IPMS-SEATTLE NEWSLETTER

EDITED BY KEVIN CALLAHAN FEBRUARY 1994

Foreign Correspondents

I recently got a note from Bill Johnson mentioning that some friends of his in the Will-Cook (Illinois) IPMS chapter were interested in exchanging monthly newsletters. Always being curious about what other modellers around the country are thinking, I shipped off all the issues since I started working on the newsletter. Within a few days, I had gotten a return package of Will-Cook's last few issues. I've also placed their group on our ongoing mailing list, and have asked them to do the same.

One interesting bit of news that I noticed was that Francois Verlinden and company are planning to open what they are advertising as "the world's first modeling museum" in May of 1994 near St Louis. This truly caused a fit of agony in the group that has been exploring the idea of a year-round aircraft model display/museum in the Puget Sound area for the last few months. Given that any Verlinden effort will no doubt have the VLS retail money behind it, and with a prime location in the center of the country, the VLS Miniatures World should have a good chance of success. There still may be a place for a more tightly focused display, one that concentrates specifically on the history of aviation in scale, but from a marketing standpoint it certainly would have been nice to have been the first to announce.

Another interesting bit of information concerned a new bit of modelling software called "Model Pro". It is a database manager that allows you to organize all of your kits and accessories (books, decals, detail parts and conversions, etc). Items for a particular project can be tied together by a project code, or kits can simply be listed and sorted. A report function allows you to create inventory lists, want lists, and project summaries. Retail for the package (system compatibility was not mentioned in the Will-Cook article) is $40.00. Further information can be had from Paul Cotcher of ScaleSoft, 625 Southshore Pl, Rosewell, GA 30076.

I will try to bring copies of these newsletters to our meetings so anyone who is interested can review them. If you know of any other (non Region 7) IPMS chapters that might be interested in a newsletter exchange, let me know and I'll send them a copy. Networking is an important skill these days, and there is no reason why we shouldn't pass our information on to other IPMS groups, as well as take advantage of their news, drawings, and original research.

We're also always on the lookout for groups in other parts of the country who would be willing to trade slides. I would especially like to hook up with someone who could take photos at their local model shows. That would give us a broader look at the type of work that is being done in other parts of the country. If anyone has good contacts, drop a line by the newsletter address.

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I presume by now most of you who read *Scale Aircraft Modelling* caught Jim Schubert's name in Mike McEvoy's *Tailpiece* column in the December 1993 *SAM*. Jim had passed on some detail information on the B-50 markings ("City of El Paso") as supplied in the Minicraft kit. It amazes me how often members of the IPMS-Seattle group have appeared in the pages of *SAM* over the years.

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Another upcoming model release rumour working its way through the grapevine

concerns Tamiya. They appear to be preparing to follow up their 1:32 F-15 with a -- this was probably inevitable -- 1:32 F-4 Phantom. They will also increase their presence in the 1:48 market with a series of F4F Wildcats.

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In this issue we have the concluding part of Lamar Fenstermaker's epic on WW2 German anti-tank weaponry. I have also reproduced the flyer from the Boeing Management Association on the Czech MiG-21 they are attempting to secure for the Seattle Museum of Flight.

I've just about burned through my backlog of newsletter articles, so if you have been considering getting a review or some original research down on paper, now would be a wonderful time to do it. All submissions should be sent to the newsletter dropbox or given to me at one of our monthly group meetings.

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Andrew Birkbeck has asked me to remind everyone that the calendar has changed, which means that it is time to ante up your club dues. Once again the total is $12. If you haven't yet brought your check to a club meeting or mailed it directly to Andrew, please do so as soon as possible. We'll be redoing the mailing list after the February 94 meeting, and if you are not paid up, you won't be on the active list. Of course someone is bound to space out and forget (*What? This isn't your top priority!?*), so you will be quickly reactivated as soon as we have your payment.

Kevin Callahan

Once again, a note from Scott Taylor on our monthly meeting trivia quiz:

January's winners of the trivia quiz were Bill Johnson and Terry Moore (tied for first place) with 4 questions answered correctly. Congratulations are in order for all who participated. My quiz must be getting harder because of the low scores; therefore, I'll try to throw in some easy questions.

The question of who awards the prizes has come up. IPMS-Seattle will award the prizes; I only make up the questions and conduct the quiz. I hope you feel that the trivia quiz is still fun as well as challenging. See you in February to boggle your mind.

WW II GERMAN ANTI-TANK WEAPONS (part three)

BY LAMAR FENSTERMAKER

CONTINUED FROM THE JANUARY IPMS-SEATTLE NEWSLETTER!

5 cm PAK 38

This one entered service in 1941, but was almost obsolete from the start -- that's how fast tank armor was growing. Still, the gun saw pretty widespread service and it really would have had a better reputation if it wasn't for the Russian T-34 tank.

The projectile weighs 2.25 kg. Penetration is 88 mm at 250 meters and 0 degree slope, 78 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, and 61 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope.

There's no cheap way to model this gun. Gunze Sangyo makes a very expensive version (kit no. 718, about $120.00), Airmodel does it in resin (kit no. 1004 about $40.95), Schmidt in metal (kit no. 2079 about $66.95), and Hinchliffe makes a 1:32 metal kit. Gunze also does a self-propelled version (on the SDKFZ 10) for those of you who are *really* rich.

7.5 cm PAK 97/38
This is a German Army conversion. With lots of captured French Schneider 75mm model 1896 guns complete with decent anti tank ammunition (EVERY nation in Europe had some, and some had many), the Germans just modified the French gun to fit the 5cm PAK 38 gun carriage. This weapon helped keep the anti-tank gunners competitive until the excellent 7.5 cm PAK 40 entered service

The projectile weighs 6.8 kg. No reference listed the penetration.

Of course you can make the conversion too. There are lots of drawings for the French 75, which in 1:35 has almost the same gun barrel size and shape as a 1:76 US 155 mm Long Tom (hint, hint). The only semi-difficult part is the pepper pot muzzle brake -- all those holes are a bitch! You can use the Hinchliffe kit with the H&R French 75 barrel if you want a 1:32 gun and are really lazy! It wasn't very expensive when I did it almost 20 years ago, but you still gotta make that !#$%^&* muzzle brake yourself. If you don't want to make the muzzle brake see Schmidt kit no. 2079 for $ 66.95.

7.5 cm PAK 40
This excellent anti-tank gun came into service in 1942, outclassing all armor except for the really big Russian KV's. Even with the increase in armor thickness as the war progressed it had adequate performance. The gun was used everywhere the German Army went, so you can put a model in any theater. This is the gun mounted on all those funny looking German conversions of old and obsolete vehicles they picked up in the blitzkrieg years.

The projectile weighs 6.8 kg. Penetration is 135 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, 121 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope, and 98 mm at 2000 meters and 0 degree slope.

There are two kits of this gun, (Tamiya no. 35047 at $6.50 and Italeri no. 318 at $8.25). Both are good, but I prefer the Tamiya. The two kits have different wheels. Tamiya has the more common pressed steel wheel while Italeri has spoke wheels. If I remember correctly the spoke wheels were for horse powered traction, and the pressed wheels for motorization. There are a multitude of vehicle mounts, lots of which are available as vacforms from Schmidt. Schmidt also makes a late war infrared night sight and spotlight conversion in metal (kit no. 2099 at about $16.95).

7.5 cm PAK 97/40
I honestly don't know whether this existed or not. One book claims that PAK 40 gun carriage production got ahead of gun barrel production so several French 75s were converted just like the PAK 97/38.

7.5 cm PAK 50
A PAK 40 barrel shortened by 1026 mm, given a different muzzle brake and mounted on PAK 38 gun carriages with PAK 40 spoked wheels. It was intended to make the weapon lighter and easier to manhandle. Unfortunately, penetration suffered, so few were made.

The projectile weighs 6.8 kg. References did not list penetration.

It's an easy conversion of some rather expensive parts or you could modify the Italeri PAK 40 by shortening the barrel and scratch building the curved shield. You've gotta scratchbuild the muzzle brake anyway. A well camouflaged emplacement diorama is recommended.

7.5 cm PAK 41
Largest of the taper bore guns. The bore tapered from 7.5 cm to 5.5 cm. Only 150 were built, and some had their barrels replaced with PAK 40 tubes when the special tungsten carbide ammunition ran out.

The projectile weighs 2.48 kg. Penetration is 226 mm at 250 meters and 0 degree slope, 209 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, 177 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope, and 124 mm at 2000 meters and 0 degree slope.

This would be a difficult conversion. You might be able to modify PAK 40 pressed steel wheels -- and of course you could use a PAK 40 barrel -- but beyond that you're on your own.

7.62 cm PAK 36(r)
The Germans captured so many Russian 76.2 mm field guns that they became standard issue. It was considered an excellent weapon by the users.

The projectile weighs 7.54 kg. Penetration is 120 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, 108 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope, and 87 mm at 2000 meters and 0 degree slope.

Italeri just reissued the Russian version as kit no. 302 at $ 8.25. About all you need is new paint.

8.8 cm FLAK 18, FLAK 36 or FLAK 37
At first glance all three of these guns look alike, and in truth they are just evolutionary developments in an excellent anti-aircraft weapon system. The justly famous "88" is just so good that it was used everywhere for all kinds of artillery support. The FLAK 18 was an early post WW I anti-aircraft gun that was used in the Spanish Civil War for anti-air and anti-tank work. The gun is not ideal for anti -tank purposes as it sits too high off the ground, has poor crew protection and doesn't have a proper sight. What the "88" *does* have is awesome armor penetration at very long range. This gun was world class in 1939 and the improved versions were still the best all around in 1945. Only the heavy Stalin III tank had a chance against the "88" at normal combat ranges. This is the most famous gun of all time, with good reason.

Believe it or not, none of the references list armor penetration for these anti-aircraft guns. The penetration figures are for the proper anti-tank guns listed below. The penetration would be similar but a bit less.

I haven't seen a FLAK 18 for years but Superior did a 1:32 metal kit that is very good, if you can find one that isn't bent. It's brittle and doesn't take to straightening well. Tamiya kit no. 35017 at $24.50 builds either the FLAK 36 or the FLAK 37. The FLAK 36 is the usual anti tank version.

8.8 cm PAK 43
This one looks like a FLAK 36 with a muzzle brake mounted closer to the ground. Actually it's the next generation of "88" with a bigger cartridge case to hold more powder and a completely new gun carriage with all-around traverse. It was intended for anti-tank use, not anti-air. The anti-aircraft gun is the 8.8 cm FLAK 41 with a similar but very different carriage. The FLAK 41 was also used for anti-tank, if you could get them away from the FLAK boys. Not too many were made due to some technical difficulties in spent cartridge extraction. The designers screwed up so it took a while to fix -- and by then the war was almost history.

The projectile weighs 10.16 kg. Penetration is 207 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, 190 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope, 159 mm at 2000 meters and 0 degree slope, and 145 mm at 2500 meters and 0 degree slope

This is a fairly easy conversion from the Tamiya 88 kit if you use a muzzle brake from a Tiger II and some sheet plastic. It's also available in resin from Airmodel (kit no. 1013 at about $65.95) or also in the anti aircraft version (kit no. 1056 at about $110.95)

8.8 cm PAK 43/41
The gun barrel from a PAK 43 with the gun carriage from a 10.5 cm leFH 18 and the wheels from a 15 cm sFH 18. Another German Army conversion because of the slow production of the more complicated PAK 43 gun carriage, it was heavier than the PAK 43, not nearly as easy to move, and lacked all-around traverse. It entered service at the same time as the PAK 43.

It is available in resin from Airmodel (kit no. 1003 at about $65.95), Gunze Sangyo (kit no. 719 at about $225.00) and Hinchliffe in 1:32.

10 cm PAW 600
This is a high/low pressure gun firing a shaped charge shell. It works like this. The projectile is bolted to a flat disk that is attached to the cartridge case. When the cartridge is fired, the gas pressure leaks through a number of holes in the disk to slowly build up pressure at the base of the projectile. When the pressure is high enough, the bolt breaks and the projectile is off down the barrel.

There really is a good reason for all this nonsense. The breech, containing the cartridge, is your usual high quality gun steel. The barrel is built of a lower quality steel because the pressure is lower. This was an attempt to build quality weapons from junk materials, and while the concept is technically interesting, it's a dead end for the desperate. Few were built.

The projectile weighs 2.7 kg. Penetration is 200 mm.

The gun carriage is from a PAK 38 with a new bigger, longer barrel.

PS: The terms "slowly", "low pressure" and "low quality" should not be taken too seriously. The projectile bolt snaps real fast and the pressure in the barrel is still in the thousands of pounds per square inch, while the "lower quality steel" is really pretty good stuff.

12.8 cm PAK 44

The PAK 44 is a Rhinemetal design that never really saw service. This is one of those technically advanced German designs with all the bells and whistles that only Germany can add to make things complicated, but it was an excellent weapon. Designed at the same time were the PAK 80 and the PAK 81 guns (which had similar performance). This is a good looking gun, but you'll have to totally scratch build everything, including the pressed steel wheels. Good luck.

The projectile weighs 28.3 kg. Penetration is 219 mm at 500 meters and 0 degree slope, 202 mm at 1000 meters and 0 degree slope, and 187 mm at 1500 meters and 0 degree slope.

12.8 cm PAK 80

The PAK 80 is a Krupp design that probably saw little service as few were built. Simpler than the Rhinemetal design, it won the production contract in 1945. This has possibilities as a conversion/ semi-scratch build. The wheels from a PAK 43/41, a gun carriage like the PAK 43 (only a bit bigger) and a gun modified from a Hunting Tiger with a pepper pot muzzle brake. I've wanted to do one of these for a long time, but couldn't afford the wheels (you'll need four), Maybe it's time to study resin casting?

12.8 cm K81/2

The K81/2 is the gun from a Hunting Tiger on a Russian 152 mm howitzer carriage. A few were made right at the end of the war. The gun is easy, the carriage relatively simple, and the wheels are possible since they are a relatively simple spoked design. Almost anyone should be able to build this one.

The Bat Bomb

BY LAMAR FENSTERMAKER

This is not the story of Batman's newest device for crimefighting, nor does it have anything to do with vampires of any type. It is the story of Dr Lytle S Adams and the Mexican free-tailed bat... the most powerful weapons combination in the US Air Corps?

At the beginning of World War II, Doc Adams had a wonderful, simple idea. Bats, besides being cute little cuddly furry fellows, like to spend the daylight hours in nice dark places, like in your attic, up under the eaves, in a belfry, a tree, or even in a cave. If you attach a small incendiary time bomb to a bat, you have a self-portable, self-guided fire bomb. And as we all know, a the beginning of World War II, most buildings in Japan were built of wood and paper. So, all you've got to do is turn about a million pyromaniacal bats loose, then sit back and watch the whole place burn to the ground. Yes sir, the best plans are the simple plans.

Doc wrote a letter to President Roosevelt (Doc always started at the top) and convinced him that the idea could work. The President passed the letter down to the military (with a note saying "This man is not a NUT!") and recommended that

they investigate the possibilities.

Doc did admit that there were a few things that might need some further study, such as:

1. Where do you get a couple of million bats?

2. What do you feed a bat?

3. How much weight can each bat carry?

4. How do you make a very small incendiary bomb?

5. How do you make the fuse?

6. Would the fuse need a safety?

7. How do you attach the bomb to the bats?

8. How do you get a million or so bats to Japan?

9. Once you get the bats to Japan, how do you release them?

Doc figured that all of this was pretty minor stuff, and that somebody would figure it out eventually, so he collected the people he needed. An eccentric inventor, a distinguished Harvard scientist, a biologist, a movie star, a lobster fisherman, an ex-mobster, several assorted college students, a Bengal Tiger (as mascot), and Flamethrower (a full-scale development bat, which never flew armed). He then conned the military into enlisting them so that nobody would get drafted. Doc, being fair minded, got someone in every branch of the service. Not wanting to command a bunch of privates, he simply made them all "acting" sergeants. The book on the Bat Bomb is by Jack Couffer, who was also the youngest man in Doc's private army. This is a great story; it's funny and yet it is sad. It is the story of how the military mind reacts to a totally new and really radical idea... and it's all true (I think).

By the way, the Bat Bomb did work! Doc and his crew demonstrated this by burning down the brand-new Carlsbad Auxiliary Army Air Corps Base in New Mexico. The Signal Corps filmed the whole thing, but the film is probably still a top secret, filed under "Things We Swear We Never Did".

February of 1944

BY KEVIN CALLAHAN

By February of 1944, it was becoming obvious that the Axis expansion had gone past its peak, and the borders of the various Fascist empires were dramatically shrinking. This is not to say that the war was over, or that all the hard fighting was behind the Allies; the Battle of the Bulge alone would eventually prove that. Still, the Allied coalition had definitely passed Churchill's "end of the beginning".

So what were the major events that stood out in February of 1944, 50 years ago this month?

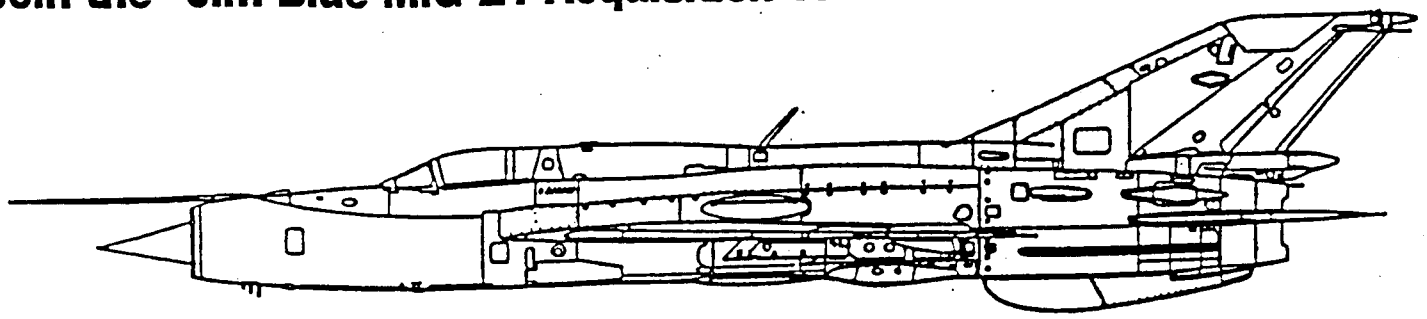
The main events were the perilous situation at Anzio and the bombing of the Abbey at Monte Cassino. The abbey was bombed because the Allied command was sure the Germans were using it's commanding hillside position to direct their artillery. It turned out that the monks had been able to resist the German efforts to do just that, and the German army did not actually occupy the abbey until the Allied bombers had reduced it to rubble.

In addition, February 1944 saw the Polish Gestapo chief murdered, the walls of the Amiens prison razed by RAF Mosquitos shortly before the prisoners there were due to be executed, and the Ukraine industrial area recaptured by the Russians.

In the Pacific, Truk Island was attacked by six battleships and aircraft from nine carriers. Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls was invaded.

In Sinzweya, Burma, Britain scored its first battle victory over Japanese forces in the war.

Join the "Jim Blue MiG-21 Acquisition Team"



Jim Blue, vice president and general manager of the Materiel Division, happened upon some surplus MiG-21s while on a business trip to the Czech Republic. Jim inquired of his hosts if it would be possible to purchase one for the Museum of Flight in Seattle. Jim fully expected the price to be out of reason. He, however, was able to acquire a flyable version in excellent shape for a sum of $10,000, a true bargain and rare opportunity. Jim has committed to pay the $10,000 himself and donate the MiG to the Museum of Flight.

We have discovered that we need an additional minimum of $30,000 in order to disassemble, crate, export, ship and reassemble here in Seattle. The Boeing Management Association has volunteered to manage a general fund-raising drive to support this excellent addition to the Museum of Flight. Donations are not limited to BMA members—anyone can contribute. Please pass this information along to anyone who may be interested in supporting the MiG-21 project.

Donation levels (tax deductible):

A donation of $21 will receive a handsome Museum of Flight certificate designating you a member of the "Jim Blue MiG-21 Acquisition Team."

A donation of $121 or more will receive the above certificate, as well as a handsome 57-page MiG-21 brochure showing all models and giving the history of the aircraft.

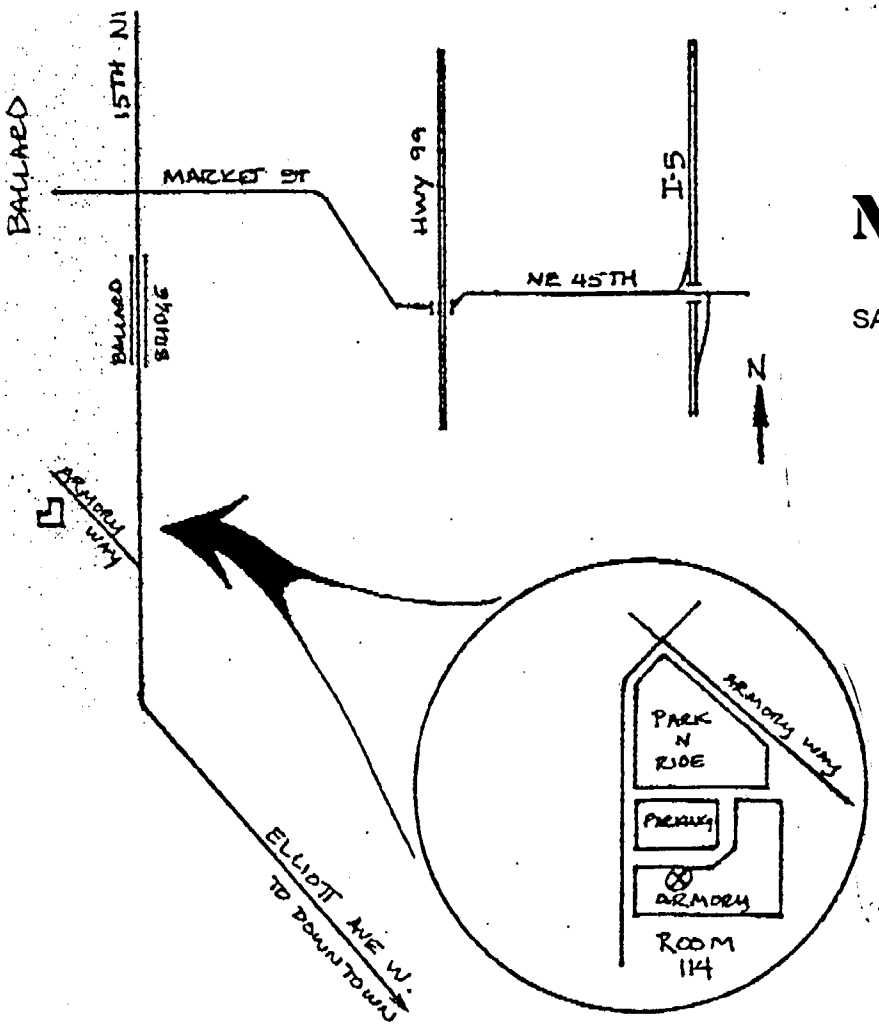
Make checks payable to the Museum of Flight MiG-21 Project, and mail to 9404 E. Marginal Way South, Seattle, WA 98108.

Event coordinator:

Del Hoffman
Telephone (206) 266-2100
Fax (206) 266-0690
MS 38-UX

"The acquisition of a MiG-21, one of the most notable Russian aircraft, will fill a significant void in the Museum of Flight's collection, and greatly enhance our ability to interpret a recent period of aviation history."

Ralph A. Bufano
Museum of Flight Director



NEXT MEETING!!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12 at 10.00am

NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY
Room 114
1601 W. Armory Way
Seattle, WA

From north- or southbound I-5, take the NE 45th st exit. Drive west on 45th under Highway 99 (Aurora Ave) to Market Street. Continue west on Market St to 15th Ave NW. Turn left and drive south on 15th Ave NW across the Ballard Bridge to Armory Way. Watch for signs!

If you are coming from south Seattle, take Highway 99 onto the Alaska Way viaduct to Western Ave. Follow Western north to Elliott. Continue north on Elliot to Armory Way. Watch for signs! There is plenty of parking.

PMS-SEATTLE

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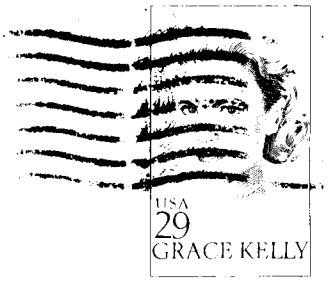

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, February 12 at 10.00am.
See the above map for meeting location.

William Holowchuk
19627 133rd Dr SE
Snohomish, WA 98290