



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

#### How I Became a Railfan By John Goodman



Amtrak's *Arrowhead* awaits its morning departure from Superior, WI May 31, 1975. Bringing up the markers is John Goodman's *Twin Cities Club*, formerly the Northern Pacific's *Montana Club* #394 off the *North Coast Limited*. Photo by Russ Isbrandt.

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#### Meeting Notice

The October meeting of the Northstar Chapter will be at 7pm October 15th at the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center, 1695 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul (Snelling and Energy Park Drive just east of Midway Stadium). Roger Clark will show his 1955 Colorado narrow gauge slides.

## Important Notice!

We will be publishing a roster of Northstar members with the information in our database. If you DO NOT want your address and phone number to appear please advise Russ Isbrandt by November 1st. See contact list p.2 for email address and phone.





## NORTHSTAR NEWS

## Northstar Chapter Officers

#### **Board of Directors**

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Webmaster Dan Meyer Website: <u>www.northstar-nrhs.org</u>

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

## Membership Information

Dues are \$32 (this includes \$20 National dues and \$12 Northstar Chapter dues). Family memberships are \$3 additional. If you want to join, an application is available at <a href="http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/">http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/</a>. 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

On Aug. 4, 2005 I had my total knee replacement surgery. I got home on Aug. 13. For the next 5 weeks I was homebound—not allowed to drive. Sitting at home for 5 weeks gives one a taste of the famous Minnesota winter cabin fever. What to do for 5 weeks of sitting in the house? Watch TV? Play with the Playstation II? Read? Play with the dog? In fact, I did all of the above to some degree, but that wasn't enough.

I knew that this was going to happen, so I purchased one of those dual VHS/DVD players that allow one to put a VHS tape in on one side and a blank DVD on the other and copy from tape to disk.

For most of my life I took movies in one form or another. I wasn't very excited about pictures and those I did take were prints not slides. To me pictures were boring, whereas with

movies you had the action that your eyes saw and later, especially with camcorders, you got the sound of that action.

My first movie camera was a rented 8mm windup from a local camera store in 1964. I was in Seattle and I took winter movies of the *International*, the *Empire Builder* and the *North Coast Ltd.* I went down to Portland and took movies of the *City of Portland, Cascade*, and the SP&S *Streamliner*.

Liking my results, I got a battery powered movie camera with a zoom lens. I repeated the movies that I took in the above paragraph, but in summer, which now gave me the winter/summer consists of those trains. These movies I had transferred to a VHS tape.

Over the years I have had a variety of movie cameras until I got my first Camcorder. It was a big thing, but I loved the results. I have taken many, many hours of video tape. The problem was after all the various segments were dubbed to a single 2 hour VHS tape, they took up lots of room. A DVD disk, with a jewel box package only takes up a small amount of that space. Further, VHS tapes have a tendency, over time, to deteriorate, whereas DVD disks last much longer.

The first VHS tape I transferred had on it the Northstar trip to La Crosse back on 2/28/87, the Hutchison trip, followed by the Ottertail Valley trip (10/1/88) and one of our Wisconsin Central trips.

Perhaps it was an optical illusion, but when I played back the new disk, the picture seemed sharper and clearer than when I watched from the tape.

Watching the new disk brought back many memories. The photographer, (me), still hadn't learned not to move the camera all over the place, but to let the subject matter move instead, nor had he learned not to zoom in and zoom out and zoom in and zoom out, etc. Nevertheless, we had a fair number of our members go on those trips, including those that are no longer with us. Russ Isbrandt and John Goodman had dark hair, Jim George's hair was salt and pepper, strangely Kurt Peterson didn't seem to look all that different. Somebody took a picture of me—I don't recall ever being that thin and my auburn hair could still be made out.

So far I have transferred 18 two hour tapes to disk. I am saving a lot of shelf space, and I believe I will be watching the disks more often than I ever watched the tapes.

At any rate, spending those weeks in the house, transferring the VHS tapes to DVD disks, watching the Northstar Chapter's trips, and viewing friends (those that have gone and those that are still with us) did a lot to keep me from getting cabin fever those 5 weeks.

Happy autumn, winter is just around the corner. Stay warm and I will see you at the October meeting.

Marty

## How I Became A Railfan By John Goodman



John Goodman on the C&NW at Eyota, MN 1963. Photo By Dick Prosser from the Greg Smith collection.

In the late 1950's I frequented a place in downtown Minneapolis called "Ray's Train Shop" in the Times Annex Building off 5th and Marquette Ave. Across the street was the Powers Department store that had a book department (in a certain section) that had railroad books available. I made both of these places a definite stop with my Mother, when we went downtown.

In 1959 I saw a flyer for a Minnesota Railfan's Association trip in the train shop window. It showed a Soo Line steam engine (#2719) going to Ladysmith, Wisconsin. I wanted to go on this trip soooo bad, but I didn't. The next flyer showed

a trip on the "range" visiting the DM&IR by way of Cloquet and Hibbing with both steam and diesel.

This trip I did take and since then I have been a confirmed railfan. I was a part owner in a Soo Line business car (#48) with Clark Johnson, Mike Mackner and seven others. I also owned a Northern Pacific streamlined sleeper-observation car (#394-Montana Club) with Bill Cordes and the late Homer Johnson.

I have worked 42 ½ years for the railroad now, starting in 1963 with the Chicago Great Western in St. Paul, the Milwaukee Road in Minneapolis, the Grand Trunk Western in Minneapolis, the St. Paul Union Depot (while I was going to the U of M), then the Great Northern in Minneapolis. I then went to the Burlington Northern following the merger and finally Amtrak, where I have completed 32 years of work.

It all started in the late '50's at Ray's Train Shop.

#### Pacific Electric 1058—a Correction to the August Northstar News By Dave Norman



Pacific Electric 1058 at San Pedro Photo by Russ Isbrandt

The caption with the picture of Pacific Electric car 1058 at San Pedro in the August issue of Northstar News states that it was modified to run on rubber tires for the 1988 movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. The car was modified in 1960-1963. It originally wasn't even a "Ten," but was actually made from the damaged remains of a 950 series car. The controller handle did the steering, the deadman pedal served as the gas pedal, and the air brakes were controlled by a con-



Interior of Pacific Electric 1058 Photo By Russ Isbrandt

ventional air brake stand. It appeared in local parades and may have been in other movies.

The website Wikipedia.org describes *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* as a landmark film which sparked renewed interest in animation. At the time of its release in 1988, it was one of the most expensive films ever made, with a cost of \$70 million. It brought in \$150 million on its initial release, making it one of the top grossing films of that year. The animation was very well done and featured characters from a number of different studios. For example, Warner Brothers' Daffy Duck and Disney's Donald Duck play a piano duet, which breaks down into more of a duel as time goes on.

When I looked through my copy of the film for scenes showing the 1058, I had to go through the Red Car scenes a second time to find it at all. The car that shows up the most is a Pacific Electric Hollywood car (I don't have any information whether it's also a real carbody on rubber tires or if it is a full-size replica built just for the movie.) The 1058 shows up only in a brief "cameo" role. It's in the background in one scene about 10 or 11 minutes from the start of the film, crossing a street about a block behind the Hollywood car.

In the film, which is set in 1947, the villain's company has

purchased the Pacific Electric and wants to get rid of cheap, convenient public transportation in Los Angeles so people will use freeways. The film is loosely based on something that actually did happen. General Motors, Mack Truck (which once made urban transport buses,) two tire companies, and two oil companies backed a company, National City Lines, which went around the country, buying up financially ailing streetcar and interurban systems and converting them to buses. There was an antitrust action brought in the case, but the judge gave only a slap-on-the-wrist level fine. Decades later, there still is an ongoing argument over whether streetcar systems across the country would have all but vanished anyway or whether this conspiracy played a major role in changing the transportation options available in America.

There's quite a bit on the Internet for those who want more information. The Wikipedia listing mentioned above has several interesting links, including scenes from the filming of the movie and a detailed analysis of the film. There is information about the San Pedro Trolley and several websites with information and pictures of the Pacific Electric. There's also information about National City Lines on the web.

# Como Harriet Line Resumes Operation

The Minnesota Street Car Museum's Como—Harriet streetcar line opened for operation Saturday August 20th much to the joy of museum members and neighbors alike. The line had been closed for a \$440,000 track and bridge renewal from June 1st and was originally scheduled to open at the start of August.

The line was re-graded in places, new ballast, ties and relay rail was installed, and concrete work repaired at a pedestrian



Twin Cities Rapid Transit 1300 awaits passengers on Saturday August 20th, the first day of operation. Photo courtesy of the MSM web site.

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underpass and at the William Berry Bridge. The Cottage City platform was restored at the latter.

Four hundred and forty friends and neighbors flocked aboard Sunday afternoon during the first shift alone!

Duluth 265 and PCC car 322 will resume operation later this fall pending completion of switch and trolley wire work on the passing siding.

## Letter to the Editor

Aug. 24, 2005

Dear Mr. Isbrandt:

A friend sent me a copy of the July Northstar News and I greatly enjoyed the article by H. Martin Swan about growing up in Lincoln. If he left in 1963 he's probably a few years older, but I remember a lot of that stuff. This prompted me to join the chapter, something I'd been thinking of because my sister has lived in downtown Minneapolis for 22 years. Your photo of Amtrak No.5 here in September 1972 struck a note too. Back then I tried to get down to see it about once each weekend, so if I wasn't there that night I was likely the next. As you may remember, No.5 derailed at Inland, Neb., just east of Hastings, on Labor Day 1972. I think Como (Shops) were still open then because they took the wrecks north from Lincoln via Sioux City.

A few items you can use if you wish: Another landmark near the CB&Q stockyards in Lincoln, Neb., was the road bridge over the yard just east of the hump crest, a wooden-decked truss structure that rattled and shook every time you drove over. Most people were sure it was going to come down someday with them on it, but it served until replacement in November 1985. But traffic was light enough back then you could stop on top and watch humping operations, at least until a deputy sheriff came along and shooed you onward. When the stockyards site was finally cleared they took out dump truck loads of dirt, with years of accumulated manure, straw, etc., that had worked down. The whole yard was built on fill in the early 1900s. BNSF is still doing yard expansion and now an intersection southeast of the hump is being transformed into a freeway interchange. In June 2005 the city announced purchase of 230 acres of rare native prairie southwest of Lincoln and west of Pioneers Park. This was site of the Burlington's old Burnham stockyards, used from 1899 until the new ones were built south of the hump in 1926. It also had large stock facilities at Montgomery, II, just west of Aurora on the main line to Galesburg.

Sincerely, Michael Bartels

#### Gleanings from All Aboard Yahoo Group

The New York Times September 30, 2005 High-Tech Gates Fail to Avert Car- Acela Train Crash By PATRICK McGEEHAN and MATTHEW L. WALD Before Amtrak started running its high-speed *Acela Express* trains in the Northeast corridor five years ago, it installed sophisticated warning systems to head off collisions with cars at grade crossings.

But one of those new gates, which cost about \$1 million per crossing, was not enough to prevent an accident that took the lives of two occupants of a Ford sedan in Waterford, Conn., on Wednesday morning.

Patricia Metzermacher, the 62-year-old driver, and her 8-year-old grandson, Zachary Metzermacher, were killed instantly when an *Acela* train from Boston going about 75 miles per hour slammed into their car. The boy's 4-year-old sister, Courtney, who had been strapped into a child's seat, was in critical condition yesterday in a hospital in Hartford.

Investigators are still trying to determine how and why the car came to be on the tracks at the crossing, just down the road from the victims' home. The accident was the first involving an Acela train at a grade-level crossing and the first at a crossing with the new gates, said Clifford Black, a spokesman for Amtrak in Washington.

After inspecting the gates and finding them to be functioning properly, Amtrak restored service along the line Wednesday afternoon. None of the 130 people aboard the train were injured.

A witness, Thomas Wagner, said yesterday that he saw the car, a white Taurus, roll slowly toward the crossing and under one of the gates. Mr. Wagner, who is Waterford's planning director, said he was waiting in his car on the opposite side of the tracks.

He said he looked across and saw the car's windshield strike the gate, causing it to bounce up and allowing the car to roll onto the tracks. Just as it did, he said, the train slammed into the car broadside, and dragged it about half a mile down the tracks.

"It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen," Mr. Wagner said of the deadly timing. "She couldn't have done that if she wanted to."

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From Gary R. Kazin DL&W Milepost R35.7 Rockaway, New Jersey

Train 97-29 Sep delayed at Florence, SC. Passenger too large to exit train.

Florence fire dept had to remove her. Philly fire dept put her on the train, per Florence Chief.

The total delay was 45 minutes.

From Howie Dash Fri Sep 30, 2005 8:40 am

#### From Trains News Wire

Amtrak's Texas Eagle strikes boulder, derails in Missouri

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ST. LOUIS — The Texas Eagle, train No. 21 of the 28th, bound from Chicago to San Antonio, derailed just after 11 p.m. Wednesday about 50 miles south of St. Louis after striking a boulder on the Union Pacific right-of-way, according to Amtrak. The collision derailed locomotive No. 54, a GE P42 type, and the first 4 of the train's 6 double-deck Superliner cars at Milepost 48.7 on UP's DeSoto Subdivision. The impact turned the locomotive 180 degrees and flipped it onto the engineer's side; the unit stopped adjacent to the second car in the consist. Two of the derailed cars, dorm car 39008 and coach 34032, the first and third cars, were leaning. Two others, coach 31026 and diner 38030, the second and fourth cars, were still upright, with their wheels derailed. The rear two cars, coach 34097 and sleeper 32057, did not derail.

Of the 103 people on board (90 passengers, 13 employees), 6 passengers and 3 employees were transported from the scene to two area hospitals for treatment. The remaining passengers and crew members were transported by emergency responders to the firehouse in DeSoto, MO, where a triage center was established. After triage, 17 passengers were transported from the firehouse to area hospitals. None of the injuries were considered serious or life-threatening. Uninjured passengers were housed in the Holiday Inn in Festus, MO, for the night.

Because of the derailment, the train was canceled, with no alternate transportation offered as far south as Dallas, Texas. At Dallas, a bus was to operate Thursday representing train No. 21, making pickups from Dallas to San Antonio. Train No. 22, the northbound Texas Eagle of the 28th, was to detour around the derailment scene between Poplar Bluff and St. Louis by using UP's Chester Subdivision on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, missing no passenger stops.

#### Minutes From September 17, 2005 Meeting

Minutes of the September 17, 2005 Membership Meeting Northstar Chapter NRHS The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by chapter president Marty Swan in the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center with 20 members and guests present. Marty asked if there were any guests. The only guest was former chapter member John Kennedy. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2005 membership meeting, as published in the August 2005 issue of Northstar News. The motion was seconded and carried. There was a Cheer CommitteeReport. Chapter member John Melius passed away on June 10, 2005. Dick Prosser, a friend of the chapter, passed away on July 27, 2005. Someone mentioned that a former chapter member, a Mr. Grebs, also died recently. John Goodman talked about John Melius and Dick Prosser. John had copies of the program from the memorial service for Dick Prosser, which was held a month after Dick's death, and the last record made of classical music made by Dick Prosser, who played the violin, and another lover of classical music, who played the organ. Prosser's home was burglarized and an estimated 10,000 slides were stolen. They later were offered for sale on e-Bay. The FBI is investigating. Also stolen were Prosser's old musical instruments, some of which were later recovered. There were about 35 people at the memorial service. After the service, there was an ice cream social, as Prosser had requested. Much of Prosser's railroad stuff has been shipped to Roger Clark and John Goodman. They have not yet had a chance to sort through it all. Marty Swan noted that he has been transferring his old rail tapes to DVD, which should last longer. There was a moment of silence in memory of the three who died. Roger Clark spoke about his memories of Dick Prosser. Roger said that he got many letters from Prosser with lots of railroad information. He still has those letters and hopes to transfer the rail information in them so it can be shared with others. Roger also remembered how Prosser came to visit him at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO many years ago when he was in the military. John Goodman said that he has copies of Prosser's book, Railroads and the Flood,

which detailed how the 1965 flood affected railroads in the Twin City area.

Marty thanked people for the cards and phone calls he received as a result of his knee replacement surgery. Marty said that he sent a card to Russ Isbrandt because of his past and upcoming cataract surgery.

Treasurer Joe Fishbein presented his report for July and August of 2005. As of July, 1, 2005, there was \$4,045 in the checking account. Income for the period included \$64 in interest from a maturing CD and \$1 in checking account interest, for total income of \$65. Expenses during the period were \$403 in newsletter and PDF software and \$400 in tax preparation charges, for total expenses of \$803. As of August 31, 2005, cash in checking account was \$3,307, of which \$3,067 was in the General Fund and \$240 was in the GW #8327 Restoration Fund. The report included a summary of the Certificates of Deposit owned by the chapter, which have a total principal amount of \$32,000. They mature at various times in 2006 and 2007. Total chapter membership is 90, of whom 2 have already renewed for 2006.

Trip Chairman John Goodman said that he had previously discussed the possibility of going to Osceola, WI and riding the Minnesota Transportation Museum's excursion train there. John reported that he had talked about the proposed trip at the chapter picnic in August, but there was little interest, so he has dropped the idea. He contacted the Iowa Chapter NRHS about their planned trip on the Iowa Traction on Saturday, Oct. 8th. He noted that the car has limited seating capacity, so if a group from our chapter came down for the event, it is possible that there might not be room for everybody to ride the car. Other possibilities might include Minot, ND and Milwaukee, WI. A trip to Illinois Railroad Museum could include a visit to the Railroad Park at Rochelle, IL. We might go by train to eastern Wisconsin and rent a van there. John noted that charter bus prices are currently high due to the recent increase in fuel costs.

National Director Doug Johnson said that the fall NRHS Board of directors meeting will be held in November at San Jose, CA. He plans to attend.

Northstar News Editor Russ Isbrandt said that he needs more "How I Became a Railfan" articles. He also said that more people should get the electronic version of the newsletter, as it has many pictures in color and often has additional material not in the printed version. Several people commented on the high quality of the newsletter.

Webmaster Dan Meyer said that the chapter's website is looking better now that there have been more contributions of material. He still needs a brief

history of the chapter. He also needs a good photo of the 8327. He also needs contributions covering chapter activities over the last 10 or 12 years.

The Housing Chairman was not at the meeting. The By-Laws Chairman was also not at the meeting.

Program Chair John Goodman said that Greg Smith will do the program at this month's meeting and also will present the program for the Holiday Party. Roger Clark will present the program at the October meeting and Dawn Holmberg (and friend) is scheduled for November. John noted that he needs programs for meetings in 2006.

Dennis Louden reported on plans for the Holiday Party. The first announcement of the party has appeared in Northstar News, but there haven't been any responses yet. Dennis reminded everyone that they need to get their reservations for the party in by one week before the event.

John Goodman, as chairman of the Elections Committee, reported that all incumbent board members have been contacted and each of them is willing to run for re-election. If they are re-elected, the new board would be exactly the same as the present one. Additional candidates can be nominated from the floor at this month's meeting, the October meeting, or the November meeting. The election will be held at the November meeting.

Bill Herzog was not present to give a report on the status of the GTW #8327 restoration project.

Dan Meyer reported for the National Convention Committee. He noted that the activities of the convention committee are over and that the convention checking account has been closed. Before that was done, he turned over a final check to chapter treasurer Joe Fishbein representing the rest of the chapter's share of the proceeds from the convention. Dan noted that he has a lot of stuff left. He wondered if it would be possible to sell the credit card machine. He also noted that some stuff should be shredded, particularly forms with people's credit card numbers on them. Chapter president Marty Swan noted that some time ago, this chapter set up a National Convention Committee, which had as its mission: 1) to determine if hosting a NRHS National Convention was feasible; 2) if so, then to prepare and successfully bid to host such a convention; 3) once the bid was accepted, to prepare and present a National convention; 4) after the convention was over, to preside over the closing of the convention's books and handling the proceeds. This has now been done. The National Convention Committee has completed its mission. Last year, 2004, we hosted a very successful convention, both artis-

## Northstar Chapter Holiday Banquet December 4, 2005

The annual banquet will be held at Mancini's Char House 531 West 7th St., St. Paul, MN beginning with a social hour at 4pm. Greg Smith will present Railroading History in the Twin Cities following the meal.

Meal Choices:

	8 oz. Sinoin Steak	Number desired
	10 oz. Chicken Breast Battered	Number desired
	10 oz. Chicken Breast Broiled	Number desired
	12 oz. Walleye Fillet Battered	Number desired
	12 oz. Walleye Fillet Broiled	Number desired
Name:_		Phone::TotalX \$21.00=
Please	Dennis Louden, Holiday Party, 1895 Wordsworth Av	Northstar Chapter NRHS and mail reservation to :
Page 7	St. Paul, MN 55116	Reservation deadline is November 29th.

tically and financially. Marty noted that almost every person in the chapter helped in this regard. He named some of them: John Goodman was the Trip Chairman. He put together some wonderful trips. Russ Isbrandt was the Bus Chairman. Not only did we have no complaints about our buses, but he even got the Minnesota Transportation Museum to operate some of their historic buses, which was very much appreciated by the attendees. Kurt Peterson did an excellent job of organizing the seminars. Dick Fish accepted the orders and did the ticketing. Doug Johnson was the Financial Chairman. Bill Herzog handled the Tote Bag giveaway. One of these bags, which contained a number of interesting items, was given to each attendee. Dee Lundeen organized the volunteers. Ben Pressnell was in charge of the Dinner Train. Chapter members showed up in force to staff the registration room and to be car and bus hosts. Marty summed it up, "This chapter can damned well be proud of itself." Marty noted that the National Convention Committee was under the leadership of Dan Meyer, who brought everything together. It was a tough job, but it was successfully done. Marty concluded, "Sadly, the time has come to disband the Convention Committee." Dan Meyer moved that the National Convention Committee be disbanded. The motion was seconded by Ron Linebacker and carried.

More Old Business - Dan Meyer reported on the cheapest new Carousel slide projector on the market. It was noted that there have been several slide projectors on e-Bay recently. Dennis Louden offered to donate his slide projector to the chapter. A motion was made to accept Dennis' offer, but it was decided that there was no need for a motion. At their meeting in July, the board discussed the purchase of a Digital Light Processing video projector. Russ Isbrandt moved that the chapter purchase such a projector. John Goodman seconded the motion. The matter was discussed. Dan Meyer said that he would check on the price of such projectors. It was noted that we would probably wait until one of our CDs matures to make the actual purchase. A motion was made to table the purchase until Dan has full information. The motion was seconded and carried.

New Business - Doug Johnson said that he is offering for sale old *Trains Magazines* for the years 1955 and 1956, with proceeds of the sale to go to the chapter. Dennis Louden said that he took some video of trains passing our picnic. He has edited it down to 5 minutes and will show it tonight after Greg Smith has presented his program. Kurt Peterson said that he has Happenings Books for sale which include a 2 for 1 coupon on the MTM's excursion train at Osceola. Someone reported that restored Milwaukee Road steam engine will be leaving Monday for Kansas City. It will run from Minneapolis to La Crescent, then to Savannah. IL, then to Kansas City. It will also return via the same route. There will not be any Diesel helper on the

Northstar News Northstar Chapter NRHS 4036 Birch Knoll Drive White Bear Lake, MN 55110 train. There was a report that Amtrak's *Empire Builder* will be running to Chicago on the BNSF mainline on certain days in the next few weeks due to welded rail work. Someone has several 1999 calendars available. Someone saw a remote control locomotive near the Amtrak station in St. Paul. The former Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern track in Richfield is busy. A rail tape is available as door prize for the Holiday Party. The old *Trains Magazines* will also be given away as a door prize at the party.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 7:55 pm.

After a break, the program was put on by Greg Smith. It was about the Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern. Dennis Louden's edited version of the trains seen on the BNSF mainline during our picnic at Prescott, WI in August was also shown.

Respectfully submitted, Dave Norman Secretary, Northstar Chapter NRHS



John Goodman's private car party May 31, 1975 aboard the *Twin Cities Club*. Photo by Russ Isbrandt.

## Address Correction Requested