



The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Bob Stafford on Burlington Northern Coal Car Operations

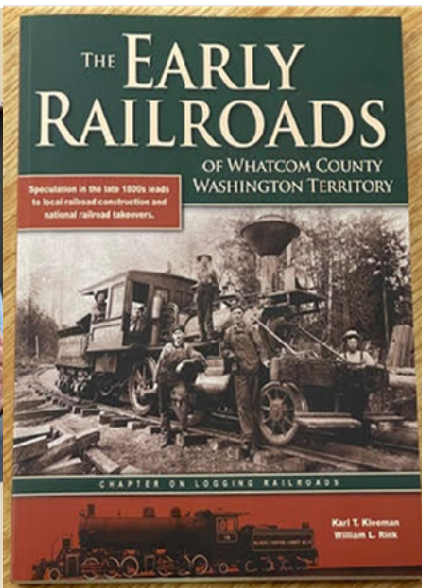
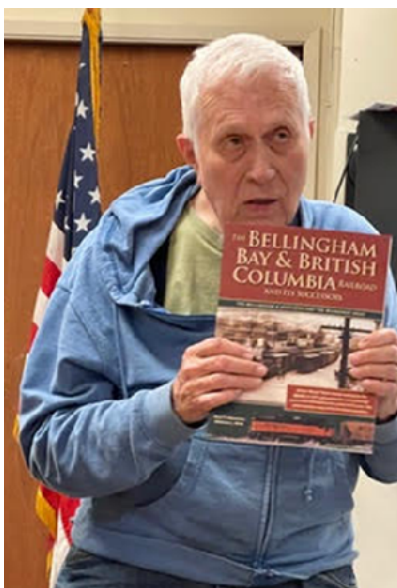


May 20, 2024 Highlights

Hmmm... Lots of empty chairs in this photo – did you forget to come to the clinic? You missed a great presentation from **Bob Stafford** (see **Evening’s Main Event**).

Next Month: Don’t forget – next month’s (June 17) clinic will be our “second annual” group field trip to visit Nick Muff’s world-famous layout. Please register by emailing Al Carter at: tabooma@msn.com or tabooma10@gmail.com or call and leave a phone message at 425-577-1570.

He’s Back: After being absent for a few months due to heart surgery, **Dale Bearden, MMR**, was able to once again join us at this month’s clinic. Dale reports he even worked on some N scale models while he was recuperating. Glad you are back, Dale!



And **Karl Kleeman** returned to the clinic. Karl has co-authored two books and he presented them. They are available from Village Books in Fairhaven (Bellingham). I have my copies and whole-heartily recommend them both!

Tool Time:



Dave Sherwood is a clever fellow – rather than spend some dollars on a hobby paint mixer, Dave made his own by simply taping a cardboard tube to the blade of his Rigid brand multi-tool. He caps the bottom end, inserts a paint bottle, and holds his hand over the end while the tool works its magic.

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NMRA 4TH 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 20th, 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 20th'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

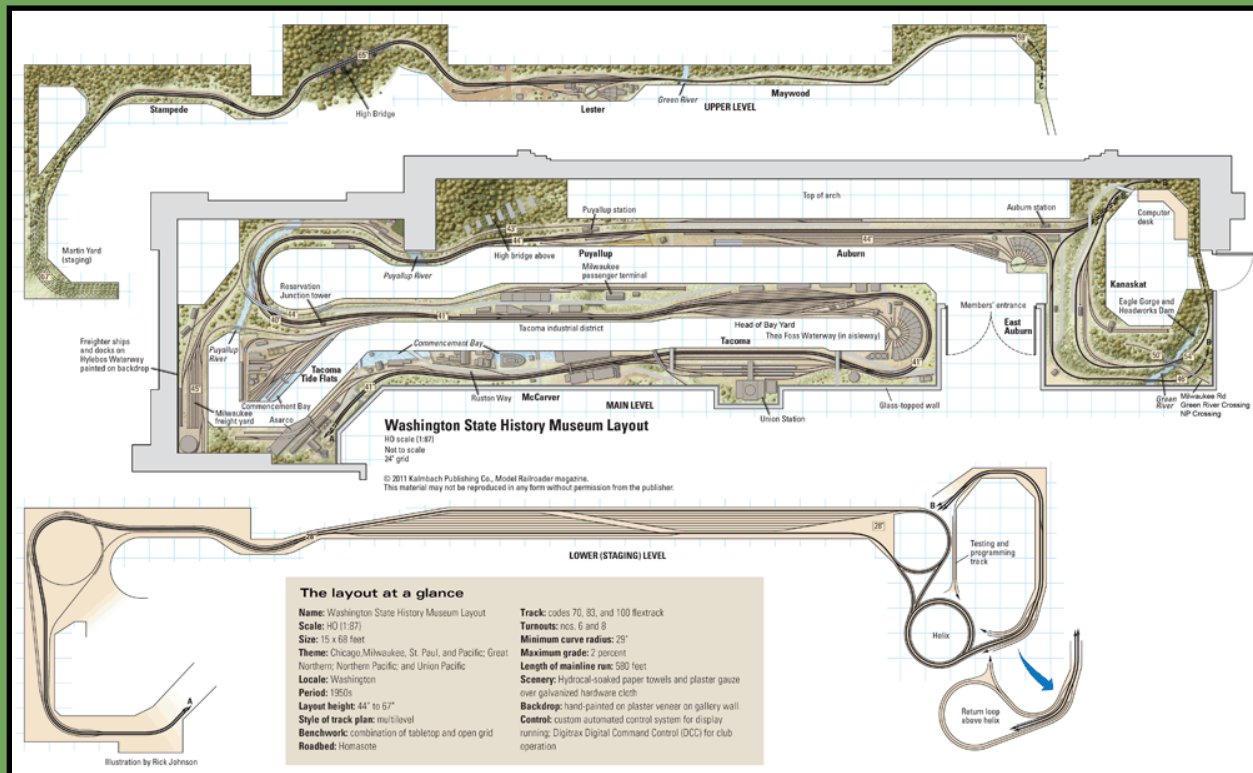
Arrives B'ham 8:04pm

Contact me, Al Carter, by email at: tabooma10@gmail.com or leave a message at 425-577-1570.

The Puget Sound Model Railroad Engineers

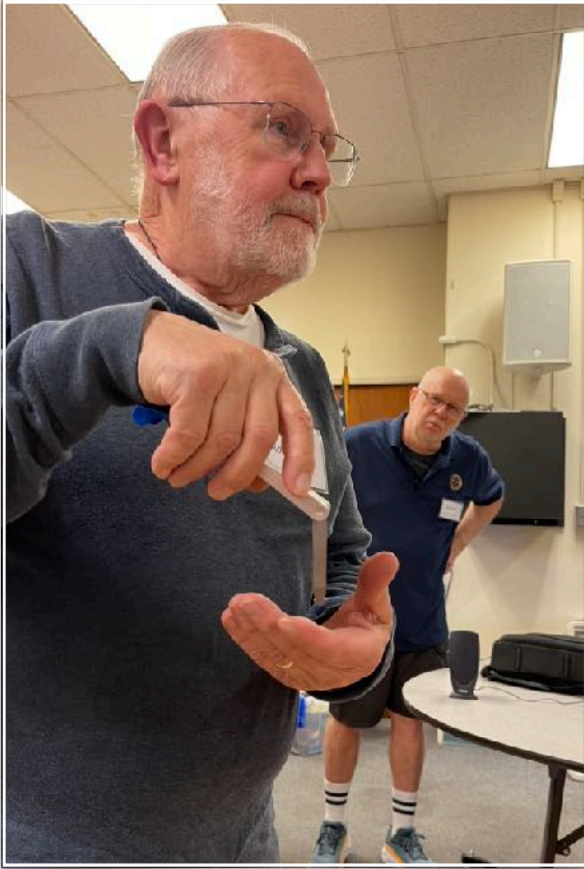


About the layout: The PSMRE model railroad is an HO-scale (1:87) model representing Tacoma, WA railroading in the 1950's. The 25' by 95' exhibit area provides a compressed view of local landmarks from Tacoma's Asarco Tunnel to Stampede Pass, and includes trackage and equipment from the Great Northern, 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



Ron Nelson showed off a bit of a roll of PSA (Pressure Sensitive Adhesive). This is not your normal glue but is a “film” of adhesive material that one presses into place, then peels back the backing, leaving a very thin layer of adhesive.

Great for a lot of tasks, like applying roofing shingles and tar paper, etc. One brand is made by 3M and available on Amazon, among other places.



Al Carter loves to weather things: rolling stock, locomotives, vehicles, structures. The first step in weathering any object, says Al, is to apply a matte finish before anything else. A matte surface is necessary for weathering materials to adhere to. Now, you can buy a hobby matte finish, such as Testors Dullcoat, but

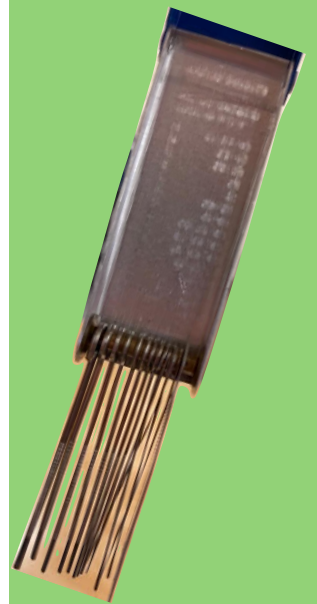


for the same amount of money, or less, you can purchase a much larger matte spray finish at your local home improvement or hardware store. Currently, Al’s favorite is Behr “Chalk Finish” clear matte spray. Al also uses Rustoleum’s “Frosted Glass”. Al brought a couple of Athearn F-unit diesels, one fresh and shiny, and one with a matte coat (the Behr product) applied. See the difference?

Tool Time: Continued
Dave also showed off a mini hobby tool (think small Dremel type tool). This one is battery operated, being recharged by a USB connection. Dave reports that it is available online. Search for “Smart Electric Sharpening Pen D2”



Ron Nelson also brought a nifty “tool” that is designed to clean out orifices in torches, but Ron uses it to clean out or ream small holes he drills.



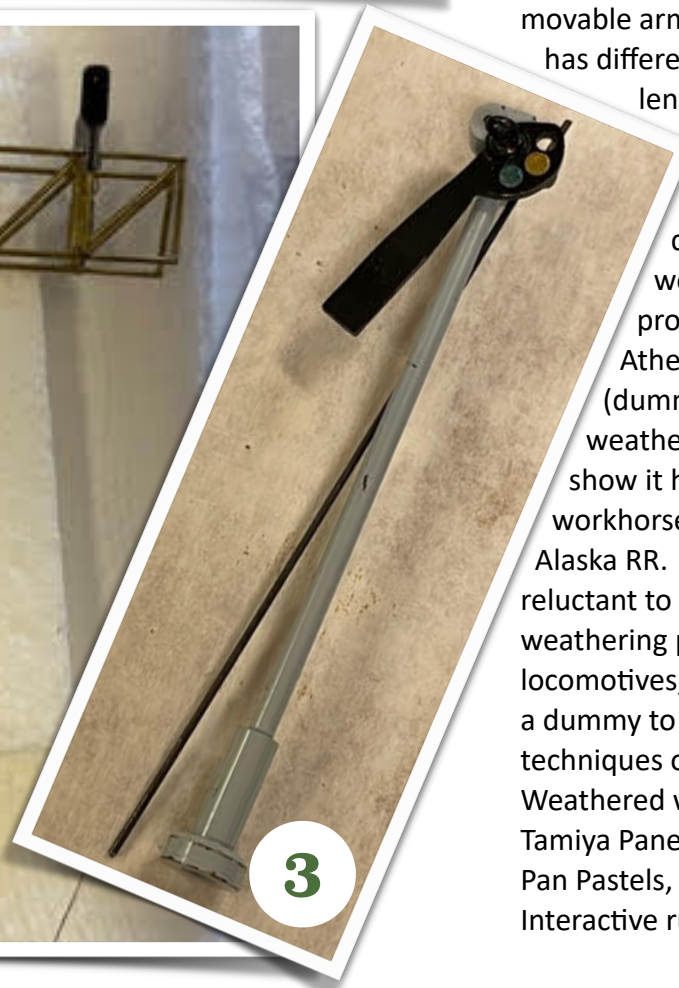
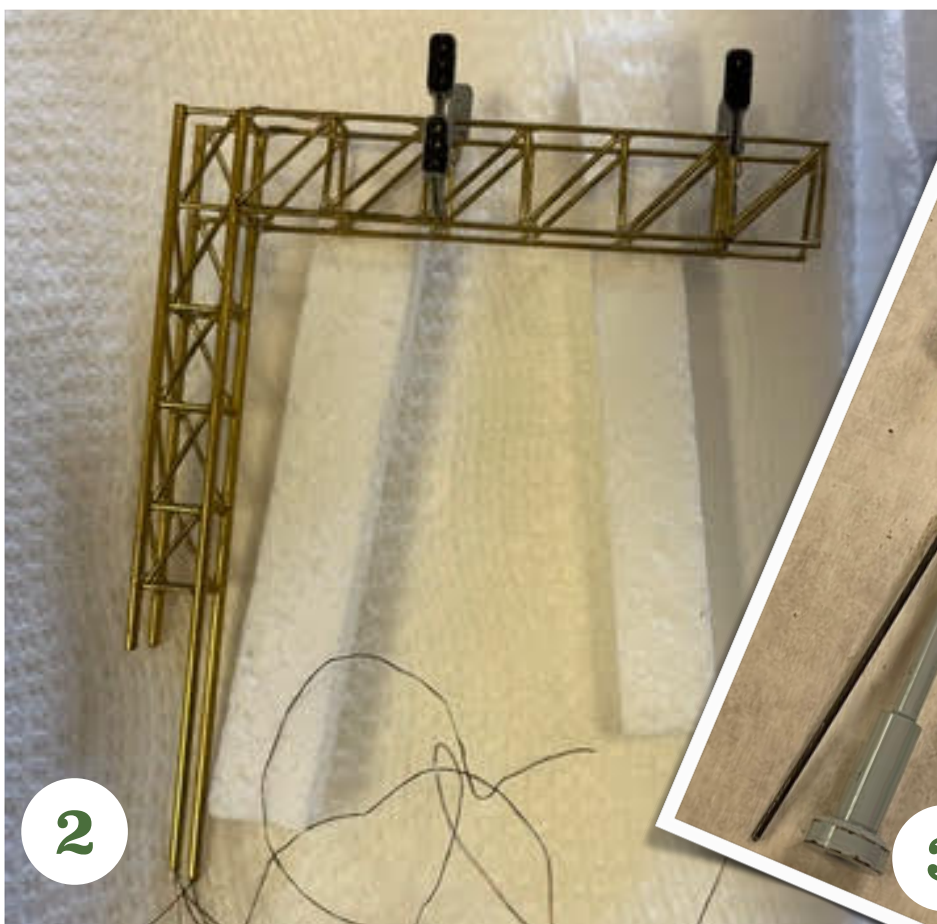
Modeler's Showcase



1. **Dale Bearden** kept busy while rehabbing from his heart surgery, and scratchbuilt a nifty N scale barn, which is a replica of a barn on his grandmother's farm.

2. **Roger Weiss** is scratchbuilding a signal bridge out of brass, in N scale, no less!

3. **Ron Nelson** continues to amaze us with his scratchbuilding endeavors. This time, he is working on a semaphore signal, including installing a tiny LED behind the movable arm which has different colored lens installed.



4. **Al Carter** displayed a work in progress: an Athearn GP-40 (dummy), weathered to show it has been a workhorse on the Alaska RR. Being a bit reluctant to start weathering powered locomotives, Al bought a dummy to try some techniques on. Weathered with Tamiya Panel Liner, Pan Pastels, AK Interactive rust

Modeler's Showcase Continued



(Continued from page 5)

powders, among other things.

5. Another work in progress from Al is this “shake the box” flat car of indeterminate manufacturer. When Al got it, the “wood” deck was painted the same boxcar red as the body of the car. Al applied (by brush) a coat of Tamiya tan paint for a base coat, then when dry applied some Vallejo washes followed by some Pan Pastels on both the deck and car body.

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 3rd 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

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

August 19 Mt Vernon

Clinic TBD

September 14 Alger

WSMRC Open House

The Mount Vernon clinics for April and May are now public on the 4dPNR YouTube channel. Here are the links:

April: Don Jones Lighting Passenger Cars

May: Bob Stafford Burlington Northern Coal Trains

Main Event Bob Stafford & BN Coal Trains

We were treated to a great video presentation from Bob Stafford, retired BNSF Trainmaster, on Burlington Northern (pre-BNSF) unit coal trains. Bob's travels and work assignments took him to various places during his career with the Burlington Northern railroad, including in Wyoming, where the BN originated coal trains. Bob worked as an operator in the train order territory until the competition of CTC in late 1980. Afterwards he worked as a yard clerk in the BN yard at Alliance, NE. In May 1982 Bob left Alliance for Trinidad, Colorado working various agent/operator and yard clerk positions on the Twin Peaks and Twin Mountain subdivisions of the Burlington Northern's former Colorado and Southern route.

There were some rather tough grades to combat with the heavy tonnage of loaded coal cars. It was a common occurrence to break a coupler knuckle or pull a drawbar out from under a loaded coal car.

Bob reports walking along the right of way would reveal lots of broken train parts from these occurrences in certain locations such as Dalton and Peetz Hills in Nebraska and at several locations on the C&S between Walsenburg, Colorado and Des Moines, New Mexico.

Bob also suggested ideas for increasing the operational value of unit coal trains on our layouts, including examples of how bad order cars were handled, and how they were placed back into coal trains at very specific locations.

Bob's entire clinic will be up and available soon on the Fourth Division's Youtube website. Be sure to check it out! And while you're at it, check out the other videos on the 4D's extensive collection.

Here is a link to the site. Be sure to check out all the great videos featuring contributions from many of our own 4D members: [4DPNR Movies - YouTube](#)



Bob Kenworthy Assistant Superintendent 4D

New/First Timers: The Mount Vernon Clinic was honored by a visit from **Bob Kenworthy**, who is the Assistant Superintendent of the Fourth Division. No, Bob didn't journey all the way here from his home near Tacoma just to visit our clinic. He was on his way to Surrey, B.C. to attend this year's PNR Convention. Doesn't matter – we were glad to have such a distinguished visitor! Bob is shown below holding Dave Sherwood's paint mixer (see **Tool Time**), with a look on his face that says... "What, really? This is how you do things up here?"



The Laugh Track



Before each clinic several of the attendees meet at 5:00 pm for dinner at Round Table Pizza in Mount Vernon for good food and stimulating conversation. Here is a scene from the May get together Join us in June!

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 3rd 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. 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

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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

You can also visit the NMRA youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChw-7-1FWB5zOgTMOZVY-Yw>

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