

The Green Signal

February 1998



The Newsletter of the
International Rail Road
Fellowship of Rotarians

Number 12



The Old Depot, Dassel, MN

When the Burlington Northern Railroad decided to eliminate most of its small town depots, the one in Cokato Minnesota was put up for sale. Howard Page, a member of the Rotary Club of Cokato-Dassel bought the depot for a nominal amount, cut it in half and moved it six miles to Dassel where it now rests on a new foundation. Needless to say, Page was fined at Rotary for absconding with a local treasure.

Initially used for community melodrama, birthday parties and Christmas craft sales the heritage of the rails soon demanded a decor suitable to such a building. That started with lanterns, a telegraph key and a bench in the waiting room. That hint of atmosphere was enough to start a never ending search of railroad artifacts that now fills the main floor and basement of the 33' x 100' structure.

Railroad items from around the world are now on display. Conductor's hats from Austria, Italy, Taiwan, Australia, China and many United States railroads fill one showcase. Signs, bells, whistles, signals, tools, uniforms, china, tickets, passes, spittoons, oil cans, lanterns and baggage carts let the visitors see how many items are used in a railroad operation.

School children from surrounding schools frequently tour the museum. A model train layout fascinates the young and the young at heart. The wide array of toy trains shows that since the beginnings of railroading in the 1800's trains have been a favorite plaything of kids of all ages.

The picture gallery depicts the progress of locomotives from primitive steamers to the "Bullet" trains of Japan.

Outside the depot there's a

restored wooden caboose that is open to show the public the lives of a train crew. An old time caboose has trucks with hardwood components that date back to the 1880's.

A quarter scale locomotive, tender and caboose in the yard give kids a chance to be an engineer for their parent's camera.

This is a museum that was a real Great Northern depot. It was around long before Burlington and Great Northern merged, and will be around a bit longer thanks to Howard.

The Old Depot is open daily from Memorial Day through October 1st. Dassel is 50 miles west of Minneapolis.

Howard Page is a member of the Rotary Club of Cokato - Dassel Minnesota U.S.A. and a member of IRRFR since 1991. He contributed to this article

Letter to the Editor

Dear Railroaders,

From Samoa comes to you all the very best wishes for the Holiday Season and 1998. How are you? Rail travel has received increasing interest worldwide.

My gift for all members is a philatelic rarity; a thirty year old stamp from Switzerland, my country of origin, commemorating the International Railroad Bureau which is now celebrating its 105th birthday. May I offer to our IRRFR these rare stamps so all who really care for them may receive an original one. Thank you for taking care of this. (Contact Doug Stewart, our secretary for the stamps and he will mail one the next time he sends something to you).

Polynesia has no railroads because the islands are so tiny and very poor.

Rail travel is - with air travel - the safest form of travel, but rail travel is so much less polluting.

I do recommend that our IRRFR does become more active in inviting humankind through Rotary's initiatives to make better use of rail travel

How do our members recommend that RI best encourage rail travel for all and set a good example?

Looking forward to your news,

Marco Kappenberger

Editor's closing notes.

This has been my last issue of The Green Signal. I've been recruited, interviewed and nominated to be District Governor of District 5580 in the years 1999 - 2000. I still have to be elected at our District Conference in April, but so far there are no candidates to challenge me. I've been told that is a good sign. This has been a job with a lot of rewards and a few frustrations, but I've met some great people and will miss that contact. Doug tells me that he has a new editor lined up and I'm wishing him all the best, and look forward to the coming issues. When I get his address I'll be mailing a box of the files that have accumulated here so he'll have something to go through. For those of you who haven't seen your articles in print, it might still happen and for those of you who volunteered articles, you'll probably get a note or call. I've tried to keep a varied focus, but that has been part of the problem, I seemed to get a bunch related articles, and thought reploting open ground counter productive. Anyhow, this is my signoff. Thanks for your input, your support and interest in the rails. With the wide use of rail traffic in Europe I figure that sooner or later more light rail has got to get going on this side of the Atlantic. I look forward to meeting more of you in the years to come, and hope that at some point some submission by me will be printed. Until that time, good travels and keep well.

Steve Andrews

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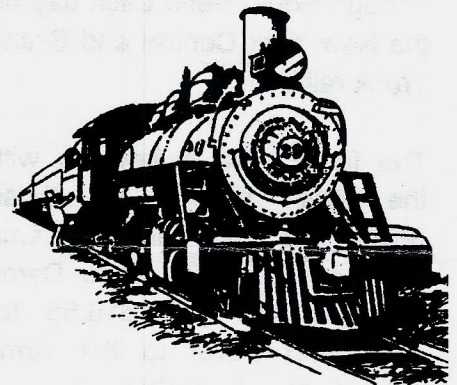
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Next Issue
Port Kembala Line in NSW
Australia.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

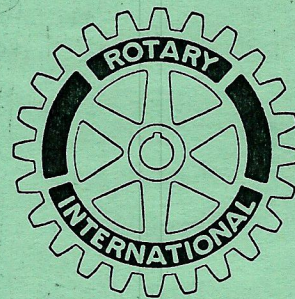
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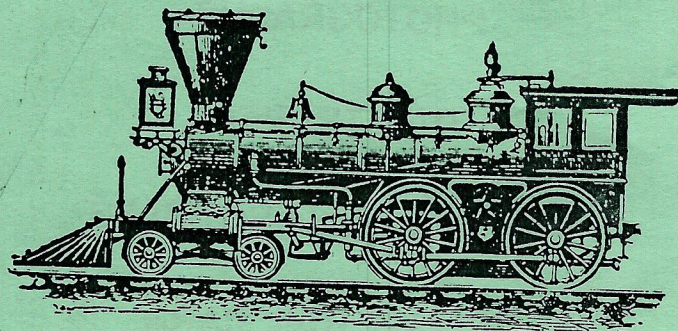
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Make check payable to IRRFR and send
your name, address, Rotary Club, District,
Classification and information about your
interests which will be included in the
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International Fellowship of
Rail Road Rotarians
146 Albert Avenue
Cranston RI 02905-3812 U.S.A.



The International Rail Road Fellowship of Rotarians



The Fellowship is open to all
Rotarians that have an interest in
railroads. Steam, Diesel, Electric or
gravity. Anything that run on rails and
has a flanged wheel.

THE GREEN SIGNAL

Members on several continents share their experiences through the Fellowship's newsletter **THE GREEN SIGNAL** published four times per year.

The **GREEN SIGNAL** - will bring you information about other Rotarians and their rail road interests.

With information that fellow Rotarians share you can plan some exciting domestic and foreign rail travel. What to see and what to avoid.

Sell and swap model rail road items.

Organize train trips to and around Rotary events.

Organize a Rotary meeting on a train.

STEAM TRAINS

DIESEL TRAINS

TROLLEY CARS

MODEL RAILROADS

PHOTOGRAPHS

RAIL TRAVEL

RAILROAD COLLECTIBLES

PRIVATE RAIL CARS