SUNDIAL AT BOXCAR PARK

Dr. James Stegenga (Everett, WA)

While I was touching up the paint on my Lions Park Sundial (described in THE COMPENDIUM 32(4), Dec. 2025), an elderly fellow stopped to chat. He told me about a second sundial[1] here in Everett.

The simple 4.5 ft (1.3 m) diameter equatorial sundial at Boxcar Park.

So, I was eager to go to Boxcar Park to see this sundial, taking along some of my instruments to check out the dial. The park is surrounded by the large Port of Everett.

I found a simple but large equatorial sundial made of two steel semicircles with a diameter of 4.5 ft (1.37 m). It is located on the

[1] Bob Kellogg, the NASS Sundial Registrar, had told me that my sundial was the only registered dial in Everett.

shore behind the historic Weyerhaeuser Building, once a corporate headquarters, now a coffee house by day and a speakeasy-style whiskey bar by night. My GPS read 48° 1′ 5″ N, 122° 13′ 23″ W.

Weyerhaeuser Building – now a Coffee Shop by day, Whiskey Bar by night.

The dial was well constructed, but poorly installed. Rather than being aligned true North, the two-meter-long steel rod gnomon was aimed about 38° to the West. And the gnomon was angled upward about 54°° above the horizon rather than being at the latitude angle of 48°.

In the Spring 2026 issue of *Portside,* the Port's quarterly publication, I found the names of the Port's CEO, Lisa Lefeber, and newly-appointed Director of Engineering, Elise Gronewald. I wrote to both, asking for permission to correct the sundial and for their help in doing so. This led to a meeting with Elise.

To establish my competence and bona fides, I showed her the photos of the large concrete equatorial sundial I constructed in Brazil (THE COMPENDIUM 28(4), Dec. 2021). Elise became enthusiastic about getting the Boxcar Park Sundial corrected.

From Elise, I learned that the sundial was constructed in 1977 by a Jim Matheson, who had picked up welding as a hobby in 1970 after

retiring. Mr. Matheson was commodore of the local yacht club and lived on his boat at the Everett Marina, adjacent to Boxcar Park. He got the sundial design from the University of Oregon and welded a simple equatorial dial with an 'arrow and tail' gnomon. You can read more about it at the Port of Everett website: www.portofeverett.com/visit_the_waterfront/public_art.php.

While waiting to meet with Elise, I visited the sundial on June 23rd, 2026. I set a vertical rod at the base of the dial. The sun would be on the meridian and the rod would cast a shadow true North at:

1:00:00	p.m.	Pacific Daylight-saving Time
08:54		Longitude Correction (2.223056° × 4 = 8.89 min)
02:23		EoT on June 23rd
1:11:17	p.m.	Clock time when sun on the meridian (PDT)

Using the North shadow I marked a North-South line with fine dabs of white paint on the stones at the sundial's base.

When Elise and I met, she introduced me to one of her staff members, 'JJ' Burgess. He went out to the dial's site and found the nuts that held the dial in azimuth and altitude alignment were locked tight. He heated the nuts red hot three times over 45 minutes and was finally able to loosen both nuts.

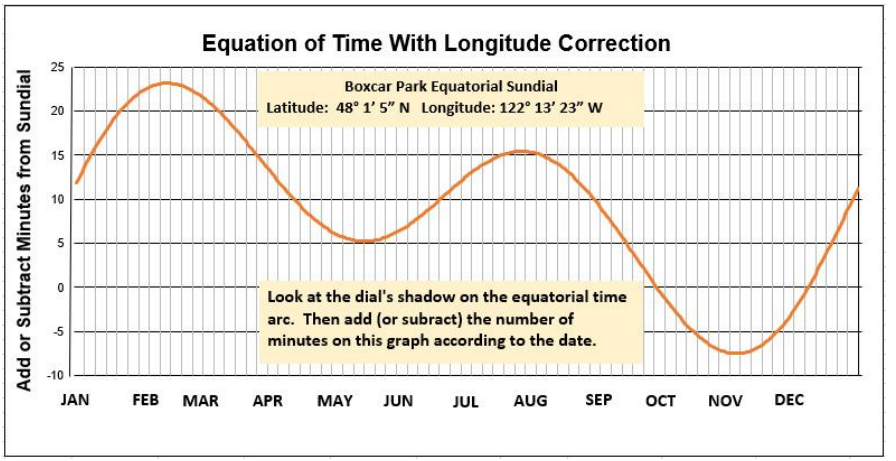
Then on July 28th, Elise and I met at the sundial to twist the sundial back into alignment and tighten the nuts.

Rusted altitude and azimuth bolts that JJ had to loosen.

I had prepared a piece of plywood with 48° stops to rest on the gnomon to ensure that it was set to the correct altitude. The dial was rotated in azimuth until the gnomon aligned with the string line set up following my tiny painted rocks.

Elise has agreed to develop, with my help, an explanatory plaque to mount on a post beside the sundial. It will include information about the site's latitude and longitude, longitude correction, and Equation of Time for those interested in determining Civil Time.

JJ Burgess, Elise Gronewald, and James Stegenga use a template to align the gnomon altitude.



Suggested Plaque for Boxcar Park Sundial.

James Stegenga