

The 4th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region of the  
National Model Railroad Association Presents



**Wednesday, April 13th**

The SV&W Model Railroading Clinic will meet at the home of Tom Hawkins for a visit to his layout and a discussion of layout design. We will **not** be meeting at the Summerhill location or dining early at the San Remo.

## **Layout Visit with Tom Hawkins & A Layout Plan Show'n'Tell Session**

PORT THOMAS & SOUTHERN R. R.  
Tom Hawkins, Superintendent  
Anacortes, WA  
e-mail: [tomhawk1@frontier.com](mailto:tomhawk1@frontier.com)

You are cordially invited to visit the **PORT THOMAS & SOUTHERN R.R. & TIMBER RIDGE LOGGING R.R.** Come a view Tom's beautiful layout, with backdrops painted by his wife, Joyce. Tom will have schematic layout plans for everyone to make understanding the layout better.

The PT&S was designed for operations so lots of switching is involved, but we will not be running an OP session.

The layout room is only 10' X 20' so there is only room for about 4 to 6 people at a time in the room. The rest will be in the Great Room and will take turns viewing and running trains. Plan to bring layout plans, pictures and anything else you want to share (see note below). We can take tours of each layout (or prospective layout!), answering design questions, and providing comments and suggestions (wanted or not).

Upon arrival please park on the street, not in the driveway. Follow the gravel area around to the back lower level to the sliding glass door. Looking forward to seeing you all.

While awaiting your chance to see Tom's excellent layout or afterwards, take a look at the layout plans and/or diagrams of other clinic members. We would like everyone who has an existing layout to bring a layout diagram/plan for people to take a look at and be able to ask questions of the owner as to why s/he did or didn't do certain things. For those with plans, but no layout as yet, bring what you have and let people offer suggestions or just ogle your dream layout on paper. This will give the "would be" owner a chance to get feedback on the layout prior to their starting construction! Try to bring a large enough printout or drawing so people can see the details, if possible.

***Lots of pictures on pg. 7!***

## **On the calendar:**

**April 2nd and 3rd:** the **Tacoma Northwestern Model Railroad Club** is presenting **April Fun Fest**, a model train show with multiple layouts as well as vendors selling train-related items, at Pacific Lutheran University in Parkland, Washington. Additional information including hours, maps, and directions is available at [www.tacomannorthwestern.org/show.htm](http://www.tacomannorthwestern.org/show.htm)

**April 30, 2016:** Olympia Model Railroad Layout Tour from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Contact Scott Buckley for more information at

sbuckley54@comcast.net.



**Saturday, May 14, 2016: 4D Spring Meet**, Tacoma Registration on site begins at 8:00 a.m., but you can register online at [www.wnrr.net/4DPNR/registration.html](http://www.wnrr.net/4DPNR/registration.html) Clinics start at 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The Spring Meet will be held at the Tacoma Community College, 6501 S 19th Street, Tacoma, in Building 15 (Science and Engineering). Parking is available near the building.



## **Selkirk Express 2016**

**June 15th - 19th, 2016: Pacific Northwest Region - Selkirk Express 2016 Convention** Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Canada For more information see the official website at: [www.selkirkexpress2016.ca](http://www.selkirkexpress2016.ca)

Our “sister” clinic, the Mount Vernon Model Railroad Clinic, meets every second Thursday at the Mount Vernon Senior Center at 1401 Cleveland Street. For April, the clinic will concern **Dioramas and Mini-Clinics**. Contact Al Carter (360-399-1226 / [tabooma@msn.com](mailto:tabooma@msn.com)) for further information.

“We have a Yahoo Groups page for our use and sharing of information. It is the Skagit Valley and Whidbey Model Railroading group or “sv\_and\_w”. The links below will take you directly to the group. In order to post you must have a Yahoo account which is simple to set up.

This is a private group that is not open to the public, it is designed for club use only.

The Link: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sv\\_and\\_w](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sv_and_w) (note those underscores)

If you have general railroading questions or would like to share railroading discussion with immediate locals or are even looking to sell some railroad stuff then this is the place to post information.”

## **Swap Table**

Feel free to bring items to sell, trade or give away to any clinic meeting. Items need to be in the side room by 6:45 and, if for sale or trade, clearly marked as to the price and owner.

## Clinic Schedule for 2015/2016

~~September 9, 2015 — The DuPont Dynamite Narrow Gauge Railway  
Russ Segner~~

~~October 14, 2015 — Mini Clinics — various presenters~~

~~November 11, 2015 — Bob Stafford — Bellingham Trainmaster~~

~~December 9, 2015 — Planning for the Future of Your Railroad After You've Gone  
Dick Haines~~

~~January 13, 2016 — Mystery Make 'n Take & Ice Cream!  
Susan Gonzales~~

~~February 10, 2016 — Contest/SHOW and tell — FLAT CAR LOADS  
Jack Tingstad in charge!~~

~~March 9, 2016 — Fences are Scenic Structures Too!  
Al Frasch~~

**April 13, 2016 — Tom Hawkins Open House in Anacortes**

**May 11, 2016 — "The Lost Art of Railroad Hand Signals"  
Ray Wheeler**

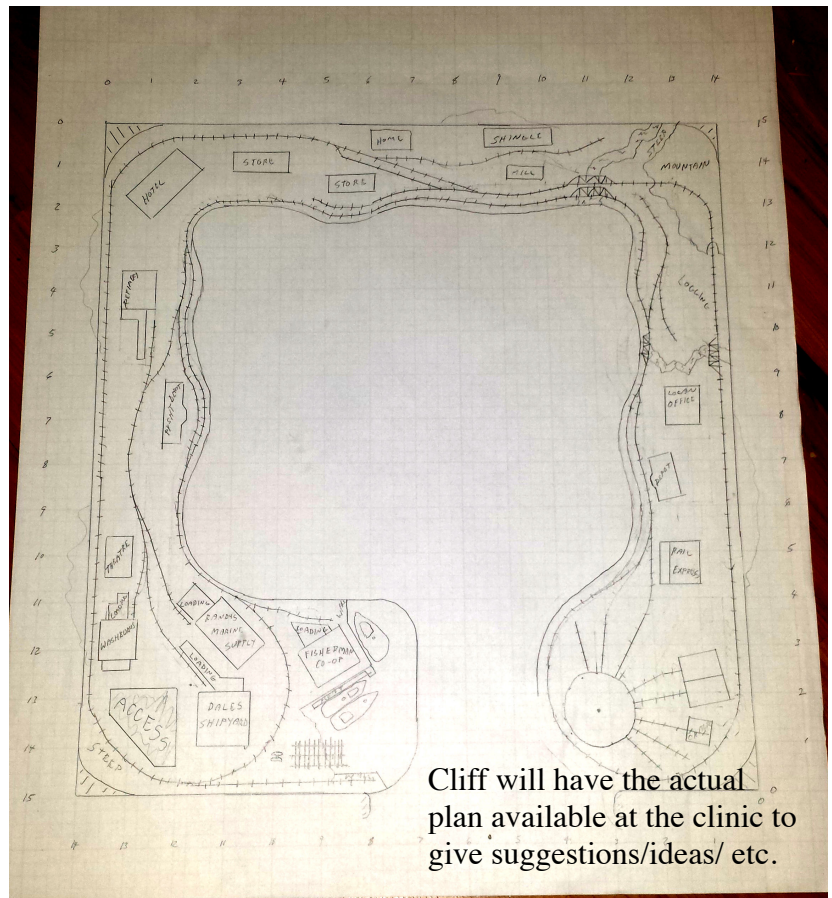
***Note: if you wish this newsletter to have anything to publish each month, it is up to you to send material to include — text and/or pictures — otherwise you may get an overdose of pictures from me. . . .***



## Layout Progress from Clinic Members

From **Cliff Aaker**: "... I have pictures of my layout with the first and only spline and an ulterior motive. I would like to talk to anyone with experience doing a spline roadbed. I can think of a way to proceed but doing the curves in mid air is a little odd. I also include the design drawing which was inspired by an article in the December NMRA magazine on the Oregon Coast Mining & Timber."

Come to the clinic at Tom Hawkins' in Anacortes and talk with Cliff about his design challenge while you wait to see Tom's fine layout.





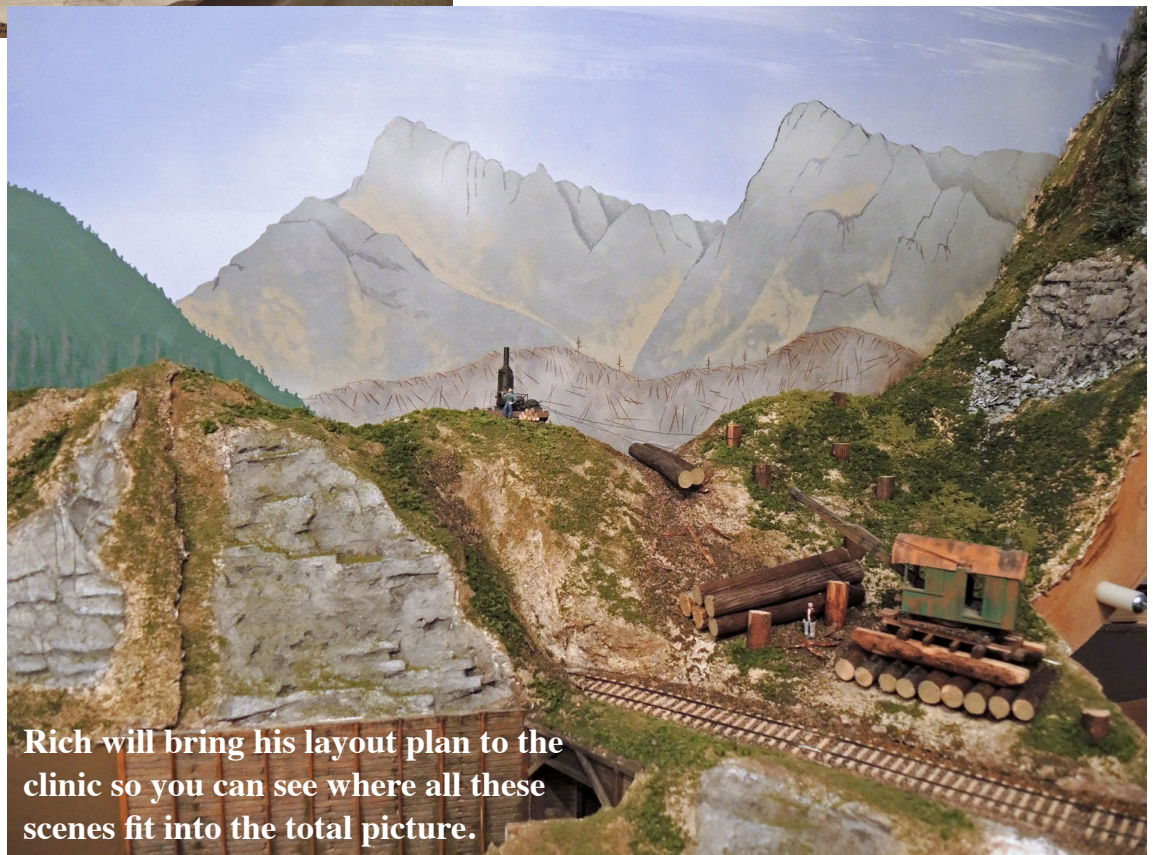
## From Rich Thom's Goldwater Creek and Cascade Railroad:

"CC&CRR Scenery Progressing: this view shows in the center a lift-out section just completed. It is about 4 ft long and allows access to three hidden tracks which run parallel to the backdrop. The tall mountain at the right is White Mountain. It contains a large lift out section (next photo) which allowed painting of the backdrop.



"Rubber Rocks on White Mountain: this is the liftout under construction. Construction is plastercloth over brown construction paper over an MDF frame. Shown are several rubber rocks pinned in place to see how they look, before gluing them in place with hot glue. Other pieces will be glued onto locations marked with marking pen. This is one of the "granite" rock pieces available. As supplied they are a dark gray color, but will be later painted with acrylics.

"Log Load: this is a small log load on the side of White Mountain; the new ties reveal that the track was just laid. The outcroppings both on the left and right are rubber rocks. The CC&C (always broke) purchased an old Barnhart Loader for this job. It's a Keystone Loco Works kit built by Norm Myers, bought for a very good price at a clinic swap table. I removed trucks and couplers and mounted it on skids. This whole area will need some trees!"



Rich will bring his layout plan to the clinic so you can see where all these scenes fit into the total picture.



## Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad and Museum is changing!

Two years ago or so, a group from the SV&W Clinic visited the MRSRR for a one-on-one with Staphi Pappas, their "steam guru" for an interesting, though rainy, day. Now, with the move by Staphi to the Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie, they are making some changes as detailed in the article below (thank you Robert Grove for sending the article).

### WHAT'S NEW?

By ANDREW FICKES

When children and their parents arrive to Elbe this spring and summer to ride the train and learn about the history of steam locomotives and logging, their experience might look and feel a little bit different-but in a good way.

Earlier this year, the **Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad and Museum** rebranded and changed its name to **Mt. Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum**. With the change has come the commitment to reinvest an approximate \$300,000 in capital improvements in this year alone, and a 40 percent increase in payroll, meaning an additional seven paid staff and in peak season, an additional 10 part-time staff. Over the next three years payroll will double.

"All of our crew will be paid staff," said Wayne Rankin, president of Mt. Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum. "We love our volunteers, and we will still use volunteers for certain aspects, but having



the same crew on all the time will give us more ability to make sure people are saying the same things to give guests a better experience from the second they're on the property to the moment they leave."

What does that mean for railroad and museum guests? It means more opportunities will be available to ride the train. During peak season in July and August and from Thanksgiving weekend through December, Rankin said guests can expect the train to operate five days a week. Having paid full-time staff operating the trains makes this increase in operation possible, Rankin explained.

Tom Murray, who founded Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad in 1981, has entrusted the organization with Rankin, who has more than 30 years of experience in entertainment and hospitality as a former employee of Disney and Sega-Game Works, and also Al Harper, a railroad industry entrepreneur, who, along with his wife Carol, own Rail Events, which include the Warner Bros. production of Polar Express.

Harper will be bringing **Polar Express** to Elbe this Christmas. Where before 7,000 passengers rode the train, Mt. Rainier Railroad now expects 18,000 passengers to experience the Polar Express ride-an authentic interpretation of the Castle Rock Entertainment computer animated film, starring Tom Hanks.

Rankin said a lot of investment will be done in refurbishing the rail cars, adding an additional two rail cars per train, reactivating the Polson Logging #70 2-8-2 Rod Locomotive, and sprucing up facilities. Another aspect that will receive an enhancement will be food and beverage.

"We want to have more variety, better quality, and bring more things in house," Rankin explained.

Over time, Rankin said he would like to add concession carts throughout the museum grounds in Mineral. And eventually, Rankin would like to add a restaurant that will encourage all-day visits to the museum and a more immersive experience.

"People can enjoy a loggerman's breakfast or a loggerman's lunch and spend the whole day there," Rankin said. "I want to make it to where guests want to come back after the train ride and enjoy what's at Mineral."

This will be helped by enhancing the guest experience throughout, Rankin said, including upgrading educational exhibits and adding new ones. Rankin wants to add an electronic docent experience and also welcome school field trips.

Rankin also said it's in the budget this year to improve the guest experience by investing in a new air conditioning system for each of the exhibit rooms.

And for those families who want to make sure they can all ride together on the train, Rankin said guests will soon be able to choose from reserved seating and first-class seating.

Over the next three to five years, Mt. Rainier Railroad plans to grow ridership from 58,000 passengers annually to 100,000. It's full speed ahead!



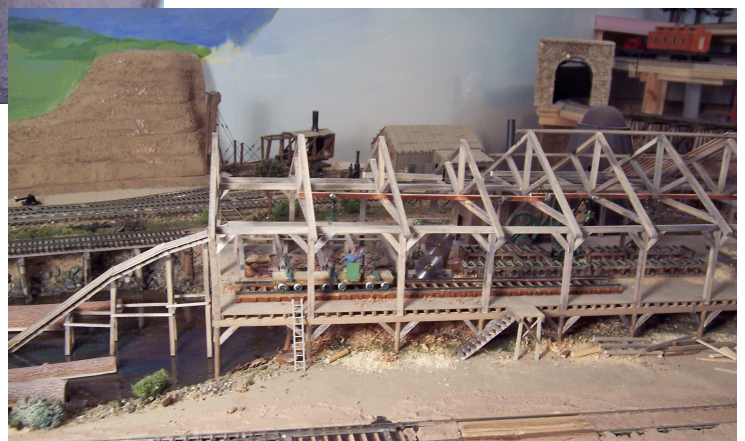


Pictures of the  
***PORT THOMAS &  
SOUTHERN R.R. &  
TIMBER RIDGE  
LOGGING R.R.***



Port Thomas  
rail barge  
loading

Tom's saw  
mill - lots of  
details!!





## ***Skagit Valley and Whidbey Clinic March Meeting Fences are Structures Too!***

Article by Rich Thom; Photos by Al Frasch

Skagit Valley and Whidbey NMRA Clinic Chair **Rich Blake** welcomed 24 modelers to its March 9th meeting at the Summerhill facility in Oak Harbor. Rich made an interesting observation about attendance. Since the “new” Mt. Vernon NMRA Clinic was launched last fall, their typical attendance numbers, and ours, together have totaled **more** than the SV&W group typically drew when it served both geographic areas. That suggests the “splitting up” of our original group was a grand idea: more folks are discovering the value and camaraderie offered by these clinics and the NMRA. Our clinic has seen a steady addition of new people, model railroaders who might have thought they were isolated in our corner of the Puget Sound, delighted to find a large and active group of like-minded souls.

**Susan Gonzales**, putting together next season’s program, pointed out that she had only received one suggestion, and even fewer volunteers, for clinics, and repeated her call for clinic topics and, especially, clinicians. The popular “mini-clinics” evening will be repeated in October—10- to 15-minute spots to describe simpler, single topics—but volunteers are needed. Interest was expressed in another contest; two suggestions from the floor for possible contest themes included (1) car interiors and (2) kit-bashing variations on one simple building kit. A contest will occur only if someone steps up to be Contest Shepherd!



Fig 1 – Fences Enclose Pastures on Al Frasch’s BNSF Pilchuck Division

Next up: tonight’s program, ***Fences are Structures, Too***, presented by **Al Frasch**, well known in the region for his N-scale, operations-focused Pilchuck Division of the BNSF and, within our clinic, his great newsletters, which have done much to increase our membership and “reach” across the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Al’s layout—100-percent scenicked (how many can brag that?)—is enhanced by over 50 fences, of which only two are illustrated in Fig 1. Here sturdy wood fences protect cows and sheep from certain death by frequent BNSF trains.

Fences on a layout, of course, serve the same functions that they do in the prototype; they are abundant in “real life” so they should be also on your layout. Al pointed out some additional advantages of fences in the model world:

- Fences create (or suggest) different scenes, each with perhaps its own story
- The more scenes, the more likely viewers will stop and look more closely at your modeling
- Fences, like tunnels and track hidden by trees, will make your layout appear larger than it really is



- In housing areas, several fences add to the feeling of density
- Fences are good “one evening” scratch-building projects

Commercial, ready-to-install fences are available from many sources; although AI prefers to scratch-build his fences, He has used some ready-to-install products on his layout, such as the one in Figure 2. This one is by Tomytec, and is printed on clear plastic; care must be taken to locate this particular product in an area where lighting does not reveal the plastic base.



Fig 2 – Ready-to-install fence by Tomytec

AI researched sources of commercially-available fences, which include:

- Bar Mills InstaFence (N/HO/S/O scales)
- BLMA—N and HO picket, wrought iron, and chain link
- Monroe Models
- RS Laser Kits—several in HO
- Gold Medal Models—photoetched chain link in N
- Tichy Train Group—a large variety in HO
- Kibri
- JL Innovative Design—picket fencing
- Busch—chain link, chain fence, pipe fence

Another intriguing commercial resource is **printable fencing**—online images that you can download, print in high-res and glue to styrene, foamboard, wood or even a backdrop—instant fence! These are mostly “solid” fences such as brick, concrete, wood plank and so-on, but they look great. Try [www.textures.com](http://www.textures.com) (formerly CGTextures) and search keyword “fence” to bring up no fewer than 365 fence textures.

But AI prefers scratch-building fences; it’s not only more creative, but you can shape them to suit terrain, and build them with “defects” too, which adds to realism. Some materials you can use:

- Scale lumber
- “Craft” wood—sticks or dowels available in craft store woodcraft departments—far cheaper!
- Styrene, both smooth surface and textured, e.g. brick
- Handmade or commercial trees and shrubs
- Thread or wire (try 30 AWG stranded) for fence wire
- Window screen (use the non-metallic variety)
- Wire mesh
- Tulle (Bridal Veil)



Fig 3 – A Scratch-Built Wood Fence on Al's Layout



Fig 4 – An N-scale Picket Fence

Two examples of Al's wood fences are shown in Figs 3 and 4. Packages of "Craft" wood available at Michael's and similar stores save money compared to "scale" lumber, and for fences dimensional fidelity is not all that critical—close is good enough. Cut posts, rails, boards and pickets with a NWSL "Chopper" to save time. Admittedly trimming the tapered tops of the pickets in Fig 4 was tedious!





Fig 5 – Concrete Fence on Al's Layout

Concrete fences (Fig 5) are simple to build, and add credibility in urban areas where they are more likely to be used, such as in New Westminster on Al's BNSF Pilchuck Division. This is an easy one-hour project using cardstock, wood or styrene, and Floquil or other concrete paint.



Fig 6 – A Tree Fence on Al's Layout

Tree fences are simple (Fig 6) and are a good use for that box of ready-to-install trees in the back of your closet—trees which look far too uniform and perfect for use on your hillsides. They would have obviously been planted together, and possibly even trimmed over the years, and the uniformity appears perfectly natural.

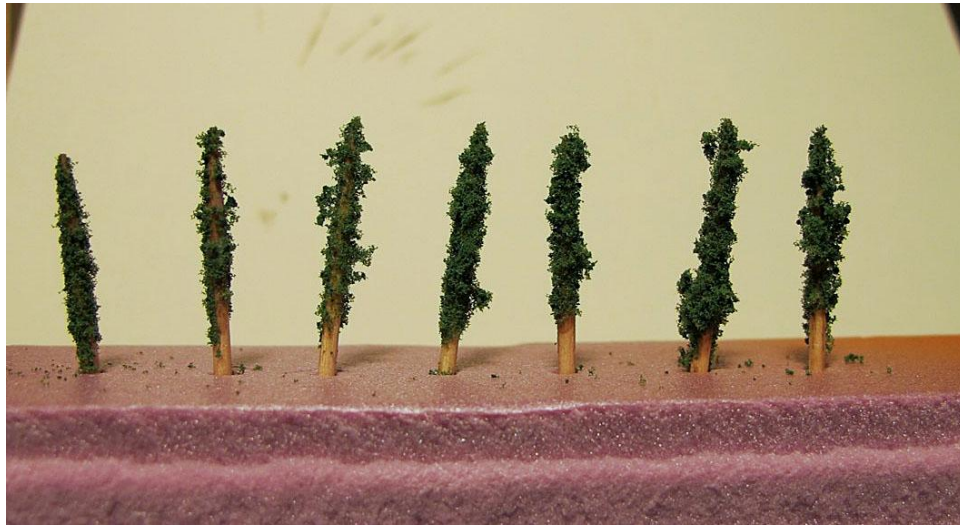


Fig 7- Making Arborvitae Trees from Toothpicks and Foam

Al has also crafted his own tree fences—modeling rows of arborvitae (*thuja*) a species commonly used for hedgerows and fences. In his scale, round toothpicks make ideal trunks. The toothpicks are stained and cut in half, then dipped in glue and foam foliage. Fig 7 shows the trees after the first foliage application. After two or three more foliage applications, and possibly some trimming with scissors, they are ready to plant: Fig 8. An easy fence!



Fig 8 – Completed Arborvitae “Fence”

Al moved next to two more slightly more complicated projects—but ones still achievable in a single evening. The first was building a wooden fence for a hillside—somewhat trickier than a level fence. Al picked a candidate slope on his railroad, then used a profile gauge to transfer the precise contour of the slope to card stock (pencil line, Fig 9). The posts, rails and fence boards were then built up using standard methods and CA glue; note Al chose to model here a “shared” fence where half the fence boards face each side. The straight pins—heads clipped off—were glued to each end of the fence with CA to enable “planting” the fence into the terrain when completed. Fig 10 shows the result after staining and pinning the fence onto the layout—an eye-catching, scratch-built detail. Any errors in building the fence to the precise contour of the slope can be hidden with shrubbery.



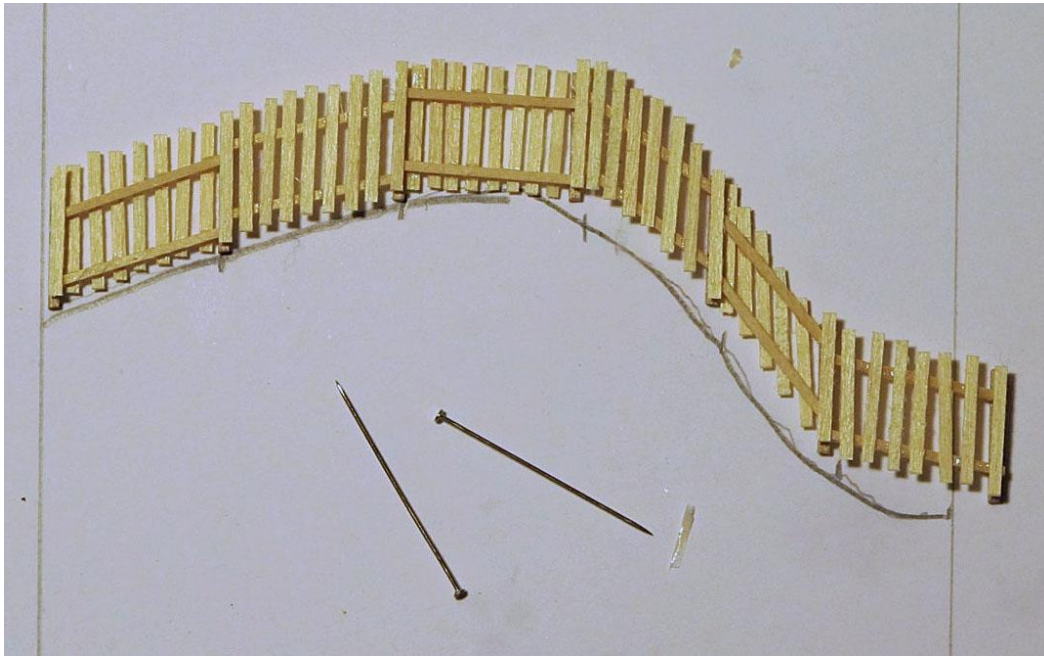


Fig 9 – Building a Wooden Fence for a Hillside



Fig 10 – Completed Wooden Fence on Hillside

Al finished his clinic with another evening project—building a chain-link fence using tulle. Al picked up this idea from an on-line magazine (see [www.model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/17658](http://www.model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/17658)). Tulle—bridal veil—is available at low cost at any fabric store; the particular brand Al used was “Celebrate It” but others are equivalent. Along with styrene strips (Fig 11) that’s all you need.





Fig 11 – Tulle Chain Link Fence Materials

After building a simple post-and-rail frame with the styrene (Fig 12) the tulle was glued to the frame; plastic cement was found to work, with the nylon tulle settling into it nicely. Pins were added—heads again clipped off—for planting the fence. The tulle can be tricky to cut: use a fabric rotary wheel and cutting board.

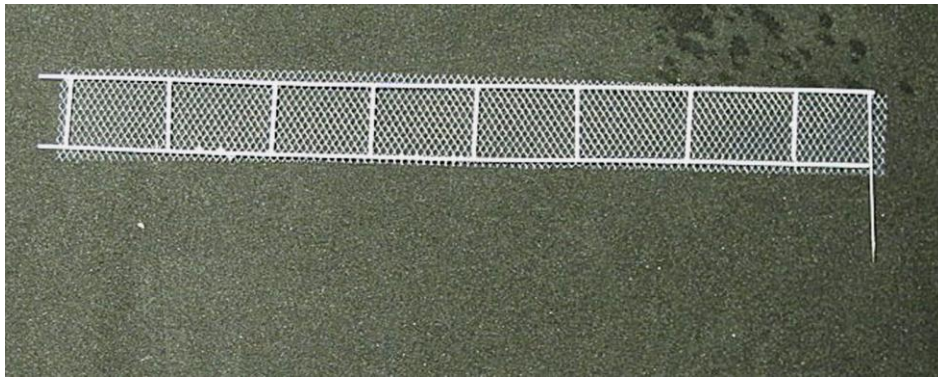


Fig 12 – Chain Link Fence Using Tulle



Fig 13 – Completed Tulle Chain Link Fence on Layout

The completed tulle chain link fence (Fig 13) looks convincing when installed on Al's layout. Fences can be a fine enhancement to anyone's layout—in any scale. Al's fences in N-scale are especially impressive!

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