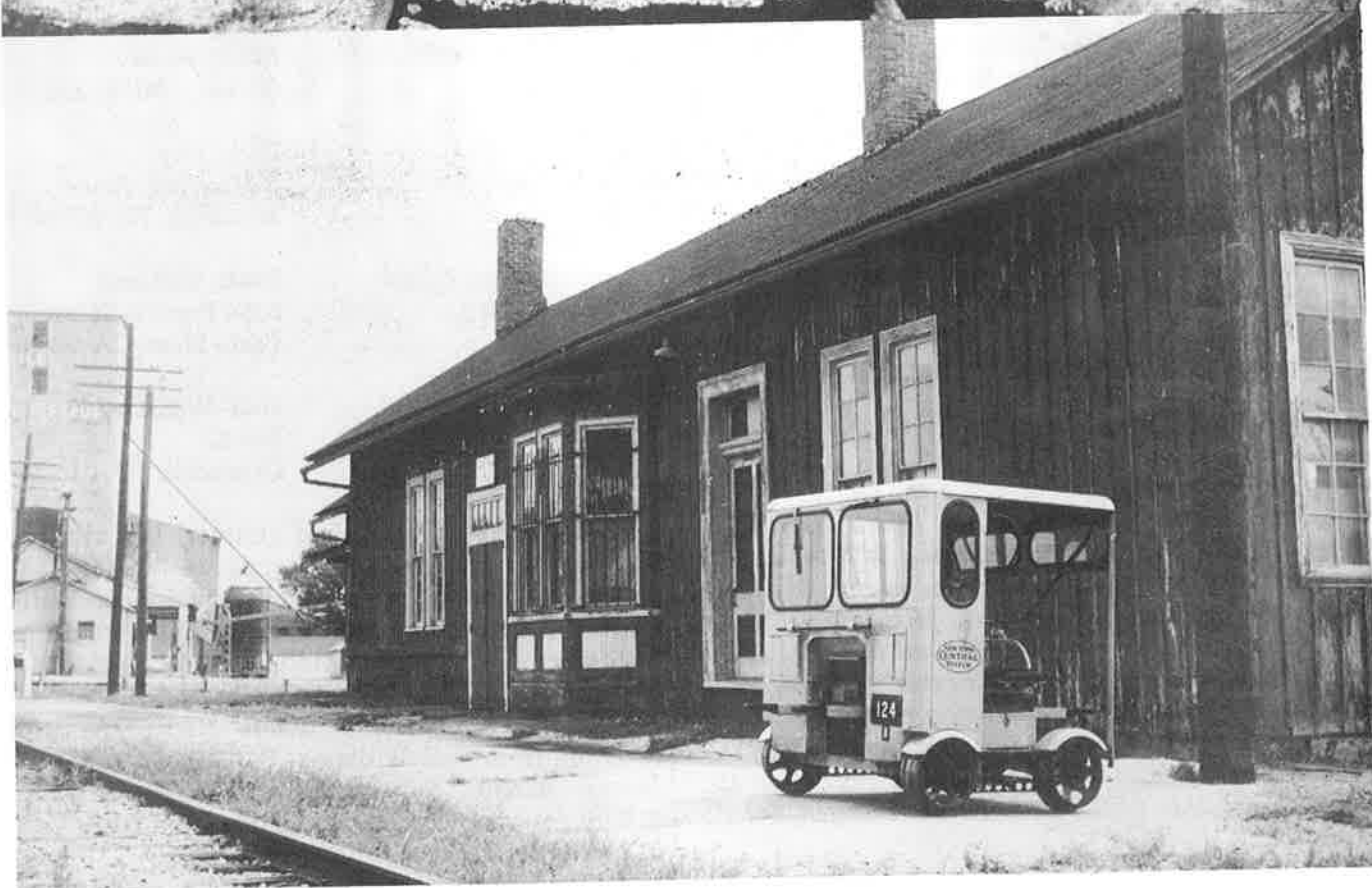
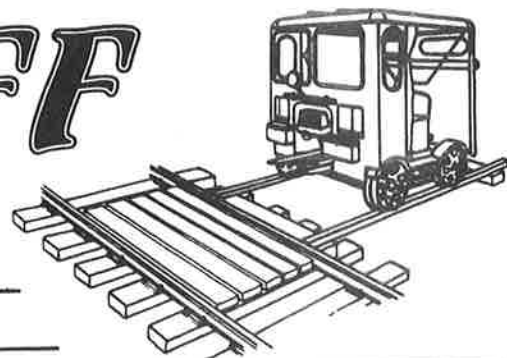


# THE SETOFF

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

Winter, 1989



## ORGANIZATION NEWS

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

Several new members have listed their cars on the NARCOA roster lately, including: Harry Coulter, of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, who owns an ex Pittsburg & Shawmut, Fairmont ST-2; R. J. Skelton, of Apple Valley, California, who owns an ex Santa Fe, Fairmont M-19; and, Steve Banias, of Colliersville, New York and John Smith of Maryland, New York, listing their Jointly-owned ex Delaware & Hudson, Fairmont A-3.

Also listing their cars were Ed Beasley of Boaz, Kentucky, with his ex Illinois Central, Fairmont M-9; Robert Donnell, of Beaumont, Texas, who owns a Rock Island, Fairmont M-19; and Ed Bush of Stillwater, New Jersey, who just bought an ex Louisville & Nashville, Fairmont M-19.

NARCOA member Dave Rose, of Elmer, New Jersey just bought 20 Fairmont M-9, and M-19's, plus several Fairbanks-Morse 40B's, which he will get running and then sell. Dave also has an extensive list of Fairmont parts both new and used for sale. For more information, contact him at: RD 4, Box 341B, Elmer, New Jersey, (609) 358-3409.

A number of railcar manuals, parts lists, advertisements, and brochures are available through NARCOA, c/o Joel Williams, Box 82, Greendell, New Jersey 07839. The originals to this material were lent by members, to be copied and made available to those who need them. Fairmont is covered extensively, and so is Fairbanks-Morse, particularly the 40B model. We also have some material on the Northwestern cars, as well as Kalamazoo model 16 and 216 manuals. We need additional material on Buda, Fairbanks and Northwestern track cars.

### COVER PHOTOS

*Top* - Coming at you with "ditch lights" blazing, is Ernie Jeschke's ex Milwaukee Road MT-14, shown running east on the Kalamazoo, Lake Shore & Chicago Railway, near Lawrence, Michigan, in July, 1988. *Bottom* - In a scene right out of 1950, we see NARCOA member Mike Woodburn's ex New York Central M-9, spotted on the platform of railfan John Marquis' ex Lake Shore & Michigan Southern (NYC) depot at Bryan, Ohio. John's depot is located on the busy Conrail "Air Line", which runs between Toledo and Elkhart, Indiana.

Anything lent to us will be copied and then promptly returned. If you want copies of any of the literature that we have, please contact us at the above address. Return postage would be appreciated. As material is received, I will list them in future columns, and give the sender credit.

### A NOTABLE QUOTE FROM "THE TRACK INSPECTOR"

"A motor car nut is one who works on his car in December...outside...at 20°...with the wind blowing...after dark...preparing for the next run...which is in April!"

# THE SETOFF

Volume 2

Number 4

Editor

Doug Leffler  
622 Pawnee  
Jackson, MI 49203

Associate Editor  
(East Coast)

Dick Ray  
5 Hemlock Place  
Randolph, NJ 07869

Contributing Editor  
(West Coast)

Brett Tallman  
3354 Fuchsia Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

NARCOA Roster  
Coordinator

Joel Williams  
Box 82  
Greendell, NJ 07839

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.

Additional information about NARCOA can be obtained from Joel Williams, Box 82, Greendell, New Jersey 07839. Subscriptions to THE SETOFF are \$10.00 per year, and are available from Doug Leffler, 622 Pawnee, Jackson, Michigan 49203

## INDIANA RAILWAY MUSEUM TO HOLD MOTOR CAR WORK MEET

The Indiana Railway Museum, Inc., of French Lick, Indiana will hold a motor car work meet on March 25-26, 1989. The purpose of the meet is to patrol the 17 miles of IRM rails, and remove any fallen trees and limbs from the right-of-way, and clear brush, in preparation for the museum's first revenue runs on the following weekend.

The meet will be limited to 20 motor cars, and you must be a member of the IRM to participate (annual membership in the IRM is only \$10.00 for motor car owners who wish to attend the meet, who are not currently members of IRM).

The motor car meet will coincide with the IRM's annual meeting, which will be held in the luxurious French Lick Springs Resort Hotel. The meeting will feature a buffet-banquet, and a slide presentation on the Monon Railroad from Gary Dolzoll, of *Trains* magazine.

As part of the IRM's 1989 membership drive promotion, the \$10.00 membership fee to new members of IRM will include the motor car meet, as well as the meeting/banquet, and a year's subscription to the IRM's newsletter, *The Mainline*. Current paid-up members of the IRM may attend the motor car meet at no cost; optional attendance at the annual meeting and banquet will be \$13.00.

For more information and registration for the meet, or membership in the IRM, contact Stanley Conyer, 5235 Lockerbie Ct., Columbus, IN 47203 (812) 379-4401. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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## TRACK CAR MEET TO BE HELD ON THE HOBO R.R. AND WINNIPESAUKEE R.R. JUNE 3-4, 1989

A NARCOA track car meet will be held June 3-4, 1989, on the rails of the Hobo Railroad and the connecting Winnepesaukee Railroad, at Lincoln, New Hampshire. The two rail lines extend 40 miles through some of the most beautiful scenery in the northeast. Day and night runs are planned for the meet, which will be based out of the Hobo Railroad's headquarters at Lincoln, in the heart of the White Mountains.

Other nearby railroad attractions include the Conway Scenic Railroad, and the Mt. Washington Cog Railway. You may want to spend several extra days in this area. A visit is planned to Clarks Trading Post, where they run Heisler and Climax geared locomotives on a two-mile line. Clarks has promised that the visiting NARCOA members will be able to run their restored Reo railbus also. All railcars must be equipped with headlights and flags, and as usual, no alcoholic beverages will be allowed.

Group rates will be available at the Millhouse Inn in Lincoln, for those who register early. For further information, send a SSAE (with two stamps) to Paul Yorkis, 24 Kimberly Drive, Medway, MA 02053.



*The NARCOA meet on the Hobo Railroad and Winnepesaukee Railroad will be Based out of the Hobo Railroad headquarters at Lincoln, New Hampshire. The Hobo Railroad is a first class operation, as illustrated in this photo of their engine facility.*

*Photo By Joel Williams*

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## K.W.T. RY TO HOST MOTOR CAR CONVENTION

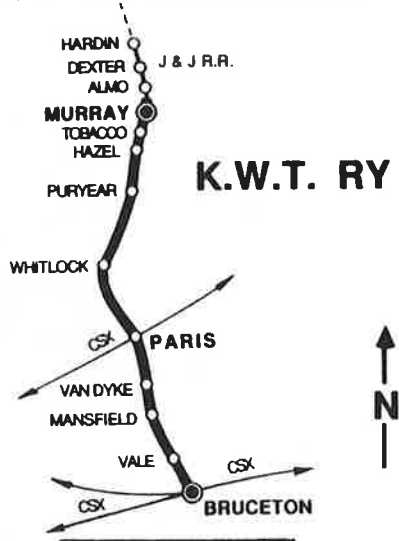
The Kentucky and West Tennessee Railway, Inc. will host a motor car convention on April 21-23, 1989. The convention, dubbed "Bluegrass 89" is being sponsored by the Motor Car Collectors of America (MCCA), and is open to all track car enthusiasts. The convention is being billed as The 5th Annual National Motor Car Convention. This continues the tradition established at the Southern Michigan Railroad, at Clinton, Michigan.

The first two motor car conventions on the SMR were sponsored by NARCOA and the last two by the SMR; however, the SMR will not be hosting a national convention in 1989 (it is anticipated, however, that they may hold an informal meet over the Memorial Day weekend).

Convention participants will ride on 45 miles of K.W.T. rails, from Bruceton, Tennessee to Murray, Kentucky. The trackage, once part of the Paducah and Memphis Division of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad (formerly Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis) is now a thriving shortline, running through little tobacco towns and scenic countryside.

A number of events will be featured at the convention, including two days of running, a banquet, and a night photo session. Opportunities for additional recreation and shopping are also available in Paris and nearby Paris State Park.

For an information packet, send an LSSAE to: Hank Brown, convention coordinator, 622 Oak Street, Cottage Grove, WI 53527 (608) 839-4939.



## DELAWARE & ULSTER R.R. HOSTS SECOND FALL MOTOR CAR MEET

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

The Delaware & Ulster Railroad hosted its second fall NARCOA motor car meet over the weekend of September 23-25, at Arkville, New York, in the scenic Catskill Mountain country. This year the railroad had more track available to run on, due in part to the efforts of several NARCOA members cutting brush along the right-of-way.

One new challenge to the operators this year was the installation of new rubber inserts added to the flangeways of the Route 30 crossing just north of Arkville. The inserts were installed to keep bicyclists from falling into the flangeways, due to the shallow angle of the crossing. The rubber inserts "rob" power from the cars, in the process of crossing, requiring nearly a full throttle just to get across. Nearly everyone mastered the technique by the end of the weekend though.

Hank Brown, of Cottage Grove Wisconsin traveled the furthest with his car. For this he received the "worn tire" award. Getting the "big hook" award, was Dick Ray and Joel Williams, for having their ex L&HR A-3 towed back to Arkville, while on a run.

Two skills contests were held in the Arkville Yard on Saturday; a short-distance acceleration contest, and a new "go-slow" contest, in which contestants could see how slow their car could run, without applying the brakes. To be fair to each operator, the go-slow contest was separated into the various car type categories; belt drive, friction drive and gear drive.

The acceleration contest winners were Hank Brown, Dave Williams, Charlie Hulsizer, Quick (no pun intended) Carlson, and John Eppler. The winners of the go-slow contest were Fred Furfinger, with his M-9, Bill Haysom, with the Kingston Model R.R. Club's Buda, and Quick Carlson, with his A-5.

The Saturday evening buffet dinner was catered by Julaine Williams, who did a fine job of preparing everything. There was plenty of good food for everyone. A large cake with the NARCOA logo on it was the finishing touch. At the dinner, awards were presented to all the contest winners. For the go-slow contest, turtle shells, mounted on miniature track car wheels on a plaque, were presented. Dave Rose made the awards. The meet volunteers were presented with certificates of appreciation.

A large number of cars participated in the night runs, and the fusees proved very successful for flagging the crossings. The meets with the excursion trains went off very well, and the D&U Railroad cooperated in every way to make this another very enjoyable and safe track car meet.



A lineup of track cars (and one HyRail car) are shown at Fleischmanns, New York, during the NARCOA fall meet on the Delaware & Ulster Railroad.

Photo By Joel Williams

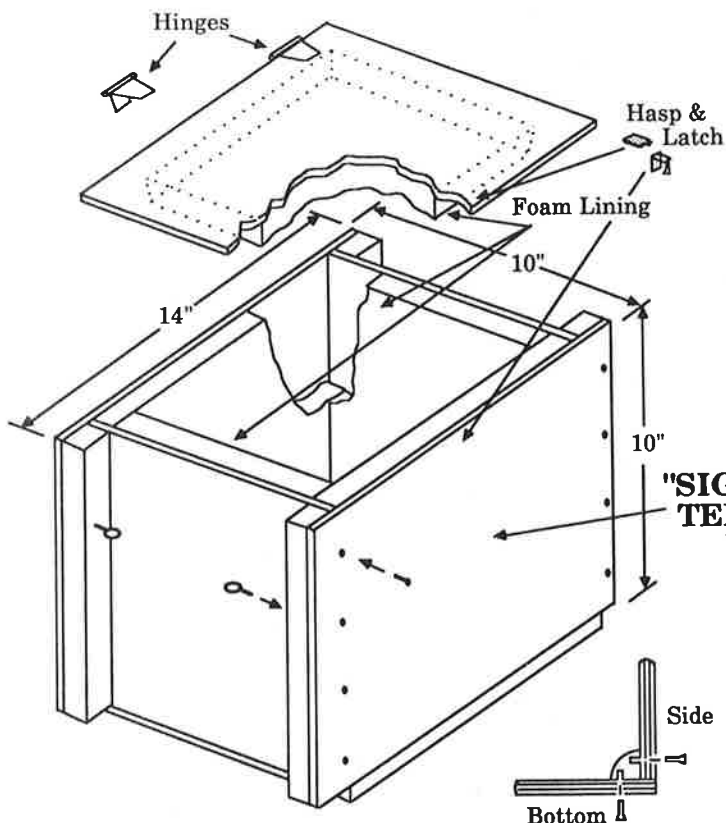
## BUILD A COOLER FOR YOUR MOTOR CAR

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

When I first rebuilt and restored my prized Fairmont M-9, I wanted everything on the car to be as close as possible to the original configuration of a typical Western Maryland Railway inspection car. On long summer trips where we had to carry food and soft drinks, a modern brightly-colored plastic cooler seemed out of place in the tool tray of a 1951 rail car.

I came up with the idea of building my own cooler, fashioned after a typical railroad "add on" box for signal and telephone cable repair tools and parts. I decided to build the box of wood, with dimensions sized to fit in the left front tool tray floorboard. The size was also chosen to hold 12 standard soft drink cans, plus sandwiches and other goodies.

The sketch shows how the box was constructed. All of the panels were made from a good grade of quarter inch plywood. I cut both sides to be exactly the same size. The ends are identical also. I sanded all the edges and filled the defects. All surfaces then received three coats of primer/sealer, with sanding in between coats on the outside surfaces. Two 3/4-inch-square strips were attached with white glue and flathead screws to the outside of the ends.



The bottom edges of the sides and ends got a strip of quarter-round attached to the inside, flush with the bottom to facilitate attachment of the bottom to the sides. The ends of the quarter round were mitered to fit together in the corners. More white glue and flat head screws were used for these strips also.

Next I assembled the sides to the ends (again, with white glue and screws) and "squared up" the box as close as possible. I cut out the bottom and the top from the same plywood, and using the box as a pattern. Some of the extra plywood had been sanded and sealed ahead of time for this purpose. The bottom was then attached to the quarter round and covers the entire bottom, as shown in the sketch.

The top was attached with strap hinges, using machine screws. The top is held shut with a chest-type latch, attached with machine screws. After three coats of yellow paint on all outside surfaces the box was ready for insulation. I used three-quarter inch rigid foam, glued into place with clear silastic. The pieces were cut with an X-Acto knife to fit snugly. The lid has insulation also, cut and tapered slightly, to fit inside the other insulation. Rope handles through screw eyes in the end blocks provide a way to carry the cooler.

The final detail was stenciling "Signal and Telephone Dept." on the front of the box, since my car served in that capacity on the Western Maryland Railway.

The cooler works well, even though my particular design won't allow ice to be put into it (the ice would melt through the seams in the foam). Perhaps some sort of sealant for the foam, or a solid foam box that fits within the wood box could be used, if ice is desired. My cans of soda, however, seem to stay quite cold for all but the hottest days.

This was an easy project that required only simple tools, and the result is a "railroady" looking accessory for your track car.



Dick Ray's homemade cooler is painted Cat yellow, to match the color of his ex Western Maryland M-9. Note how the cooler fits snugly in the front portion of the car's tool tray.

Photo By Dick Ray



## "RAIN RUN" ON THE TOLEDO, LAKE ERIE & WESTERN RAILWAY

By Doug Leffler  
New York Central M-9, No. M-220

The morning of October 23, 1988 dawned cold and grey. The weatherman had predicted that cold, intense rainshowers would hit before noon. Even with those dire predictions though, a dozen or so dedicated track car enthusiasts from southern Michigan and northern Ohio arrived about 9:00am, at the Toledo Lake Erie & Western Railway, in Grand Rapids, Ohio, for two ten-mile runs over the former Nickel Plate Road trackage to Waterville, Ohio.

The TLE&W meet was the second meet sponsored by the railway in 1988 (the other meet was held in April). The chief organizer was Victor Geckle, one of the principle officers of the Railway. After unloading the cars, the attendees assembled for a short safety meeting with Vic, before departing for Waterville. The wind was fairly cold and brisk, as we pulled out of Grand Rapids, and all of owners who had side curtains for their cars had them in place.

While crossing the Maumee River on the classic old Pratt truss bridge in Grand Rapids, I noticed that there were small white caps on the river. If it was going to rain this day, it would be the first motor car meet that I ever attended where it rained. The run to Waterville ran quite smoothly, and as we pulled into town, I could see the glowing headlight of one of the TLE&W's Alco locomotives, as the engine and train idled on the main, in front of the Waterville depot.

Many of the attendees had already parked their cars and had walked the short distance to the depot for hot coffee, and a look at the train, (it was scheduled to make it's first run of the day, after the departure of the track cars). After a quick tour of the locomotive cab, I began the short walk back to my Fairmont, to fire it up for the return run to Grand Rapids. Before I had walked 50 feet, the rain began; slowly at first, and then in earnest.

With the side curtains drawn, and my right arm working furiously with my hand-operated windshield wiper, I began the ten-mile, return trip to Waterville. I noticed that the M-9 glided along very nicely on the wet rails...in fact it seemed to ride like a Cadillac, with none of the occasional "hunting" that my car sometimes does. The curtains did a good job of keeping out the rain, and I got only a little bit of "leakage" around the fender areas in the tool tray.

As I pulled into Waterville, the rain was now coming down intensely. After pulling up to the crossing where I had set on earlier, I decided that it was time to throw in the (wet) towel. I pulled the car off the rails, loaded the car on the trailer, and waited in the cab of my truck for the others to arrive. After helping each other get the cars loaded, we all decided to head for a nearby restaurant, for some nourishment, and to dry out. Even though we opted to forego the second run over the railroad, all of the operators seemed to have had a good time. We thank Vic Geckle, and the TLE&W for another fine meet.

## HARTWELL RAILWAY HOSTS RAILFAN WEEKEND

By Van Workman  
Fairmont M-19 twin

The Hart County Scenic Railway hosted its 1988 Railfan Weekend October 8-9, on the rails of the Hartwell Railway, a ten mile long short line that runs from Hartwell to Bowersville, Georgia. At Bowersville, the line connects with Norfolk Southern's Toccoa to Elberton line.

The Hartwell event featured an impressive array of equipment for the weekend, including steam and diesel locomotives, passenger cars, vintage freight equipment, and of course motor cars. Several runs were conducted using this wide variety of equipment, and a Saturday banquet was provided for the visitors.

On Saturday, a passenger train with a 1925 Baldwin 2-6-2 steam locomotive made several runs over the line. On Sunday the motor cars made runs between Hartwell and Bowersville, as well as diesel-powered passenger train runs. The motor cars were operated from 9:30am till' 12:30pm. Such cars as Fairmont S-2's, M-19's, M-9's, and a Northwestern 532 were operated.

Some of the owners provided rides in the yard area and the main line for interested railfans and family members. On the run to Bowersville, extra caution was provided for a safe trip. All crossings were flagged, and all cars were stopped before proceeding across. A soft drink stop was made at a place called Air Line.

At Bowersville, the cars were turned around for the return run to Hartwell. The scenic railway has a very interesting old depot, which serves as the office building. We would like to thank Craig Myers, and the staff of the Hartwell Railway for a very nice weekend of railroading. We hope that we will be able to take part in this event next year.

## MAINTAINING MOTOR CAR COOLING SYSTEMS

By Jay Boggs

Pennsylvania R.R. M-19, No. 299

This is the time of year that most of us are looking forward to that first trip in the Spring, when it will be warm enough to ride the rails on our track cars. Now is a good time to perform a little maintenance on our cars to prevent problems in the Spring.

Proper maintenance of our cooling systems is one area that should be addressed to eliminate engine overheating. For air-cooled engines, the fins around the cylinder(s) and head(s) must be clean. Use a stiff bristle brush and compressed air to remove all dust and dirt. Heavy dirt may require a detergent and water bath, along with the bristle brush. If so, cover the carburetor to keep out overspray of water. All rust and corrosion must be removed.

For water cooled engines, check the hoses; if they are soft and spongy, it is time to install new ones. Check the fan belt; if it is dry and cracked, it will slip on the pulleys, and not cool the engine adequately. If the belt runs an alternator, the battery will not be charged properly.

The condition of the radiator/condenser is very important, particularly in engines without water pumps, such as the Fairmont OD, RO, RK and QB/RQ engines. The core must be clean, and the fins should be carefully straightened to allow maximum air flow.

Fairmont cores should be back-flushed occasionally with a garden hose, through the steam overflow pipe. The radiator should be painted with only one coat of paint. I use "bar-b-q grill black" for my cars, some owners use aluminum on their Fairmont condensers. Some railroads used one color for the entire car including the radiators (to cut costs)...perhaps you may have seen some of these cars with yellow radiators!

Check the color of the coolant; it should have a blue or green tint, depending upon what brand of anti-freeze is used. If you use water only in your Fairmont engines, be sure to use an anti-rust compound, to avoid buildups of rust. Dirty rusty coolant needs to be flushed out of the system before topping up or refilling.

In four cycle engines, the presence of oil in the coolant means a leaky head gasket. Check the oil to see if it is milky colored, this is usually where the evidence of a leaky head gasket first appears. After correcting the problems, refill the system with clean

(preferably distilled or "soft") water and a top grade anti-freeze mixed 50-50, with a little room at the top for expansion. Now your engine's cooling system should be in good shape for the upcoming summer season on the rails.

## WILMINGTON & WESTERN R.R. HOSTS "LEAF KICKER" MOTOR CAR MEET

By Joel Williams

Western Maryland M-19, No. 334

On Saturday, November 5, 1988, the Wilmington & Western Railroad of Wilmington, Delaware hosted a late fall motor car meet, organized by NARCOA member David Rose. The railroad is operated by Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc., from a connection with the B&O Railroad (now CSX Corp.) at Wilmington, 10.2 miles to Hockessen, Delaware.

The railroad regularly operates steam-powered excursion trains, with a 2-8-2 saddle tank engine. They also run an ex Pennsylvania Railroad "doodlebug" on charters. The line may be short on length, but is long on scenery. Numerous curved wooden trestles (one is s-shaped) are crossed as the line follows the gorge along Red Clay Creek.

The day began as NARCOA members arrived for the seton at Greenbank station. After unloading, the folks were given a packet of Wilmington & Western Christmas cards for souvenirs. Upon leaving the station at Greenbank, we proceeded east to the Marshalton engine terminal, for a tour of the facility. Of particular interest was steam locomotive #98, a 4-4-0 that is undergoing restoration...it was formerly used on the line. There was also plenty of other equipment to photograph at the facility.

After turning our cars, we headed back west, stopping at the picnic grounds at Mt. Cuba, for lunch. The track passes through varied scenery. Along the line are found wilderness areas, estates and large homes, and of course the numerous chemical plants that Delaware is famous for.

The threat of rain persisted all day, and finally became a reality as the sky let loose on the return trip from Hockessen. Of course those of us with side curtains were not bothered by this, but the poor guys with the open cars were at the mercy of the elements. Railroaders are tough, so there were no complaints! I think I heard one soaked operator say in a loud voice "Isn't this fun!"

Our thanks goes out to the nice folks on the Wilmington & Western for this nice, albeit wet meet. If you are ever in the area around Wilmington, be sure to stop by for a visit on a very interesting and professionally run operation.

## HE HATED TO WALK The Story of George Sheffield's Famous Velocipede

By Larry Massie

George S. Sheffield hated to walk; he figured he had done enough marching during his three-year stint in the 11th Michigan Infantry during the Civil War to last him the rest of his life.

After the war, he had settled down on a farm about 10 miles east of Three Rivers, Michigan. There he spent another seven years plodding endless miles behind a horse-drawn plow. Then he got a job as a mechanic with Jonathan Willits and Son, a Three Rivers pump manufacturer. Ten hours a day, six days a week he labored; that was the normal factory work week in the 1870's.

Sheffield roomed in town during the week and went home on Saturday night for his one day off. The problem was that the Michigan Central Railroad ran no passenger cars to the east on Saturday afternoon, or to the west, before noon on Monday, and livery rental was too expensive for a working man. So, the tired mechanic hiked home along the railroad tracks on Saturday night, and back to work again early Monday morning. The walk was nearly 10 miles each way.

There is an old saying, "Necessity is the mother of invention." and Sheffield had a need. He had plenty of time to mull over that need as he trudged along the tracks, and he also had mechanical skills. So, during the winter of 1877, he began tinkering on a gadget that he thought might satisfy his need. He called it a velocipede car, after what early bicyclists called their machines.

His contraption looked something like a bicycle on training wheels. A third wheel, attached like an outrigger, allowed it to fit the railroad tracks. But unlike a bicycle, the operator pumped the handle bars back and forth to power the rear wheel. Sheffield did not mind using his arms and back muscles to get from one place to another, he just hated walking. His first experimental model had some bugs in it, but, by 1878, he had perfected his velocipede, and he promptly patented it.

At night, and without authorization from the railroad company, Sheffield and his little invention merrily clacked along the tracks. But one winter night, on his way home, the velocipede was suddenly thrown off the tracks by a broken rail.

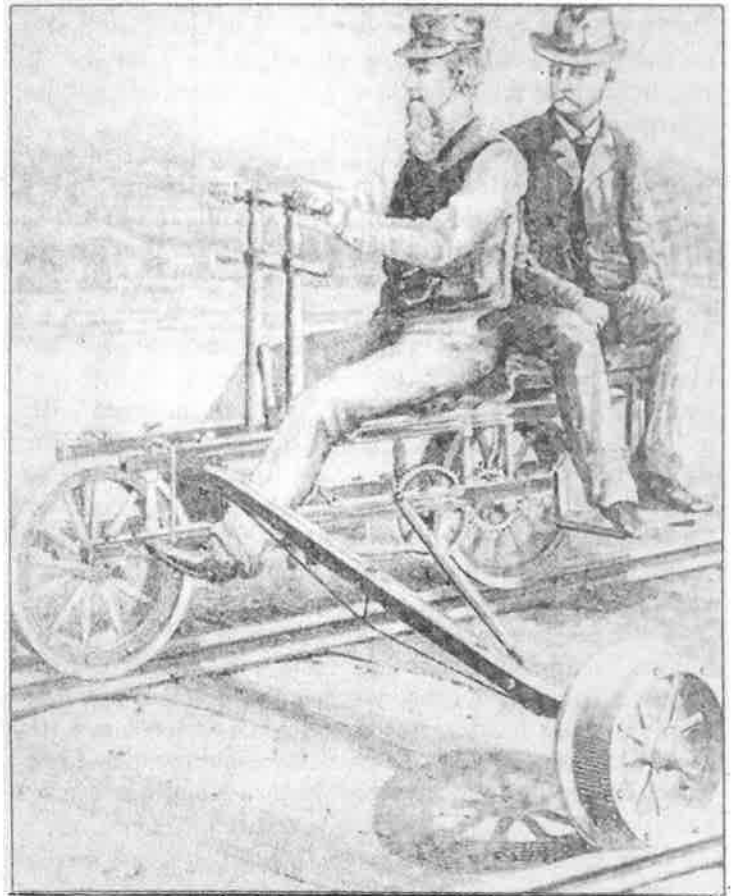
He had become familiar enough with the train schedules to know that a freight train was due shortly. There would be a wreck unless he could head it off. Sheffield ran to a nearby farmhouse, borrowed a lantern, flagged the train down and then helped the

crew repair the track. Grateful Michigan Central officials later inspected the velocipede and gave Sheffield permission to operate it over that stretch of track. They also asked him to build several more for the use of their track inspectors.

The velocipedes proved so successful that orders began pouring in from other railroads. In 1879, Sheffield formed a partnership with his former boss' son, Warren Willits, and the Sheffield cars went into production. They soon added a novel lightweight handcar to their line, and by the end of the year, Sheffield velocipedes and handcars were in use by more than 100 American and foreign railroads.

Other businesses also found the velocipede ideal when they could get permission to use them on the rail lines. A western Pennsylvania newspaper, the Oil City Derrick, purchased one to deliver papers to neighboring Franklin. In 1880, the editor, obviously a frustrated poet, penned:

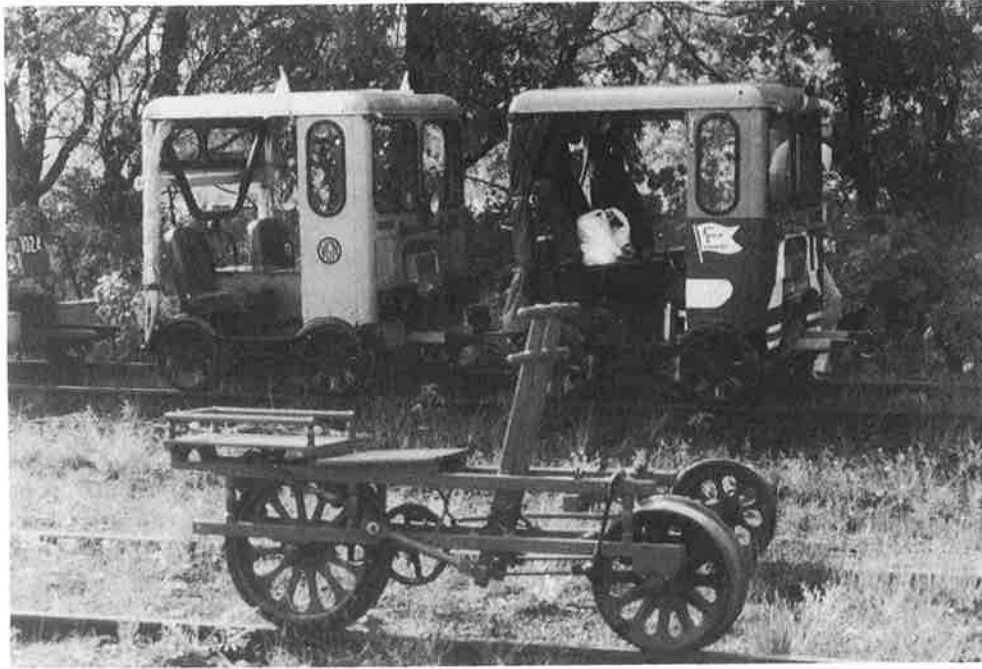
*What is it that each morning bright, takes down  
to Franklin great delight to every Derrick  
reader? 'Tis nothing else under the sun, than  
that mysterious son-of-a-gun, the Derrick's  
three-wheeled speeder.*



*This old woodcut shows Mr. Sheffield and perhaps a perspective customer trying out one of his patented velocipedes.*

*Collection of Larry Massie*





Many of Mr. Sheffield's velocipedes still exist today, both in museums, and in the collections of some NARCOA members. NARCOA member Glen VanWinkle is one of the fortunate ones to own one of these machines. Glen's velocipede is shown, along with some younger "cousins," at the July 1988 meet on the Kalamazoo, Lake Shore & Chicago Railway, at Paw Paw, Michigan.

Photo By Dennis Gokey

Within a few years those mysterious son-of-a-guns were making inventor Sheffield a rich man. But for some unknown reason, he sold his interest in the firm in 1883. Sheffield moved to Bronson in Branch County, Michigan, where he continued his tinkering. In 1891, he patented a novel type of hand corn planter. He set up a factory in the St. Joseph County (Michigan) village of Burr Oak for its manufacture.

That venture also proved a success, and by the turn of the century, Sheffield was shipping his corn planters to "all civilized parts of the world." He became Burr Oak's "leading citizen," organizing the First National Bank there, and the South Michigan Telephone Co.

Meanwhile, the track car company he had sired in Three Rivers also stayed on the right track. The Sheffield Velocipede Car Co. branched into other railroad specialities, including the Dodge standpipe, a water spout used by steam locomotives to take on water, and cattle guards, a bed of sharp spikes that kept livestock off the tracks.

The company reorganized in 1884, and Charles H. Morse, of the famous Fairbanks-Morse Scales Company bought in. Within a few years, the Fairbanks-Morse Company absorbed the Sheffield Car Co. completely.

In 1896, the company introduced a line of gasoline-powered inspection cars, for one- and two-persons. The cars were similar to Sheffield's original velocipede, and larger four-wheeled models

capable of transporting an entire eight-person section crew were designed and produced.

Then came various cars adapted to narrow-gauge mining railroads. These included small, four-wheeled models, pedaled by one miner into the shaft, larger hand cars for mine crews, and machinery and ore dump cars.

By 1912, nearly 1,200 employees worked at the massive Sheffield Car Co. The factory was sprawled over 40 acres on the south side of Three Rivers. One-third of the city's residents depended directly on the company for their livelihood.

During World War I and World War II, the company turned to production of military equipment. When World War II ended in 1945, the company began producing a line of automatic coal stokers that saved endless trips to the basement to shovel coal into the furnace. The railroad track inspection cars, however, remained the bread-and-butter product.

Other southwestern Michigan companies also developed products similar to Sheffield's velocipedes. The Kalamazoo Railroad Velocipede and Car Co., which later evolved into the Kalamazoo Manufacturing Co., went into production in the early 1880's. Its line of hand and gasoline-powered track cars were sold to railroads worldwide. In Australia, "Kalamazoo" became a common slang term for small railroad track cars.

In remote parts of the world, slightly more sophisticated versions of the railroad velocipede are still in use, based upon the original car invented by Mr. Sheffield...the man who hated to walk.

## MOTOR CAR + IMPROPER LIFTING = BAD BACK

By Doug Leffler  
New York Central M-9, No. M-220

There is nothing like tooling down the rails on our track cars, on a warm summer afternoon. The 750-1500 lb. cars (depending upon what model we might own) are our "tickets" to full size railroading; however, if we are not careful, they can also be the bane of our life, by causing severe back/leg pain, if we lift and maneuver them incorrectly.

Unfortunately, I can speak from experience. At first, the pain was just a tingle, in the lower calf of my leg...it must be a pulled muscle, I thought. A pain in the leg *can't* be caused by something wrong in your back...can it? How wrong I was.

You see your back has spongy cartilage between your vertebrae, called discs. As one gets older, it seems that the discs become more fragile, and they are prone to rupture or "herniate" if we bend over and *incorrectly* lift something heavy or "abuse" our backs. Additionally, the ruptured disc can pinch nerves, causing severe pain. Well, lifting a heavy motor car definitely causes back abuse if the lifting is not done correctly!

Like most everyone, I thought "it can't happen to me." I'm in excellent health, and the thought of a bad back was the farthest thing from my mind. When I first restored my track car (a Fairmont M-9) it didn't have a cab on it, and I didn't consider it to be all that heavy.

Like many beginners to the hobby, I "made due" with a winchless snowmobile trailer for carting my track car around. Since I considered my M-9 to be somewhat "light" in weight (in reality it's about 500 lbs without a cab) I simply lifted the car, by the front lift handles, up onto the trailer the 18 inches from the ground. Yes, it was a strain, but it worked. Looking back now, I think that was the start of my disc problem.

After nearly five years of this method of loading and unloading, I finally got smart last Spring, and installed a winch and ramps. But, it was too late. The pain in the leg kept getting worse, and my doctor gave me the news I didn't want to hear...surgery was in order for partial removal of the disc. This would eliminate the pressure on the nerve that was causing the pain.

After having the surgery in November, I can happily say that I'm ready once again to hit the rails. Any future lifting of my motor car will be done very carefully. The doctor indicated that the key to lifting anything is the angle at which our backs are when we lift. Don't *ever* lift in a bent over position. Lift with your legs, with your back in a vertical position. This will minimize the risk of the disc "popping" out the rear of your vertebrae.

Also, don't try to lift beyond your physical capabilities. Most of us aren't built like Arnold Schwarzenegger. NARCOA member Ron Butler found this out when he ruptured his disc after trying to lift his 1000-lb car (from the front end) after being stuck in soft dirt after unloading. A single incident like this *can* cause you severe injury!

The bottom line to all of this is to use common sense when "horsing" your motor car around. For loading and unloading, use a winch. The \$40.00-\$50.00 for the winch is a lot cheaper than a \$6,000.00 hospital bill. Make sure that the lift handles are fully extended when maneuvering the car from the trailer over to the rails for seton. And, above all *never* try to play "Russian weightlifter" with your car. If you're in a minor predicament and need to move the car, ask for help from friends. If you are alone (such as was the case with Ron Butler) use a board or heavy tree branch as a lever, to avoid the back strain. In essence...use common sense, and you can continue to enjoy the railcar hobby without pain.



*Jim and Ron Baird are shown with their ex B&O Fairmont M-19, alongside the PRR K-4, during the August NARCOA meet on the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad, at York, Pennsylvania.*

*Photo By Jim Baird*

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

Jim Baird  
P.O. Box 69  
Bealton, VA 22712

"My interest in railroading was developed at an early age.", so says Jim Baird, of Bealton, Virginia. "I was especially interested in steam locomotives, and stationary steam power, since like many kids, I had one of those model stationary steam engines, that ran on either pellets or alcohol."

Jim and his son Ron have been into the track car hobby since the early 1980's, when they acquired and rebuilt a 1944, ex Baltimore & Ohio Fairmont M-19. Even though the M-19 was the first car that Jim had acquired, he has long had an interest in track cars. "Quite a few years ago, a friend offered to sell me a Fairbanks (Sheffield) model 40B, unfortunately, I was not in a position to buy a car at that time."

"Our B&O car is a war model, with a steel hopper and frame, wooden lift handles...it had a shipping weight of 640 lb." "The standard B&O steel Kalamazoo cab was added by the railroad." The car number is 349, painted on a large metal plate."

"When we originally got the car from the B&O, up in West Virginia, it had been crushed, apparently by a large tree falling upon it." "It had a crushed cab, a bent axle, bent frame, and crushed bearings and blocks." "My son Ron and I worked all winter long restoring the car for the first motor car convention on the Southern Michigan Railroad, at Clinton, Michigan, in 1985." "After almost four years of running the M-19 at various NARCOA meets, we are very pleased with the performance of the car."

"Our newest project, however, is our steam-powered A-3, which we first ran at the 1988 meet at Clinton." The steam car project was quite involved, and we hope to do an article for THE SETOFF, outlining this project."

"I also have an ex U.S. Army 8-man Kalamazoo car, (with a Willys engine, and square cross section axles, for different rail gauges), and an ex Reading, model 23 Kalamazoo car, in really rough shape...these cars are awaiting their turns for rebuilding and running."

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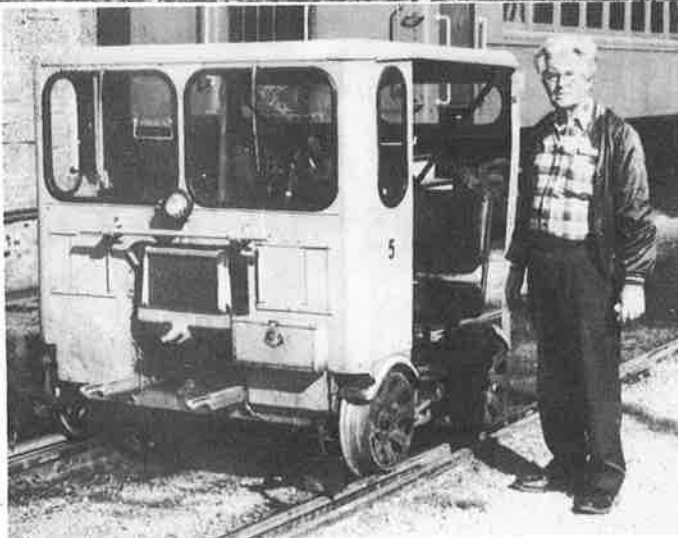
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*Top- The Toledo Lake Erie & Western held it's second track car meet last October. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't as pleasant as it was during the meet in April, as shown in this view at Waterville, Ohio. Photo By Doug Leffler Middle- The Fall meet on the Wilmington & Western Railroad was based out of Greenbank Station. The above photo was taken prior to the downpour of rain, which failed to dampen the spirits of the group. Photo By Joel Williams Bottom Van Workman and his M-19 are shown between runs on the Hartwell Railroad, at Hartwell, Georgia. Motor car runs were a part of the Hartwell Railway railfans weekend, late last summer. Photo By Van Workman*



## **THE SETOFF**

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