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December 2020

Puget Sound Garden Railroading

Official Newsletter of the Puget Sound Garden Railway Society



The staff of the newsletter wishes everyone a Safe Holiday Season and a hope that in the New Year we can soon return to a more normal life filled with sharing our garden railroading activities in person.

Views from the Cupola

By Beth MacLaren, President

There are some few bits that may be news to at least some of you. I have no idea how effective any rumor mills or grape vines are in the club these days.

Regarding club officers, when Elizabeth Alkire moved to California, she kept her membership, but gave up her role as Secretary. Bob Alkire, who took on that role, will be moving back to the Midwest within this next year is also resigning. Our Secretary should be someone who can attend the Annual Business Meeting, recording the results of our annual election of officers, and recording any other significant items of business. I expect voting will again be done by email, except for those very few who have no computers and will therefore vote by snail mail.

Ed Mattison served for many years as our Treasurer, but this past spring Alan Melrose offered to assume the post, and was so elected.

I will not run for President this next year. Chuck Carlson has agreed to be our next President (the normal course of succession for the office, but not mandatory). This leaves the position of Vice President open. Alan Melrose is, as of this writing, willing to serve as either Treasurer or Vice President, whichever is the greater need.

The Veep steps in when the President cannot be present for a club meet, and maintains an accounting of those things that are owned by the club at large. The Treasurer, obviously, pays our bills.

My request to the membership is that you, especially some of you younger members, consider between now and March whether you can take on one of these two positions. The By-Laws require that Officers must have been members

of the club for at least two years, a condition which was intended to let us get to know you, and give you time to get to know other club members, so that there is a comfort level between us.

Fortunately, Mark Howe is both very well suited to being Membership Chairman, and delighted to continue to serve in the position. He truly enjoys the outreach, and has a lot of fun doing his videos and website, which are all his own invention to help find and encourage new members.

Bill Thurston is our happy Newsletter Editor, but if there is one among you who yearns for the position, talk it over with Bill. The time will certainly come when he would prefer to give up the position. Once we are allowed to be socially near, if you wonder how a newsletter goes together, Bill might be willing to serve as a mentor for you. There is nothing requiring that the newsletter take its present format. You could let your creativity loose via newsletter production. And Bill, if you get bored with what you are doing, you are welcome to experiment, too. But I think you already do a great job! And that is my view from the Cupola. Happy, relaxing Christmas, y'all!



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- Pages 10-11 have no new info. from last newsletter except for note on page 10 that dues are due.

This and That

By Bill Thurston, editor

In last month's newsletter, John Engle ask for help in identifying an object hanging of the wall of a bed and breakfast caboose. Thanks to Mike Zachary and Ed Mattison for providing the answers: flare, map and torpedo carriers!



John- your photo from Oklahoma looks like a map carrier from around the WWII era. These were used by maintenance and survey crews to carry their maps in weather protected cases (complete with shoulder strap) before the days of nylon and kevlar bags. Mike Zachary

Ed Mattison: I have two. They are known as signal cases or flare cases. It was used by the brakeman on a train to carry flags, flares, and torpedoes. Not the type of torpedoes that are on a submarine. A railroad torpedo: it is a small explosive device, like a fire cracker, that is placed on top of the rail. When a locomotive runs over this device it makes a loud noise signaling the engineer.

The brakeman used this container if a train made an unscheduled stop on the tracks somewhere. The brakeman would take the item you saw hanging on the wall and follow the tracks behind the train. When he went a predetermined distance which varied by railroad and visibility of the area, he would place usually three torpedoes on the track and light a flare. He would also take out the red flag to wave in case another train was coming. At night he would use a lantern instead of the flag. This was done to notify the oncoming train that another train was stopped on the track and prevent a collision.

Bob Alkire reports that he plans to move out of the area in the next few months and will not be able to continue as our club secretary when he does so. We thank Bob for his service and wish him the best.

The first official issue of the national newsletter being developed with help of several wester clubs is expected to be issued any day now. I will distribute it to all club members with an email address as soon as I receive it.

Mark Howe has added 4 more videos to his YouTube site [Garden Railroading Join The Fun](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGardenRailroading) .They can be found at:

2020 Hotel Refurbish Part 1: <https://youtu.be/j4TQQYF7p0M>

2020 November review: <https://youtu.be/CF1FCRNyKko>

2020 Clean Your Shoes!:: <https://youtu.be/b4HL9Kh2Rwo>

2020 Log car repairs: <https://youtu.be/EZN7ZshdNhw>



Ed's cases: The silver one doesn't have a name on, but the red one is from the Penn Central and it has a flag in it and a spare flag sitting next to it.

Photo by Ed Mattison.



Light at the end of the tunnel?

By Mark Jennings

Yesterday, (12 Nov), I received a most encouraging letter from Ken DeBord announcing that the newly built layout at the Real Life Church in Covington was up and running. You may recall that Ken and Arlene will be hosting the April 2021 meeting at the church. Originally, Ken and Arlene were to host the 2020 April meeting, but the Covid pandemic forced the cancellation of all our 2020 monthly meetings. Not to be deterred, Ken signed up to host the April 2021 meeting. Then a minor miracle occurred and each member who offered to host a meeting in 2020 offered to host the same month in 2021.

I was rather skeptical about Ken hosting the 2020 meeting at a church. At that time there was no layout - only the shabby remains of a previous attempt. However, both Ken and Rev Stephen (Steve) Murray, Real Life Church's pastor, were confident that a layout would be ready in time for the meeting. Then a year passed and I heard almost nothing from either Ken or Steve so I assumed the layout and meeting were dead issues. And then Ken's email arrived with a short video of the layout in action. Ken and several church friends, with Pastor Steve's support, have put together a quite attractive layout. From the video it appears to be a basic loop with a siding and nice landscaping. Included in his email was Ken's assurance that all was ready for the 2021

meeting - five months ahead of time, including indoor access in case of rain.

As I write, the corona virus pandemic is almost out of control so it will probably be necessary to accommodate changes to our usual meeting procedures. In particular, we probably will have to change our open pot luck lunch for individual box lunches. We may even have to cancel the April meeting. I choose to be an optimist and trust that anti-Covid vaccines will be widely available by April 2021 and that train running, conversation and eating will once again be a main part of PSGRS.



So What Is It ?

Photo and article by Ed Mattison

Inspired by the question and photo John Engle had in last month's newsletter, I am starting a new column. I will put a photo of a railroad (past or present) item in the newsletter and see who can answer the question "what is it?" The answer will be in the next newsletter .

If you know the answer, send it to our editor Bill Thurston (thurston.bill@gmail.com). He tells me that those who answer correctly will be recognized in the newsletter and provided honorary titles of "Know it All".

To start this thing off, here is the first photo. What is this object. The answer will be posted in next month's newsletter.



Module Update

November 2020

By Alex Osenbach

There are two items to report on: one for the future planning and the second a cost summary of the new layout.

We have been in contact with the Great American Train Show sponsor and have been informed that it is still a little early to commit to the Puyallup Show. They have been holding shows in other cities throughout the US subject to state and county regulations relative to the covid-19 virus. Until we get closer to the January show date and know what our state will allow, there is no commitment for the Puyallup show. Keep the third weekend in January open for now. Please send me an email if you would consider helping if there is a show in January (aosenbach@gmail.com). At a minimum we will need masks and attempt to social distance as much as possible.

After completion of the new bridge and the power cart we are substantially complete with the construction of the new layout. There is always some additional landscaping and scenery that can be done. Note that we have materials on hand to do more scenery work which can be accomplished on a Friday before a show.

To summarize: The club authorized fabrication of a new layout in 2018 with a total budget of \$26,000. Final accounting of all expenses showed we spent \$26,171. However this total includes the purchase of some additional buildings and landscaping materials which should have been allocated to the normal annual maintenance budget. Excluding those items, the cost of the new layout was \$25,692.

We thank all those members who contributed some of their own materials and purchases that helped hold down the expenses. Bottom line: we met the commitment made over two years ago. It is believed a significant savings resulted from the generous (low cost) estimates we had for the fabrication of the modules and bridge by Premetco. Below is a summary of those costs. We are looking forward to when we can run trains again on the club layout. Be safe.

Cost Details

\$13,178	Module Fabrication
2,200	Bridge Fabrication
1,296	Misc. items for the assemble of the modules (screws, cork, clamps, glue, paint,etc.)
2,777	Track, Rail clamps
977	Electrical
774	Landscape items
4,155	Racks
335	Other

\$25,692 Cost of new layout

Note: the following two items, though expenses of the layout, should be allocated to the annual operating budget.

429	Modification to old bridge (counter balance and extending the wheels.)
50	Buildings

\$26,171 Total module costs



Christmas Past! It is certainly unfortunate that we cannot hold our usual festive and well attended Christmas party this year. Hopefully the virus will be well controlled in the upcoming months and we can get back to some semblance of normal. In the meantime, please be safe.

Bill T., editor

Photo from newsletter archives.

Building a PVC Roadbed

Re-print from 2016 Workshop

Article and photos by Chuck Carlson

Originally Split-Jaw made and sold a PVC roadbed. One club member had purchased and installed the Split-Jaw system on his layout. He grabbed my attention when he presented pictures of installing it at our 2014 club workshop. I had been looking for a method of building a roadbed for my layout. Floating track was not cutting it; I looked at using plywood or cedar board but was not too thrilled. After seeing the presentation I went home and looked up Split-Jaw's web site. Figuring up what I needed to install the PVC roadbed on my layout came to 4K. Okay, this was too much for my blood.

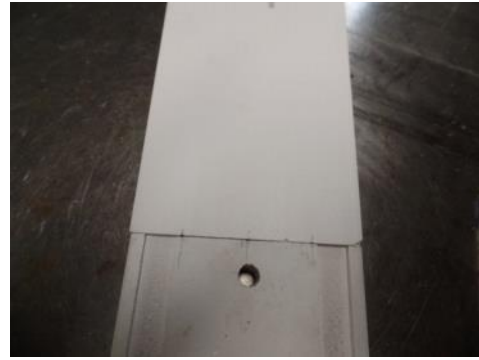
Looking at a real old copy of Garden Railways there was an advertisement of the original company in Santa Clarita (who sold to Split-Jaw) and they had their engineering drawings of the PVC boards. I thought I could do this and set out to the big box stores. At Lowe's and Home Depot I found they both carried PVC boards. The 1x4 board was perfect for straight tracks; the 1x6 for curve tracks (at both) and the 1x8 was needed for switches (Home Depot only).



I measured the straight track from rail end to rail end and cut the PVC board to that length. The curve tracks I laid on the 1x6 (clamping will help) and placed a mark on the ties both inside curve and outside, straight edge line mark on the both rail ends. Then I used a French Curve to connect the tie marks to form the curve roadbed. I used a digital protractor to measure the angle on the line drawn on the rail ends. Using a chop saw set to the angle measured I cut the curve ends; then I cut the outline of the curve out on a band saw. For the switches it was basically the same; laying the switch on the straight edge and marking the ties and straight line the rail ends. Cut the curve rail end first and then the 90 degree lines. French curve the tie marks and cut out on the band saw.

I first made a template from a short piece of straight board, marking for the 2 alignment pins and center mark for connecting clip. Then placing the template on each end of

the board pieces and marking (this makes sure that each board aligns).



Using a doweling jig set to the pin marks I drilled a 3/16" hole 1" down centered. The center mark, square a line on the board and mark 1/2" from the end, drill a 1/4" hole. Do this on every board end. The pins are from 3/16" zinc rod cut to 2" and rounded on the ends. The center clip is made from 1/4" wide brass plate 1/16" thick. Cut 2" long and then mark 1/2" from each end. Putting the brass piece in a vise at the 1/2" mark bend the plate down 90 degrees; do the same on the other end making a C clip. You will need a set of pins and clip for each connection



Next, on each board measure in on both ends 3" on center and from those marks every 12" on center (if space allows). On each mark use a 1 -1/8" hole saw bit and drill holes. Flip board on edge and with a #8 counter bore bit drill in the middle of the board on the center of the hole so the counter bore is just inside the board. Now you can paint the boards black or brown – your choice.



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Next put the pins in the align holes and connect your boards based on your layout design and lock them together with the clip. Using electrical plastic conduit, cut for height of road bed allowing one foot to be in ground. Check the level and grade and then screw a deck screw (1 1/2") in the side holes (both sides) into the conduit pipe. It's important that the pipe is below the top of the board. When the road bed is final, cut duct tape (same color as board) and place over the holes, this keeps ballast on the board and gives a finish look. Finally lay your track down and screw to the board.

On the raised section of my layout, I painted the conduit pipe black, built trestles to fit under the PVC board and after connecting the trestles together no one notices the conduit pipe. The board serves as your trestle top runner. Also on bridges I lay the PVC board on the bridge and this serves to better support the bridge.



Dealing with Debris

Photos and article by Bill Thurston

As those of you that have seen my railroad know, it is a high maintenance affair. Set in the woods and mostly at ground level, there are always leaves, fir needles, twigs, and other debris to contend with. I have found the Railbroom kit made by Bill Wilcox in Arizona serves me well. I have been using one for the last few years. Several other club members have found it helpful as well.

To reduce the amount of time it takes to run the broom around the layout, I decided I needed a second one. Part of the fun is building the platform to hold the broom in the proper position.

I used the base of a Bachmann bobber caboose for my first broom car. Photo 1 below shows the broom kit and batteries mounted on the caboose base as well as a few details added for effect. Photo 2 shows the final car with custom built cover and a few more fun details. Photo 3 shows some of the hazards faced by the crew when cleaning a tunnel!



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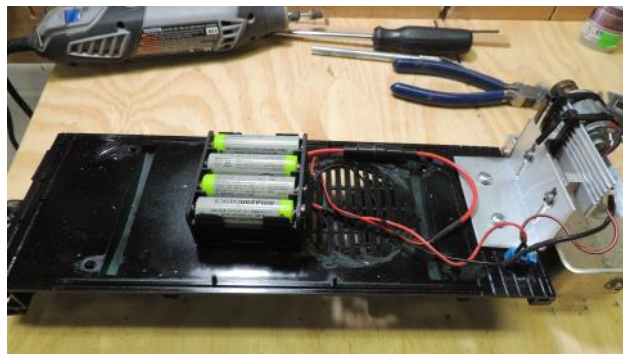
I used the base of the tender for a Bachmann 10 wheeler for my second broom car. Photo 1 shows tender base before modification. Photo 2 shows the base with the speaker and mounting posts removed and the broom kit installed, along with batteries, switch and fuse. Photo 3 shows the cover of the tender reinstated. Photo 4 shows

the finished broom car with a wooden deck, lights installed for night operation, and a bench for the operator. The drive belt was removed in this photo so the broom would be stationary and show better.

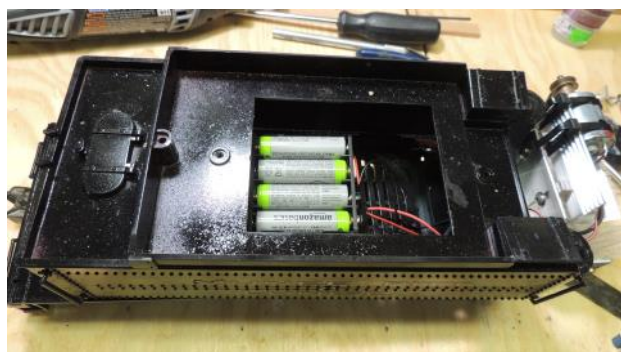
Building these two platforms was a fun project and the cars are serving me well. Thanks to Chuck Carlson for introducing me to the Railbro kit.



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For Sale

Mark Howe (psgrshowe@gmail.com) has the following items for sale. Please contact Mark with any questions.

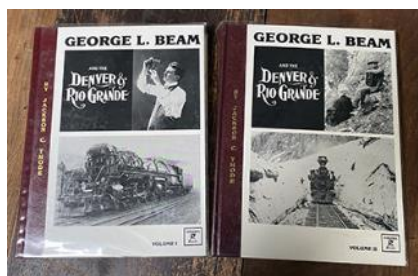
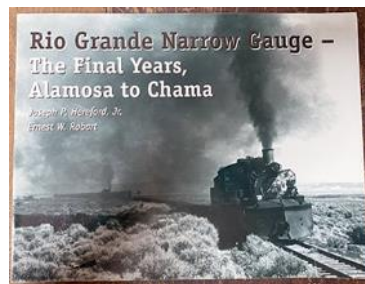
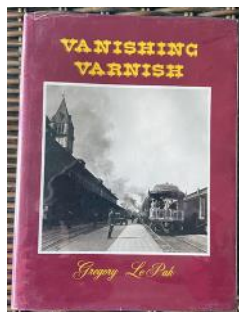
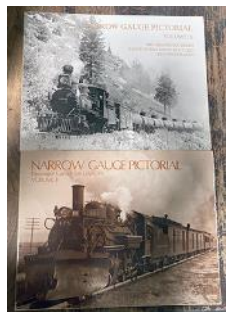
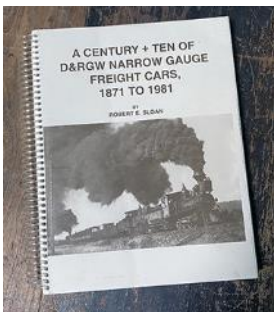


\$35 for all: one set Kadee #779, one set Kadee #335, two sets Kadee #331, three bags of at least 9 individual Kadee couplers of various types.

And Gretchen Schlomann has some items remaining to be sold. Contact her at gbschlomann@gmail.com or text her @ 206-778-9619 for more information.

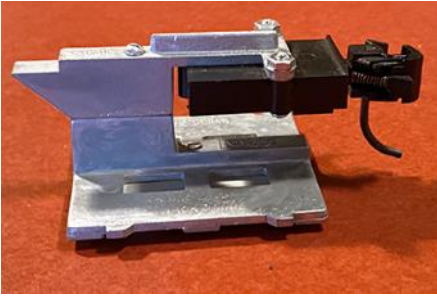
BOOKS - all in very good condition.

- a) A Century + 10 Of D&RGW Narrow Gauge Freight Cars, 1971 - 1981 by Robert Sloan \$75 spiral bind. Signed by Author
- b) Narrow Gauge Pictorial - 3 volumes #2, #9 - \$25 each
- c) Vanishing Varnish by LePak - signed by author #866 / 2000 limited edition - excellent condition - \$80
- d) Rio Grande Narrow Gauge: The Final Years, Alamosa to Chama by Hereford & Robart - \$25
- e) Geo Beam and D&RG Vol. 1 & 2 by Jackson Thode hardcover & plastic protective cover - \$25 each
- f) The Twilight of Steam Locomotives - by Ziel - \$5
- g) Lines West - by Wood (pictorial history of Great Northern 1887 - 1967) - \$5
- h) Pacific Slope Railroads - by Abdill - \$3
- i) The Locomotives that Baldwin Built - by Westing - \$7
- j) Steam Trains 'steam locomotives of N. America' - by Winkowski - Fulkerson (new) - \$7
- k) Highball A pageant of trains - by Beebe - \$3



More items on next page.

Continued from previous page: items for sale by Gretchen Schlomann



Kadee Coupler height gauge - \$10



Gary Raymond wheels 4 axels - \$50



Kadee Coupler - one pkg - unopened #831 - \$6



Weathering chalk + graphite sticks + Alphacolor soft pastels + lettering - \$40



Liquitex Acrylic Paint 4 oz. tubes - unopened. 8 colors - \$15 for set



Bronson-Tate Wilson General Store Kit - \$150



Building Drawings - Country church and Storefronts (GardenTexture) - \$20 for both

Club Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Regularly Scheduled Events

Cancelled until further notice

Big Liars Club

Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 9:00 AM at Redmond Family Pancake House 17621 Redmond Way, Redmond for breakfast and friendship.

Little Liars Club

Meets at 9:30 AM the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday of each month at Ikea, 600 SW 41st St, Renton for breakfast and friendship.

West Sound Liars Club

Meets at 9:30 the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Family Pancake House, 3900 Kitsap Way, Bremerton for breakfast and friendship.

Tall Tales Club

Meets at 9:00 AM on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Denny's in Monroe located at 18824 US Rt 2, for breakfast and friendship.

South Sound Liars Club

Meets for breakfast different times, places, and dates based on who calls for a meeting. Sometimes includes running trains after breakfast. Notices typically sent to all club members who have email addresses. Contact Chuck Carlson at 253-927-7062 for more information.

Wind Up Train SIG

Jim Montgomery is hosting a monthly wind up, or clockwork, train meet at his house on the first Saturday of each month at 1:00 PM until dark. Bring your vintage windups and have fun! Call Jim at 206-783-0829 for more information.

Live Steam SIG

The Live Steamers meet on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Chris Johnson's. We also meet at a member's home as shown in the steam-up schedule. Contact John Bigelow (206-284-5038) or Peter Comley (253-862-6748) for further information.

Modules SIG

Constructs and displays the club modular layout at various shows throughout the region. No set schedule, but shows are publicized well in advance. Contact Alex Osenbach (206-369-2446) to join.

Boating SIG

For PSGRS members who are also interested in model boats. Meets the 1st Sunday after the 1st Thursday of each month at the Bellevue park just south of Bellevue Square mall. Call Dave White at (425-269-9277) for further information.

Operations SIG - Briggs

Second Friday of each month starting in May and ending in September from 2:00 PM until 9:00 PM at Tom and Judy Briggs' home. Battery powered engines available for visitors to use. Call Tom at 425 885 3894 for more information. (Goodson's on page 10)

Schedules and Stops

(All club events, including our Christmas party, are cancelled until further notice)

Dues are Due.

It is that time again. The cost is \$36.00 for 2021 and must be paid before the beginning of the annual business meeting in March. Make your check out to PSGRS and send it to: Mark Howe, POB 1551, Woodinville, WA 98072.

Local Sources for Garden Railroading Stuff*

What	Who	Contact Info	Recommended By
Track, switches, trains and more	Sunset Valley, Bonny Lake	https://www.sunsetvalleyrailroad.com/	Bill Thurston
Ballast, rock, water features, landscaping materials	Walraths, Gig Harbor	https://tewalrath.com/landscape-supply/gig-harbor-wa-landscape-supply/	Bill Thurston
Bridge topping for ballast	Manufacturers Mineral 1215 Monster Rd SW Renton, WA 98055	http://manminco.com/	Alex Osenbach
Plants	NW flower show, Seattle	https://gardenshow.com/	Bill Thurston
Plants	Brothers Greenhouses	https://www.brothersgreenhouses.com/	Bill Thurston

- If you have local sources you would like to recommend, send them to me (thurston,.bill@gmail.com) and I will add them to the chart Bill Thurston, editor.

Other events of possible interest to club members*

* If you know of a railroading event that you would like to see posted here in the future, please send it to me
(Thurston.bill@gmail.com) .

Date	Event	Website
Third Friday afternoon and evening of each month.	Operation sessions @ Goodson's (Briggs info on SIGs page)	Please call Dave(425 823 3507) for an invitation. <i>Ed note: I assume these are cancelled until further notice.</i>
Now - May 2021	NMRA sponsored events in the northwest.	http://pnr.nmra.org/ website indicates most events thru May 2021 are cancelled.
May 30 - June 5, 2021	2021 National Garden Railway Convention, Nashville TN	https://ngrc2021.com/
June 20-25, 2022	National Garden Railway Convention: Denver	https://ngrc2022.com/
2023	National Garden Railway Convention: Bay Area	https://ngrc2023.com/

Puget Sound Garden Railway Society

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carlchuck@msn.com.....253-927-7062

Treasurer:.....Alan Melrose
alan.melrose@comcast.net.....253-631-5481

Membership:.....Mark Howe
psgrshowe@gmail.com.....360-668-4764

Dues are \$36.00 per year payable each January first. New members prorated. Send dues to Mark Howe, POB 1551, Woodinville, WA 98072. Send changes in membership information to Mark by e-mail or to the above address.

Secretary:.....Bob Alkire
bobalkire@comcast.net.....425-374-7890

Meetings Scheduler:..... Mark Jennings
m.jennings32@gmail.com.....206 218 7008

Website Honcho:.....Paul Clark
findpaulclark@gmail.com.....425-239-7647

Keeper of the web newsletter archives:.....Paul Clark
findpaulclark@gmail.com.....425-239-7647

The club website is www.PSGRS.org.

Keeper of the e-mail list:.....Tom Briggs
tabtabtab@msn.com.....425-885-3894

Purveyor of club T-shirts, Sweatshirts, etc.:.....Dwight Malott
djm98292@yahoo.com.....360 652 2311
Items are generally on display and for sale at club meetings.

Electric modules coordinator:.....Alex Osenbach
aosenbach@gmail.com.....206-369-2446

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