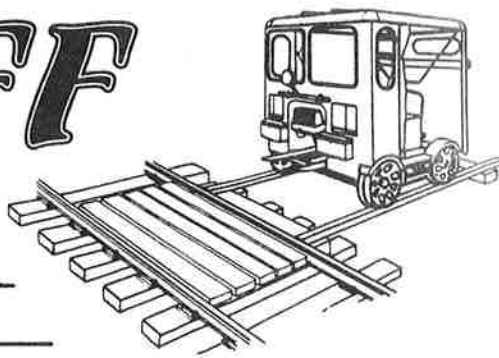


THE SETOFF

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN
RAILCAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (NARCOA)

Fall, 1989



ORGANIZATION NEWS

By Joel Williams
Western Maryland M-19, No. 334

New members adding cars to the NARCOA roster are George Badstuber of Spring Hill Florida, a Fairmont MT-19; Bob Mense of Hamilton, Ohio, and ex Milwaukee Road Fairmont MT-19; Paul Beddoe of Lenni, Pennsylvania, an ex Southern Pacific MT-19; David Williamson of Frazer, Pennsylvania, adds another car to his roster, an ex Central Railroad of New Jersey (nee' U.S. Army) Kalamazoo 27AW-TC; Ron Butler of Salinas, California, an ex Milwaukee Road Fairmont MT-19; Brad Anderson of Muskegon, Michigan, an ex Pere Marquette Fairmont 59C; and James Paty of Ashland City, Tennessee adds three cars, An ex Tennessee Central Fairmont M-9, an ex Chicago & North Western Fairmont M-19, and a Fairbanks-Morse 40B.

The NARCOA track car insurance policy is now in effect, with coverage provided by Kemper Insurance Co. This coverage is new for track car owners, and was a learning experience for both the insurance brokers and NARCOA. Our insurance coordinator, John Nolan, with help from Dick Ray did most of the work on this task.

Coverage will be in effect until October, 1990, with the next sign up period starting in July, 1990. At that time, we will be investigating ways to negotiate a better price (and perhaps a better policy) for everyone. Our biggest problem this year was not knowing how many members would sign up. Further information will be available from John Nolan at a later date.

COVER PHOTOS

Top- Over a dozen track cars participated in the Labor Day weekend NARCOA meet in Indiana, on the Whitewater Valley R.R. and Indiana & Ohio R.R. In this scene the cars line up on Saturday, September 2, along the old Whitewater Canal in Metamora, Indiana, on the Whitewater Valley R.R. Photo by D. Leffler *Below-* On the same day, but on a different railroad, NARCOA members Rick Leach, Kelley Morris, Bob Makins, and Russ Noe paused for a photo stop on the rails of ex Milwaukee Road trackage, now operated by the Mount Rainier Scenic Railway. Photo By Rick Leach

Brett Tallman, SETOFF contributing editor, will be organizing a series of Sunday track car meets in both November and December on a portion of former industrial spur trackage off the old Southern Pacific Lone Pine Branch (the "Jawbone") at Mojave, California. The meets will be held only on the one-mile portion of trackage that traverses the property of the Mojave airport (the airport authority owns this section of track, with locked gates at both ends of the fenced property). Hence, "extra mileage" over other portions of this SP branch will *not* be allowed.

Rides will be available to those not owning a track car. For further information, contact Brett at: 3354 Fuchsia Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 (714) 546-4131.

A NOTABLE QUOTE FROM "THE TRACK INSPECTOR"

A random comment while pumping a hand car:
"Now I know why the track crews were so tired when they got to the work site!"

THE SETOFF

Volume 3

Number 3

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THE SETOFF is published quarterly by the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA), to promote safe operation of railroad motor cars, and to encourage fellowship and exchange of information among motor car enthusiasts. Membership in NARCOA, which includes a subscription to THE SETOFF is \$10.00 per year, and is available from Joel Williams, Box 82, Greendell, New Jersey 07839

SPARK PLUGS

By Dick Ray
Western Maryland M-9, No. 67

At almost any gathering of track car owners, the talk usually seems to turn to spark plugs. There appears to be as many theories and practices about spark plugs as there are track car owners. This article will investigate some of the questions and present some answers, however it is not intended to be the final word on spark plugs.

First, we will discuss the topic of heat range. Fairmont recommends that its two-cycle engines be equipped with Champion brand D16 spark plugs. The equivalent plug in AC brand is the C86 plug. While these two plugs can certainly be expected to perform adequately, experience has shown that a slightly warmer plug can sometimes improve performance on some cars. The AC C87/C88 or the Champion D21 plugs are hotter than the C86 and D16. The D21 is equivalent to the C88, with the C87 plug falling in between.

"How can I determine which plug to use?"...you ask. The key to this answer is to look at the center insulator on your plug, after a long run at normal speed. White "ash" on the insulator indicates that the plug is too hot, black is too cold, with tan or brown being perfect. Black deposits can also indicate other problems with your ignition system, such as a low battery, bad or pitted timer or coil points, incorrectly tuned coil, or faulty wiring. Make sure that these other components of your system are in top notch shape before selecting the plug type that is best suited for your particular car.

A plug that is too hot can crack off the center insulator, which will rattle around in the cylinder, before being blown out the exhaust port. Another problem is that of oil deposits being baked on, and then firing erratically at full throttle. The cooler plugs, while performing fine on a correctly tuned ignition system, can sometimes foul more easily, if the ignition system is not in top notch condition. The hotter plugs will improve performance slightly on a marginal system, although this is not a substitute for a system that conforms to recommended performance specifications.

Twin cylinder RK engines sometimes operate better with different heat range plugs in each of the two cylinders. Usually this can be attributed to the fault of one side of the twin-lead coil shorting out. This leads to cylinder misfiring, which will foul one of the plugs. The hotter plug placed in the cylinder affected by the coil misfire won't do much for you...it's a temporary fix. A new coil may be in order.

Occasionally, after running your car for an extended time at very slow speeds, or when the car has idled for a considerable length of time, black, oily or sooty deposits may form on the plug. This is not necessarily an indication of fouling. These deposits will burn, and be blown off, if the speed and load on the car is increased for a short period of time. Continuous running at very slow speeds, or excess idling of the car will, of course, result in "baked on" deposits, ultimately fouling the plug.

If your car won't start with fouled old plug, but it will after installing a new one, don't keep the old plug! It's better to find the cause of the fouling, than to try and clean old plugs.

Finally, here's a tip that I use to further improve a good ignition system. I cut off half of the ground electrode on my plugs so that the spark will jump slightly further from the cut edge of the electrode to the center electrode. This puts the spark "out in the open" and insures reliable firing every revolution.

To the Editor:

After reading Dick Ray's article about ignition systems in the Spring, 1989 issue of THE SETOFF, I have resolved the ignition system failures which had plagued my ex New York Central Fairmont M-19 during the spring and early summer. During the NARCOA track car meet at Lincoln, New Hampshire on June 3, my engine just stopped, as if turned off with the ignition switch. This occurred after running for about 5-6 hours.

I had also experienced a similar problem with my ignition system at the April track car meet in Paris, Tennessee. Two times the engine stopped, but came back to "life" before I got the car stopped. On the Hobo Railroad run though, the engine stopped and would not restart. After checking the ignition system wiring and fuel flow, I removed the coil from the battery box to check the points. These were OK, and I then attempted to restart the engine. It started OK and ran fine *after* I had handled the coil.

At the next photo stop, I added the jumper wire to the coil from the battery terminal to the moving point terminal, as was described in the article. The engine ran fine the rest of the day, and at two other track car meets since then. Apparently, the coil must have had a loose or broken connection internally. I bought the coil new in 1979, and have had no problems with it until now.

I'm going to put the jumper wire on the coil in my ex Toledo Terminal M-9, before I put the car into regular use

Dave Williams
NYC M-19

On Saturday and Sunday, September 2-3, a NARCOA-sponsored track car meet was held on the rails of the Whitewater Valley Railroad, and the Indiana & Ohio Railroad. The two railroads are portions of the old New York Central Railroad Whitewater Branch. NARCOA members Phil and Rose (Rusty) Hines attended the Whitewater Valley portion of the meet (on Saturday)...but not in the conventional sense (as track car operators). We thought that you would enjoy this slightly different perspective...

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

By Rose (Rusty) Hines
Conrail M-9, ("Blue")

The 2nd of September was finally here. Phil and I had been contemplating a trip to the NARCOA track car meet on the Whitewater Valley Railroad, at Connorsville, Indiana for a number of weeks. The meet would be our first in over a year, since moving in August, 1988, from our lifelong home, in the state of Michigan, to relocate in Indiana. We hadn't heard the "putt-putt," or inhaled the oil-smoke aroma of railroad motor cars since then...withdrawal isn't easy! Since apartment living was an inevitable interim "between houses," our track car life has been on hold...but, back to the September 2nd scenario.

Connorsville is a one-hour drive from our new home in Indianapolis, and we arrived at the Whitewater Valley Railroad at about 8:30am. Since we still have our ex Conrail (nee' New York Central) M-9 ("Blue") in storage, this was to be strictly a spectator trip, to see our old friends, and their cars again. As we pulled into the parking lot at the Whitewater Valley station, it was devoid of motor cars, and we experienced a moment of anxiety, thinking we had missed the meet. Looking south, we were elated to see the scene that we came for: a dozen-plus track cars sitting at the first crossing, preparing to depart.

Minerva Mike (Woodburn)!, Sunshine Fred (Furminger)!, Adrian Ernie (Jeschke)!, Jon, the Knight!, The (Joel) Williams', times three!, and more! The "Indy 500" had nothing over this spectacle! After chatting with the group for awhile, the cars were off and running the rails. Via the highway, we chased, and paced their 17-mile journey into the historic canal town of Metamora.

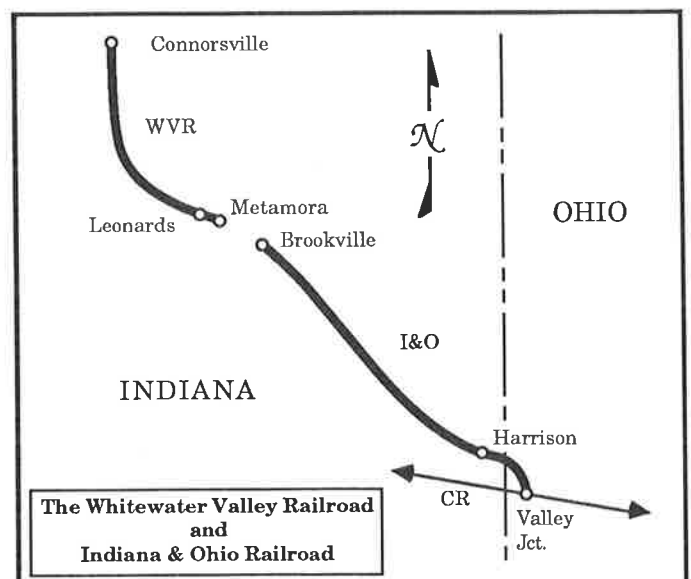
Being motor car owners, and finding ourselves in a "chase mode" leaves much to be desired. There's a vast difference between watching and participating. When the highway and rails part, or when the trees block the view, it's like losing



Stan Conyer photographed this group of cars on September 3, on the Indiana & Ohio Railroad, just south of Brookville, Indiana, during the Labor Day weekend NARCOA meet.

your kids in a store...You know they are there, but what are they doing, and where are they? Finding and waiting at the bridge where the motor cars would cross was equivalent to waiting for your (late) kids to meet you at a predetermined spot. The wait seems eternal, and their arrival is relief and excitement! The motor cars pass, and the chase resumes.

Given our druthers, we'd rather have had our hands on the throttle. Experiencing motor car "drought" is not recommended! As good as it was to see old friends, and familiar sights and sounds (and smells), we are anxiously awaiting our own personal reunion with the rails...something's lost without it.



DELAWARE & ULSTER RAILROAD HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL NARCOA FALL TRACK CAR MEET

By Joel Williams
Western Maryland M-19, No. 334

On September 22-24, the Delaware & Ulster Railroad hosted its third annual track car meet for NARCOA members. The Delaware & Ulster, which is based out of Arkville, New York, is the Delaware County portion of the old *Ulster & Delaware Railroad* (yes, the current name is reversed from the original) which was built to haul vacationers (and freight of course) from eastern New York (Kingston) to the Catskill, Mountains, and ultimately to Oneonta, New York, a route of 107 miles. In the years before air conditioning, the wealthy city folks spent their summers in luxurious hotels in this mountain area along the route of the old U&D.

The D&U line is one of the oldest in the country; when it was originally opened, passengers came to Kingston by river boat, and then transferred to the U&D. Starting at 12 feet above sea level, the rails climb to the 1885 feet summit at Highmount, New York, in 42 miles. The steepest grade was 3.2%!

The record year for passengers carried on the old U&D was in 1912, when 675,00 tickets were sold. In 1932 the New York Central Railroad bought the U&D, and it became their Catskill Mountain Branch. Even though the railroad was abandoned by the Penn Central, subsidized through freight service was maintained right up to early Conrail. The last train into Arkville was powered by a Conrail GP-38 locomotive. After abandonment, the counties both Delaware and Ulster acquired portions of the railroad, and excursion service was begun on the Delaware County portion of the trackage, on the renamed Delaware & Ulster (In Ulster County, that portion was renamed the *Catskill Mountain Railroad*).

The Delaware County portion is where the meet is now held. The track cars run over the same route used by the D&U excursion trains, as well as additional mileage that is being upgraded for potential future use. In addition to the regular track cars, there were two steam cars, two hand pump cars, and a Teetor railbike at the meet. The one steamcar, built by Quick Carlson of Brandywine, Maryland, was built by starting with a converted Fairmont A-5 chassis, upon which he installed a vertical boiler, and two-cylinder compound steam engine. The other car, built by Jim Baird of Bealton, Virginia, was built on a Buda Chassis, and has a vertical

boiler with a single-cylinder steam engine. More detailed information about Jim's steamer can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Awards were presented at the Saturday evening banquet to both both steam car owners for their fine work, and to Walt Antonik, of Hopatcong, New Jersey for his beautifully restored Fairmont M-19. NARCOA thanks Vic Stevens, NARCOA member and Chief Mechanical Officer for the D&U, as well as the entire D&U staff for their fine hospitality and help in hosting this meet.



This fall's NARCOA meet at Arkville, New York featured two steam cars...Jim Baird's "open" car and a similar, albeit slightly larger version built by NARCOA member Quick Carlson.

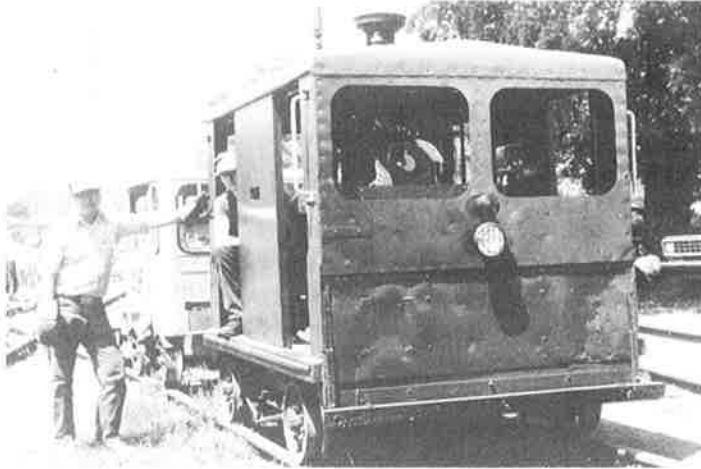
Photo By Dick Ray

FABRICATING STEAM-POWERED TRACK CARS

By Jim Baird
B&O M-19, No. 349

After one has acquired and rebuilt one's first track car, there is always the feeling that there is that "better" car out there somewhere that one cannot live without. The car may be bigger or smaller, faster or more powerful, or perhaps it's a car from your favorite railroad. This feeling was true in my case also, after I had rebuilt my ex B&O Fairmont M-19 a few years ago.

It all started when I acquired an ex Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad Fairmont A-4. The car was missing the engine, transmission, drive line, and part of the brakes! With such a tremendous task at hand to replace the missing parts, I decided to jump in head first on fabricating a *steam-powered* track car! In the past I have fabricated and restored



Jim and Ron Baird pose with their first steam car at the Southern Michigan Railroad track car convention in 1988.

Photo By D. Leffler

stationary, traction, and small scale railroad steam engines, so I decided that a steam-powered track car shouldn't be that much more difficult.

The starting point for my project began with the acquisition of a small dry cleaning plant boiler and a Chrysler V-4 single-acting steam engine. The V-4 steam engine was originally built for experimental use in light-weight Dodge trucks prior to World War II. The boiler is a code, (1959) lap seam, VFT boiler with 35 square feet of heating surface, dry (firebrick) firebox, and state inspected for 100 lbs. It is fitted with both a 3/8" Penberthy and a 1/2" Detroit injector, and is designed for coal burning.

Since the A-4 had looked like it had been dropped by a crane, I had to completely strip, straighten, and rebuild the entire car, before installing the boiler into the center of the car. The V-4 steam engine was then rebuilt and installed over the rear axle. During the rebuilding effort, I installed new oil seals, which I obtained from a local NAPA dealer. The old timer at the store counter quipped "Yup, that's one of them seals that Chrysler used to use". Fortunately, he had a dusty one on his back shelf! It fit the engine like a glove.

The engine is built along automotive practices, with poppet valves driven by an internal camshaft, splash lubrication system, and babbitt rod bearings. The cylinders are 3-1/8" x 4-1/4". It is chain connected to the rear axle housing, providing forward, neutral and reverse through the Fairmont housing. The V-4 will reverse, but it does not receive lubrication when in reverse.

After the mechanical restoration was completed, the car was painted a "forest green" color, with red wheels. This scheme seems to "fit" the steam concept perfectly. For the initial run, we took the car to the Southern Michigan Railroad track car convention in May, 1988. Aside from some minor problems with the ash pan, (we burned a hole in it!) the car steamed and ran perfectly (although some of the SMR's neighbors complained about the coal smoke!). The car was also successfully run on a short line in Virginia later that same year.

About a year after building the A-4 steam car, I saw some old lithographs of steam-powered inspection cars, and I decided it was time to try my hand at building something a little lighter in weight. The A-4 weighs in at 2800 lbs., empty, and over 4000 lb. ready to go! An open cab, turn of the century style steam inspection car seemed like the way to go. I thought that perhaps I could build one that would weigh in under 1000 lbs.

Looking around my junk pile, I decided to use a set of 20" riveted Buda wheels and axles, an early (stripped) Kalamazoo pump car frame, some riveted water tanks, and other "early looking" parts. I built the brakes from early Buda car drawings, using those "dangling" wood shoes. The boiler is an old "dairy" type, code, (1927) lap seam, VFT, with 16 square feet of heating surface. I had to retube it with both 2" and 1-1/4", 13-gauge tubes, rolled and beaded at both ends. It is state inspected for 100 lbs. I also added a 5 square foot superheater, 3/8" Hancock inspirator (injector), a feed pump (driven from the engine) and a pre-water heater.

The firebox is dry (firebricks plus liner) and is designed for wood burning. The engine is a single cylinder factory "bottle" engine, 4" x 4", with a slip eccentric reverse. It is connected to the axle directly by chain. Lubrication is by a displacement lubricator, although I plan to add a mechanical lubricator, as well as a hand-operated feed-tank pump, to enable me to pump water from a stream into the holding tanks.

The car was finished in time for the SMR convention in May 1989. The car will easily maintain a 20-mph speed, topping out at about 30 mph. The range is about 20 miles, but we are planning to extend the wood bunkers to gain an additional 10-mile range. After three days of hard running at the SMR, we decided that we had an easy steaming and proven steam car. The only thing that got "derailed" though was my original design plan for a light weight steam car...the dry weight of my open car is 2100 lbs...Sigh!!



During the lunch stop at Morton, the group posed their S-2's by the Tubafor Lumber mill for a photo. The mill has had the same name for over 42 years.

Photo By Dick Ray

SMALL WHEELS POLISH MOUNT RAINIER RAILS

By Dick Ray

Western Maryland M-9, No. 67

On Saturday, September 2nd, a small invited group of track car enthusiasts toured the Mount Rainier Scenic Railway from Elbe to Morton, Washington and return. The operators included Rick Leach, Kelley Morris, Bob Makins, and organizer Russ Noe. All of the fellows have Fairmont S-2's or ST-2's, equipped with the two-cylinder RK engine.

This ex Milwaukee Road trackage once saw 90 loads of Douglas fir logs hauled out every night from the Kosmos (Kos'-mus) Timber Company railroad interchange outside Morton. The logs were destined for the mills of Tacoma, as were the logs that were delivered to the Milwaukee Road on numerous other spurs that once connected to the line. In the early 1950's, Morton was called the "tie capitol of the world". Many truck loads of railroad ties from the numerous small mills in Lewis County were transferred to railroad cars on the half-mile of loading docks at Morton.

The Morton Loggers Jubilee has been an annual event for more than forty years. In earlier days, the Milwaukee Road and Kosmos Timber Company participated with the town of Morton in celebrating the Jubilee. Displays of Milwaukee

Road diesels and Kosmos Heisler and Shay steam locomotives were spotted at the Morton Station as part of the two-day event.

During our lunch stop at Morton, our group was fortunate to meet one of the former Milwaukee Road engineers. He explained that four Milwaukee Road F-unit ("covered wagon") diesels had to double the hill on the way north to Elbe, due to the 2.3 percent grades and sharp curves. Our four Fairmont S-2 track cars had no trouble with these grades, even with a full load of passengers.

After a flawless trip to Morton, Rick's car refused to start for the return trip. A plugged gas cap vent was eventually diagnosed and corrected. At Mineral, we waited for the tourist train, pulled by the largest Porter steam locomotive ever built, a 2-8-2. Its lovely whistle, softened by surrounding trees, and echoing off nearby mountains gave us advance warning of its arrival. Near Elbe, Bob Makins' car fouled its plugs, and was pushed the last few miles, since we were just ahead of the tourist train.

The Mount Rainier Scenic Railway is run by Jack Anderson, who is very active in locomotive restoration projects. The railroad's trackage is generally unavailable to motor car operators, except through Jack. However, trip organizer Russ Noe is a long time friend of Jack's. Russ is also an engineer on the Snoqualmie Valley Railroad, running ex Kosmos Timber Company (later U.S. Plywood) Mallet steam locomotive number 11!

DO IT YOURSELF HI-RAIL TRUCK

By Joel Williams
Western Maryland M-19, No. 334

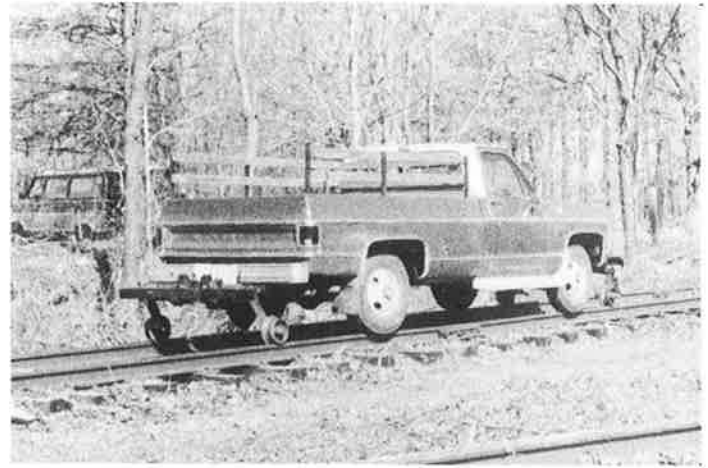
Several years ago, I obtained a set of Fairmont Hyrail® gear. They were available at a scrap price, and I couldn't pass them up. At that point, I began asking myself questions about what was needed to properly apply them to my pickup truck. In my research, I found out more than I really wanted to know, especially about wheels and tires.

The problem of adapting any highway vehicle to run on the rails boils down to the width of the particular vehicle's running gear. The tires of a hi-rail vehicle must sit centered on the rails to drive and brake it. Full-size pickups are too wide, and most compact trucks are too narrow. A few older mid-size GM cars (Monte Carlo), older Jeep pickups and wagons, and the first Ford Broncos all fit the rails without modification.

Obviously the first thing you would do is to measure your vehicle's tire width against rail centers, (not gauge...the centers are wider) to find out if it will fit. The greatest number of railroad-ordered hi-rail vehicles are full-size pickup truck or Suburban chassis. To narrow the track of these vehicles, deep dish wheels are used. I don't know if these wheels have an official name, but I know them as "Budd" wheels. These are the same wheels as used on the smaller dual-wheeled truck chassis. The wheels come in half-inch increments, from 16 to 20 inches. Fairmont recommends 19 1/2 inch wheels on their Hyrail® trucks.

On the dual wheel applications, the inner wheel is put on the hub with the dished part facing outward, and the inner wheel is put on the opposite way. A ring to accommodate the tapered lug nuts goes on last. I should add that these wheels are made to fit 3/4 ton and larger trucks with 8 studs. All the large pickups have the same 8-bolt pattern. Special wheels are available from Fairmont for other types of vehicles. One should remember that since the typical hi-rail gear weighs in the neighborhood of 700 lb., smaller trucks won't have much payload capacity left after a hi-rail installation.

Just mounting Budd wheels on the hubs is not the end of it, because the track width would then be too narrow. Fairmont makes spacers which correct that problem. For the Chevy truck, the spacers are 1-inch thick. The spacers have eight holes, and mount to the truck hub studs. The spacer in turn has eight studs to which the wheels mount. Installation of the spacers brings up the next problem...the wheel studs are too long...about 1/2 inch too long. Therefore, they must



Joel Williams' hi-rail truck is a full size Chevy pickup with modifications as outlined in his article.

Photo By Joel Williams

be cut off, all 32 of em'. Cutting off the extra 1/2 inch won't hurt anything, except that if you want to install dual wheels later, you're out of luck.

The size of the wheels that you want to use must be considered. I noticed that in regular Chevy hi-rail trucks that the 19-1/2" front wheels would rub the inner fender in a tight turn. Several trucks that I have seen have had the inner fenders worn through. The question of the day is, why use such big wheels? There must be clearance on the front for the disc brake calipers. Remember that the deep dish wheels project inward. The smallest wheels that I could put on my truck was 17-1/2". This still required grinding away some high spots on the caliper casting. The 17-1/2" wheels don't rub the inner fenders of the Chevy. Of course, other makes of trucks, or trucks with drum brakes will be different.

Some advice about tire sizes is in order. Full sizes such as 16", 17", etc. are high profile tires. That is, they have a wide side wall, and a larger overall diameter. The 1/2-inch sizes such as 16-1/2", etc. are low profile, with narrow side walls. A tire for 16" wheels is larger in diameter than a 17-1/2" tire. That's something to keep in mind when selecting wheels and tires.

After going through all that, mounting the Hyrail® gear to the chassis is almost easy. Fairmont has brackets to fit the frame of almost any vehicle. Except for removing the front bumper, it's a simple bolt-on affair. I chose not to use the Fairmont brackets in my installation, since I wanted to be able to remove the Hyrail® gear quickly and easily. The idea of carrying around an extra 700 pounds when it wasn't needed seemed like a bad idea.

I decided to build a removable arrangement, similar to a box-end receiver on a trailer hitch. This

was accomplished by mounting a set of heavy-walled, square tubing under the rear bumper, with extra braces to the frame. Smaller size square tubing was bolted to the Hyrail® gear. Mounting the gear just requires sliding it together, and locking it with a 1/2" bolt...It takes about a minute. In the front, the bumper was modified to mount the same way as the Hyrail® gear...with the same square tubing as that used in the rear.

I simply unlock the bumper, slide it off, and mount the Hyrail® gear in its place. The mount is strong, and it doesn't require the diagonal braces that Fairmont uses. When we were cutting trees along the right-of-way of the Susquehanna Railroad, during their rehabilitation program in northern New Jersey, we loaded a full cord of wood on the truck many times. We figured that the cord weighed in at about 3000 lbs., making the gross weight of the truck at about 9300 lbs., with the Hyrail® gear! Since that exceeds Fairmont's recommended load by about 1500 lbs., I figure that the design is strong.

Just like any set of railroad wheels, the Hyrail® gear must be correctly aligned for proper tracking. The front and rear gear must be mounted parallel with each other, and in-line, front to rear. When mounting the gear, check that nothing on the vehicle will be in the way of stowing the wheels in the up position. Fairmont recommends that the height of the bottom of the main cross channel of the gear be mounted at 15-3/4" above the rail (16-1/2" for gear with rubber wheels). Both have a tolerance of 1/2" either way.

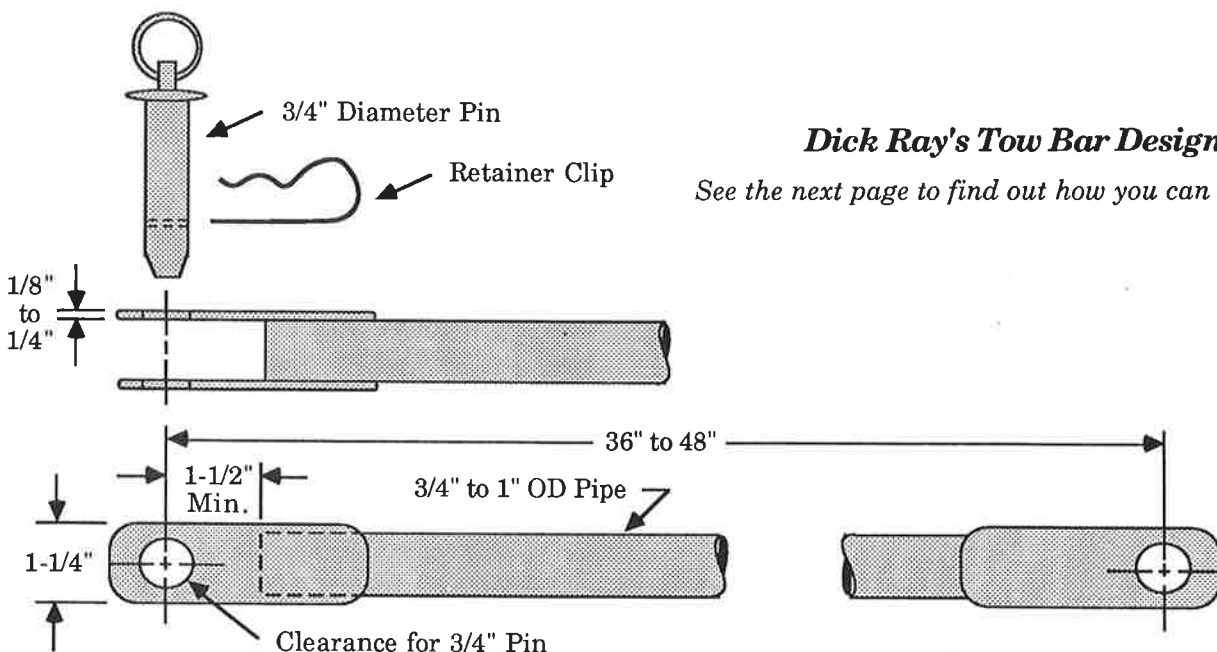
Once the gear is mounted at the proper height, you are ready to adjust the downward force on each guide wheel. This is done by turning the adjusting

stud on the top of the cross channel. The guide wheels should be adjusted for a downward force of 350-400 pounds. This is accomplished with a special Fairmont 1-1/2-ton weighing jack, fitted with a gauge that reads in pounds.

After placing the vehicle on the track, the jack is placed under the spindle carrier, and operated until the guide wheel just lifts off the rail. A reading is taken, and then the adjustment is made. For safety's sake, this adjustment shouldn't be overlooked. A derailment could occur, if the downward force on the guide wheels isn't enough. Fairmont's operator's, service and parts manual (bulletin 942) goes into much further detail on setup and adjustments than this article can. The bulletin also lists all of the special equipment needed to adapt a variety of vehicles. The list includes automobiles, trucks and 4-wheel drive vehicles.

How does a hi-rail vehicle behave on the rails? It feels just like it does on the highway...except you don't have to steer. Normal highway speeds can be achieved, but remember that the guide wheels are rotating about four times as fast as the vehicle wheels. The bearings on the guide wheels must be well lubricated so they won't overheat. With a long wheelbase vehicle, care must be exercised on sharp turnouts or very sharp curves, or you'll find yourself on the ground. It's not a bad idea to carry some large wood blocks for rerailing.

A vehicle with an automatic transmission is preferred to one with a manual transmission, because of its ability to travel in reverse at a faster rate. This is important, if you don't have a grade crossing where you can turn around.



Dick Ray's Tow Bar Design

See the next page to find out how you can make one

A SIMPLE TOW BAR FOR YOUR TRACK CAR

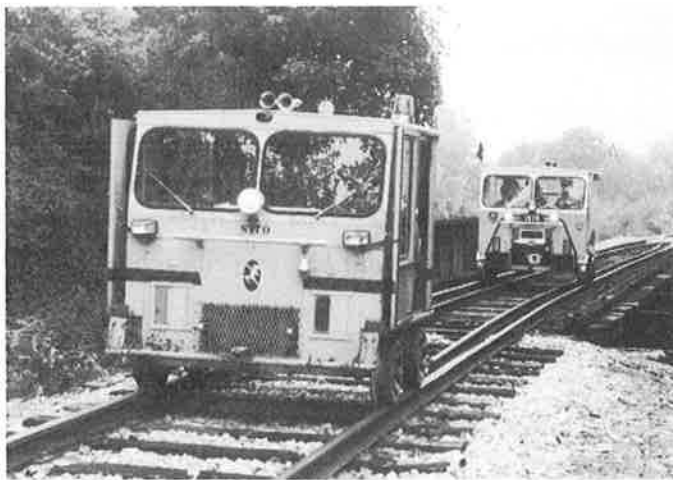
By Dick Ray
Western Maryland M-9, No. 67

Sometimes, in spite of all the care and maintenance that we expend on our track cars, they will periodically break down on a run, and we will need to be towed home. This article will show you how to make a simple tow bar that will be useful for a "rescue" or perhaps for towing a small trailer.

The accompanying drawing shows a piece of pipe, with two plates welded to each end. A 3/4" diameter pin slips through holes in these plates, which in turn straddles the hitch plates on the car and the trailer (or towed track car). When the tow bar is not in use, the pins hold it to two small angle brackets on the rear of the track car.

This assembly is lighter than the typical 1" diameter solid tow bars that are commonly supplied by railroads, but it is strong enough for our small inspection cars. The length is also a bit longer, to allow for lift handle clearance, and for extended cab fronts.

It is advisable to fit towing brackets to both the front and the rear of the track car, so that the powered car pulls, instead of pushes the "dead" car or trailer. It also avoids having to turn the car for a tow home or to the next setoff point, so repairs can be accomplished.



Ernie Jeschke's ex Milwaukee Road MT-14 is a familiar sight at midwest NARCOA meets. The car is fully equipped with a cab heater, headlight, tailights, stoplight, wipers, and a CB radio!

Photo By Ernie Jeschke

WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET THIS NARCOA MEMBER...

Ernie Jeschke
4106 N. Adrian Highway
Adrian, MI 49221

Most of you who have attended track car meets in the east know Ernie Jeschke (Jes'-key) from the familiar red suspenders, all-brim hat, and that ever-present smile, but, I'll bet that few of you realize that Ernie is the publisher of THE SETOFF. You see, Ernie is the owner of Jes-Key Graphics, of Adrian, Michigan.

Born and raised in Dowagiac, Michigan, Ernie's interest in railroading began at an early age. "I used to hang out at the old New York Central freight depot in Dowagiac" says Ernie. "Every once in a while the switch crews would let me ride in the locomotive while they switched the local industries." In 1958, Ernie moved to Adrian, and by 1964, he went into the long-haul trucking business. By 1977, Ernie decided that he would start his own printing business. It was a natural move, since he had always dabbled in the newspaper business, and with printing in general...even through the trucking years.

Ernie was one of the first supporters of the Southern Michigan Railroad Society, of nearby Clinton, Michigan. He is still very active in volunteering his help for the Southern Michigan Railroad. "I got interested in motor cars in the mid 1980's," says Ernie. "I've leaned toward the electric start, MT-14's, with Onans, rather than the hand crank cars." Over the last several years, Ernie has owned several ex Milwaukee Road MT-14's, which were bought through the Soo Line shops in Bensonville, Illinois. He currently has a "full cab" MT-14 with electric start, headlight and "ditch lights," cab heater, wipers, flasher, and citizens-band radio.

In addition to his interest in railroading, Ernie can't stay away from a good auction. The back room of his print shop on north M-52 is testimony to the fact that Ernie can't resist a good "deal." When Ernie is not attending the numerous track car meets throughout the year, he can usually be found working into the late hours of the evening at the print shop. Frequently Ernie's wife Joan is working there with him to get those "hot" jobs completed. The shop mascot cat, "Dusty" is always on hand to lend his support too!

For Ernie, railroading, motor cars, and printing seem to go together just fine.

FOR SALE OR TRADE

For Sale

Mechanical gongs for use on track cars
4", 6", 8", 10" sizes available

for more information, contact:

W. L. Jenkins Co.
P.O. Box 80429-1445 Whipple Rd. S.W.
Canton, OH 44708

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Fairmont Motor Cars
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Tamper 16-inch Motor Car Wheels-new, \$35.00
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Caroline Drive, RD #1
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
(914) 831-1170

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Piston for Kalamazoo Model 44 Motor Car

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Fairmont Motor Cars
Over 40 Cars in Stock, including A6, A5 Gang Cars,
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1225 Rowland N.E.
Canton, OH 44705
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Wanted

Fairmont Track Car, Preferably \$300.00 or less
I would prefer a car with a cab
any condition, any model

Contact:

Richard Rowlands
77 Stonybrook Drive
Hubbard, OH 44425
(216) 759-8168

Wanted

Fairmont M-9 Track Car in Running Condition
Preferably with Cab

Contact:

Tom Hillis
Box 186
Stanton, MI 48888
((517) 831-5375

For Sale

Two Fairmont 14" Rubber-tired Wheels (M-9)
Used, in Good Condition
\$40.00 for the pair

Contact:

Mike Woodburn
16495 Marvindale Street
Minerva, OH 44657
(216) 863-3023







Forty years ago, the Santa Fe still had Electro-Motive FT freight diesels on its roster, as well as a few Sheffield velocipedes. In the view above, at Prescott, Arizona, recorded by the late Cecil Hommerding, we see a maintainer pause long enough for his picture to be taken before continuing on with his work of filling kerosene switch lamps (note the kerosene can on the tool tray of the velocipede). **Left and Below-** These two photos of a similar vintage show a Fairbanks-Morse gang car and motor car house in New York Central's Ft. Wayne, Indiana yards, on the old Ft. Wayne & Jackson Railroad.

Photos By Richard O. Lawrence
(collection of Victor Baird)



THE SETOFF

Box 82
Greendell, NJ 07839

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