



# The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



## Don Jones Lighting Passenger Cars and Caboosees



### April 15, 2024 Highlights

**Attendance** rebounded last night at the Mount Vernon Clinic, up to 23 eager railroaders, undoubtedly, to see/hear **Don Jones** delve into lighting passenger cars and cabooses (see details in "Main Event" below). Just look at all these eager faces:

**Dale Bearden, MMR**, who recently underwent successful open-heart surgery, is back home and reports he is doing fine in his recovery and hopes to be back among us soon

**In Memory:** According to **Rich Blake**, clinic chair of the Skagit Valley & Whidbey Clinic: *Former Skagit Valley and Whidbey Clinic Chair **John White** dies at 90. It is with a heavy heart that I have to report that one of our members, John White, has peacefully passed away on March 21st in Anacortes. He was 90 years old. John, an avid On30 modeler, was one of the founding members of the Skagit Valley and Whidbey Clinic and was the Clinic Chair from 2000 to 2012. He was instrumental in resurrecting the clinic from only a few enthusiasts to sometimes over 30 members showing up for monthly clinics. He organized many clinic locations, finally settling at the Summerhill location in Oak Harbor which we enjoyed for many years. His charismatic leadership style was one that encouraged folks to volunteer their time and knowledge on many great clinics he led over the years (See photo of John on page 5).*

**Schedule Change Reminder:** The Mount Vernon clinic will be shifting to a schedule of March through November, effective now. The clinic will still be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of those months, at 7:00 pm at the Mount Vernon Senior Center. Driving to and from the clinic is easier during spring/summer/fall months and we won't have to venture out in the darkest days of winter to go to the clinic.

#### Coming Down the Track

- May 11, 2024 Alger**  
WSMRC Open House
- May 20, 2024 Mt. Vernon**  
Bob Stafford Coal Trains
- June 17, Sedro Woolley**  
Field Trip to Nick Muff's
- June 20, 2024 Tacoma**  
Field Trip to PSMRE
- July 15, 2024 Mt Vernon**  
Nick Muff 3D Printing

#### Tool Time:



**Dave Falconer** is building his home HO scale layout, which features multiple grades as well as three helixes, and several years ago he purchased a Skill brand digital level. Dave reports that it is helping out very well in helping maintain an even grade, and is accurate to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a percent.



**Ron Nelson** displayed a couple of homemade drill bit holders.

(continued on page 4)

# NMRA 4<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION

## Field Trip to PSMRE in Tacoma June 20, 2024

A Visit to the Puget Sound Model Railroad Engineers HO Layout

Link to the Museum's web page devoted to the club: [PSMRE](#)



***On June 20<sup>th</sup>, we will be taking a “field trip” to visit the Puget Sound Model Railroad Engineers very large and complete HO scale layout in the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma. Our hosts have promised us a “behind the scenes” look at the layout!***

### **Thursday June 20<sup>th</sup>'s Agenda**

The plan is to take Amtrak train #517 in the morning all the way to Tacoma and return on train #518.

Currently the one-way fare is about \$30 (from Bellingham), depending on where you board. Travel insurance is extra (cancellation protection, etc.).

Once we disembark in Tacoma, we will take Tacoma Light Rail (same station) directly to the museum.

Admission to the museum is \$14; \$11 for seniors (65+), and \$10 for groups of 10 or more. The fare on Tacoma Light Rail is \$1.00 each way.

***It is strongly recommended and encouraged to purchase your Amtrak tickets in advance!***

To buy your tickets online, go to: [Buy Tickets | Amtrak Cascades](#). Caution: Be sure to make sure your departure location is correct (I booked my trip from Bellingham, forgetting that I am traveling to/from Mount Vernon – head slap!). Don't forget your senior/military or whatever discount.

***This is a “no host” trip – in other words, each person is responsible for all costs: Amtrak tickets, Link Light Rail fare, museum admission, and any meals.***

***Please let me know if you plan on joining us. This is not a binding commitment, but I need to get an estimate of the number of attendees for our hosts in Tacoma***

### **Departure**

Amtrak Cascades #517

Departs B'ham 9:14am

Departs Mount Vernon 9:43am

Departs Stanwood 9:57am

Departs Everett 10:37am

Arrives Tacoma 12:55pm

Amtrak Cascades #518

### **Return**

Departs Tacoma 4:47pm

Arrives Everett 6:48

Arrives Stanwood 7:19pm

Arrives Mount Vernon 7:32pm

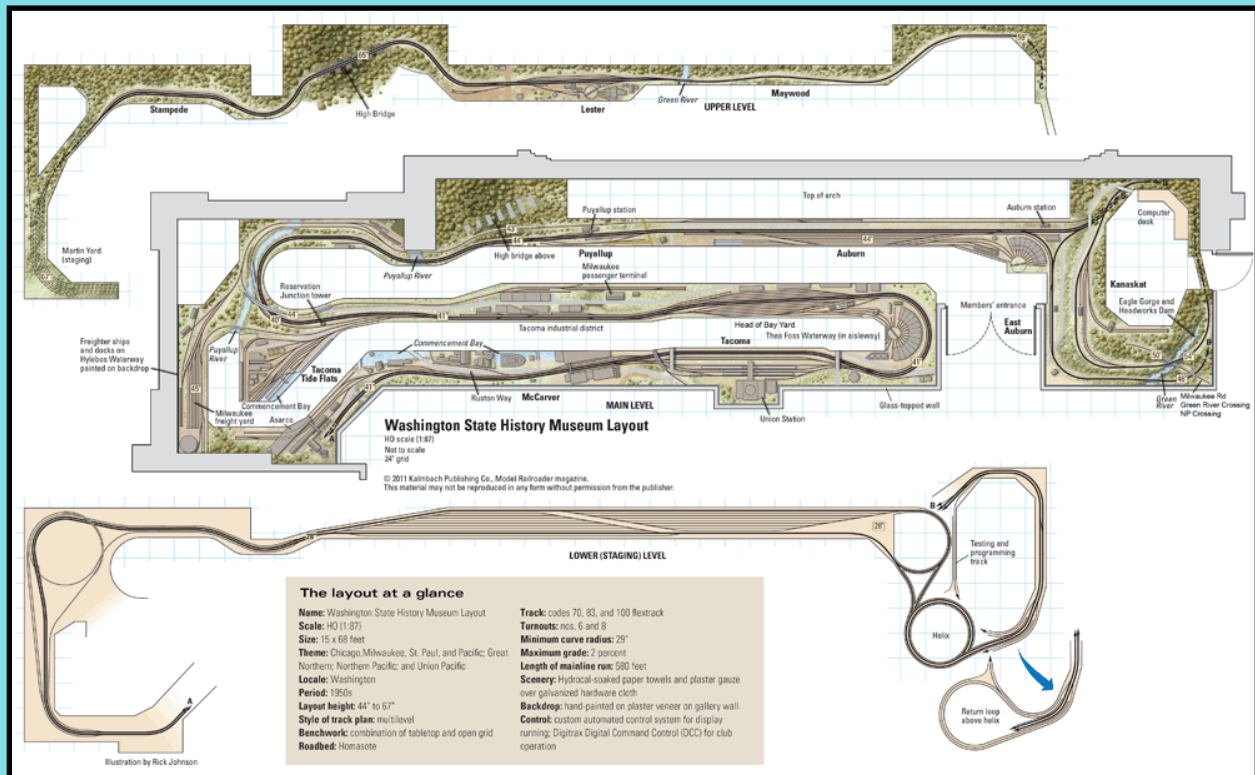
Arrives B'ham 8:04pm

**Contact me, Al Carter, by email at: [tabooma10@gmail.com](mailto:tabooma10@gmail.com) or leave a message at 425-577-1570.**

# The Puget Sound Model Railroad Engineers



**About the layout:** The PSMRE model railroad is an HO-scale (1:87) model representing Tacoma, WA railroading in the 1950's. The 25' by 95' exhibit area provides a compressed view of local landmarks from Tacoma's Asarco Tunnel to Stampede Pass, and includes trackage and equipment from the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, Union Pacific and Milwaukee Road railroads. In addition to being a public display, the model is used as an operating forum for PSMRE members.



**Lunch:** Our host, Marshall Wilson, reports there is a food court at Freighthouse Square, which is also the Amtrak and Sounder station, so finding lunch won't be too hard.

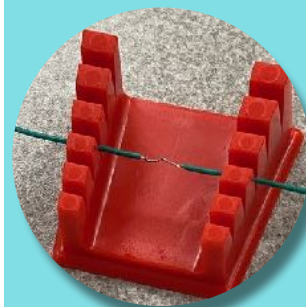
# New and Improved Tool Time

Al Carter kicked off this segment of the clinic by showing a copy of the NMRA Magazine, and specifically the “Tool Car” segment. MMR Jack Hamilton, who lives in our own Fourth Division, has authored this monthly feature in the magazine since January of 2013! And, as Al reports, he has “got into” Al’s wallet on numerous occasions with reviews of “gotta have” tools.

Leigh Wilson brought along a couple of the new Walthers expandable track sections, which he is using to splice in the track on his Nason Creek module part of his HO scale layout. Leigh’s sections are code 100 (Walthers part number 948-10091), and they are available in code 83 as well.



**Tool Time: Continued**  
In the April 2024 issue, the aforementioned **Jack Hamilton** showed off a nifty soldering aid, a device



designed to hold two wires securely while one solder-splices the wires together:

Al Carter also showed a small handheld vacuum that is excellent for getting into smaller spaces, especially with the attachments included. It is recharged via a USB connection, is easily cleaned, and emptied, and can double as a miniature blower with attachments on the exhaust port.



## Special Announcement:

The June 17, 2024, clinic will be our “second annual” clinic field trip to visit the fabulous layout of **Nick Muff**. You must pre-register for this by emailing Al Carter at:

[tabooma10@gmail.com](mailto:tabooma10@gmail.com) **There will not be a clinic at the Mount Vernon Senior Center in June.**



**May Clinic:** For our May 20 clinic, retired BNSF Trainmaster **Bob Stafford** will explore BNSF unit coal trains. Originally he had planned to cover unit grain trains also but decided to split those subjects into two presentations; the grain train clinic will be scheduled at a later date.

# Modeler's Showcase

1. Phil Gonzales showed his in-progress rebuild project of an HO scale MDC/Roundhouse shay kit that he has been tinkering with for many years. He bought the new Shay Handbook, an upgrade kit, and more details. Looking forward to seeing more of this rebuild project!



2. Tom Hawkins started building an HO scale Ambroid combine kit in 1956 and reports he is still not completely done. He shortened the coach and added a cupola, which necessitated changes to the roof as well. Tom came to tonight's clinic hoping for some ideas on how to light the interior. Well, I think he got his wish! Now Tom, let's not wait another 60 plus years to finish this up! Tom also got up and spoke on behalf of the family of On30 Scale Modeler John White of Anacortes who recently passed away. Tom said that the family has quite an extensive collection and are looking for parties interested in John's trains. Tom's email is: [hawkinst338@gmail.com](mailto:hawkinst338@gmail.com)

# Modeler's Showcase Continued



3

3. **Bob Stafford** displayed an HO scale loco. In Bob's own words:

*Atlas "Yellow Box" RS-3 painted with Model Master gloss black. Decaled with Micro-Scale Lehigh and New England decal set strips and alphabet set numbers. Susquehanna and Hudson River roadname and S&HR logo custom decals made by Prime Mover Decals.*

4. **Al Carter** continues his build of his "Kit 1 of 1" HO scale gas station, now partially painted in Shell Gasoline colors. Al also displayed 3 gas station signs that enlisted aid from **Nick Muff**, who scanned some sign images, converted the scans to CAD drawings, then laser cut the styrene sign backing and frames (ever tried to hand cut a Shell insignia with all the scallops on the shell? Not easily done; hence the cry for help from Nick).



4

5. **Al** also showed off the renumbered Alaska Railroad passenger car that he removed the existing numbers from during the March 2024 clinic. This car started off as #201, and is now #202.



5

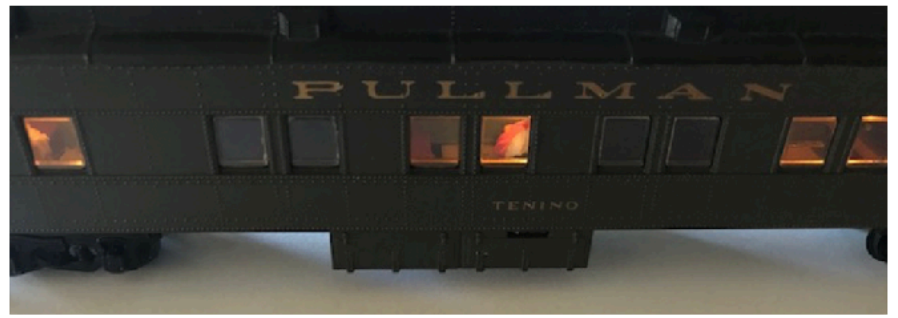


6

6. **Doug Seward** "threw together" a small diorama featuring a wood structure, some 3D printed details and a vehicle. Nice!



# Main Event Don Jones Lights Up The Night



The Evening's Main Event featured Don Jones taking us through a brief history of lighting passenger cars and cabooses, bringing us up to the current methods and products he favors.

One manufacturer of LED light boards is Voltscooter:

[HO Scale Passenger Car Lighting Board – Voltscooter Engineering](#)

This company also has other nifty products, like some 3d printed structures, as well as various lighting accessories. And they offer track (power district) circuit breakers, too. Neat find!

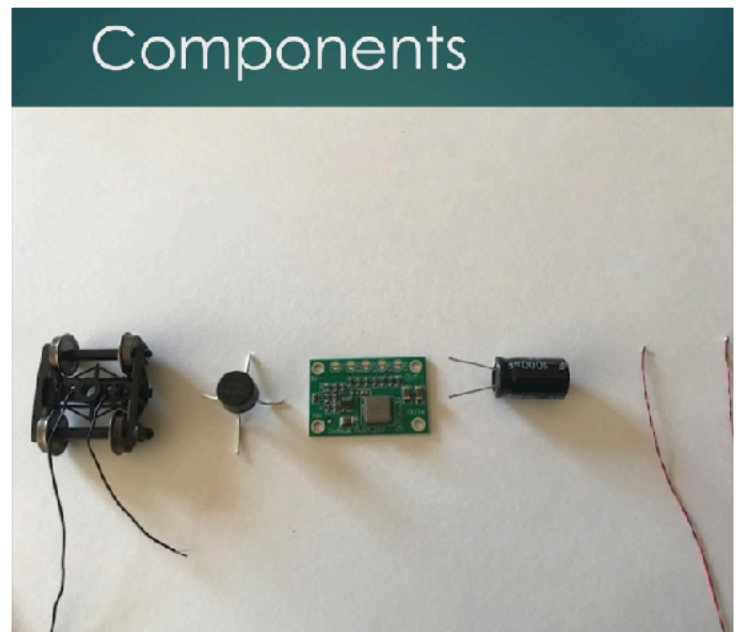
For a complete run-down of the presentation, Don's clinic was videoed by Bob Stafford, and it will soon be up for viewing on the 4D's YouTube channel

---

## The Laugh Track 🚂

All scales cost the same amount - all you can afford." — John Armstrong -from The Winnebagoland Whistle Fall 2021

---



# Levi Reyes Model Railroader Extraordinaire



**Levi Reyes**, age 11, is quite a train enthusiast! Levi has been attending the clinic for the past several months and reports his favorite railroad is the BNSF. Here he is showing off a neat BNSF SD-90 loco, given to him by **Bob Kenworthy**, as well as a C449W, a GP50, a wide vision caboose and several rolling stock. Bill and Susan Gonzales supplied him with track and other supplies as well. Levi also received a genuine engineer's hat and a BNSF pin from Steve Londino and Al Carter. Levi has a small HO layout at home and was eager to give his new locomotive a test run.

## SPONSORSHIP:

The Mount Vernon NMRA clinic is one of several clinics sponsored by the Fourth Division, Pacific Northwest Region, National Model Railroad Association. We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 7:00 pm at the Mount Vernon Senior Center, 1401 Cleveland Street. No meetings during the summer months (June, July, August). Membership in the NMRA is **NOT** required to attend our clinic. For more info on joining the NMRA, see: [www.nmra.org/membership](http://www.nmra.org/membership). Or see **Al Carter** for a membership application. Remember, if you are unsure, there is a one-time 9-month Rail Pass trial membership for only \$19.95.

## CONTACT US

Clinic Chair: **Al Carter** ([tabooma@msn.com](mailto:tabooma@msn.com) or 425-577-1570)  
Clinic Refreshments: **Dave Falconer** ([dsfalconer@aol.com](mailto:dsfalconer@aol.com))  
Newsletter Editor: **Steve McCartt** ([smccartt@comcast.net](mailto:smccartt@comcast.net))  
Newsletter Publisher: **Steve McCartt** ([smccartt@comcast.net](mailto:smccartt@comcast.net))  
Clinic and Newsletter Photographer: **Steve McCartt**  
Roster Keeper and Videographer: **Bob Stafford**

## 4TH DIVISION ZOOM LAYOUT TOURS

Courtesy of Cliff Aaker

You can expect a regular layout tour the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM. The Zoom link will be posted on the [Grab Iron](#).

One of the best clinic options is the meetings put on by the [NMRA 4th Division](#). Some of these are also Zoom Meetings.

The 4th division also provide a youtube archive of past Layout tours and clinic videos you can access at [www.youtube.com/c/4dpnrMovies](http://www.youtube.com/c/4dpnrMovies)

You can also visit the NMRA youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChw-7-1FWB5zOgTM0ZVY-Yw>

**Note:** Membership in the NMRA is not required to view Zoom meetings or on line clinics.