

The 4th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region of the
National Model Railroad Association Presents



The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic



Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Location: Summer Hill meeting room in Oak Harbor.

Time: 7:00 PM

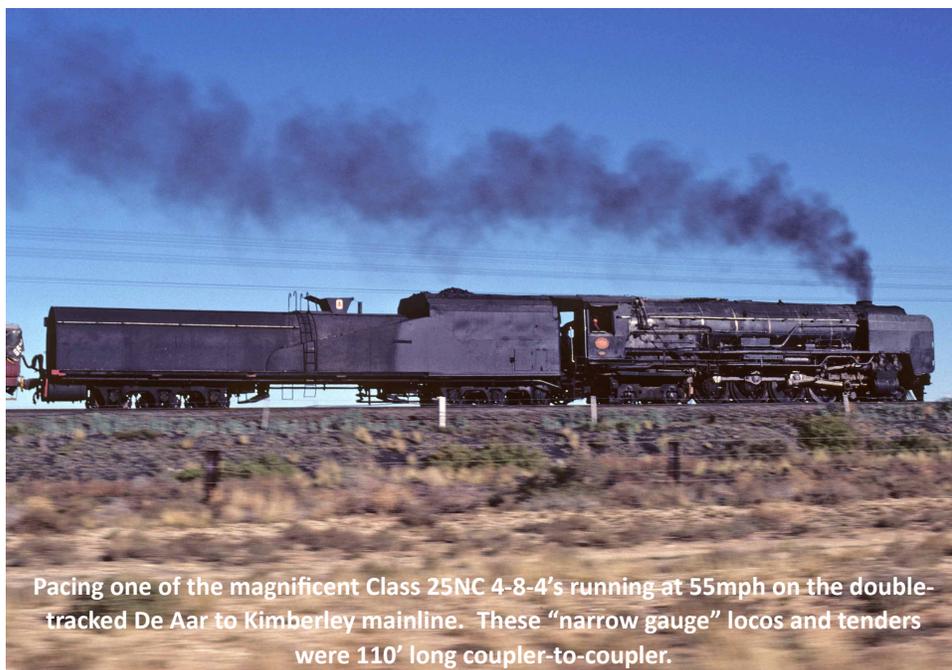
STEAM FROM CAPETOWN TO VICTORIA FALLS

By the 1980's, steam had disappeared from most of the world's railways, and large numbers of them remained in service in only three places: China; India; and South Africa. South African steam was some of the most unique anywhere, with designs tailored to the region's railway lines, laid mostly with light rail, steep grades, and sharp curves. South Africa was the first to use the 4-8-2 "mountain" wheel arrangement, years before the USA, and also famous for its Garratt locomotives, an articulated design widely used in Africa, Australia, and many other parts of the world, but never adopted in America. Steam development culminated with 4-8-4 locos, including the famous condensing locos that hauled both freight and passenger trains on the double track main crossing the waterless Great Karoo. And all this was *narrow gauge*--South Africa's rails are laid to a gauge of only 3'6".

This program is based on two visits to the region: one in 1980, to both the Republic of South Africa and its northern neighbor Zimbabwe, where together well over 1,000 steam engines were still in service. The steam fleet of the National Rwy's of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia Railways) was 100-percent Garratts at that time. A second visit was made in 2000, when only "museum" steam remained in South Africa. The program includes both still photos and video.

Along the way, we'll include the story of the Garratt design; visit the "Big Hole" in Kimberley (which produced over 14 million carats of diamonds); the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River; the engineering features of the great 4-8-4 condensers; and of course (since this is Africa!) some four-legged critters, too. We'll also see, and ride behind, the "Baby Garratts" on South Africa's "narrow-narrow" gauge--2-foot gauge miniatures of their larger 3'6" gauge counterparts.

(more pictures on page 6)



Pacing one of the magnificent Class 25NC 4-8-4's running at 55mph on the double-tracked De Aar to Kimberley mainline. These "narrow gauge" locos and tenders were 110' long coupler-to-coupler.

The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic						
Model Railroad Calendar for March 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			Rich Thom Presents South African Steam			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
April 14th will be the date of the Ninth Annual Olympia Model Railroad Layout Tour, with at least 8 layouts to visit, some having been featured in national publications!						

Last Month's Clinic:

In February, we had a good time watching logging railroad videos from the collections of Rich the Elder and Rich the Younger, aka Rich Thom and Rich Blake. The previously scheduled clinic with Tim Miller will be rescheduled to sometime next season. Prior to the videos, we had the great fortune to have several members show off what they are working on, including Tom Hawkins below showing the work so far on his sawmill. **As an aside, the poor quality of the TV for showing DVDs and other presentations brought up the**



suggestion that maybe the clinic group should kick in a few bucks and buy a projector that would always be available to any clinic presenter. This 'suggestion' led to several anonymous donations sufficient to purchase said projector! Rich Blake, Rich Thom, John White and some others looked into what to buy and we have one on order which might be here for the March clinic! Thanks in particular to Rich Blake for 'pushing' this through!!

[see second addendum for a spreadsheet comparing three models within our price range, an analysis of the choices looked at and a draft Policy document on the use of the projector.]



This year's new competition was introduced at the October Clinic. This competition will be to build/modify a piece of rolling stock as per the 'rules' below. And, in case you think you can't do this, remember that one of the categories is "ready-to-run": take a car, weather it, add decals, add details like grab irons, and/or graffiti it!

Only 1 month to go! They will be judged at the April clinic.

Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Group **Piece of Rolling Stock Competition Rules**



Introduction

The purpose of this competition is to build a piece of rolling stock according to the specifications below.

The entries will be judged by Di Voss [MMR, NMRA Standards and Conformance Department head,. Also, with his brother, the NMRANet development person] at our April meeting in 2012.

Display of model

Material of your choice.

On rails or plain surface. Only the rolling stock will be judged.

Rolling Stock

The rolling stock may be of any type [Revenue, non-revenue] or any scale and any prototype.

Piece must be weathered to some degree and decaled or hand lettered.

Commercial parts on scratch built rolling stock are permitted.

To win prize money Rolling Stock must have been built specifically for this competition.

Other older scratch built or craftsman kits that have not won prizes may be entered for illuminated Scrolls only.

Additions

The judge will be asked to judge the rolling stock itself [see prize list].

Animals and people and other details may be added to rolling stock.



Prize Categories

Best rolling stock in each category [kit or kit bashed, scratch built, craftsman kit, ready to run]. The builder will decide which category he/she wants to enter a particular model in.

Peoples choice irrespective of category.

Three Honorable Mentions.

Prizes

All category winners will receive an Illuminated Scroll with their name and prize category and a monetary cash award.

Competitors can enter rolling stock in more than one category but only one entry in each category.



If a competitor receives more than one award he/she will receive only the illuminated scroll for the second award. In the event of disputes the Competition Shepherd's and Judge's decisions are final!

Jack Tingstad, Competition Shepherd

The Miscellaneous Information Page

Computer Track Planning and Simulator Resource List

Several have asked for the list from Rich Blake's January presentation, so it is attached as the first addendum after the season's clinic schedule.

March is Swap Meet Month!!

Again in March, bring anything that you wish to sell/trade/give away to the Summer Hill clinic 'side room' prior to the clinic. Please have the name of the seller/donator on the items along with a price.

We will have another Swap Meet in May!!

From the new Program Organizer, Susan Gonzales:

"Your newest Program Organizer, Susan, has already been busy talking and recruiting speakers for next year. What I need and truly want from the group is for each person who attends our meetings to bring with them to the next meeting in March at least 3 ideas for programs that they would like to see next year. You don't need to provide the details of who, or when, just bring some ideas. I would like the programs to reflect the wide variety of interests that we all have in trains. It is my desire to continue the traditions that John White has established. A little learning, a little snack, a lot of laughter, and the camaraderie of friends who love trains. You can email me ideas at: fishnutztoo@frontier.com or call me at: (360) 679-6819 (home) or (360) 550-7410. All ideas are welcome.

"Would you like to see another Make 'n Take project? if so, what would you like to make/take? buildings, scenery? Would you like another contest? if so, what type? Another field trip? How about a swap meet?"

"We have a firm commitment from Al Carter for a clinic on his Tabooma County Railroad and how it all started and we are working on a backdrop clinic. Some other suggestions include: A movie night featuring Colorado railroading in the winter, how to hand lay track and how to tune up a locomotive (both steam and diesel). I will be asking for a show of hands to indicate interest in these and any other ideas that you may have. And then we should probably ask John W. if he is up for another Wassail.

"And contrary to popular belief, Phil will NOT be bringing beer and beef jerky for snacks to the next meeting!"

So, once you get over your disappointment that the snacks won't be upgraded, violating Rule G won't happen I guess, think about the topics you want to have for next season and get them to Susan or bring them up at the March Clinic!



From Al Carter: Two items:

1: "Here is a link to the just completed 2012 Monroe Train Show....

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HljNkeATSI&feature=related

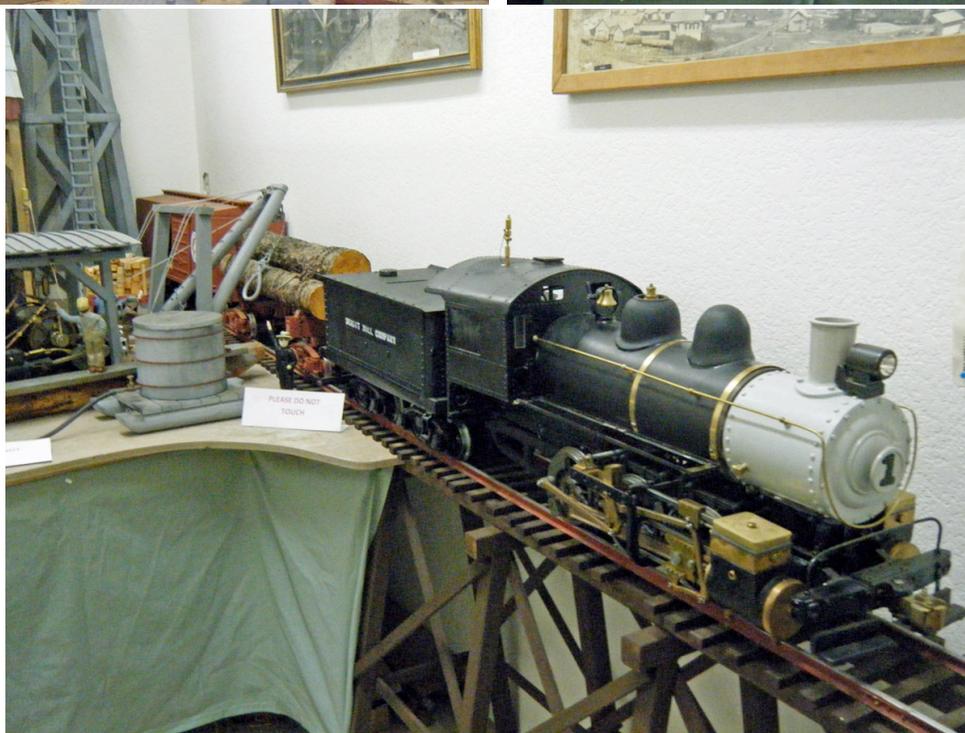
"I thought this was a pretty good video, for a "homemade" effort. It is about 14 minutes long, and there is some really good footage of some of the layouts; wish I had spent more time looking at the layouts in detail. That 4D N scale layout has some really nice scenes."

2: He is in need of empty boxes to put cars in for the swap tables in May. Athearn blue boxes and the like, all lengths.



FOR THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNION PACIFIC, THEY ARE CELEBRATING THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR AND HAVE A WONDERFUL WEBSITE WITH A GREAT TIMELINE COVERING FROM 1862 TO TODAY! CHECK IT OUT AT WWW.UPI50.COM

Susan Gonzales got a chance to check out the Sedro-Woolley Museum and took these pictures of the railroad related exhibits, including a HO layout and logging locomotive.



Pre-Clinic Dinner Get-Together: Pizza +!

Last month was such a hit that we will again be getting together at the San Remo Mediterranean Grill in Oak Harbor at about 5:15.
421 NE Midway Blvd - just a block south of the Chinese place, near Sears!
They have pizza, pastas, Greek specialities, seafood and salads!

For those that might be new to these newsletters, the “back issues” are available online at our 4th Division website www.4dPNR.org under the Newsletters category. This service is thanks to the 4th Division and their webmaster, Al Lowe.

If you have any information, good websites, things for sale of a model railroad nature or whatever, send me a note and I will add it to this page in the future editions as space permits.

STEAM FROM CAPETOWN TO VICTORIA FALLS



A National Rwy. Of Zimbabwe Class 15A Garratt at Thomson Junction. These 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 ("double Hudson") Garratts were the greyhounds of the NRZ.



A 2-foot gauge "Baby Garratt" at the coaling dock in Umzinto, in Natal Province

- pictures by Rich Thom

Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic Schedule 2011/2012

Notes: All regular meetings are held at the Summer Hill Community in Oak Harbor from September through June on the dates shown starting at 7:00pm or as otherwise announced.

NMRA Membership is encouraged, but not a requirement for attendance.

DATE	EVENT COORDINATOR	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
09.14.11	Jim Tartas	Visit to Dr. Nick Muff's KCS Layout	Nick Muff
10.12.11	Rich Thom	Q & A Panel of Experts.	5 Experts !
11.09.11	Al Frasch	Wellington Disaster - Vis Major	Martin Burwash
12.14.11	John White	Wassail and Other Delights.	John White
01.11.12	Rich Blake	Virtual Railroading	Rich Blake
02.8.12	John White	Logging and Narrow Gauge Extravaganza	
03.14.12	Rich Thom	Steam from the Cape to Victoria Falls	Rich Thom
04.11.12	John White	The Reality and Model of the Everett & Monte Cristo + Competition Judging	Di Voss
05.09.12	Al Frasch	How to Drive a Steam Locomotive	Barry Anderson
06.13.12	G & V Jones	How to Airbrush. In and o/s G & V Jones Garage	Dave Clarke

Volunteers or Press Ganged

NMRA Liaison and Reportage	Gordon Garnhart
Keeper of the Purse [aka the Bucket]	Jack Tingstad
Layout Design Aficionado	Tom Hawkins
The DCC & Audio Visual Main Mann	John Mann
Newsletters and Announcement Flyers	Al Frasch
Refreshments	Phil Gonzales
Keeper of the Rolls[aka the Membership Roster]	Rich Thom
Clean-up Artists	Vera & Gordon Jones
The Tin Can Gaffers	Curt and Iver Johnson
Competition Shepherd	Jack Tingstad
Program Organizer	Susan Gonzales
Clinic Chair Protém	John White

Computer Track Planning and Simulator Resource List - Compiled by Rich Blake

Model Railroad Software Links

<http://home.cogeco.ca/~trains/rrsoft.htm>

Track Planning Software

<p><i>AnyRail</i> (Free Trial, \$59 unlimited size) www.anyrail.com Preset track template libraries 2D planning Simple interface Limited export file types</p>	<p><i>X-track CAD</i> (Free) www.xtrkcad.org Open source freeware 2D CAD design based Template libraries 1:1 print option Steep learning curve</p>
<p><i>3rdPlanIt</i> (\$125-160) www.eldoradosoft.com CAD based track sets buildings/equipment library 3d mode export file types dxf and dxg</p>	<p><i>Train Player</i> (\$59-99) www.trainplayer.com Operations mode Track layers "101 Track Plans" overlay for ops Switchlist generator</p>
<p><i>RR Track</i> (\$69-139) www.rrtrack.com CAD based Gauge specific bundles 2D and 3D options/view tabs operations mode</p>	<p><i>CADrail</i> (\$67-109) www.cadrail.com CAD based 2D mode 3D view mode Track templates</p>
<p><i>Atlas Right Track</i> (Free) www.atlasrr.com 2D planning Preloaded sectional track Labeled track pieces Several preloaded plans</p>	<p><i>Rail Modeller</i> (\$39) www.railmodeller.com For Macintosh Templates drag and drop CAD design 3D mode</p>
<p><i>SCARM</i> (Free) www.scarm.info Large track library 3D view option</p>	

Railroad Simulators

<p><i>Trainz Railroad Simulator (2012 current version)</i> www.auran.com/shop/TrainzSimulator12_view.php Most flexible simulator, Australian published Driver mode for operations/multi player option Surveyor mode, easily build routes Lot of included content Huge internet fan base and additional content available Able to import models and topographical data</p>	<p>Microsoft Train Simulator (MSTS) http://www.microsoft.com/games/trainsimulator/railroading.aspx No longer available new, used still out there Popular in early 2000s, lot of users Prototype operations and scenarios are good Difficult to create routes Many fan sites and content still available</p>
<p><i>Railworks 3 Train Simulator 2012</i> http://www.railsimulator.com/ British published Focus on prototype operations Modern graphics rendering Limited but high quality content available</p>	<p><i>BVE Trainsim (Open BVE)</i> http://trainsimframework.org/ Engineer simulator written by Japanese student Open BVE is open source freeware Mostly passenger service Several fan sites and routes of various quality</p>

<p><i>Slugsasher's Narrow Gauge and Logging Shortlines</i> http://www.steammachine.com/slugsasher/ My personal virtual railroading website Contains much of my work for Trainz to download Contains some interesting rail reference photos</p>	
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Virtual Railroading further reading:

Test Running Your Railroad in Cyberspace, by Jim Richards
Model Railroader - Model Railroad Planning 2007
(good use of Trainz to help plan and test operations on a large model railroad layout)

CADrail A User's Perspective, by Mike Dodd
Model Railroader - Model Railroad Planning 1996
(good intro on basics of CAD that still applies)

Designing the Deepwater District Using CAD, by Gary Albers
Model Railroader- Model Railroad Planning 2005
(overview of CAD use as applied to track planning)

V-Scale Logging, Making Layout Space in Cyberspace, by Rich Blake
Tall Timber Short Lines No. 81 Winter 2006
(Trainz familiarization article showcasing logging operations and equipment)

The Virtual Gilpin, by Mark Baldwin
Railroad Model Craftsman AUG 2005
(Building the Gilpin in Trainz)

The Virtual Gilpin Part II, by Mark Baldwin
Railroad Model Craftsman SEP 2005
(More Trainz Gilpin, lot of how to information)

Some other interesting links:

Dawson Station an N-scale layout based on the Hull Oakes lumber company
<http://dawson-station.blogspot.com/2009/10/welcome-to-dawson-station.html>

Train Dispatcher 2 – A freeware dispatcher operations program running on a track schematic, fun.
<http://www.signalcc.com/train2/td2freeware.html>

Virtual Railroader – Online E-zine focusing on train simulators
<http://www.virtualrailroader.com/>

Rich Blake's Youtube – Several model railroad related videos I have made
http://www.youtube.com/user/rblake3?email=share_video_user

Speaking of YouTube videos. Rich has several videos that folks may be interested in on his youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/rblake3?feature=mhee>
You can see things like:
Monroe show 2011
Tom Enloes layout in detail
3 videos of Ken Larsons WSLC in On3
3 videos from the Roots of Motive Power steam up in Willits CA from last September on my moto trip.
Anacortes and Fidalgo club layout
Switching ops on my version of Al Frasch's BNSF Edmonds area in Trainz



Typical computer requirements for current railroad simulators (example as of 12/2011 from Railworks3)

<i>Operating system</i>	Windows XP, Windows Vista or Windows 7
<i>Processor</i>	2.8GHz or faster
<i>Memory</i>	2.0GB RAM
<i>Graphics</i>	256MB with Pixel Shader
<i>DirectX®</i>	Version 9.0c
<i>Hard Drive</i>	6GB of free space
<i>Sound</i>	DirectX® 9.0c compatible

V i d e o P r o j e c t o r C o m p a r i s o n s

This spreadsheet courtesy of Rich Thom. The BenQ model @ \$360, was the one chosen based upon price and features. An explanation of the information and analysis is on the next page from Rich Thom.

<u>Make & Model</u>	<u>BenQ MX501</u>	<u>InFocus IN114</u>	<u>Viewsonic PJD5223</u>
Type	DLP	DLP	DLP
Lumens#	2700/NS	2700/2200	2700/NS
Native Resolution	1024 x 768 (XGA)	1024 x 768 (XGA)	1024 x 768 (XGA)
Contrast Ratio	4000 to 1	3000 to 1	3000 to 1
Aspect Ratio	Native 4:3 5 Selectable	Native 4:3 Supports others	Native 4:3 Supports others
Throw Ratio	1.86 to 2.04	1.97 to 2.17	1.97 to 2.17
Display Size	24" to 300"	Not stated	27" to 300"
Throw	52.5" at 6.5 ft	50" at 2 meters	Not stated
Lamp Life*	4500/6000 hours	5000/6000 hours	5000/6000 hours
Lamp	220watts	180watts	180watts
Speaker	1 x 2watt	1 x 2watt	1 x 2watt
Inputs	RGB, S-video, composite, component, audio, USB, RS232	RGB, S-video, composite, audio, USB, RS232, HDMI	RGB, S-video, composite, component, audio, RS232
Audible Noise**	33/27dB	30/28dB	32/30dB
Video Compatibility	HDTV	HDTV	HDTV
120Hz/3D Ready	Yes	Yes	Yes
Similar Model	BenQ MX511		PJD5233 Adds HDMI input
#Lower brightness is for "eco" mode			
*Longer life figure is for "eco" (reduced power and brightness) mode			
**Lower noise figure is for "eco" mode			
NS = Not Stated by mfg			

Analysis of Spread Sheet by Rich Thom

From Rich Thom's analysis email, aka 'the fine print':

...there are literally hundreds of projector makes and models out there, and dozens in the price/performance range adequate for our purposes. These are generally described as small/medium classroom projectors, to distinguish them from the ultra-portable business models, the "short-throws" (which we do not want), and the auditorium models. There is a new class being marketed for home theater and gaming, and we don't have to worry about some of the features that those have, either.

Rather than putting together some gigantic matrix with dozens of models--which would make me very crabby and no-one would read it all, anyway--I just took the three models that have been floated by Rich B. and Al F., and a third similar unit. They are the BenQ MX501, InFocus IN114, and the Viewsonic PJD5223. I looked up the specs on the manufacturers' websites; the Newegg "comparison" specs, and Amazons, contain some small errors. The tech specs are summarized in the attached table.

Spec Comparisons

The main thing to take away from this table is that the performance of all three projectors is very, very similar--hence they are competing head-to-head in the same class/price range.

- *All use the same (preferred) DLP display technology.
- *All have the same (desired) XGA native resolution, but can accept higher resolution inputs and are compatible with HDTV
- *All have precisely the same brightness in "max power" mode (despite the BenQ which has a higher wattage lamp) 2700 lumens is plenty bright for our venue.
- *All have an "eco" mode which extends lamp life, lowers power consumption, and reduces fan noise. At our Summerhill venue, since the room can be darkened, we can probably usually get by with the "eco" mode, which will lower the fan noise a little. All three projectors are equally noisy.
- *All have the same native 4:3 aspect ratio but can display others including 16:9
- *All have the same lamp life in "eco" mode.
- *All have only one (pitifully small) speaker (2 watts), and thus monaural. If sound features in someone's presentation (such as steam locos in stereo) then the speaker will need to bring along supplemental audio equipment such as a pair of small computer speakers. With diesel videos, of course, this won't matter since low, dull and boring rumbling sounds can be reproduced OK by a 2Watt speaker. [editorial comment: boo-hiss]
- *All have about the same throw, and a very small throw ratio. What this means in our case is that, for an image size of around 50", the projector has to be about 6-1/2 feet from the screen or wall. Remember they are designed for classroom or small conference room use, not auditorium or theater. They have a "zoom" feature but it is very limited in its range, and to make the image smaller or larger to suit the venue or audience size, you physically have to move the screen closer or farther way from the projector.
- *The claimed contrast ratio of the BenQ is higher than the other two units. Contrast ratio is highly dependent on the ambient lighting in the room. But for a darkened room, the higher the contrast ratio, the blacker the blacks will be, and the brighter the highlights. Some lower-end LCD projectors project a "black" that is more of a gray, but these DLP projectors are known for their high contrast ratios.
- *Inputs vary among the units, but all have the inputs that (I would think, anyway) the vast majority of our speakers will need or want to use.

Reviews: I didn't spend much time looking at reviews. I couldn't find any for the BenQ MX501, but Amazon has several for a similar model the MX511--and it was well rated. Only one review for the InFocus IN114, and it complained about the minimal "zoom" in these units, but that is characteristic of this price range as stated above. I had never heard of the BenQ brand before, but their website claims they are the major worldwide producer of "DLP" projectors and manufacture hundreds of models, marketing mostly to the education/professional sector.

Accessories: Some of the product reviews complain about lack of lens caps, and soft cases. Cases don't seem to come with units in this price range, but are available as an extra. I suggest one be purchased as it helps keep the unit clean. You can also throw a sack of dessicant in the case if it is going to be stored in a particularly wet environment (like Fidalgo Island!) All seem to come with IR remotes. I didn't check on this point, but some remotes have laser pointers built in, I suspect in this price range they won't.

One Disclaimer: Two of the manufacturers--InFocus and Viewsonic--both specifically state that these projectors are "Mac-compatible" in their spec sheets. I could not find this specifically stated in the BenQ information. However, I can't imagine that they would market anything that WASN'T Mac-compatible--they just wouldn't be competitive. Especially so since a lot of people in the graphic arts, photography etc. worlds prefer Macs due to their superior performance with many "imaging" tasks.

Price: I didn't bother with price comparisons because Rich B. has already done all that.

Conclusion: I think the attached table is sufficient to present to the group to justify a purchase and selection of a model. If Rich Blake has located the BenQ at an attractive price, I would support that selection.

Rich Thom

Draft Policy Document for the Clinic Owned Audio Visual Projector

Custodian

The Custodian of the Projector is John Mann who will be responsible for safe custody, maintenance and repairs. [both warranty and outside warranty]

If for any reason the Custodian is unable to attend a meeting at which the projector is to be used it will be his responsibility to arrange for another Fidalgo Island member of the group to take the projector down to the meeting.

Approved Operators

Approved Operators are John Mann, Rich Thom, Rich Blake, and Al Frasch.

If it is found that additional operators are required then they should be appointed by a vote of not less than three of the existing operators.

The number of approved operators should be kept to a minimum.

Use by Others

The Projector should not be leased or loaned to any other entity, group, or person.

Repairs

The Custodian will be responsible to arrange for all repairs, whether under warranty or outside warranty and for the purchase of new bulbs and will be reimbursed on the presentation of an invoice to the Bucket Keeper [Treasurer].-

Records

The Custodian will keep all records relating to the Projector including Instructions, Warranty, Invoices etc and a list of the events and dates of the use of the Projector.

Ownership

The Projector has been purchased by Anonymous Donors of the *Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic* and is therefore the property of the Members of that Clinic.

In the event of a break up, failure or split of the of the Clinic, the projector will be donated to the 4th Division of the NMRA.

John White
02.25.12