

# LINEUP

Motorcar Operators West Official Magazine



**Alaska  
Grand Canyon  
Annual Meeting  
Fillmore and Western**

**Volume 27, No. 1**

**June 2019**

# Motorcar Operators West

## Board of Directors, Officers and Members

### Jim Culbertson, President

PO Box 221  
Courtland CA 95615  
916-775-1894 (H)  
209-483-0903 (C)

### John Haverty, Vice President

PO Box 5078  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
916-769-1912  
Havertyconstruction@yahoo.com

### Secretary

Vacant

### Glen A. Ford, Treasurer

P.O. Box 129  
Rough & Ready, CA 95975  
530-432-5487 (H)  
530-913-2386 (C)

### Dave Balestreri

2320 E Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816-3513  
916-444-6374 (H)  
916-531-7536 (C)

### Ken Bilodeau

1170 Harker Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
650-326-7047 (H)  
650-269-2700 (C)  
kbilo@via.net

### Robin Douglas

1809 N Thistle Dr.  
Kuna, ID. 83634  
661-713-9295 (C)  
rsdouglas@aol.com

### Karl Hovanitz

2110 S Halcyon Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805-481-7353  
Silverado@thegrid.net

### Ron Mayer

PO Box 747  
Julian, CA 92036  
760-765-1577 (H)  
760-685-0747 (C)

### John Martin

1360 J Street  
Wasco, CA 93280  
661-331-7916  
madog979@aol.com

### Mike Mitchell

PO Box 245  
Guinda, CA 93021  
530-796-2350 (H)  
707-421-6333 (C)  
mlmitchell@solanocounty.com

Motorcar Operators West Documents  
Are Available At [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)

### Excursion Committee Chairman

#### Dan Berg

2017 Mule Creek Road  
Las Vegas NV, 89134  
702-341-8617  
deerail@embarqmail.com

### MOW Webmaster

#### Jaime Foster

pbjrr@jf2.com

### NARCOA Operator Certification

#### Manager

#### Dan Page

dan.h.page@gmail.com  
714-749-7548

### Membership Coordinator

#### Harry Fischer

28819 Shadow Valley Lane  
Santa Clarita, CA 91390  
661-296-0636 (H)  
661-733-3084 (C)  
homecraftHarry@gmail.com

### Line Up Editor

#### Andy Limon

13614 Summit Knoll Rd  
Agua Dulce, CA 91390  
310-951-4176 (C)  
MOWLineUp@gmail.com

## Cover Photo Credits

Front cover: Beautiful view of Denali which can usually be seen only 1 in 3 days due to clouds. Photo: Carol Balestreri

Back cover: Following Vic Thies' beautiful MT14 around a curve on the way into the Grand Canyon. Photo: Laura Wambsgans

2019 MOW Membership Renewals and new membership applications are now being accepted.

All memberships expire on December 31. Please download the printable form on the MOW website ([www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)) and fill-out all requested information. Mail the form along with a \$24.00 check to:

Motorcar Operators West, c/o Harry Fischer, Membership Coordinator, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

The Line Up is the official publication of The Motorcar Operators West, Inc. which is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the safe and legal operation of railroad motorcars as excursion vehicles. Motorcar Operators West excursion schedules, documents, items for sale, and past Line Up issues are available at [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org). Membership is \$24 per year and includes a Line Up subscription. The Line Up is copyrighted and permission to reproduce any portion of the newsletter must be obtained. All rights reserved. Submitting Photos and Captions: Members and guests are encouraged to contribute to the Line Up Photo Journal magazine by sending their excursion photos, accompanied by who, what, when, and where captions to: **MOWLineUp@gmail.com**. When submitting, please change photo file name to the caption text, or place caption text in the email body and photos as .jpg attachments. Front and back cover photos should be submitted in a portrait orientation at a high resolution

# President's Message

**Jim Culbertson**

Greetings to the membership.

I've got a couple of nice reports to share with you on recent Motorcar Operators West activities. I'll begin by reporting on the HeritageRail Alliance spring gathering hosted by the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Taking a look back, MOW Board of Directors voted some four years ago to consider participation with the HeritageRail Alliance as a member and further expand such support to joining the National Shortline RR Association. Following the successful first year of MOW membership and participation with the HeritageRail in Golden Colorado, it was decided that we should move forward with this support but move the project to the national level and coordinate the activity with NARCOA. HeritageRail holds gatherings at various locations in the US and Canada and it was felt that national representation could most cost effectively be accomplished by using the support of regional NARCOA members.

April of 2019 was once again MOW's opportunity to step up in Sacramento and represent the hobby and all of the members of NARCOA. With much effort and coordination by past MOW President and current director, Dave Balestreri, NARCOA was once again supporting the hobby with a booth at the gathering. NARCOA Area 11 director, Steve Paluso joined in with MOW Director John Haverty and yours truly to man the booth and reach out to the attendees. It's safe to say that as a hobby, participation with HeritageRail Alliance, positions us within the fabric of this portion of the railroad community and opens doors towards new rail access. It should be noted that Dave Balestreri worked very hard on coordinating an attendee event at the Western Railway Museum (WRM) for museum touring and motorcar rides. In the end, the newly arrived steam locomotive "Skookum" rebuilt and owned by MOW Member Chris Baldo stole the show and Niles Canyon was the hot ticket. The event at the WRM was dropped from the schedule. Too bad but steam is a big attraction.

Moving forward, I have the opportunity to present another success story for MOW. I've reported before about our three-year effort to return motorcars to the rails of the California Western RR (Skunk Train). Our hobby in California suffered a large blow with the loss of access to the rails of the Sierra Northern RR which operates three potential motorcar excursion lines. After many rounds of discussion, MOW was able to work out a plan to conduct work parties on the Skunk Line and as reported, in July of 2018 a line inspection was conducted with General Manager Robert Pinoli and Engineer Glen Ford. At that time, potential work projects were outlined and the structure and insurance coverage of our potential access was discussed and plans for the future were put in place. I'm happy to report mission accomplished occurred on June 8 and 9 as the first group of MOW members assembled under the leadership of CWRR employee Glen Ford to hit the rails in



Willits, CA for points west to tackle a long list of railroad improvements that our members could accomplish. I will refrain from the details at this point because others have indicated they will be writing articles covering the details of this meaningful event. One scope of the project was to create defensible fire space and general clean up around various historic buildings along the right of way. Look closely at the before and after pictures included in this copy. It clearly shows the improvement that was made on this first round of activity. Future work parties are under discussion and will be announced to the MOW membership via email. From a personal standpoint, it felt very good to be back out on this iconic line in the redwoods of Mendocino County. Longtime MOW member Wayne Parsons commented that it had been 7 years since his last time on those rails. Our club has a deep history with this line and we are once again writing some new chapters to the story.



Glen Ford on the 2018 inspection run illustrating the potential brush clearing to "The Chief Skunk" Robert Pinoli .



The after shot of the same location after the June 8 and 9, 2019 MOW work party.

I'll close by tipping my hat to three great railroad accomplishments, two of which occurred in 2019 and one that occurred in 1869. We are currently in the middle of the 150<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the completion of the transcontinental railroad. One of the large feats scheduled for this year of celebration was the Union Pacific Railroad's return of an operating Big Boy Steam locomotive to the rails. After reading many comments over the years that such an event would never happen, it in fact did happen. UP ran Big Boy 4014 from Cheyenne, WY to Ogden, Utah to coincide with the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Point, Utah. All I can say is mission accomplished! And be looking for this locomotive in the future as UP 4014 tours their railroad lines.

The other salute goes out to long time motorcar operator Chris Baldo and crew on the completed restoration of the steam logging mallet "Skookum." This now beautifully restored locomotive was rescued from basket-case condition lying derailed in a creek bed. The story is just amazing and future generations will benefit from the knowledge and skill it took to bring this engine back to life - Kind of the 'Little Engine That Could' story as opposed to the 'Big Boy' - but what great stories they are!

Safety First and Shiny Rails to all. We'll see you out on the line!

Jim Culbertson, President, Motorcar Operators West

# Membership Message

## Harry Fischer

Hello MOW Members!

It's me...your membership Dude, Harry!

Since our last publication, I would like to begin this report by welcoming our newest members into the hobby:

- Mark Comstock, Potlatch, ID
- Greg and Claudia Ockander-Pittsburg, CA
- Hal and Katie Johnson-Bloomington, MN
- John Allmen, Gilroy, CA
- Stephen Preston, Fruita, CO
- John and Myra Brigschgi, LaGrange, OR
- Jim and Barbara Haley, Lake Tapps, WA
- John and Jill Sorrells, Norco, CA
- Mike and Liz Steiner, Sacramento, CA
- Walt and Bonnie Wilson, Auburn, CA
- Gerald Mazur, Van Wert, OH



Effective June 1, 2019 we have 131 paid members for 2019.

Spread the word...Share your speeder experiences with your friends, co-workers by purchasing them a gift of a one year membership of The Line Up or share the magazine with them. They can use the tear out below to join.

Look at our website on a regular basis for updates and information of upcoming MOW events and information. And of course, your emails from me!

See you on the rails

Harry, Your Membership Dude

---

Motorcar Operators West Membership Application Form

Here is my \$24 dues check made payable to Motorcar Operators West. Please mail to:

Harry Fischer, MOW Membership, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390-1265

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# North to Alaska Railroad Tour

September 8-24, 2018

**Dave Balestreri, Excursion Coordinator**

Written by Carol Balestreri

Photos Courtesy of: Carol Balestreri

After months of preparation, a sunny September 8<sup>th</sup> saw 22 speeders gathered from all over the United States to run through the grandeur of our 49<sup>th</sup> state, Alaska. The enthusiastic welcome of Alaska Railroad Corp set the stage for a fabulous trip. We were popular everywhere we went (as speeders always are) but even more so as we were given credit for bringing the fabulous weather after 3 weeks of rain. We had some sunshine nearly every day of the 17 we were there. The autumn leaves colored the landscape in breath-taking displays of contrasting yellows, golds and greens. Truly, every day on the rails brought new delights around every curve. The majesty and scope of the mountains defies description. The breadth and enormity of the glaciers is overwhelming. Interspersed between rail days were days of discovery and adventure. Our layover days gave everyone a chance to explore the wonders of this amazing state. A variety of side trips and attractions were enjoyed by our diverse group. From museums to white-water rafting, landing on a glacier in a tiny airplane or traversing the tundra on foot or with a tour group in search of wildlife, Alaska shared its wonders with us. Add to that the camaraderie enjoyed within our group and the North to Alaska excursion truly was the trip of a lifetime.

I think the pictures speak for themselves.



Renee McAmis, EC Dave Balestreri, and Isabelle Bourneman  
at the welcome dinner at Sullivans.





Escorts Gene Lewis and Shaun Sanderlin of Alaska Railroad who became part of our group and were a constant delight. They were representative of the general attitude of Alaska Railroad, who welcomed us and went that extra step to make sure our Alaska experience was trouble-free. They simplified our fuel needs by carrying gas for us and filling us up at each stop.



Leaving Anchorage yard at the start of a 17-day adventure.

Passing Wasilla Visitor Center at MP 159.





Lineup under CTC light stand, coming up to Houston where we waited for a train at MP 174.3.

At Sunshine for a train meet.



Beautiful view of Mt. McKinley.

John Martin and Dave Balestreri assist Gene Lewis with filling gas tanks from his Hi Rail truck at Talkeetna.





O'dark-thirty, early morning Talkeetna before heading out for the day.



Curry Station midway between Seward and Fairbanks.

Lineup at "Twin Bridges", the second of 4 crossings of the Indian River. We stopped here to have a look at the scenic rivers, but the rails were icy and it was a challenge to get going again!



Chilitna Fall colors.





The lineup just after crossing the Parks Highway, between Chilitna and Hurricane.

Train meet at Hurricane.



At Cantwell for a train meet.

Entering Denali Park.







Denali Weather Station.



Scenery between Carlo and Oliver MP 342.7.

Train leaving Healy in the morning.



Clear site MP 392.9. We waited here for two train meets; passengers on the trains were always as enthusiastic waving at us as we were waving to them.





Historic Nenana Station MP 411.7.

In front of Fairbanks Station.



View from Hurricane Bridge MP 284.2.

1:30PM train meet at Hurricane, MP 281.4.



“Flag stop” at Chilitna where the train stopped for locals wanting to board at MP 274.



Train meet at Talkeetna, engines and ballast cars.



Kashwitna, watching gravel being loaded as engine pushes cars through MP194.



We arrive at the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry in Wasilla for dinner and an auction.





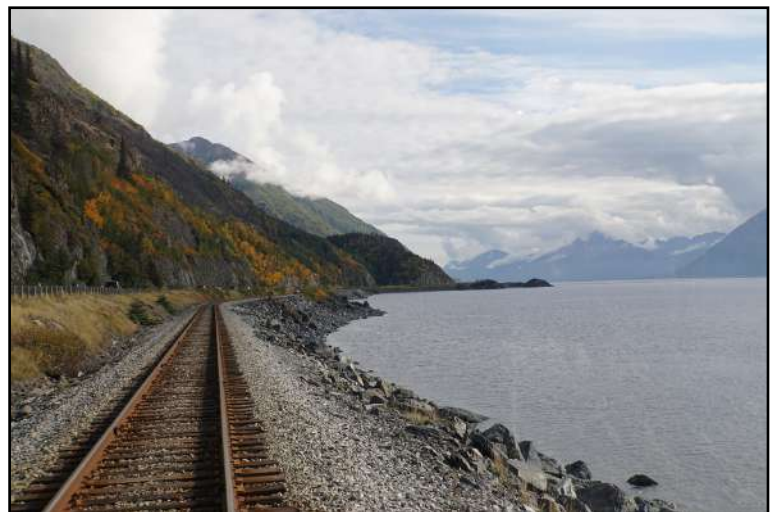
Renee McAmis and Mardie Devine wheel in the cake a'fire.

Auctioneer Terry Devine works the crowd while Renee displays auction items.



Quilt that John and Renee McArmist won at the benefit auction for Wasilla Transportation Museum.

Turnagain Arm.





Last rest stop on Turnagain Arm at Indian Station, near Indian Valley MP 89.



Brookman siding train meet.

Safety meeting at Girdwood.



As we wait on the Whittier side, the tunnel light tells us when the tunnel is next open in this direction.





At Seward they took us out by the dock, then decided to move us when they realized a large cruise ship would be docking there in the morning with hundreds of people unloading where they had parked us!



End of the tracks at Seward Station.



Group picture at Seward on our last day on the rails before heading back to Anchorage.

Leaving Seward.







Bridge at Snow River MP 14.5.



Upper Trail Lake.



Lineup in front of Bartlett Glacier.

So many people contributed to making this trip the best ever. Renee McAmis coordinated our group functions, and Terry Devine, John McAmis and John Martin made shipping our speeders happen. We couldn't have done it without the invaluable help of our travel agent Isabelle Bourneman with Alaska Travel Connections who arranged hotel accommodations and tirelessly pursued transportation options for us, as well as being on the spot when questions arose throughout the trip. Many thanks to all of those who transported speeders to and from set-on, and the **Group in General** for being cooperative and operating safely at all times.



# Fall Color Tour of the Grand Canyon

October 14-17 , 2018

Joe Schnyder, Excursion Coordinator

Written by Joe Schnyder

Photos Courtesy of : Tracee Clausen, Steve Hart,

Lonnie Hughes, Dave Jeffery, Jen Limon and Laura Wambsgans

We had an uneventful set on Sunday afternoon with Dee Berg heading up the paper-work trail while Dan Berg, John Martin and I got the cars set on and drivers shuttled back from the parking lot. Monday morning we were delayed getting out from last minute ADA car issues for the morning train but we were soon on the way to the canyon. We had a short stop at Valle to speak with a rancher there then on to Willaha where the Blue Room was waiting for us. It was a little windy and cool but most of us were still out walking around and talking. When we got to Imbleau siding we refueled the cars and sent the gas cans back to Williams in another truck.



Preparing to depart the Williams Depot yard.

Excursion Coordinator Joe Schnyder held the Safety meeting Monday morning before our departure.







After leaving the high desert of Williams, the landscape transitioned to beautiful forest.

Refueling stop at Imbleau before entering Grand Canyon National Park.



We arrived at the canyon and pulled up on the south end of the Wye and waited for the 3:00 passenger train to depart before we backed in to our parking spot in front of the Grand Canyon depot. Everyone got settled in to their rooms and we had a wonderful evening with friends. We woke up Tuesday morning to a dusting of snow and rather cool temperatures. Most folks still managed to get out and do a little walking around and enjoying the limited view for the rim.



What a difference a day makes. The day we arrived it was cold but clear. The following morning, snow was in the air.....(and on our speeders).





Speeders parked in the snow at the historic Grand Canyon Railway Depot, a National Historic Landmark.

Wednesday the weather cleared up a bit but it was still pretty cold and the wind was picking up. We awaited the arrival of the morning train, then started out of the South Rim at about noon. The ride home was very cold and windy, some interesting ways of keeping the wind out were improvised, and I'm sure a few decisions on obtaining a second, enclosed car were made on the run back to Williams. We had our rest stops and were back in Williams in the clear of the passenger train before 3:30 pm.



The Grand Canyon Railway passenger train arriving in the fog at Grand Canyon Village.



Rest stop at Willaha on return trip.



We set off at the maintenance yard, where the wind had died down. Some headed for home, some were off to the Copper Basin the next day. Good news at the end of the day was that we were invited back to enjoy the run to the Grand Canyon again, maybe as soon as next year. Thanks to EC Joe Schnyder and the folks at the Grand Canyon Railway, for another great trip. Joe says this was an EC's great run, no incidents, no accidents and other than a little snow on the ground we had a wonderful time with our friends.





# General Meeting Western Railway Museum

November 3-4 , 2018

Dave Balestreri, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of: Jen Limon

The Motorcar Operators West annual meeting was held Nov 14 at the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista Junction, CA. The meeting was preceded on Saturday night by a run on the WRM track, first headed south to Molena, then back to the museum yard, then north to Dozier, the intersection with highway 113, a total run of about 29 miles. This was my first night run, so I was excited and curious what it would be like to be in almost total darkness surrounded by wild creatures. It was kind of like my first time scuba diving at night, which was another fun experience. It turns out, it really isn't as dark as I expected as my lights did a great job of lighting the way, and the wild creatures kept to their lairs. One advantage of night running is that other cars (and automobile traffic at crossings) were easy to see with their lights on.



Ready to leave the Museum yard, prior to the trip to Molena.



Running at Rio Vista after dark.





Excellent night visibility, these LEDs really light up the track. These are aimed slightly downward to not blind the operator of the car in front, even when up close.

The next morning the annual meeting was held. Many topics were discussed, including a potential return to the Skunk Line hopefully sometime in the not too distant future, but it sounds like there's a lot of work to be done to make that happen. Other potential runs were also discussed, as well as state of the club, and any outstanding business. Newly elected NARCOA Area 11 Representative Steve Paluso commented on issues discussed at the 2018 NARCOA Annual Meeting held in Sept in Chicago.



After the meeting, a ride on one of the beautiful Museum trollies was offered followed by another run on the Museum track, this time south to Molena, then north to Canon, end of the museum line.



Preparing to turn around at Dozier, ready to head back to the Museum yard and end a enjoyable night run.

# Fillmore and Western Railway

January 12, 2019

## Wayne Parsons, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of Tracee Clausen, Ross Kallenberger, Russell Hajek,  
Jen Limon, and Bill Phoenix

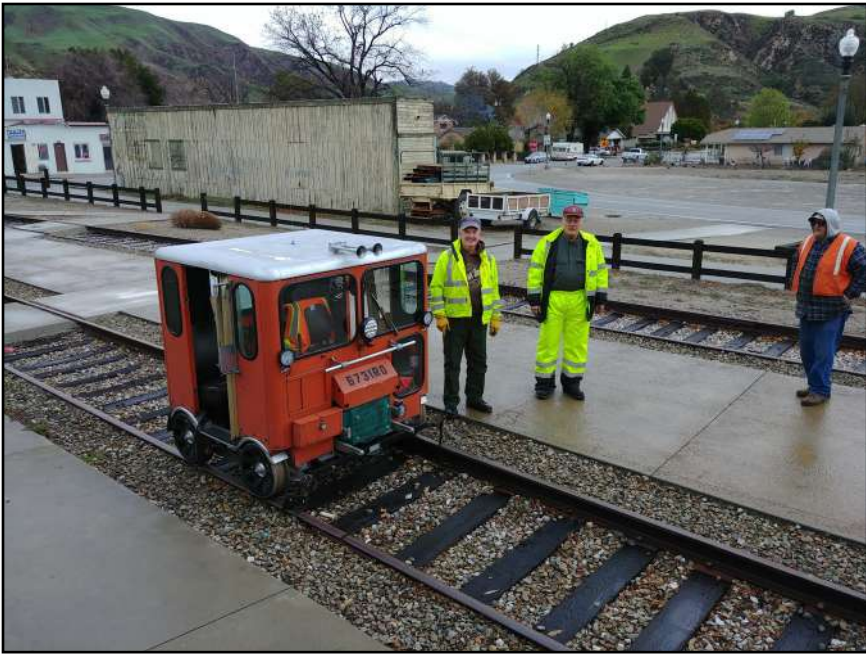
It was a cold and rainy day on January 12, as MOW members and guests came together in Fillmore, CA for a run on the Fillmore and Western Railway. The schedule for the day included a morning run to Piru, then a run to Santa Paula. The Santa Paula run was followed by an afternoon run to Piru, stopping at the Bennett's Honey Farm for honey tasting and purchase of sweet treats to be enjoyed later.

Set on was conducted in the Fillmore yard, with periodic rain making things sometimes difficult but not enough to dampen the spirits of the participants. Set on was followed by a safety meeting led by Excursion Coordinator Wayne Parsons. At the conclusion of the safety meeting we saddled up and headed East towards the small town of Piru, about 7 miles away. After a quick turn around, the rain had let up, and we headed back to Fillmore for a quick comfort stop.



EC Wayne Parsons conducts the safety meeting under gloomy skies and a light rain.





Glen Ford and Carl Sorenson take a break at Piru.



Orange trees and other agriculture on the way to Piru.



Preparing to depart Piru for Fillmore, then on to Santa Paula.







Ross Kellenberger's son and 3 granddaughters are all smiles during their first speeder ride.

Returning to the Fillmore yard after the morning run to Piru.



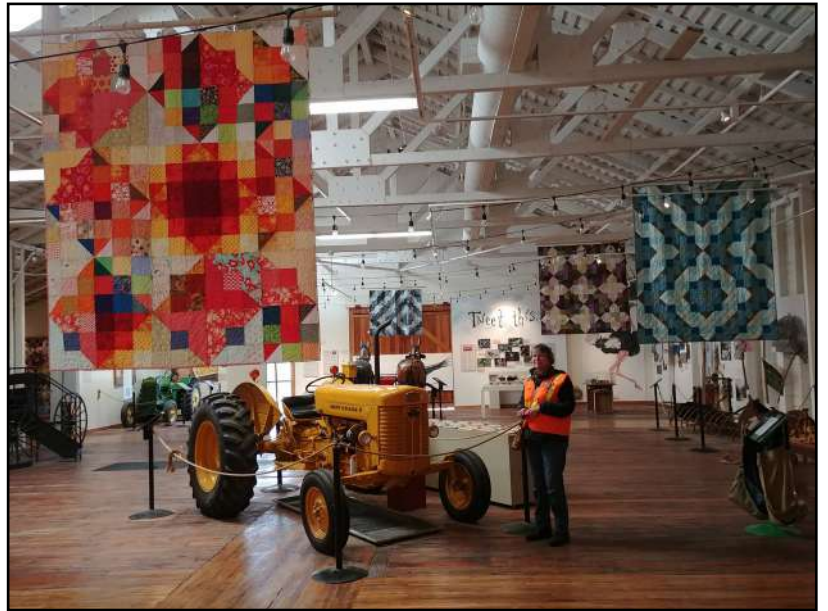
We then headed West out of the Fillmore yard to sunny Santa Paula, where we had time to have lunch and make a visit to the Agriculture Museum of Ventura County while we waited for the train from Fillmore to arrive.





Historic Santa Paula Station.

Kathie Phoenix admiring the quilts and restored tractors at the Agriculture Museum of Ventura County in Santa Paula during the lunch break.



Enjoying lunch at the Santa Paula Station just outside the Agriculture Museum.





Waiting for the train from Fillmore to arrive in Santa Paula.



Once the train was at the station, we headed back to Fillmore, then on to Piru again.

Pulling into the Fillmore yard from Santa Paula.



Departing Fillmore yard East,  
for the final run to Piru.



On the way back to Fillmore, we stopped at Bennett's Honey Farm to taste different flavors of honey, see a live bee hive in action, and purchase honey and honey based candy.

For set off it was damp, but not raining, and the set off went quickly and orderly.

Despite the wet weather, everyone seemed to have a good time, many thanks to Wayne Parsons for a very organized event, which even disagreeable weather couldn't ruin.

Afternoon run from Piru,  
returning to the Fillmore  
yard to end the day.



# Onan CCKB Ignition Tune Up

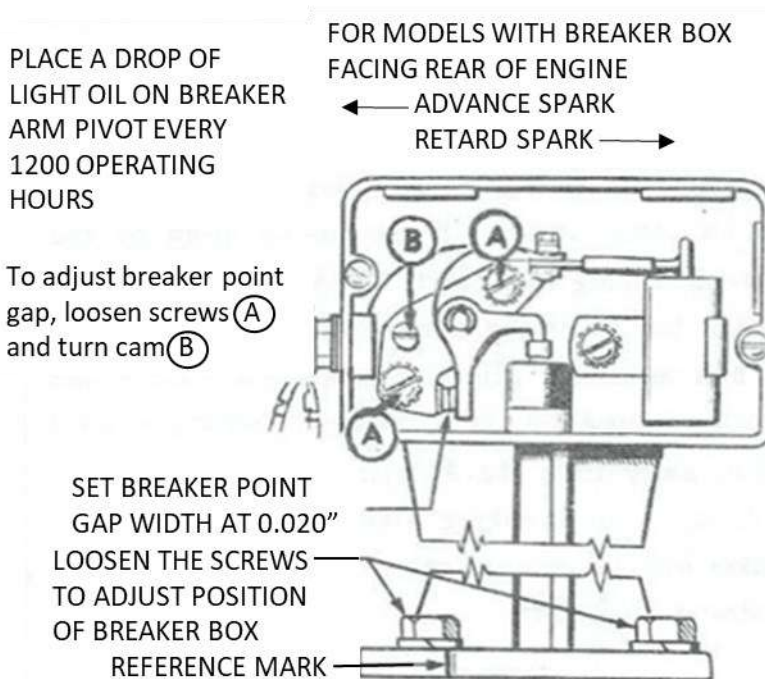
Dan Berg

*Editor's Note: This article has been printed previously, but it is being presented again due to the many new operators who may not have had the opportunity to see it.*

To improve Onan CCKB engine performance, a quick breaker box tune-up can be performed with a screwdriver, a flat feeler gauge, a 3/16 hex key wrench, a 5/8-inch box end wrench and a multi-meter or a simple continuity test lamp. A multi-meter that gives an audible signal is the preferred tool as it allows the operator to keep an eye on the task of setting the ignition timing and not distracted by looking at a test light or a meter.

**The first task** is to place the motorcar transmission in neutral gear and pull the spark plugs. This allows the engine to be turned-over easily by hand using the 5/8-inch box end wrench when setting the breaker points. Secondly, remove the breaker box cover and leave one screw in place as a spot to connect a test light or multi-meter lead. Continue by withdrawing the three 8-32x1/4 machine screws. Pull the breaker points from the box far enough to disconnect the mounting screw that connects the copper strap and condenser wire to the point assembly. Discard the old points and replace with a new set (Onan part number 160-0002 or NAPA part number 7-01035). At the same time disconnect the old condenser, discard and replace with a new condenser (Onan part number 312-0069 or NAPA part number (7-01312)). Connect the copper strap and the new condenser wire to the new point assembly. Next, shift the box to align the cylinder block and breaker box **witness marks** by loosening the breaker box mounting hex screws. Place a drop of oil on the point's pivot point (Figure 1).

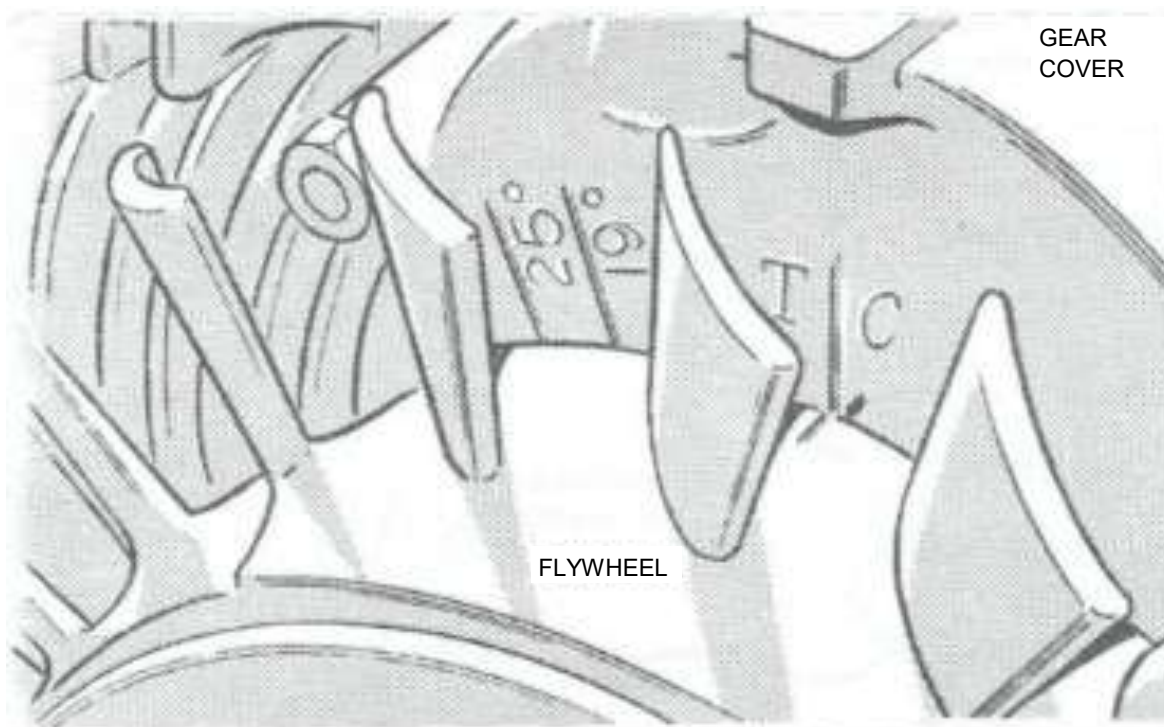
**Point Gap** - Using the 5/8 " wrench, rotate the engine flywheel clockwise until the **flywheel mark** and the **gear cover TC mark** are exactly in line (Figure 2). Apply a flat blade feeler to the breaker points. Turn the breaker point cam screw to set the .020 gap for full separation. Tighten the two machine screws. Withdrawing the feeler gauge from the gap, a slight resistance should be felt. Again, rotate the engine and check the breaker point gap. If the points maintain the .020 clearance, the **point gap** is set.





**Ignition Timing** - Connect a continuity test light or the multi-meter test leads across the breaker box terminal screw to the box cover screw, then return to the engine front to set the ignition timing. Turn the flywheel counter-clockwise until the timing mark is about 2 inches past the gear cover's 20-degree mark. Slowly turn the flywheel clockwise and note if the points breaks past or before the 20-degree gear cover line. If the lamp goes dark or the audible sound becomes silent at the 20-degree gear cover line, the ignition timing is correct. However, if the test lamp glows or the multi-meter makes an audible sound past the 20-degree gear cover mark, move the breaker box right (towards the #1 cylinder) to **retard** the spark until the flywheel mark align with the 20-degree gear case mark. If the points break too soon before reaching to 20-degree mark, shift the box slightly to the left to **advance** the spark.

**Finish** - Making the final adjustment, securely tighten the hex head screws and replace the breaker box cover. Complete the tune up by installing new Champion H10C, Autolite 216, or NGK B6L spark plugs gapped at .025. Coat the spark plug threads with Permatex anti-seize grease to prevent galling the aluminum cylinder head threads when later removing the plugs. The plugs should be torqued to 25-foot pounds.







For membership information, please visit our website at [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)