

The Mt Vernon NMRA Clinic



Breaking News!!! Thanks to Steve McCartt, WSMRC member and retired high school photography and videography teacher, this month's clinic was videoed and posted on the Fourth Division's You Tube website: [What happens to your trains after you die, by Don Jones for 4dPNR's Mount Vernon clinic March 2023 - YouTube](#) Steve went beyond just videoing the clinic – he edited it and added in many photos and there is even a cameo appearance by Steve. Be sure to check it out.

Twenty-Two folks showed up for the March 2023 Clinic, including a couple of first timers: **Steve McCartt**, an N scale modeler from Sedro Woolley, and member of the Whatcom/Skagit Model RR Club (Steve is the webmaster and photographer/videographer for the club and you can see his fabulous work on the club's website: whatcomskagitmrc.org). Another first timer was **Kirsten Falconer**, the wife and no doubt better half, of long-time attendee **Dave Falconer**. Dave is one month removed from hip replacement surgery and Kirsten is his chauffeur. Kirsten also brought homemade cookies – we've gotta keep her coming back! Welcome to both Steve and Kirsten and good to see you back so soon, Dave!

Important! Did that get your attention? Good. As I have mentioned before, it is important to check your email prior to leaving for each month's clinic. In the event of bad weather or other emergencies, I will send out an email notification. I'll try to do this prior to 3:00 pm on clinic day.

April Clinic: Remember as kids we used to play in the dirt? Well, come to the March clinic and see **Tom Hawkins** show us his version of playing in the dirt as he makes up his concoction of "Ground Goop" to use as scenery base material for layouts and dioramas.

New Feature - Pun of the Month: From "Master Punster" and new clinic attendee (and N scale modeler) Steve McCartt:

"My wife nearly caught me playing with my son's toy train, but I was able to throw a blanket over it and cover my tracks."

Build A Structure: The clinic's "group project" for the next few months is "structures", in an effort to get more people involved. The idea is to build a structure (any type, any scale, any medium) and can be scratchbuilt, kit built, or kitbashed. Bring it to the clinic in the coming months, **including while the build is in progress.** This can be a structure you have already started, or a new one, but the idea is to build (or complete) a structure to share with the group. This is a great opportunity to grab one of those unbuilt, "shelf orphan" kits and get to it!

May Clinic: For the May clinic, there will not be a meeting at the senior center. Rather, we are going on a "field trip" to visit Nick Muff and his layout. **Important:** if you want to attend, you must pre-register by emailing me at: tabooma10@gmail.com (note, this isn't my "usual email address). I will confirm and send you directions.

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Tool Time:

From the “Why Didn’t I Think of That?” department... **Dave Sherwood** showed off another of his “inventions” – a paint shaker. He used a hose clamp to attach a length of cardboard tubing to the blade of a trim saw, inserts a paint bottle, caps the end (or just holds his hand over the end) and hits the trigger for a couple of minutes. Presto! Mixed paint. Sure beats shaking those bottles by hand. Sort of an improved version of the old “tape-the-bottle-to-a-jigsaw-blade” approach, and easier, too.



Ron Nelson suggested a different (to me, at least) way to clean files: take a small piece of brass shim stock and run it against the grain, repeatedly. Ron says this method works better than using a traditional file-card, wire brush, or toothbrush. Ron didn’t bring an example, so no photo; sorry.

Steve Londino mentioned that his wife had given him a pair of gloves with LED lights in the fingertips. Again, no sample available for a photo, but this sounds very interesting. Steve says it helps illuminate whatever you are working on/holding in your fingers.

Al Carter previously reported on a “new and improved” rail (track) inspection car that he had seen on **Leigh Wilson’s** layout, so he went out and bought his own (Kalmbach Hobby Store, also available from Good Deals DCC). It is substantial as it is made from a hefty piece of clear acrylic, has a 4- and 6-wheel truck, Kadee couplers, metal wheels, a bubble level (user attaches), and a magnification device to place on top of the car (not shown in photo) for a clearer view of problem spots.



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Tool Time, continued:

Al also showed a number of products he used to weather a bridge and its abutments (see photo below). They include some enamel washes from AK Interactive (Crusted Rust Deposits Light, -Medium, -Dark), Moss Deposits, and Slimy Grime Dark, as well as several washes from Vallejo – black, light and dark rust, AK Interactive’s “Terrains Concrete”, a dark gray pan pastel, and some burnt umber artists pigment from Daniel Smith.

AK Interactive products are made in Spain and are available by mail order from AK-Interactive.com and several U.S. retailers (Megahobby.com, hobbyworld-usa.com, Amazon, eBay, etc.). Surprisingly, orders from Spain do not take that long to arrive.



This is just a portion of Al's weathering and rusting arsenal. He reports he doesn't want to know how much he has spent on stuff to dirty up his models. No, no, no...

Rumor has it that Al might give a clinic on rusting techniques next fall....

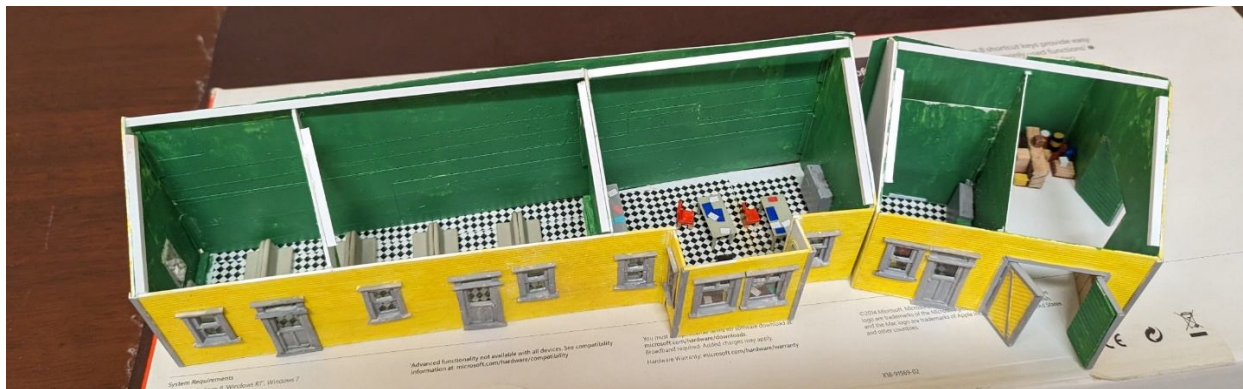


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Modeler's Showcase:

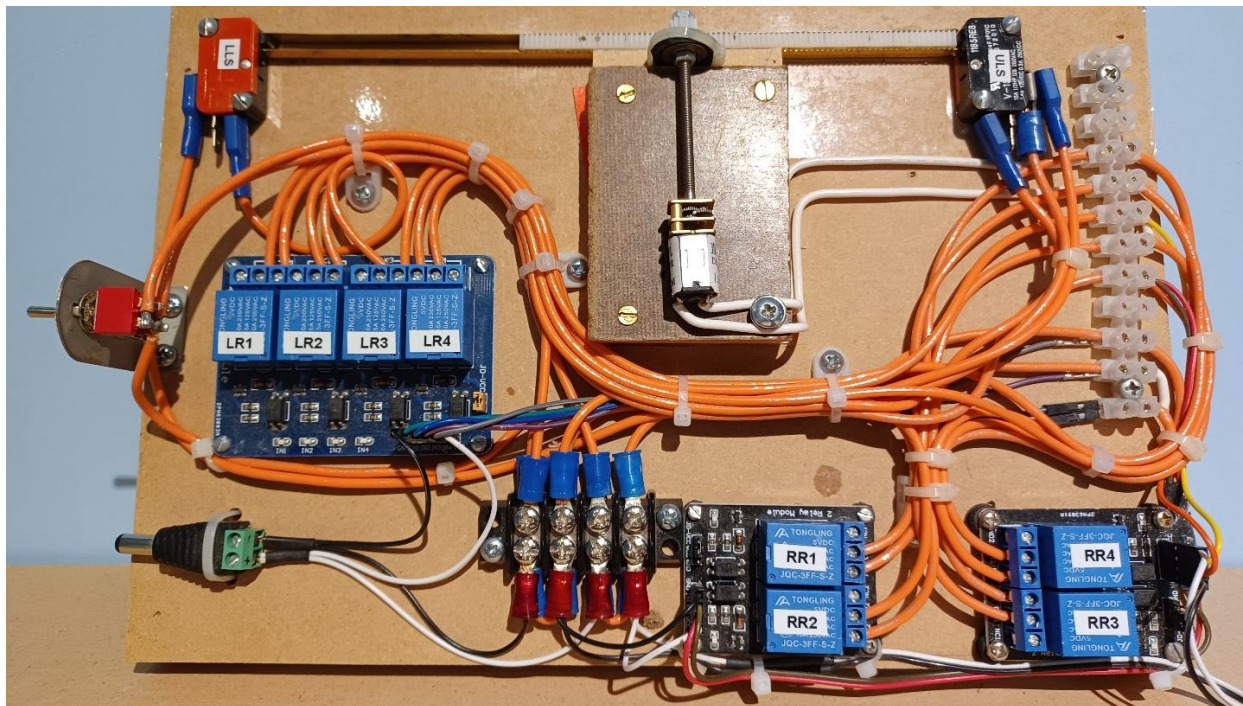
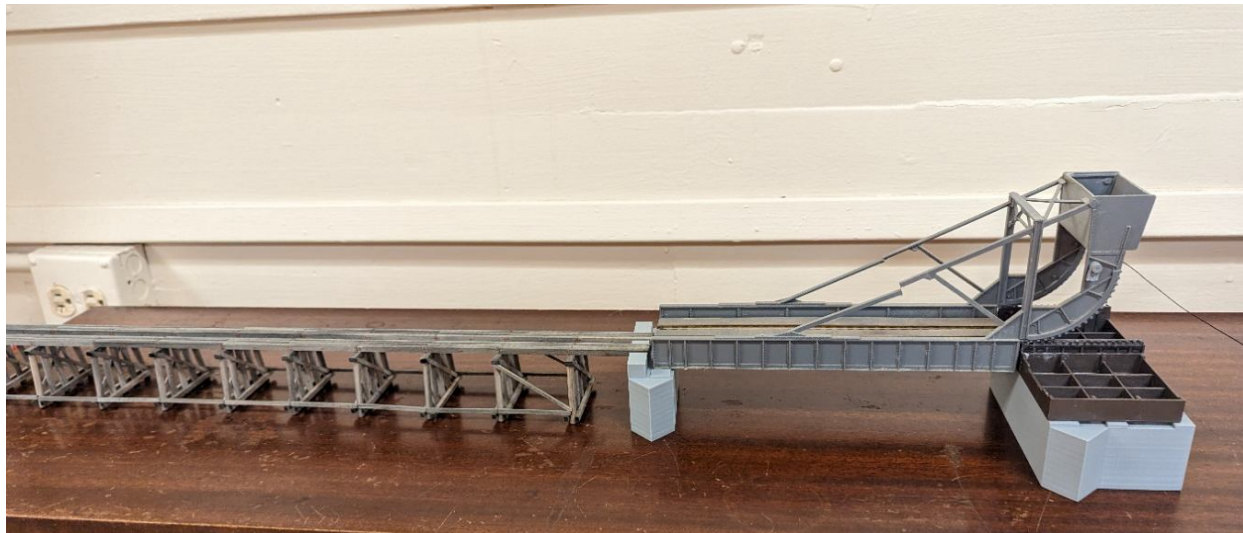
Mark Malmkar, MMR, showed continued progress on his scratchbuilt model of the second Leadville, Colorado depot. Mark has now attached the styrene siding to the substructure and has added windows and doors. Not commercially available products, mind you – Mark scratchbuilt the windows and doors, out of styrene! He is also adding some interior detail and will be adding some lighting.



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Modeler's Showcase, continued:

Dave Falconer brought his in-progress model of his scratchbuilt trestle and the "rolling lift bridge" that he is incorporating. He also sent along a photo of the "control board" he designed and built to operate the lift bridge, running on 5vdc (the blue things are relays, according to Dave).



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Modeler's Showcase, continued:

Al Carter has been working on a brass bridge he bought at the Monroe Swap Meet, which needed "a little attention" to repair a couple of solder joints. It was silver, so Al repainted it faded black, and then has made many rust applications using a variety of products from AK Interactive, Vallejo, Daniel Smith, and Pan Pastel.

The abutments are reworked Walther's styrene with AK Interactive Concrete troweled on. While the concrete texture might be a bit on the coarse side, with the weathering it turned out pretty good. Of course, after the texture was applied, Al then read the directions from the AK Interactive packaging and noticed that it could be thinned a bit for easier, smoother application (head slap!)

A listing of the products Al used to simulate rust and grunge appears above in Tool Time.





Evening's Main Event: **Don Jones** was our featured speaker, and his topic was Model Railroad Estate Planning. Don is a long-time member of the Whatcom/Skagit Model RR Club (and prior to that, a member of the Bellingham Society of Model Engineers (the forerunner to the WSMRC). Over all those years, the club has been contacted many times with requests for help in disposing of model railroad estates. Sometimes the "departed" left clear, detailed instructions regarding his/her wishes with respect to the model railroad items, but sadly, most often no direction had been provided, leaving the surviving spouse or family without much of a clue as to what to do.

Don has personally helped settle more than two dozen estates, and he provided some thoughts as to what we, as model railroaders, can do to help those that are "stuck" with trying to liquidate/donate our miniature treasures. Don related the interaction he and the club has had helping dispose of model railroad items over the past several years, and each one was a different story.

Focusing on our local area in Skagit, Whatcom, Island, and Snohomish counties, from where most clinic attendees come, there are, of course, the two "big" annual model railroad swap meets (Monroe, usually on the last weekend of February, and Lynden on the first full weekend in October). And then there are a couple of estate-selling business, as well as The Electric Train Shop in Burien that buys model railroad items/estates (all scales). Or you can go the eBay route, with power sellers like Loren Clarke, who has helped several of us sell some excess items (on commission). Or you can simply specify that you want your items donated to a local club, which can turn the donation into a source of income for the club.

Mark Henderschott, a retired attorney and clinic "regular" commented that it is easy to specify your desires in your will, an especially good option if you don't have a spouse, significant other, or close family.

The main thing that all of us can do is to make a list of our model railroad estate, whether just a hand written list or maybe a simple spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel, Google Docs, etc.). On it, it is good to perhaps list when items were acquired, what was paid, and maybe estimated worth at the time of the listing. And, of course, update this listing periodically, as we all know our collection of trains and so forth keeps growing and growing and growing...

This isn't a "fun" subject for most of us to think about, but we probably should at least give some consideration to what is to be done with our model railroad estate after we pass.

If you were unable to attend the clinic, or just want to review it, you can see the clinic on the Fourth Division's You Tube Channel, thanks to Steve McCartt: [What happens to your trains after you die, by Don Jones for 4dPNR's Mount Vernon clinic March 2023 - YouTube](#)



Coming Down the Track:

Apr 17	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Tom Hawkins – Ground Goop
May 6	Mount Vernon	Mini Swap Meet – Mark Malmkar
May 13	Alger	WSMRC Open House – HO & N Scale Layouts
** May 15	Mount Vernon	Clinic: Nick Muff – Home Layout Visit
May 19-14	Tacoma	PNR Convention
Aug 21-26	Dallas, Tx	NMRA National Convention

**Pre registration required (see first page of newsletter)

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. 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.

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). 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).

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).

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Rumor has it that while **Ted Becker** has been hospitalized, he hasn't been idle... He apparently is branching out into his own line of beer:



And that's all for this month!





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