



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

**Dues are due NOW.**

**My First Trip to California by Bill Dredge**



This is the Great Northern's *Western Star* September 2, 1962 along the Kootenai River. While the train may not look like Bill's Scout Special, the scenery has likely changed little. **Photo by Russ Isbrandt**

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## Meeting Notice

The March meeting of the Northstar Chapter of the NRHS will be held in the Como Park Streetcar waiting station, March 21st at 7pm CDT. See directions on following page.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together at the Keys Cafe and Bakery at the northeast corner of Lexington and Larpenteur starting about 5:15 pm. Call Bob Clarkson at 651-636-2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons coming with you.

Program: Richard Tubbesing will present a DVD of New Zealand steam.

# Northstar Chapter Officers

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

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues are \$45 (\$33 for the National dues and \$12 for the local dues). Family memberships are \$5 per person additional. The student rate is \$22 (\$16 for the National, \$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 payable to "Northstar Chapter NRHS" to Northstar Chapter NRHS Membership Services, P.O. Box 120832, St. Paul, MN 55112.



### Directions to the Site of the February Meeting, Twin Cities Lines Streetcar Waiting Station in Como Park.

Exit I-94 at Lexington Parkway and travel north to Horton Ave. second light after crossing under the second set of BNSF tracks. Turn right onto Horton Ave. and left into the small parking lot. If the lot is filled, park on Horton Ave., or on Churchill Street to the east.

### DUES ARE DUE NOW

Due to many circumstances, some within our control and some outside of our control, dues renewals have not gone as smoothly as we had hoped. If you have renewed your NRHS dues, you should have received a receipt showing that your dues were paid by now. If you have not received a receipt, please contact Dan Meyer at 763-784-8835 or e-mail [treasurer@northstar-nrhs.org](mailto:treasurer@northstar-nrhs.org) and he will check your dues status immediately. Please do this promptly, as the deadline for dues renewals is fast approaching.

### My First Trip to California By Bill Dredge

It was July 1953. I was a Boy Scout going to a "Jambo-ree" on Irvine Ranch, just south of Santa Ana California.



We had a special train consisting of 2 baggage cars, one with a long picnic table where we ate and in the other we stored our duffel bags and equipment, including our tents. In between the baggage cars was an army kitchen car, where our food was cooked, and 7 Tourist (sections) sleepers, none air-conditioned.

We had a pre-Jamboree session at a scout camp on Lake Minnetonka. Then in the evening we went to Maple Plain to board our train which was pulled by a pair of Great Northern Railway (F-7A & B) freight diesels. The "B unit" had a steam generator for optional passenger usage. While waiting to board our "antique train", the *Empire Builder* passed us by and I was wishing I was on it instead, but I made up for that in later years on the CB&Q/GN and Amtrak editions.

We boarded our train, I took an upper berth for the trip and went to sleep after we picked up more scouts at Willmar, MN.

The following morning, after breakfast on the long picnic table in the baggage car, we got off for a stretch while our train was being serviced in Minot, ND. We then settled back for a long ride across the prairies, but got a nice break at Wolf Point, MT where we detrained for a rodeo. We re-boarded the train after the rodeo and it soon got dark. I turned in before reaching Havre, MT.

The next morning we woke up and I saw mountains for the first time in my life at East Glacier Park, MT. We had breakfast at the Lodge, then boarded their special buses (Jammers) for a trip on the Going-To-The-Sun Highway. We re-boarded the train at Belton (West Glacier) MT, then stopped at Whitefish and took a swim in Whitefish Lake. After our swim it was back on our train for an afternoon ride along the Kootenai River. (See cover photo.)



**About nine years after Bill re-boarded his Scout extra at Belton, we see the *Western Star* making its station stop there. A blow up of this slide above right, shows one of the "Jammer" buses Bill rode through the park. Note there appears to be a heavyweight sleeper in the consist. Photo by Russ Isbrandt**

We arrived in Spokane, WA in early evening for a service stop. After leaving Spokane it was "lights-out" and bedtime for the overnight trip to Seattle. We were up in the morning and were along Puget Sound, then entered Seattle's King St. Station through a 1 1/2 mile tunnel. We then



"marched" to the pier where we boarded a ferry boat to Victoria BC. We spent the afternoon visiting Victoria and then re-boarded the ferry boat for an evening cruise back to Seattle, where we then walked back to King St. Station for an overnight ride to Portland, OR. We visited Portland while our train was being serviced and switched to the Southern Pacific in preparation for a trip to California points. Our power was a 4-8-4 Daylight steam engine (possibly the 4449).

After a fast ride down the valley to Eugene, OR we started to climb the Cascade Mountains. A cab-forward engine was coupled on at Oakridge at the foot of the climb up the Cascades. I was totally impressed with this mountain range and in later years have returned to see them from the *Coast Starlight* several times. Twilight came about the time we reached Mt. Shasta.

The next morning our train arrived at Oakland Pier (also known as the "Mole") and a ferry boat took us to San Francisco for a daytime sight-seeing trip. We had some free time to walk around downtown, then went back to the Ferry Building for the ride back to Oakland and an overnight train ride to Puente, CA (south of Los Angeles) where we detrained and took buses to Irvine Ranch and all its sand. (Irvine is now a growing city south of Santa Ana). We pitched our tents and set up camp for 10 days. While at the Jamboree we swam a few times in the Pacific Ocean and visited Long Beach and its amusement park with a very large roller coaster.

We had an interesting trip home. We boarded our "Special (Antique) Train" at Union Pacific's East Los Angeles Yard. Our power was an ALCO PA, followed by 2 FB units and a heater car. Upon arrival in San Bernardino we picked up 2 UP F-7 cab units for helpers for going over Santa Fe's Cajon Pass. Union Pacific had, and still has, trackage rights over this line to Barstow, CA. That afternoon we "roasted" in our non-air-conditioned car while going across the Mojave Desert. When we got to Las Vegas, NV for a service stop, we took a walk around town. Every place you looked had slot machines. We got back on the train. Luckily the desert cooled down after dark, and we went to bed.

The next morning we woke up in Salt Lake City, UT, detrained and took buses to "Saltair" the beach and swam in the Great Salt Lake. In the afternoon we visited the Mormon Tabernacle, then had some free time. I went

back to the station in time to see D&RGW's *Prospector* depart for Denver. After dinner we went back to our train for an overnight trip on the Rio Grande to Denver. The next morning we awoke somewhere around Glenwood Springs, CO and I was totally impressed with the scenery. Up front our train had an A-B-B-A set of "F" units. When we got to Winter Park we met the westbound *California Zephyr* (pulled by ALCO PA's) and I vowed to someday really see the scenery from a vista-dome car (3 years later I would be on the CZ). We went through the 6.2 mile Moffat Tunnel, then wound down the mountains to Denver (I still say this is the most scenic trip on any USA train).

Upon arrival in Denver, our train was serviced and once again turned over to the Union Pacific. Our power leaving Denver was a 4-8-4 Northern, similar to the 844 (which it could have been). We had a fast ride across Colorado with a service stop at North Platte, NE where got off and stretched before our last night on the train.

On the final morning I awoke near Sioux City, IA. The train at that point had been turned over to the Chicago & Northwestern (Omaha Road) in Omaha, NE during the night. I noticed a pair of GP-7's pulling the train.

We went through the southwest corner of Minnesota and arrived at the Great Northern Station about 2:30 pm. I said goodbye to my fellow scouts and the Jamboree Scoutmaster and went home with my Dad. Since then, I have taken many train rides which I will share with you in future Newsletters but I'll never forget this one.

Additional photos in the electronic edition extra pages.

**Washington D.C. Inauguration Day Passenger Trains Contributions from Philadelphia Chapter *Cinders* -Frank Tatnall, editor, Trains Newswire, the Virginia Railway Express web site and Yahoo All Aboard Group posting by Carleton MacDonald**

January 20th was a banner day for passenger train enthusiasts. Amtrak trains to D.C. were sold out even with cars from other trains added to the regular Northeast Corridor trains. Amtrak leased a 10 car New Jersey Transit multi-level train hauled by an ALP-46 locomotive 4618. It ran as extra train #3181. A total of 90 trains were operated to and from Washington that day. That was 8 more than on a ordinary Tuesday. A special schedule was issued emphasizing morning arrivals and evening departures from Washington. Amtrak said they increased their usual weekday capacity by 50% by diverting cars from other trains and scheduling maintenance to provide additional cars.

There was a large collection of at least 16 private cars which could be seen at Ivy City and Union Station. Among them were two BNSF business cars, the *Georgia 300* used by President-elect Obama, and the cars from a special move from Philadelphia, Sunday the 18th, that was composed of AEM-7, number 905 pulling Bennet Levin's *Pennsylvania 120*, *Little Juniata Rapids*, *Warrior Ridge*, *Kitchi Gammi Club*, stainless steel parlor cars *Greenwich Harbor* and *Greenwich Estate*.

Because of the high volume of traffic, Amtrak said that some passengers might be asked to remain on board trains for a short period of time prior to detraining "to en-

sure the safe and orderly movement of passengers through Union Station." With numerous trains arriving within short timeframes" Amtrak said, "trains will take turns unloading passengers to prevent unsafe overcrowding conditions in the station."

Of the estimated 1.1 million people in town that day, 20,000 of them traveled on Amtrak, and a whopping 980,000 rode the Washington Metro.

The Metro subway service was also enhanced to handle the crowds. Metrorail lines opened at 4 am and stayed open until 2 am January 21st. After midnight, Red Line trains ran 15 minutes apart and Blue, Orange, Yellow and Green line trains ran 20 minutes apart. Metrorail was working to enhance the system's power-related infrastructure to accommodate more eight-car trains. Metrorail designated some rail station entrances as exit-only or entry-only to move people efficiently.

There was one incident at Gallery Place - Chinatown on the Red Line. At 9:25 am, a 68 year old Nashville woman stepped too close to the station platform at Gallery Place and fell onto the tracks. As a train was approaching, the woman tried to get a lift onto the platform. Houston Transit Authority police officer Eliot Swainson was on the platform as one of 100 officers from other transit agencies helping in Washington. Swainson had been trained the day before to respond in such a scenario. He leaned down and pushed the woman to safety under the platform seconds before the train pulled in. "The train was coming through, it was loud, windy and cold," said Swainson, a 15-year veteran of the Houston Transit Authority Police. "I remembered that the platforms have a little space, and I pushed her down and told her to stay down." After the train passed, Swainson pulled the woman onto the platform. The woman dislocated her shoulder, but was treated and released at a local hospital. The train involved was removed from service and Red Line trains were turned short of the station at Farragut North and Judiciary Square Metro stations. Service was resumed at 10:15 am.

Virginia Railway Express charged \$25 for roundtrip tickets from all stations and for all passengers including infants in arms, except for monthly ticket holders. No quiet cars were run that day. All seats were sold out. They are currently selling the surplus ticket stock as souvenirs for \$5 each or \$100 for tickets from all stations.

All Aboard Group member, Carleton MacDonald described his experience going home on MARC from Union Station.

5:20 pm- 5:35pm: Union Station was a mob scene. Only one exit out of Metro and that to First St. NE, all others closed to avoid sending people into chaos. There was a huge crowd outside being sorted out as Amtrak, MARC or VRE passengers. Everyone had to show tickets. Amtrak people were told to go up to the garage then into station from garage entrance. Once in station, I saw co-workers gamely trying to get everyone to the right place. There were massive lines at Amtrak gates and at Starbuck's. Most of the station was closed off because one of the Inaugural Balls was there. I made my way to the gate.



5:35 pm - 6:00 pm: MARC passengers were being sorted by Brunswick, Camden or Penn lines. The Brunswick line in turn had three flavors of train with different stops, depending on whether the train was going to Frederick, Brunswick or Martinsburg. I got on next train, Frederick-bound.

6:00 pm: The Frederick train left. It was full, but had very few standees - the reservation system worked and worked well. The first stop was Germantown. My son came with car and picked me up.

There were numerous comments on the All Aboard Group about the patience, good behavior, and good humor displayed by the mob under the most trying conditions. There was one comment that there were no arrests for disorderly conduct, drugs or drunkenness.

#### **Stimulus Plan Impacts on Rail Passenger Service Railway Age Breaking News, February 18, 2009**

H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, contains billions of investment dollars for rail projects, passenger and freight.

Passenger rail stands to benefit the most from H.R. 1. In addition to the \$13 billion over five years authorized last October under H.R. 2095, Amtrak receives \$850 million for capital and \$450 million for security. High speed and intercity passenger rail programs get a massive combined infusion of \$8 billion. Guidelines will be developed over the next few months, but the USDOT Secretary and the Federal Railroad Administration will be primarily responsible for distributing funds. Project applicants can be a state or group of states, an interstate compact, a public agency established by one or more states with responsibility for providing high speed or intercity passenger rail service, or Amtrak. Transit, including bus and rail, gets \$8.4 billion administered through the Federal Transit Administration, including \$750 million each for the Fixed Guideway Modernization and New Starts programs. The Department of Homeland Security will separately administer a \$150 million rail transit security fund.

Freight rail stands to benefit as well, with access to as much as \$29 billion: \$1.5 billion in a new discretionary grants program for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure that will have a "significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region," and \$27.5 billion in highway formula spending that can be flexed to rail. Through the Federal Highway Administration, there is \$27.5 billion in highway infrastructure investment money for state DOTs and local MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) using formula grants (half via the STP formula and half via FY08 obligation limitation ratio distribution). At their discretion, states may flex any amount of this funding for passenger and freight rail transportation and port infrastructure projects eligible for assistance under Subsection 601(a)(8) of Section 133 of Title 23, U.S.C. Projects may involve the combining of private and public sector funds, including investment of public funds in private sector facility improvements. States will have 120 days after apportionment, which must be made within 21 days of the H.R. 1's enactment, to obligate the first 50% of their highway apportionments and until one year after apportionment to obligate the remainder. The federal share of projects is up to 100%.

Amtrak outlines "near-term" equipment needs.

Amid a laundry list of capital equipment needs, Amtrak has identified roughly \$1.42 billion in "near-term equipment needs" submitted as part of its fiscal year 2010 budget request to grow national intercity rail service.

In a letter February 17th addressed to Vice President Joseph Biden and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Amtrak President Joseph Boardman notes, "While capacity investments in rail infrastructure offer us potential increases in traffic, we cannot realize the potential without new equipment. Our fleet's average age has reached an all-time high, and it is hard-pressed to keep up with existing demand on large segments of the system, let alone growth."

Amtrak seeks to acquire 60 electric locomotives for the Northeast Corridor, 25 single-level dining cars, 75 baggage cars, 25 single-level sleeping cars, and 130 bilevel cars for short-distance routes.

Boardman noted "Amtrak strongly supports the installation of PTC systems on the rail network, and we intend to complete it by 2012 (3 years prior to the deadline)" mandated by Congress last year. Amtrak intends to complete installation of its ACSES system (ACSES is ALSTOM's Advanced Civil Speed Enforcement System) on the NEC; "the wayside installation of ACSES on the Northeast Corridor is incomplete," in some places covering only the tracks used by Amtrak's Acela Express service, Boardman wrote. Amtrak also will complete installation of its Incremental Train Control System (ITCS) on right-of-way it owns in Michigan. "Amtrak will also need to install PTC systems on its diesel fleet that will be compatible with any systems our hosts [mostly Class I railroads] adopt," Boardman said.

Though Boardman's letter is submitted as "an overview of our FY 2010 funding request," Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black noted that some of the capital needs in the letter listed might theoretically be funded by the stimulus package recently signed into law by President Obama, or by a combination of stimulus funding and congressional appropriations. "We just don't know yet how it will sort out" for some of the infrastructure items, Black cautioned.

#### **Don Phillips' "Boardman: Changes Are Coming to Amtrak" Trains Newswire, February 18, 2009**

WASHINGTON - New Amtrak President Joseph Boardman says many Amtrak managers do not know whether to believe that Amtrak actually has a future, and that anyone who cannot make the transition from a survival mode to a growth mode will have to find another job.

Boardman said in an interview that shortly after leaving the top spot at the Federal Railroad Administration last Thanksgiving to take over Amtrak, he discovered that the passenger rail system is in worse shape than he thought, and that some people in Amtrak headquarters in Washington are, in effect, burnout cases. He would not be specific about numbers, saying he has still made no final decisions about how many people will have to leave because they cannot make the transition from survival to growth.

"There are a whole host of people here who don't know whether to believe," he said. "People are going to have to get on the train. We will make some judgments very soon."

Among other things, Boardman found that despite growing passenger traffic, up about 12 percent in 2008, Amtrak's five-year plan in October contained no plans to order new passenger cars other than seven new high-speed trainsets, cars to lengthen current Acela trainsets, 15 new single-level sleeping cars, and some new baggage-dormitory cars. All other cars would have to be paid for by states that needed them for new corridor service, and perhaps ordered them through Amtrak. That secret plan, which had already become a joke around Amtrak, was thrown out quickly after Boardman arrived, and Amtrak is now making more ambitious plans.

Boardman said Amtrak's most urgent need is for new electric locomotives, and he put in an immediate request for \$1 billion in long-term low-interest government loans. Electric motive power is in such poor shape that Washington-New York-Boston trains are sometimes canceled for lack of power.

Since no firm plans have been made to order cars, up to three years will be necessary to actually obtain new cars. Meanwhile, as many wrecked cars as possible will be refurbished, he said. This leaves Amtrak in horrible shape even as politicians preach about a grand future of "high-speed rail."

Meanwhile, Amtrak at least initially lost out in President Obama's multi-billion-dollar stimulus plan, receiving \$1.3 billion while commuter rail got \$8.4 billion and "high speed rail" got \$8 billion. (Amtrak is eligible to compete for the high speed rail funds.) Nonetheless, Boardman has instilled such confidence among members of Congress and congressional staff members that some effort may be made to make up the shortfall in future legislation. It is too early for any specific plans, especially since Boardman himself is still developing plans.

Interviews with various Capitol Hill staff members found a lot of confidence in Amtrak's future under Boardman, perhaps too much confidence for Boardman's own good.

Boardman has been surprisingly successful in blunting threats by unions to get rid of him. Shortly after he was appointed, 12 labor unions made a statement opposing him as an effort by the Amtrak board to block Obama from naming his own Amtrak president. However, Amtrak's own unions came to Boardman's defense and blunted the attacks. Much of Boardman's union support began on a long Thanksgiving day at the crew room at Washington Union Station, as he and his wife bantered with engineers and conductors. Within hours, he had become almost a hero to Amtrak union employees as word spread around the country. Higher union leadership backed off.

Now comes the question: Can he produce? One major union official said he does not believe Boardman has the guts to do what is necessary. In the field, other union officials are waiting for a sign that Boardman means business, and they will not be patient forever.

What about Obama? Well-placed sources said he pushed for the \$8 billion last-minute increase in high-speed rail funds, partly because he realized he had short-changed rail in his proposed stimulus legislation after bragging on the campaign trail about his dedication to passenger rail. Rahm Emanuel, Obama's chief of staff, confirmed the reports, telling the internet newsletter Portico that Obama realized he had not asked for enough for high-speed rail and wanted \$10 billion added as a commitment to the future.

One of the chief staff members responsible for a last-minute \$8 billion increase in high speed rail funds laid almost all the blame for Amtrak's current condition on President Bush and his administration. This Democratic staff member, who did not want to be quoted by name, said that Amtrak will now be able to grow without enemies looking over its shoulder. He expressed confidence in Boardman, and noted that more funds for regular Amtrak trains could be made available in future legislation if Boardman gets Amtrak's house in order. The staff member said that meaningless restrictions enacted under Republicans, including harassment such as limits on the number of dining car staff numbers, were wiped off the books and he is sure that such restrictions will soon be eased by Amtrak.

Meanwhile, Democrats on Amtrak's board gently but firmly took control. Republican Donna McLean was eased out as chairman, but given the vice chairmanship. Democrat Thomas Carper took over as chairman. Hunter Biden not only remains on the board, but has joined Carper as a force to be reckoned with.

Carper, mayor of Macomb, IL, and a longtime Obama friend and political supporter, and Biden, son of the new vice president, have at least one tough job ahead. That is to convince Obama and Congress that plain old regular rail is slowly approaching a breakdown unless lots of new locomotives and cars are ordered soon, and unless aging basket-case terminals such as Chicago are fixed soon. That includes replacement of often-useless switch heaters. As Boardman points out, it is no secret that Chicago gets cold and is pelted by heavy snow in the winter. So why does Amtrak seem to be surprised when winter comes? - Don Phillips

## Railfan Calendar

### Spring Railfest

Saturday, March 28, 2009, 10 am to 6 pm at the Hutchinson, MN Mall, 1060 State Highway 15 South. Admission: Free. Operating model railroads in several scales and model railroad, rail memorabilia flea market.

### Greater Upper Midwest Train Show and Sale

Saturday, April 4, 2009, 9 am to 2 pm at Century College, 3300 Century Ave. N., White Bear Lake, MN. Admission: 12 years and older \$4, under 12 free.

### Newport Model Railroad Club Flea Market

April 18, 2009, 10 am to 3 pm at Woodbury High School, 2665 Woodlane Drive, Woodbury, MN. Admission: 12 years and older \$5, under 12 free.

### **Three Roads to Hutch - The 2009 Thousand Lakes Region NMRA Convention**

Friday May 29th through Sunday May 31st. Best Western Victorian Inn, 1000 Highway 7 W., Hutchinson, MN. See [www.thousandlakesregion.org](http://www.thousandlakesregion.org) for more details.

### **Rail Fair, Copeland Park, La Crosse, WI**

Saturday July 18th, 2009 10 am to 5 pm. Admission \$5, children under 12 free with an adult.

## **Trains Newswire**

### **UP to invest \$4 million in "Spine Line"**

Published: Friday, February 13, 2009

ALLERTON, IA - Union Pacific Railroad is working on a \$4 million project to upgrade its Kansas City, MO-St. Paul, MN, "Spine Line" in northern Missouri and southern Iowa. Work began January 28th and will be completed by the end of March.

Crews are changing out rail in curves between Excelsior Springs, MO, and Allerton, IA. The work aims to raise speeds on this section of track.

### **Wisconsin town welcomes train-watchers**

Published: Wednesday, January 28, 2009

FERRYVILLE, WI - The village of Ferryville is using its location along BNSF's Aurora Subdivision main line and the Mississippi River's east bank to encourage visitors to come to town to watch trains. The village, located 23 miles north of Prairie du Chien on State Highway 35, has set up a viewing platform at River View Park along the BNSF main line. The platform is just 20 feet from the tracks and 25 feet above them, offering clear views of trains from the north and south as they travel along the Mississippi River.

An official ribbon cutting and grand opening for the platform was held October 3, 2008. The viewing area also has picnic tables and benches, and nearby businesses offer snacks and beverages. On some days, the volume can exceed 50 trains a day through Ferryville on BNSF's former Burlington Route main line between Chicago and the Twin Cities.

For more information go to the village website at [www.visitferryville.com](http://www.visitferryville.com).

### **Amtrak eyes second train to Vancouver, B.C.**

Published: Wednesday, February 11, 2009

SEATTLE - Amtrak is considering adding a second daily Seattle-Vancouver, B.C., round trip in time for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, the Olympia (WA) Olympian has reported. Amtrak *Cascades* currently operates one daily round trip, which leaves Seattle northbound in the morning and returns in the evening.

The second train is currently being held up as Amtrak tries to resolve a dispute with Canadian Border Services, which wants C\$1,500 daily to inspect the northbound train's passengers. The passenger line doesn't want to pay that fee.

"The province of British Columbia, the tourism industry, and others have been working to attempt to get the fee waived," said Ken Uznanski, the rail-passenger manager for Washington's Department of Transportation. "The current Seattle-Vancouver round trip does not have such a charge ... [that's] what has held up the start of service.

### **Florida East Coast: We're open to passenger trains**

Published: Monday, February 09, 2009

JACKSONVILLE, FL - Florida East Coast Railway has indicated it's open to the idea of hosting passenger trains on its line, which connects many of Florida's largest cities, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel has reported. In years past, FEC had resisted the idea of hosting passenger trains when approached.

Railroad officials say any passenger trains will have to operate in such a way as to not interfere with freight trains. Still, the change of heart is welcome in South Florida. The parallel Tri-Rail service, operated on a former CSX line, has seen impressive gains in business, but misses several downtown areas in the Miami-Palm Beach corridor.

State planners are studying locations for stations, how best to create whistle-free zones, and how much the service would cost. Current estimates peg it at \$4.5 billion to \$6 billion. They intend to apply for Federal Transit Administration funds.

## **Chapter Library Sale**

Lists of non-railroad books and model railroad equipment are available on our web site, [www.northstar-nrhs.org](http://www.northstar-nrhs.org), "Library Sales", the third item down on the list on the left side of the home page. Additionally the model railroad material will be available at the Greater Upper Midwest Train Show and Sale at Century College, Saturday, April 4th. (See Railfan Calendar on the previous page.) We will need volunteers to help man the tables at the train show. This is an important revenue producer to help with the library rent. Call Russ Isbrandt at 651-426-1156 or email him at [risbrandt@comcast.net](mailto:risbrandt@comcast.net) to help. So far 2552 items have been entered in the data base with much, much more to be sorted and entered. Cy Svobodny has sorted through an estimated 11,000 slides with many thousands more to go. John Cartwright, John Goodman, Dawn Holmberg, Dan Meyer, Dave Norman, Joe Stark and Cy Svobodny and your editor have spent many a Wednesday doing the sorting and will continue. It is our hope to have an open house August 9th before the 40th anniversary banquet at Jax Cafe. More information on that will appear in future issues of Northstar News.

## **Minutes of the February 21, 2009 Meeting**

The meeting was called to order in the historic Como Park Streetcar Station at 7:01 1/2 pm by chapter president Cy Svobodny with 15 members and guests present (several more arrived later). Members and guests were invited to introduce themselves. There was a correction to the minutes of the January 17, 2009 membership meeting, as printed in the February 2009 issue of the Northstar News. Dan Meyer is a member of the 2009 National Convention Committee, but he is not the chairman of it. A motion was made to approve the minutes of that meeting, as corrected. That motion was seconded and carried. Treasurer Dan Meyer reported that the chapter is out of checks - the bank sent us some new ones, but they didn't have the correct address on them, so more are on order. Dan said that the current balance in the chapter's checking account is about \$2,800, but he noted that many expenses are coming up. Our investment account has a balance of about \$33,000. The chapter's board has authorized the transfer of \$2,000 from that account to the checking account. Dan also reported on membership renewals. There have been some delays in processing renewals, but he said that if you have paid, you should have gotten a receipt. As of Thursday, 40 members have renewed. NRHS national office "got right on it" with an up-dated version of the membership records for the chapter. He will be sending in

about 20 more renewals by the end of the month. Dan said that he would like to get the membership renewals all straightened out by March 1st. He also promoted the membership application and brochure about the chapter, both of which can be downloaded from the chapter's website. He has drawn up a budget for 2009 which calls for a deficit of \$700, but he noted that we might break even if we can sell enough items from the library collection. National director Bill Dredge said that he had just gotten back from the winter Board of Directors meeting in Philadelphia. Many items were discussed at the meeting, including a proposed national dues increase. John Goodman also attended the meeting. He gave more information on the meeting, including a proposal by Greg Molloy to set up a "Governance Committee." The Lone Star Convention from 2008 made the final payment on national's share of the profits from that convention. The 2010 convention will be at Steamtown - future conventions beyond that are not yet set. John also reported on programs. He needs one for next month's meeting. His camera was stolen while he was on his trip. He might show some slides from the Kurt Peterson Collection. April's program will be slides from the book "Trackside in the Twin Cities." There is a lot of material in the Kurt Peterson Collection that could be the basis of future programs. We have been sorting items in the collection. Back to the 2009 convention - a slide or photo of a GN Geep Diesel pulling a passenger train is needed for the trip booklet. John mentioned that Dick Thompson of Ironhorse Farm owns an ex-Dresser Traprock 0-4-0 steam loco and will be getting several more engines. He will be having a steam-up on Friday, July 17th for the convention of the Northern Pacific Historical Society. We could tag along for that. He would also be willing to run on Saturday of that weekend for us if we pay enough. There was a report on plans for the 2009 NRHS National Convention, which will be held in Duluth. Another item of Old Business - did we pay our 2009 dues to the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance? The final payment of \$181 from their convention held in Duluth was made, bringing the total profit from the event to \$2,281. There was more information on plans for

the NRHS convention in Duluth. Cy Svobodny reported that material in the library is being sorted and inventoried. So far, we have sorted about 800 books, over 500 videos, and thousands of slides, plus additional items, such as railroad china, T shirts, caps, etc. The room is crowded, but we usually have five to seven people there every Wednesday. There was a message from Marty Swan - he knows of no one who needs a card from the Cheer Committee. Also, Marty has made reservations at Tinucci's for our annual Holiday Party.

New Business - Reservations have been made at Jax Cafe for our 40th Anniversary Celebration, which will be on Sunday, August 9th. The library will be open that day from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and the meal will be at 4 p.m. Those attending can choose items from the regular menu. Several of the NRHS national officers will be present. There was a call for any other business items or announcements. It was mentioned that the former local agent for the D&RGW, Fred Cress, had given John Goodman an old photo. Jim George said that he needs to borrow an 8mm movie projector to preview some old rail films before having them digitized. He asked if anyone had had experience with having films digitized. There was a discussion about this. An announcement was made that anyone whose car was parked on Horton Ave. would have to move their car by 9 p.m., as that is when they will be starting to plow that street.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 7:46 1/2 pm. After a brief break, Jim George presented a program about his trip by rail to Mexico's Copper Canyon. A carousel of slides about the Great Northern was also shown.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave Norman, Secretary  
Northstar Chapter NRHS

Last month's mystery railfan, p.2 and 3 was Dave Norman.
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Address Correction Requested





Thirteen years later in May of 1966, Cajon Pass hasn't changed much from Bill's trip, but the train sure has. No more Alco PAs, instead five E-8/9s haul the combined *Challenger*, *City of St. Louis* and *City of Los Angeles* over Cajon Pass. Photos by Russ Isbrandt



Three BNSF units in Heritage I paint at Northtown, February 13th. The 1685 is of particular interest as it does not have dynamic brakes. It is former BNML (BN of Manitoba) #2 which spent most of its life in Winnipeg. Photo from John Hill collection



CB&Q 5632 prepares to head out of St. Paul with a fantrip. Soo line Geep off the *Winnipeg*(?) makes an appearance. Photo from Greg Smith