

SANTA FE INTERURBAN

A 2014 exercise in train trashing

By Jerry Hansz

I wondered if the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe ever had interurban cars. Online searches didn't find any. I did find a number of interurbans operated by other railroads.

I decided that one of my older Santa Fe passenger cars would do. I had a pair of pantographs I'd picked up somewhere years ago. In the junk box were some power trucks removed from old diesel locomotives. What the heck, Santa Fe Central would have an interurban!

One of the photographs I found online was a reasonable match to my passenger car:

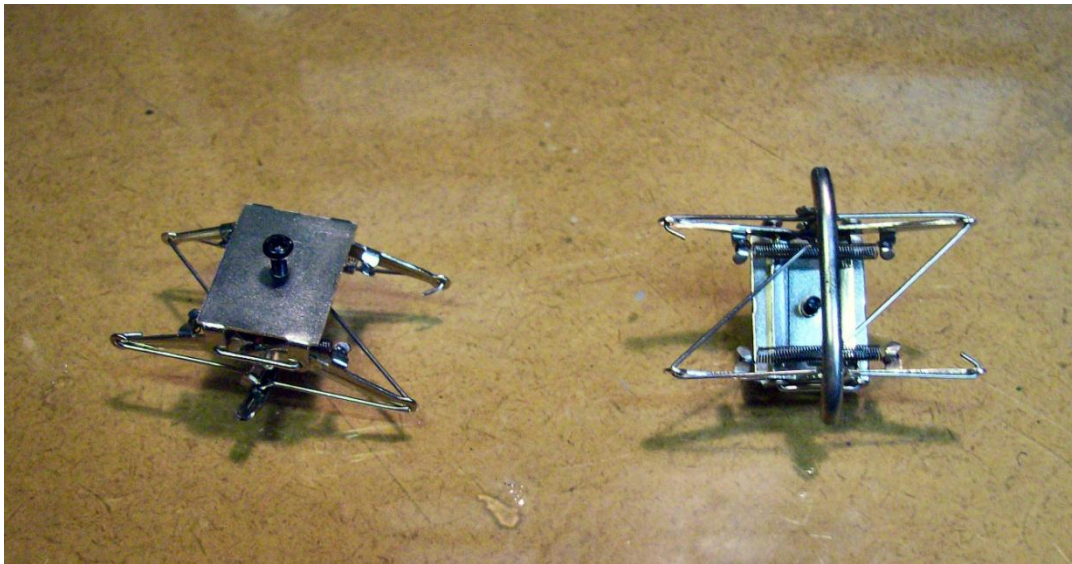


ATSF 1461 is an 80 foot coach made by Rivarossi, coach green with Santa Fe lettering. It should fit the bill. The next photo shows the mess I made! The coach already had Kadee couplers. I removed the 6-wheel heavyweight trucks. The surplus power truck and trailing truck from an old locomotive were used. Considerable work was required to make this work!

The coach is 10 inches long. NMRA weight should be 6 ounces. The total weight of the coach with trucks and pantographs is about 8 ounces. Close enough.

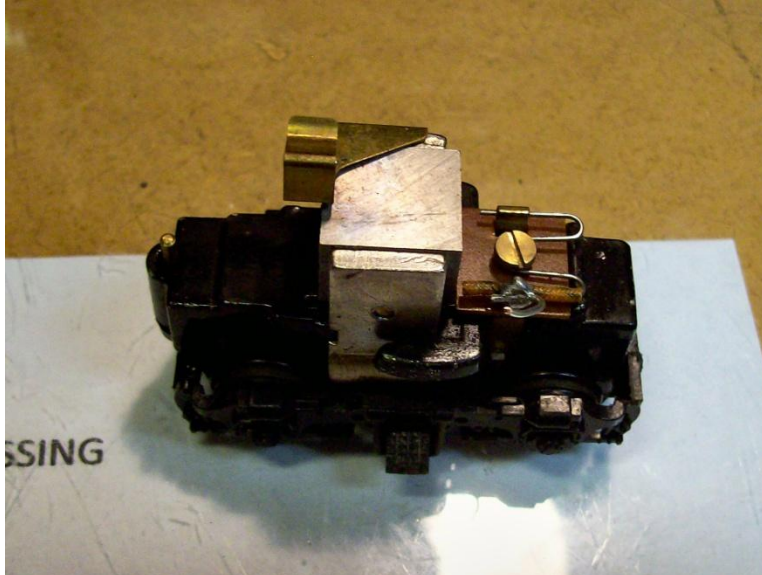


Coach, power truck and trailing truck



Pantographs

The pantographs were screwed to the car roof. They will not be made operational.



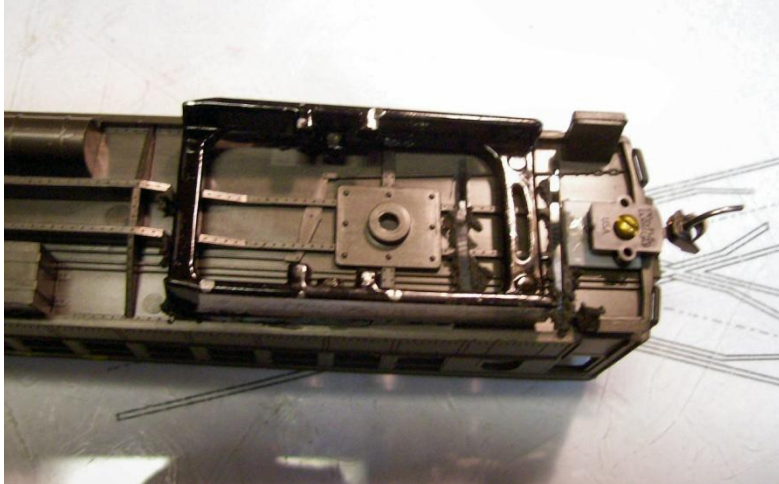
Power truck

The power truck operates. I didn't see an easy way to go DCC, so stayed with straight DC. The car floor was cut out to fit the power truck.

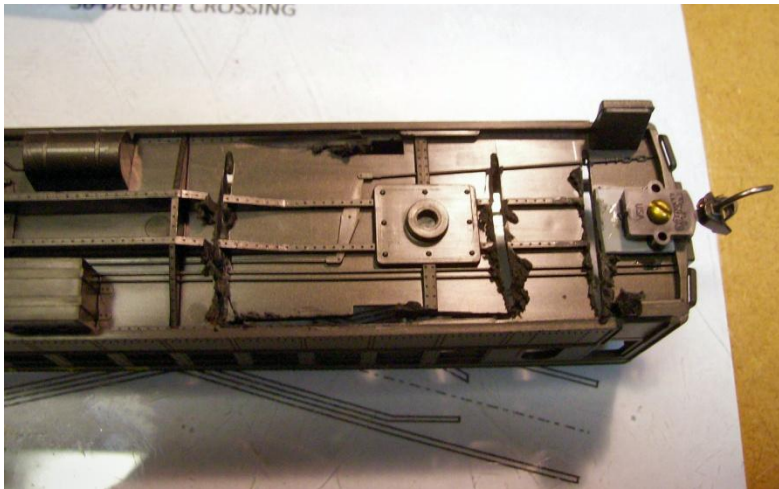


Trailing truck

The trailing truck was cut down to get the correct height. The mounting hole was drilled out and tapped 8-32. An angle bracket from the junk box was soldered to the mounting screw for power pickup.



The power truck mount located over the car bottom.



The start of another messy Dremel operation!



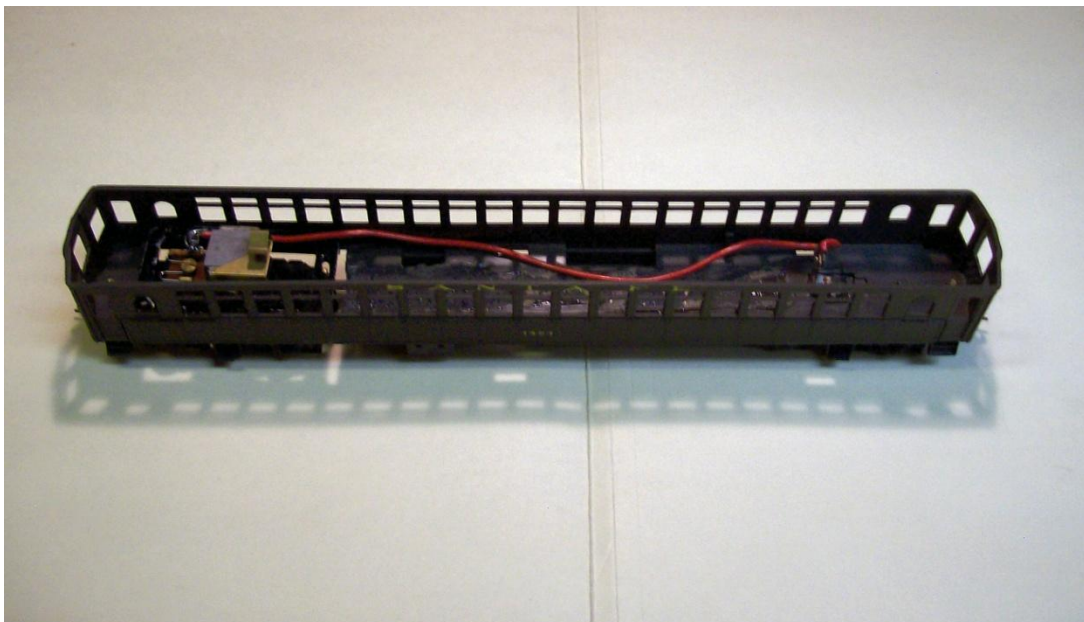
Supported at proper height for gluing

The modified trailing truck was fitted. The mounting boss on the chassis had to be filed to get the proper coupler height. The power truck was supported at the correct height, and secured to the chassis with 'super glue'. Note the ragged floor where lead weight had been removed.

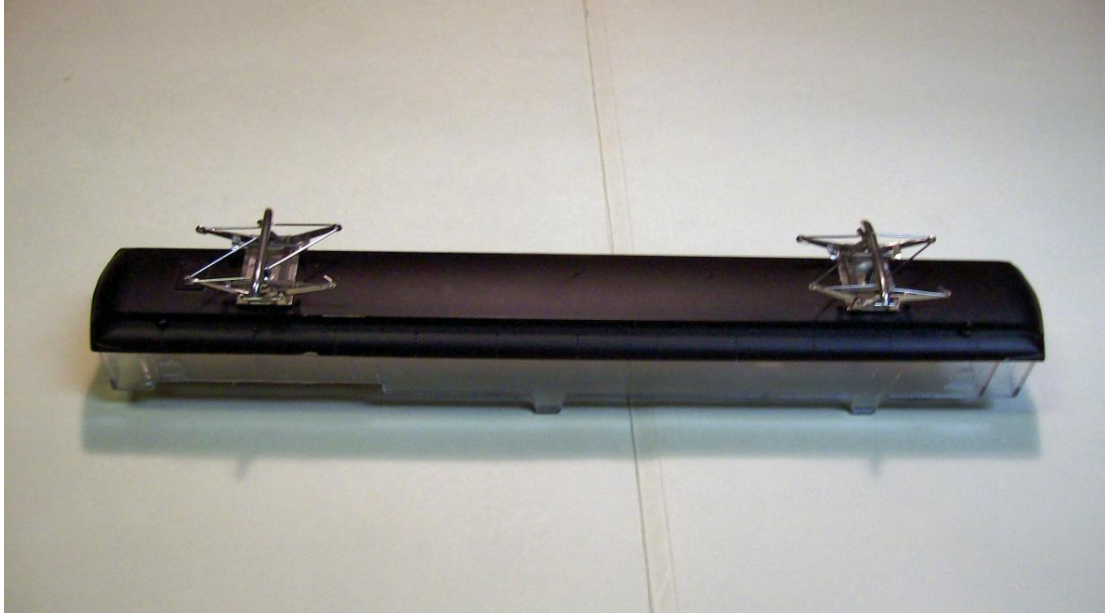


Any old tool will work!

After the glue dried, the trailing truck was wired to the motor. Contrary to normal protocol, the power truck picks up from the left rail, and the trailing truck from the right rail. (Don't know who manufactured these things!)

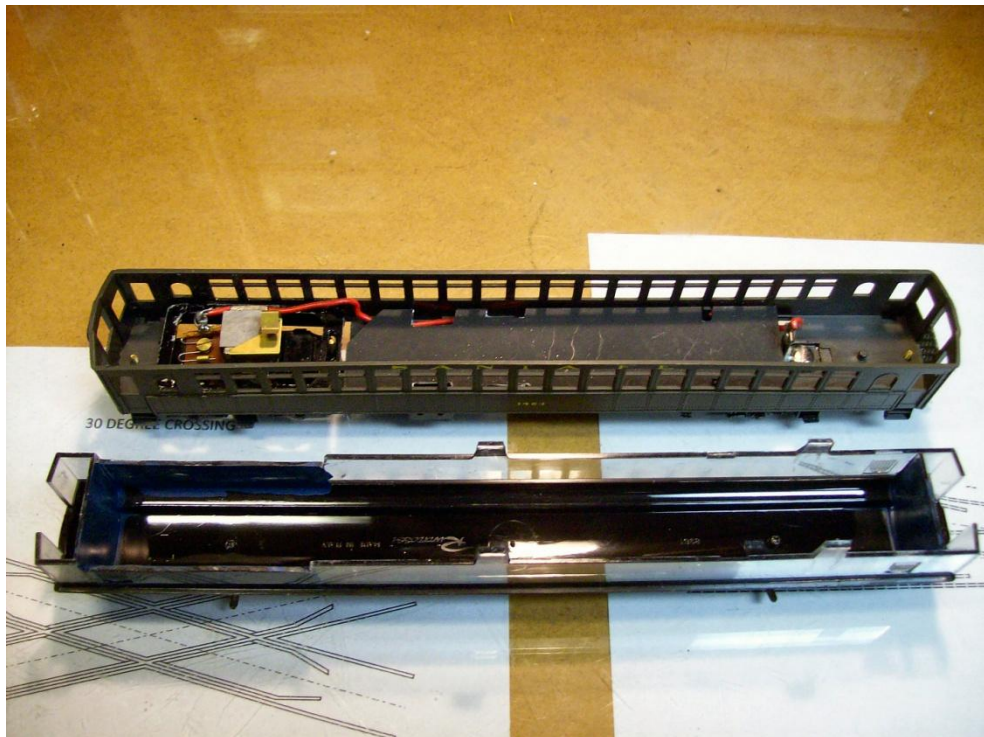


Trucks installed and wired.



Pantographs mounted to the car roof.

The window material and roof are a single assembly. The window material had to be notched to clear the motor. To obscure the motor when assembled, the inside of the windows were painted in that area. The ends were also painted on the inner vestibule walls.



Prior to final assembly.



The completed car.

The car is essentially complete. I may add pilots, if I can find suitable ones. The trucks don't track correctly on curves, so some tweaking will be necessary. The old power truck draws pretty heavy current, and needs quite a bit of voltage to move, if it moves at all! Oh well, it is unique! I removed the front pantograph for use on the second car (#1464). See part II for details on that conversion.