

NORTHSTAR NEWS

The editor wishes to apologize for the lateness of the Northstar News for May 2002. Due to a computer virus this issue was unable to be distributed as it would also have spread the virus.

Thank you for your understanding- Lauren Maiden, Editor



NORTHSTAR NEWS



Vol. 33 Issue 6

June 2002

Minutes of the Northstar Chapter, NRHS, Membership Meeting, May 18th, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m. in the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center by National Director Marty Swan, who was presiding because several other chapter officers were not able to attend the meeting. Twenty-three members and guests were present. It was reported that former chapter trustee Paul Freed had died. There was a moment of silence in his memory. Approval of the minutes of recent meetings was deferred, as the editor is having computer problems and has been unable to put out the Northstar News.

Committee Reports - Treasurer Joe Fishbein reported that on March 1, 2002, there was \$5,127 in the checking account. Income during March and April was \$1 in checking account interest, for total income of \$1. Expenses during that period were \$100 donation to the DM&IR 193 Paint Fund and \$4 to print the Treasurer's report for the Board of Director's meeting, for total expenses of \$104. Cash in checking account on April 30, 2002, was \$5,024, of which \$3,284 was in the General Fund and \$1,740 was in the Grand Trunk 8327 Restoration Fund. Total chapter membership is 94, of

whom 76 have renewed for 2002. A motion was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the treasurer's report. Joe Fishbein reported that we received a nice letter of acknowledgement for our donation from the Lake Superior museum.

National Director Marty Swan reported that there was not much news from NRHS on a national level. The NRHS convention committee has a new member, who had been part of the group that put on the Stanford convention. Our local convention committee met several weeks ago. They filled out the committee head positions. The next meeting is planned for July 13th. The chapter picnic was discussed. The Baltimore chapter will be having a catered picnic. Several possible locations were suggested for our picnic. Glen Holmberg was asked if he needed help assembling and distributing the

Table of Contents

1	Minutes of the Northstar Chapter, NRHS, Membership Meeting, May 18th, 2002
2	Trip Report from Marty Swan
6	Northstar Chapter Board of Directors
7	Location of the Northstar Meetings



-8-



-1-



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

Northstar News. He said that it was OK for now, but he might ask for help later.

Trip Director John Goodman noted that many people who usually might be at the meeting were probably on the 261 trip to Duluth this weekend. Perhaps we should have changed the date of our meeting this month to avoid the schedule conflict. The Union Pacific trip coming to the Twin Cities will be coming up a different route than previously announced. Marty said that he had gotten his ticket and parking information for the UP trip, but didn't bring it to the meeting. The 261 is going to La Crosse in June. They are also selling tickets to Chicago. They are also going to Green Bay this summer. Future possible trips were discussed. John Gohmann of the Minnesota Commercial is unwilling to run any trips because of insurance considerations.

There was no other Old Business.

New Business - Glen Holmberg wants program ideas. Several members had suggestions.

Announcements - Roger Clark, who lives in Lakeville, will be putting on a local railroad history program at 7 p.m. on November 18th. Downtown Lakeville has a nice auditorium. He could use more material for his program. Anyone who has material should contact him. Tonight's program will be presented by Dick Prosser. Marty Swan said that we are honored to have him here.

Adjournment was moved by J. Goodman, seconded by several people, and carried at 7:46 p.m.

The program was a slide show by Dick Prosser. Subjects included Milwaukee Road (including branch lines), Soo Line passenger trains, demonstration operation of a Hy-rail bus at New Prague, and Arkansas shortlines in 1955.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Norman  
Secretary, Northstar Chapter NRHS

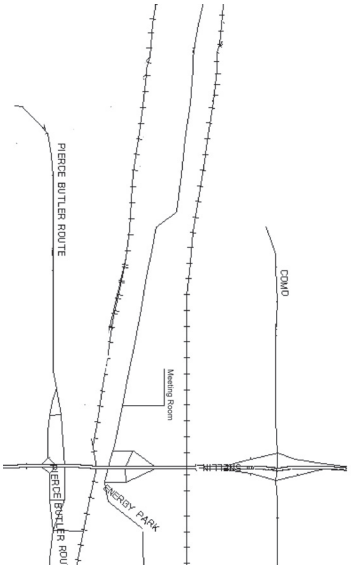
## Trip Report

by *Marty Swan*

On Tuesday April 23 I left St. Paul on a lower level coach of #8. We had the most friendly car attendant. She spent 45 minutes down in the lower lever laughing and talking to the 5 of us down there. We learned about her amazing experiences with a palm reader and where she was from (Wy'o) etc. The only problem as I saw it was that this conversation was from 7:00 am to 7:45 am while the train was loading. One would have thought that she should have been up and about her two (yes two not four) cars helping people that were boarding the train find seats etc.

Last time I rode the Builder to Chicago the Dining car steward announced that only sleeping car passengers were to be served

## The June Northstar Chapter, NRHS Meeting is Saturday, June 15th @ 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.

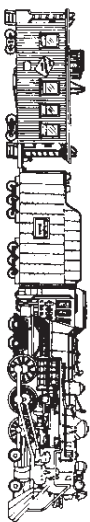
*Meetings are usually the third Saturday of the month in the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center.*

*NEXT MEETING: July 20th @ the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center- Program TBA in the July Northstar News*

*A Trip Report continued from page 6*

Next up, in Aug, the 2002 NRHS National Convention at the Grand Canyon. SW Chief Ft. Madison to Williams, for the NRHS National Convention. thence SW Chief to LA, thence Coast Starlight to Portland, thence EB to St. Paul. 4 consecutive nights on the train without a break. Can't wait.

-Marty



**Copeland Park, La Crosse,  
Wisconsin Rail Fair  
Saturday, July 20th, 2002 @**

**10:00am to 5:00pm**

Railroad fleamarket, Swap meet,  
Buy-Sell-Trade  
Model and Toy Trains- Railroadiana  
Railroad Exhibits & Displays plus guided tours of the steam locomotive, caboose and grand crossing tower.

There will also be a BNSF Railway display @ the North La Crosse Yard & Canadian Pacific Railway display at Summer Street next to Copeland Park.

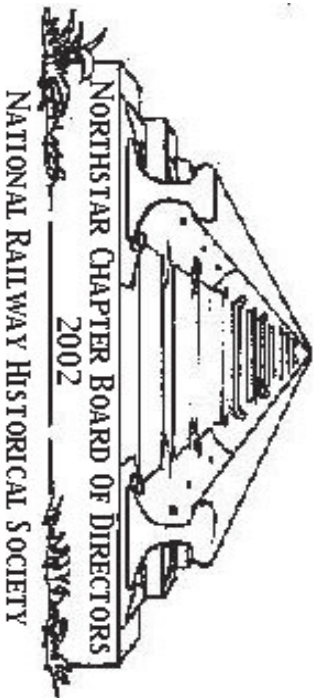
Admission is \$3.00, children under 12 are free with paid adult admission.

All proceeds go to maintain and restore the La Crosse Short Line Railroad.

**For more information, or vendor contract, please send a large S.A.S.E. to:  
The 4000 Foundation, Limited  
PO BOX 3411  
La Crosse, WI 54602-3411**



# NORTHSTAR NEWS



**President: Dan Meyer**  
763-784-8835 (Home)  
[Dan@Meyer.net](mailto:Dan@Meyer.net)

**Vice President: Doug Johnson**  
Phone# n/a at time of publication

**Past President: Andrew Koeltz**  
651-776-8309 (Home)

**National Director:**  
**H. Martin Swan**  
Phone# will be available in next publication

**Treasurer: Joe Fishbein**  
651-457-1610 (Home)

**Secretary: David Norman**  
612-729-2428 (Home)

**Trustee: Mark Braun**  
Phone# n/a at time of publication

**Program Chairman:**  
**Glen Holmberg**  
phone# n/a  
[n00yz@hotmail.com](mailto:n00yz@hotmail.com)  
\* email contains a ZERO after the n  
and an 'o' following the zero.

**Editor: Lauren Maiden**  
651-306-0352 (Home)  
[lauren.k.maiden@uwrf.edu](mailto:lauren.k.maiden@uwrf.edu)

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# NORTHSTAR NEWS

lunch in the dining car, coach passengers could go to the lounge car. As a result, on this trip I carried two 6 inch Subway sandwiches with me that I had purchased the night before. They were delicious. On this run, however, lunch was served to all the passengers.

For information, the Empire Builder this winter has been operating with the Dorm sleeper, one Seattle sleeper, one Seattle dining car, 2 Seattle coaches, one Portland Lounge car, 2 Portland coaches and one Portland sleeper. We lost the 2nd Seattle sleeper during the Olympics. They expect to get it back toward the end of May as well as the local St. Paul /Chicago coach (train 808 and 807).

We left on time (the only train on this trip to do so) but by the time we had left Milwaukee we were 30 minutes down due to track work. I had just put my scanner away and was starting to pack up to get off the train when we made a very hard stop. I immediately got the scanner out and heard the engineer calling the dispatcher to call the police and fire department as we had hit a truck. The first questions asked was if anybody was hurt and if we were derailed. He answered nobody was hurt, the two people in the truck were standing near a highway crossing and that we weren't derailed.

Firetrucks came and fireman were running to the front. Police came and they didn't really have anything to do but to redirect

traffic off the intersection we were blocking. After awhile it was determined that we had hit a UP highraiter. The two people in it had bailed out when we came around the curve at 70 mph but since it was on the track we simply pushed it down in front of us. Of course when you hit a stationary item at 70 mph, it usually is squashed. In this case we turned the truck into scrap metal that was"welded" to the front locomotive. I have video of the yellow truck on the tracks wrapped around the locomotive from the 3rd passenger car back. The conductor, the police, the dispatcher and everybody else wanted to make sure that they had the names of the people that put the highrail on the track in front of a fast moving passenger train.

After awhile the Fire Chief, the foreman of a track gang (I don't know if he was CPRS or Metra) and a Maintainer decided to see if they could separate the truck from the locomotive by backing up. This worked. Next they had to get the scrap metal off the track and I saw a Metra truck mounted crane come off the highway and go down to the front of the train. By this time the operating crew was ordering the passengers to close the door windows "...because the train was going to be moving in any minute".

Next was inspecting the locomotive and removing spare truck parts from it and inspecting the track. We finally got the go ahead to move past the site at walking



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

speed. As soon as the foreman of the track gang said we were past, the engineer opened it up and we were going track speed so it would appear that there was little or no damage to the locomotive. All of this took 90 minutes. It didn't bother me since it cut down on my waiting time for the next train. Food for thought, if we had hit it broadside, the results, could have been different especially in regard to derailing the train.

I was suppose to meet a friend, Norman Wilson from Toronto at the station, but alas the International didn't arrive Chicago until after I had boarded #448. I had a room in the Boston section which at that time ran one New York sleeper, one New York dining car, one New York lounge, 3 New York coaches, 2 Boston coaches and the Boston sleeper in that order front to rear..

I was surprised to see the lounge next to the dining car instead of in the middle of the train. Our 7:10 departure time came and went. We didn't start moving until 7:40 pm—I never did find out why, maybe we were waiting for people off the International. We went out to pick up the mail and express and I heard on the scanner somebody say, uh there is something wrong with this air hose. So 60 minutes later, with a new air hose, we finally started off. We got to Hammond, left there and stopped. 30 minutes later the conductor finally got curious and asked the engineer what was up. "Freight trains" is all he said and the conductor simply said "gatcha". 30 minutes after that we finally got started. That 2 hours and 30 minutes stayed with us the entire trip.

I also had my only "hot under the collar" episode of the whole trip. I was hungry and I waited and waited for them to announce that the dining car was open. finally I decided to walk the 7 cars to the diningcar. When I got there it was only half full but they refused to seat me. Seems that the Stewardess was taking reservations in the sleeping cars. I never saw her, we might have passed, but why the ding-dong didn't they announce over the working intercom that she was headed back. One of the waiters said she always does that. well Yippeel! When she came back I snapped at her and I wasn't going to sit in the lounge car waiting for a seat. My sleeping car porter was standing there so I told him to bring the chicken dinner to me to eat in my room.

The next morning when I went into the dining car she comes up, sits me down and puts a coach check before me. I gave my order and the server filled out the check. Another sleeping car passenger sat down and she gave him a sleeping car check. I finally said, "..don't you think you should give me one like his". pointing to the sleeping car check.. "You in the sleeping car?—well I guess I should have asked". "Yes" I replied "you should have". She then had to sit down, void the coach check and transfer my order to the sleeping car check. A small measure of revenge.

When we got to Albany we stopped an awful long way from the station in fact the engines were well short of the station.. With my sore

# NORTHSTAR NEWS

knees and bad back, there was no way I was going to be able to walk all the way up there and back.. They put on a coach cafe car to serve as a lounge for us and finally 2 hours nd 30 minutes late we left. This was the first time I had been over this part of the line in daylight and it is very impressive.

We actually got to Springfield only 2 hours 15 minutes down. At Springfield there were no red caps and no baggage carts. So I had to struggle with my bags to get to the station.

My return was Sunday April 28 on the Capitol Limited. 2 sleepers, dining car, lounge 2 coaches in that order from the front. The first sleeper was a bouncing betty (Chapter member Bill Herzog and his wife was in that car—pure coincidence that he was on board) and I was in the 2nd car which rode like silk. Hey, we left Washington DC 60 minutes down. The Conductor came on and said we had a bad order car (mail and express car) and they were going to have to remove it. Should take 30 minutes. I turned to Bill and said "60 minutes". We left 60 minutes to the second late.

Not much to tell, crew was friendly and the train got into Chicago only 30 minutes down. We backed into the station right up to but not coupling onto, the 3rd coach that is added for the train when it becomes the SWChief.

The final run was on the EIB back to St.Paul. I got myself a room for the ride. Departure time came and went but an announcement was made

that we were waiting for a late Lake Shore. They even announced when the Lake Shore was entering the station. We arrived St. Paul only 7 minutes down.

Notes. There no announcements about the country side on any of the trains with the single exception that on the 448 out of Albany we were told to look out to the left to see some Buffalo. That was it.

Food service: Wonderful, I had oven fried chicken, fish stew, pork chops that looked burned and dried out but when you cut into them they were tender and juicy and one of the most fantastic desserts I have ever had. On the Capitol, they said they had a double, double chocolate cake. "Why not". It turned out to be a Chocolate sponge cake about the size of a pancake, and inch or so thick. Served warm and when you cut into it, hot fudge streamed out. Oh my blood sugar!!!!!!!

On the EB on the way back, I believe we were starting the National menu. I might be wrong here...but when the menus were passed out they announced that the menu item of porterhouse was now a New York Strip, the menu item of BBQ ribs, was the pork chops, the Chicken remained the chicken, but the catfish became stuffed trout.

Wonderful trip, No vouchers will be requested. The lateness was not a problem for me and I did get my revenge on the Stewardess on the Lake Shore.

