

Hello Everyone! It's time to get registered for the GNRHS Annual Convention in September. The Convention is a West End Convention in the beautiful city of Bellingham, Washington. Your local committee – Don Pavia, Neva Jean Pavia, Tom Carr, Francina Carr, Kent Cavaghan and Linda Cavaghan – have developed an agenda full of great activities for all. The information you need to plan your “escape” to the great Pacific Northwest is included in this edition of the GOAT.

Please Note: Because many of our convention tours require “pre-payment” and/or guarantee of costs, we will not be able to give refunds for the Post Convention Tour after July 19; other tours must be cancelled by July 27, 2018.

TOURS:

Saturday, September 15:

Exploring Bellingham Rail History Sites and Routes

RAIL TOUR

Bus Loads at 7:45 am; return to hotel at 4:00 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 35 persons.

This tour will explore the interior and coastal routes of the major GN railway precursors (the Fairhaven and Southern and Seattle and Montana Railroads) into Bellingham from the south. On the way south, we will view the preserved Blanchard GN frame depot and the site of the Colony Mill. We will start north at the F&S and Seattle & Lake Shore Eastern (NP) “rail triangle” in Sedro Woolley and follow the F&S route into Happy Valley and Fairhaven (driving on portions of the old route). We will also visit the major S&M rail crossings at Burlington and Belleville leading respectively to the S&M coast line and the temporary connection to the old F&S line at “F&S Junction”. The bus will follow Friday Creek, Lake Samish, Chuckanut and Padden Creeks back into Bellingham. Box lunch will be provided at Fairhaven Park. The major historic rail sites and parks along Bellingham Bay in Fairhaven, Sehome Junction, and Whatcom (Bellingham precursor towns) will be explored including the Taylor Dock and Boulevard Parks which have an offshore boardwalk from which views of the current BNSF (ex GN) and Amtrak “Cascades” (old “International”) rail line are available. The still-extant Bellingham GN Depot and freight house will be viewed in old Whatcom. The location of industries and competing railroad facilities (depots and yards) of BB&BC (Milwaukee) and BB&E (Northern Pacific) railroads will also be visited.

Saturday, September 15:

Historic Fairhaven District

Non-Rail Tour

Bus Loads at 9:15 am; return to hotel at 3:00 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 30 persons.

Tour the historic Fairhaven District of Bellingham with a choice of activities including ceramic painting or glass fusing, shopping, book stores, clothing and jewelry shops, and local artists' craft boutiques. Fairhaven dates from the 1880's and many old historic buildings (some reportedly haunted) have been carefully restored. Modern infill buildings generally mimic the style of older ones, giving the town the feel of an older village. Shoreline walking trails are available starting near the Fairhaven Green or the multi-modal Amtrak/Greyhound/Alaska Ferry Terminal at the foot of Harris Avenue. A spiral bound guidebook will be included in your registration packet to provide detailed directions, explanations and maps.

A special loft will be reserved for GNRHS members at the ceramics painting shop along with a knowledgeable staff person to instruct or help participants with their painting and glass fusing projects.

Lunch will be on your own at a wide variety of over 30 local (non-chain) eating establishments, including restaurants, small cafes, pastry and coffee shops, craft breweries, wine bars and a traditional English tea shop.

Saturday, September 15:

Bellingham Bay Sunset History Tour by Boat

RAIL and Non-Rail Tour

Bus Loads at 5:45 pm; return to hotel at 9:30 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 75 persons.

This two-hour boat trip tour, beginning just before sunset, will explore the major industrial, rail and historic sites along Bellingham Bay viewing the coastline from the water. Modern-day BNSF and Amtrak trains follow the shoreline. The boat provides both interior and exterior seating on the deck. This trip may provide an opportunity to view a variety of Puget Sound marine life. A chicken dinner will be provided on the boat and an open cash bar will be available.

Monday, September 17:

A Taste of Whatcom County Crafts

Non-Rail Tour

Bus Loads at 8:30 am; return to hotel at 4:30 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 30 persons.

This tour will visit Mountain Glass Studio, a local glass works, to observe a glass-blowing in action. Bellewood Acres, a local orchard and distillery, will be next on your itinerary where you will have a tour of the orchard and packing plant operations; you will be able to pick 3 apples on the tour to take with you. A soup, salad, lunch buffet will be served. A short visit to the River Walk Park in Ferndale will allow viewing of several totem poles carved by the Lummi Nation "House of Tears" carvers. These carvers have produced many famous memorial poles, including poles for the 9-11 site in New York and a memorial for Standing Rock. The tour will end at Twin Sisters Creamery with a wine and cheese tasting. If cheese production is in progress, it will also be possible to observe the procedures.

Tuesday, September 18:

Cross-Border Rail Tour

RAIL TOUR

Bus Loads at 7:30 am; return to hotel at 8:00 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 90 persons.

NOTICE: This tour crosses the U.S. – Canadian border. U.S. and Canadian citizens will require a valid passport; Foreign nationals (non-US or Canadian citizens must be sure to the proper papers to allow you to leave the U.S., enter Canada, and re-enter the U.S.) Passports and ID will be checked at bus boarding. Be sure your passport is up to date or you will not be allowed to board the bus. Be advised that if you have ANY felony convictions, you will NOT be allowed to enter Canada. Drunk Driving offenses are considered a felony in Canada and will prevent your entry. Be sure you can meet all requirements. Do not attempt to bring alcoholic beverages, firearms or any prohibited drugs, including marijuana, into Canada.

If requested, we will provide registrant information to both U.S. and Canadian customs officials.

This day-long, lunch and dinner inclusive, tour starts at the restored former Great Northern Depot in White Rock BC, which now houses the City of White Rock Museum and Archives. There will be a presentation in the museum as well as a walking tour on the promenade along the former Great Northern (now BNSF) mainline between Seattle and Vancouver BC. From there we visit the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society (FVHRS) in Cloverdale BC, where we will tour their facility and shop and ride a restored BC Electric Interurban car that once served the Fraser Valley between Vancouver and Chilliwack. Lunch will be served on site. Following that we continue to the Burnaby Central Railway in Burnaby BC where we are hosted by the BC Society of Model Engineers at their 6.5-acre site in Confederation Park. We will enjoy rides on the 7.5-inch live steam railway, an N scale modular display by the Vancouver TraiNgang in the station, as well as the newly expanded Garden Railway. A BBQ Salmon and Rib Dinner will be served at the park prior to our return to the hotel.

Wednesday, September 19:

Non-Rail Tour

Shopping in La Conner and Pacific Northwest Quilt Museum

Bus Loads at 9:00 am; return to hotel at 3:30 pm

This tour requires a minimum of 30 persons.

La Conner has become a mecca for artists and is home to a small fishing fleet. The main street features many boutiques offering the work of local artists and other esoterica of the Pacific Northwest. The morning will be devoted to exploring or shopping.

Lunch is on your own in one of the many fine restaurants on the main business street in La Connor with several of these featuring fresh seafood and other prototypically Northwest Cuisine.

In the afternoon we will take a short ride up the hill to the Pacific Northwest Quilt and Fiber Museum, one of only eight museums in the United States dedicated to fiber arts and quilts. Housed in the charming Gaches Mansion, the museum is one of the oldest buildings in La Conner. It features three stories of displays of quilting artistry. There is NO elevator; however, the stairs are manageable for most and the museum generally has a video or pictorial overview for those who do not wish to go beyond the first floor.