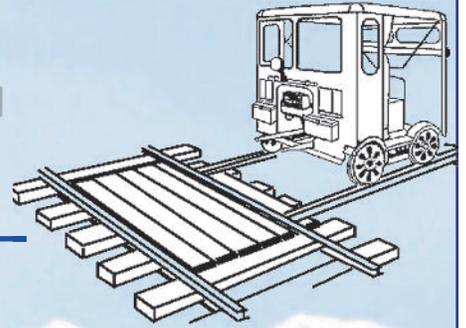


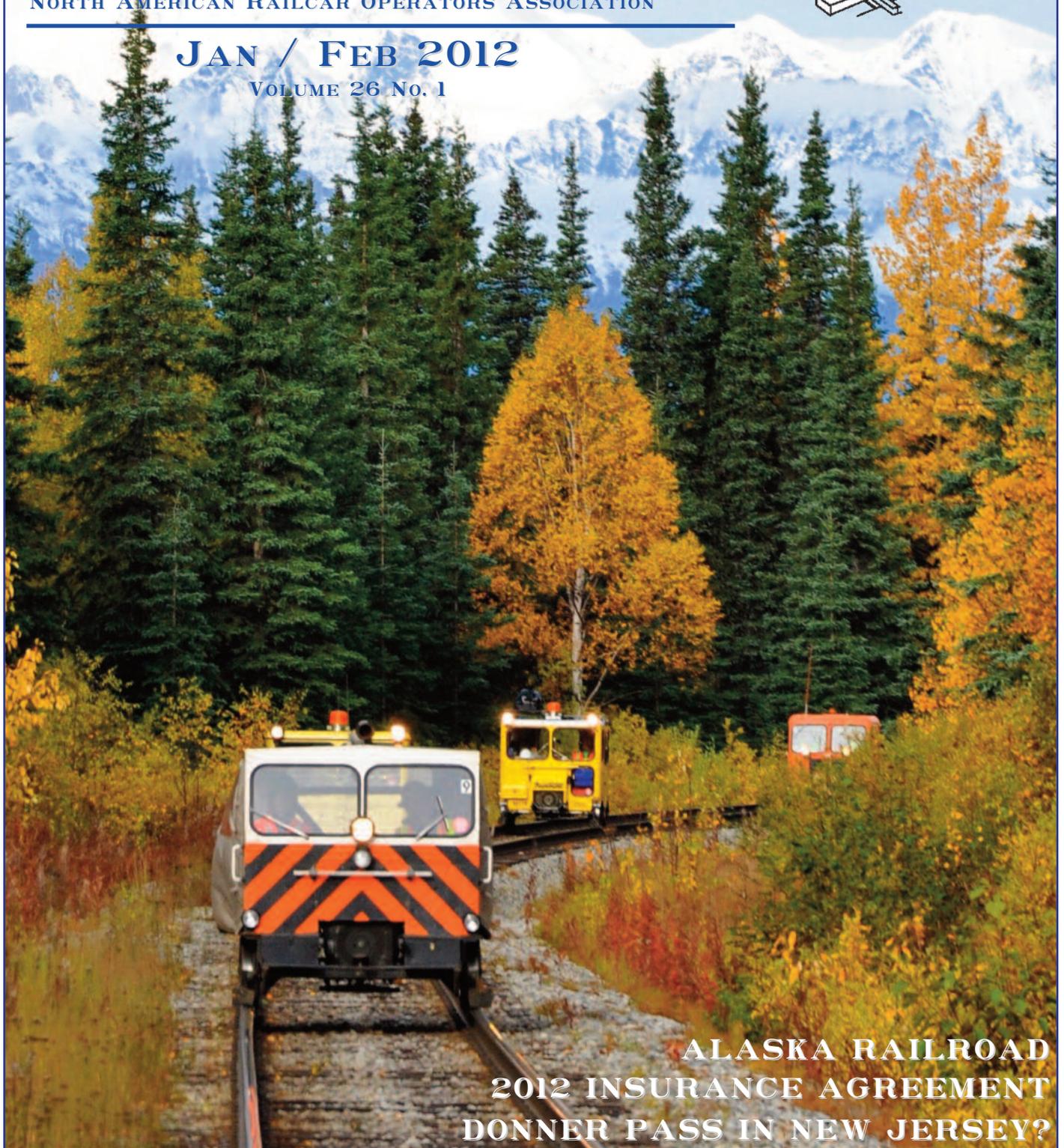
# THE SETOFF

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF NARCOA  
NORTH AMERICAN RAILCAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION



JAN / FEB 2012

VOLUME 26 No. 1



ALASKA RAILROAD  
2012 INSURANCE AGREEMENT  
DONNER PASS IN NEW JERSEY?

# THE SETOFF

VOLUME 26 - No 1

The SETOFF is the official publication of the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) and is published bimonthly to promote safe legal operation of railroad motorcars, and to encourage fellowship and exchange of information among motorcar enthusiasts. Membership in NARCOA is \$36 per year and includes a subscription to *The SETOFF*. Please send a check made out to NARCOA to:

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[www.narcoa.org](http://www.narcoa.org)

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**ON THE COVER: CHRIS & WENDY BALDO LEAD THE 2011 ALASKA RR EXCURSION INTO TALKEETNA WITH MT. MCKINLEY IN THE BACKGROUND. DAY 9, MP233 - PHOTO BY JAMIE HAISLIP**

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NARCOA Radio Call Sign: WPHT745  
Channel 1 – 151.625 MHz  
Channel 2 – 151.505 MHz  
Channel 3 – 158.400 MHz

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## BERNIE LEADON

Dear Members-

Well, you can breathe now. Tom Norman, resident insurance magician, has received an acceptable insurance quote for 2012. He will discuss the details in his own note in this issue. Everything is pretty much the same- but we will no longer have the Member policy, which covered us for \$1 million anytime we were on track with permission. So after February first, unless you are attending a regular NARCOA excursion, with an EC and all the bells and whistles, you're on your own. It was no longer possible to continue to have that policy.

Please read an article I wrote in this issue regarding authorized use of the NARCOA name. It is important that the organization regain control of its name.

As you prepare your motorcars

for the upcoming season, remember to think about all the time which your Excursion Coordinators and other volunteers put into making sure you have great rides to attend. Thank them when you see them. Without them, well, you'd be sitting at home wondering what to do with that track car in the garage.

You know that saying, "when in doubt, always take the safest course"? Well, I continue to learn the hard way that it is a good rule for just about anything in life. When in doubt, take a break, THEN send that email.

I hope everyone has had a great holiday season with your friends and families. That's what its all about. I wish us all a blessed and fun New Year.

See ya

Bernie

## FROM THE EDITOR

BRIAN DAVIS

I just LOVE the Holiday Season! As I write this Christmas is a few days away and when it arrives our home will be filled with the joys of family, food, and fun. The only thing that isn't on track is the weather as the snow is nowhere to be found and the weather is un-seasonably warm. I guess we can't have everything.

One thing we can be thankful for is the wonderful articles that have been submitted this fall! Jamie, Boomer, and Leon have provide wonderful reports of their trips on the Alaska Railroad, Oklahoma,

and the ill fated New York, Susquehanna, & Western run. Les Keegan sent in a great article on narrow band radios, and Wayne Parsons has written in to both recognize folks making donations, and has penned an excellent article on Flag and Advance. To the others who submitted articles that are not included, don't despair because you may see them in a future issue!

Jane and I hope you and yours have a wonderful season, and be safe out there.

See you on the rails!

Brian Davis

## 2012 Insurance: New Certificates of Permission

Attention Excursion Coordinators! Be aware that the new 2012 Insurance Program will require an alteration to our Certificate of Permission form. Tom Norman is creating that new form, and a supply of the new forms will be sent to the Regional Insurance Reps soon.

The old Certificate of Permission forms are now obsolete, and should be discarded! Any use of the old form will be rejected, requiring you to make a second trip to the railroad to obtain the permission signatures.

Please contact your Regional Insurance Representative after Jan. 1, 2012 to obtain the new forms.

**PLEASE DISCARD THE  
OLD C of P FORMS!**

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## AREA ONE

ME, NH, VT, NY, MA, CT, RI  
WARREN RICCITELLI

Well it's going to be a Happy New Year. Looks like we have all survived the holidays and now our thoughts are of snow shoveling and getting ready for motorcar season. And it looks like we have our insurance in place for the coming year. Please review the President's Notes and Tom Norman's messages for the update and changes on insurance and how it may affect you.

Area 1 was quite busy last year. We had storms to fight thru, a storm cancelation and we saw a few new members join NARCOA and get mentored. We have seen our representation grow to eighty-two insured members out of a total area membership of one hundred forty-eight. It seems only a few years ago that we had only forty two members from the area.

NERCA is well and fine. And with the growth of membership and participation of excursions, we have added a few more for this year. And with the popularity of multi day and overnight excursions there will be more to choose from. We have been trying more than ever to schedule these as to not run back-to-back in the same area and allow you to pick excursions in your areas. We are working with another new affiliate to New Brunswick to help them get their final affiliate status. That should encourage them as well as ourselves to have more time on the rails. As of this date we are working on a total of thirty-three days on the rails. Our most aggressive schedule ever. While I cannot announce them till confirmed, that list

will be updated on the website.

And talking about our website – IT'S ALL NEW. We developed a new website, with the software and data being in 'the Cloud'. So software to maintain and uploads that can go astray. We have expanded it with more slide shows, and even videos. A separate page for each railroad we normally do, with a little history, some with maps and a quick note on usual excursions and mileage. We are expanding our site with use of TicketLeap so you can make instant reservation. But we had to add restrictions on refunds, all outlined on the website.

[www.nerailcar.org](http://www.nerailcar.org)

Happy trails.....

Warren

## AREA TWO

DE, MD, NJ, PA

JOHN GONDER

Greetings and HAPPY NEW YEAR. Yes it looks to be a good year starting out with the fact that Tom Norman has come through again for us and found insurance. It came right down to the wire, and we did lose some coverage, but what we got is good. I am sure that elsewhere in this issue of the set-off, there will be a full description and explanation of our coverage. The main difference is that we no longer have the "PLAN B" coverage. This means that unless you are on a NARCOA sanctioned and insured excursion, you have no coverage at all. All the little secret runs out there that relied on Part B to cover them with insurance now are on their own without any coverage. It was this Part B that almost cost us our insurance and our hobby due to folks miss using this policy. Also

there will be no more coverage for your motorcar going to or from excursions. Anyway, Please read the explanation that is here in the Set-Off. The cost has come down due to the loss of the "B" Policy and also will be announced. Please do not mail anything pertaining to the insurance to Tom until you get your renewal form.

I hope that all of you have been listening to the news reports regarding cell phones and electronic devices being banned from use by operators of all types of vehicles etc. The Feds are trying as we speak to pass a bill to make this a Federal Ruling not just up to the states. We along with the Railroads have already outlawed the use of cell phones while operating and will be following the recommendations of our host railroads as to the other electronics. (GPS, Video cameras, Ipods, Etc.) this is a reminder to the EC's to ask about their use before your run.

By the time you get this issue we will have had to deal with something that greatly disturbs me. Our hobby is a family oriented group with women and children welcomed on our runs. In recent months there has been an instance of one of our own folks in AREA 2 making lewd and improper remarks over the radio as well as "mooning" the entire column. This type of behavior is demeaning and offensive and puts out a very bad image to the public. Not to mention, it is illegal to use such language on the radio. NARCOA does not tolerate such activities and has dealt with this person via Judicial Committee. Please, let's all play nice together and act like the Respectable Adults that we need to be. Our image IS

everything in the eyes of our host Railroads and communities.

Respectfully,  
John Gonder

## **AREA SIX MN, WI, IL, UPPER MI BOB KNIGHT**

Greeting and a very happy 2012 New Year to all the great members of Area 6! I trust your Christmas and Thanksgiving was a happy one for you and your families. I must say thanks to all of you in Area 6, as we had a good and safe year on the rails in our area 6 excursions during 2011. Speaking for all the members of our area, we wish to thank all the EC's that spent many hours doing all the work to set up the excursions that were in our area and close by.

On another note, North Central President, Dave Otte, wants to let all the members in MN and WI know they are welcome to attend their annual meeting in Black river Falls, WI this coming spring. He is planning to have Mike Ford attend and share his upcoming excursion season. He has also asked me to share all changes in the NARCOA area and highlight safety issues that have surfaced this year. He has requested all interested members (other state members are welcome, too) watch the NCR website and yahoo discussion board for date and time.

On that same subject, the annual meeting of the Great Lakes Railcars is also being planned for this Spring. This includes members in MI, IN and IL and again, other state members are more than welcome. Please watch the NARCOA websites for place and time.

I have had several phone calls regarding the pending sell of the Wisconsin Southern Railroad in the near future. We all should watch the news as wouldn't that be great if it could open the railroad back up for motorcar excursions. Many years ago, there were a lot of great motorcar miles enjoyed in many parts of Southern Wisconsin.

As your Area 6 director, I would encourage each member to use every opportunity to promote our great hobby to the general public this winter. Please take time to speak at your local Rotary, Lions Club, schools or other civic groups. Many of these groups are always looking for "interesting subjects" and you know we have one! If you need support materials, just let me know at [railbuff@indianvalley.com](mailto:railbuff@indianvalley.com) or call me at 1-815-786-3096. I had a call from a potential interested person last week, who had seen a motorcar excursion article in a newspaper and then spent a lot of time on our website exploring our hobby. After a long discussion, he has decided to join and called back for another review of how to become a member.

Two other short subjects of interest to you.... by now all of you should have received your 2012 NARCOA calendar. If not, please contact me above by e-mail or a phone call. The second subject is you will be receiving your 2012 insurance information soon as it is in the final stages at this time. Again, if you have any questions concerning it, please contact me.

Keep warm, safe and I look forward to seeing you on the rails soon.

Bob Knight

## **AREA ELEVEN CA, NV, UT, AZ, NM, HI WAYNE PARSONS**

This director's column is being written on deadline with two important issues in NARCOA unresolved: insurance for 2012 and repercussions from recent crossing incidents.

First, our insurance will most likely be different in the future. The "members" policy that covers non-NARCOA events such as work parties, rides for the public, and test runs (for either equipment check out or railroad surveys) may not be available from any insurance carrier. There is growing sentiment within the board against buying this policy even if offered. Why? Our most recent payout, just agreed to by the insurance company, was on a Georgia non-NARCOA event in August 2008 where rides for the public were given. With only the "association" policy in place, future events would require a certified EC and Insurance Certificate for all NARCOA events of any size.

As you Area Representative, I support not having a "members" policy. Why? The two places where such a policy might be used are the Amador Central and the California Western where regular work parties take place. In the case of the Amador Central, the railroad has its own insurance. On the Cal West, the volunteers are deemed employees and are covered under the railroad plan. Therefore, loss of the "members" policy would not impact our area very much.

As your Area Representative, I support changing our procedures at

*Area Eleven continues on page 6*

From page 5

major crossings where lights and gates or just lights are installed. At these crossings I think EC's should either send flaggers out, set shunts between the rails, or use the stop-wait-and-go (SWAG) procedure. John King has been promoting shunts on our individual cars. The NARCOA board as a whole does not support shunts on our cars for the technical reasons of poor rail to wheel contact and possible failure of the signals. Nor does the board feel any urgency in the case of the SWAG proposal.

What can we do in Area 11 to promote crossing safety? We must again rely on our individual clubs to be innovators. I ask the MOW, PRO, and SWRC boards to come up with new methods, acceptable to them, of controlling their motorcar group at danger points. I suggest the three boards seriously consider giving new instructions to their EC's; instructions that might include SWAG. With innovation from our local clubs, Area 11 can lead the way on the national level.

See you on the rails!

Wayne

## **NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR ODD-NUMBER AREAS BOARD MEMBERS**

**NOW IS THE TIME!**

**It is always good to have more than one person  
running for a seat on the NARCOA Board.**

**Who would you like to see on the Board?**

Nominations for Board of Directors for odd-number areas are open until March 30, 2012. Incumbents are automatically nominated unless they decline to seek another term.

Area 1 Warren Riccitelli  
Area 3 Jeff Levensgood  
Area 5 Bobby Moreman  
Area 7 Carl Schneider  
Area 9 Chris Weaver  
Area 11 Wayne Parsons

To be nominated, one must:

Be a member in good standing with NARCOA.

Be at least 18 years of age.

Be from the same area as the person nominating you.

To nominate a member for the Board, first contact that person and verify that he/she will be willing to serve. Then send an E-mail or letter informing me of the nomination. I will request the nominee to send a write-up of 100 to 150 words about him/her to be put on the ballot.

Nominations will close on March 30.

Voting will take place as in the past with all ballots received by July 15, 2012 being counted. Results will be announced in the September/October SETOFF.

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# INSURANCE RENEWAL FOR 2012

BY TOM NORMAN, NARCOA INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

NARCOA's Railroad Liability Insurance Program for 2011 was with United Shortline Insurance Services as the agent and National Interstate Insurance Company as the carrier. I have received a notice of nonrenewal from National Interstate effective 2/1/2012. The reason for nonrenewal was that National Interstate was no longer writing the United Shortline insurance program.

I do have one proposal now; however the coverage is not the same as previous programs. Previous programs consisted of two policies. One policy was the association policy and provided \$10,000,000 liability coverage for all NARCOA sanctioned events. The other policy covered the member for \$1,000,000 at all other times. The current proposal is for just the association policy.

A NARCOA sanctioned event is defined by the NARCOA Policy Book as:

"An insured NARCOA motorcar excursion is one in which a Certified Excursion Coordinator has received all of the following items: 1) signed Certificate of Permission from the railroad, 2) signed Certificate of Insurance from the insurance coordinator, 3) signed NARCOA General Release, or NARCOA and Affiliate General Release from each adult excursion participant, 4) evidence that all operators have NARCOA insurance, 5) evidence that all operators have a current NARCOA rulebook certificate of examination, and 6) evidence that all operators have been, or are being, mentored per NARCOA mentoring procedure, as of June 1, 2005."

I am recommending to the NARCOA Board, that they approve this renewal proposal, and they have done so. The cutoff date to submit this article for our newsletter is 12/15/2011, with the January/February issue of *The Setoff* being mailed in January. Hopefully I can have Board approval shortly so that I can have the insurance application documents inserted with *The Setoff*.

Many NARCOA members participate in our second insurance program and buy insurance to provide physical damage coverage for their motorcars. This program is entirely optional, and it is up to the member to determine if it is appropriate for them. Since the current policy is good through 3/31/2012 applications are not yet available. If interested, look for a future article in a later issue of *The Setoff*. Again, this coverage is optional and should not be confused with the liability insurance program that is required in order for a member to operate at a NARCOA insured excursion.

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## PASSING THE HAT RAISES \$2550

### MONEY FOR BIRTH PAPERS -DONORS

BY WAYNE PARSONS

NARCOA members raised \$2520 to help the Martin County Historical Society in Fairmont, MN. The money was used for construction of a room to house the Fairmont Railway build card records, also known as the "birth papers."

NARCOA members meet 100 percent of the MCHS goal of funds needed for the construction. Thanks to the following members and affiliates that made contributions:

Great Lakes Railcars  
Mike Heaton  
Warren Froese  
Jim Hopkins  
Hal Johnson  
Bob Knight  
Greg Kightlinger  
Bernie Leadon

Tom Norman  
Wayne Parsons  
Mark Sorensen  
Bill Taylor  
Appalachian Rail Excursions  
John Becker  
John Gonder  
Bob Hastings

Roger Hugg  
Jeff Levensgood  
Fred Lones  
Keith Mackey  
Northeast Rail Car Association  
Rick Randall  
Roger Lee

# THE ALASKA RAILROAD - 2011

BY JAMIE HAISLIP

September 7 - September 23, 2011.

I was fortunate enough to be added to the 2011 Alaska Railroad excursion offered by the Motorcar Operators West (MOW). A last-second cancellation allowed me to get onto this trip. It was such a last-second cancellation that I barely had enough time to check the weather and get a flight to Alaska. I had no idea what to expect on this trip or what I was going to see. One thing I can say now was boy was I lucky to get onto this trip. Truly this was a once in a life time trip.

A basic overview of the trip: The 1000 mile trip begins in Anchorage, Alaska and we proceeded north up to Fairbanks, where we would turn and come back through Anchorage and proceeding south to Seward and Whittier, covering the entire length of the Alaska Railroad less a few miles outside Fairbanks. Instead of

a constant 1000 mile drive through the wilderness, MOW expanded the trip into a vacation style trip. Instead of spending three days on the tracks where everything starts to look the same you really got to experience the uniqueness of the environment. MOW through past experiences created a trip in which we ran for a few days and then would layover in the major towns along the line. This could expand from a simple overnight stop to several days depending on the location, or the railroads schedule. At each location, MOW provided us with a short list of excursions or events that we could do while we were at that location. Marge Hope explained this method to me from past excursions. According to her people said they saw Alaska but yet they didn't get to enjoy Alaska and by adding the stops we could take a break from the speeders and





*Facing Page: The whole gang in front of the Rotary snow plow at Potter Creek Station. Day 12, MP100  
Above: A Unit train lead by 4327 passes Jim & Marilyn Groover's MT-14 while on lunch break at Willow.  
Day 11, MP185. All photos this article by Jamie Haislip.*

actually explore out and truly discover Alaska. Forgive me if this is the norm for MOW but I came all the way from the East Coast to do the Alaska trip. This was my first MOW Tour and came across quite differently than excursions on the East Coast where we tend to run shorter overnight excursions. This was only my second West Coast trip of the year.

The trip started in Anchorage, Alaska, where MOW arrange for a get acquainted dinner. Unfortunately, my flight was late and I arrived at the end of the dinner and only got to meet a few folks. The next morning we were to set off from Anchorage and run to Talkeetna for a quick overnight stay. The second day we would run to Denali National Park early and we were treated to one of the main landmarks of Alaska the Mount McKinley mountain range. They say Mount Mckinley is only visible 25% of the time. Yet the first time we saw it, it was in full view and was a truly impressive site, in the morning sun. Mount McKinley became one of the main landmarks to look for throughout the northern leg of the trip. The view of the

range literally would change by the minute, given the sun and the constantly changing weather conditions. Once in Denali, we had a two-day layover to enjoy Denali National Park and the surrounding town. I spent my two days primarily in the park, enjoying its sheer beauty and all the wildlife. Regrettably, I tried to do a little hiking and turned a simple cold into a major cold. During our two-day layover, Mount McKinley decided to hide from us and only on the evening of the second day, it became visible again. Despite this, the park is a truly beautiful site to enjoy and I highly recommend it to anyone.

Once we departed Denali, we made a run for Fairbanks with a stop for lunch in Nenana. Several excursions were planned for the two-day layover in Fairbanks; several folks went to the Hot Springs, while others went to the Mining Museum, which was my personal choice. Unfortunately, I was so sick that I never left the hotel. Everyone told me they had a good time though.

Once we left Fairbanks, we headed back to Denali for a quick overnight stay. The next day we proceeded on a short trip down to Talkeetna with stops at Hurricane Gulch with a tour of the station house where our tour guide( AAR Pilot), Rocky was stationed for years. A second stop was at Curry an old resort town destroyed by fire many years ago. Once at Talkeetna, we had a one-day layover and a rare beautiful view of Mount Mckinley. By now I was starting to feel a little better and decided to simply tour this beautiful rustic town. I walked around town and enjoyed the local hospitality, museums, and restaurants.

The next day we left Talkeetna and headed for Wasilla. In Wasilla we were treated to the Alaska Museum of transportation and the MOW benefit auction and dinner. Once at the Museum, it was apparent that whatever goes to Alaska stays Alaska. There were plenty of mechanical antiques to see at the Museum. If it was motorized; it was featured in that museum. There was everything from chainsaws up to train engines. And not just one, a truly amazing collection of

transportation artifacts from the beginning of the motor age large and small. One especially nice antique was a 1939 Evans rail bus in perfect condition. We were treated to a grilled salmon and moose stew dinner which was truly delicious. The proceeds from the auction benefitted the transportation Museum.

Leaving Wasilla the excursion group headed back through Anchorage for Girdwood. Once at Girdwood, we stayed at the Alyeska Hotel Ski Lodge. The next day, for me, was one of the most interesting parts of the trip. As we departed Girdwood, an automobile lost control on the adjacent highway and overturned onto the railroad tracks just a mile behind us. This event required a lot of attention from the railroad personnel. I heard all the action; given that I was riding in the railroad hyrail. Between Girdwood and Portage the rail went around a swamp. This swamp used to be a town of 2500 completely destroyed in the earth quake in 1964. There was not a trace of that town. The ground had sunk three feet in the earthquake and allowed the bay to swallow the town. Once at portage we turned

*Below: Chris Baldo leads the group, as we approach Denali following the Nenana River at the end of day 2. MP354. Opposite: In route to Fairbanks, the gang leaves Nenana after lunch. President Harding drove the golden spike at Nenana in 1923, completing the Alaska Railroad. Day 5, MP411.*



for Whittier for an attempt to run through Whittier tunnels. Three Prior excursions had run up to the tunnel, but were never allowed to pass through the tunnels. Would we be the first to make it through both tunnels? The weather turned very nasty on this leg of the trip and time was running short to get to the tunnel. We finally got to the tunnel and luckily we were allowed to pass through the first tunnel. Once through the first tunnel, we got permission to go to the second tunnel after a short wait. Whittier Tunnel was unusual in that the rails shared the tunnel with the road. The tunnel authority had rights all over all movements both rail and vehicle travel each taking a turn on the quarter hour. The tunnel is approximately 3 miles long and contains both traffic signals and railroad signals. The signals activate based on what traffic movements were active. Once through, we continued on to Whittier and Prince William Sound, where we turned and reversed back towards portage then turned again and headed for Seward. After departing Portage, we headed through the glacial areas and the famous loop at Barlett Glacier. Along this stretch, the railroad would use cannons during the winter to minimize potential avalanches by causing smaller ones. These sites were pointed out to us as we continued for Seward. After a long day, we fi-

nally arrived at Seward turned the cars and had a lay-over day in the town of Seward. We enjoyed a farewell dinner cruise in Humpy Cove, where we saw sea otters and bald eagles and took in the beautiful glacial hills all around the cove. Our final day the speeder trip we left and headed back for Anchorage. After a long day, we reached Anchorage and left the cars overnight for set off was the following morning.

Throughout the trip there was endless scenery, the mountain ranges were ever changing their fall colors, where rocky terrain displayed its beautiful earthen colors. Just when you get used to seeing one scene it would change and you're off onto something totally different. The scenery alone was simply amazing. Riding up front, I got to see more than my fair share wildlife throughout the trip. I saw several moose, bear, Dhal sheep, eagles, and a porcupine. The railroad was very busy itself and it was normal to meet two or three trains as well as maintenance of way trains, maintenance of way crews and other work parties. We even interchanged twice with the Sperry crew. It is obvious that the Alaska railroad takes very good care of their roadbed and I would say it was probably the finest track NARCOA has ever traveled on. The excursion ran the average track speed of about 25 miles an hour





which allowed all the cars to get into their high gear/low idle and cruise along at a steady pace for the entire day.

I really have to congratulate Margaret Hope and Chris Baldo, the meet coordinators as well as their spouses and a whole team of people that helped coordinate this trip. This trip took a massive amount of planning and coordination and daily fine tuning. Margaret was on the phone daily coordinating and or once or twice rescheduling our transportation to and from the hotel when we ran late. This was certainly the largest and longest trip that I'll ever do and probably for NARCOA. I truly have to commend them for all the work that they had to put in to pull this trip off it was a huge undertaking. On the opposite side, Rocky Murrill and Dwight West really had their hands full coordinating with the railroad on our hourly movements. The work Rocky had to do from the railroad side is an article in itself and will be done in a future set off. During this trip, I managed to take over 7000 pictures. I've edited and added them to my webpage and can be viewed at the links found on the NARCOA website, and below\*. The pictures will start from the beginning of the trip are in chronological order documenting the entire journey. I will also post pictures of Denali National Park.

Again I have to congratulate and thank the crews for both Pacific Northwest tour and the Alaska rail road for pulling off such a great trip.

*Left: Co Coordinator Marg Hope and Carl Vanderspek emerge from one of 5 tunnels at MP52. This is where footage of "Runaway Train" was filmed. Day15*

*Opposite, top: Late in the first day, we were given our first view of Mt. Mckinley, and it was truly spectacular. MP224.*

*Opposite Bottom: Early on day2 RDC ARR 701, a mobile engineering office car, passes Bill & Susie Pardee's car at Sherman siding MP257*

\*Vol I: <http://tinyurl.com/755np6h>  
Vol II: <http://tinyurl.com/858j592>  
Vol III: <http://tinyurl.com/76pcmnp>  
Vol IV: <http://tinyurl.com/7dc3qrw>



# THE UNHERALDED PERILS ENCOUNTERED BY THE DONNER PARTY ON SPARTA MOUNTAIN, NJ OCTOBER 29, 2011.

BY: BOOMER JOHN (JOHN WM. SCHMIDT)

Perhaps it should have been apparent from the heavy, leaden gray skies obscuring the morning light - or because it was the weekend of All-Hallows-Eve - or because there were 13 cars setting forth on the run; but we did not know at set-on what perils and tribulations would befall us on the Volunteer Railroader's Association's (VRA) 2011 annual New York, Susquehanna, & Western's (NYS&W) Southern Division run.

The run - scheduled to depart southbound from Sparta Junction, NJ on Saturday covering the round trip distance to Hawthorne, NJ - followed on Sunday by a northbound leg - first over the well known route between the junction and Baird's farm on the Susie-Q and followed by some rare mileage on the Middletown & New Jersey up to Campbell Hall, NY. The plan was to do the last of the season's "leaf peeping" in New Jersey as the 2011 speeder season drew to a close; the turning leaves gave an indication it would be a colorful trip. In addition, for us "rare mileage collectors", this itinerary would connect the missing link between the previous NYS&W trips northern point and the southern point of the two week previous VRA run be-

tween Maybrook and Campbell Hall, NY.

This weekend's forecast proclaimed early snowfall expectations for northern New Jersey - which was fully in keeping with the unusual 2011 bad weather experienced by the northeast - which included an earth quake, Hurricane Irene, and a series of very wet nor'easters. Oh well - the money had long since been paid, and, historically such forecasts are taken with a grain of salt since most TV weather forecasters are trained at the "Chicken Little" school of broadcasting (you know - "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!"). Anyway, speeder runs go on - rain or shine; suck it up and get on with it!

Set on went rapidly and we wanted to get a move on, but were informed that we would be held in the hole for a northbound passenger train, then later in the day, again, for a southbound passenger train.

PASSENGER TRAINS ??? - there haven't been passenger trains on the Susie-Q in years. As it turns out the afore mentioned Hurricane Irene washed out a significant portion of the NJ Transit/Metro North Port

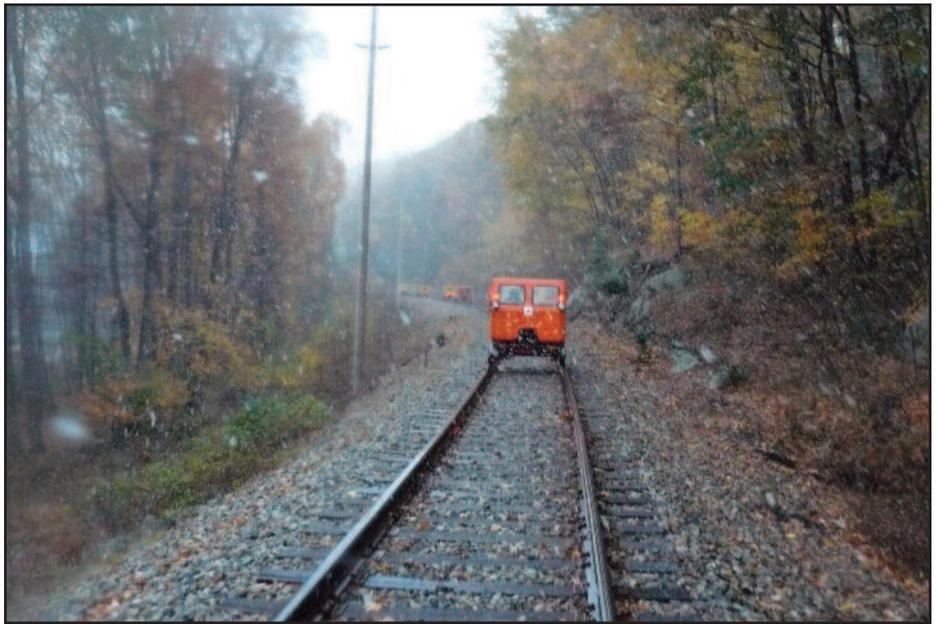
*All photos this article by Hank Weber. Below: At end of track Linekiln Industrial Spur (old L&HR); Opposite page Top: Leaving LIME (Sparta Jctn) southbound the snow begins; Middle: Wiper blades sure are handy; Bottom: Bobby Peoples' A4E in cut on Sparta Mountsin becoming difficult to see.*



Jervis line and continuous service was being accomplished by bussing patrons around the washout area. Apparently these passenger trains were coach hops relocating equipment around the washout area to Port Jervis, NY. As we moved the six tenths of a mile from the set-on to the LIME switch (NYS&Ws name for Sparta Junction at MP 60) it began to snow - first lightly and, in a within a few moments, it began to come down. It was not heavy wet snow/rain, but nice sized, fluffy flakes.

Since we were in the hole on the Limekiln Branch, the coordinators decided to run it to end of track. Back in the day, this was the main-line of the Lehigh & Hudson River RR and Sparta Junction was the location of the diamonds where the old NYS&W ran further west and then north to tie in to the Middletown & New Jersey RR accessing Middletown, NY. This resulted in several operators logging 1.2 new and rare miles (Note: NARCOA members also have ridden this branch during the VRA trip in May, 2006). A half hour later, upon our arrival back at LIME, the snow had begun to accumulate and bout 1/2" of the stuff was on the ground (and rails).

Shortly thereafter the northbound passenger train "OS"ed LIME, and we were given a track warrant south. Once on the main, we found going extremely slow. Between the snow and the accumulated layers of pulverized leaves, which had been ground into a greasy mass on the rails by the passing trains, we were barely able to even move. The slight up-hill grade out of LIME was enough to stop our forward progress and many had to dismount





and push their cars. We covered the first mile south in 35 minutes, and we hadn't even set a wheel yet on Sparta Mountain. In the next mile - covered in 30 minutes - the drivers learned, by experience, operational skills for running in snow. Sparta station and its water tank base passed as an apparition just off the rails. The snow obstructed our view from the green, NJ route 15 bridge - barely revealing the traffic snarled highway below.

The flaggers radioed that the next major highway crossing was flagged and to proceed across - we struggled across the grade crossing - Sparta Mountain lay just ahead. Sparta Mountain is the highest rail point in New Jersey. For those of you not envisioning mountains in the Garden State, you would be amazed at the grades, rock cuts, and fills found on the NYS&W main line, which crosses it in a tunnel of hardwood trees.

The going was painfully slow up the grade; speeders spinning wheels and breaking traction almost constantly. Finally, the consist came to a grudging halt on the grade. Someone bent down and wiped the rail - the pulverized leaves had formed a 1/16" layer of slimy grease on the rail which was now covered by 1" of snow. Visibility was down to less than a hundred feet. The operators struggled on - it was found that placing boulders in light cars would achieve some level of increased traction. Also the local right-of-way was scoured for flat rocks the size of cement bags to

*Top: Bobby Peoples A4E on Sparta Mtn; Middle: Craig Hartman collecting rock ballast to enhance traction; Bottom: Southbound NJ Transit / Metro North passenger train at LIME*

bungee cord onto the beaver car's rear undercarriage. We were off again - slipping and sliding towards the summit, which was still a mile ahead.

Normally, VRA excursion's stop at the summit of Sparta Mountain (MP 55) where a fire break/power line right-of-way cuts the foliage down the mountain and also affording one magnificent view for miles. This is, in fact, the highest rail point in NJ. Today, however, we pressed directly on past that point, logging some 5 miles in 3 hours.

By this time we were well past the scheduled lunch break and stomachs were starting to growl. Lunch was planned to be at a deli somewhere up the line - a distance which now seemed like a millennium away. As we contemplated our fate, our foursome's (Bobby, Buck, Harbor Freight Hank & Boomer John) thoughts turned to the ill fated Donner Party. After a couple of comments about the Donner Party, Hank asked, "Who are they?" (*A group of American pioneers who set out for California in a wagon train. Delayed by a series of mishaps, they spent the winter of 1846-47 snowbound in the Sierra Nevada. Some of the emigrants resorted to cannibalism to survive, eating those who had succumbed to starvation and sickness. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donner\\_Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donner_Party)*)

After an explanation, Boomer told Hank that they had brought him along for lunch. Thereafter several comments like: "Call ahead for reservations and tell them we are coming for lunch - there are 4 of us but we only need 3 chairs", etc. rebounded around the car. Since it was such a good story and a stress reliever, it was shared via the radio with the comment "This is the Donner party and we are stopping for lunch." This transmission elicited an immediate and hearty response.

The excursion plodded on - now down grade, but still at a snail's pace. Soon it became apparent that: 1) we had a southbound passenger train opposing us in the line-up, 2) the closest passing siding, at Newfoundland station \*, was still a long way off, 3) the weather reporters were saying it was getting worst - not over - with up to 15" of snow expected to fall during the evening, and 4) we had again to cross Sparta Mountain to get back to the set-off. Based on all that was facing us, the excursion coordinators wisely called the run and instructed us to turn back to Sparta Junction and get off the tracks.

In about 6" of snow we spun the cars and again at-

tacked Sparta Mountain. For some reason - perhaps because the A-Car was in the second position clearing the rails - we slowly crossed the distance with only one delay (to clean the accumulated snow from the windshields). Passing Sparta Station and the route 15 highway crossing, we were in sight of our goal - and also warm feet - the set-off point. Unfortunately, the NYS&W dispatcher did not concur; with the southbound NJ Transit train already in route, we were again stuck in the hole at LIME. There we sat for about 30 minutes with the large puffy snow continuing to fall and blow.

Finally, we heard the whistle of approaching engines and all rushed out to railfan the passing passenger hop. The wait for the requisite passage time and granting of track warrants seemed to take a year. Finally, the LIME switch was thrown over and off we went the last 0.6 miles to the expected set-off - warmth - and lunch.

But, low and behold, the siding at the set-off was being used by a contract trucker loading MofW track equipment for highway transit. Guess what? He was jackknifed across the only road access to get our highway vehicles to the set-off point. Luckily, the driver graciously interrupted his work and moved his truck so we could up load our speeders - soon we were setting off in 10" of snow.

What a trip! All in all, those veterans' of Sparta Mountain 2011 will hereafter be known in NARCOA as the Donner party.

Rumor has it, however, that on future Halloweens - trackwalkers in the deep rock cut on Sparta Mountain will feel the apparition of 12 cars ghostly climbing in the mist - finally the last car will pass and the phantom operator will be heard to mutter: "STOPPING FOR LUNCH! WHAT? I'll give them stopping lunch - how disgusting!"

EPILOG: Northern New Jersey received a record breaking snowfall on October 29-30, 2011 totaling some 16 1/2". Highway traffic was brought to a standstill (the author spent two hours covering 15 highway miles - also on Sparta Mountain - back to the hotel). Electric power was lost by a million people throughout the region (NJ, NY, CT, and MA). Worst of all, the annual Hobo Party sponsored by Craig and Shirley Hartman was cancelled for lack of electricity. By-the-way, the colored leaves and white snow were very pretty.

# NARROW BAND COMMUNICATIONS AND NARCOA - LES KEEGAN

As I write this article I am inundated with television commercials selling a variety of electronic gadgets from intelligent phones, tablet devices, radio controlled toys and a host of other wireless devices. The manufacturers are promoting these items for the Holidays with sales and incentives to get more of these items into consumer's hands.

What do all these items have in common? Well they are all competing for radio spectrum to operate their devices. There is only so much spectrum to go around. The FCC realized the growth potential of wireless or radio controlled devices back in the 90's so it began planning for the onslaught of applications for licensing of these radios. This was accomplished by conducting hearings on proposed rule changes it was making to allow more efficient use of the radio spectrum. Early in the discussion and with an eventual passing of some of the

new rules the FCC mandated that any commercially built two way radios be narrowband capable by February 1, 1997. As the next decade came about the FCC mandated that all radios that operate in the 150 to 512 MHz bands be capable of being converted to narrowband. Several extensions were granted but the FCC eventually stated that all the radios in the

bands previously mentioned must comply with the new rules by January 1, 2013.

So since NARCOA operates in the 150 MHz band, all radios operating under NARCOA's license must meet the new narrow band rules by the January 1, 2013 deadline. Under the new rules any radio operating under NARCOA's license by January 1, 2013 must be converted to 12.5 KHz bandwidth. Currently your radio is operating at a bandwidth of 25 KHz.

So the obvious question is will my radio convert to narrowband? As I mentioned earlier in this article if you operate a commercially built

radio you have.

Now the next question is when should I convert my radio to narrowband? At the October NARCOA Board meeting the Board passed a resolution that all radios operating under the NARCOA license must convert to the 12.5 KHz bandwidth by January 1, 2013. That being said a lot will be determined by what excursions you attend in 2012. If you attend any excursions where the host railroads require you to operate on their railroad frequencies you might have to already have made your radio narrowband compliant as many railroads are already making the transition to narrowband. This will have an effect on shortline railroads that interchange with Class 1 railroads as well. Check with the EC of the excursion to determine if the railroad has converted to narrowband. If you attend excursions that only use the NARCOA frequencies then I suggest that you do your conversion after your

last excursion in 2012 that you attend.

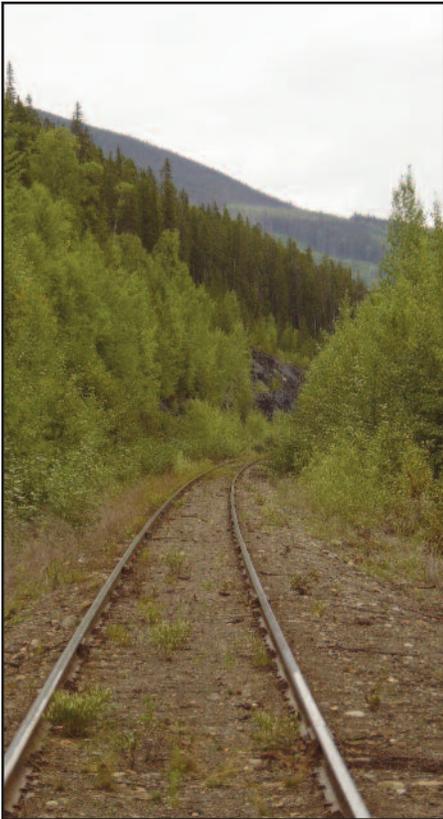
If I can be of any help to anyone feel free to contact me at [LKEEGAN@COMCAST.NET](mailto:LKEEGAN@COMCAST.NET) or by phone at 941-227-5847. I have a few limited resources that I can provide you with to help you determine if your radio is narrowband compatible. Happy New Year.



radio that was built after the February 1, 1997 deadline then your radio can be converted to narrowband. Depending on the brand and model of radio you have it may simply be a software change or it may require an internal conversion that will have to be done by a licensed radio repair facility. In some cases it may require a new radio depending on the age of the

# FLAG AND ADVANCE

BY WAYNE PARSONS



**Dense forest growth hides a fallen tree and stopped motorcars just around this curve on the Talka Sub, CN Railroad in 2005.**

Takla Sub - Canadian National Railroad, August 15, 2005. The last NARCOA event on this line from Prince George to the north to end of the Takla sub-division traveled through beautiful British Columbia forest and mountain scenery. Excursion Coordinator Tom Phair, of Southwest Railcar, lead the group of eleven that ended at a far north logging camp that was about to close after its last season. Here we slept in the bunkhouse and ate in the camp kitchen. It was an experience and a run to remember.

On the return trip, John Armstrong, our CN escort, called out a warning on the radio that a tree had



**Clearing the track while “Flag and Advance” protects the rear of the group at a blind curve. Photos by Wayne Parsons**

fallen across the track ahead just around a curve. The visibility of the site was very poor due to the forest growth. John ordered cars to “flag and advance.” This is a very good maneuver we should all know how to use to warn cars approaching a danger point. Here is how it works.

As I approached the danger point, the car in front of me was stopped short of the curve with flags out. I came up to the stopped car, put my flags out, and that car proceeded

slowly ahead around the curve. Since the group was spread out over about 2.5 miles, it took a few moments for the car behind me to arrive and take over the flagging duties so I could proceed. In this manner, we “flagged” the danger point “and advanced” safely. The distance around the curve to the fallen tree and the stopped cars was very short. The extra warning given by cars stopped with flags out made getting the group safely stopped a very smooth event.



**Seen recently on the Eagle Mountain RR event, Flag and Advance is now known as Stop Wait And Go (SWAG) when used at a road crossing.**

# A TRIP REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER 19 - 20, 2011 FARMRAIL EXCURSION ***YOU'RE DOIN' FINE OH-KLA-HOM-AH !***

BY BOOMER JOHN (JOHN WM. SCHMIDT)

When I was growing up, my parents attended the Rogers and Hammerstein production of "OKLAHOMA" and it must have been some event, because ever after that time my mother would break forth into song with any mention of Oklahoma. Hence, the lyrics from that musical echoed in my head when I attended the Oklahoma Railway Museum sponsored motorcar ride on Farmrail Railroad, November 19-20, 2011. My previous flash visit thru the *Sooner state* was a marathon run down I-35 between Kansas and Texas - not affording much chance to see any sights. This trip, however I wanted to gather the flavor of the state of which my mother heralded in song.

According to their web site - the Farmrail System, Inc. is an employee-owned holding company for two Class III common-carrier railroads comprising "Western Oklahoma's Regional Railroad." Farmrail Corporation (FMRC) acts

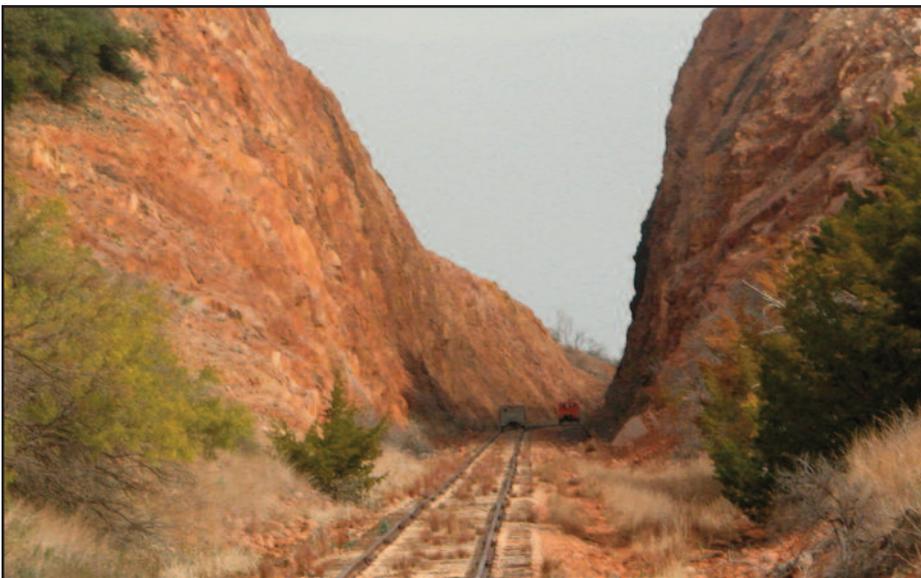


*Above: Entering Altus, OK. Below: Entering the notch at crest of Quartz Mountain northbound. Opposite page top: Crude Oil Tank Cars & old Grain Elevator in Sayre Opposite page bottom: Old RI Station in Elk City, crossing US Route 66 westbound - All photos by John Schmidt.*

as a lessee-operator for Oklahoma Department of Transportation on the 82-mile east-west line between Weatherford and Erick, OK, and an additional 89 miles between Westhom and Elmer, OK. Another wholly owned affiliate, Grainbelt Corporation (GNBC) owns and operates the 176 contiguous north-

south route-miles linking Enid and Frederick, OK.

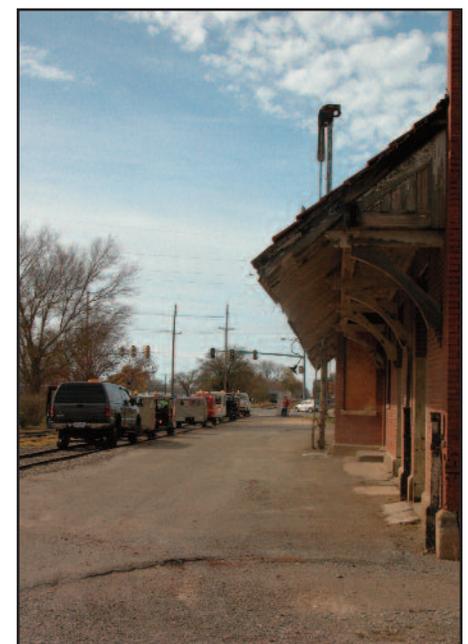
Our trip on Saturday ran west through the southwestern portion of the state - Clinton to Sayre, and consisted of seven motorcars and two Hi-Rails. Seton was located in the shadow of the enormous, cement grain elevator in Clinton. Our hosts at Farmrail were gracious and offered us their yard office for our safety meeting. On the move - we ran on a smidgen of Grainbelt rails north about one mile from the Clinton yard to the junction under I-40 - then preceded west, more or less paralleling that interstate (and also the path of historic U.S. route 66), for 46 miles to Sayre on Farmrail Corp. iron. For the rare mileage people among us, we gained route miles on the old Frisco (SL-SF) and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific's (RI) Memphis, TN to Tu-





structure in town - the elevator (again the lyrics rang out in my brain - *“They went and built a skyscraper seven stories high, about as high as a buildin’ orta grow”*), and it was COLD! Now I - a Yankee - always thought of Oklahoma as being pool-table flat - Right? Wrong! As we ran south from Sentinel, passing thru Lone Wolf (and over the grade of the now gone RI interchange) the purple haze of distant mountains appeared on the horizon. Passing a large lake, we began climbing thru a grand notch in the Quartz Mountains - and yes, *the land is truly grand!* Finally, we concluded our southward progress for the day by turning just short of the yard in Altus.

Just to give credit where credit is due, Drake Rice was the EC, Mr. Rodney Roof our Farmrail host, with Justin Shephard and Cory Clark our pilots. I enjoyed my visit to the Sooner state and hope to return sometime to ride the remaining Farmrail lines and visit the Oklahoma Railway Museum. All I can say is: *“You’re doin’ fine, Oklahoma! Oklahoma O.K.”*



cumcari NM main line - originally the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf (later BN) and passed over interchanges with the KCM&O - the Orient line and the COW - Clinton, Oklahoma & Western (both later ATSF properties).

The day was sunny and cold and as the lyrics of the musical go *“OKLAHOMA, where the wind comes right behind the rain.”* We didn’t experience any rain, but the wind was certainly present. Flags along the route were standing straight out from their staffs and the open prairie offered few restrictions to its passage - side curtains were pulled shut and fastened down. It would be a cool day for most of the travelers. I must confess, however, we were snug and warm - I had accepted Doug Gentles’ invite to ride with him in his Hi-Rail. This was a new experience for me, and I will admit I did enjoy having warm feet at the end of the day.

At any rate, we were treated to several vintage RR depots along our route over the prairie, and spun

our cars to return in Sayre almost in the shadow of the columned, Beckham County courthouse, which was quite prominent upon our arrival in town. Historically, this area was in the heart of the 1930’s dust bowl and the courthouse was the momentary backdrop in the movie version of *“The Grapes of Wrath”* (a 1940 drama film directed by John Ford and produced by Darryl F. Zanuck - based on John Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name.)

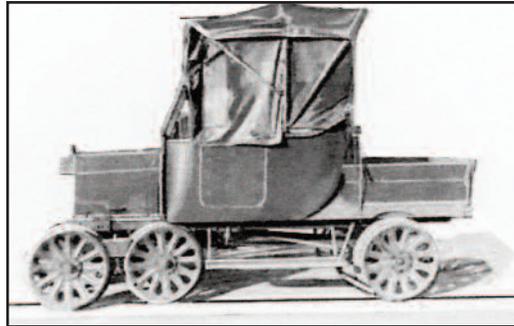
As we entered town we noticed several black, extended length tank cars and were informed the latest revenue source for Farmrail is shipping Oklahoma crude oil to market. We were enthusiastically greeted Ray & Shirley Killian, local historians, who warmly welcomed us to town and accompanied us to lunch.

The trip on Sunday traveled a portion of the former Orient Route - originally Kansas City, Mexico & Orient (later Santa Fe) line from Sentinel south to Altus and back. Seton occurred next to the tallest

# Ford takes to the rails

by Leon Sapp

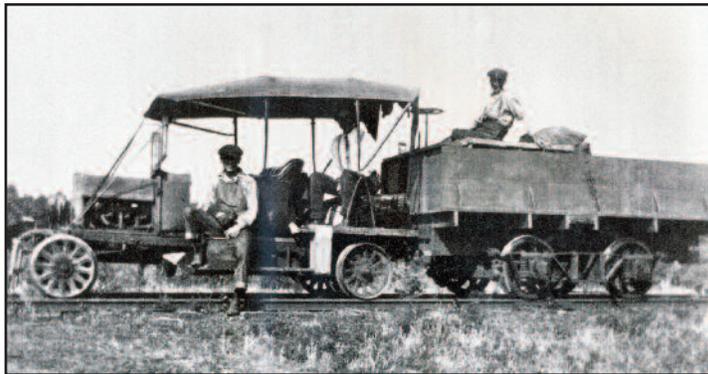
One might not think of Henry Ford as a manufacturer of speeders. Certainly He never considered himself as such. But, the name of Ford is no stranger to the rails. Although Ford never specifically advertised his cars for railroad service, entrepreneurs were quick to recognize their potential. At 56 inches the Ford wheel base was nearly perfect for conversion and Buda, Kalamazoo and others were soon selling pressed steel wheels that would bolt right onto the Ford hubs.



Northwestern offered a complete Ford kit with a special replacement front axle on Hyatt Bearings and 24" wheels. Soon hundreds of Ford autos and trucks found their way into railroad service around the World

Ford touring cars were especially popular with Railroad Officials who liked the idea of inspecting their lines in the relative comfort of an automobile. But the open sedans were also handy as gang cars and were actually cheaper than many contemporary and conventional speeders. And nothing was handier than a flat bed Ford truck for hauling supplies and materials. Many became line repair cars on street-car systems and one was even adapted for use in the New York Subway System. When the first Ford pick-up was introduced in 1918 it also was an immediate candidate for conversion and became the pride of many a Road Master.

Several notable events took place in which the little conversions would show their worth and gain notoriety for Ford. When disastrous flooding took out bridges and highways into Oklahoma City in 1923, the first relief to the entered the beleaguered city came in a Ford touring car equipped with flanged wheels.



The U.S. Forestry Service pressed several early Ford Model T's into service as Fire Patrol Vehicles.

For a number of years Fords were the speeder of choice on Alaskan Railroads where they performed better in snow and ice than conventional motorcars. On September 8, 1925, Ford's chief photographer left Halifax Nova Scotia in a brand new Ford with the intention of driving 4,794 miles across Canada to Vancouver but for 500 miles of the trip he had to fit the Model T with railroad wheels because there were no roads.

Ford toyed with the idea of building gasoline powered streetcars. In 1920 the City of Detroit had tried to pass a 15 million dollar bond to build a municipal system that would be powered exclusively by Ford gasoline propelled cars. However Ford opposed municipal ownership of public transportation and backed out of the plan. The bond issue subsequently failed. Still several manufacturers used the sturdy (and cheap) Ford engine and transmission to power a variety of rail buses. More than a few branch line railroads would find a Ford powered rail-bus replacing the familiar but expensive steam train. Several motorcars and rail coach manufacturers loved Ford engines. In fact Ford continued building the now famous Models 'AA' and 'B' 4-cylinder L-head engines for speeders until the beginning of WWII, long after it had been dropped from their line of trucks and automobiles.

Ford engines would find their way into motorcars built by Fairmont, Kalamazoo, Brill, Gibson, Skagit, Wickham and others. Northwestern was especially fond of Ford engines and from their model 551 onward many of their larger cars and rail coaches were powered by Ford 4-cylinder (40 & 50 hp) and 8-cylinder (80, 85 and 100 hp) engines. Often Northwestern retained the distinctive Ford radiators and grills.

When Henry Ford came out with his first farm tractors they also were drafted into railroad service. He had built his first experimental gasoline powered farm tractor in



Conversions could be two, three or even four axle arrangements. Here are two narrow gauge examples



1907 but he ran into opposition from his Board of Directors. Determined to proceed with the idea he formed a separate company, 'Henry Ford and Son Company' and installed his young son Edsel as its president. A short time later the corporate name was shortened to 'Fordson' and the company began producing tractors using the sturdy and dependable Ford 22 hp engine. They would produce over 750 thousand during their first ten years of operation including twenty-two thousand for Russia alone. It would not be long before entrepreneurs would discover the Fordson frame, engine and power train were ideal for a type of rail service. The Fordson, it seemed, made an ideal



The Epsom Salts Railroad used the most unique adaptation of a Fordson tractor as a monorail locomotive.

light locomotive.

WWI had seen 170 small gasoline locomotives sent to France to haul ammunition and supplies just behind the front lines. Steam engines were prime targets for enemy artillery as they gave away their position with smoke and sparks so gasoline engines were much preferred. The success of these locomotives was not lost

*Northwestern Catalog circa 1918*



Northwestern Motor Company  
Eau Claire—Wisconsin



Casey Jones Motor Car Accessories

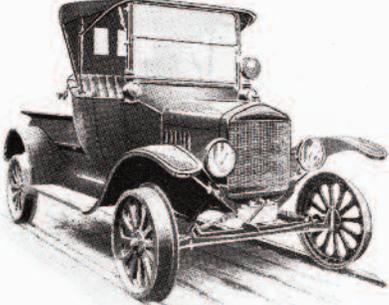
A great demand from railroad people owning Fords for flange wheels to fit their cars for operation on the railroad track has caused us to bring out a Ford outfit consisting of four wheels and a special front axle complete with Hyatt Roller Bearings. The two rear wheels are properly bored to fit a Ford rear axle so the Ford wheels can be taken off and the track wheels applied properly ganged for standard gauge track. This applies only to 50-in. gauge Fords.

For the front wheels on the Ford we use a solid axle running live in Hyatt Roller Bearings. These bearings are bored to fit the standard Ford pivot, bolted so that the steering knuckle can be removed from the Ford axle.

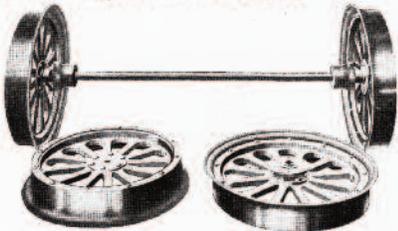
The two bearings inserted in the same pivot holes used in making a through-raming axle.

The wheels are 24 inches in diameter, wood center with 1/4-inch and 3/8-inch reinforced rims and will give maximum speed to the car of 25 to 30 miles per hour.

We can also furnish this same type of outfit for one-ton Ford trucks.



Casey Jones Ford Outfit No. 610



Casey Jones Quality

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

"Ford" continued on page. 24

“Ford” continued from page 23

on soldiers coming home after the war. Those hiring out to Lumber Companies told of the value of smokeless and fireless engines and the safety they could offer in the deep woods. Soon shop built, Ford powered motorcars and small locomotives were working all through the Lumber Industry. At one time there were at least seven small companies in the Pacific Northwest modifying the Fordson Tractors. At least two Australian and an amazing fourteen different New Zealand companies would produce Fordson rail tractors for the timber industry ‘down under.’ Often one would find them in a dual purpose role, pulling long strings of trailers laden with men and supplies out each morning and later in the day hauling equally long strings of cut logs back to the main camp.

There were a number of U.S. Manufacturers such as Adamson Motor Company, A.G. Price Limited and Brookville Locomotive Company that used Fordson engines and transmissions exclusively to power light locomotives some as heavy as 8 tons. But, perhaps the most interesting adaptation was the small Fordson powered monorail locomotive on the Epsom Salts Railroad in Trona, California. And when Ford would later have his own railroad, the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton, naturally his first speeders would be exclusively Ford powered.

Ford’s international network ensured that components were available just about anywhere there were railroads. In Great Britain both the early Ford V8 and later the 4-cylinder industrial engines and transmission were a favorite choice of

Wickham Motorcars. In Mexico several urban transportation systems were built on a preverbal shoestring and operated with what amounted to large home built speeders for public transportation. More often than not it was a Ford or Fordson engine that provided the power. In Tlaxcala long strings of paying passengers were carried in trailers pulled by a small 2-axle home built Ford powered locomotive.

Ford automobiles and trucks may not have been first to wear rail wheels nor were they always the best at it, but they were produced on a massive scale and affordable by even the poorest railroad. They were rugged, simple to maintain and thanks to Ford’s world wide distribution, parts were available just about anywhere.

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## Mystery Machine ???

# FAIRBANKS GAS ENGINES

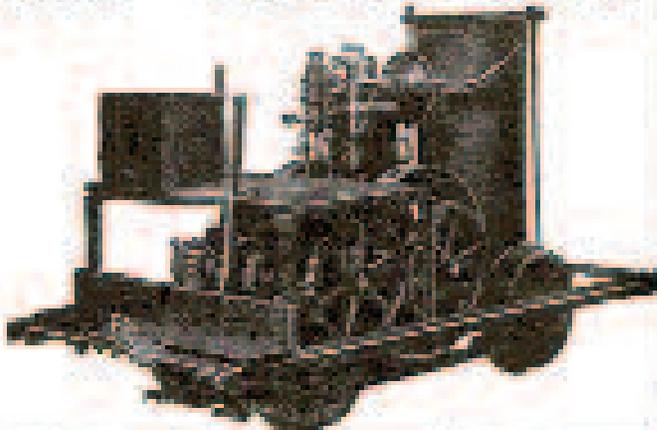
## TO FIT EVERY NEED—

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Adaptable to Manufactured, Natural or Producer Gas, Gasoline, Alcohol or Kerosene as fuel. Direct connections of engines to Pumps, Compressors, Hoists, Generators, etc. Expert service and advice on power requirements free. A complete line of Seals, Trucks, Transmission, Valves, Railroads, Factory and Mill Supplies, Machine Tools, etc.

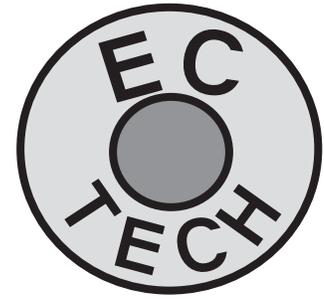
CATALOGUE FREE. Address any of our houses:

<b>THE FAIRBANKS COMPANY,</b>	<b>New York.</b>	
Albany.	Baltimore.	Bangor, Me.
Boston.	Buffalo.	Burling.
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Paris.	Hamburg.	



This small advertisement appeared in the September 1906 edition of Popular Mechanics. It shows a very substantial machine on railroad wheels but exactly what it could be is a mystery. Its the size of a motorcar with a single seat and controls up front for an operator. Speciality machines the size of a motorcar were rare in 1906. There is an extremely large upright, single cylinder engine. Or perhaps, as the tank on the back suggests, it was a slow speed, single cylinder compressor such as those used on steam locomotives of the day. The large gears were seriously gearing up or down for something and the resistance of an air compressor would have required some equally serious assistance for the small motorcar engines of the day. If you want to make a guess, please contact Leon Sapp [jakemt19a@yahoo.com](mailto:jakemt19a@yahoo.com)

## 2012 Insurance- New Certificates of Permission



**BY BERNIE  
LEADON**

This notice pertains primarily to Excursion Coordinators. Be aware that the new 2012 Insurance Program will require an alteration to our Certificate of Permission form. Tom Norman is creating that new form, and a supply of the new forms will be sent to the Regional Insurance Reps as soon as possible after the first of the year.

The old Certificate of Permission forms are now obsolete, and should be discarded, and not used. Any use of the old form will be rejected by the Regional Ins. Reps, requiring you to make a second trip to the railroad to obtain the permission signatures.

Please contact your Regional Ins. Representative after Jan. 1, 2012 to obtain the new forms.

**PLEASE DISCARD THE OLD C of P FORMS!**

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## A PIECE OF TRIVIA

### TRAIN STATION WATCHES WERE JUST THE BEGINNING

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line.

Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way that they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years.

This was all arranged by "Richard", who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the east. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them.

So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit.

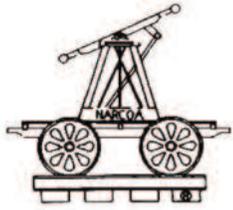
That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches.

Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. And the rest is history as they say.

The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods.

Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago — and it's still there.

IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator: Richard Sears and his partner Alvah Roebuck!

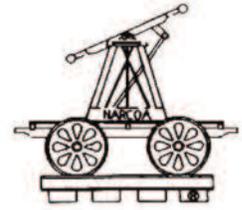


# NARCOA EXCURSIONS

## AS OF DEC. 16TH, 2011

Please submit all excursions and ads directly to  
**webmaster@narcoa.org**

The SETOFF downloads directly from the website  
for the most current information.



### January 2, 2012 - CA - California Western Railroad

Motorcar Operators West Annual New Years Run. Set-on and inspection in Willits on Sunday Jan 1, at 3PM. Monday Jan 2, 80 round trip miles between Willits & Fort Bragg. Safety meeting at 07:30, leave at 08:00 and return at 5:30. \$160 and large SASE to Chris Baldo EC, P.O. Box 874, Willits CA 95490. (707) 459-2600. Optional New Years Eve party on Dec. 31, 2011 at Rancho Baldo in Covelo, CA. Contact Bobbie Yokum (707) 459-4350 for details.

### January 21, 2012 - GA - Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad

Destination, Time and Safety Briefing Unknown due to winter track work. \$5.00 Blue Ridge Scenic Volunteers. All others \$10.00 per car. EC - Carl Hymen, or 706-455-0492. WATCH FOR UPDATED DETAILS!

### February 11 - 12, 2012 - TX - Border Pacific Railroad

Travel approx. 60 RT miles between Penitas and Rio Grande City each day. Track parallels the Mexican border along the Rio Grande River. Sturdy shoes and long pants required. No shorts or tennis shoes. Mentoring by permission only. Hyrails welcome. Trip fee of \$50 includes railroad fees. Trip information available at Railroad Partners, Inc. EC Leland Stewart 10057 Palomino Canyon Converse, TX 78109 210-945-9268

### September 28 - 29, 2012 - IL - 2012 NARCOA Annual Meeting

Sheraton O'Hare Airport Hotel, 6501 North Mannheim Road, Rosemont, IL 60018 This meeting is open to all paid NARCOA members.

### Excursions Held On A Regular Basis

### August 12 - January 31, 2012 - GA - Heart Of Georgia-West Railroad

Southeast Railcar Operators, Inc. will be having NARCOA Motor Car runs and workdayson the HOG West Railroad from Richland, Ga. to Omaha, Ga. on various dates from August 1, 2011 thru January 31, 2012. Contact Will Thompson E.C. 229-723-8231 Home or 229-359-5701 Cell Or E-Mail. Click [HERE](#) for details and map.

### 2011 Season - First and Third weekends of each month - NC - Red Springs and Northern Railroad

Railcar Operators of the Carolinas (ROC) invites you to ride 12.5 miles on the Red Springs & Northern Railroad in Red Springs. Located near Fayetteville, NC and 17 miles west of Lumberton / US 95 and Hwy 21. NARCOA rules are in effect. Trips are mainly on Saturday, starting in Red Springs and going north to Parkton, NC and return. Cost is \$25/day or ROC membership of \$90/year. Contact person: Carey Boney - EC, 1605 Powers Road, Wallace, NC 28466. Tel. 910-285-7489

### February 1, 2011 - January 31, 2012 - PA - Stewartstown Railroad

The Northern Central Railcar Association is offering to NARCOA members, Excursions on the Stewartstown Railroad from New Freedom, Pa to Stewartstown, Pa. on various dates between February 1, 2011 thru January 31, 2012 Call Dean L. Grote Excursion Coordinator at 717-637-7647 or details.

### February 1, 2011 - January 31, 2012 - PA - Northern Central Railroad

The Northern Central Railcar Association is offering to NARCOA members, excursions on the Northern Central Railroad from New Freedom, PA

to York, PA, on various dates between February 1, 2011 through January 31, 2012. Call Dean L. Grote Excursion Coordinator at 717-637-7647 for details.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Advertisement of an excursion at the NARCOA Web Site does not constitute responsibility by NARCOA and/or its officers nor the NARCOA Web Site manager for event conditions. Excursion attendees must exercise caution in the observance of safety conditions and rules and must accept full responsibility for themselves, their guests, and their equipment when attending any event.

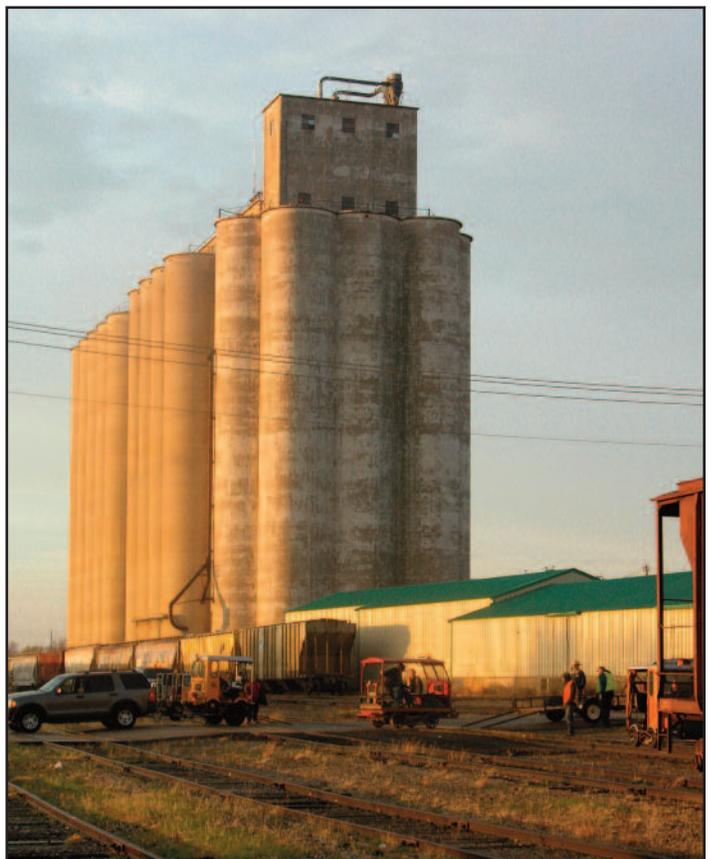
### Information excursion coordinators

Excursion organizers must advertise their events on the website. "THE SETOFF" editor will copy these ads. Do not send a separate notice to "THE SETOFF". Include details of the trip such as time, schedule, total mileage, costs, restrictions, and conditions for attending. Please send all excursion announcements [Webmaster@narcoa.org](mailto:Webmaster@narcoa.org) Please follow the standard format for the submissions. The ads will be copied from the web page on the Setoff deadline dates listed below.

### SETOFF deadlines are:

February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, December 15

### *Morning Seton in Clinton Iowa under elevator - Boomer John*



# SUPPLIERS

*If you are a supplier of motorcar parts, and wish to be included here, please contact [setoff@neo.rr.com](mailto:setoff@neo.rr.com). No endorsement is made of the products, services, or vendors. All listings are for member's consideration only, and are at the discretion of the Editor.*

**Atlantic Rail Cars** / Warren Riccitelli, [warren.riccitelli@cox.net](mailto:warren.riccitelli@cox.net) 39 Jacksonia Drive, North Providence, RI 02911 phone: (401) 232-0992 Fax: (401) 231-7073. Brake Shoes, brake liners, and brake parts for most cars.

**Carey Boney**, [Careyboney@embarqmail.com](mailto:Careyboney@embarqmail.com) or Carey Boney, 1605 Powers RD. , Wallace, NC 28466 phone 910-285-7489. Engine parts for RQ,QBA,ROB,ODB, ROC and parts for F-4,C-5,F-6 and C-8 carburetors. Frame and some body parts.

**Brown Railroad Equipment** / Dan Brown, [www.brownrr.com](http://www.brownrr.com). 4 Amersham Court, Glen Carbon, IL 62034. (618) 288-6698. The entire remaining Fairmont factory inventory of motorcar parts was bought by Brown when Fairmont stopped making speeders in the early 1990's. Web site has NOS inventory look up by part number. Over 200 cars for sale. Se habla espanol.

**Railroad Motor Car Resource Library** / Doug Cummins, [rrstuff@hawaiihost.us](mailto:rrstuff@hawaiihost.us) 1146 W. 27th St. Independence, MO 64052-3222. Library of rail motorcar manuals, performance sheets, parts lists, maintenance instructions.

**H & H Mfg. CO.** [hhimaparts@aol.com](mailto:hhimaparts@aol.com) (707) 887-7181 Full service machine shop and Mfg. of aftermarket Fairmont parts. Large supply of new and used Fairmont and Onan parts including transmissions, engines, brake and drive sprockets. Frame and aluminum door and side panels. Assorted rail speeder project cars for sale.

**Tom Falicon** [Raildawg@gte.net](mailto:Raildawg@gte.net) 1227 Sawmill Creek Rd, Bryson City, NC 28713 ph: 828-488-8063 after six. Fairmont Billet Shift Knobs.

**Fredericksburg Shops**, [fredshops@earthlink.net](mailto:fredshops@earthlink.net) or [leskingmotorcars.com](http://leskingmotorcars.com) or 209 Creamery Rd., Fredericksburg, Ohio 44627, phone: 330-465-0713 2PM-6PM EST. Newly manufactured motor car parts and accessories. Many original producers identified, and their parts are again for sale. Shop also does car repair. Formerly Les King & Company.

**Doug Heinmuller**, [www.dhrc.clco.us](http://www.dhrc.clco.us) P.O. Box 111, 153 Bobbin Mill Rd, Lunenburg, VT 05906, phone 802-892-6144. Former ONAN dealer has many Fairmont and ONAN parts. Complete engine & transmission rebuilding. For a detailed list of parts available, see website.

**Model T coils for 2-cycle cars** Epoxy sealed in heavy duty plastic case. Moisture and vibration proof. USA made. These are the famous grain dryer coils. \$80.00 each. Shipping \$10.00 via priority mail Randy 785-632-3450 or [www.fifthaveinternetgarage.com](http://www.fifthaveinternetgarage.com)

**L&S Speeder Repair and Restoration** [heatmor@itctel.com](mailto:heatmor@itctel.com) 17504 438th Ave., Henry, SD 57243 phone (605)532-3470. Custom motorcar trailers - will build to your specifications.

**Dave Myers** at: [dave@redspeeder.com](mailto:dave@redspeeder.com) or 928-380-7056 MT-19 Temporary Axle splint. Fairmont transmission sprockets, and special sprockets of interest when re-powering a car with non-Onan engines.

**Tom Phair** [tom@phairs.net](mailto:tom@phairs.net) phone (925) 820-4159 Complete line of the David Clark Company Intercom systems and railroad type Motorola Radios; new double chain sprocket kits, large inventory of NOS Fairmont parts. Some motorcars for sale.

**NARCOA does not guarantee, certify or warrant that any mechanical equipment, modification, solution or device described in articles or advertisements in The SETOFF are safe or suitable for any member's needs or purposes. Technical articles are provided for member's consideration only. Readers are advised to do their own due diligence to determine the safety and suitability of any such equipment, modification, solution, or device for their purposes, and are advised to seek outside expert advice.**



# NARCOA COMPANY STORE



## Wheel Inspection Tools

The clear plastic wheel profile is necessary to determine if the wheel is flat, thin in the flange area, or has wear between the flange and the flat section of the tread. Use the wheel profile as your first step in diagnosing "hunting" on the rails. Use two of the clear plastic wheel profiles to determine track gauge. The stainless steel caliper is necessary to determine if you have the required 1/8" minimum wheel thickness. One plastic wheel profile is \$11 including s/h. Two plastic profiles are \$17 including s/h. Stainless steel wheel calipers with laser printing (they'll outlast your grandson!) are \$30 each including s/h. One plastic profile and one stainless steel wheel caliper go for \$35 including s/h. Two plastic profiles and one stainless steel wheel caliper are the best combination for \$40 including s/h. The new calipers have a bold mark at the 1/8" minimum. Shipments outside the USA are becoming more expensive, so add to the list price: \$5 for Canada, and \$11 for the rest of the world. Make your check payable to NARCOA, and mail to Warren Riccitelli, 39 Jacksonia Drive, North Providence, RI 02911 E-mail questions to: warren.riccitelli@cox.net



## NARCOA Lanterns

NARCOA has received another order of Trainman's lanterns produced by Star Headlight and Lantern. They are model 292 featuring a bright halogen lamp along with a conventional bulb. A standard 6 volt lantern battery is required (not included). The body is orange plastic with the NARCOA name, motorcar logo, and "Safety First" imprinted. The lamps are effective for night signaling, and make great presentation items for our railroad hosts. Cost is \$29.00 each plus \$8.00 shipping for the first lantern and \$2.00 s/h for each additional lantern per order. Make your check payable to NARCOA, and mail to Jeff Levensgood 2189 Oak Tree Dr., Dover, Ohio 44622 phone 330-343-3407

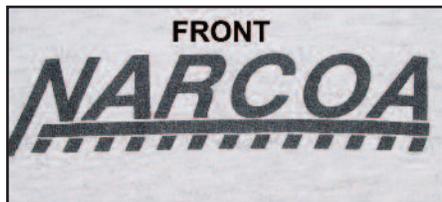
*Please note: each item is shipped from the person in charge of that particular product. Profits from Company Store sales go to NARCOA.*



## Reproduction

### Fairmont Data Plates

These plates fit on the engine cover. They are correct for late 1930's to late 1960's cars. M9 M14 M19 S2 ST2 A3 A5 59C - maybe others. \$6.00 per plate except Membership plate which is \$3.00. Include SSAE with one stamp for each plate (Three Plates per envelope maximum) to: Richard C. Ray, 5 Hemlock Place, Randolph, NJ 07869 All Profits go to NARCOA - Make checks out to NARCOA. ray\_r@rocketmail.com



## NARCOA Tee Shirts

Show your support for NARCOA by wearing one of the new NARCOA Tee Shirts. Available in either Ash Gray, or Safety Green. High quality Gilden Extrem Cotton shirts. Short sleeve with the NARCOA on Track emblem on the left front and the NARCOA .ORG emblem on the back in black screen print. Sizes: adult, from med-3xl. No kids sizes at this time. All proceeds go to NARCOA. \$20.00 each, includes postage to U.S. To order send your request with sizes and color to: John Gonder 415 Levine Lane, Ruffs Dale, PA 15679. Make check out to NARCOA. US funds only. Canadian orders please include \$5.00 extra per/shirt for additional postage and customs.

