



NORTHSTAR NEWS

Amtrak Mini-Odyssey - Rails to the Great Lake State By Joe Fishbein



On a beautiful October Saturday, eighteen Northstar Chapter members traveled by chartered bus to Emery, Iowa, suburban Mason City, to ride a Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee interurban car shown above.

Photo by Russ Isbrandt

Inside this Issue

Officer Contact List	P.2
President's Page	P.2
Amtrak Mini-Odyssey - Rails to the Great Lake State By Joe Fishbein	P.3
Meeting Minutes of October 21st Meeting	P.6
Holiday Banquet Reservation Form	P.7
Northstar News Derailed	P.8
Neenah Replicate Station Grant Denied	P.8

MEETING NOTICE

The November Meeting of the Northstar Chapter NRHS will be held at **7pm, November 18th at the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center, 1695 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul, (Snelling and Energy Park Drive just east of Midway Stadium.)**

This will be a very important meeting. Next year's officers will be elected. Please plan to attend.

The program will be more slides from the late A. Robert Johnson, featuring pre-Amtrak and early Amtrak trains of the

Northstar Chapter Officers

Board of Directors

Office	Name	Email	Phone
President	H. Martin Swan	<u>HMSwan@webtv.net</u>	612-961-1684
Vice President	Mark Braun	<u>mkbraun@hutchtel.net</u>	320-587-2279
Past President	Bill Herzog	<u>billpeg21@peoplepc.com</u>	952-470-4021
National Director	Doug Johnson	<u>djoh322721@aol.com</u>	612-825-6458
Treasurer	Joe Fishbein	<u>jmf@visi.com</u>	651-457-1610
Secretary	Dave Norman	<u>nevad11@hotmail.com</u>	612-729-2428
Trustee	Dennis Loudon	<u>bnsf@comcast.net</u>	651-698-8559
Staff			
Program Chairman	John Goodman	<u>jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com</u>	
Newsletter Editor	Russ Isbrandt	<u>risbrandt@comcast.net</u>	651-426-1156
Webmaster	Dan Meyer	<u>Website: www.northstar-nrhs.org</u>	

NOTE: Consult the website for any announcements regarding chapter activities including cancellation of any meeting for any reason including weather.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The electronic newsletter distribution list has been lost in a computer crash. If you received a paper copy instead of the electronic version, my apologies for the inconvenience. Please send your email address to the newsletter editor as shown above.

Membership Information

Dues are \$34 (\$22 for the National dues and \$12 for the Northstar Chapter dues). Family memberships are \$4 additional. The student rate is \$17 (\$11 for the National dues and \$6 for the Northstar Chapter.) If you want to join, an application is available at <http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/>. Print out this application and send it with a check made out to Northstar Chapter NRHS to Treasurer, Northstar Chapter NRHS, 1092 Humboldt Ave., West St. Paul, MN 55118.

The President's Page

Well, the party is almost over. Almost time to turn out the lights and go home. It has been a fun (well, mostly) and fast 2 years where you have honored me by voting me to be your President. Term limits come into play and so I'm being kicked out. Term limits aren't a bad idea for this office so as to keep one person from taking total control such as happened in several other chapters, but perhaps 2 years is really too short a period, 3 or 4 years would seem to me to be more reasonable.

I managed to do some of the things I planned to do and failed in others. Among other things, I failed to figure out how to get younger people into our Chapter and I failed to find out where all of our property is located. I'm still working on that. On the other hand I did manage to have us run a couple of "break even" trips that our Chapter mem-

bers enjoyed. I did manage to find an editor that has made our newsletter one of the better ones in the society. I did manage to get the By-Laws updated. I did manage to have some of our money spent for an updated audio and video system. I did manage to start a Cheer Committee. I did manage to open a line of communication between the members and this office through this President's page and I did manage to get our board involved in some of the more important decisions of the Chapter. I do think I leave the Chapter in better shape than it was when I was voted into the Office. Of course this is could be considered as a self-serving opinion and only you can determine if I, in fact, did a good job. Understand when I say "I did manage...." other people did most of the work, but since I'm in the Chair I get to take the credit (grin).

Some of those "other people" who deserve kudos' include Russ Isbrandt, for what he has done for the Newsletter; John Goodman, for the two excellently planned trips we

took and for the wonderful programs that he arranged; Dennis Loudon, who arranged our Christmas banquets and merry times were had by all; Mark Braun, who slaved over the By-Laws Committee and led the development of the new By-Laws adopted last month; Joe Fishbein, our outgoing, Treasurer kept the books, kept us honest, figured out how to handle the IRS and did not move to Mexico with our money; Dave Norman, our Secretary, kept the records of the meetings and very rarely were there any errors that had to be corrected in his presentations as published in the Newsletter; Doug Johnson, who represented this Chapter before the NRHS as our National Director and has attended every BOD during his tenure; Dee Lindeen, developed who printed and donated the greeting cards the Cheer Committee uses; Dan Meyer, who maintains the website, and he and Dawn Holmberg set up and, to the extent necessary, operate our audio and video equipment; and Michael Mackner, who has developed several places we can move to if the time comes that we have to leave the Fire Training Center. With so many active people working for this Chapter, I'm sure I missed one or two here, but it does go to show how many people are working to ensure the success of this Chapter.

Elections are coming up this month. I'm disappointed that only two offices have more than one candidate running for them, but it is hard to get anybody to agree to running for any office. That is a shame, but that is the way it is. Perhaps at the election, when I am calling for nominations from the floor, one of you will decide that you want to get involved and will jump up and throw your hat in the ring. I hope so. Since I am personally involved in one of the elections, I will yield the Chair to the Vice President for handling, to avoid any possible impropriety, in that particular election. The votes themselves will be counted by Cy Svobodny (Chairman of this year's election committee) assisted by the election committee. I recommend we follow past practices and the Committee will simply advise who the winner is without giving a vote count.

I will see you all at the November meeting.

Marty

Amtrak Mini-Odyssey Rails to the Great Lake State By Joe Fishbein

Last November, I wrote an article for Northstar News about the big 15-state Amtrak trip I took in September on the *Empire Builder*, *Coast Starlight* and *Southwest Chief*. This year's trip wasn't nearly as ambitious, only taking me to Detroit and back. Still, it was a very nice trip and, except for some delays at the hands of Norfolk Southern,

went very smoothly.

As many of you know, I am originally from Detroit, and travel back there a couple of times a year to visit my mom, stepdad and friends. With few exceptions, I take Amtrak every time. Why the train? I like flying, but with all the delays, security checks and high costs nowadays, flying isn't nearly as much fun as it used to be. (And, yes, I'm old enough to remember when airports didn't have any security checks at all, before a rash of Cuba hijackings in the early 1970's changed all that). Driving that distance is a pain in the rear, even if I didn't have to contend with Chicago area construction and traffic jams, and the cost of gasoline makes it expensive as well, despite owning a fuel-efficient car. As for taking the bus, I won't even go there.

The trip to Detroit is about 700 miles and takes a full day. Eastbound train 7/27, the *Empire Builder*, departs St. Paul at 7:50 am and arrives in Chicago at 3:55 pm. The evening *Wolverine Service* train, 354, leaves Chicago at 6:00 pm and arrives in Dearborn, the closest stop to my parents, at one minute before midnight (at least in theory). Returning, Train 351 leaves Dearborn at 7:46 am, arriving in Chicago around noon, and the westbound Train 8/28 leaves Chicago at 2:15 pm and gets into St. Paul at 10:31 pm. The two-hour layover in Chicago in both directions allows time to get something to eat, and can accommodate minor delays on inbound trains.

For the first time, I booked the trip entirely through Amtrak's web site. It is very easy to use, and fare differences between different days and times can be easily compared. I am a member of Amtrak's "Guest Rewards" program, and since I hadn't traveled since January, I had a special "we want you back" promotion offering a 15% discount on tickets (a bit better than the 10% I usually get from my NARP membership). I was flexible on my travel days, and booked the trip well in advance, so I was able to get a very reasonable fare, even with the extra \$10 charge each way for Business Class between Chicago and Dearborn.

Eastbound Train 8/28, *Empire Builder*

Wednesday, August 16th found me at Amtrak's St. Paul Midway station early on a sunny and clear morning. The eastbound *Builder* pulled in at 7:10 am, 20 minutes early. For boarding, they were assigning seat numbers in the extra coach added between St. Paul and Chicago during the summer months. Interestingly, the seat assignment cards they were using were printed for the *California Zephyr*. I had a window seat on the right side of the car. There were a number of private cars on the St. Paul house track, including the *Montana*, *Cedar Rapids*, *Super Dome*, *Caritas* and *Gritty Palace*.

We pulled out of St. Paul right on time at 7:50. The trip through St. Paul yard, St. Croix Tower and down the river was very smooth and pleasant. I struck up a conversation with Michelle, the young woman sitting next to me. She is a medical student, interested in public health, and had spent some time working in Bolivia and Thailand.

She was headed to Grand Rapids, MI for a family visit.

We departed most stations along the way around 5 minutes late, and left Columbus 11 minutes late after a triple-spot at the station. At Milwaukee, I observed something I hadn't seen before. When the announcement was made that Milwaukee was a smoking stop, passengers were cautioned to stay close to the train and not go into the station, because the train had "no set departure time." Sure enough, we left Milwaukee at 2:09, 6 minutes earlier than the 2:15 shown on the timetable. Apparently, since Milwaukee is now designated as a discharge-only stop for the *Empire Builder*, and doesn't receive passengers bound for Chicago, they don't have to follow the timetable. I had not observed this on previous trips, so it must be something new (A similar early departure occurred at Glenview).

The rest of the trip continued smoothly, and we pulled into Chicago Union Station at 3:23 pm, 22 minutes early. I grabbed a quick dinner at the upper concourse food court, and wandered around the station for a while. The PA made repeated announcements that a grade crossing accident in Berwyn between an Amtrak train and a car would cause delays for all BNSF commuters. Further announcements reported on specific train cancellations, delays and substitutions.

Eastbound Train 354, *Wolverine Service*

There was a very large crowd waiting at the gate on the south concourse for the evening Detroit train, the last of three that run daily. About a half hour before departure, Business Class passengers were moved to an inner seating area, and were then boarded ahead of the other passengers.

The Detroit trains are run in a push-pull configuration, with power on the west end and one of the converted F40PH "Cabbage" cars on the east end. These have a control cab at the head end and space for baggage, although no checked baggage is handled on any of the Michigan trains. In between are 4 or 5 coaches, with a snack bar and Business Class seating in the rear Café car. A few years back, the evening train to Detroit was called the *Twilight Limited*, but now all Detroit trains are referred to simply as *Wolverine Service*.

Instead of the usual Amfleet Café car, Business Class on my train was located in a recently-refurbished 58000-series car. The blue, white and maroon décor reminded me of the recent *Empire Builder* upgrades. The seating is in the typical 2/1 configuration, with leather-like upholstery and ample leg room. A strip of 110-volt outlets below the windows provides power for laptop computers and other electronic devices.

The 6:00 pm departure time came and went with no movement. On the adjacent track was the *Pere Marquette* (Train 370), which was due to depart at 5:20 but had been delayed for mechanical problems. It pulled out

of the station at 6:00, and we followed 13 minutes later. Apparently, some problem with the locomotive GPS was the cause of our late departure.

Along with the nicer seating, Business Class offers a complementary newspaper (Chicago Tribune) and one free non-alcoholic beverage. The attendant, Henry, a pleasant man with a sharp sense of humor, passed around a sign-up sheet for us to fill in our name, reservation number and choice of beverage. It seemed like a lot of rigmarole to go through for a \$1.75 can of Diet Pepsi, but I don't make the rules. I spent some time talking with Henry; he has worked for Amtrak for nearly 30 years, and has served on most of the long-distance trains. For the past few years, he has worked exclusively on the *Wolverine* trains, which keeps him close to home.

As we rolled through the maze of trackage south of the station and turned east onto the main line across northern Indiana, we made several stops and restricted speed movements. The conductor said that we were at the back of a parade consisting of two Norfolk Southern freight trains, Amtrak Train 30 (*Capitol Limited*), Amtrak 370 (the delayed *Pere Marquette*) and us. We passed the Hammond/Whiting station at 7:06 pm, 16 miles and 53 minutes after our departure.

The northern Indiana landscape has changed drastically over the past 10 years or so. A few large casinos have replaced some of the defunct steel mills, although a couple of mills are still operating. East of Hammond, we were able to resume our 79 MPH track speed, and west-bound freights slammed by us every few minutes. At 7:32, as the sun was setting, we finally turned off onto the Michigan line at Porter, IN. From there, our track speed varied from 79 MPH down to a crawl several times as we progressed east.

It was too dark to see the mileposts on the high-speed segment between Niles and Kalamazoo, so I couldn't gauge our speed through that area. It had been 90 MPH when I was there in January, and the plan is to upgrade that part of the line to 120 MPH service. (The track between Porter and Kalamazoo is owned by Amtrak; the rest of the route is on the Norfolk Southern, nee Conrail, nee Penn Central, nee New York Central, nee Michigan Central).

We continued to lose time, and when we got to Battle Creek, we had to wait several minutes for the CN dispatcher to clear us onto the ex-Grand Trunk joint trackage that runs past the station. By the time we departed Battle Creek, we were running 50 minutes late, only 160 miles from Chicago.

Then, if that wasn't enough, between Albion and Jackson the entire signal system went dark! We had to run at restricted speed instead of the normal 79 MPH; the conductor said that they couldn't even reach the dispatcher by radio, and had to use a cell phone. The signals finally came back on as we neared Jackson, but it took us over an hour and a half to traverse the 45 miles from Battle

Creek. I was very tired by this point, and when I heard our train clatter across the diamonds at Wayne Junction an hour later, I knew we only had about 10 minutes to go. We finally arrived at Dearborn at 1:40 am, well past the 11:59 pm advertised.

Detroit

One of the must-see attractions in the Detroit area, especially for railfans, is the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn. (I think the last time I was there was during a 4th grade field trip). It is housed in a former aircraft manufacturing plant, and has a very large collection of automobiles (including several presidential limousines), railroad equipment, aircraft, stationary engines and many other items. The highlight of the railroad collection is a massive C&O Lima Allegheny locomotive (The nearby Greenfield Village, a collection of historic buildings, also features a steam-powered train ride around the grounds).

Among the other unique items in the museum's collection is the surviving prototype of Buckminster Fuller's 1946 "Dymaxion House," a round building made of aircraft aluminum intended to apply the efficiencies of post-war manufacturing to housing, and incorporating many of his inventions. The museum also has the fully-restored Montgomery, Alabama city bus where Rosa Parks sparked the Civil Rights movement in 1955 by refusing to give up her seat to a white man. What made my visit even more special is that I was attending a wedding reception that was held in the museum after regular hours, so we had the full run of the place without fighting crowds.

Westbound Train 351, *Wolverine Service*

On Monday morning, August 21st, I found myself back on the platform at the Dearborn station waiting for the arrival of Train 351. It was running a bit behind schedule, and by the time it arrived and the passengers boarded, it was 15 minutes late.

This train had the more typical Amfleet Café car, and Henry was once again in command of Business Class and the snack bar. Although I'm not certain, I think the Business Class seating in the Amfleet cars has a bit more leg room than the 58000-series car. The complementary newspaper westbound was the New York Times, and there was the usual sign-up sheet for the free beverage.

This trip was much less eventful than the eastbound trip had been, and we remained about 15 -20 minutes behind schedule most of the way. After leaving Kalamazoo, I got ready to time the mileposts and see how fast we were going in the high-speed segment. However, we proceeded at a steady 35 MPH for several miles, which was somewhat disappointing. Finally, somewhere between Kalamazoo and Dowagiac, we passed the eastbound train (350) and immediately began to pick up speed. Within a few minutes, the mileposts were zipping by every 37-38 seconds, corresponding to a speed of 95-97 MPH! I kept watching, hoping the engineer would shave one more second off the time to make it an even 100 MPH,

but such was not the case.

The track in this section is very smooth. All the grade crossings, even remote dirt roads, are equipped with gates, and additional signs warn motorists of "High Speed Trains." At 95 MPH, you really get a sense of moving very fast which you don't get at 79, even though there is only a 16 MPH difference.

As we approached Niles, MI (not a stop on this train), we slowed to track speed of 79 MPH and maintained that speed the rest of the way to Porter, save for some slower running through Michigan City, IN. At Porter, we once again rejoined the main line, and maintained the 79 MPH speed through to Gary. At the EJ&E yard in Gary, SD9s 804 and 814, still wearing DM&IR colors, were shoving cars over the hump.

After Gary, we slowed considerably, and crossed from main to main several times to avoid freights and a great deal of track work in progress. We progressed slowly towards Union Station, and finally came to a stop at 12:08 pm, only 9 minutes late.

Again, I found my way up to Union Station's upper concourse for lunch, and there I ran into Michelle, the woman I had been talking to on the *Empire Builder* five days earlier. She was on her way back from Grand Rapids.

Westbound Train 7/27, *Empire Builder*

The waiting lounge on the North concourse was very crowded. Outside, in the hallway, the PA system was stuck in some kind of loop, and a woman's voice kept saying "Track Number Thirteen..." over and over, every 4 seconds. Boarding began, as usual, with seniors and families with children. This cleared out much of the crowd in the waiting lounge. When I boarded, I was once again in the MSP coach at the rear of the train. I did manage to find an open window seat, and wound up sitting with a woman from New York who was traveling with her husband and 2 daughters on a vacation. They had missed the pre-boarding call for families, and as a result the rest of her family was 4 rows ahead of us. The car was full.

Departure from Chicago was right on schedule at 2:15. We passed the eastbound *Empire Builder* near Wadsworth, IL, and continued at track speed with no delays into Milwaukee. Milwaukee was a smoking stop, and since passengers were boarding there, an early departure was not possible. We left only 2 minutes past the scheduled time of 3:55 pm.

One of the minor gripes I have about riding coach from Chicago to St. Paul concerns dinner reservations. The dining car steward walks through the train taking reservations, but by the time he gets back to the MSP car at the end of the train, most of the prime time slots are already filled. Indeed, on this trip the only times left were 5:00 pm and 9:30 pm. I opted for the earlier time, and as we neared Columbus, I made the 6-car trek up to the diner. I was seated with an older couple from Sheboygan, WI who were going to Seattle, and a woman going to St. Paul

who didn't say much of anything.

I have read about major changes coming to food service across the Amtrak system, but on the *Empire Builder*, at least, little has changed so far. The only thing unusual was that the waiter served salads and rolls before taking the dinner orders. The food was served quickly, and my chicken dinner was very good as usual.

We were losing a minute or two at each station stop, and by the time we left La Crosse and crossed into Minnesota, we were running 14 minutes late. Winona is a designated smoking stop, and as we slowed to a stop there, several people went down the stairs to get a breath of air – fresh or otherwise.

At every smoking stop, passengers are urged to stay close by the train to make sure they hear the re-boarding call. This is especially true at Winona, where the station is set back from the main line. The announcements specifically state that the train will leave when called, whether everyone is back on board or not, and that the next train doesn't arrive for 24 hours.

Despite the instructions, there will always be people who don't listen or don't pay attention, and such was the case this evening. As the train started to pull away from Winona (after making a second stop to pick up a few stragglers), I saw a woman running alongside the train on the platform, frantically waving. She fell further and further behind as the train picked up speed. I would have said something to the car attendant, but he was downstairs at the time. I suppose she talked to the agent at Winona and probably found a ride to St. Paul, but she certainly won't make that mistake again!

It got dark between Winona and Red Wing, with a faint glimmer of orange sky lingering in the distance above the hills. We were 17 minutes late out of Red Wing. Through Hastings and the interlocking at St. Croix Tower, we took the ex-Milwaukee line up the hill away from the river. We continued at a steady pace through Dayton's Bluff and up Short Line hill, and finally pulled into Midway station at 10:19 pm, 12 minutes early.

Final Thoughts

Amtrak continues to provide very good service, considering they are at the mercy of freight railroads for on-time performance. Some railroads don't seem to care, and give their freights top priority (are you listening, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern?). On-board amenities are very good, and with very rare exceptions, employees are friendly, helpful and show a genuine desire to help passengers enjoy their experience aboard the train.

This is extremely important. As a railfan, I understand how Amtrak operates, and can tolerate the occasional late train or surly employee. But for those who may be riding Amtrak for the first time, a bad experience can put them off trains permanently, and word of their negative

experience will spread among their friends and family.

Finally, on one of these trips, I am going to ride one of the Wolverine trains to its final destination of Pontiac after stops in Dearborn, Detroit, Royal Oak and Birmingham. This adds another hour and a half after Dearborn, while covering only an additional 31 miles, but I'd like to add that mileage to my travels. When I do that, I'll have to arrange my own transportation from Pontiac, since I can't expect my parents to come and pick me up at 1:30 in the morning. Again. (Train consists in electronic edition.)

Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Marty Swan in the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center with 21 members and guests present. Marty asked if there were any guests present - there was one. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 16 meeting, as printed in the October 2006 issue of Northstar News. A correction was noted. The missing minutes were for the June meeting, not the May meeting. The motion to approve the minutes, as corrected, was carried. Cheer Committee - Andy Koetz reported on the condition of his father, Bob Koetz. Recently, Bob had an infection problem. They are still hoping that he can come home at the end of this month.

Treasurer Joe Fishbein reported that, as of September 1, 2006, there was \$4,915 in the checking account. Income during September was \$1 in checking account interest, for total income during September of \$1. Expenses during September were \$108 in newsletter expenses, \$400 for IRS Form 990 tax preparation, \$150 deposit for bus trip to Iowa, \$34 for fliers for Iowa trip, and \$24 for summer picnic supplies, for total expenses during September of \$716. Cash in checking account, as of September 30, 2006, was \$4,200, of which \$2,460 was in the General Fund and \$1,740 was in the GTW 8327 Fund. Funds in CDs and investments, as of September 30, 2006, was \$31,000. Current chapter membership is 93, of whom 81 have paid their 2006 dues. There were no questions about his report.

National Director Doug Johnson reported on the results of the ballot for national office in the NRHS. All those on the ballot for national office were unopposed, so all of them were elected. Five people were elected as at-large directors, representing those who are not members of any chapter. A new Executive Board was appointed. Doug will be attending the Fall NRHS Board of Directors meeting in Huntsville in November. There was no Editor's report. The Webmaster had nothing to report. The Holiday Banquet form, as printed in the October issue of Northstar News, has an error - the correct price is \$22. The report of the By-Laws Committee will be deferred until later in the meeting.

Program Chair John Goodman said that the slide collection of a deceased (1994) railfan from Eau Claire, A. Robert Johnson, is being sold. The items that John purchased included the early days of Amtrak, the destruction of the GN station in Minneapolis, and construction of the present Am-

trak station in St. Paul. Cy Svobodny also purchased items from the collection. These will form the basis for programs at the October and November meetings. The program for the Holiday Banquet has been lined up. It will be presented by professor Don Hofsommer, railroad historian and author.

As Trip Director, John Goodman reported that the trip to Iowa last Saturday for an excursion on the Iowa Traction Railroad went well. There were 16 from the Iowa Chapter NRHS and 18 from the Northstar Chapter (3 more from our chapter wanted to go on the trip, but we had to turn them down as we were only allotted 18 seats on the trip.) The weather was good and everyone had a good time. Voigt gave us a 55 passenger bus. As planned, we were back at 6:30 pm. John estimated that we probably lost \$20 or \$30 on the trip. For next year, we might go back to Boone, IA or we might make a trip to the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay, WI. It was noted that there is a new highway across Wisconsin that might make it possible to do the Green Bay trip in one day, instead of having to stay overnight.

There was no other Old Business.

New Business - Mark Braun reported for the By-Laws Committee. Everyone should have gotten a copy of the proposed revised version of the By-Laws with their October issue of Northstar News. It has been many years since they have been updated, there have been changes in the national NRHS By-Laws that need to be reflected in our By-Laws, and there were a number of minor corrections and clarifications that the committee felt needed to be made. Mark ex-

plained many of the changes. After some discussion, Jim McLean moved that we adopt the revised By-Laws, as printed in the October issue of Northstar News. Joe Fishbein seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

There was one more item of Old Business. The Election Committee reported that there was one more candidate for Trustee: Frank Willkie.

Marty asked if there was any more New Business or any announcements. There were postcards available announcing this year's CP Holiday Train. On December 12th, it will stop at Cottage Grove, downtown St. Paul, and Shoreham Shops (in Minneapolis.) The model railroad club at Newport has ripped down the upper level of their layout and is rebuilding it to provide better pedestrian flow. The club usually has an open house starting after Christmas and ending on New Year's Day, but the exact dates for this year have not been set at this time.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved, seconded, and carried at 8:10 pm.

After a break, the program was presented. It consisted of the slides purchased by Cy Svobodny from the A. Robert Johnson collection. They were mostly of the CB&Q, but there were also a few miscellaneous subjects.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Norman, Secretary
Northstar Chapter NRHS

Northstar Chapter Holiday Banquet December 3, 2006

The annual banquet will be held at Mancini's Char House, 531 West 7th Street, St. Paul, MN, beginning with a social hour at 4pm. Don Hofsommer, History Professor at St. Cloud State University and author of numerous books on area railroads, will speak following the meal.

Meal Choices:

8 oz. Sirloin Steak	Number Desired _____
10oz. Chicken Breast (Battered)	Number Desired _____
10oz. Chicken Breast (Broiled)	Number Desired _____
12oz. Walleye Fillet (Battered)	Number Desired _____
12oz. Walleye Fillet (Broiled)	Number Desired _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Total _____ X\$22= _____

All meals are \$22 including beverage, tip, tax and dessert.

Please make check payable to the Northstar Chapter NRHS and mail reservation to:

Dennis Loudon
Holiday Party
1895 Wordsworth Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55116

Reservation deadline is November 29th.

Northstar News Derailed Numerous Casualties

Your editor had a computer hard drive crash. Unfortunately, unlike previous occasions when the newsletter was sent to the printer, I did not include an MS Publisher file of the newsletter on the CD for the printer. As a result, all graphics and layout info was lost. Furthermore, pending stories, photos and the email distribution list were not backed up. Only personal financial information had been deemed critical enough to backup. Needless to say there will be changes in my backup policy.

My apologies to those of you who elected to receive the electronic version and received the paper version instead. Email me at risbrandt@comcast.net and I will reinstate your electronic delivery.

Neenah Station Grant Denied

In April, the Soo Line Historical & Technical Society Archives, together with the Neenah Historical Society and the City of Neenah, submitted a proposal to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for a Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant to build a replica of the 1891 W.C. Neenah depot for use as a transportation museum and archives.

I am sorry to report that we were not successful in receiving a grant and send my "thanks" to the many members

Northstar News
Northstar Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
4036 Birch Knoll Drive
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Address Correction Requested

of the society who were so supportive of our proposal. The committee will now consider other options to find a permanent home for the archives. If you have suggestions, please let me know.

Larry Easton, Archives Chairman



Some of the eighteen Northstar Chapter members enjoying their ride over the Iowa Terminal Railroad on North Shore Line car 727, a 1924 Cincinnati Car Company product. The road is gradually restoring the car. With the ethanol boom, the road apparently will be enjoying a bright future. Additional interchange capacity is being added. Photo by Russ Isbrandt Additional photos in electronic version of the news letter.

Train consists:

Amtrak eastbound *Empire Builder*, Train 8/28, Winona, MN, 8/16/06

42, 92	GE P42DC
1172	Baggage
39035	Sleeper
32062	Sleeper
32016	Sleeper
38039	Dining Car
34004	Coach
34026	Coach
33011	Sightseer Lounge
34114	Coach
31030	Coach
32056	Sleeper
31039	Coach

Amtrak eastbound *Wolverine Service*, Train 354, Chicago, IL, 8/16/06

90225	Baggage/Control Car
54547	Coach
54556	Coach
54535	Coach
54511	Coach
58000	Dinette/Business Class
27	GE P42DC

Amtrak westbound *Wolverine Service*, Train 351, Dearborn, MI, 8/21/06

35	GE P42DC
54554	Coach
54566	Coach
54584	Coach
54011	Coach
54577	Coach
48169	Café/Business Class
90200	Baggage/Control Car

Amtrak westbound *Empire Builder*, Train 7/27, Milwaukee, WI, 8/21/06

72, 64	GE P42DC
1735	Baggage
39027	Sleeper
32113	Sleeper
32002	Sleeper
38024	Dining Car
31018	Coach/Baggage
34052	Coach
33040	Sightseer Lounge
34012	Coach
31007	Coach/Baggage
32068	Sleeper
31039	Coach

Photos on the right: Middle photo shows a section of the original car ceiling prior to the 1950 "Shore Line" modernization, which included lowered ceiling and target lights but not rotating high back seats. The lower shot is of the car making a second run for those Iowa Chapter members not seated on our trip. Photos by Russ Isbrandt



Iowa Terminal line car built from a North Shore merchandise dispatch car. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

