

MOTOR CAR TRAILERS... ...MY APPROACH

By Mike Paul

(Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, & Pacific MT-19)

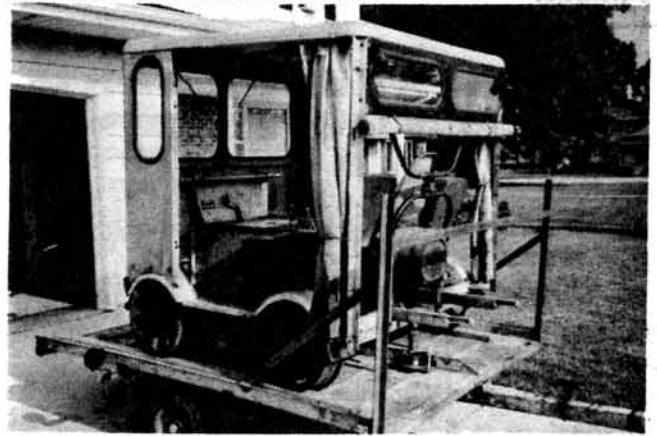
A few months ago, fellow NARCOA member Joel Williams prompted me to write about a subject that is infrequently covered during discussions among NARCOA members, and that is motor car trailers.

Back in July, I attended my first motor car meet, on the Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad. It was organized by fellow NARCOA member Hank Brown, and sponsored by the MCCA. I made it a point during my visit to look over the various types of trailers that the attendees used. Believe it or not, there were no two trailers alike! Some were very substantial (a 2-ton rating, I would guess), with tandem axles and surge brakes, while others were not so substantial...like mine!

My motor car trailer is a former snowmobile trailer (see photo). It is a 1970 vintage, and it looks it! It is a short two-place trailer, unlike the longer ones produced currently. In my opinion, the shorter variety is more preferable if you are only hauling one motor car. My experience with this snowmobile trailer during the mid-summer run (in 90° heat) up to the E&LS indicated that the small 8-inch wheels are pressed to the limit, bearing my 950-pound Fairmont MT-19, (plus the 250 lb+ trailer weight) and going 55 mph. My trailer has "B" rated tires, which are rated for a 620-pound load (each) at 45 psi. Thus, you can see my concern.

Although my wheel bearings had been repacked before my trip to the E&LS, I noticed that both my hubs and tires were warm after the 4-hour trip to Channing. Because of this maximum loading, I would generally not recommend using a snowmobile trailer, with the smaller wheels. Until I can justify the expense of a replacement though, I'll have to settle on what I have presently.

Adapting my snowmobile trailer for motor car use was quite easy. I bolted two 2x4's to the deck for the "rails", and bolted a boat winch to the center flange of the trailer bed, and I was in business. With the winch, I can easily load and unload my MT-19 by myself. Which reminds me...I didn't see one other trailer at the Channing meet with a winch! How do some of you guys handle that load if you're by yourself? I also noticed that nearly all of the trailers at the meet employed 12 to 13-inch tires (I saw only one other trailer with tires the size of mine).



Mike Paul's "temporary" trailer is a 1970's vintage snowmobile trailer that he has modified for track car use. Note the winch, wood rails and small 8-inch wheels. (Ed note: Hey Mike, if you turn that MT-19 around to the front, the wind drag won't be so bad!)

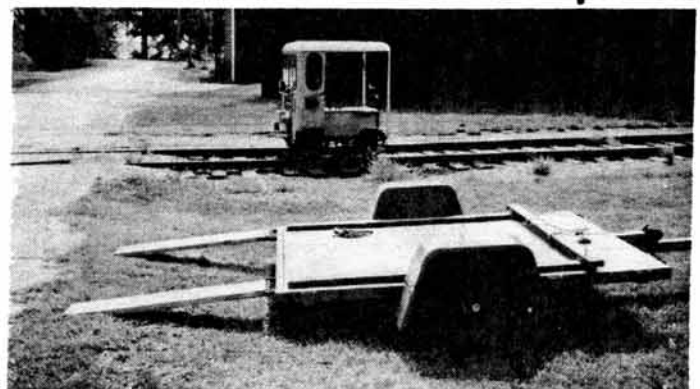
Photo By Mike Paul

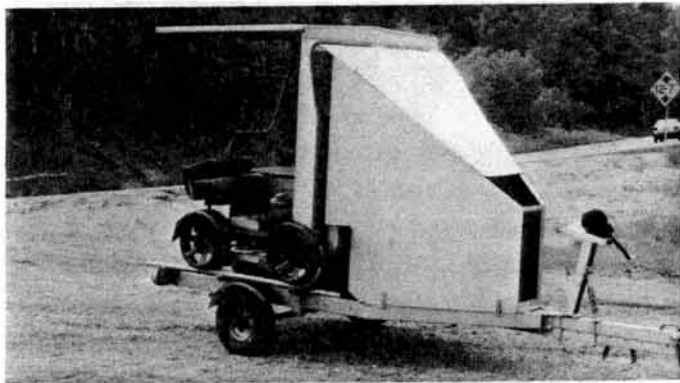
If I used my MT-19 more often than I currently do, I could probably justify buying the type of trailer that I *really* want...a model UT6020S-1 trailer manufactured by the Chilton Manufacturing Company of Chilton, Wisconsin (phone 1-414-849-2221 for the dealer nearest you). The Chilton job is a low bed, tilt trailer with 13-inch wheels outboard the bed. The bed is 64 inches wide, (not the 60 inches like mine) with a length of 8 1/2 feet, which makes it ideal for towing a single motor car.

The trailer has a weight rating of 2000 lbs, (including the weight of the trailer) and it retails for \$649.00. My dealer indicated that he would sell one to me for \$532.00, so this indicates some "haggling" room. Additionally, Chilton offers a slightly larger unit with a 2500 lb capacity. The construction seems to be substantial on both versions, and the spring hangers even have grease fittings!

Now, if we only had more motor car meets in Wisconsin, I could see my Chilton trailer dream become a reality...

EXAMPLES OF OTHER TRAILER APPROACHES





Dick Ray has modified this boat trailer for motor car use. In addition, he has installed a removable wind deflector to minimize wind drag. The trailer will accommodate either an M-9 or M-19 size car.

Photo By Dick Ray

Garrett Vandermeer, of Battle Creek, Michigan uses a small flatbed trailer with a drop axle and 14-inch tires. Note the winch on the trailer tongue and the wooden "rails".

Photo By Garrett Vandermeer



Fred Furminger uses a stock snowmobile trailer that is slightly "beefed up". Fred uses the tilt feature to load and unload his car with a tongue-mounted winch. The wooden "rails" have indentations to keep the car from shifting (even though it is tied down with cargo straps).

Photo By Fred Furminger