



Important Notice: Dues are PAST Due NOW See Page 2

Minnesota Streetcar Museum Needs Operators. Learn to run one of these cars! See details inside.



Minnesota Streetcar Museum's Twin Cities Rapid Transit 1300 running for the National Convention July 2004.
Photo by Wendy Dunham

Inside this issue		Inside this issue		<h3>Meeting Notice</h3> <p><i>Note Date Change</i></p> <p>The April meeting of the Northstar Chapter will be at 7pm <u>April 8th</u> at the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center, 1695 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul (Snelling and Energy Park Drive just east of Midway Stadium). John Hotvet will show a program of fallen flags roads from the area.</p>
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Northstar Chapter Officers

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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.

Dues Are Due NOW!

Dues are past due *NOW!* Unfortunately the National has *NOT* extended the deadline despite the late arrival of the dues bills. Don't miss a single issue of the Northstar News and National Bulletin. Membership in the National is required to receive the Northstar News. *Please send in your renewal to avoid any disruption in receiving your newsletters and Bulletins. This may be your last Northstar News if we haven't received your dues.*

The President's Page

Spring has sprung, March Madness is over and Daylight Savings time has returned. The restless railfan buried in each of us should be springing up; time to grab the camera or camcorder and go to our favorite spot and shoot a few trains. Many of you have wonderful slide or movie collections. I would love to see some of them. Please consider providing the chapter with a program of your work.

It is nice to know that Northstar Chapter has entered the electronic age. For those of you who attended the March meeting, we had our new toys on display, including a microphone system which truly came in handy during the program as the various presenters were able to provide information about their slides without having to go hoarse trying to speak loud enough for all to hear. We got to sample another of our new toys when Dan and Dawn presented digital slides which were projected over our new digital projector. We still will require a

laptop to be able to use some of the features of our new toys, but we are working on that.

Currently, as I write this, out of 89 members from 2005 only 62 have renewed. This is distressing. It is true that the National Organization was distressingly late in getting the membership dues notices out, but they are NOW out and have been out since the end of February. The National's By-Laws call for membership dues to be paid by Dec. 31st, with a 90 day grace period. While the National's dues notices didn't come out until mid February, we are still well within the 90 day grace period. At the end of March, members whose dues are not paid become non-members. I have a little more latitude but not much more. Accordingly all 89 members will receive the April News but this will have to be your last Northstar News if your dues are not paid by the end of April. We have a viable and healthy Chapter. We have outside activities planned, the Board of Directors is composed of extremely motivated people whose goal is to keep Northstar Chapter one of the best Chapters in the National Railway Historical Society. Please, if you haven't renewed, do so now.

Have a Happy, Holy, Easter and Passover.
Marty

Editorial

I received a request from Rod Eaton of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum to insert a request for volunteer operators for the upcoming season. Needless to say, I was happy to oblige.

The thought occurred to me that two of the chapter goals are to preserve railroad history and educate the public. One of the ways we can do this is by encouraging our members to volunteer at the streetcar and transportation museums. Toward that end I've invited the Minnesota Transportation Museum to submit an article also.

No matter what aspect of rail and urban transportation you're interested in, there is an outlet for you in the Twin Cities. Things have changed dramatically in the last year with the formation of three separate transportation museum entities, including a steamboat museum. If you've been disillusioned by political in-fighting and have quit or avoided joining a group, it may well be worth re-examining the situation in the entity which reflects your interests.

You don't have to be a mechanical or electrical engineer, welder or mechanic to play a role. Your editor is none of those and still finds rewarding work operating and maintaining equipment. There is always plenty of scraping, painting, cleaning, parts holding and go-for-ing to do. A side benefit is the camaraderie of like-minded individuals working together.

This spring sign up and get into the act of perpetuating rail history in the Twin Cities.

Please note that the Minnesota Transportation Museum was invited to send an article but it hadn't been received by press time.
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Streetcar Operators Needed

By Rod Eaton Minnesota Streetcar Museum

Are you interested in having a real rail experience? The Minnesota Streetcar Museum will begin new operator training in April. The classes are almost exclusively aboard one of our classic wooden cars and are very hands on -- your hands on the controller and brake as you run the trolley along the scenic mile of track between the Lake Harriet bandstand and the east shore of Lake Calhoun. Following a few evenings of personalized instruction and practice, you'll take your place as a Trainee on a few revenue shifts before becoming a fully certified streetcar Motorman.

I can't tell you how much fun it is to operate streetcars along the Como-Harriet Line by the lakes, or on the Excelsior Streetcar Line. People who ride love the old trolleys, and children especially enjoy the experience. It's always a pleasure to visit with passengers and talk with them about the great street railway system that used to connect the Twin Cities. Nothing is more enjoyable than drifting down grade past Lakewood Cemetery, a warm summer breeze blowing through the open windows, and feeling the rails beneath the car. Although I like to operate one shift a week, many of our members run only a couple times a month throughout our season.

The Museum also provides the opportunity to work on car and line maintenance, and to participate in restoration projects. Membership is just \$30 a year for an individual. You'll be joining an interesting group of people with a passion for all things on rails. Check out the Museum's web site at www.trolleyride.org. Or give Rod Eaton a call at 763-576-0608 for more information.



Your editor about to start his run. October 2005.

Jinxed Train

By Greg Smith

In 1997, I was marked up on the Amtrak extra board in St. Cloud, MN as a conductor. I received a call from the crew dispatcher that number 8 was in trouble and running over 5 hours back. I would be dog catching (Ed. Note: relieving a

crew whose hours of service expired) the train west of Minot because the crew was short on time and there was no relief crew available in Minot for the dogcatch. I drove from my home in Apple Valley to the depot in St. Cloud where I reported for duty. After getting all the current bulletins, we were cabled to the St. Cloud airport where we were flown on a small twin engine "bug smasher" to Minot. I remember never once being able to see the ground due to overcast. At Minot, we were cabled again, this time in a van, to Williston, ND where we would pick up the train.

The old saying on Amtrak was "late trains just get later", and boy did that hit the nail on the head. The train arrived, and we proceeded east without much trouble until we hit the Hawley, MN detector with "no defects". The fireman radioed back that we needed to stop and have a look at something. Seems when we slowed for the curves at Hawley, the automatic (air brakes) didn't respond. The head end crew used some dynamic (brakes) and a little automatic to get the train slowed to the restriction for the curves.

After stopping and messing around with the automatic, it became apparent it would not operate from the lead unit, so the head end guys decided to operate the train from the second unit and put someone in the lead engine to operate the horn at crossings. This worked pretty good, but the rules all change when you are not operating from the lead unit, and I believe we ran 30 from Hawley to Staples setting us back even more.

At Staples, the plan was to wye the power while we were waiting for the next relief crew (we were getting tight on time). We uncoupled the engines and got our warrant to use the Brainerd sub for head room when the BNSF dispatcher radioed and told us he just lost all his CTC and we would have to hand line. I recall 5 dual control switches being lined for the move and returned to normal after the power was turned.

We tied back on and cut in the air, but it wouldn't come up for the air test. I walked back to the 15 car (Ed. Note: car 2815 reservation line number), which is the second to the last car in the train and could hear the air blowing. I had to cut the car out, bleed the air completely off both trucks, and then cut the air back in. This did the trick and the air came back to life. So, now the train is set to go, but when the relief crew arrived, the dispatcher called again and told us to sit tight. A coal train had crashed at Sartell fouling both mains and taking out the CTC.

The decision was made by the higher ups to route the train to the cities via the Brainerd sub over to Superior, and down the Hinckley sub to Coon Creek. The BNSF had an eastbound DEEX coal load waiting for us to clear at Staples, so they pulled the guys off that train to pilot #8 to Superior. We were all dead on hours, so the next relief crew got that portion of the trip.

The relief crew arrived and we were cabled back to St. Cloud to tie up. I would have loved to have ridden the train back to the cities over old NP and GN lines, but my car was in St.

Cloud and I had already been up over 24 hours. I also needed to get some sleep as I was already first out on an exhausted extra board and would likely go out on my rest, perhaps to catch the same train again. I think I remember hearing the train was over 12 hours back when it arrived at MSP Midway Station. John Goodman and Cy probably remember this train. It should have arrived at Midway not long before #7 was due.

I don't think this was my longest time on duty, including deadheads, that honor goes to the WC when I would regularly work a coal train over to Stevens Point and deadhead back in a cab making for a 17 hour day, but in terms of miles, it was certainly the most I ever covered on a single trip.

AAR Announces Railfan Club From Altamont Press

The Association of American Railroads is happy to announce RailFanClub. We urge you to visit <http://www.railfanclub.org> and join today!

RailFanClub is a members-accessible club offering railroad industry news, a monthly club newsletter, train discussion and photo swap, contests, fun downloads, trivia, videos, a train simulation demo, and much more. Most importantly, RailFanClub offers resources to help railfans pass the knowledge of railroads to the next generation. A weekly train lesson, a field guide, and classroom projects help railfans organize information about their hobby and share it with others.

RailFanClub annual membership costs only \$19.99.

RailFanClub's membership contributions go to the Railroad Research Foundation at the AAR. The Railroad Research Foundation's mission is to promote today's railroad industry through research, communication and education activities.

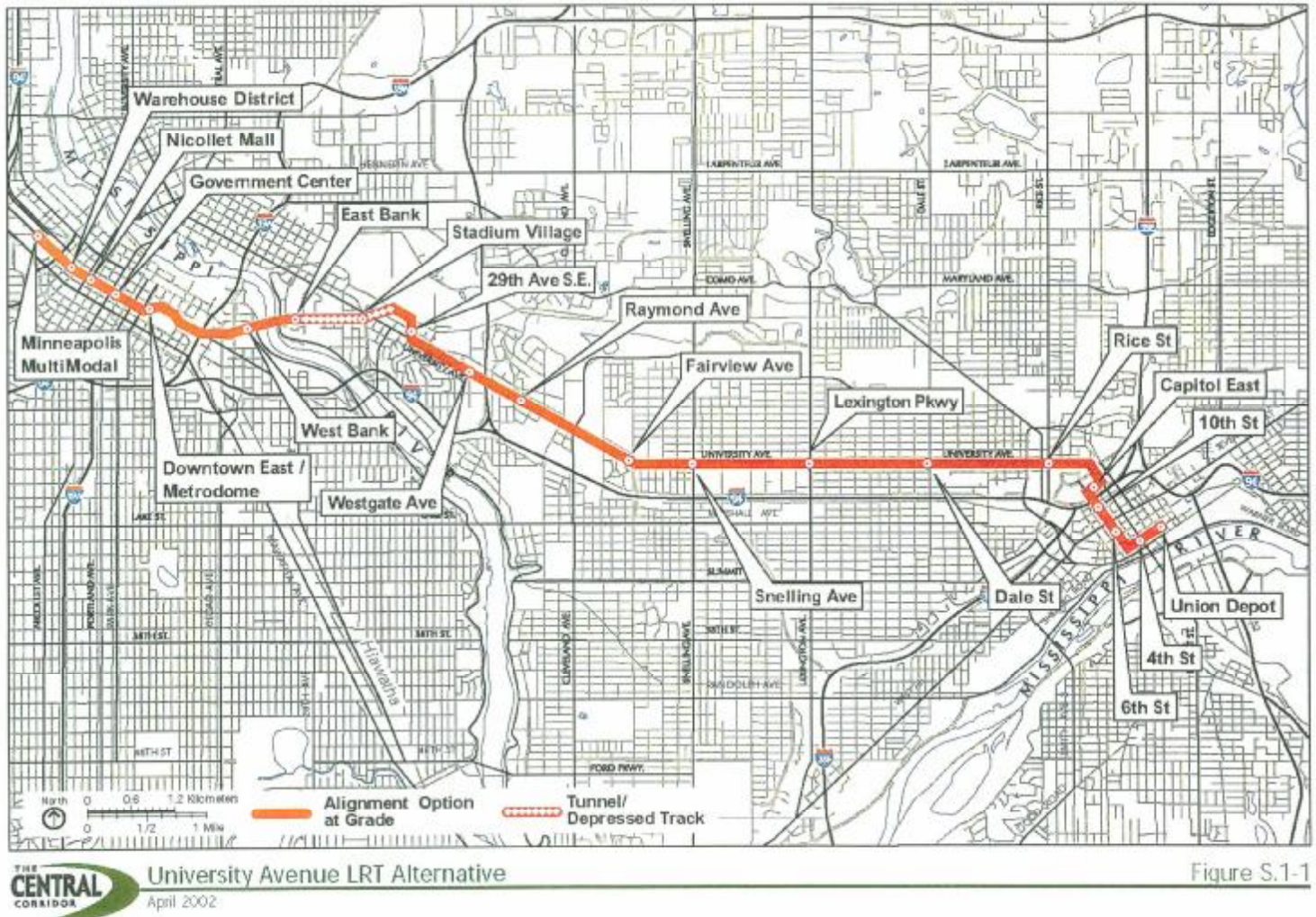
Joining the club can be done online, or by mailing \$19.99 to:

RailFanClub
Association of American Railroads
50 F Street NW Ste 1200
Washington, DC 20001
E-mail or call us with any questions about RailFanClub: Tom Palmer, Manager of Member Services, RailFanClub, (202) 639-2540 - Tom Palmer

Central Corridor Light Rail News

Sources for the following were the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, and the Metropolitan Council by way of member Bob Clarkson.

Tuesday March 21st, the Federal Transit Administration determined that the proposed Central Corridor light rail line project would be cost effective. The program had been delayed for two years while methods of determining cost effectiveness were being debated. Calculations determined that the



costs were low enough for the program to proceed and ridership calculations turned out more favorable than local proponents expected, according to Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega, Chairman of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority.

The next move is to write the Environmental Impact Statement. Public input will be sought for the statement to determine whether the public would prefer a Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Line. Informal estimates indicate that the light rail line would provide 20% higher ridership than the busway. There will be three public hearings in Central Corridor locations at dates yet to be determined. Commissioner Ortega said preliminary engineering studies could begin as early as July.

If final approval is obtained, the line could be in operation by 2010 or 11. Final approval is not a lock, however. This program is competing with 200 other projects, only 100 of which may be funded.

Editor's Opinion

The opinion expressed here is the editor's only and does NOT reflect any official position of the Northstar Chapter NRHS.

While it is encouraging that the Central Corridor planning is on the move, the fact that there appears no provision to extend it to the east metro should be of great concern. Long range plans call for a Red Rock and Rush Line Corridors operating commuter rail lines from Hastings and Hinckley to St. Paul. That is a nice pipe dream, but the Central Corridor would be much more useful for east metro residents if light rail were to be extended to White Bear Lake or Hugo over the former NP Skalley line. Much of that line is a bike trail and could be rerailed for much less than building additional freeway lanes. Addressing the needs of Woodbury and Cottage Grove will be a much greater challenge, but must be examined.

I have seen no indication that the Central Corridor will make provisions for skip stop or express train operations to permit fast travel between St. Paul and the UM campus and downtown Minneapolis. Will the line be operated like the Hiawatha line with every train having to make every stop at all times whether or not the stops are necessary? For a transit system, that would be like not being able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

People want a one seat ride to their destination. If one has to change trains or buses or park in downtown St. Paul to get to the U or downtown Minneapolis, they will drive all the way, and the potential for reducing traffic from the east metro is

dramatically reduced.

East metro residents should be heard at the public hearings. East metro residents must not be precluded from access to a modern comfortable (i.e. rail) transit system.

Save the Turtles!

Source: Minneapolis Star Tribune

It's been reported that rare Blanding's Turtles live in wetlands along the BNSF mainline to be used for the Northstar Rail commuter service. The state has agreed to erect barriers along the construction zone to keep the turtles from wandering into harm's way. Workers will be required to pick up straying turtles and construction roads will be kept to minimum widths. Erosion and sediment control will be practiced to minimize the muddying of the wet lands.

Rich Baker, staff zoologist for the state Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program said no state inventory of the turtles has been made. He estimates the population to be in the low thousands.

The BNSF mainline to be utilized runs through Anoka County, on a sandy plain, "primo" turtle zone. The turtles can wander to the sandy area from their wetland home by as much as a half mile during nesting season.

The line will see 18 commuter trains a day in addition to heavy freight traffic. The Northstar project has to negotiate an acceptable payment plan with the BNSF for use of the tracks.

Gleanings from the Web

Trains Newswire

Healthy Traffic Growth for Metra and The South Shore

Metra Traffic Growth: Metra is bracing for a possible influx of new riders because of the Dan Ryan Expressway reconstruction project, said a story on Chicago CBS television station WBBM-TV, Channel 2. But, even without them, the report said, the commuter rail agency's business is up, with ridership jumping 8.7 percent in January compared with one year ago. Monthly ticket sales have not been this brisk since 2001.

Weekend ridership is up 30 percent. Metra Planning Director Lynette Ciavarella said that doesn't count riders who hoarded 10-ride tickets in late January because of last month's fare increase. Ten-ride-ticket sales jumped 27 percent in January. Ciavarella said that eclipses the 25 percent one-month jump in 1996 and the 18 percent jump four years ago.

"Based on this trend, we anticipate that the 10-ride tickets are going to return to their previous levels in about a month or two," she said. The 10-ride tickets purchased in the days before the fare increase will be good through January of next

year. Metra Deputy Executive Director Rick Tidwell said he is not sure what to expect when Ryan reconstruction hits full speed April 1. Tidwell said past reconstruction projects on the Ryan, Stevenson, Kennedy, and Edens expressways failed to produce any sizable increase in ridership. But, Tidwell said, Metra has extra capacity on its Electric and Rock Island Districts in case motorists decide to switch.

To assure that additional seats will be available, Metra has retained 14 Electric District Highliner cars and 50 former Chicago & North Western bilevel cars (for diesel trains) that had been scheduled for retirement.

New Cars for the South Shore: With ridership growing, the South Shore Line is working on a \$40 million plan to add passenger cars, according to an Associated Press story in the Chicago Sun-Times. The South Shore Line's ridership grew 7.3 percent last year, and for the first two months of this year, it has grown 10.7 percent.

"We are at capacity," said John Parsons, a spokesman for the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, which operates the electric commuter rail line that runs between downtown Chicago and South Bend, Ind.

A purchase of double-deck cars would be a first for the South Shore, which borrowed similar cars from Metra in the early 1990s. The double-deck cars being considered would hold 148 passengers, 15 more than current cars. The Electric District of Chicago's Metra commuter railroad, now is receiving new double-deck electric cars; South Shore operates on the Metra line between the Kensington, IL, station, at 115th Street in Chicago, and downtown.

March Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:07 pm by President Marty Swan. (21 members and guests in attendance)

President Swan announced that the April meeting was being moved one week earlier to April 8, 2006 due to the Easter holiday on our normal 3rd Saturday weekend.

President Swan asked if any guests were in attendance. Wayne Torset of the MTM was in attendance. Also Andy Koetz introduced Daryl Gragnon and Nick Welseth who were also in attendance.

President Swan asked for a motion to approve the February minutes of the meeting as shown in the March newsletter. Motion made by Jim McLean and seconded by Tom Neadle.

Cheer committee report given by President Swan. He called upon Andy Koetz to report on his Father's condition (Bob Koetz). Andy reported that Bob was moved to a different hospital in the St. Paul area and is doing very well.

Treasurer's Report given by Joe Fishbein showed cash in checking account of \$6,435.00 with \$1,740.00 of that being help for GTW engine #8327 restoration work. Joe also reported that we have investments in CD's in the amount of \$31,000.00. Our current membership is 62. We have 27 people who were members in 2005 who have not as yet renewed for 2006.

(Continued on page 8)

RETURN OF THE HIAWATHA

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 21, 23, 24 & 25, 2006

This summer the "Friends of the 261" in cooperation with Amtrak and Canadian Pacific Railway will operate steam excursion trains featuring equipment of the Milwaukee Road's famed "Hiawatha."

On Wednesday, June 21st, Milwaukee Road 261 will pull a one-way excursion from Minneapolis to Milwaukee. The train will make all of the regular Amtrak stops at Red Wing, Winona, La Crosse, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, Portage and Columbus, and passengers may board or detrain at any of these points.

On Friday, June 23rd, 261 will pull a special V.I.P. all first & premium class dinner excursion from Milwaukee to Sturtevant, Wisconsin. At Sturtevant passengers will be given the opportunity to view the new Amtrak station while the 261 is turned for a return run to Milwaukee.

On Saturday, June 24th and Sunday, June 25th, the 261 will pull a round-trip excursion from Milwaukee to the Wisconsin Dells. After arrival at the Dells, a second excursion will be operated to New Lisbon and return. In total the excursion will make a 270 mile round trip each day.

The Minneapolis - Milwaukee excursion will depart from the 261 Harrison Street Shops. A map will be provided with your tickets. Departure from Minneapolis on June 21st is at 8:30 am. The train will stop in Winona at 11:00 am and is scheduled to arrive in Milwaukee at 6:00 pm. On June 23rd the departure for Sturtevant is scheduled for 6:00 pm with arrival back in Milwaukee

at 10:00 pm. Departure from Milwaukee is scheduled for 9 am on June 24th and 25th with arrival at the Dells scheduled for 12 noon, returning to the Dells at 2:25 pm. Departure from the Dells for Milwaukee is at 3:00 pm with arrival in Milwaukee scheduled for 6:00 pm.

Equipment featured on the trip will be original 1940's vintage railroad equipment. The premium class will feature the Skytop observation car "Cedar Rapids" and "Super Dome" # 53. Premium class includes hors d'oeuvres and gourmet meals prepared on-board by our executive chef. First class includes an upscale meal plan with hors d'oeuvres. Both first and premium class include complimentary beer and wine with a cash bar.

First class equipment will feature lounge cars with comfortable seating.



"Friends of the 261" is not responsible for equipment substitutions and assumes no liability for inconvenience caused by delays. Train will run rain or shine. Coach and first class seats are not reserved; seating will be available 30 minutes prior to departure time. Light food service and souvenirs can be purchased in the concession car.

Refer to the Friends of the 261 web site

www.261.com or call 651-765-9812 between 9am

and 4pm Central Time. As of press time the web site hadn't been updated.

Proposed Trip Survey

Trip Chairman John Goodman has learned of an opportunity to recreate the days of Milwaukee Road Hiawatha by riding the Skytop Lounge parlor-observation car to Chicago going down behind the *Empire Builder* August 25th and returning August 27th. The rate for transportation only is \$399, approximately \$100 more than a one way trip to be run June 21st to Milwaukee. This proposed trip would NOT utilize steam locomotive 261.

The trip John is proposing would utilize former Milwaukee Road business car *Montana*, a Super Dome and the *Cedar Rapids* Skytop Lounge parlor observation car. Breakfast and lunch would be served from the Super Dome going down and dinner on the return. The trip would be shared with a group of baseball fans going down for White Sox games. As a result we would NOT have exclusive occupancy of the cars.

This trip would NOT INCLUDE BASEBALL TICKETS OR HOTEL ROOM! Because of the wide range of discounts for AAA members or Seniors, hotel rates vary considerably. For that reason participants would book their own hotel rooms, though we can probably suggest a few. One option would be to ride a Metra commuter train out to Elgin and stay at a Quality there. If there would be sufficient participation, we could possibly look into renting a van mini coach to take us out to the Illinois Railway Museum Saturday. Please check the items you would be interested in.

- ☐ 1. I am interested in the transportation part ONLY; \$399 per person.
- ☐ 2. I'd be interested in a transportation, hotel staying at Elgin, IL and transport to Illinois Rwy Museum; cost range \$500-\$600 per person plus meals.
- ☐ 3. I'd rather stay in downtown Chicago with hotel, transportation to the Illinois Rwy Museum; cost range \$550-675 per person plus meals.

Please cut this form out and send it to John Goodman, 8409 13th Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55425-1705. Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

There is NO obligation in returning this form. The purpose is the gauge the interest in such a trip.

(Continued from page 6)

Joe mentioned that he removed \$1,000.00 in monies to pay the expected costs of the audio visual purchases of Dan Meyer for the chapter. Dan will explain later in the meeting. The Treasurer's report was accepted into the minutes.

The Director's report was given by Doug Johnson. Doug reported that each member by now should have received the national NRHS newsletter giving the status of the NRHS as a whole. Doug also reported that in April he will attend the mid-spring BOD meeting in Indianapolis, IN. He also reported that this year is the 175th anniversary of the N&W railway, now part of the NS.

John Goodman gave a trip chairman's report of possible trips this year. He reported that Steve Sandberg quoted to him a cost of \$399.00 per person for the August 25-27, 2006 trip to Chicago for the Minnesota Twins games with the Chicago White Sox. We would then have to get our own hotel. A discussion took place and Russ Isbrandt said he would get more information about hotels in downtown Chicago and maybe out in one of suburbs near the IL RR museum. John also mentioned continued plans to possibly visit the trolley line in Clear Lake, IA in October, if we can coordinate with Iowa Chapter for a joint meeting and trip on the Mason City and Clear Lake lines.

Russ Isbrandt gave a report for the editor of the newsletter. He asked that all information for the April newsletter be given to him by this Wednesday. He has an early deadline for the paper due to the one week earlier date for this April meeting.

Dan Meyer gave the Web master report. He says that our web page is getting about 40 "hits" a day. He is keeping up the web page continually.

Northstar News
Northstar Chapter NRHS
4036 Birch Knoll Drive
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Dan then showed the chapter the new audio visual equipment he purchased with the authorization of the Board of Directors. He has a Toshiba 2000 lumen unit and other equipment which cost the chapter \$1,406.00. This includes a 3 year guarantee at additional cost, which is included in this amount.

The by-laws committee report was given by Mark Braun. He will be holding another meeting in April, just after the Easter holiday.

John Goodman gave a Program chairman report. We hope to have John Hotvet give the April meeting, as he has already volunteered to give a program in the near future. We hope to ask him to do a "fallen flags" slide show. John is looking for future programs for the chapter.

President Swan and Kurt Peterson discussed the video DVD's that were made of our 2004 convention seminars. At a previous meeting Kurt reported that the DVD's were set up to show each of the 4 seminars. It was decided at this meeting to send a set of seminars DVD's to each of the 4 presenters. As presenter George Isaac has died recently, we decided to send it to his widow. Kurt reported that the seminar's actually comprise 7 DVD's to encompass the four seminars.

There was no further Old Business to bring before the group.

President Swan asked for New Business and there was none.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was placed before the group by Rod Linebarger and seconded by Joe Fishbein.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.

The program consisted of a "members night" of slides and video.

John H. Goodman - Acting Secretary

Address Correction Requested