



Non-Clinic Report

March, 2020

Clinic Cancelled: Well, no clinic for March, as you all know by now, and April is looking like a probable cancellation, too. Of course, we'll let you know as soon as a decision is made regarding April, and May, too. But that doesn't mean we have put away our trains. I've heard from several folks that they are working away on various projects (see below).

Face Masks: Speaking of social distancing and face masks (who isn't speaking about that these days?), our neighbor gifted us with two homemade face masks (according to the news, this is a very popular way to "do your part" to help the virus fight). But the thing that makes these special is mine is made of fabric of a railroad motif, and my wife's (Nona) mask is of a sewing/quilting theme. Pretty neat, but I hope we don't have to press them into service...

Pacific Northwest Railroad Modelers: Jim Betz has started a new model railroad discussion group, part of the relatively new Groups.io family (for those of you that remember, this is similar to the old Yahoo Groups thing). This is a totally free site devoted to model railroaders in the Pacific Northwest, where we can come together and share thoughts and progress on our layouts and ask questions and so forth. You do not have to be registered to just read the posts, but if you want to make or reply to a post, you must be a registered member, which is really easy: a username and password. Go to Groups.io and search for PNWRRModelers and then join. I've noticed folks joining from all over – British Columbia, Idaho, and all over Washington. This is a great way to stay connected during this isolation period.

Working At Home: While we are spending so much time at home, I imagine most of us have been spending a lot of time working on our layouts and/or various projects at the workbench. I put out a call to several clinic "regulars" to see what they have been up to:

Myself – Well, I dug out several unfinished projects and have been busy making progress on them – most of them are vehicle kit-bashes that I had started, then stalled for whatever reason. I’ve “completed” about 8 so far and have a couple dozen more kitbashes in the hopper. Rear, left to right: Classic Metal Works 54 International/resin dump bed; Athearn Kenworth tractor/Classic Metal Works van box; CMW 60 Ford truck/Magnuson reefer unit; CMW 54 Ford/RS Laser kits truckbed kit; Walther’s 61 Ford/Trident utility bed; CMW 41 Chevy/G.C. Laser stakebed. Front row: CMW 60 Ford p/u with “heavy” gravel load; Athearn Ford stake bed, repainted /weathered.



I’ve also been busy working on my layout. First, I had to replace a turnout that I busted (don’t ask!). Amazingly, I was able to remove the damaged turnout, and then inserted a replacement, hooked up the appropriate feeder wires (correctly!), turned on the DCC power, fired up a loco, and voila! The loco sailed through the turnout in all directions with no problems. Now I’ve painted the ties and rail and am about to embark on a lot of ballasting and more ground cover. Fun!

Jim Betz sends along a photo of components for the benchwork for his abuilding layout – from Engineered Layout Systems. This product uses extruded aluminum plus accessories that you put together “Erector Set” style, according to Jim. His layout will be based on the Great Northern, post WWII, in Burlington, with the branches to Anacortes and Concrete.



Jim Mays reports he is spending lots of time working on his new railroad, which is set in the late 1800's. Jim is a fan of early steam locos and cars, although he admits an occasional diesel may make a guest appearance on the railroad.

Anyway, Jim discovered the wonderful world of paper models (structures). He has downloaded and built a paper model (from ModelBuildings.org) of an old west structure, which fits the theme of his layout:



Al Carter reports There are other sources of paper models out there, such as Scalescenes.com and [Clever Models \(clevermodels.squarespace.com\)](http://CleverModels.clevermodels.squarespace.com), (the latter of which is running a 50% off sale, as of press time, on all downloads. I myself bought about 15 different texture files (brick, wood, concrete, roofing, siding, etc).

If you haven't tried a paper model, this is a very inexpensive way to occupy some hobby time, and you get instant delivery, too!

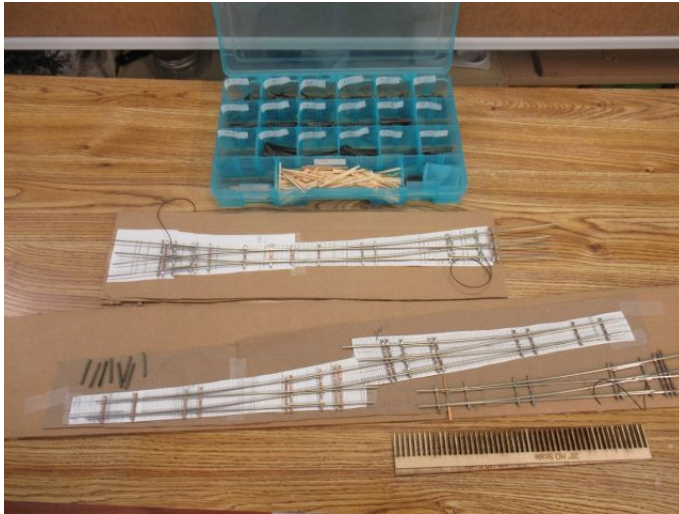


Ted Becker says in the last couple of weeks he has (finally (his word, not mine)) finished installation of five turnouts using the "through the roadbed" servo mounting system. Five more turnouts have been assembled on the FastTracks jigs and need to have wood ties attached and servos attached.

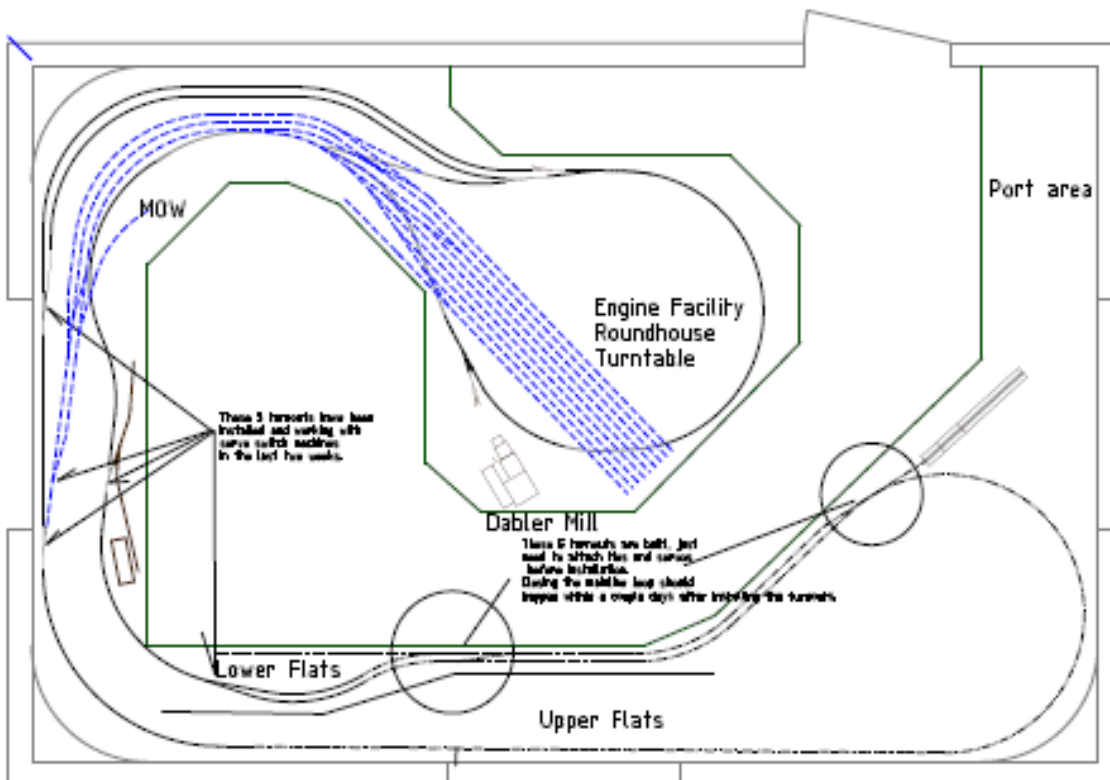


An ABBA set of Stewart FTs bravely approaching the new switches. The FTs run through it smooth as silk. Close your eyes and you cannot hear when the locos go over the switches.

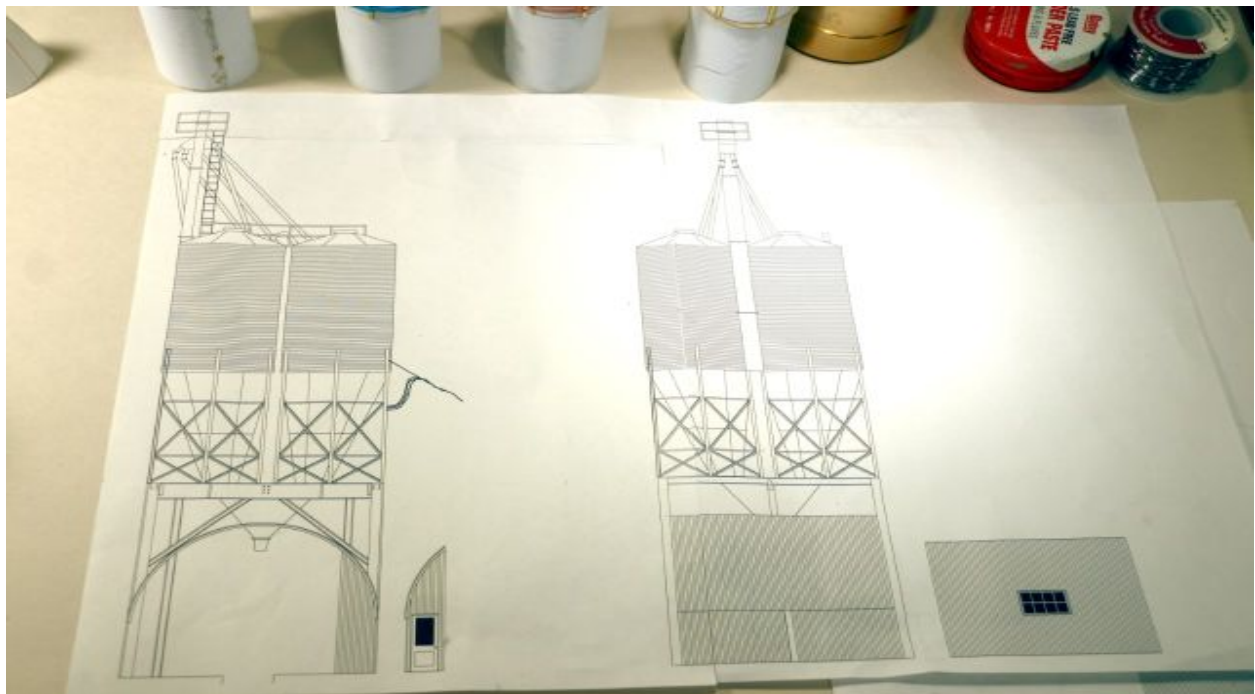
Here is the next group of five turnouts getting set up for attaching ties.



And an overview of Ted's layout plan:



Nick Muff of course is busy as ever on his railroad. He is finishing up the last structures for Siloam Springs (MO). First up is the Ozark Cement Company. Nick is also in search of some K&S brass angle (3/64 and 1/16), if anyone has any to spare... (contact him at: muff_nicholas@msn.com).





Nick has installed the Allen Canning Company Warehouse #2 on the curve coming into Siloam Springs. Now just some weeds and other final details to go. Nick mentions that his grandmother used to work at this company during the summers “way back when”...



Chairman's Challenge: Hello fellow COVID-19 exiles. Most of us are using this time of house arrest to work on model railroad stuff. If not, you should consider it. One of my thoughts when I became aware of potential isolation was: "Thank God I have a hobby."

Looks like we're headed for a long break in the clinic schedule. During past breaks I have issued a "Chairman's Challenge" to prod you folks into working on MRR stuff. This break is going to be a long one so there is more to the challenge. It is a multi-part challenge.

1. Work on your layout. Take some photos now. Take some photos later then share them with the group when clinics resume.
2. Finish an unfinished project. 'Before' photos would be nice. Bring the finished model to the next clinic.
3. Build a kit or scratch-build. Don't forget the theme for the coming season, no matter when it starts, is still flat cars and flat car loads.

Stay healthy, follow the guidelines and hopefully we will meet again sooner rather than later.

Ted Becker

Book Review: Well, not an "official" book review, but I thought I'd mention that I recently finished "Death Rides The Zephyr" by Janet Dawson, which is set in 1952 aboard the California Zephyr. It's a mystery, and a very good description of train travel in those glorious streamline passenger train days. Here's part of Amazon's review:

December 23, 1952. A transcontinental train is stopped cold by a rockslide in a remote Colorado canyon. There's a murderer aboard, one who has already killed, and will kill again unless stopped. The California Zephyr, with its run from Oakland to Chicago and back, was famous for its Vista-Domes, which provided a 360-degree view of spectacular Western scenery. It was a kind of small city populated by passengers from all walks of life and a large crew whose duty it was to keep them safe. Zephyrette Jill McLeod is the passengers' primary point of contact. She's armed for any emergency with a first-aid kit, a screwdriver, and her knowledge of human nature. But can she figure out a ruthless killer's clever plot in time?

This isn't a thriller, or deeply engrossing mystery, but for us railroad enthusiasts, it sure was fun to read. There are at least two more books in this series from Ms. Dawson, which I intend to read. It is available from Amazon:

https://smile.amazon.com/Death-Rides-Zephyr-Janet-Dawson-ebook/dp/B00F4I1WQW/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=death+rides+the+zephyr&qid=1585517613&sr=8-1

Tool Time: This is the part of the clinic where we encourage you to bring along a tool (or more than one) to share with the group. It can be a trusty old standby that you use all the time, or something new that you have discovered. There are a lot of sources for tools, some non-traditional and some obscure. Show us what you've got!

For now, during our isolation time, here is a "virtual" tool time:

Dave Sherwood sent along photos of three tools he recently bought from Micro Mark. BTW, Micro Mark has frequent sales, and you can be notified of such sales directly from MM by signing up on their website: www.micromark.com

First off is a pair of rail nippers, which Dave reports work much better than the Xuron brand, and **Ted Becker** reports he has a pair of these pliers and he really likes them. He never uses them for anything but cutting rail. Looks like I'm going to have to invest in a pair of them



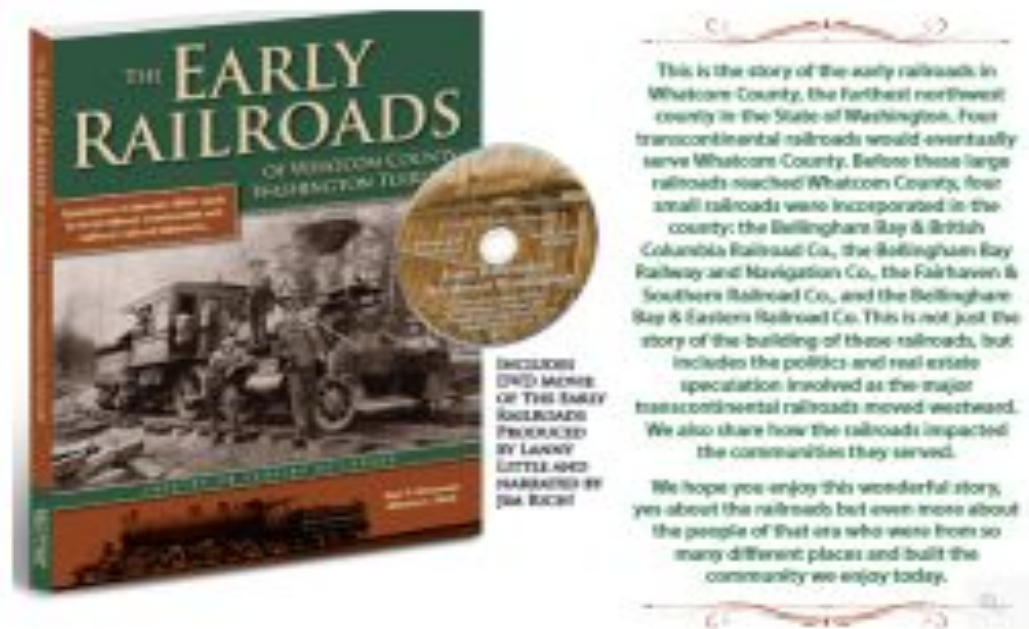
Dave also bought two types of micro screw starters (both slotted and Phillips):



Ted Becker sends along a note that he really likes his Hakko FX-888D Soldering Station, which you can get from <https://gokimco.com/> and they have free shipping and just about any soldering supplies you can think of, as well as lots of other tools.



Don't Forget **Karl Kleeman's** new book he co-authored: **The Early Railroads of Whatcom County.** Co-authored with William Rink, this book is an absolute treasure! Very well written and excellent photographs. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the history of Whatcom County railroading.



Karl reports the book is available for sale at Village Books in Bellingham (Fairhaven). Don't miss your chance to pick up a copy – I'm really enjoying mine!

Next Up: Well, obviously we are in a holding pattern. The clinic topics for March and April, ground cover and static grass and static grass applicators, will be rescheduled, probably for next fall. The March and April clinics not yet officially cancelled, but that will be the most probable expectation.

The May clinic, REA Operations in Seattle by **Thomas Keyes**, is at this time a "maybe", and of course we'll keep you informed about this and other clinic topics and plans.

Coming Down the Track:

March 16	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Static Grass Applicators – TO BE RESCHEDULED
April 20	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Ground Cover (Al Carter) – TO BE RESCHEDULED
April 21-24	Eugene, OR	PNR Convention - CANCELLED
May 16	Everett, WA	4D Spring Meet - POSTPONED
May 18	Mount Vernon	Clinic: REA Operations in Seattle (Thomas Keyes)
May 18	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Diorama Build Finale – FIZZLED OUT *
May 22-24	Burnaby, B.C.	7 th Div Railway Modelers of British Columbia Meet - CANCELLED
July 12-18	St. Louis, MO	NMRA National Convention

* Fizzled out: Not enough participation...

Further Down the Track:

For the next “season”, starting in September 2020, we are planning on promoting a “flat car build” – not necessarily a contest. Details still to be worked out. Initial thoughts on this project:

- Making a plastic flat car deck look realistic
- Exploring different types of flat cars and flat car loads
- Examining methods for securing loads

Are you willing to present a clinic (need not be a full hour clinic) related to flat cars? Know someone who might be willing? Let us know your thoughts and desires, please!

This just in.... Bob Nelson has been doing some research on flat car loading and is well on his way to presenting a clinic on this subject. Thanks, Bob!

Layout Photos:

Send a photo or two of your layout (send to Al Carter at tabooma@msn.com). Note: this doesn't have to be a completed scene – people are very interested in progress photos: benchwork, partial scenery, track being installed, etc.

Sponsorship: The Mount Vernon NMRA clinic is one of several clinics sponsored by the Fourth Division, Pacific Northwest Region, National Model Railroad Association. We meet on the 3rd Monday at 7:00 pm at the Mount Vernon Senior Center, 1401 Cleveland Street. Membership in the NMRA is **NOT** required to attend our clinic, but it is encouraged. For more info on joining the NMRA, see: www.nmra.org/membership. Or see **Al Carter** for a membership application. Remember, if you are unsure, there is a one-time 9 month Rail Pass trial membership for only \$19.95.

Contact Info: Clinic Chairperson is **Ted Becker** (rail.bird@att.net). Name badge maker/keeper and roster manager is **Tom Buckingham** (tom@401kplanninggroup.com). Refreshment provider is **Dave Falconer** (dsfalconer@aol.com). Newsletter writer/editor/publisher/photographer and general all around behind-the-scenes guy is **Al Carter** (tabooma@msn.com).

Help Out: To volunteer for a clinic, or to suggest a clinic topic, contact **Ted Becker** at rail.bird@att.net

Questions/Comments/Contributions to this newsletter should be sent to **Al Carter** at tabooma@msn.com. If you want to be removed from the mailing list, contact **Tom Buckingham** at tom@401kplanninggroup.com.

That is all for this month...

