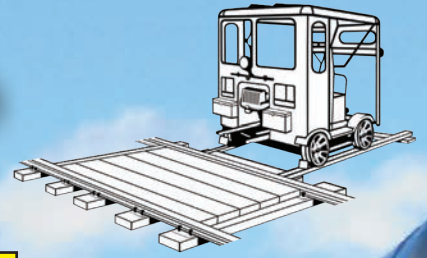
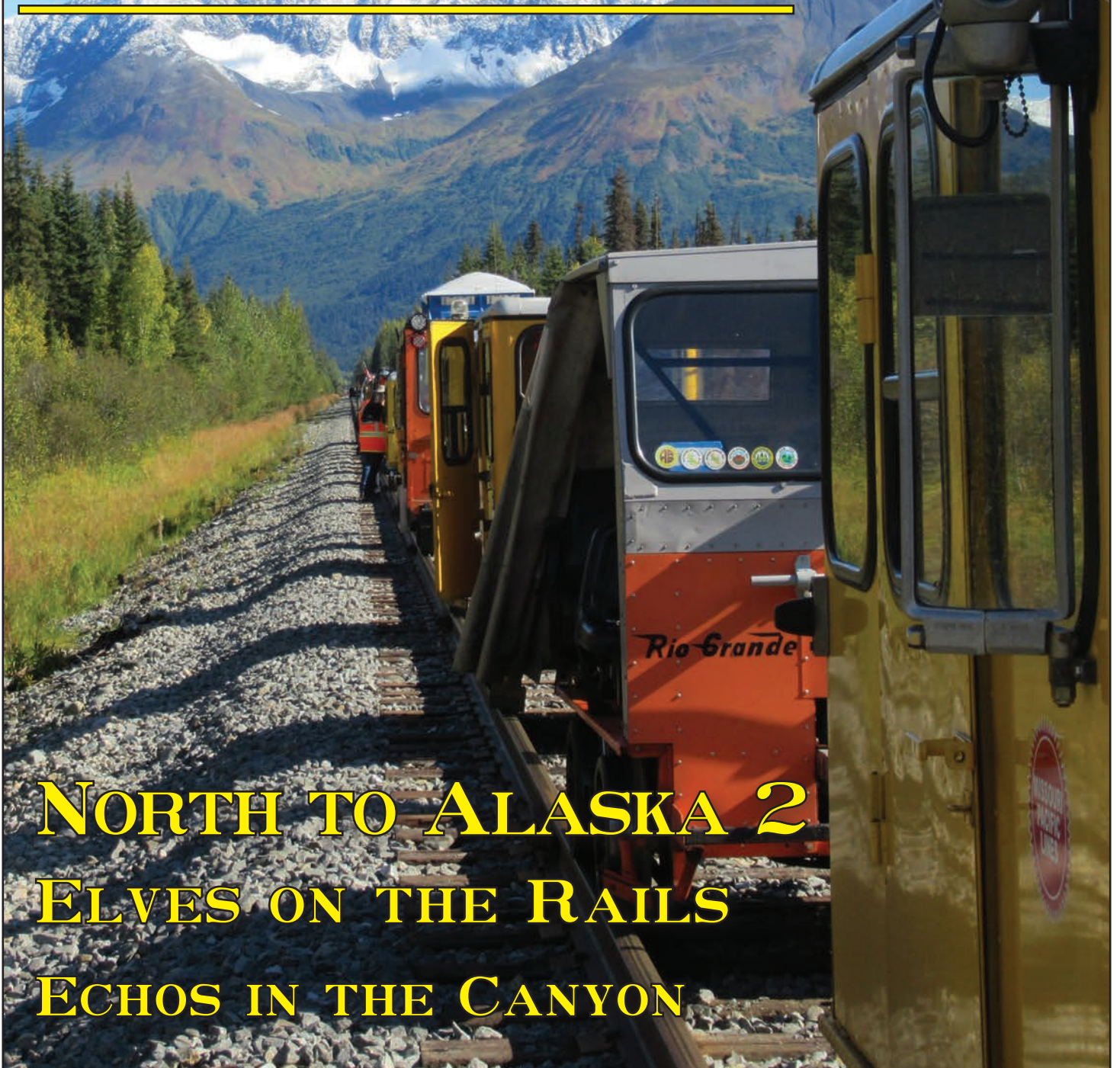


THE SETOFF



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF NARCOA
NORTH AMERICAN RAILCAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION
JAN / FEB 2022 VOLUME 36 - No. 1



NORTH TO ALASKA 2
ELVES ON THE RAILS
ECHOS IN THE CANYON

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Online order processing is now available. All our popular items are available for purchase via a typical shopping cart function. Plus, we now accept credit cards for your convenience. Now it is easier than ever to get tools, hardware and all your NARCOA gear. Scan this new QR code with your smartphone or type in the new website address for instant access.

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Safety yellow with reflectorized trim. One size fits all; embroidered with our logo. \$15 plus \$5 shipping.



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Iron or sew it on your favorite jacket or shirt. 4" x 3" \$5 + S/H

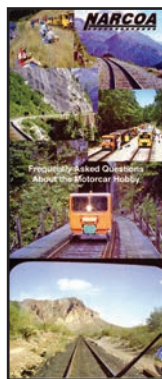
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Wheel profile with tape measure slot for gauge dimension. \$12 each + S/H

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Made by the original supplier with solid brass cases and shackles, and are keyed alike.

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AREA DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

AREA
TEN



BILL ANDREWS



and Peter Wolfgram, to contact CMR and the local authorities to see how we can help. In the mean time, contributions may be sent to Farmer's State Bank, PO Box 1047, Denton, MT, 59430, payable to Denton Fire Relief Fund. CMR and the residents have been generous to NARCOA over the years; let's help them out!

Bill Andrews

The Central Montana Railroad has provided rail access to NARCOA members for years, resulting in great rides for many of us. On December 1, disaster struck the town of Denton, MT, population of only 299. It was devastated by a wildfire that consumed 24 homes, multiple grain elevators, and outbuildings. A bridge and train trestle were also destroyed. Fortunately, the CMR engine house and equipment escaped the surrounding fire. The townspeople are in surprisingly good spirits and organizing a recovery plan -- a tribute to the resilience and spirit of Montanans. I have asked two Montana PRO members, Bryan Adams



Motorcars on the Central Montana RR in better times

FROM THE EDITOR *ROBIN DOUGLAS*

Happy New Year to all of you. Winter is a great time to perform repairs and upgrades on your motorcar. Look carefully at our list of Suppliers on page 25. Please note there are changes in contact info as well as some who are no longer in the hobby, or their offerings have changed. I encourage you to support them. It's time to put up the new 2022 NARCOA calendar and reflect on some of the excellent adventures enjoyed over the past 12 months. As you do, perhaps you'll consider sending me a photo or two and a few details I can share in Short Lines.



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THE SETOFF

VOLUME 36 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.

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NARCOA
P.O. Box 9035 Cincinnati, OH 45209
membership@narcoa.org

All subscriptions and address changes must be sent to NARCOA at that address.

All materials for publication must be sent to the SETOFF Editor (master of time, space and ink).

Materials received by the 15th of even numbered months will appear on the 1st of the next odd numbered month subject to editing and available space. Please include your e-mail address and phone number. Electronic submissions are preferred. Text files must have either .doc, docx or .txt extensions. Photo files must be high resolution with .jpg extensions. All materials are archived and not returned. We cannot reprint copyrighted material without written authorization and/or proper attribution.

Letters to the Editor must be signed and include an e-mail address or phone number for authentication. All such letters may be printed as discussed in the NARCOA policy book.

For more information about NARCOA, the safe legal operation of motorcars, or to find NARCOA affiliates located in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, please see: www.narcoa.org

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ON THE COVER:

Motorcar Operators West explores the Alaskan wilderness heading south to Seward. Photo by Linda Gunn

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AREA ONE



TOM SOPCHAK

Area 1- our season is over. People that attended excursions in Area 1 had a very good year. If you were lucky enough you had an extra trip in Area 1 on the Pan Am railway. This was very rare rail to access, and most likely one and done. It came about on extremely short notice, less than a week, and was weather dependent. However, the excursion was an awesome opportunity for some unique rail mileage. It was a great day and some very nice track.

Someone always mentions this, but the winter is a great time to review or inspect your motorcar. It keeps you in contact and fresh with inspecting your motorcar. Please check your wheels, both profile and gauge. I would suggest inspecting things you might not look at on a regular basis, like the inside of your brake shoe thickness. Also, how is your car running? Reliability is key, especially for others on your

excursion and the EC running it. If you are experiencing difficulty maintaining speed or keeping your motorcar running, and you don't have the necessary skills to identify and correct the issue, please seek input and help from someone with more knowledge.

Although the motorcar season is over, know that your board of directors and the officers of NARCOA are still busy reviewing 2021, holding meetings, and moving the organization forward into 2022. I look forward to seeing everyone again next season on the rails!

Tom Sopchak

AREA THREE



BRIAN DAVIS

Happy New Year Area 3!

We are in the midst of winter here in the Midwest, but I am warmed to know that the affiliates in Area 3 are making arrangements to put on some great excursions this season. I start every day by checking the NARCOA excursion page to

see what has been added as I am sure you do too.

As I write this the NARCOA Board has just finished their most recent meeting, held via ZOOM. The ability to meet electronically has been a positive change for the Board as we seem to be able to address more issues in a shorter amount of time than we could in the past just using emails. Unfortunately, we also had to discuss a couple of incidents that happened late in last season, one of which involved a motorcar that did not stop in time to avoid an accident. I will not release specifics here, but please know that a rear-ender accident is avoidable and for the future of our hobby we must avoid this kind of accident in the future. Please be certain that at all times you are able to stop your motorcar in half the distance to the car in front of you. Keep your eyes moving and stay aware of the motorcars and the other traffic around you. This is important both on and off the rails!

PS: My email address has changed! Please use briandavis1111@gmail.com to reach me!

Stay Safe!

Brian Davis

AREA FOUR



JIM HOPKINS

Seasons Greetings to Area 4 and all NARCOA. I write this on the day after completing a 14-hour Santa Train charity event. This is an event by some good friends that own the Greenville and Western Railroad in upper South Carolina. This was the 15th year and one of the most challenging to make a success due to the rough weather here yesterday afternoon and in other parts of the country. This is the fifth year that I have been the man in red on the train with my wife as Mrs. Claus. It is a joy to be involved with such a great event that brings happiness to the local community. We had 760+ come through the caboose for pictures with Santa, gifts for each and a ticket for a chance to win other gifts.

I know that other events are held around our area as toy runs or other ways to place a little joy in the lives of others that may not be as fortunate as we are at this time of year. Thanks to all that have participated and had a little fun while

doing so. In doing these events we also get to show others how much we enjoy what we do as a hobby.

In November I participated in a very good excursion on the Great Smoky Mountain RR with Tom and Mugz Falicon as our hosts. It was a very well organized and enjoyable overnight trip...my first overnight excursion. This was also one of the largest events I have been to as there were 46 motorcars and two hi-rails. I met some new people both from my area and others and got to see a lot of people that I have not seen in a while.

Please take the time this winter to make any needed repairs and improvements to your motorcars. Remember also to take some time to review the rulebook and other documents that make our hobby a safe one. Remember what makes this hobby a safe one is YOU! Happy New Year!

Jim Hopkins

AREA FIVE



BILL DELMAR

Area Five welcomes new members Kevin Greene (Laurel, Mississippi), Todd Brackett (Rockledge, Florida), Paul McLendon (Satsuma, Alabama), Roy McLendon (Jackson, Alabama) and John Boudway (Royston, Georgia). I look forward to meeting all these new members and hope to see you on the rails soon.

There were two Fall runs in Area 5: the Hartwell RR on Oct 23-24 with 15 motorcars and 3 hi-rails, and the Florida Central / Florida Northern RRs on December 3-5 with 18 motorcars and 2 hi-rails. Both events had great weather. A New Year's Day run has been announced for the St. Marys RR.

In addition, a number of Area 5 folks attended the Great Smoky Mountain RR run on November 7-8, which had a record number of 44 participants! Chilly morning temps but the days warmed up and there was no rain.

While have a lull in runs in the winter months, this is a good time to go over your motorcar and make sure everything is in good order. Reread the recommendations for turntables and even if you are not ready to add the lights, think about how you will implement the changes.

Bill Delmar

AREA

SEVEN



CARL SCHNEIDER

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and are anxiously waiting for the 2022 excursions to begin. The EC's of the First Iowa Division have already had a Zoom meeting to start planning a tentative schedule and will be contacting the railroads soon. It looks like we'll have another full schedule with plenty of opportunities for you to get the motorcars out and shine up the wheels.

If you have a nice warm place to work on your cars during the cold months to get them ready, you're one of the lucky ones. Some of us may be waiting until warmer weather and spending time shoveling snow instead.

The First Iowa Division will be implementing a pre-registration policy this year to help the ECs with their excursion planning. More information will be put out as the ride season approaches and we work

out the details. We'll also be discussing this at the FID annual meeting in March.

Carl Schneider

AREA

NINE



LELAND STEWART

As we wind down the 2021 season, we are grateful that the motorcar world got a lot better than what we had going in 2020. While we all still struggle with the uncertainties related to the confusion of ever-changing regulatory guidelines, we were able to recover some semblance of normalcy. There were many great excursions held this year and we look forward to even more in the coming year.

As always, NARCOA is striving to improve our operations and increase safety by addressing and encouraging safe practices. In 2022 we will be seeing an increased emphasis on mentoring and new operator training. In addition, there will be a focus on improvements to turntables and

continued focus on the prevention of rear end collisions. Be sure to give these efforts your full attention as they are conveyed through The SETOFF and official bulletins.

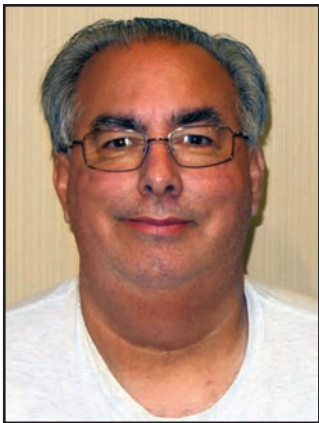
As far as excursions in Area 9, things are quiet right now but EC's are currently making plans for the 2022 season. A couple of items of interest are a tentative March run on the Border Pacific and a possible spring run on the Northeast Texas Connector (the former Blacklands RR). Myron Malone has been making progress with the NETC management and is working diligently to restore our operations on that line. Additionally, Railroad Partners will be doing work session runs in early 2022 on the Llano branch in preparation for the annual Bluebonnet Run. The Rocky Mountain Division and the Oklahoma Railway Museum are also working to set up their 2022 schedules.

Be sure to watch for the 2022 NARCOA Insurance application and get them in quickly. The 2022 excursions will be popping up on the NARCOA run calendar very shortly.

Meanwhile, stay warm and have a Happy New Year.

Leland Stewart

AREA ELEVEN



STEVE PALUSO

Greetings to all the Area 11 members. I hope you all had wonderful holidays and Santa brought you lots of rusty train parts to have fun with. Area 11 has been pretty quiet recently. EC Carl Shellhorn just completed the Amador Central Toy Drive run in December and by the time you read this the Napa Valley New Year's Day excursion as well.

To all operators and participants, please read Rule 5.06 in the NARCOA Rulebook about flagging procedures at grade crossings. This information is very important. It is the responsibility of all operators to ensure that their passengers know the proper procedures. All EC's should also remind all participants about the proper flagging procedure in the safety meeting. Please take this seriously. Knowing and following the proper flagging procedures could prevent a mishap.

To all operators it is also your responsibility to make sure it is safe to proceed through a grade crossing. The flagger is there to facilitate a safe crossing, but it is ultimately the operator's respon-

sibility to make sure it is safe before entering the crossing.

On a sad note, we lost a longtime Area 11 member. Bill Owen passed away suddenly on Thanksgiving Day. Bill and Kathleen joined the motorcar hobby in the early 1990's. Bill was an EC, and he took safety for all participants in the hobby very seriously. He will be sorely missed.

See you on the rails.

Steve Paluso

SAFETY



RICH GUNN

Linda and I recently returned from a wonderful excursion on the Alaska Railroad, hosted by Dave Balestreri and John Martin. One of the things we encountered on that excursion that was somewhat out of the ordinary was meeting many oncoming trains. Whenever participants of a motorcar excursion must meet a train or railroad equipment there are a few things to consider in the name of safety.

Once the track cars have safely moved onto a siding, away from the track being used as active rail, it is imperative that EVERY-

ONE remain on the field side of the motorcar lineup. The motorcars must be between any excursion participants and the live rail on which the oncoming train or equipment will be travelling.

A wheel flange may strike the tip of a point within a switch and travel over the tip, causing a derailment and possibly drag part of the operating train consist onto the adjoining track. If our motorcars are already occupying the adjoining track we'd best be as far as possible away from the passing train.

There can be no exceptions to this practice. Once it is recognized and announced that the train/equipment is approaching everyone must remain on the far side of the rail – away from the live track. There can be **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this! You cannot poke out for a quick look at the train or a photograph. It can take a mile or more to stop a moving train. There is no reason to endanger participants of the train crew by having a train begin emergency braking.

Please be considerate of others in your excursion as well as the train crew.

Operating motorcars is not a complicated science. Operators need to remain focused on safe practices and basically "use their heads" and realize the possible repercussions of foolishness.

Think safety and you'll be safe!

INSURANCE UPDATES
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES NAMED
--AND NEW ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF PERMISSION
BY WAYNE PARSONS, INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

Two regional insurance representatives have retired from the hobby. Here is the new list of regional insurance representatives and the states they cover. Nancy Andrews is welcomed as the first lady to be an insurance rep. Excursion Coordinators, please note there have been some changes of which states are covered by which representative. Please contact the correct representative when requesting Certificate of Permission supplies.

Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Wyoming

Nancy Andrews, 191 Azalea Drive, Grants Pass, OR 97526-7292 Phone: (541) 295-5635

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Tom Falicon, 1227 Sawmill Creek Road, Bryson City, NC 28713 Phone: (828) 736-4777

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Canada (all Provinces).

Mike Ford, 7712 Carpenter Court, Plainfield, IN 46168 Phone: (317) 839-9320

Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

John Gonder, 415 Levine Lane, Ruffs Dale, PA 15679 Phone: (724) 244-7538

Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.

Doug Stivers, 1544 Fuchsia Drive, San Jose, CA 95125 Phone: (408) 269-5547

Electronic COP and related COI. Affiliate insurance renewals

Wayne Parsons, 3161 Country Lane, Simi Valley, CA 93063-1514 Phone: (818) 631-4805
narcoatrea@gmail.com

Once the certificate of permission and certificate of liability insurance forms are processed by the regional representatives, they are returned to the Excursion Coordinators; and copies are forwarded to Wayne for amalgamation and routing to United Shortline Services. The job of the insurance team is to facilitate and support motorcar events. Please do not hesitate to call anyone of us with questions or suggestions.

The Board of Directors has changed the NARCOA policy book section 14:01 to permit electronic signatures on Certificates of Permission (COP). This will facilitate railroads that may want to use electronic forms; and enable last minute hurry-up-quick coverage. EC's just need to send their name and e-mail—along with the name and email of the railroad official—to Wayne Parsons. He will initiate a DocuSign.com form that gets the electronically signed COP back from the railroad at e-mail speed. It's new, but very easy. If any EC wants to test this electronic COP procedure, please contact the Insurance Administrator.

MOW GOES TO THE GRAND CANYON

BY JOE SCHNYDER AND BILL PHOENIX



We had a safe and quick set on at the Williams roundhouse on Tuesday afternoon and at 3 pm we moved our cars to track 5 at Williams to get ready for Wednesday mornings trip to the Grand Canyon.

of the rails. We backed around the wye and in front of the historic Grand Canyon Depot for our two-day stay at the park. Thursday, we had



At 9 am the passenger train left Williams and we moved all the motorcars to the track in front of the Williams depot for a picture that the railroad wanted for their offices...and we managed to slip in a few shots in ourselves. After about 15 minutes of pictures and coffee, we departed for our first stop at Milepost 37.8 at the Willaha siding where we had the comfort stop at the blue room set there for our group. It was quite windy and cool to me but other people from colder climates were enjoying the “warmer” weather. After about 30 minutes we headed to the crossing at Coconino MP 57.1 where we refilled our cars with fuel and sent our empty gas cans back to Williams in a truck waiting there for us. Portable gas cans are not allowed in the National Park. From there we moved up the line and pulled up into the wye track at Grand Canyon MP 64.3 and waited for the passenger train to depart. I was parked next to a snowbank and in certain areas there was quite a bit of the white stuff. Monday evening before we got there the Canyon had 5 inches of snow, and on the way up there were many spots where the only thing you saw was the top

all day to explore and hike and visit the canyon. Bill Phoenix brought his Alphorn with him and played it for people at the rim. From what I saw it was quite a hit with the visitors there, making an amazing echo in the canyon walls. I'll let him take it from here

"Going to the Grand Canyon provided me with the perfect opportunity to play my alphorn. Crowds naturally gather to listen. They ask what the instrument is, and I always demonstrate its sound and range, then talk about its history as a signaling instrument. Classical music composers, I explain, have used alphorn melodies in





their compositions. Brahms used the *All is Well* theme in the 1st movement of his 1st Symphony. Some, however, are more familiar hearing it in the Ricola cough drop commercials.

On Thursday around noon, Kathie and I found an incredible spot, overlooking the Bright Angel Trail. In the picture, the trailhead is on the rim at the left and just to the right of the shelter whose roof has a bit of snow. Hikers enter a steep section of the trail and then a more level section that goes through tunnels and switch-backs.

Just before sunset, when the wind had died down a bit, we took my alphorn and led a group of MOW friends to the spot to play several numbers. There were many hikers making their way back up to the rim. We arrived, and a man who probably suspected that I was carrying an alphorn said to his companions, 'I feel like I'm in a different country' and asked what I had. I uncased it and began to play. Kathie later told me that he said as he walked away, 'You meet all kinds of interesting people at places like this.' It's true. He would have been astonished to learn that we had ridden from Williams to the depot near the El Tovar hotel on the south rim in our little vintage railroad inspection car the day earlier, on my 75th birthday.

During the first tune, I decided to stop after a phrase...and listen for the echoes. The phras-

es were generally short enough for the echo to entirely return it. A series of echoes went on for maybe 5 seconds. The first and loudest appeared from directly across the valley, then weakened as the others progressed to the right until the weakest and last seemed to come from the main part of the canyon itself. It was amazing to hear from our perspective.

The South Rim of the Grand Canyon is lightly forested with cedar and juniper trees at about



7,000' elevation. And because I play with such a big mouthpiece, making music takes a lot of effort. After six or seven tunes, I was tired and cold and decided to quit playing while I was ahead. I had just cased the horn when two excited young women holding hiking sticks were suddenly in our group, asking where the trumpet or bugle was. They had been on the trail in the valley when I began playing and described being surrounded by an 'ethereal' sound. They hustled up the final 500' vertical elevation, and I don't know how many more horizontal feet they walked, but they were out of breath. One is in a white jacket and the other is to her left and holding a phone. Now I ask you, when was the last time you saw young women smile like that at a 75-year-old man?

They had worked so hard to catch us that I couldn't leave without demonstrating the alphorn, so I uncased it and played once more.

The wind briefly subsided to the point where the echoes were especially plain. Kathie took a picture that included them and people above us on another level of ground. I was surprised to see how many people were there. We're looking forward to returning next October in our motorcar and bringing the alphorn!"

Thanks Bill, for the music and the story. Friday morning, we made our way to the motorcars and held the safety meeting. After watching the passenger train arrive from Williams, we departed around noon for the return trip to Willaha and after about 30 minutes we headed to Williams for a safe and leisurely set off. The new railroad management was happy to have us on the property; and we were invited back next year. Come join us.



INSURANCE RENEWALS DUE

--AND SOME INSURANCE PROCEDURE CHANGES--

BY WAYNE PARSONS, INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

There is good news about our NARCOA insurance, we are renewed at \$149.00 per insured operator! Enclosed with this issue is the insurance description, the insurance application, and the NARCOA agreement. Please fill out the forms and renew your insurance by no later than March 31st. Insurance applications get mailed to Mike Ford. Here are a few minor changes to the application.

First, having a driver license is still required. Operators warrant that they possess a valid license in section 2 of the General Release. However, NARCOA no longer collects driver license numbers on the insurance application and does not store them in the Wild Apricot database.

Second, you no longer disclose your complete birth date on the insurance application. You are asked to list your year of birth, but only for member demographic tracking. These changes are an effort to protect your identity; and eliminates the need for expensive cyber insurance.

Please use the check list on the insurance application to make sure your paperwork is in order. Last year one in six of all applications received by Mike was defective and had to be returned for correction. Please make sure your dues are paid through 2/1/2023—see the SETOFF mailing label—otherwise include a \$40 check for NARCOA membership. Also remember to sign the NARCOA agreement. Making sure your application is complete will help the renewal process go faster.

EASTERN RAILCAR RIDES THE SOUTHERN TIER

The Southern Tier of New York has been a railroad beehive over the years with rail lines crossing the area. In 2021, many of those lines have been removed but a few still remain, namely the WATCO subsidiary Ithaca Central and the RJ Corman subsidiary Owego & Harford. Through the cooperation of both railroads, NARCOA affiliate Eastern Railcar Association (ERA) was able to conduct railcar excursions in 2021 on both lines.

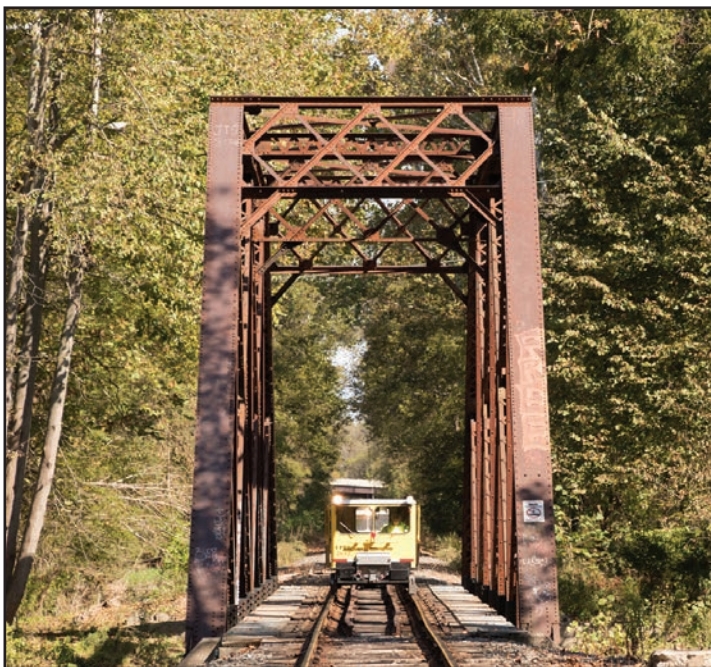


Photo by Mark Whipple

The O&H has seen many trips over the years when it was owned by Steve May. Steve was very gracious through the years permitting us the privilege of operating on both his Lehigh Railway and the O&H, and then donating our trip fees to the Tioga County Boys and Girls Club. When he sold his rail holdings in the northeast to RJ Corman at the end of 2020 there was doubt whether we would be able to operate our railcars once again, despite a spotless safety record since 2009. Luckily, our contact at the railroad, Tom “TC” Clark, agreed to investigate the possibility of an excursion and was able to secure permission for us to return to Owego this fall.

The Ithaca Central is a WATCO subsidiary and its general manager, Michael Cooper, was very cooperative in permitting an excursion to take place on these “new” (to NARCOA) rails. Mr. Cooper was approached about the possibility of operating a railcar excursion in 2020 and we were in the process of setting up a trip when COVID-19 arrived with a vengeance and put a halt to our plans. By early spring 2021, fears had calmed a bit and a one-day trip was organized for June 2021. A successful day was had by all, and we were invited to return at a future date.

So now, with RJ Corman on board with a trip, the Ithaca Central was asked if ERA could operate again; our goal was to combine both railroads into a 2-day weekend as the Southern Tier Weekend. September 18th and 19th was to be the date until mid-August when the area received an inordinate amount of rain, causing widespread flooding. That flooding resulted in almost a mile of the Ithaca Central being washed out, rendering our excursion impossible. Mr. Cooper was extremely professional and advised that there was a possibility of the tracks being restored to service by our date but if we could postpone the trip for several weeks, we’d have a better chance to ride the rails. This would be possible only if the O&H would agree to a



East Waverly, NY on the Ithaca Central and the cars are preparing to turn for the return trip to Ithaca.

Photo by Donna Benson

date change (they did) and if a catered lunch scheduled for the Sunday O&H portion could be rearranged (it was at a different location). That in mind, the date was changed to October 2nd & 3rd. Now, it was up to the registrants to go with the date change and, luckily, most just rolled into the new date, with spaces being filled by others who couldn't make the original date.

October 2nd saw a successful run over the length of the Ithaca Central including the entire section along Cayuga Lake. During the

pilot TC was happy with our operation and led our group to Harford and return in his hy-rail. Our lunch stop at Jackpot Richies, provided



Newark Valley, NY on the O&H. The owner/builder of the motorcar Eric Humes, our O&H Pilot Tom "TC" Clark, James "Itchy" Mead from ERA and Rob Piligian from ERA, October 3, 2021 Photo by Donna Benson



Photo by Mark Whipple

trip, track repair crews were encountered, still repairing the flood damage from the preceding months. Long sections of freshly placed stone ballast, ties and rip-rap bank protection could be seen during the roughly 95-mile round trip. Our pilot Russell was very pleased with our performance; for many years he had operating motorcars as part of his work on the railroad.

October 3rd dawned grey and drizzly, but the 50-mile trip was operated without incident. Our

a nice break in the trip as did the stop in the morning at Newark Valley where the lovely ladies who man the depot there provided coffee, doughnuts and other goodies to the group. They opened the depot specifically to provide the refreshments and use of their restrooms and were very gracious in doing so.

All in all, it was an enjoyable weekend and special thanks to Michael Cooper at the Ithaca Central along with his fellow WATCO personnel, Tom Clark at the Owego & Harford along with his fellow RJ Corman personnel for allowing us their rails and to the Eastern Railcar Association/NARCOA participants for operating in a safe and professional manner.

Group photo below by Donna Benson





ON TRACK FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS BY ROBIN WHIPPLE

We always enjoy doing Toys for Tots runs, so we did two weekends this year. Saturday November 13 was on the Southwest PA Railroad, a continuing tradition of Appalachian Rail Excursions. We went from Mt Pleasant, PA to Greensburg, PA approximately 50 miles round-trip

many toys and some participants even collected toys prior to the trips from friends and family to donate. After our safety meeting there was judging of the decorated cars. All winners of the cars received a gift, Deb Severino's gingerbread house took first place each trip and well deserved at that.



Our journey on the 13th began at Mt Pleasant, PA. It was a cold morning, around 28-30 degrees...Brr!! We started out in the rain which then turned into sleet then snow but that didn't stop anyone. By 10-10:30 it all cleared up, just cloudy the rest of the day. We made several planned stops to meet people and collect toys. If people were by the side of the track along the way, a car would slow down, stop and pick up

with John Gonder as our Excursion Coordinator. On Saturday November 20th we were on the Northshore Railroad from Northumberland, PA to Berwick, PA approximately 84 miles round-trip, part of the former Lackawanna Railroad line. On Sunday, November 21st we were on the Union County Industrial Railroad approximately 40 miles round-trip from New Columbia, PA to Allenwood, PA with Larry Maynard as our EC both days. All participants were encouraged to decorate their cars each weekend. There were many nicely decorated cars, we even had a gingerbread house! All cars as part of the excursion fee had to bring a new unwrapped toy or make a cash contribution. We all contributed



Photo by Darryl Betts



the toys. At certain collection stations we would all unload our cars to a Marine Corps Toys for Tots truck. At one of our designated stops, there were hot chocolate and goodies given out to all the community as well as us. A local house was even playing Christmas music for all to enjoy, wow, such community support! A few railcars handed out candy to children stopped along the way. Each day we had a surprise visit from Santa Claus! Santa was a big hit with the children, and you can image how surprised they were to see Santa pull up in a railcar! He would greet

the children then many smiles erupted, and many pictures were taken. Thank you, Santa (who looked a lot like Ed Summers), for all the joy you brought to all the people young and old!

Much to our surprise during our safety meeting today we were told Chick-fil-A was supplying our lunch and Aroma Joes (a local coffee shop) was giving out free coffee and hot chocolate to us. Thank you very much Aroma Joes and Chick-fil-A. Our lunch break was at Greengate Rd. Crossing and here we had a very large turnout of people and toys. The local newspaper "Tribune-Review" was there taking pictures and interviewing some railcar owners. A nice article and pictures were published in the paper. Great day and lots of toys collected that day. Thank you all.



Saturday November 20th weather was warmer and much dryer. We did many scheduled stops along the way to meet and mingle with folks and to pick up toys. Such a nice turnout throughout the day. Santa again was a big surprise to all young and old as he rode his railcar past people along the tracks, and at our stops greeting and picture taking with the kids. Today's lunch was on our own, so many people from the railcars went to local eateries and checked out the area. It is always nice to stop within a community for lunch to take in the sights and to have local

people check out the railcars up close. We get to talk about the cars, NARCOA and let the little ones sit in a car while parents get a picture. Such smiles and happiness they get, a fun-filled day for all.



Photo by Shane Dunlop

Sunday November 21st was a little cooler with a light wind, but it was partly sunny. We stopped along the way to pick up toys and greet folks. Our lunch break was on our own at the Roller-mills Market Place in Lewisburg, PA. This is an old flour mill turned into many floors of antiques. Many railcar participants enjoy this spot and look forward to it each year. Our turnaround was at Winfield, PA where the local fire department had two of their fire trucks on display for all to view and enjoy. A nice gathering of people



Photo by Darryl Betts

with toys were ready for us here. Again, Santa brought smiles to all young and old, posing for pictures and trading hugs. He even got many honks from traffic on US 15.



John Gonder carrying some of the 2751 toys collected, in addition to \$3150.00 in cash and checks. They actually had enough toys that the local chapter of the reserves was able to send a truck load of toys to Kentucky to aid the folks hit by the tornados. Photo by Shane Dunlop



It was a joyful way to start the Christmas season with lovely, decorated cars, gifts given, and fun times shared by all. We truly had wonderful support throughout the communities for the local children on all three trips.

Photos by Michael Whipple and Tom Healy except as noted.

NORTH TO ALASKA 2

BY BILL SCHERTLE



Unloading and setting on. Photo by Nancy Parsons

Under the capable leadership of EC's Dave Balestreri and John Martin, Motorcar Operators West was once again ready to tackle the challenges of an excursion on the Alaska Railroad that connects Seward and Whittier in the south to Fairbanks in the north, a total of 482 miles. However, the major issue was getting the motorcars to Alaska in the midst of a closed Canadian border. The solution was to containerize the motorcars and ship them to Anchorage by truck and barge – and it worked! The cars were trailered to Wasco, CA where EC John Martin coordinated loading and tying down 15 motorcars in three containers. The containers were then trucked to Seattle, WA, placed on a barge, delivered and unloaded in Anchorage about 50 feet from our set on site. The tour was ready to begin.

Following seton the morning of September 4th there was time for some shopping in Anchorage followed by our welcome dinner later that evening at Sullivan's Steak House. The next day it was time to start our motor, bring in the chain, release the brake, and head north to Fairbanks! Our northbound overnights were in Talkeetna and Denali. Both of these towns offer a variety of tours from flightseeing to rafting to bus excursions into spectacular areas. Several layover days allowed participants to take advantage of these tours.



Matanuska MP 150.6

Northbound at Cantwell, motorcars meet with the Alaska Railroad passenger train





Rest stop at Three Bridges on the way from Talkeetna to Denali



Colton supervises the daily routine of filling the gas from the hi rail tank.



When you're on the rails for almost 1000 miles, something is bound to break. Photo by Ann Bilodeau



Train meet with 3008 on the way from Healy to Fairbanks



Smiling faces across the board at Talkeetna! Photo by Nancy Parsons

Our northbound journey ended in Fairbanks, a large city with multiple opportunities to explore the surrounding area including the Alaska State Museum at the University and the amazing car collection at the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum. After two layover days it was time to motor around the Fairbanks balloon track and head south, once again laying over in Denali and Talkeetna.



Spectacular view of the Bartlett Glacier

Our next layover was Wasilla where we observed the on-going rebuild of Alaska RR steam engine #557. EC Dave Balestreri presented a donation to Pat Durand to help it get back on the rails.



Photo by Linda Gunn





We then gathered at the Alaska Museum of Transportation for dinner and the traditional auction to raise money (\$4000) for their ongoing expenses. The next day it was off to Girdwood for the Farewell Dinner.



With the safety meeting over; Dave shares a laugh with Gene, Colton and John. Now it's time to get the motorcars on the move.



MP 14.5 the bridge on the way from Whittier to Seward.



Following a short detour to experience the 4 ½ mile tunnel to Whittier (photo above) we reached the southern end of the line at Seward where we had the opportunity to take a boat tour of Glacier Bay National Park. Then it was back to Anchorage for set off and the end of an unforgettable motorcar experience – 964 miles of rushing rivers, fall colors, eagles, and great traveling companions.

P.S. – Unfortunately, five motorcars from the East that were also containerized, were mis-directed and did not make it to Anchorage. However, the majority of their owners decided to do the tour anyway, riding in the railroad's hi-rails, calling out mile posts, crossings, and wildlife. They were a great addition to the excursion, and we were all glad that they decided to join the trip in spite of their setback.

MAGIC OF THE RAIL- INRR EXCURSION

BY LINAS MASTIS

The magic of the rail, the longing for the rhythmic clickety-clack sounds of our railcars, the hot summer sunshine, the smiles of friends old and new all came together at the Indiana Northeastern Railroad excursion.

For us it was an early morning start at 3 am as we left our home in Michigan for a short 2 ½ hour drive to the Klink Trucking Co. yard in Ashley, Indiana. We arrived early to find three other operators as eager as we were to set on the rails that were already populated by the Friday evening set-on. Morning set-on was punctual at

applications and checks for excursions only to have them returned due to cancellations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, I was exceptionally happy to see that he was finally able to cash one.

As the sun rose, the 35 railcar participants gathered for the 7:40 am safety briefing. Introductions were made of the general manager of the Indiana Northeastern Railroad (INRR) Troy Strane, the railroad owner Gale Schultz, and of Klink Trucking Co. owner Wayne Klink. Much gratitude was expressed with a warm round of applause for their hospitality, and generosity in letting us use their properties for the enjoyment of our hobby. This was followed by introductions of other notable participants including several other EC>s as well as area directors. The farthest traveling participant was Dave Acheson from Orlando, FL. He might have thought he'd be getting out of some of the summer heat by traveling north, but, rather, we think he might have just brought the high temperatures with him. We were in for a sweltering weekend. The final phase of the briefing was the most important regarding the safety protocols and understanding the general release, the importance of staying hydrated and alert, and a very detailed outline of the day's events and rest stops throughout the 100-mile excursion. At 7:55 the tracks rumbled with the sound of our wheels.



6:45 as the excursion coordinator, Mike Ford, arrived with a clipboard and an enthusiastic smile to greet this year's lucky participants. I say lucky, because this excursion always sells out exceptionally fast, due to Mike's long-standing reputation for excellent organization and attention to details. We were lucky also, because, at least personally, I had sent Mr. Ford multiple



We had a reverse move from the yard to access the main railway, then took off for approximately 25 miles straight eastward to the last two crossings before Pergo Junction. Using both crossings we were able to quickly turn our cars around. We proceeded back west to Edon, OH where we were greeted by the Florence Township Volunteer Fire Department at their old fire-house for our morning break and much appreciated cold refreshments, as well as an opportunity to stretch our legs.

Only several days prior to our excursion this area was ravaged by a horrific wind and rain-



storm resulting in many trees being toppled and branches strewn onto the railways. It must have taken an army of people as well as abundant resources to clear such a length of track. Often, we don't consider or truly appreciate the maintenance required after such acts of nature. Gratefully, the track was freed up enough for our excursion, but much work still needed to be completed to clear the devastation remaining on the side of the tracks.

Our excursion took us to Steubenville Junction and north to Angola. We arrived at Trine University, stopping briefly to rest and stretch, enjoying the well-manicured grounds as well as the air-conditioned lobby. As we proceeded about 90 minutes north to Hillsdale, we crossed the border into Michigan. The countryside was



absolutely gorgeous with acres and acres of lush corn crops, which left us drooling for this summer treat. Here we stopped for lunch with multiple choices of local fast foods to satisfy almost any palate within a few short yards off the track.

Breaks also gave us a chance to chat with other participants, see other makes of cars up close, pick up on clever ideas or just learn some tips. This year we were surrounded by several poppers. We were pleasantly surprised that one of



the 2-stroke owners, Chuck Pearson, lives just a few miles from us. It's such a small world yet offering such big adventures. By 3 pm we were continuing north then west to Quincy for our rest stop. We came upon an unexpected community art fair with a live outdoor concert in the town park. Small town community gatherings always mirror the camaraderie and friendships amongst our own community of railcar enthusiasts.



The final stretch was westward to Coldwater, MI where, at the old railroad station depot we did a turnaround then rode east to end the day's journey. After securing our motorcars, some walked up the hill to the hotel only a few hundred yards away. (A shuttle bus was also waiting to take us weary participants to the hotel.) The evening was free. There were many nearby restaurants for dinner, even a barbeque joint, for those that still had energy. Most of us simply enjoyed a cold shower and relief from the 90+ degree weather and high humidity that we had traveled in most of the day.



Sunday morning came quick with a breakfast buffet at the hotel starting at 6 am followed by the shuttle bus back to our rail cars. We gathered at 7:15 for a detailed safety briefing and review of the day's plan. Just before 8, we were rolling on the rails for the 50 miles of Sunday's leg. Around 10, we reached Hillsdale for our morning break where we were greeted by a short rain that brought out a spectacular rainbow. As we left, we were able to drive through a weighing station and have our railcars weighed before crossing back into Indiana and heading south to Angola, a mere 90 minutes away. We returned to Trine University for a quick rest stop, then continued less than 10 miles to Steubenville Junction, where we switched rails, moved in reverse for two miles until Interstate 69, then forward on the spur to Klink's Trucking yard to end our excursion just around 1 pm.



The set off was incredible as the excursion coordinator had arranged for seven cars to be set off at the same time, so in very short order all the railcars quickly made their way onto their trailers. We said our farewells to old and new friends, until we meet again on the rails, and by two o'clock we were heading home, fortified with a weekend of magical memories.

SUPPLIERS

If you are a supplier of motorcar parts and wish to be included here, please contact the Editor. No endorsement is made of the products, services, or vendors. All listings are for members' consideration only, and are at the discretion of the Editor.

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

ThunderHill Services, thunderhillservices@gmail.com and thunderhillservices.com 857-302-3135. Sean McInerney Quality brake assemblies for Fairmont A-3/4/5, S2/ST2, M/MT-14/19, M9 and all Woodings. Oak brake blocks (incl. fasteners) also sold separately. All components manufactured in New England.

Fairmont parts, majority are NOS, all OEM, no reproductions, most came from Brown Railroad Supply – Phil's Motorcar Parts - Operated by Philip Hopper, 6126 Bear Branch Drive, San Antonio, TX 78222, Phone: [210-845-4119](tel:210-845-4119) from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Central Time, weekdays. Personal visit by appointment only. Email at royalrubyman64@gmail.com or visit my website for details on the listings at: <https://www.philsmotorcarparts.com>

Railroad Motor Car Resource Library / Doug Cummins, doug@rrstuff.net 1146 W. 27th St. Independence, MO 64052-3222. Library of rail motorcar manuals, performance sheets, parts lists, maintenance instructions.

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Dave Myers at: dave@redspeeder.com or [928-380-7056](tel:928-380-7056) Custom Fairmont transmission sprockets.

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NARCOA EXCURSIONS

AS OF DECEMBER 15, 2021



Please submit all excursions and ads directly to

webmaster@narcoa.org

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

Jan 1, 2022 - GA posted 11/28

St Marys Railroad

Southeastern Railcar Operators (SERO) will be having a motorcar car run on the St. Marys RR from St. Marys to Kingsland with a side trip to Kingsbay. \$35.00 per car Contact EC Jay Boggs [904-910-5648](tel:904-910-5648) boggsrr@bellsouth.net

January 1-2 - CA posted 11/19

Napa Valley Wine Train

Napa to St Helena and return. Limit is 40 rail cars; no high rails. This is a rain or shine event. Set on is 2 ap to 5 pm on Saturday Jan 1, 2022 and 7 am to 8 am on Sunday Jan 2, 2022; actual run is Sunday. This is a NARCOA sanctioned run. Run fee is \$135. EC Carl Shellhorn [707-695-9722](tel:707-695-9722) cell Chaserskip@Comcast.net

Mar 5 - 6 - TX posted 12/15

Border Pacific Railroad

Railroad Partners, Inc. 60 RT miles between Penitas and Rio Grande City each day. Track parallels the Mexican border along the Rio Grande River. Trip fee - \$50.00. Details <http://www.railroadpartners.com/> EC Leland Stewart poppermaker@gmail.com or call [210-863-5397](tel:210-863-5397)

Excursions Held On A Regular Basis

Feb 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Capitol Metro Transportation

Railroad Partners, Inc. will host NARCOA motorcar runs and work sessions on various dates from Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. Details <http://www.railroadpartners.com/> EC Leland Stewart poppermaker@gmail.com [210-863-5397](tel:210-863-5397)

Jan 1, 2022 - Dec 31, 2022 - PA

Northern Central Railroad

Excursions on the Northern Central Railroad from New Freedom, PA to York, PA on various dates. EC Dean L. Grote call [717-637-7647](tel:717-637-7647) or e-mail for details dizzydean55@embarqmail.com

Jan 1, 2022 - Dec 31, 2022 - PA

Stewartstown Railroad

Excursions on the Stewartstown Railroad from New Freedom, PA to Stewartstown, PA on various dates. Northern Central Railcar Association EC Dean L. Grote call [717-637-7647](tel:717-637-7647) or e-mail for details dizzydean55@embarqmail.com

Feb 1, 2022 - Jan 31, 2023 - GA

Cater Parrott Railnet

South Eastern Railcar Operators, Inc. will have work sessions on Cater-Parrott Railnet between Madison, GA and Newborn, GA. Barnesville, GA and Thomaston, GA Valdosta, GA and Willacoochee, GA on various dates. EC Frank Ahouse Ahouse.frank@yahoo.com [229-886-4707](tel:229-886-4707)

Feb 1, 2021 - Jan 31, 2022 - CA

Amador Central Railroad, RRCHS

RRCHS will be having NARCOA motorcar runs open to all licensed and insured motorcar operators and work parties from Ione to Martell on various dates throughout the year. Details <https://www.amadorcentralrailroad.com/> for information and times/dates on the work parties and runs.

Feb 1, 2022 - Jan 31, 2023 - GA

St Marys Railroad

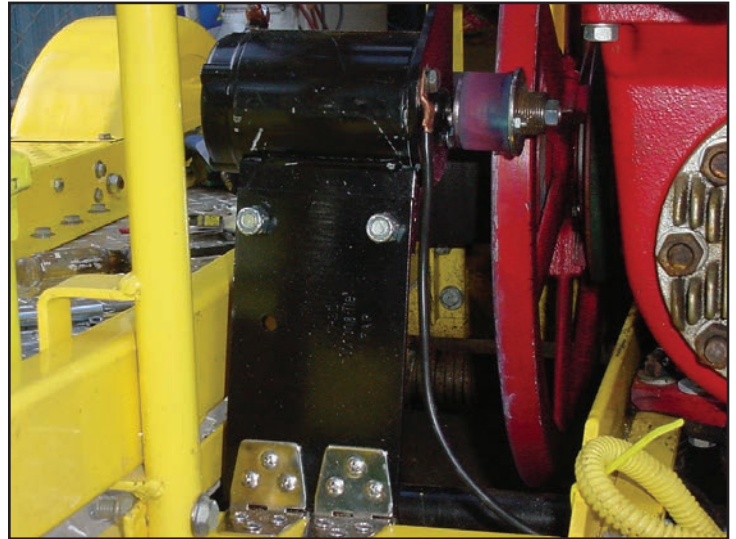
SERO will be having motorcar car runs on the St. Marys RR from St. Marys to Kingsland on various dates. Contact EC Jay Boggs boggsrr@bellsouth.net [904-910-5648](tel:904-910-5648)

ELECTRIC STARTER FOR AN RO-C

BY ROB BAUR

Fairmont offered a rare option for an electric start for the RO-C engine. It had a special flywheel with a V groove cut in it and a starter motor with a rubber disk with a matching V profile. A lever connected to the motor with a spring was pulled back to press the rubber disk into the groove. As the lever was pulled further back, it pressed a switch which energized the starter.

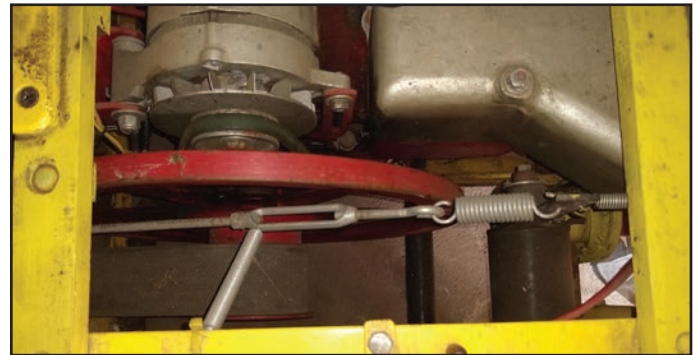
I devised something similar for an unmodified flywheel using a Club Cadet starter motor and a skateboard wheel. I mounted the starter on a hinged plate and attached a used Fairmont lever. I drilled the end of a left-handed tie rod and connected it to the starter shaft. (I used a left-handed tie rod end and nut to avoid it unscrewing when operating.) I chose the softest skateboard wheel I could find and machined its diameter down to increase the “gear” ratio. The wheel was put on the shaft with washers on both sides. I installed screws through the washers and wheel to transfer the torque to the wheel. In



needed to reverse the rotation of the starter, so I swapped the + and - brush positions on the armature. I used a floor mounted starter switch from a 50's pickup at the end of the lever's travel to connect power to the starter. A heavy gauge ground wire also is fitted so current doesn't go through hinges. It cranks the RO-C at around 300 rpm.



A piece of copper tubing cut in a 'V' shape was added over the starter switch to capture the lever. V bracket on right keeps the lever from going too far forward.



Turnbuckle adjusts spring tension, small spring at left keeps linkage from rattling against flywheel and a third spring pulls the starter forward.



Occasionally I need to clean the flywheel and skateboard wheel with brake cleaner to remove oil flung from the crankcase seal. When waiting for the consist to gather for a crossing I can kill the engine and restart without having to leave my seat. I get some double takes when someone notices an extra lever sticking out of the doghouse.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE HOBBY?

BY CARL SCHNEIDER

March 31, 1980 marked the end of operations for the Rock Island Railroad and also the last day I would receive a paycheck from my employer of nearly 10 years. I had grown up around the Rock Island and was lucky enough to find a job with the railroad after graduation from tech school so the Rock Island was in my blood. After the railroad shut down, there were auctions to sell off everything on the property. A friend of mine and I had the opportunity to buy a “piece of the Rock” which was an S-2 motorcar. Neither of us had any experience with

al times. I met my wife, Wally, during this time in 1982 and took her for a few rides on the motorcar. She enjoyed it and maybe that was one of the reasons she said ‘yes’ when I proposed and got married later that year.

When the Rock Island had one of their auctions in Silvis, Illinois, we went over and ended up buying an M-19 for \$50. The much lighter M-19 was easier to handle so we sold the S-2. A few years later, we found a Rock Island M-9 for \$125 in a junk yard to add to our collection. The M-9 was a complete restoration from the

frame up and we still run it to this day along with the M-19 which was fully restored in time to attend the 100th anniversary of Fairmont Motors.

We first joined the MCCA motorcar club in about 1988 so we could ride our cars on organized excursions and did that for a few years before we found out about NARCOA around 1990. Since then, we’ve ridden many thousand miles on the rails. We rode enough excursions with Hank Brown and his Wilderness Tours that Wally and I each received a cap designating we had ridden 25 different railroads

with him. Although we haven’t ridden in all the states around the country, our trips have taken us to Canada six times as well as many states across the country. Our choice of motorcars continues to be the M-19 and M-9 because we enjoy the 2-cycle cars. Wally is an operator as well and being left-handed, she can operate the 2-cycle cars from the right side while I operate from the left. That wouldn’t work with an Onan motorcar. Besides, the Rock Island never had Onan motorcars so we must keep our 2-cycle cars to remain true to my railroad roots.



motorcars but we purchased it anyway. We had luck getting the S-2 running and it ran beautifully. One big downfall was the weight of the motorcar. I towed it behind a Ford Pinto station wagon because that’s all I had at the time and I think the S-2 had more power than the Pinto. Eventually, the Iowa Railroad began operations on former Rock Island tracks and I just happened to know some of the dispatchers from my Rock Island days. We were able to call the dispatcher and get permission to run the S-2 on the line between Altoona and Pella, Iowa sever-