

# The Mt Vernon NMRA Clinic

## Clinic Report, October 17, 2022

**Twelve** folks showed up for the October 2022 Mount Vernon Model RR Clinic (six showed up at Round Table Pizza for a bite to eat beforehand). Thanks to **Dave Falconer** for bringing cookies and beverages!

**Illness Update:** Glad to report that **Nick Muff** is on the mend and hopes to be joining us again in November. **Ted Becker** is still hospitalized, now in Kindred Hospital in Seattle. He is no longer in the ICU, but still requires time on the ventilator. Recovering from Myasthenia Gravis is a long , and he is making slow progress, I'm told.

**Skagit/Whidbey Clinic:** Our friends from our "sister clinic" over in Oak Harbor are currently holding Zoom clinics, as they do not have a meeting room currently. You can find out more by emailing Cliff Aaker at [4dclinic@whidbey.com](mailto:4dclinic@whidbey.com) to be put on his mailing list, which he sends out to notify people of an upcoming clinic. Or, you can always watch for an announcement in the 4D's Grab Iron, which you can sign up for (you do not have to be an NMRA member to sign up for the Grab Iron). Go to: [4dpnr.com/grabiron](http://4dpnr.com/grabiron) , and while you are there, check out the rest of the 4d's website

**Tool Time:** **Tom Hawkins** showed a new, unconventional uncoupling tool... a "gum soft pick", which is sort of an enhanced toothpick in that it comes with tiny bristles. Think of a bottle brush, but much smaller – typically maybe 3/16<sup>th</sup> inch diameter or less. You simply insert it downward between the knuckle couplers (Kadee type couplers) and gently twist. Available via Amazon or at your local drug store.



Amazon Link: [Amazon.com: GUM - 10070942002438 Proxabrush Go-Betweens Interdental Brushes, Ultra Tight, Plaque Removal, 10 Count, \(Pack of 6\) : Health & Household](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B007094200)

Note: there are about a bazillion different dental soft picks to choose from, in different sized diameters of the bristles, so you can experiment to find out which one works best for you. I have tried them myself and find them to be better than the typical Kadee uncoupling pick, and better than using a bamboo skewer, too.

**Al Carter** showed a nifty tool to use for scribing styrene prior to snapping it. This tool is typically used by woodworkers to scribe a line for cutting or chiseling on wood. It is much more robust than using a hobby knife, which tends to wander from the straight edge. This tool is available on Amazon. I should mention that I got this idea from **Jack Hamilton** who writes a tool column in the NMRA Magazine each month. Jack has cost me a bundle over the years, but he has a knack for finding unique and useful tools!

Photos:



Amazon link: [Marking Knife Marking Gauge, Marking Gauge Woodworking, Wood Scribe Tool, Marking Tool, Woodworking Gauges, Marking Guide, Marking Gauges for Woodworking, Wood Marking - - Amazon.com](#)

**Modelers Showcase:** **Rich Blake** showed a small freight shed with loading dock. He brought it as an example of his peeling paint technique, presented as a Mini Clinic. **Al Carter** brought an HO scale rural gas station, built more than 20 years ago. It is actually a cast hydrocal building with added detail and weathering. **Bob Stafford** displayed his Atlantic Hosiery Company structure that was also part of his Mini Clinic.

**Program, part 1:** Continuing last month's theme, **Don Jones** showed photos of various very well-built HO scale craftsman structures that were gifted to the Whatcom/Skagit Model Railroad Club, with the proviso that they be used on the club layout. Don showed photos of the structures on the originator's layout in Bellingham, then showed them in place on the club layout.

**Program, part 2:** This month we revived one of Ted's favorite clinic subjects... "Mini Clinics". The idea is that participants will take 5 or so minutes to give a quick demo on a particular process or technique.

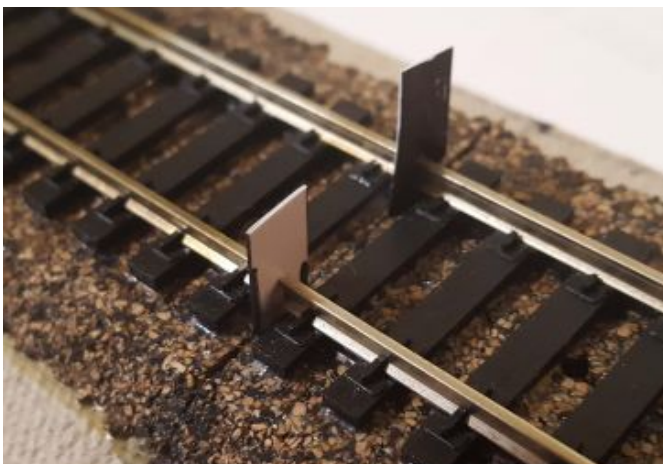
**Rich Blake** showed us his method of achieving peeling paint on a wood structure. Basically, Rich stains the wood to whatever weathered color he wants, lets the stain dry thoroughly, then applies a brush coat of odorless turpenoid (paint thinner). After that is thoroughly dry, he applies his paint color, using inexpensive acrylics. Once again, the paint is given ample time to dry, then Rich uses a piece of masking or Scotch tape to lightly press onto the painted surface and gently lift it up. Only part of the paint will lift off the turpenoid surface, resulting in a peeled paint look. Follow up with a clear dull sealer and presto... peeled paint. Here's a photo:



**Tom Buckingham** described how he keeps both rails aligned when both are gapped (electrical gaps). Tom's first rule is don't gap on a curve! But if you must, you have two choices. The first is preferred--pre-ballast both side of the gap you will be cutting; or secondly ballast as soon as you are done. The third picture shows what happens if you wait some time before ballasting the track in place--the track begins to straighten. If you choose the second method (because your track had already been laid) don't be afraid to use super glue (ACC) to affix the rails to the ties, then cut the gap with a jeweler's saw. He then uses a narrow Xacto chisel blade to excavate a slot in the roadbed material (cork, homosote, etc). Finally, he inserts a piece of thin styrene (he usually uses .015") into the gap and down into the roadbed. Super glue is then applied to the styrene along the gapped rails, and also into the hole beneath. This secures the styrene piece very nicely. Finally, trim the styrene to the shape of the rail. Here's a few photos (hard to see the gaps but trust me – the finished effort is pretty slick!







**Previous Page:** Side view, pre-ballasted

**Top:** Top view, pre-ballasted

**Middle:** Gapped on a curve without pre-ballasting or super-gluing – Not a good choice!

**Bottom:** In progress view showing the styrene shims inserted between the rails and down into the roadbed

**Dave Sherwood** reports he had a need to upgrade the wheels on some Rivarossi passenger cars. So, he went on a mission to find suitable replacement wheels and came up with a company Roll-Tru Scale Models which makes replacement wheelsets for Rivarossi/AHM/IHC passenger cars. These replacement wheelsets are available in a variety of sizes and there is a chart on the website that shows photos of original wheelsets and which ones to use as replacements.



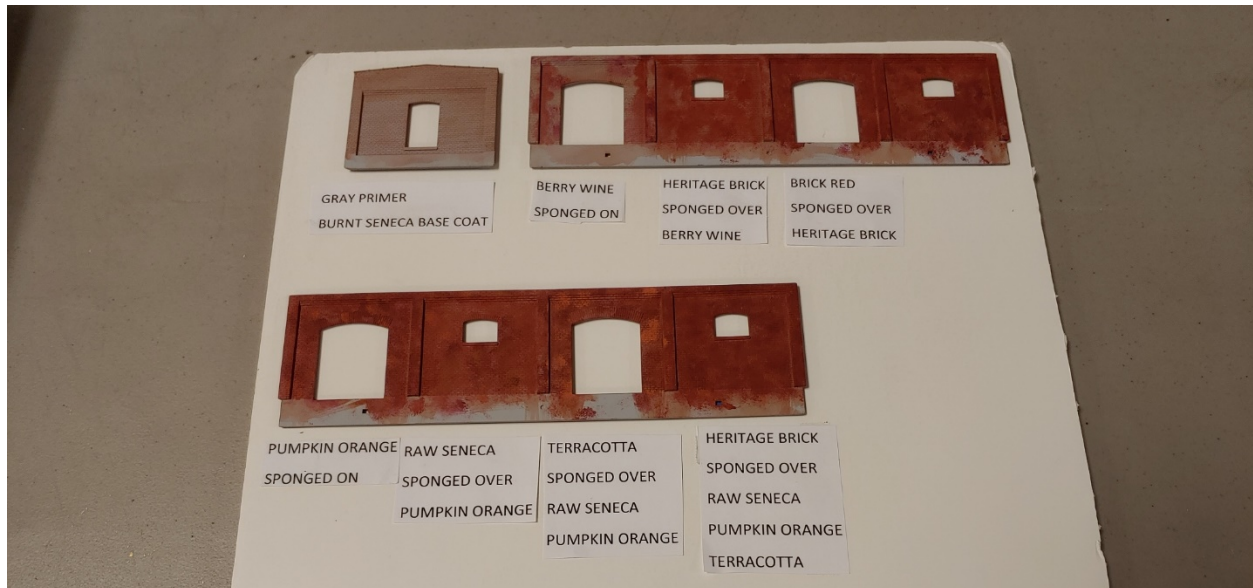
***Sizing chart:***

Model	Size in Scale	Real Size Metric Imperial	Notes
RTW900259	30"	9.0mm x 25.9mm .354" x 1.02"	Replaces the old Rivarossi /IHC/AHM Pizza Cutter metal wheels
RTW935248	31.75"	9.35mm x 24.8mm .368" x .976"	Replaces many Rivarossi /IHC/AHM plastic wheels and some metal wheels
RTW935259	31.75"	9.35mm x 25.9mm .368" x 1.02"	Replaces many Rivarossi /IHC/AHM plastic wheels and some metal wheels
RTW950248	33"	9.5mm x 24.8 .374" x .976	Standard freight wheel for many manufacturers, including Tyco and others.
RTW950256	33"	9.5mm x 25.6mm .374" x 1.006"	Standard freight wheel for many manufacturers.

You can find out more about Roll-Tru Scale Models here: [Roll-Tru Scale Models HO Scale Wheels - For Freight and Some \(thehobbysensei.com\)](http://thehobbysensei.com)



**Bob Stafford** showed the steps he follows when “finishing” brick. Bob starts by spraying the interior walls with flat black (to help prevent light leaks), then sprays the front, brick surface with gray primer (both via rattle cans). Once the gray is thoroughly dry, Bob uses a variety of colors of craft grade acrylic paints, mixing and blending until he has the desired color. He uses chunks of sponges to apply the paint – sort of “dry sponging” the paint onto the surface. He brought along a neat display of this technique, showing various colors on the brick walls.



Here is a link to Bob’s You Tube video that goes through the process (6 plus minutes): [Atlantic Hosiery Part 1 Wall Preparation - YouTube](#) and a photo of one of Bob’s structures using this coloring method:



**Mark Malmkar, MMR**, showed an easy way to upgrade cheap trees. His steps:

1. Collect supplies: Green foam flocking, ugly trees, vinyl gloves, spray adhesive, and a cardstock tray. I use a cardstock tray cut from packaging. An old Athearn car box works too. It catches the excess foam which can be reused.
2. Spray adhesive all over tree. Spray against a layer of newspaper.
3. Cover tree evenly with flock
4. Tap excess foam from tree and insert it into a foam block or cardboard tray to dry

A photo of two freshly flocked trees:



**Dale Bearden** was scheduled to do a mini clinic on the new Blunami train control system, but Dale called in sick, so we'll get to that another time.

## Coming Down the Track:

Oct 1,2	Lynden	Lynden Lions Train Show/Swap Meet
October 17	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Mini Clinics; Photos
Nov 12	Kent	Boeing Employees Model RR Club Swap Meet
Nov 21	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Dale Bearden – Monson RR
Dec 19	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Mark Malmkar – Seasonal Layout Changes
Feb 25/26	Monroe	United NW Model RR Club Show/Swap Meet
May 19-14	Tacoma	PNR Convention
Aug 21-26	Dallas, Tx	NMRA National Convention

**Future Clinics:** (Watch this newsletter for scheduled dates)

**Don Jones** on Model Railroad Estate Planning

**Tom Hawkins** on Ground Goop

**Bob Stafford** on Everett's BNSF Delta Yard

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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.

**Building Access:** Please remember to use the rear door (up the ramp off the parking lot). For security reasons, the door cannot be propped open and must remain closed and locked.

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

**Bring:** Bring a favorite tool or new tool to share with us in **Tool Time**. Bring a model to share in the **Modeler's Showcase** (in-progress is fine – sometimes in-progress examples are great learning opportunities). Bring unwanted items to give away or sell on the **Free/Sell** table. Bring photos of your layout or projects and we'll show them with the **New Projector** (bring on a USB thumb drive).



That's about all for this month...

