

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

The Skagit Valley & Whidbey NMRA Clinic

Wednesday, January 13th

The SV&W Model Railroading Clinic will meet at the Summer Hill location [165 SW 6th Ave] in Oak Harbor Wednesday, January 13th at 7:00pm for a clinic presented by our clinic's scheduler supreme, Susan Gonzales.

Real Rocks Used to Make Scenery!!

It's almost here! Yes, it is the annual **Make and Take Clinic** presented by Susan Gonzales. At the clinic on January 13th, she will be delighted to show the attendees how to use nature made rocks to build scenic accessories for buildings and additions to scenery.

From Susan: "In the attached photos, you can see that I used rocks to build a small rock fireplace for outdoor use. I built this freehand using my favorite glue. To find out what this is, you will have to attend the clinic. In the other photo, I made a rock chimney to add interest to a plain paper building that I built at another make and take meeting.



"If you wish to participate, **please bring tweezers, a scale ruler and your best glasses.** I will provide glue and toothpicks for wiping off excess glue. If you have a building you would like to add a rock chimney to, please bring it and a hobby knife to cut a notch in the roof line. I have card stock that I will provide for making a chimney or you can make a freehand rock fire pit.



"Even if you don't plan on participating in the make and take, please join us for laughs and treats. Those of you who have attended one of my clinics will know how much fun they are, those of you who have not should come to find out what you are missing!"

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:

If you are reading this before 1/1/16: December 21 - January 1: 20th Annual WA State History Museum Model Train Festival, Tacoma see <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/visit/wshm/eventsprograms/festivals/trainfest/>

January 16-18, 2016: Plan on volunteering to help at the 4th Division's main fundraiser of the year: At the Pacific Science Center, **The 42nd Annual Model Railroad Show**, Contact: Jeff Moorman, 206-367-2377, kb7rr@arrrl.net

Feb. 27 - 28, Monroe: United NorthWest Model Railroad Club is hosting the **24th Annual Model Train Show and Marketplace** to benefit Snohomish County 4-H Foundation. The 2016 Show will be in the same buildings as the 2015 show in the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe, WA.

Our "sister" clinic, the Mount Vernon Model Railroad Clinic, meets every second Thursday at the Mount Vernon Senior Center at 1401 Cleveland Street. **January 14: Mike O'Brien will share his tree building process.** 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.

At the last clinic, mention was made of a dealer in Skagit County and that the information would be available in the newsletter, so here it is!

Here is the contact info for Mike O'Brien and his wife Annie at Xtrains Model Train Supplies (and Moose Creek Trees): email sales@xtrainsmodeltrains.com website <http://stores.ebay.com/Xtrains-Model-Train-Supplies> phone 360-202-9750

They have a pretty good selection of items other than rolling stock and locos but will order most anything for you. They are located just off Pioneer Highway between Conway and Stanwood and while they don't have "normal business hours" will gladly open their doors for anyone with a little advance notice. As Mike told me once, "if Annie or I are here we are open".

I still need more layout pictures from you guys!!

Dick, Rich and I can only fill the pages so many times :-)

So, please let us know how that plastering is going, how that newest building fits on the layout, what you did to make that new 12" tall fir tree, etc.

Send contributions to afasch@whidbey.com and thanks!

Clinic Schedule for 2015/2016

~~September 9, 2015 — The DuPont Dynamite Narrow Gauge Railway~~
~~Russ Segner~~

~~October 14, 2015 — Mini Clinics — various presenters~~

~~November 11, 2015 — Bob Stafford — Bellingham Trainmaster~~

~~December 9, 2015 — Planning for the Future of Your Railroad After You've Gone~~
~~Dick Haines~~

January 13, 2016 [Mystery Make 'n Take & Ice Cream!](#)
[Susan Gonzales](#)

February 10, 2016 Contest/SHOW and tell – FLAT CAR LOADS
Jack Tingstad in charge!

March 9, 2016 Good Fences Make Good Layouts
Al Frasch

April 13, 2016 Tom Hawkins Open House in Anacortes

May 11, 2016 "The Lost Art of Railroad Hand Signals"
Ray Wheeler

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 silly cartoons from Dick Haines.

Only ONE month to go!

Flatcar Load Contest!

From Jack Tingstad, the contest coordinator extraordinaire!



Well, here it is, another season of model railroading operations and model building. As you no doubt recall, this season we are have a "contest" to help you do some imagining and building of unique flat car loads.

Judging will be in the following categories:

Scratch built flat and scratch built load

Commercial flat and scratch built load

Super detailed commercial flat with super detailed commercial load

Humorous scratch built load.

Within these categories you could have long loads, MOW permanent loads, excursion cars with loads, circus calliope or other Big Top stuff, or whatever your imagination comes up with that would fit into one of the categories. There will be prize money for "winners" in each of the four categories.



The loads could have some small commercial parts like NBW castings, chain, angle iron, or wood bracing etc., but no huge components like Chooch load parts (sorry Mike, we love your products, but not this time!).

So this is just a brief reminder to start thinking about your entry. To get started with ideas here are a few possibilities: Slabs of marble, ship propellers, junk railroad cars or engines, buses, lumber/logs, alien space ship, dinosaur in cage, pre-fab track sections, military vehicles, pipes, cable reels, and on and on. You could Google flat car loads or go to mrhmag.com and search "flat car loads." There are

dozens of articles in past issues to give you ideas. Even one on building a truss rod flat car. So now is the time to ponder this most important activity of the next few months. We know we're not like school kids and put it off until the night

before "it's due." So get to it. The judging will most likely be in February.



Layout Progress

Your kind editor, Al Frasch, has again been busy making modifications to his “finished” layout. For those not familiar with the layout, upon entering the layout room, your are. . . er, were, faced with a large black curved wall at the end of a peninsula. This tunnel has now been daylighted for the most part, except where a fascia is needed to keep bodies from messing up the layout in a narrow location. Below is a series of pictures showing

the “remodeling.” I would like to think that this shows that changes can and should be made even to a “finished” layout. Do not be afraid to rip out and redo - hey, if you could do it the first time, you can certainly make it look good the second time too!

(note: if you have never seen the layout, the best articles to check it out would be the July 2015 issue of **Trackside Model Railroad**, an online emag by a wonderful couple from eastern Washington - check out the June 2015 issue for Jack Tingstad's CC&W too! Or, the July 2011 issue of **Model Railroad Hobbyist**, free online from their website - and, as long as you are there, check out Jack's in the May 2011 issue.)



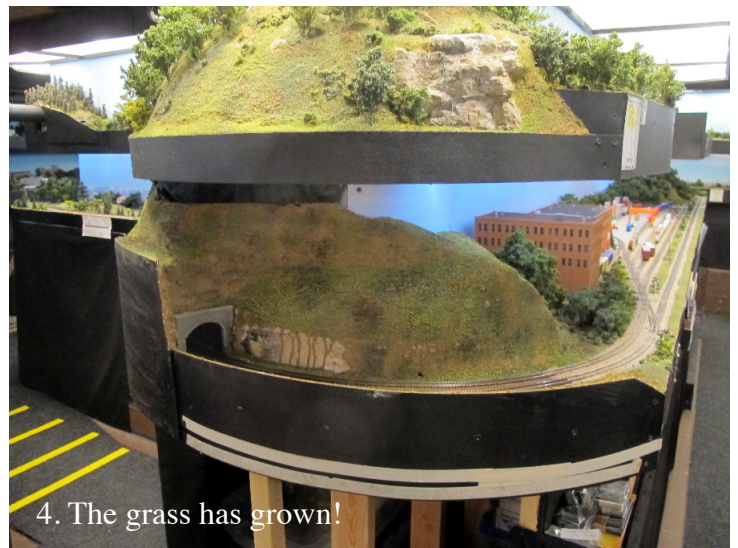
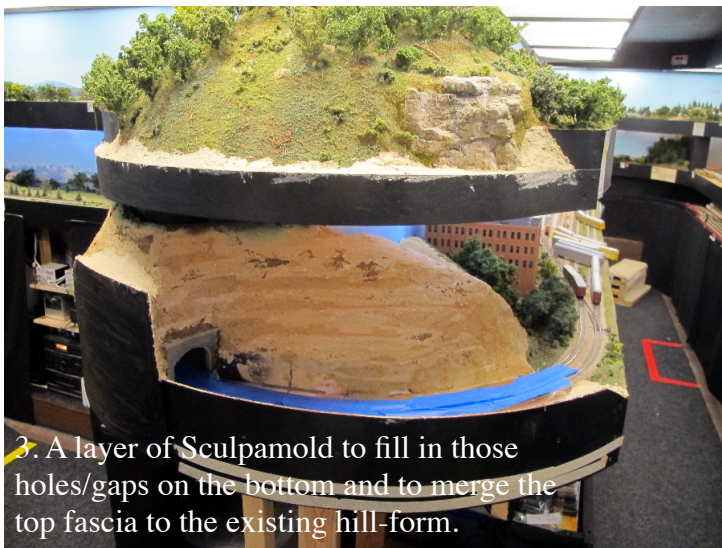
1. Initial removal of old fascia - kind of ugly under there!

The foam hills are created by cutting 1" blue or pink foam in approximate shapes for the terrain desired. Each succeeding layer is smaller until the top is reached. These are hot-glued together and ready for carving. Note: do the carving somewhere besides the layout room! It makes a mess when you use that Surform tool! I use my ground cover paint to cover the hill before placing on the layout.

Then I used Scultamold which was mixed with diluted ground cover paint (2/3 paint, 1/3 water) so that if the scenery is punctured in the future, it won't show the white of Scultamold.



2. Foam hills fill up the space and the new fascia board fitted to block damage to the new area.



Using my mix of diluted ground cover paint again, I paint the surface pretty heavily and immediately apply any ground covers - I use Scenic Express "grasses" in about 16 different shades. The thinned paint reaches into all portions of the surface and wicks into the ground foam "grasses", making a very solid surface that does not blow away - one can even vacuum the grass!

Then, "just" ballast the track that had been hidden, plant some trees and paint the fascia black to match the rest of the layout and, ta dah!



Now for something completely different...

Recently, the world's largest container ship, the **CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin** arrived in Southern California to unload its 18,000 TEU load - that is 9,000 40' containers! To put that in railroading terms, if a average cross country intermodal train from the SoCal area to the Midwest is a 130 car double stack or about 8900', then it would take 35 full intermodal trains to haul that one shipload. Put end to end, that is about 60 miles of train or just about the distance from Everett to Tacoma on I-5. No wonder that BNSF and Union Pacific have spent so much money on their TransCon routes to increase capacity! Of course it could go by truck, requiring 9,000 semis, along with 9,000 drivers, which end to end would be just over 100 miles of trucks!



**Skagit Valley and Whidbey Clinic December Meeting
Planning for the Future of Your Railroad After You're Gone**

Article by Rich Thom; Photos by Dick Haines

Twenty-seven regulars gathered at the Summerhill Residence in Oak Harbor for the December meeting of the SV&W NMRA Clinic. Four from the Mt. Vernon NMRA clinic group made the long journey from the mainland, and **Barry Anderson** braved the sparse wintertime ferry service to come over from Port Townsend. Clinic Chair **Rich Blake** welcomed two guests this evening, **Mike Garcia**, Coupeville and **Mike Piccone**, Oak Harbor.

In opening remarks, Rich observed that **Performance R/C Hobbies**, in Burlington, had closed its doors in November after over three decades of serving R/C hobbyists and model railroaders. We extend sincere thanks to owner **Susan (Suzie) Thornton** for maintaining a stock of basic model railroad supplies over the years. Rich reminded everyone to patronize the remaining hobby shops in the Seattle-Tacoma area to help keep them financially viable. Upcoming events were reviewed, which can be found anytime on our region's website www.pnr.nmra.org. **Susan Gonzales** announced that the mystery "make and take" planned for the January meeting was no longer a mystery: we will be building *Rock Details for Structures*. If you are eyesight-challenged, Susan warned, bring a magnifier.

Dick Haines was up next with the night's program titled "*Planning for the Future of Your Railroad After You're Gone.*" For a more upbeat spin, he added the subtitle "*or you change hobbies or just want to downsize.*" But in fact most of Dick's material (Figure 1 was one of several cartoons to make the point!) was in the spirit of *after you're gone*.



Fig 1- The time to plan your model railroad's future may be sooner than you think

Dick covered the five general questions that come to mind when considering this topic.

1. Why is Planning and Acting Beforehand Important?

It's obvious to any serious model railroader that you've worked hard to build your layout (often several!) over a long time and have collected a lot of "stuff"—not only the models themselves but tools, electronics, books, often railroadingiana, and other items unique to the hobby. Personality types influence how much you've amassed, and affect decisions on how you will ultimately dispose of it. Are you a sampler of a lot of different things, such as scales? Are you a minimalist who gets rid of things no longer of practical use (rare!)? Are you a collector-saver (common!)? Whichever type you are, dealing with your treasures before your untimely demise is important because:

- Your departure is a time of emotional distress—why add to the burden?
- It's kind to let your loved ones know what your desires are (via written instructions)
- Your layout and collection have some financial value, from which your survivors might benefit
- Your heirs don't know the value of what you have—help them ahead of time
- Your creations and collection deserve to be treated with respect—to find new homes

2. Some Ways to Dispose of Your Railroad Stuff

A dumpster is one possible final resting place, and many fine collections end up in the dust bin because your survivors have had no word from you about what to do with it. Help them out by discussing the options:

- Donate/gift all or piece by piece: retirement homes; charitable organizations; railroad clubs; museums; schools; scout troops; other non-profits
- Sell all or parts: auctions; private sales; garage sales; hobby shops; swap meets; internet e.g. eBay, Craigslist; other on-line buyers; consignment; model railroad magazines
- Trade all or parts e.g. to start a new hobby
- Lease out to others
- Downsize e.g. scrap layout and shrink to one or a few modules
- Destroy—abandon the lot

You can help your family by not only letting them know now what your preferences are, but to set up some of these arrangements well in advance.

3. What's All Your Stuff Worth?

If your chosen option is to sell or otherwise have your heirs get some value from your collection, you'll need to either tell them what it's all worth in advance, or give them some resources to find out when the time comes.

Some things you should do **now**:

- List all engines and cars showing original price paid, MSRP, condition and estimate of a realistic selling price
- Mark each new/unbuilt car (or structure) kit with the same info
- Mark each already-built or RTR car with a realistic selling price, and the box too if you have it
- Give special attention to higher-value kits e.g. LaBelle, Ambroid, Central Valley, others—your survivors have no way of knowing these craftsman kits are more valuable
- Flag your brass engines; again your family won't know their special value
- Also flag your built-up model structures which may have higher resale prices (Fig 2)
- Do your family a big favor: photograph and document now while you still can



Fig 2—Built-up structures may have higher resale value than kits; Dick's Ambassador Hotel in his Olympia scene

Fig 2 shows one of Dick's foreground structures, the Ambassador Hotel, in his city of Olympia. A Bachmann kit with a MSRP of \$119, Dick has set its suggested resale price at \$25, or 20%. Its exterior and interior lighting add to its value.

Dick's internet search found several sites for individuals or companies dealing with the valuation, buying, and/or selling of model railroad equipment. As usual, *caveat emptor* and do your own assessment before either working with them, or recommending them to your survivors. Here are just some of them:

- www.brasstrains.com – Begun in 2005, now one of world's largest brass dealers
- www.aergroup.net – American Eagle Rail Group, model railroad construction but also buys collections
- www.traincity.com – Buyer
- www.steamlocomotive.com – Prototype site but also contains guides to HO, and HO brass, locos
- www.lionelcollectors.org – Club (with fees) with seller privileges
- www.tcawestern.org – Train Collectors Association, mainly tinplate
- www.collectorsweekly.com/modeltrains -- Flags most-watched eBay items
- www.hoseeker.net – Internet auction site
- www.uncledavesbrass.com – Buys, sells, trades brass

Most buyers require that your items be sent to them for evaluation and an offer. For very large collections some buyers will travel to your location. Hobby magazines such as Model Railroader, Railroad Model Craftsman, Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette and others also carry classified ads and wanted sections.

The hardest part, obviously, is establishing realistic resale prices for your precious stuff. Frequenting train shows, swap meets, and checking trends on eBay and Craig's List are clearly important. You can also get it all professionally appraised, but fees can be high.

It's essential to steel yourself to reality. For example, that bridge that you're so proud of—such as Dick's shown in the foreground of Fig 3—despite the work he put into it, may sell for just pennies on the dollar, just cannibalized for parts. Its specific radius and height likely make it useless—and thus of no value—for someone else's pike.



Fig 3 –Blanchard Harbor area of Dick's layout; bridge in foreground, kltbashed from Microengineering kits, may sell for pennies on the dollar

One method, Dick suggested, to establish a value for highly-detailed sections of a layout—or for example a module—is to assess it by the square foot. See for example Fig 4, a tighter shot of Blanchard Harbor.



Fig 4 – Blanchard Harbor detail: Dingus Boat Works, left; Blanchard's Wharf under construction; Loob General Mercantile lower right.

In this method, estimated resale value takes into account the number of structures, whether they are kit or scratch; added details (interiors, lighting); brass castings; vehicles; figures. For this section of his railroad, Dick values it at \$30 per square foot.

4. How and Where to Keep Your Documentation

Dick showed several examples of how he has documented his layout, rolling stock, structures and other assets. Dick keeps a three-ring binder with pages for each steam and diesel locomotive, with photographs, purchase price and value as discussed earlier, customization notes if any, and CV values. Be sure to take multiple views of all equipment from various angles, and any other notes to establish condition. Don't just document locos and rolling stock. Include all higher value items such as DCC controllers, boosters, throttles, specialty tools, and higher value structures. Store it all digitally (CD, DVD, thumb drive) and put that media in your safe deposit box.

Dick also shot videos of his layout showing it in action, which can be archived with the other materials. Videos can provide context, prove that everything was functioning beautifully before your demise, and provide powerful marketing tools.

5. When to Begin

Important determinants of when you should start this process:

- Your state of health, physical and mental: arthritis, eyesight, trembling, memory and the host of other maladies which creep up on all of us
- Your state of wealth: do your survivors need income from selling, or can they afford donating or other non-cash disposition?

We're all optimists, Dick emphasized, but don't procrastinate. Plan and document now as described above. Even consider some extreme steps, including deconstructing your masterpiece while you are still able to. That's precisely what Dick is doing in Figure 5—taking a hammer to his layout.



Fig 5 – An emotional experience: deconstructing your layout, as Dick is doing here

Dick included this photo to make a point—but to be honest, it's not his current layout. Here he's pulling down his previous pike in a small bedroom, in preparation for starting his far-larger current layout.

Finally, modelers—and families of modelers—are fortunate to have in the Puget Sound region long-time model railroad estate dealers **Bobj Berger** and **Roger Ferris**, well-known to all of us at nearly every train show in the region. Their goal, Bobj wrote me, is to “return the trains to the community from where they came.” In cases where families don't care about the money, Bobj and Roger donate to the NMRA. In addition to the train shows, appointments can be made to shop the collections at their warehouse in Edmonds. Bobj can be contacted at camelrenter@yahoo.com.

The SV&W clinic group thanks Dick for putting together a detailed—and thought-provoking—talk, the points of which all of us would be wise to heed.

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