

# THE FLIMSY BOARD



[BNMR is a 100%  
NMRA Member Club](#)

Watch your email and  
the website for news and  
updates about meetings,  
clinics, and clubhouse  
status.



*A young girl runs trains on the Young Engineer's Layout as her mother and brother watch.*

## AUGUST CLUBHOUSE SCHEDULE

*Dates and times are subject to change — consult the website for updates.*

- 4th..... Open House 12 pm to 4pm.
- 4th..... Business Meeting, 6 pm at the clubhouse.
- 6th..... Breakfast social time at All Star Lanes, 8:30 am.
- 6th..... Open House 12 am to 4pm.
- 11th..... Open House 12 pm to 4pm.
- 11th..... 4D Westside Clinic, canceled
- 13th..... Open House 12 am to 4pm.
- 18th..... Open House 12 pm to 4pm.
- 20th..... Open House 12 am to 4pm.
- 25th..... Open House 12 pm to 4pm.
- 25th..... Board meeting, 6 pm at the clubhouse.
- 27th..... Open House 12 am to 4pm.

# THE FLIMSY BOARD

Official Publication of the Bremerton Northern Model Railroad, Inc

The club is incorporated in the State of Washington as a non-profit and is recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c)(7) social club. We are a 100% National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) membership club.

## FLIMSY BOARD STAFF:

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Submittal deadline is the 30th of the month, publication date is the weekend after the business meeting.  
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## MEETINGS NOTICE:

Business meetings are held on the Thursday of the month in the clubhouse. Board meetings are held periodically in the clubhouse on the last Thursday of the month. The January meeting is our annual dinner meeting held at a local restaurant.

## OFFICERS:

President:..... Bruce Himmerick  
Vice President: ..... John Forsythe  
Secretary: ..... Bill Hupé  
Treasurer : ..... Wes Stevens  
Sergeant-at-Arms: ..... Jerry Enders  
Directors:..... Bert Cripe, Mike Boyle,  
Dick Stivers, Ray Hagele  
Librarian..... Tom Barrett  
Web Site:..... <http://www.bnmrr.org>  
Facebook: ..... <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1988490354736510/>

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## PRIVATE VARNISH—THE TIOGA PASS

For the benefit of those who don't know, private varnish now days normally refers to privately owned, older passenger cars. In the late 1800s passenger cars were made of wood which requires preservation - usually varnish. Thus those cars privately owned became known as "Private Varnish".

The business car "Tioga Pass" was one of six lightweight business cars built by the National Steel Car Company Ltd. for the Canadian National Railroad in 1959. It was assigned to the Vice President of the Mountain Region in Edmonton, Alberta.

By the early 1990's some of the cars were deemed to be surplus. In 1992, this car was sold to Rudy Hayes. In 1997, it was resold to Norm Orfall. It subsequently entered regular private charter service in the early 2000's. Extensive modifications and upgrades of almost every system on the car have been made.

The Tioga Pass is unique even among private varnish because, in addition to charter trips riding on the back of Amtrak trains, the car is marketed in a niche role as an escort for specialized loads on freight trains. It has traveled widely across the North American.

In 2018 I rode the Coast Starlight from Tacoma to LA. Our regular stop at Jack London Square was delayed when the Tioga Pass was coupled to the rear of our train. The exterior was a bright blue and appeared freshly washed. It was an unexpected treat to watch a switch engine arrive with the car and watch as it was coupled up to our train.

At San Luis Obispo we had a longer than usual stop. The car had been chartered by some rail fans and was on the return leg to its home base.

Tours of the inside were given, but unfortunately I was not aware of this so I missed out.

After arriving at my destination, I began an internet search to learn the story of this car.



*"Tioga Pass"*

*Photo used with permission of the owner Doug Spinn and Julie King, Executive Director American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, Inc.*

*<https://www.aaprco.com/>*

The more I learned the more I wanted to have at least one 'private varnish' to run at the rear end of a passenger train at the club.

On my return trip to Tacoma, as we departed LA, we slowly past by the Tioga Pass as it sat on a siding in the maze of tracks near Union Station. At that point, with the knowledge of what the car was all about, I was in envy of those folks who could charter, never mind own, one of these very special cars. It provided fodder for my imagination on the long trip north.

I now have four passenger cars (three in N scale and one HO) in various stages of work to become my fleet of 'private varnish'. Obviously I cannot own a real one so this is the best I can do.

.... BC

### NEW MEMBER REPORT

No new members in July.

## TRACK CLEANING AND METAL WHEELS – CAN WE PUT THIS TO BED?

There has been much ‘debate’ over the years about the black deposits on the rail tops. Many people believe this is caused by running plastic wheels. There are pros and cons about both types of wheels such as cost vs. availability, shorting vs. no shorting, wheel gauge, broken wheels, and perhaps many more.

A post at the Model Railroad Hobbyist forum from 2010 [<https://forum.mrhmag.com/post/black-gunk-12186610>] is paraphrased here:

“A piece of heavily used, poorly cleaned silver nickel track was sent to an analytical lab for an analysis of the black crud that was presumed to be from using plastic wheels.”

The report came back with this, to paraphrase:

“The black crud is near 100% pure nickel oxide. It is the natural oxidation of the nickel in the silver nickel plating on the track. When viewed under extreme magnification it looks like random dots rather than a continuous film. It is likely microscopic irregularities on the tread of locomotive wheels and track face and/or common dust on the track is causing momentary loss of electrical contact resulting in nanosecond duration, nanometer long electrical arcs which cause the nickel to oxidize far faster than would naturally occur.”

“When asked about plastic wheels he postulates the plastic has nothing to with it.”

More research along this line will result in finding discussions about no ox id such as this one, again at MRH: <https://forum.mrhmag.com/post/the-no-ox-thread-12189685>.

The N scale layout was treated to a track cleaning work day in June. Four club members spent about an hour & a half cleaning rails. The process was with a ‘Bright-Boy’ style cleaner lightly brushed over the rail tops first, followed by a makeup sponge dipped in mineral spirits, and finished with a light coating of no ox

by finger tip application. The rails were then lightly wiped down again and followed by running a locomotive over the rails for some amount of time (duration not recorded). Mineral spirits is a non-polar liquid. It is believed by some that non-polar cleaners are better than polar cleaners.

The specific product used was "No-Ox-Id A-Special" purchased from Amazon, search for: “NO-OX-ID A-Special-Electrical Contact Grease”.

Joe Fugate (publisher of Model Railroad Hobbyist magazine) remarked:

“When observed with the room lights off, there is less visible arching on loco wheels and track cleaned with mineral spirits - and apparently less oxide build-up as a result. Some have sworn by Wahl clipper oil for years, I suspect the effect is similar to mineral spirits.”

The success or failure of this process on the N scale layout has yet to be determined but so far the trains are running well.

No-Ox seems to work. It's been used for a long time (over 65 years according to one vendor's website) and yet we continue to hear discussions about dirty track. It seems the work of the masters like Linn Westcott, John Allen, and Bill McClannahan is being ignored by current modelers. We should not overlook older techniques and the knowledge of those from earlier times who came before us.

If you would like to hear a discussion about this subject I would suggest viewing a video from Ron's Trains n Things here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWv5Jdr9v9k&t=312s>

So the answer to the question is: No I think not because someone will continue talking about it no matter what.

....BC

## AMERICAN FLYER TRAINS IN THE CLUBHOUSE

My introduction to toy trains began sometime in the third or fourth grade when I received a windup Disney circus train. The initial circle was fine for a little while, but I could create a far bigger layout using the back side of the oak flooring my dad was installing in the living room. The grooves were the right width for the approximate O-gauge windup train. I could make really long straights and connect my rails to the ends of the straight to make a really big oval layout. Of course that lasted only until dad finished the living room.

Sometime before Christmas that year, I remember being asked what type of electric train I would like for Christmas. I remember looking at 3 rail Lionel, 2 rail American Flyer and HO. I chose American Flyer because it was realistic, and not as fragile feeling as the HO sized trains. I set it up in the unfinished living room on a 4x8 sheet of plywood. Figure 8 with orange trestles.

When the upstairs bedroom was finished in the 8 or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I had space under the south end of the house upstairs. I combined a 4x8 and a 5x9 into one big and continuous layout with tunnels and bridges. It wasn't a switching layout. I had by then obtained a second train set from an older boy scout.

Throughout high school a friend and I always discussed our future layouts, sharing various catalogues on the school bus.

When I left for college I kind of willed the AF layout to my younger brother, who combined it with an N scale plan. N scale fit within the two AF rails. When I graduated and moved to Washington, Ron and I divided up the trains. Mostly I put out a circle during Christmas.

When I moved to my current smaller house I discovered E-bay and went nuts. Ron had decided to give me back his portion of the AF

*(Continued on page 6)*



*Jim's American Flyer layout.*

(Continued from page 5)

gear. So now I had two sets, but with an empty garage, I prepared a plan for a 5x11 layout, and started shopping on E-bay. Now I have 25 locomotives, countless rolling stock, too much track.

I learned about the BNMR club, and proposed adding S gauge (scale) layout. The club was in the mall by then, but Covid hit so I couldn't build anything.

I have steam locomotives: 4-4-2, 4-6-2, 4-6-4, 0-6-0 and a 4-6-6-4. Various models, shapes and colors. A few diesels: some modern some older. A few repaints created for fun. I have some kit bashed cabooses that are figments of someone's imagination.

My intent over the course of the year is to rotate rolling stock and locomotives so a variety is shown. I just obtained some all-wood box cars. My overall goal is to have visitors say, "I remember playing with my American Flyer or my father's or my grandfather's years ago" In the future I want to add some operational accessories for visitor button pushing.

.... Jim Hochstein



In this picture, there is a little girl running the train. The lady is Alice (housekeeper on the Brady Bunch) or Schultze from the Bob Cummings show.

Vintage advertising photo from the Facebook group "American Flyer Trains Back on Track"



## CLUB MEMBER EARNS AP CERTIFICATE

Congratulations to Robert Shepperd who recently received an Achievement Program Certificate in the Service to the Hobby category:

**Association Volunteer**

....BC

## ROLLING STOCK MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADING CLINIC?

Several months ago John Forsythe presented a clinic about upgrading and maintenance of rolling stock. He is willing to present the clinic a second time if there is sufficient interest. The intent of this program is to improve the performance of your rolling stock to reduce derailments and unintended uncoupling.

His clinic handouts are available here:

<http://www.bnmrr.org/handouts.html>

Contact John if you are interested in a clinic.

....BC

## UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

National Narrow Gauge Convention

September 1-4

Website: <https://www.seattlenngc.com/>

Venue: Hotel Murano, 1320 Broadway, Tacoma



**N**orth Olympic Peninsula Railroaders  
Twenty-second Annual Train Show &  
Swap Meet

September 17 & 18 2022

Free Admission & Parking

Clallam County Fairgrounds

1608 West 16th St, Port Angeles

Operating Layouts

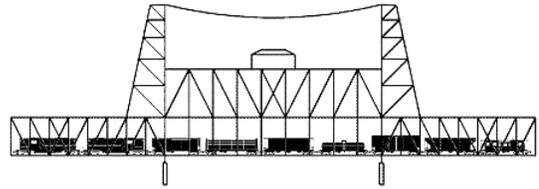
Contact Steve at 360-582-1316 or steves-  
tripp9@gmail.com for table rental info.



## DECODER PREFIXES

**T**he decoder prefix & consist numbering scheme was approved at the August Business meeting. Participation is optional but the aim is to prevent any two members' locomotives from having the same decoder address. If you have questions about the scheme please contact John Forsythe. The listing of address prefixes and consist numbers will be posted inside the HO layout area.

.... BC



## BRIDGETOWN

RAILROAD PROTOTYPE MODELERS  
PORTLAND, OREGON

October 1, 2022

At the Airport Shilo Inn

Portland, Oregon

**I**f you have never attended one of these prototype modelers shows you should! It is difficult to find work of this quality on display anywhere else!

Watch their Facebook page for details:

<https://www.facebook.com/northwestrpm/>

Check out Tony Thompson's blog for some photos of a Bay Area show:

[Bay Area Prototype Modelers, part 1](#)

[Bay Area Prototype Modelers, part 2](#)



**L**ewis County Model Train Show & Swap Meet

October 8-9

SWW Fair Grounds, Blue Exhibition Hall, 1909  
South Gold St, Centralia

Hours Saturday 10 to 4 and Sunday 10 to 2

Contact Ted Livermore 360-985-7788 or 360-  
269-0921 or tedstrains@lewiscounty.com