

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

# The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic

## Wednesday, April 10, 2013

Location: Summer Hill meeting room in Oak Harbor

Time: 7:00 PM

### **DCC Sound Systems Hands-On with Test Track by Bill Harper/John Mann**

This month's clinic promises a presentation with a live comparison of the various brands of sound decoders and speakers with as diverse an assortment as possible. Have a great example of a sound equipped locomotive? Bring it along to show off!

They will also discuss building speaker enclosures and installation tips. They even promise to install a sound decoder right in front of your eyes!



The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic						
Model Railroad Calendar for April 2013						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			Clinic at Summer Hill in Oak Harbor			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				
				May 18 - 19 4D Mini-Meet in Tukwila		

### *Further information about April events:*

The BSME have changed their name to more accurately reflect their location in Alger. They are now the Whatcom Skagit Model Railroad Club and have regular Open Houses. According to their website, the next couple are on April 13 and May 11. Times are 11:00 to 4:00PM. They can be reached at [www.whatcomskagitmrc.org/](http://www.whatcomskagitmrc.org/) on the internet or by email at [info@whatcomskagitmrc.org](mailto:info@whatcomskagitmrc.org)

April 4 - 6: Again, for those of you up in Whatcom County: Kamloops Model Railway Days, PNR 7th Division Spring Meet and public show, Calvary Community Church Halls, 1205 Rogers Way, Public Show Friday 6 PM to 9 PM and Saturday, 9 AM to 4 PM, vendors, operating layouts, clinics, layout and proto tours, contests, door prizes, and more. Registration forms: <http://pnr.nmra.org/7div/Timetable.shtml>

April 6: Want to take a trip over the mountains? Try the First Annual Central Washington Iron Horse Model Train Swap Meet in Cashmere, 10 AM to 4 PM, Apple Annie's Antique Mall and Convention Center, 100 Apple Annie Ave. Admission: \$5 Seniors (Over 60): \$3 Kids (Under 12): \$2



Be sure to reserve the weekend of May 18 - 19 for the 4th Division's Spring Mini-Meet in Tukwila. Several of the Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic members, including Al Carter, Rich Blake and Al Frasch, will be presenting clinics at the event. See the Mini-Meet Poster at the end of the Newsletter for more information.

## Last Month's Clinic:

Since I was away “playing with trains,” [see report in this newsletter] I missed John White’s presentation, but, with permission, have taken the following from Al Carter’s Updated Grab Iron posting along with pictures from Dick Haines.



Clinic Chair Rich Blake called the meeting to order at a little past 7:00am – 30 hearty souls were in attendance. The group was treated to a pre-clinic “swap mart”, where people bring items to sell or trade, or even give away. While the swap mart was held every few months or so in the past, it has become quite popular and is now a monthly part of the clinic.

Phil Gonzales brought along a nifty jig he made to make duplicate cuts in Campbell corrugated siding. He passed it around for all to see, but wouldn’t take orders to build any more. Darn!

The main event of the evening was delayed a bit while Rich and others tried to solve some technical difficulties with the

computer, but the computer held out and wouldn’t cooperate, so we were without the DVDs that were to be a part of the show.

Undaunted, our clinician, John White (and former clinic chairperson) pressed onward with his presentation entitled “Track Construction Methods In The Real World”, aided by his ever faithful Kodak slides and projector. John’s presentation told part of the story of the evolution of track/tie renewal from single insertions, to panelization, gantries and finally the need for a faster system for total track renewal, hence the P811.

John described the evolution of the use of concrete ties in North American railroading, including first aborted attempts in the 1960s.

Then, in the 1970s, the Canadian National, plunged forward with some extensive research and development into the use of concrete ties. This was also when use of the European P811 machine came into use, as a machine that could remove old wood ties, grade the ballast, and place new concrete ties all in one fell swoop. Quite a machine, judging by the great slides John displayed.

The P811 became the defacto machine used by the CN, UP, Amtrak and BNSF and is in use today, placing 400,000 or more ties per year for each railroad. A couple of interesting facts:

- A concrete tie used by the CN(8’3”) weighs about 610 lbs

- Concrete ties for UP, BNSF, etc, built to AREA specs (8’6”) weigh closer to 750 lbs

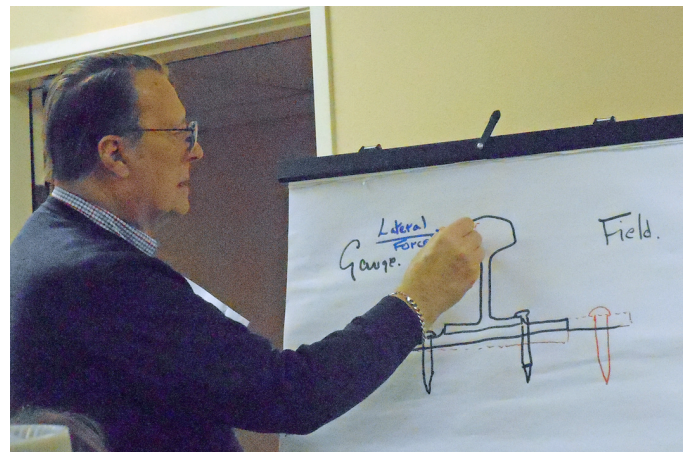
- Concrete ties for transit use can weigh less, according to design requirements

- Concrete ties are depressed in the center as a function of their design, not necessarily to save weight

- Concrete ties outlast the tie life of wood ties in similar track conditions

Quite a fascinating presentation by a fascinating individual – thank you, John!

***Some interesting videos of track renewal machines in action listed in the Video section.***





# The Miscellaneous Information Page

## Remember: The S V & W NMRA Group's Yahoo! Online Group!

As mentioned at the last couple clinics concerning social media information sharing, Rich Blake has created a Yahoo Groups page for our use. It is the Skagit Valley & Whidbey Model Railroading group or sv\_and\_w. The links below will take you directly to the group. In order to post you must have a Yahoo! account which is simple to set up. One of the moderators will also have to accept you as a member. This is a private group that is not open to the public, it is designed for club use only. We can post any questions or information for each other on this group as well as photos and files. If you have railroading stuff to sell then this could be a medium for advertising as well. For real-time information it is hard to beat and all messages are archived and searchable. The cost? Free! The Link: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sv\\_and\\_w](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sv_and_w) (note those underscores)

To get ahold of the list moderator i.e. Rich Blake: [sv\\_and\\_w-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:sv_and_w-owner@yahoogroups.com)

At last check at the end of March, we are up to 22 members of the group, so consider joining today!!

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## Read the *Grab Iron*, our Division's online Newsletter

Fourth Division, Pacific Northwest Region, NMRA website: <http://www.4dprn.org/index.htm>

Anyone can access this page and all sub-topics (except Members Only, which is primarily just BOD meeting minutes, etc). Of particular interest is the Timetable: <http://www.4dprn.org/Timetable.htm> and the Grab Iron: <http://www.4dprn.org/Grab-Iron.htm>. You can subscribe to the Grab Iron by sending in an e-mail and you will receive a reply allowing you to choose which categories to subscribe to: [http://4dprn.org/grabiron/?page\\_id=118](http://4dprn.org/grabiron/?page_id=118) - easiest: just to subscribe to all. Best of all, it's free!

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## Tool Of The Month & Show-n-Tell

"Tool Of The Month" is an ongoing segment at the Skagit Valley & Whidbey Clinic. Please consider bringing along something to show and describe: a tool that you'd like to share with the clinic members that is cheap, maybe kind of unique, and makes things easier in your modeling. Please limit your presentation to no more than 1 to 2 minutes, and also, please provide us with a source for your tool. Likewise, feel free to bring a recent project to 'show off' to the group!!

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## OPSIG

Like to operate your and other's layouts? Consider joining the Operations Special Interest Group or OPSIG! This is an international group loosely affiliated with the NMRA that promotes what many believe to be the future of the hobby - operations. It is easy to join and includes a quarterly publication - The Dispatcher's Office. Still only \$20/yr with print DO or \$7 with electronic version. See [www.opsig.org](http://www.opsig.org) for more information.



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## Inside Gateway Store

The Inside Gateway store [[www.theinsidegateway.com](http://www.theinsidegateway.com)] in the Bellevue/Redmond area is moving! For those of us up north and west, the new location in Woodinville should be easier to get to. The store is owned by a model railroader, Steve Depolo, and is known as having the best supply of detail parts in the area and also will have a large HO layout at the new location. They have an online presence also, at [www.theinsidegatewayonline.com](http://www.theinsidegatewayonline.com). They will be open by April 2nd at:

14128 NE Woodinville-Duvall Road  
Woodinville, WA 98072

# The Frontier Building Supply Discount Card



If you are a member of the NMRA - isn't everybody?? - then you qualify for the unique Frontier

Building Supply discount card to use in Anacortes, Freeland, Friday Harbor, Oak Harbor and Sedro Woolley. Just send an email to me at [afrasch@whidbey.com](mailto:afrasch@whidbey.com) or Rich Blake at [slugsasher@oakharbor.net](mailto:slugsasher@oakharbor.net) with your name and NMRA number and I will print and laminate the card free of charge! It may be used for layout stuff or an entire house! *If not a NMRA member see page 8 in the March Newsletter for information on why and how to join.*

## Pre-Clinic Dinner Get-Together: Pizza +!

We will again be getting together at the  
San Remo Mediterranean Grill in Oak Harbor [421 NE Midway Blvd] at about 5:15.

## Train Videos of the Month

Each month I would like to list a few YouTube or other Train related video finds - so if you have some contributions, please let me know and I will list them here!

Rich Blake found these videos of track machines:

P-811 on Amtrack <http://youtu.be/7-rY4G2pB2U>

Plasser and Theurer in action (in greek but there is no talking)  
<http://youtu.be/q0t1RzS2PMA>

Plasser Tamping machine <http://youtu.be/nLR1qCDEM6I>

Thermit welding process (low quality but informative)

<http://youtu.be/TstoubOQImQ>

Also:

Here is a great period piece with a fair amount of humor that only makes sense in the 50s era. It uses the example of a family receiving a busted TV set as an indicator that the railroad failed several times to properly take care of cargo during rail car handling.

One thing that this film translates into model railroad operations is that it makes you think back to how you may handle your own switching operations. Do you back the loco into the string and keep going without stopping to check the couplings. Do you bash

into strings and then take off in the other direction without allowing time to connect brake hoses and check couplings. Do you speed over turnouts to get to the runarounds cause there is a lot of free track. Do you think about where your brakemen are located or where they need to be dropped off or picked up by the engine or caboose. How many times have you been able to back into a string so soft and easy that only the couplers move as they connect. More commonly, how many times have you backed into that string and everything moves an inch or two. Think about how far an "inch or two" is in your scale! I've seen many cases including myself, where operators either get in a hurry or just don't pay attention to what they are doing and it results in a lot of rough car handling and/or derailments.

This film illustrates all these bad habits with 1:1 scale and really emphasizes the point that we all need to slow down and go easy on the equipment. Never know what precious cargo is in there.

Enjoy: Santa Fe "Pay Day" <http://youtu.be/nlzTqPfHrAI>

**That's all for this month, don't forget to send links to others that you wish to share.**



## The Swap Table is now a permanent feature of the Clinic!!

If you have anything to sell/trade/give away just bring it to the Summer Hill meeting room before the Clinic. Please make sure that any price is clearly labeled and the owner's name is shown. Sell all that stuff you don't need and buy some more stuff you don't need!!



*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.*



## Local Layout Progress

From Jim Tartas: “Getting my street scene built before installing that there bridge. Mock ups/need better figures.

Curves and tunnel are level and running great. Bridge next. The street/sidewalks are my 1st try at scratch building/styrene snappin'. Retaining wall will be behind the bus.”



On the ***Pilchuck Division*** down in Freeland, there is a new multi-million dollar industrial area on reclaimed land along the Skagit River - okay, just a bump out on the upper deck, but still new land. The new Burlington Intermodal yard gets traffic up from the deep water port of Edmonds and the Fibrex plant makes fiberglass reinforced plastic pipes for industrial uses. Both have been in operation for the last couple of sessions.



In use at the intermodal yard is one of the new Piggy-Packers that are available from Wheels of Time in both N- and HO-scales ([www.wheelsovertime.com](http://www.wheelsovertime.com)). They come fully assembled and all the parts move to accommodate your scene - you can even add a magnet to the machine and an intermodal container to model a container being lifted.





# A Trip to Winterail & BayRails

You say you want to “play with trains” huh? Well in March I had a chance to go to California to two events - one prototype oriented and the other operating on model railroads.



The first was the 35th Annual Winterail event in Stockton held on March 9th. This is both a swap meet with railroadiana dealers from around the West and a 10 hour slide/video train show as described on their website as:

“Winterail is the nationally well known multi-media slide show event that showcases railroad photography from up and coming as well as well known railroad photographers in the form of digitally produced slide shows to a narrative and soundtrack. No two shows are alike. Held on the second full weekend of March, the show also includes a vendor table Railroadiana Show and Sale”

There were ten 25 - 30 minute presentations ranging from East Coast ALCOs and the D&RGW Marysvale Branch to a history of two Santa Fe RDC cars. The highlight of the show was a slide presentation of installing a snowshed up in the Donner Pass area of the Sierras in the early ‘80s with photos by the famous railroad photographer, Richard Steinheimer, who passed away in 2011 and live narration by his widow and fellow photographer, Shirley Burman.

If you are interested in attending, the next event is March 8, 2014. More information can be found on their website at [www.winterail.com](http://www.winterail.com).



The second was the fifth edition of BayRails, a three day op-to-you-drop event that is held on the odd years, alternating with the Northwest’s own SoundRail. Barry Anderson, a friend of the Skagit Valley & Whidbey group, and I went one day earlier and operated on two

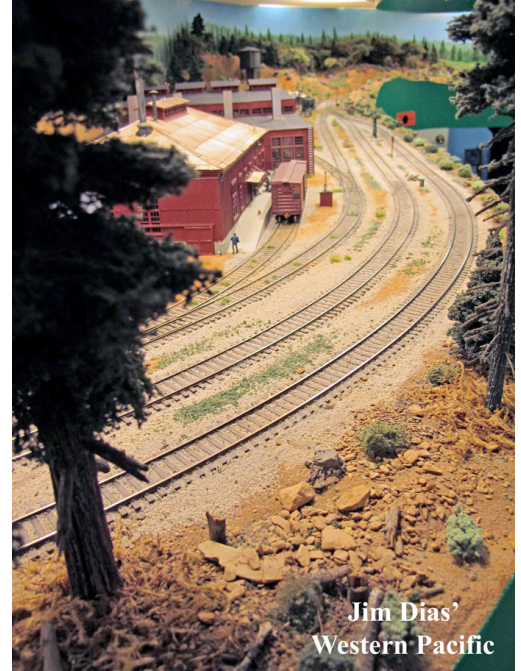
layouts up in the Sierra foothills [John Zach and Steve Hayes], before driving to the Bay Area for the regular event. There we were joined by Rich Thom and Gary Jordan, another honorary Whidbeyite - the BayRails organizers call



Jack Burgess, Yosemite Valley RR  
photo by Gary Jordan

us the “Whidbey Four.” There, on Thursday, we operated on the world famous layouts of Jack Burgess (The Yosemite Valley RR) and

Jim Dias (Western Pacific). These are both superbly scenic layouts that only handle four operators at once, but are wonderful to operate, not to mention just stare at! Friday saw us at the Silicon Valley Lines in San Jose. This is a large club layout which has been in business for the



Jim Dias’  
Western Pacific

past 33 years, but in the last several has made significant progress, and being in the heart of Silicon Valley, has lots of bells and whistles, with most of them working, mostly. Saturday, we traveled north to just past Berkeley to operate on Jim Radkey’s BNSF Pink Lady Sub built in a California basement, aka garage. It was a bit rough around the edges and had a common layout problem of too many freight cars in too small a place, but in a few years should warrant a return visit.

If you would like to participate in one of the many Operation Weekends that there are around the country, joining OPSIG would be a good start [see information of how to join on the Misc Info Page].

- Al Frasch



Silicon Valley Lines

Susan Gonzales has been very busy and is excited to present to you the clinic schedule for 2013/2014. It will be a fun filled and entertaining year for all who attend. There is something for everyone to enjoy and there still may be a surprise or two in store. Thank you to Al Carter and Rich Blake for helping to find and coordinate some of these great clinics.

## Skagit Valley and Whidbey NMRA Clinic Schedule for 2013/2014

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PRESENTOR(S)</u>
August 14, 2013	Summer BBQ at John Marshall's	
September 11, 2013	Tesoro Crude Rail Operations	Bob Gilbert
October 9, 2013	Hydrocal Structures	Al Carter
November 13, 2013	Mini-Clinics: Decals	John White
	Hemlock trees	Cliff Aker
	Scratchbuilding with common materials (i.e. free)	Rich Blake
December 11, 2013	All Things DCC/Decoder Pro	Ted Becker
January 8, 2014	Be a Rock Star/Make and Take Rocks with a special presentation by Jim Tartas on Bragdon's Geodesic foam/resin method	
February 12, 2014	Scenery Clinic	Tom Hawkins
February 22, 2014	Operating Sessions hosted by: Al Frasch, Jack Tingstad, Phil Gonzales,	
	Dick Haines, Tom Hawkins	
March 12, 2014	Prototype Steam Locomotives	Stathi Pappas
	CMO Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad	
April 9, 2014	2 Views from Above/Structure Roofs/roof top detail	Al Carter
	Removable Mtns. w/Tunnels Construction Techniques	Norm Meyers
May 14, 2014	Vehicle Lighting	Dr. Nick Muff
June 11, 2014	Air Brush Painting 101 (in Phil and Susan's backyard)	Rich Blake



# Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic Schedule

## 2012/2013

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

See [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

DATE	SUBJECT
Aug 8 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Potluck BBQ at John Marshall's
Sept 19th	Logging and Live Steam by Eric Erickson
Oct 10th	Mini Clinics
Nov 14th	The Tabooma County Railway: Choosing a Private Roadname— Developing a Plausible History by Al Carter
Dec 5th	Annulled
Jan 9th	Locomotive Tune-ups (both steam and diesel) by John Mann and Tom Hawkins
Feb 13th	Streets & Highways, Including Street Trackage by Al Carter
Mar 13th	Track Construction Methods in the Real World by John White
<b>Apr 10th</b>	<b>DCC Sound Systems Hands-On Test Track by Bill Harper/John Mann</b>
May 8th	Backdrop Clinic by Al Carter and Jack Tingstad
Jun 12th	Open House at Dick Haines

### Volunteers or Press Ganged

NMRA Liaison and Reportage	Al Carter
Keeper of the Purse [aka the Bucket]	Iver Johnson
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]	Jon Wilbert
Clean-up Artists	- open -
The Tin Can Gaffers	Curt and Iver Johnson
Competition Shepherd	- open -
Program Organizer	Susan Gonzales
Clinic Chair	Rich Blake

**NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION  
4TH DIVISION - PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION**

# 2013 SPRING MEET

**SATURDAY, MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>**  
**Embassy Suites - Tukwila, WA**

15920 West Valley Hwy.

**12 Great  
Clinics!**

**LAYOUT TOURS MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>!**

**Registration:**

\$20 if registered by mail or  
email prior to May 11.  
(Includes lunch)

\$30 admission at the door  
for those not pre-registered  
(NO LUNCH)

**SPACE IS LIMITED!**



**Clinic topics to include:**

- DCC Systems & Installs
- Layout Design & Ops
- Proto 87
- Prototypes for Layouts
- Track Warrants
- Award Winning Modules
- Building a Forest  
& more!



**Phone 425-228-7327**

**Or visit [wnrr.net/4dspringmeet](http://wnrr.net/4dspringmeet) for registration forms and more details.**