



NORTHSTAR NEWS

A Trip on the "Hi-Four" By Richard Prosser



Milwaukee Road #3 combined with mail and express from trains 57 and 55 running at 90mph with 26 cars April 17, 1965 at Duplaineville west of Milwaukee during the Mississippi River flood. This was the counterpart to the train Dick Prosser rode. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

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

Membership Information

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

The President's Page

A new season is upon us and I begin my lame duck year as your President. This Chapter encourages all of its members to get involved. There will be several openings next year and I hope that the members of this Chapter will step forward to throw their names in the hat to fill those positions.

Several problems remain from last year. We still haven't figured out how to get new and young members to join our or-

ganization and I still haven't been able to get an inventory of all of our property that is scattered here and there throughout the membership. The former is extremely important and the latter would be nice to have. In the case of the former I tried to get the U of Minnesota's rail group to come visit with zero results, and I looked into trying to help the Boy Scouts get their railroad badges but had little success in that venture. Short of going out and grabbing people by their shirt collars and dragging them to our meetings I'm out of ideas and

would certainly appreciate any help from anybody out there for their thoughts on the subject.

Russ Isbrandt would like some help getting articles for the Northstar News. Any of you that have taken trips recently or would like to relate stories of your railroading fan days would be most welcome. I recently bought a new toy—a scanner. It amazed me how that thing can take a color picture I took in the late 50's that had faded to pink and restore it to very close the original colors. With that new toy, I'm writing a series of articles on trips that I have taken from oh so long ago. My memory of these trips isn't so sharp anymore—after all they took place more than 40 years ago, but I'm able to provide nice pictures never before seen by anybody; for example, a shot of the CB&Q's train number #21 (the former *Silver Streak Zephyr*) sitting at St. Joseph, MO. I hope that some of you will also sit down before your typewriter or computer and write a few articles. Contrary to what you might think, these articles would be of great interest to the group; it would nice to have some old pictures, but these are not necessary.

We are going to have a Board of Director's meeting on Feb. 11. We have several important items to discuss, including our budget, by-law changes, where we should hold our meetings, policy for donations to worthy causes, what is our direction for the future of the Chapter, just to name a few. The results of this meeting will be reported here next month and at the Feb. meeting which will be back at the Fireman's Training Center. For the record, all members are invited to attend the BOD meeting. However, it must be understood that only the BOD has voting rights at these meetings and members can engage in discussions only on invitation, which isn't a problem. We want to hear everybody's point of view, but at some point it might be necessary to end member's discussion so that the Board of Directors can discuss the matter prior to making decisions.

I hope you are enjoying the exceptionally warm winter.

Marty

Long Time Member Bob Koetz Is On the Mend

Bob is doing a lot better now. He's at Bethesda Rehabilitation Hospital, 559 Capitol Boulevard, St. Paul, for PT & OT, and he's been there for a couple weeks. He can have visitors. His rehabilitation is finished by 3pm, so please plan to visit after 3pm. His room # is 402 and it's on the 4th floor. He does have a phone in his room also, and his phone number is 232-2402. It looks like Bob will be there for another 3 weeks. Hopefully he'll be attending meetings again this spring.

Traction Expert Extrodinaire, MTM Founder, Light Rail Advocate, George Isaacs Passes

It is with a great deal of sadness that we note the passing of George Isaacs, 83, January 24th at home after battling pros-

tate cancer.

George presented a seminar on Twin Cities traction at the 2004 National NRHS Convention. He was one of the founders of the Minnesota Transportation Museum and strong supporter and active member of the successor Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

George was one of the earliest and most outspoken advocates of light rail transit and had a not inconsiderable influence in the successful establishment of the Hiawatha Line. He had every reason to be proud of the spectacular success of the line.

A memorial service was held January 30th at Presbyterian Church of the Way in Shoreview. Following the service a number of mourners accompanied George to his interment at Ft. Snelling Cemetery via the Hiawatha Light rail line.

Great Northern Empire Builders By Bill Yenne May 2005 MBI Publishing Company LLC \$31.46 Review By Ed Burns

This book chronicles the Great Northern's *Empire Builder* that ran from Chicago to Seattle/Portland and Glacier National Park. Unfortunately, this book has seventeen errors therefore, I must give this book an "F".

I will only list five of the most egregious errors we found.

1. Page 135 shows a picture of BNSF 1038. Mr. Yenne states that this was a former BN locomotive. In reality this locomotive was built for the BNSF in 1996.
2. Page 80 states that the GN had E7B's. No, they were F7B's.
3. Page 133 shows a picture of BN 9903. Mr. Yenne states that this locomotive hauled the *Empire Builder*. No it did not as this was the second 9903 and it was a former CB&Q unit. Mr. Yenne does not know an E7 from an E9.
4. Page 112 states that the *Empire Builder* traveled non-stop from Chicago to St. Paul. This is not true as there were both operating and non-operating stops.
5. Page 16 refers to the interior of the Great Dome lounge. In reality it is a picture of a Great Dome coach dome section.

The sad fact is that people are going to read this book and believe what Mr. Yenne has written to be fact. Secondly, John Strauss, Jr. has written several excellent books on Great Northern passenger services and his books are my standard to see what the Great Northern did for their passenger service.

Florida Scanner Law

Old Dominion chapter's Jerry Grosshans reports that in 2005 Florida made the "possession" of a scanner capable of receiving police, rescue, fire and other law enforcement agencies frequencies ILLEGAL. This somewhat overstates the law. On checking with the following website:<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/transportation/radar.htm#table2>, it turns out the law is very similar to Minnesota's. You must have a permit from the chief of police or sheriff to have one in your car if

you are not member of the working press, alarm system contractor, a member of the press on assignment, or a licensed amateur radio operator. Just don't bet that your Minnesota permit will keep you out of trouble in Florida. Dan Meyer has offered to do an article on the subject of various state scanner laws.

Riding the "Hi-Four"

By Richard Prosser

In April of 1965 the Mississippi River overflowed its banks big time! This resulted in major disruption of passenger and freight service on the Milwaukee Road, Burlington, Chicago Great Western and Rock Island. I watched some of the detour trains go through Milwaukee. The following article was excerpted from Dick Prosser's booklet, *The Railroad and the Flood 1965*, published by Dick in 1965.

It was my good fortune (some would call it misfortune) to ride the Milwaukee's *Afternoon Hiawatha*, alias the Hi-Four, when it was operating via the North Western to Camp Douglas and the Stone Arch Bridge was out. The consist was four units and at least 25 cars, many of which were of the head end variety, and with three or four special sleepers had come in on the Soo Line that morning. Super Dome and Skytop Lounge cars were conspicuous by their absence.

I was lunching when we departed at 12:33pm, 18 minutes late, from the Milwaukee Road Station. We pulled forward across the celebrated Washington Ave. viaduct (Ed. Note: Demolished after Amtrak began.), where a switcher coupled onto the rear end and towed us back on the Minneapolis Eastern, within the shadow of the Gold Medal flour mills and below the post office. We passed adjacent to the Great Northern depot, and around the bend toward Lyndale Junction until the dining car was about beneath the 7th Street N. bridge. We were now lined up for the river crossing, and pointed toward Duluth. Finally we got the "highball".

We inched forward across the churning river on the bridge next to the station and on to the Great Northern roundhouse (Ed. Note: Current home to the Milwaukee Road 261), where we swung eastward onto the freight line. Then it was past the backyards of the northeast district homes, behind the University's football and baseball athletic practice fields, and on to Union Yard and St. Anthony Park. At this time there was still no interchange between freight and passenger trackage at St. Anthony Park (this was soon remedied), and consequently we were required to traverse the freight line all the way to Westminster Street. This entailed an exceedingly bouncy, lurchy ride at a maximum speed of 30, instead of the usually smooth glide at 55.

We dropped anchor at Westminster Street with a resounding jolt, and sat there for nearly 40 minutes for no apparent reason. Eventually we moved out on the North Western, through eastern St. Paul and Lake Elmo. Patches of snow still spotted the landscape. We descended the hill to the St. Croix amid billows of brake smoke, and crossed the Hudson bridge, water and ice swirling around the low steel, at 5 mph. It was

now 2:30; we were nearly two hours and 30 miles out.

I exchanged the time of day with the special sleeper passengers, who were returning from the coast on a tour and who had many comments on their previous night's journey. The train climbed out of the St. Croix and over land, just as the 400 had done for many years, about the same time of day. Now, however, the double track had become single track and the speed limit was just 60 mph.

We snaked through the lovely valley landscape near Wilson and halted at Knapp for about 10 unexplained minutes. Next came Menomonee Junction and the Chippewa River at Eau Claire, but eased through a reverse curve at about 20 mph with the populace by now not taking much notice. Three miles beyond was Altoona where we shifted crews. The yard was well filled and we passed both a westbound and an eastbound freight pulled by multiple-unit GP-35's.

The sun was well along in the afternoon sky as we departed for Augusta, Fairchild, and Merrillan. I noted our speed was adhering quite strictly to the 60 mph limit, with an occasional venture to 65. We slipped through the hill and forest country near Black River Falls. At Valley Junction we hustled past the *North Coast Limited*, running by itself this day and waiting in



Combined *Afternoon Zephyr* and *North Coast Limited* running fast at Duplaineville, Wi. Just west of Milwaukee April 17, 1965. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

the siding for us. This was a rare occasion, a Milwaukee Road train passing a Burlington (NP) train on the North Western. Then came Wyeville where new ballast marked the place where the antiquated depot had stood. Two different 400's used to exchange passengers at this meeting place.

We shot straight through on the route to Madison, formerly the "Royal Route", and followed a tangent between forested hills to Camp Douglas. This was the interchange point with the Milwaukee. We stopped for some minutes with the rear cars far back from the depot and practically adjacent to the military post, which is utilized mainly for reserve activities in the summer.

Then we pulled far down on the North Western to clear the trailing switch. Next the train backed up far under the highway bridges and into the camp grounds. This was really

"crossing over into camp ground!" My car stopped next to a receiving gate and for a moment I felt that I was being delivered here for training! The reason for this maneuvering was that the Milwaukee interchange track did not connect with the North Western mainline directly but with an adjacent siding which we were now parked on. To effect the interchange, it was necessary to manipulate the train into the camp grounds in order to get lined up. Besides being a very curious procedure, the operation consumed a great deal of time.

With switches thrown and re-thrown, we set forth around the bend with flanges squealing vigorously, and eased onto the Milwaukee mainline. Green boards were ahead and we quickly accelerated to 90. My calculations told me that we were a still-respectable 2 ½ hours late, which I found surprising. If we should now run in the "company notch" from here on in, we ought to be able to make up quite a bit of time.

We bombed past the *Empire Builder*, both trains were running full tilt, just west of Mauston. Darkness closed in and I

not seem to be making up much. Watertown came and Oconomowoc. Then we approached Milwaukee through Elm Grove and Wauwatosa and our speed dropped to insignificance. It was a terribly creeping pace we set while picking our way in from North Milwaukee (sic) (Ed. Note: Author mistook the industrial area along Milwaukee's State Street and the Menomonee River Valley for North Milwaukee.) through the industrial district, and we finally attained the depot about 9:00pm. This was bad enough but then we also remained there for half an hour until 9:30.

We took off out of Milwaukee "hell bent for leather" and the pace was remindful of those days of 75 minute Chicago-Milwaukee trains and speed tests. Whizzing across the Wisconsin and Illinois countryside, through the junction points of Sturtevant and Rondout, we easily made Glenview, 17 miles from Chicago by 10:30. But now after this suburban stop, we were required to follow in a late night commuter train making all the local stops and due into Chicago about 11:10pm. This trundling pace made the last 17 miles very nerve racking, with everyone impatient to set foot on terra firma. It was about 11:15 when the air brakes hissed their last at Union Station. The travelers, including myself, were most glad to mark an end to this most interesting but wearying trip.

Christmas Amtrak Trip to Springfield, MA

By H. Martin Swan

Once again it was time for me to take my annual trip to Springfield, MA for my Christmas/New Year's visit with my family at my brother's home in Southwick, MA. This year, in Oct., I had obtained a coach seat to Chicago on the *Empire Builder*, a roomette to Albany on the *Lake Shore* and a Business Class seat to Springfield on the Boston Stub that replaced the Boston section of the *Lake Shore Ltd.* last year. The reverse trip was set for New Year's Day and was the same except that I also had a roomette from Chicago to St. Paul. About a week before departure I had noticed on the Amtrak website that a roomette had opened up on the *Empire Builder* from St. Paul to Chicago at the lowest bucket price. Knowing that the train was packed and that Amtrak was not running the local St. Paul/Chicago coach, I opted to upgrade my ticket to have a lower level roomette from St. Paul to Chicago.

The westbound version of my train had arrived Seattle on Dec. 25, five hours late. By the time that they turned, cleaned and stocked the train, it left Seattle 2 hours late. It did pick up about an hour en-route, so when we left St. Paul, it was only a little over an hour late. I had no worries about making my connection to the *Lake Shore Ltd.* The station prior to loading was a mad house. The station was packed. The first class lounge had so many people in it that there weren't enough seats.

I like the lower level rooms. It is easier to step outside at stations, you get a much increased sensation of speed and it is easier to put one's luggage in the room since you don't have to drag it upstairs. Since my luggage included Christmas presents, including \$600 worth of Gift Cards for my nephews and nieces (6 @ \$100 each), I didn't really want the luggage



The *Empire Builder* entering Milwaukee April 17, 1965. Photo by Russ isbrandt



CB&Q #31 The *Empire Builder* departing Milwaukee April 17, 1965. Train carried a full length Great Dome and Cathedral Mountain observation lounge. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

went to dinner. Portage was the next stop and crew change point. We proceeded on, making all the stops on the time-card. While none of them consumed many minutes, we did

to be out of sight. It is just too easy for somebody getting off to "take the wrong bag."

With my new knee I figured I wouldn't have much in the way of a problem climbing the stairs to get to the upper level nor did I and it was kind of nice to be able to step out at Winona and Milwaukee.

The weather was cloudy. It was interesting that as the further south we went, the deeper the snow. Unfortunately my roommate was not on the river side. The crew to Winona was pretty good at advising people as to what was going on, including when we made a stop out in the middle of nowhere so that the single person in the cab of the engine could write down track orders from the dispatcher. The crew south of Winona wasn't as good.

At one point on the trip we made a very hard stop, so hard that you could smell break shoe "smoke". A few seconds later a trainman walked by outside my window. I decided to break the rules and open the vestibule door and take a peek. The only thing I could see was the engine beyond a red signal. I can only surmise that the light turned red in his face forcing him to make the hard stop, but not permitting him to stop in front of the signal. At any rate we soon started up again, but now running a greatly reduced speed until we got to the next signal.

Because of the late start in St. Paul, the unexpected hard stop, double stopping at all stations where hordes of people were getting on and off and then being caught behind a Metra local, we didn't arrive in Chicago until 6:15 pm. The crew kept advising that they had no information on any of the connecting trains including the *Capitol Ltd.* due out at 5:35 pm. Finally as we approached Union Station it was announced that the *Capitol Ltd.* was being held for us, but all other connecting trains (to Detroit, St. Louis and Grand Rapids) had left.

Subsequently, while talking to the Amtrak Customer Service person, I discovered that the reason that the *Capitol* was held was that they didn't have a rested crew until 6:15 pm so that train would have waited until that time regardless of any other reason. In fact, she said that she doubted if the train would have been held if they had a rested crew so that it could have left at the scheduled time of 5:35 pm.

The new Metro Lounge in Chicago is nice and much roomier. They expanded the room out into space that used to be part of the waiting room on the old CMStP&P/Soo/CP side of the station. Since Amtrak only sends the *Hiawatha's* and the *Empire Builder* out that side, they didn't need all the room that they originally had over there. The lounge now has a nice large flat screen TV, and they have snacks set out for your enjoyment along with the coffee and soft drinks.

The *Lake Shore Ltd.* was called and boarded on time. Three sleepers, dining car, lounge and 6 coaches—full. We were called into the dining car shortly after boarding. It was in one of the new renovated dining cars with nice wide seating. The steward came by and handed me the menu. I would get to know this menu quite well over the 3 dinners I would have on Amtrak this trip. This evening I ordered the lamb shank. De-

parture time was 7:55 pm. That time came and went. The meal was served by the excellent dining car staff and I was enjoying it when we finally left at 8:25 pm. My sleeping car attendant later let me know that we had to wait for a rested crew.

Back in my room I decided I wanted to watch the first of the "Harry Potter" movies on my portable DVD machine. I used to like Southern Comfort, so I had decided to bring a flask of that along with me. I poured my first drink midway to Chicago on the *Empire Builder* and now I poured myself a 2nd drink. I sat back and enjoyed the movie while sipping on my drink. It was pitch black outside and I could see little. Around 11:00 pm (EST) it was hit the hay time.

Since I had been up since 4:00 am (CST) time this day, I was a bit on the tired side and fell instantly into a nice deep sleep. When I awoke the next morning around Buffalo there was lots of snow on the ground and, miracle of all miracles, we were only 45 minutes down. For the *Lake Shore Ltd.* this was almost like running early. I had been watching the train for over a month and it regularly ran 4-5 hours late. I had hopes of getting into Springfield very close to on time and over to Southwick in time to be able to see the Nebraska-Michigan football game that evening.

We maintained the 45 minutes down time, zooming along the CSXT, and passing freight after freight after freight, sometimes we would switch tracks and pass a freight going the same way we were. Today the CSXT dispatching was favoring the train. I've been on this route at least 4 times in the winter and I have never seen so much snow. It was continuous from the time I woke up until we got to Springfield.

We were held just outside Albany for about 15 minutes and arrived that town one hour down (actually we don't go to Albany, the State Capitol of New York is across the river. Our actual stop was in Rensselaer, where I attended the 1966 NRHS Convention. Back then the station was in fact in Albany. But NYC or PC, can't remember which, moved it over to Rensselaer).

Changing trains was easy enough. The Boston stub was literally across the platform a few car lengths down from the sleeper. Somewhat over powered, it had an engine at each end, a baggage car, two coaches and a Club car doubling as a Business Class car. Last year I had gone coach on this segment and there were no empty seats. It was very crowded. This year the same thing, the two coaches were full, but I had a Business Class seat. Since the Business Class Car was a Club Car, tables at one end, and Club Seats in a 2/1 configuration, it was most comfortable. I was able to get a seat on the single side. The schedule had us leaving 30 minutes after the *Lake Shore* arrived, and sure enough 30 minutes after I got there we took off. Sort of. First the train has to pull down, then it has to back into the station on another track and then it can pull forward onto the Boston track.

Unlike the sleeping cars, a Business Class person gets a free soda. So after we had been moving for awhile I went back and got my freebie. In the past we had been so late that it was dark during this portion of the trip, but today it was light enough to watch the whole trip. Again deep snow and the little "country" roads between the towns in this mountainous

region were snow packed. It didn't look like they were ever plowed. We passed numerous small towns all blanketed with snow.

Arrival in Springfield was about an hour down. The Springfield station has 8 tracks, with the number 8 track being the closest to the station. Our train came in on track number 1, which appears to be the only through track going to Boston. I was the only Business Class passenger getting off in Springfield, along with a gaggle of coach passengers. Not only were we on the farthest track from the station, but we were de-boarded on the side of the train away from the station. We had to walk past the Club Car, the Baggage Car, the rear engine, then across all 8 tracks to the side of the station and then perhaps two car lengths further until we were actually able to enter the station proper. That must really be messy during a bad storm of any kind, rain or snow.

My Mom, Sister and Sister-In-Law met me and we drove the 25 minutes to Southwick. Nebraska upset Michigan that night and I had a wonderful time with the family.

To be Continued in the March Newsletter

Minutes of the January 21, 2006 Membership Meeting of Northstar Chapter NRHS

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Jackson St. Roundhouse in St. Paul by chapter president Marty Swan with 32 members and guests present. Thanks were given to Mike Mackner for arranging for the use of the roundhouse as a place to hold this evening's meeting.

The question was asked if there were any guests at the meeting. There was one -- Stu Nelson, a retired Soo Line employee who had worked for the railroad for 44 years. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2005 meeting, as published in the December issue of Northstar News. The motion was seconded and carried. Cheer Committee -- member Bob Koetz is very seriously ill. At last report, he is out of danger, but it is expected that he will have a long road back to good health. A custom-made "Get Well" card was circulated for members present at the meeting to sign.

Treasurer Joe Fishbein gave his report, which covered November and December of 2005. Cash in checking account, as of November 1, 2005 was \$5,167. Income during the period was \$1 in checking account interest, \$113 in dues and donations, and \$693 in Holiday Banquet registrations, for total income of \$807.

Expenses during the period were \$185 in newsletter expenses, \$20 dues payments to national NRHS, \$270 in National Director expenses, and \$660 in payment to Mancini's for the Holiday Banquet, for total expenses during the period of \$1,135. Cash in checking account, as of December 31, 2005, was \$4,839, of which \$3,099 was in the General Fund and \$1,740 was in the GTW 8327 Restoration Fund. Funds in CDs and investments total \$32,000. Current chapter membership is 90, of whom 4 have renewed for 2006. There were no questions about the treasurer's report.

National Director Doug Johnson reported that the dues notices from the NRHS national office had been delayed. The 2004 Activities Annual is in final preparation for going to the printer. Other bulletins are also behind schedule, but are being worked on. The Spring NRHS Board of Directors meeting will be in Indianapolis, at the old Union Station, which now includes a hotel. There may also be tours in con-

junction with the BOD meeting. This year's NRHS national convention will be in July at New Philadelphia OH. Housing Chair Mike Mackner reported that we are meeting tonight at the MTM's Jackson St. Roundhouse. This is a trial this month, but if it works out, we might come back here regularly. He felt that this seems to be our best possibility as a meeting place for the chapter.

Trip Chairman John Goodman said that a lot has happened recently. He talked to Steve Sandberg about the proposed trip to Chicago. The cost would be about \$400 per person plus the cost for a hotel room. We would need to have 22 people sign up for the trip. It would be difficult to include the suggested side trip to the Illinois Railway Museum, as the insurance on a van rental would not be sufficient to cover liability if there were any accident. A cheaper possibility for a trip to Chicago would be to charter a bus from the Twin Cities. John said that he would do a write-up for the Northstar News on the possibilities. John also talked about a possible trip to Mason City, IA to ride the Iowa Traction RR. This would be a joint trip with the Iowa Chapter of NRHS and we would have to limit the number of passengers from the Northstar Chapter because of the limited seating capacity of the car.

John attended the railroad passenger car convention and learned that there is a new president of the UP and that the days of running fantrips on the UP are "on hold" at this time.

Editor Russ Isbrandt reported that the roster sent out with the January issue of Northstar News is somewhat faulty, as many of the street addresses are wrong. He will send out a corrected version by e-mail on request by e-mail. He needs more material. He plans to reproduce portions of Dick Prosser's book, Railroads and the Flood, but needs more pictures of the flood and of trains operating on detours. He also could use more "How I Became a Railfan" articles. Webmaster Dan Meyer said that he had updated the chapter's website to show the new meeting location and he had renewed the domain name for another year. Holiday Banquet Chairman Dennis Loudon said that he had reserved the room at Mancini's again for the first Sunday in December. Dennis said that he would like to see more people attending this year's banquet. There was a show of hands to indicate which members would like to go back to Mancini's versus those who would like the event to go back to Tinucci's (where it had been held several times before.) Greg Smith did a good job of putting on the program at the banquet.

Mark Braun said that the By-Laws Committee had nothing ready to report. Program Chair John Goodman said that the remains of the Dick Prosser slide collection are still missing. The 8 mm. railroad films from Prosser's collection have been transferred to DVD. He plans to show one of them as the program for the February meeting and another one in March. Several other people have offered to present programs. John said that he had four programs "in the can," but needs six more to fill out the year. Programs should be a maximum of 1 1/2 hours long -- about 160 slides. Mike Mackner said that he could do the program for April. John said that if people wanted copies of the DVDs, it would be possible to make copies of them, although he noted that they were "not of commercial quality."

Old Business -- Jim George brought up the suggestion that he had made last fall that the chapter make a donation to the Soo Line Historical Society for construction of an Archives Building. Stu Nelson of that group talked about his career with the Soo Line and gave a brief history of the Soo Line Historical Society. A number of libraries and historical societies had been contacted, but none of them were interested in housing the material. Members of the historical society had voted 275 in favor of building an archives building and only 15 against. The group already has pledges for \$40,000 toward the project. The preliminary estimate of the cost is \$200,000, but an architect is doing a more detailed study and should have a report in

March. The records include material from other railroads that became part of the Soo Line. He estimated the material at about 2000 to 2500 file boxes and noted that some members of the group have additional material at their homes, plus the collection includes some museum exhibit materials. An advantage of the proposed location at Neenah, WI is that most of the people involved in the Soo Line Historical Society's magazine live near there. After Mr. Nelson's talk, he answered questions from the audience. One question was about grants -- they plan to apply for a government grant which would cover up to 80% of the cost. They will also be asking for other grants. No motion was made, but it was suggested that we discuss the matter again after the Society has more information -- probably in April.

We have postponed the proposed purchase of a digital projector, but plan to discuss the matter at the upcoming board meeting. We will postpone the decision on the site for this summer's chapter picnic until next month's meeting, as this month's business meeting is running a little bit long. Kurt Peterson announced that the videos of the seminars given at the 2004 NRHS national convention that we hosted are ready and wanted to know how much we wanted to charge for them. There was a show of hands from members who were interested in purchasing one or more of them. Russ Isbrandt made a motion that we sell the DVDs at \$7 to chapter members and \$10 to non-members and that we sell VHS tapes at cost to chapter members and cost plus \$3 to non-members. The motion was seconded by Kurt Peterson and carried.

Chapter member Edward J. Burns reported that, as authorized by a motion at the November 19, 2005 membership meeting, he wrote a letter on behalf of the Northstar Chapter to Motorbooks International, publisher of Bill Yenne's book "Empire Builder," complaining about the large number of errors that he had found in the book. Mr. Burns said that so far, he has not received any reply to his letter. Mr. Burns also wrote a letter to Trains magazine, under his own signature, about the errors in the book. A suggestion was made to Mr. Burns that he write a brief review of the book.

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Address Correction Requested

New Business -- none.

Announcements -- Glen Holmberg said that certain rail calendars which had been published annually for many years had not been published this year. Treasurer Joe Fishbein said that he has the dues notices for 2006 dues. Those at the meeting who haven't already received their notice should see him during the break after the end of the business meeting. A meeting of the chapter's Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 11th (probably at the Amtrak station.)

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 8:25 p.m.

After a break, the program was presented by Russ Isbrandt. It was a video about his rail trip to and from the 2005 NRHS national convention in Portland OR, plus some of the events at the convention.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Norman
Secretary, Northstar Chapter NRHS

2004 National Convention Seminar DVDs and Videos Are For Sale

The recorded 2004 Minneapolis National NRHS Convention seminars are available. Each seminar DVD is \$7 for Northstar Chapter members, \$10 for all others. Video tapes are \$9 for members and \$12 for all others. Please make checks out to Jeff Borne -- Prairie Works and send to Kurt Peterson, 5945 Wooddale Avenue, Edina, MN 55424-1841.