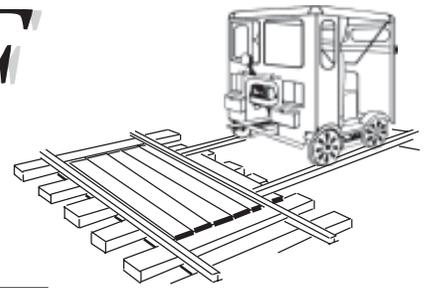


The **SETOFF**



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

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March/April 2008, Volume 22 - No. 2

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2007 Pacific Northwest Tour  
Photo by Marg Hope

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Please submit materials  
for the May/June issue of  
The **SETOFF**

by April 15  
as follows:

Letters to the Editor  
All other materials  
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Visit NARCOA's Website at:  
<http://www.narcoa.org>

## **President's Message**

by Warren Riccitelli



As I write this, it is mid February. We have put our motorcars away and most of us are recovering from the expenses of Christmas and trying to figure out how to pay for the home heating bills. Yesterday, an absolute beautiful day, I went out and looked at one of my motorcars and selected the ROC M-19 C&O car to carry most of the duties of this year. It did bring a good feeling that we'll be on the rails again within two months.

Is it ready to go? Well it was last year, if I remember correctly. But I am getting older and the car is older than I am. Is this the time that we should go through the car, or should I wait to hit the rails and worry about it there? Should I take the chance to brake down twelve times on the first run of the year, be towed for countless miles and have my friends rub it in? If my friends are anything like yours, we should look at our cars and make sure they are ready.

A lot of people do not know that they are ultimately responsible for the inspection of their own cars. In an upcoming issue will be an article by Al Elliott printed side-by-side with the NARCOA inspection form. But by just looking at the inspection form you can realize what your car is expected to pass, as far as the basics of a mechanical inspection. These are the standards that make this hobby what it is. There are many more things that can be done to your car that are more cosmetic than safety minded that will add to your motorcar experience.

A few years ago, I was doing a reversed move in a tunnel on one of my M-19s. I was sitting backwards on the engine cover and my butt slipped. I ended up triggering the fire extinguisher and I came out of the tunnel proceeded by a yellow cloud. I am reminded of that incident to this day. The fire extinguisher was safely attached to the motor car and was within easy reach, if needed; however more thought could have been used in selecting a better location to avoid this type of discharge.

While this was more of an embarrassment than a safety issue, it could have been a major issue if I had others in the car and they decided to jump while I was moving. These are the little things that we should look out for. Have you looked at your car and said something could have been better? Have you ever walked the line and looked at what others have done to their cars, and think of what you were planning on doing to your car?

For your information, NARCOA had over 1,000 members in the motorcar insurance program and over 110 new members were mentored. The Certified Excursion Coordinator Program has now had 112 excursion coordinators pass the written exams.

And I have been busy. It is that time of year that I have been arranging my own excursions. It looks like I am the EC for 25 days of great motor car excursions. Hope to see you out there.





Pacific NW Tour - Modoc 2007  
Photo by Doug Jensen

### Submitting Materials for Publication

- 1 Materials received by the 15th of February, April, June, August, October or December will appear in the following two-month issue, subject to editing for space. Include e-mail address or phone number.
- 2 Submit hard copy, photos or .jpeg images, clearly labeled as to subject and photographer.
- 3 Electronic submissions are preferred for text.
- 4 We cannot reprint copyrighted material without authorization. Include permission to reprint with all copyrighted materials.
- 5 Originals are archived, not returned.
- 6 Letters to the Editor must be signed and include email address or phone number for authentication. "Name withheld upon request" may be substituted when the letter is published. All such letters will be printed as discussed in the NARCOA policy book.

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## The SETOFF

Volume 22 Number 2

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## Letters To The Editor

If you have a comment, suggestion, or complaint, send it to Wayne Parsons at:

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**Please put LETTERS in the subject line.**

**NOTE:** Any views expressed or implied in this column are not those of the editor.

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## Goodbye

It's time for me to enjoy full retirement and say goodbye as Editor of *The SETOFF*. I wish my replacement, Wayne Parsons, good luck in this new position.

I leave with a feeling of accomplishment, having seen *The SETOFF* through with a new printer, color cover, and PDF availability, in full-color. Technology is great, and it's always a challenge keeping up with it.

Many of you have commented on the color calendar. Were it not for Greg Kightlinger (our printer), and myself, this would not have been possible. Although captions were not given, it was because this was put together at the last minute, having had only one photo submitted during the year. Also questionable was who's responsibility it was to get this job done. All in all, I think the finished product was pretty darn good, considering the walls that we hit along the way.

It's been great meeting and working with so many of you during these past years as Editor. I look forward to seeing most of you on the tracks, or elsewhere in our travels.

Thanks for your input, support, encouragement, and praise; every little bit sure helped.

*Charlene (Charlie) Morvay*



## **From The Director's Desk Area 3 (IN, Lower MI, OH)**

by Bruce Carpenter

Although I've had a lot of fun being the Area 3 representative, I think it's time to step aside and let someone else take a crack at it for a while. I really, honestly mean it; I've enjoyed being the voice of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana at the board meetings. I think it is important to turn over elected officials regularly to keep new points of view and ideas coming in. I would encourage some of the "older timers" to do the same. And, I can honestly say, I think that I'm leaving NARCOA's BOD in better shape than when I was voted in. By this I mean I participated in almost every aspect and every decision of business that was made and feel that all of the past four years of decisions were to the betterment of the organization. In that time, there have been no serious injuries, fewer rules, more rules clarification, and the insurance and judiciary process is stronger than ever.

Another reason I have chosen not to run again is because I applied, and have been accepted, to Norfolk Southern Management Trainee Program. For the next six months, I will be traveling extensively and will have little time to devote to the organization; therefore I think it is only fair to pass the torch. I will never leave the hobby, but this is an opportunity I have been working toward for the past three years.

Again, the entire membership should feel very fortunate to have a BOD made up of such diverse, fair members who volunteer their time to keep NARCOA strong. It has been a pleasure working along side all of them for the past four years. Who knows, maybe when the dust settles for me in a year or two, I may be ready to try it again.

Thanks for all your support and suggestions. See you on the rails.



## **From The Director's Desk Area 4 (KY, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)**

by Tom Falicon

Let's roll, Area 4! The good weather is back, and there are a multitude of amazing excursions of various costs and sizes all across our land. This spring season seems especially exciting due to all the run announcements that already have been posted on the NARCOA web site. So let's all pick an excursion or two that fits our budget and get ready for some good old' motorcar fun!

I would like to thank Charlene Morvay for the fine work she has done putting together our SETOFF for the past four years. It's a tough job that takes up more time than one would imagine. I know I speak for the entire Area 4 community when I say thanks, Charlie, for a job well done!

On a sad note, we have lost another colorful character from our motorcar family. Area 4 member, Evan Roderick, passed away in mid February. Anyone that has had the pleasure to run with him would always come away with a few unforgettable stories of Evan's motorcar adventures. Up until then, my MT-14 had never been on the rails and the only distance I had run a motorcar was 20ft across my shop's floor. My car was freshly painted, I had all my NARCOA safety equipment aboard, everything was in place, and I was ready for my first ride. I cautiously let out the clutch and started my motorcar future. I didn't even get to run 200 feet and Evan signaled me that his car was dead and I would need to pull him. I had never even run my car in high gear yet and here I was thrust into towing a disabled car. I tried to act like I knew what I was doing as Evan and his two traveling mates cracked jokes and hooked my car to theirs. The entire day went fine, and I soon realized that I had hitched up to a bunch of "livewires" that I would not soon forget. Goodbye, Evan, you'll be missed!

Those of you with two cycle cars that continue to piss and moan that I insist all two cycle cars be towed over the 5+% grade on the great Smoky Mountains RR will, once again, be happy to know that I will be hosting a run in June that will allow two cycles a solo chance at the grade. I still haven't decided on the exact date, but I know it will be either June 15 or the 22. Keep an eye on the NARCOA website.

This month is sort of a milestone for me. It is the 30<sup>th</sup> Area 4 Newsletter I have written. I guess I should have added them up a little sooner to celebrate my 25<sup>th</sup> letter, but 30 is a fine number too. I loved writing each and every one of these letters for you guys and I hope to write many more. I'm so happy that I can bring a little information, humor and motorcar news to you in every issue of the SETOFF.



## **From The Director's Desk Area 6 (MN, WI, IL, Upper MI)**

by Hank Brown

I have to admit that the winter is not going well. I haven't seen my motorcar in almost four months, and I know we are getting lonely for each other.

However, I have received news from up north that the area around International Falls may have us running on the CN.

The CP Rail may collapse and need our money in Wisconsin, so there may be runs around southern Wisconsin. There is rumor that the Wisconsin & Southern may forget the issues they have had with us and permit another run.

The BNSF has not given us permission to run up the Mississippi River, unless it's on a boat.

The First Iowa Division is trying to break an all time record for the number of excursions in one year.

Richard Hinds will run another excursion in Illinois.

Progressive Rail is leasing or buying up more track, so we may be riding in Minnesota again.

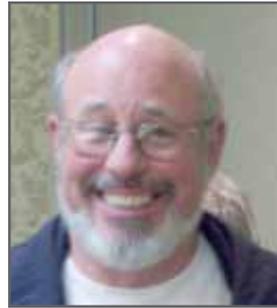
And here you thought nothing was happening in Region 6.

See you on the rails this year.



## **Operations Committee 2008**

by Hank Brown



The excursion coordinator's test is going very well. At last count we have 107 members that have taken the test. We have 10 new coordinators that have not been mentored yet. Everyone that took the test has received a passing grade. I will give you more information in the next *SETOFF*.

There was a question about the safety meeting. No where in any document of NARCOA's does it mandate a safety meeting. It was assumed that there would be one before each excursion. There is reference to it but no rule exists. The answer to that question was in the Operation Handbook and Rule Book.

We received 59 different items that should be mentioned in the meeting. Of course if all were mentioned, the excursion would leave about 3:00 p.m. So, as a committee, we have taken these items and prioritized them into a usable list for the coordinators. This list will appear within the next two *SETOFFs*.

In the next issue I will share the rest of the results and ideas that were given to us from those that took the test.





**Stop, Look & Listen**  
by Bob Knight, Chairman, NARCOA Safety Committee

I believe the old saying goes . . . "A picture is worth a thousand words" . . . Well, please check out the picture on page 9 in the March 2008 issue of "Trains" magazine. Ok, does that help you recall how people driving, walking, running or riding a bike never seem to pay much attention to an approaching train or much less a motorcar. Sometimes it seems also that flashing lights or gates just slow them down too!

In our years of operating a motorcar we have observed many times, while stopped at a crossing, the expressions of people while they were crossing the tracks, and they finally noticed us, and their eyes grew with fear and their mouths dropped!!! We have even had several actually stop in place right on the tracks!!!

As active members of the hobby, each of us know that every roadway railroad crossing has at least a cross buck that says "railroad crossing" and many have "Stop, Look & Listen" added.

Now, take a moment to review rule # 5 about "Grade Crossings" on page 12 under II Motorcar Operating Rules in the Book of Rules, Revised 6.1.

By the time you read this issue of *The SETOFF*, the excursion season will be underway. Please keep the photo on page 9 of "Trains" in mind as you come to each crossing and take every precaution to make it a safe crossing. Remember some excursions can have up to 100+ road crossings, so we must never let our guard down even for the many farm, trail or equipment crossings.

In the last several years our hobby has had a decreasing accident/incident record so your Safety Committee and NARCOA leadership challenges you to make this the safest motorcar season on record. Also remember a very safe season affects you in the pocketbook by keeping our insurance premiums low and coverage available.

Let's make it a win-win season for SAFETY ON THE RAILS.

P.S.: Thanks to all of you who were part of the 2007 mentoring season . . . you made a record - 109 mentored individuals!!!



## **Motorcar Physical Damage Coverage for 2008**

by Tom Norman, NARCOA Insurance Administrator

There are two separate insurance programs available for NARCOA members. The first program is our Railroad Liability Insurance Program, and is required by NARCOA for a member to operate at a NARCOA insured excursion. The liability policy year is 2/1/08 to 2/1/09. Insurance applications for 2008 liability coverage were inserted in the November/December 2007 issue of *The SETOFF*. Application forms can be downloaded from NARCOA's website at [www.narcoa.org](http://www.narcoa.org) or may be obtained from the NARCOA Area Insurance Reps. **Remember 2007 liability coverage expired 1/31/08, so renew now.**

Many NARCOA members participate in our second program and buy insurance to provide physical damage coverage for their motorcars. This program is entirely optional, and is up to the member to determine if it is appropriate for them. The insurance covers loss or damage to our railroad rolling stock (motorcars) and also covers hy-rail vehicles with one exception. Hy-rail coverage is in effect only while the vehicle is being operated on railroad tracks. Motorcars are not usually covered under the member's homeowners or automobile insurance. It requires a special type of insurance coverage referred to as Commercial Inland Marine Insurance. This insurance has been provided by United Shortline Insurance Services. They will continue to offer this insurance directly to NARCOA members.

The policy year is 3/31/08 through 3/31/09. We have switched this year to Travelers. The premium has gone down slightly from last year. There are three levels of motorcar valuation - essentially \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$20,000 for a premium of \$50, \$100, and \$150 respectively. Please see the application inserted in this issue of *The SETOFF* for details. A \$500 deductible applies per car. Renewal applications received by 4/7/08 will be effective 3/31/08. After 4/7/08 effective date of coverage is date of receipt of application. A minimum of 100 motorcars must be insured before the physical damage coverage will be written. NARCOA has met this requirement the last five years. United Shortline will email



applications in February to members that currently participate in this insurance program.

United Shortline has provided a list of Frequently Asked Questions received in the past about the inland marine coverage:

1. Can a member insure a car for more than \$20,000? *Values exceeding member limits of \$20,000 may be submitted for underwriter and NARCOA approval.*
2. Can a member insure a Hy-rail vehicle? *Coverage for Hy-rail vehicles is offered again this year but it is only in effect while the vehicle is being operated on railroad tracks.*
3. Is this "24 hour" coverage? *Coverage is in effect while being hauled, stored or used in an event.*
4. Are trailers covered? *Trailers are not covered since they are licensed for roadway use and should be listed on an automobile liability policy.*
5. Can a member insure their motorcar for less than it is actually valued? *You must be sure to insure your motorcar to its correct value or the company may discount any claim settlement due to a value discrepancy.*
6. Are communication devices covered? *Your communication items are covered if they are permanently installed.*
7. Why don't members receive an actual policy? *Mr. Tom Norman, your insurance administrator, holds the master policy for your organization. Our office sends the member a certificate of insurance only as a way to keep your costs down.*



## Leadville, Colorado & Southern

by Gus Mocilac

Eleven motorcars from the Rocky Mountain Division of the North American Rail Car Operator's Association (NARCOA) enjoyed a fantastic excursion at 10,220ft on the LC&SRR the weekend of October 6 and 7, 2007.

The weather on Saturday was a bit windy, but the temperature was not too bad for the Leadville area in October. We left Leadville for the end of track around 3:30 p.m. At the end of usable track a few of us walked across the talus slope along the roadbed towards the next curve. We had a real nice view of the Climax Mine and of Fremont Pass. We started our return trip, made a stop at the French water tank for some photos, and then headed again for Leadville, arriving into Leadville around 6:30 p.m.

We had dinner that evening at the Tennessee Pass Cafe. While having some good conservations and enjoying some good food, it began to snow. Well, here comes that approaching storm. Let's see how much snow we would get.

Sunday morning was one sunrise that Mary and I will never forget. We had the window shade up and we were greeted by no snow accumulation and a beautiful sunrise. Mt. Massive and the rest of the Sawatch Range was snow covered and was reflecting the sunrise.

A balmy 28 degrees greeted our excursion on Sunday. All motorcars started up and most operators had covers on the Onan engines to prevent carb icing. We left Leadville at 9:10 a.m., following the railroad's track crew who was inspecting the track for the daily train. Tracks started out nice and dry, but further up towards 1100 feet the tracks began to get a bit icy. That was one different and strange experience to have the motorcar slip and slide over the icy patches. I began to sand the rails to keep the traction up.

Everyone made it to the end of track despite the ice on the tracks.



We again began our return trip back to Leadville with a stop to look at a discarded boiler left over from earlier days of the mining and logging that took place in the area.

Arriving back into the Leadville yard we had the switch thrown for the roundhouse area and proceeded to set-off our motorcars. We were visited by the owners of the railroad. They were very impressed by the RMD and our safe operations on this excursion. The RMD has been invited back for further excursions and maybe a work party next year to open the tracks for motorcars to reach the real "end of track" on the Leadville Colorado & Southern RR.



## **Hints & Tips: Improved Two-Cycle Engine Cooling Or, Water Usage Greatly Reduced!**

by Dick Ray (WM M9 No. 67)

Many years ago when I first started running a two-cycle car it was apparent that I had to carry water on a trip of any length, especially in the warm weather. As the trips got longer, I had to carry two and even three gallons of water. That required a special rear carrier for all of it. Even a stream was the source of a jug refill once in British Columbia.

I just thought the condenser, after 50 years, was partially corroded and restricted inside.

I tried all kinds of radiator cleaner chemicals repeatedly, and frequently flushed the system with a garden hose into the vent hose. None of these attempts worked to solve my water consumption issues. I also noticed that when coming to a stop and idling my car steamed more than others.

The cab on my car is the flat, full width front with a sloped windshield and peaked roof.

It was put on by the Western Maryland Railway after the car was purchased. The front sits behind the pipework, which still has the fittings for the canvas windshield option.

Figure 1 shows the cab style.



Figure 1

Due to the location of the engine in an M9 and the sloped inner panel there is very little clearance behind the condenser. I considered putting in a sliding door in the inner panel, but rejected the idea due to it not being OEM, and anyway on a long trip there would be a bag of clothing right there. Removing the inner panel was not an option because it would let rain in, and the baggage would still be in the way. Fans were rejected because there was very little clearance behind the condenser and 6-volt fans of any decent size were scarce. A

couple of 5-volt computer fans were just too wimpy. Locating one or more bigger fans out in front was rejected because of the non-OEM appearance issue again.

Eventually, the solution dawned on me. The cool air was passing around the sides and top of the condenser because there was less restriction than going through the condenser. At the same time, the air was being trapped in the restricted space behind the condenser making it difficult to get any air through the condenser. It helps to visualize the air as just another liquid, but one that we cannot see.

The solution became obvious at this point. Just block the air from bypassing the condenser. On the next trip I filled the spaces alongside and above the condenser with some pipe insulation, suitably folded as necessary to fill the spaces. It was an instant success! The temporary filler was replaced with baffles made from 0.032 aluminum sheet sourced from the local hardware store.

Figure 2 shows the two sides with finished baffles.



Figure 2

The top will be done next, but is mostly insignificant because the rear of the condenser top is so close to the inner panel. The baffles are fastened to existing hardware on the aluminum angle that is bent into a hoop shape.

The best part is that the baffles appear to be OEM and blend into the bodywork without being very noticeable. After installing the side baffles, my water consumption dropped dramatically! No longer do I carry gallons of water. On the last two two-day trips I carried only a half -gallon, and did not use all of that.





The "Spotlight on an Affiliate" column has been created to highlight one or several NARCOA affiliates in each issue of The SETOFF. With 32 affiliates dotting the country, we hope to show the areas served and the unique flavor of each group. Each affiliate is being asked to submit an overview to The SETOFF, in order to enlighten members-at-large about their presence, special rules, activities and excursions, as well as special and annual events.

### **Pacific Railcar Operators - "PRO"**

**Areas:** Western U.S., Canada and Mexico – California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada, British Columbia, Alberta, Mexico

**Events:** A group of excursion coordinators founded Pacific Railcar Operators in 1998 as a "run friendly" group sponsoring motorcar excursions throughout the western U.S., Canada and Northern Mexico as a NARCOA affiliate. PRO tries to sponsor at least one major excursion a month both in the north and south. We are fortunate to have several railroads in the region that are motorcar friendly and that offer fantastic scenery, interesting operations over miles of track and with compelling history. PRO is pleased to have over 270 members.

PRO excursions are open to all NARCOA members although joining is encouraged.

Some favorite PRO excursions include Camas Prairie (the Railroad on Stilts), Niles Canyon, Puget Sound & Pacific, Copper Basin, Montana Rail Link, St Maries River Railroad, Sierra RR, the "Wool Growers" Special, Pend Oreille Valley Authority, Idaho Northern & Pacific, Central Montana Rail, Kootenay Valley RR, Kettle Falls RR and many more.

In addition PRO assists local museum groups with several fund raising events. These include "Dayton Depot Days" in Washington (June) and The Washington, Idaho & Montana Historical Association's efforts to rehabilitate its Potlatch, ID depot (July).

PRO dues are \$15 a year which include a quarterly newsletter. Consult the web site for membership. "A"-cars and hy-rails are welcome depending on the determination of the Excursion Coordinator.

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**WEBSITE:** [www.pro-online.org/](http://www.pro-online.org/)

## ***A World Class Excursion on the Finger Lakes Railway***

by Dan Page

All signals went green for a great excursion!

What makes a really good rail car trip? Some might say a great route with interesting scenery, others may say a welcoming railroad, and others could say that an experienced, flexible excursion coordinator is essential. All these factors lined up on the weekend of August 18-19, 2007 on the Finger Lakes Railway in Geneva, New York, and the result was a safe and fun event for all.

The Finger Lakes region of New York is beautiful and includes lakes, waterfalls, and beautiful rural country side. Interesting industries are served by the railway. Best of all, the Finger Lakes Railway is one of the most welcoming roads for rail speeder enthusiasts. This is due to the relationship the excursion coordinator, Warren Riccitelli, has developed over the years with the line.



*Over 40 cars set-on the Finger Lakes Railway for a great excursion.*

The set-on location – a spur at a grain elevator – was excellent, offering several points on the track where we simultaneously set on four or five cars at the same time. The area around the set-on point offered ample parking for our cars, trucks, RVs, and trailers. These were important factors since we had over 40 cars and over 100 persons on the run.



*Warren Riccitelli and our railroad host, Bruce Habberfield, conduct the safety meeting.*

After a careful and detailed safety meeting, lasting over an hour and including a separate session for passengers lead by one of Warren's assistant ECs to review flagging procedures, we departed heading toward Syracuse. The scenery on this part of the line includes a stunningly beautiful run through a large marsh on a built up roadway along the banks of Lake Cayuga. The road then transitions to rural farmland, vineyards and small towns. Light industry and food processing plants are located along the way.

We turned around late morning at Auburn and headed back. When we got back to the shore of Lake Cayuga, we stopped at a park where the railway had arranged a wonderful chicken and ribs barbeque lunch. After lunch, we continued back to the Geneva yard and took a break of several hours before the evening run. When we all returned later that day, we discovered that the railway had opened one of their passenger cars in the yard for our convenience; their gift shop was open, and they had food available for us.

The night run began at dusk as we departed for the Seneca Army Depot on a beautiful night run on the east shore of Seneca Lake. We turned at the gate of the depot and headed back to the yard for the

*continued on next page . . .*

evening. This rare night run was an instructive experience for all.

The next morning we left the yard and headed west on the road's Canandaigua Branch for a non-stop trip to that city where we turned around, and got back to the



*Bob Hastings and his wife wave hello from their M-19.*

setoff point by mid-afternoon. Warren planned carefully and broke up the excursion into two groups so we could have lunch in two different towns without overwhelming the small town restaurants. One of the groups also volunteered to drive to some of the busiest crossings and flag. This helped keep us on schedule. Warren is one of NARCOA's most experienced excursion coordinators and it shows. His events always run smoothly and safely.

As he has done on previous excursions, our railroad escort, Bruce Habberfield, went



*Jim Gallagher and his M-19.*

above and beyond his call of duty escorting us. Bruce is always concerned about running a great excursion and finding new things to keep us interested and entertained when we are on the Finger Lake Rail Railroad. Thanks Bruce, you're a real pro!

Warren is already talking about what we might do next time we run this great railroad. I can't wait until the next Finger Lakes run!



*Harvey Page and his grandson, Christopher Page, and their unique railcar Canada Car 007.*



## ***Pictures from Canada***

by Mike Gravel

*From the Ontario Northland Railway motorcar run, from North Bay, Ontario, to Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec. 450 Miles approx. July 19-21, 2007.*

*Stopped on a siding, to let the Southbound "Northlander" passenger train pass.*



*From the run on the Trillium Railway Co.'s "Port Colborne Harbour Railway". From the station in Port Colborne and ran through Welland, Thorold, Merritton, and St. Catharines, Ontario. We covered over 50 round trip Miles.*

*Stopped to watch the large ship navigate through the Welland Canal.*

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*Pacific NW Tour - Lakeview 2007  
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