chapter thanks members of the model railroad club for making arrangements for us to have our picnic there and thanks the city of Newport for providing the picnic tables.

David Norman
Secretary, Northstar
Chapter NRHS

Railfanning Over the 4th in Northern California *By "Choo Choo" Joe*

This past holiday I put a trip together to take advantage of several opportunities to see old steam in action plus just get away up in the mountains of Northern California. On July 3rd I headed for the former railroad town of Dunsmuir, California some 400 miles north of where I live, arriving at the Railroad Park Resort just south of the city. This site is made up 24 old cabooses restored from the outside and renovated on the inside to be very comfortable with tongue-in-grove pine installed walls and ceilings. I stayed in the "McCloud Railroad Caboose"- about nine feet wide and forty feet long with all the amenities of any smaller hotel room, self contained and

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extremely comfortable. Many old railroads are represented by these cabooses and they include Southern Pacific, McCloud Railroad, Erie Railroad, Union Pacific, Northern Pacific, Burlington, Great Northern, Cotton Belt and Santa Fe.



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This Railroad Park is located very near the base of Castle Crag Mountain (elevation of 6,500 feet) and is especially awesome in the early morning. There are timber forests all around this outcrop of solid rock so the majestic granite mountain looks especially inspiring as it bursts straight up out of the forests. Especially relaxing was a cup of good coffee early in the morning while relaxing outside the caboose with this gorgeous scenery in the morning as well as in the evening as the sun set and the stars came out to glitter. The Little Crag River runs in back of our cabooses so the constant gurgling of the river is very soothing and only about half mile away the Little Crag River dumps into the Sacramento River. Union Pacific's railroad follows along side the Sacramento River and so during the night one can sometimes hear the faint sounds of the freight trains passing by. Interstate 5 also passes by the Railroad Park and much of time the highway traffic downs out the sounds of the working railroad.

There was an interesting article in the caboose room about the history of the word caboose. It comes from the Dutch word *kabuis* meaning "cabin house." The first caboose goes back to the 1840s when a conductor set up shop in the last boxcar of a freight train. It happened in New York. He stored flags, lanterns and wrote his reports on a wooden box using an upended barrel as a desk. Other conductors followed and by the 1880s the caboose had evolved into

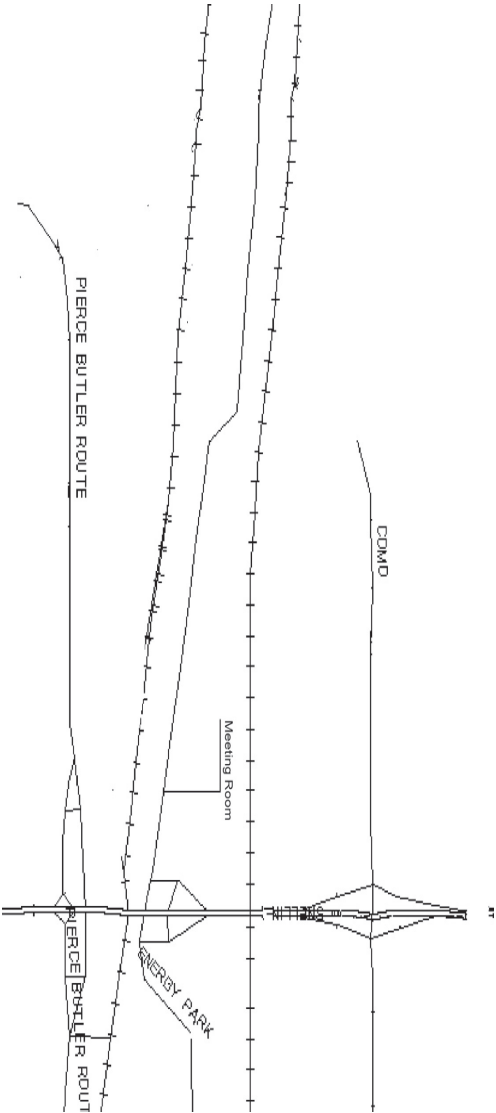
the piece of railroad equipment we have seen in the past.

On the 4th I drove up to the McCloud Railroad located at the small town of McCloud, California. This railroad has been working since 1896 and was once a very busy lumber site. Now it carries some rail freight to connections with Union Pacific on one side of their trackage and Burlington Northern Santa Fe on the other end of the trackage. The McCloud Railroad has reinvented itself and now is more of a Tourist railroad. They do have several events each year where they get out one of their two steam engines (#25 & #18) and run to the end of part of their 120 miles of track. They also have a very well run dinner train that is also a pleasure to enjoy. I have come to enjoy both types of trains.

First, I board steam engine #18 which is a 2-8-2 Baldwin engine (built in October of 1914) around 11 AM and we head over to Shasta City some 18 miles away but requiring some very steep grades as well as the necessity to use one of the remaining switchbacks(in the US) located at Signal Butte (4,200 feet). At this location the forests are so green and abundant. We also can see the snow capped Mount Lassen (10,457 feet) some 70 miles away. We are also at almost the foot of Mount Shasta about 5 miles away that is still snow capped with active glaciers and just towers over the entire area at 14,162 feet. As one drives towards Mount Shasta the view of the majestic mountain seems to fill

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**The August Northstar Chapter, NRHS Meeting is
Saturday, August 17th @ 7:00 PM
@ the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center.**



Directions: Take Snelling Ave to Energy Park Drive. Exit and turn right at the bottom of the ramp. Watch for the entrance gate to the Firefighters Training Center. (Look for the cement building that looks scorched.) If you go past Midway Stadium you have gone too far.

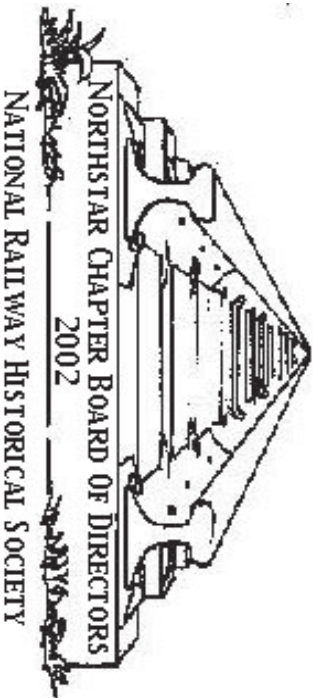
Program for August will be Leigh Neprude with slides of the BN in Montana and
Pentrex video of Chicago Railroads from the 1960s-70s.

*Meetings are usually the third Saturday of the month in the St. Paul Fire Department
Training Center.*

*NEXT MEETING: September 21st @ the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center-
Program TBA*



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the entire windshield both heading north or heading south.

In any case, the little steam engine pulls one old passenger car (formerly used on the VIA railroad system in Canada) and one open car that was custom built so there are sitting areas on two levels. It is a somewhat hot day so being outside is the place to be. The little engine pulls our small consist up the mountain and the barking cadence of the engine and the echo in the forest is marvelous to listen too. We heaved up the mountain and then at the switchback we back the rest of the way down into the small community of Shasta City. We arrive just in time to see the July 4th parade on one side and a fast traveling Union Pacific freight train passing on the other side of the train. It takes about 90 minutes to make the trip from McCloud to Shasta City. I get off and video the train as it makes two short round trips part way up the mountain. Lots of folks and their kids board the train for the short excursion, which lasts about an hour. Finally at 4 PM we reboard our steam train and head back to the town of McCloud. I might mention that the McCloud Railroad was used in a movie a few year's back called "Stand By Me" in which engine #25 chased three small kids across a bridge. The kids escaped but it was a magic moment in that film.

That evening I board the Mount Shasta Dinner train pulled by a diesel from the 1960s. The dining cars are originally from

the Illinois Central Railroad and were built around 1916. They were brought to the McCloud Railroad Shops and internally redone to resemble the romance of fine dining on one of the historic and famous passenger trains of the past. The food and service is amongst the best I have ever had on a train and well worth doing. We

departed at 7 PM and headed back the same way we had gone in the morning and were served a wonderful meal. At the top of the mountain we had finished our meal and adjourned to the open-air car to watch the fireworks some three miles away as they exploded over Lake Siskiyou. It was a glorious evening and wonderful way to celebrate our countries birthday. We arrived back at the town of McCloud around 11 PM. I drove back to my caboose and as I fell asleep I wondered about my caboose as to where had it traveled and who were the characters who had worked in the caboose over the many years it was in service.

The next day I drove up to the small town of Yreka, California some 40 miles away to photograph the steam engine affectionally referred too as "The Blue Goose." This engine was built by Baldwin in April of 1914 and is also a 2-8-2. I had ridden this train before so this day I just wanted to video it as it headed for a short run over to the small town of Montague (population of just over 2,000). This railroad (Yreka Western) was started in 1898 after the Southern Pacific decided to bypass this



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area. It has some freight service but is mostly a tourist train. The roadbed is very bad so the train goes very slow so chasing the train was easy and the view of Mount Shasta in the distance was awesome. This area is more flat and has little timber on it so the view of the mountain is mostly unobstructed.

I drove back to my caboose and relaxed and then headed back to the Shasta Dinner train for a second evening aboard their dinner train. The evening was just as enjoyable as the previous night had been. The crew provides great service and really enjoy serving us. Lots of train fans on both dinner trains. Some have come from all over the USA but lots come up from Sacramento to enjoy the weekend.

On Saturday I check out of my caboose at the Railroad Park in Dunsmuir and head back home. I make two stops on the way home. First I stop to see how the rebuilding of Baldwin steam engine built in 1918 is coming along. It is undergoing major repairs to the boiler and operates during the year as part of the Yolo Shortline Railroad. As I stand by the old steam engine, the diesel tourist train comes by with lots of waving and happy passengers. I have ridden this short line before and so just choose to video the passing train and wave back at the passengers. This trip on the Yolo Shortline goes out about 15 miles along the Sacramento River and at times is very scenic. The Yolk Shoreline operates out of the town of Woodland, California and is about 20 miles north of the capitol of California at Sacramento.



I head on in to Sacramento and make a stop to revisit the California State Railroad Museum again. I am a member of this organization and usually get to visit this excellent museum maybe two or three times a year. It is located right next to the Sacramento at a place referred to as “Old Town.” Lots of old restored buildings and an old paddle wheeler converted to a permanent hotel and restaurant. On the weekends, there is a train ride available along their right-of-way which at the

moment goes out about three and a half miles before returning. The museum is currently working on extending their right-of-way another three miles further. The museum is also located near the old Southern Pacific Railroad Building now used by Amtrak and each day sees 48 passenger trains come and go from this station. Lots of Union Pacific freight traffic thru this location too. As I arrive at the passenger station to park I see that the long distance Amtrak Train “California Zephyr” is in the station. Besides the various passenger cars and freight cars in tow, I am elated to see two beautiful restored Union Pacific Railroad Passenger cars majestically bringing up the end of the rain and proudly showing off their famous UP color scheme but mostly that brilliant yellow. Each car has an open platform and have been used most probably for recent UP customer use. I believe these cars are kept and maintained at the Union Pacific yard in Omaha, Nebraska. The names of the cars are “Sunset” and “Stanford.” As the Amtrak train pulls out of the station it is a beautiful sight to see these old restored passenger cars bringing up the year and heading down the track. I move over to the operating

railroad that is maintained by the Sacramento State Railroad Museum. Today they are using their small steam engine #10 which was built by Porter in 1942 for shipment overseas but never was shipped. It is a small yard switching engine with a 0-6-0 wheel alignment. It carries no tender and instead has the fuel in a tank behind the fireman and engineer and water is carried on tanks built on both sides of the boiler. It was used by the Granite Construction company for many years before it was donated to the museum along with enough money to completely rebuild it. This little engine will pull four old restored passenger cars from the 1940s originally used by Southern Pacific on the passenger trains several times during the day and with seemingly little effort.

All in all, my 4th has been one with lots of railroad experiences and enjoying the scenery around me. I am fortunate to have so many examples of operating railroad history so close by to see, ride and enjoy. I do not take them for granted and so try to support these various organizations. It is said that the railroad museums and operating railroads run on three things: Water, Fuel and MONEY. We do need to support these organizations while they are still available. I just wish you all could have come along for the holiday and celebrate the 4th in a very unique way.

“All Aboard”

Light-Rail Vehicle Mock-up to be on display @ the State Fair

By Dave Norman



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A full size mock-up of the front half of one of the light rail vehicles being built for the Hiawatha Light Rail line, which will run from downtown Minneapolis to the Mall of America in Bloomington, will be on display at this year’s Minnesota State Fair. The State Fair runs from Thursday, August 22nd to Monday, September 2nd.

The mock-up was built at Bombardier’s plant in Mexico. The first two complete cars will also be built there. The body shells for the other cars will be fabricated in Mexico, but shipped to the company’s assembly plant in Barre, VT for completion, so they will qualify as Made in USA. There are 24 cars on order, a cut of two cars from earlier plans, as greater than expected costs elsewhere on the project led to cuts to keep the overall project within planned budget limits. It’s expected that the first two cars will arrive in Minnesota for testing in January of 2003.

Construction work on the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit line is under way at many points along the line. Track has already been laid at the shops (on the site of the old Milwaukee Road coach yards) and for some distance south of there. This will be used as a test track for the cars when they arrive. For several miles further south, the roadbed either is ready for tracklaying or soon will be. Fifth Street through downtown Minneapolis is torn up for track construction. A bridge over Hiawatha near 28th St. is done. Work is being done on the bridge over Lake St. and a bridge over Highway 62. The first tube of the tunnel under the airport was completed April