

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



The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic



Wednesday, December 10th

The SV&W Model Railroading Clinic will meet at the Summer Hill location [165 SW 6th Ave] in Oak Harbor Wednesday, December 10th at 7:00pm for a spirited clinic by Susan Gonzales on how she makes wonderful windswept trees - and you will have a chance to make some yourself!!

Make & Take Windswept Trees

From Susan Gonzales: In the beginning there was a *Model Railroader* article in the April 2013 issue by Ross Katz titled Windswept Trees From Natural Materials. I scanned it briefly and thought that would make a great clinic. Life went on and the magazine got stacked under the coffee table. When our youngest daughter enrolled at Eastern Washington University, that possible clinic became more real as frequent visits to the eastern side of the state were required. So began our adventures in sagebrush foraging. Eventually, we began setting our clinic schedule for 2014 and I volunteered to do a windblown tree clinic. I had yet to actually read the article or make a tree but I had bags of sagebrush. Clinic time has arrived, I made a windblown tree, which I think looks pretty



good and you are all invited to our make and take clinic on December 10th where you will hear stories of sagebrush picking, how to use the information in a Model Railroad article written by a guy in Arizona and transfer that to Washington, have lots of laughs as we learn how to make the trees and eat plenty of snacks.

There are some things you will need to bring:

1. #11 exacto knife
2. a pair of light weight gloves to handle the sagebrush which is thorny
3. tweezers
4. small wire brush for cleaning trunks
5. pin vise drill or other sharp pointy instrument for making holes in the trunk for branches. I had better luck with using a T-pin as the wood is much harder than balsa.
6. a piece of foam or something similar to transport your tree home

If you would like your tree to match other trees on your layout, then please bring whatever stain or wash you color the trunk with and any branch like foliage you prefer.

We will provide sagebrush and a dark green and light green caspia for branch foliage.

Bring your imagination and sense of humor!

Once again, we will be meeting at San Remo Mediterranean Grill in Oak Harbor [421 NE Midway Blvd] for a pre-clinic dinner starting at 5:15 if you are interested. They have very good pizza, pasta and Spumoni!

On the calendar:

The Washington State History Museum will host its 15th annual **Model Train Festival December 26 - January 1**. The family-friendly event will showcase elaborate train sets that bring to life the history of railroads in the state of Washington. The interactive festival will occupy every floor of the museum and include eight displays designed by local enthusiasts and railroad clubs including the largest permanent model train layout in the state. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on 12/31. See:

www.washingtonhistory.org/visit/wshm/eventsprograms/festivals/trainfest/

Never too soon to plan on volunteering to help at the 4th Division's main fundraiser of the year: At the Pacific Science Center, **The 41st Annual Train Show, January 17-19, 2015** Contact: Jeff Moorman, 206-367-2377, kb7rr@arrrl.net

February 28 - March 1, 2015: United NorthWest Model Railroad Club is proud to announce its **24th Annual Model Train Show and Marketplace** to benefit Snohomish County 4-H Foundation . The 2015 Show will be in the same buildings as the 2014 show in the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe, WA.

Next spring: **The 30th Annual Sn3 Symposium**, April 16-18, 2015, Bellevue, Washington Information at: <http://sn3symposium-2015.com/>

And, of course: Aug 23-29, Portland, OR NMRA 2015 National Convention "Portland Daylight Express" Info:- www.nmra2015portland.org

Our "sister" clinic, the Mount Vernon Model Railroad Clinic, meets every fourth Tuesday at the Mount Vernon Senior Center at 1401 Cleveland Street. There will be no clinic in December as the fourth Tuesday is only two days before Christmas this year. Next up **January 27, 2015** will be "**Structures on a Diet**" with Roger Johnson showing how he reduces structure kit foot prints while retaining the structure's character. Contact Al Carter (360-399-1226 / tabooma@msn.com) for further information.

"We have a Yahoo Groups page for our use and sharing of information. It is the Skagit Valley and 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. This is a private group that is not open to the public, it is designed for club use only. The Link: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sv_and_w (note those underscores)
If you have general railroading questions or would like to share railroading discussion with immediate locals or are even looking to sell some railroad stuff then this is the place to post information."

Swap Table

Feel free to bring items to sell, trade or give away to any clinic meeting. Items need to be in the side room by 6:45 and, if for sale or trade, clearly marked as to the price and owner.

Planned Clinics for 2014/2015

September 10, 2014 ————— Art Of OPS
————— Rich Blake

October 8, 2014 ————— MINI CLINICS
Bob Erley – Proto48 Turnouts - TBD
~~John White – Decking Flat Cars~~
Rich Blake – Logging Speeders and Railcars - TBD
~~Tom Hawkins – Things Learned in Layout Planning~~

November 12, 2014 ————— ~~Westside Lumber Co. Railfanning 1962~~
————— Nick Muff MMR

December 10, 2014 Make & Take Windswept Trees
 By Susan Gonzales

January 14, 2015 BYOB Bring your own building
 Hands-on weathering clinic
 Assorted assistants to be recruited

February 11, 2015 Contest/SHOW and tell – FLAT CAR LOADS
 Review and critique session, volunteer models

March 11, 2015 Viva Vapor! Steam with a Latin Beat II
 Rich Thom

April 8, 2015 Signs for Structures
 by Al Carter

May 13, 2015 Using RC servos for Switch Machines
 By Ted Becker

Note: if you wish this newsletter to have anything to publish each month, it is up to you to send material to include — text and/or pictures — otherwise you may get an overdose of my layout pictures!

As you can see by the contributions from Jim Tartas, Rich Blake and Dick Haines in this issue — the call has been answered!

And, next month, we will have Rich Thom's layout progress!

New From Jim Tarta's Layout in Anacortes



Jim is building a layout in a small room in his Anacortes home that will be able to run operation sessions for 3 to 4 operators. He is starting to design his operation scheme at this time and should be able to have trials by Spring - should be fun!

These buses are waiting for passengers to arrive on the morning scheduled passenger service at the station.



Remember those rocks that Jim showed at the clinic on Bragdon rock molds, well here they are in place and looking good.

Nice new turntable installed - can't wait for all those stinky steam locomotives to dirty it up real good!!

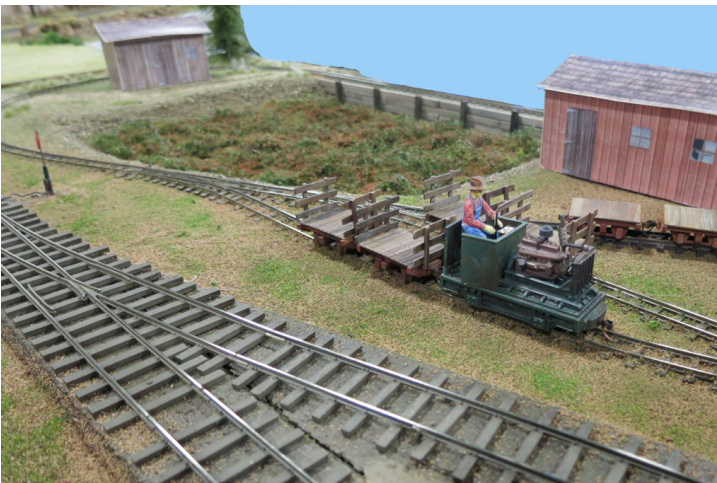
This switch tower is ready to control the traffic across the diamond - just hope the operator looks both ways before crossing those tracks!



From Rich Blake:

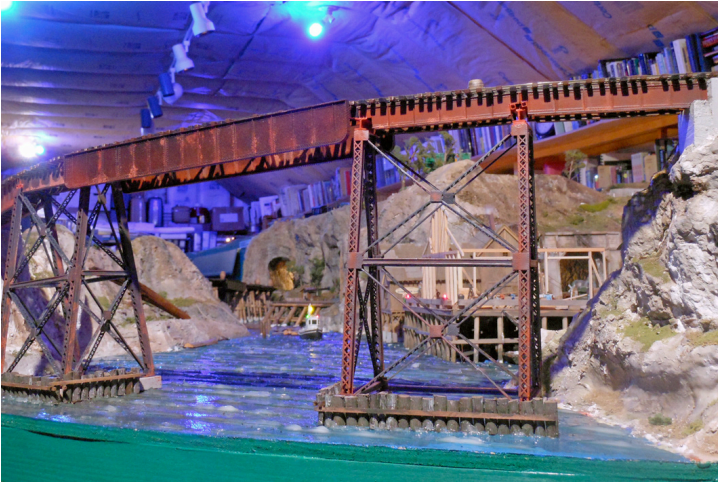
Some photos from Puyallup Great Train Exhibition Nov 15-16 and the **Pacific Northwest On30 Modular Group** setup of which SV&W members Rich Blake and Alan Murray were participants. The layout was about 25' x 55' and again is the only true point to point exhibition layout in the region that has a different configuration at each show to keep operations interesting.

We now have a large transfer table (middle right) for staging and also displayed is Rich Blake's work in progress cranberry bog On18 (that's 18" wide track!) railway (bottom two). Next time to see this layout will be in Monroe Feb 28th -Mar 1st 2015.



The Big Stump Little Lump Lumber & Ore Railway

Dick Haines shares his new work on the B.S.L.L.L. & O. Rwy. Construction has progressed a little lately and the pictures captured by a stealth drone camera below are the proof. This is the steel bridge that spans the entry to the harbor. Great work Dick!



And, just in case you are thinking, gee, I wish I was back East enjoying the late Fall snow..... brrrrr....



Skagit Valley and Whidbey Clinic's Dr. Nick Muff Night

by Rich Thom

Photos: Al Frasch; Nick Muff Collection

Chairperson Rich Blake welcomed 33 attendees to the SV&W Clinic's third meeting of the season on Wednesday, November 12th. Rich was pleased to point out that several folks from the mainland, who are now regulars of the new Mt. Vernon Clinic, were in the audience tonight. Our two clinics are scheduled about two weeks apart each month, giving area modelers the opportunity to attend both if they wish. That idea seems to be a good one!

Also making the trip to the island, Jack Hamilton and Di Voss devoted their entire day prior to the clinic to evaluating layouts, rolling stock, scenery, buildings, and even volunteer data, resulting in several NMRA AP awards being earned by SV&W modelers. Thanks, gentlemen, for taking the time and driving the distance to do so, year after year; it has really vitalized the AP program in our area. Jack described the AP program and how rewarding—and relatively easy—it is to accumulate points for your modeling, authoring, volunteering, and operations efforts. He noted that working towards the “car” award seemed to be a particularly common roadblock for some of our SV&W modelers, who otherwise were within shouting distance of earning their MMR. As just one result of the day's judging, Jack called Tom Hawkins to the front and presented him with his Golden Spike Award. Tom was one of the winners of a layout design competition run by Model Railroader magazine, and his layout was featured in the magazine..

Next, as Rich Blake pointed out, it really was *Dr. Nick Muff Night*. Jack presented Nick with his MMR certificate and plaque, remarking that whenever he visited Nick's layout, he returned home and contemplated taking a sledgehammer to his own. (Your reporter has had the same emotion!). If ever you are able to visit Nick's world-class layout, simply look at the chandeliers in the Kansas City station and you will understand that sledgehammer urge.



Nick was also the presenter of the evening's program, an historic collection of his still photographs and 8mm film of the **West Side Lumber Company**. Just as remarkable as the photos were the "vehicles" that Nick and two friends used to travel over the railroad, the entertaining stories about how they were built, and the adventures they shared on the rides. The vehicles? **Homemade handcars**—a series of three of them no less—each one significantly better than the last.

Nick visited the West Side many times between 1961-66; his earliest explorations in 1961-62, when he was 16, were the subject of tonight's talk. The West Side's 3-ft gauge railroad operations had been in gradual decline and finally were abandoned altogether in midyear 1961; only a single steamer, standard-gauge Heisler #3, continued working the mill in Tuolumne. After that, gyppo truck loggers brought timber down to the mill. However Pickering, who owned the West Side, stored the locos rather than scrapping them, and kept the track in place, too, just in case relying on the gyppos didn't work out. The entire line was ripe for exploring by three keen teenagers.

Nick opened with slides shot in Tuolumne: the large mill operation; Heisler #3; some of the charming home-built caboose; the gauntlet track at the log dump; and several of the Shays. The Shays were kept in immaculate condition, mechanically and in appearance, too; paint gleamed on most of them in Nick's photos.

The boys hiked much of the line on their first forays, and soon realized that this was one long railroad! Camp 45—the last camp built for railroad logging—was 56 miles from Tuolumne, and the main line at one time was 70 miles long. To speed things up, they built their first handcar—their "Car # 1." It had no pump mechanism and was simply a platform, rope-pulled or sometimes "poled." Its wheels had rubber tires, and those wheels were the biggest problem. The tread just wasn't wide enough and the car constantly derailed. Nick said that the variations in gauge of the West Side's rail, as light as 35-pound in places, were so large that any successful car needed 5-inch wide treads!



In 1962, Nick and his friends were at Clavey River bridge when they spotted a wheelset (it appeared to be from some sort of handcar) discarded near the track, and then another nearby. The axles weren't quite true and wheel flanges had pieces missing but—as Nick put it—there was just enough of the flanges left to keep the wheels on the track. They found a steel frame that fit, and using some 2 x 12's among the scrap they built a floor and other wood parts for their new Car #2—built entirely in the woods! With wider treads and sturdier all around, it was a clear improvement over #1. Intending to return to Tuolumne on their new creation, things went awry. A severe rainstorm came up quickly, necessitating a night spent on soaked bedrolls and, eventually, their rescue by the county Sheriff, who was not pleased.



Undeterred, Car #2 was improved yet again with the addition of a 5 hp engine, and proudly lettered *West Side #3*. On it Nick and the others could now make the trip out to Camp 45 in style. But not without more adventure. Returning to Tuolumne, #3 had an unfortunate encounter with some 2 x 12's which a farmer had used to "enhance" his cattle guards, the boys jumped off, and off went Car #3 too, picking up speed and outpacing its pursuers on the downhill grade into Tuolumne. Would the handcar—possibly on fire—crash into Tuolumne yard and get Nick and friends into some *really serious* trouble this time?

If you'd heard Nick's talk, you'd know. If Nick ever gives this talk again at another clinic, a regional convention, or other gathering, make every effort to get there. You'll enjoy it.