



April 17, 2023

Twenty-Two folks showed up for the April 2023 Clinic, including first timer **Garry Baker** of Arlington. Garry models in HO and N scales. Welcome, Garry!

From the Clinic Chair: This was the last in-person clinic for this 2022-23 season. I reluctantly stepped into the Chairperson's role since **Ted Becker** is still hospitalized (8 months!), and I would like to thank those that stepped up to help by giving clinics, and especially to **Dave Falconer** for bringing refreshments each month, and **Tom Buckingham** for maintaining our roster and mailing list.

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

How many model railroaders does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: 100.

1 who actually changes the lightbulb.

90 who complain about the price of lightbulbs, how lightbulb manufacturers are gouging everybody and how they're not going to play the lightbulb manufacturers' game anymore.

5 who claim that you can make better lightbulbs from common household materials for cheap.

3 who go off on a tangent and rail against MTH lightbulbs because they're not all that compatible with everybody else's lightbulb.

And finally, 1 who claims he knows everything there is to know about lightbulbs, their history, their eventual demise and who insists the golden age of lightbulbs ended with the second Eisenhower administration.

Oops! Department: Apologies to **Don Jones**, last month's clinician, whom I had identified as "Done Jones". I can assure you that Don is most assuredly not "done" (Sorry, Don!)

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. No meetings during the summer months (June, July, August). 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.

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. Here are a couple of photos to whet your appetite:



Tool Time:



Ron Nelson last month described a better way to clean a file. Tonight, he brought the "tool" to demo for us. The "tool" is a piece of brass shim stock, maybe 1/16 inch thick or less. The idea is you run the brass along the grooves of the file, sort of left to right (or vice versa). Ron says it works much better than a file card.

Also last month, **Steve Londino** mentioned some "lighted gloves" he received for Christmas, and tonight he brought one to show. The glove leaves your fingertips free, not inhibiting movement and he reports his "Santa Claus" (Mrs. Londino) bought them on Amazon. Search for "LED lighted gloves."



Tool Time, cont'd:

Al Carter brought a new "ball vice" that has a heavy base and holds those small objects steady while gluing or painting. Al bought this from AliExpress (China). Here is a link: [Alloy Grinding Coloring Tool | Alloy Gk Soldier Model | Hobby Building Tools - 360° - Aliexpress](#)



Modeler's Showcase:



Steve McCartt brought a cake. Well, that's what he called it, but really it is his first attempt to build a mountain for his home N scale layout, which features a vehicle tunnel emerging from a mountain. He started by laminating several 1" pieces of foam on top of each other, then added some "Great Stuff" spray insulation. Next up will be carving/chopping it up, and then adding some sort of rock castings or rock work. Steve wanted the mountain to be removable from his layout, hence the foam and Great Stuff construction.

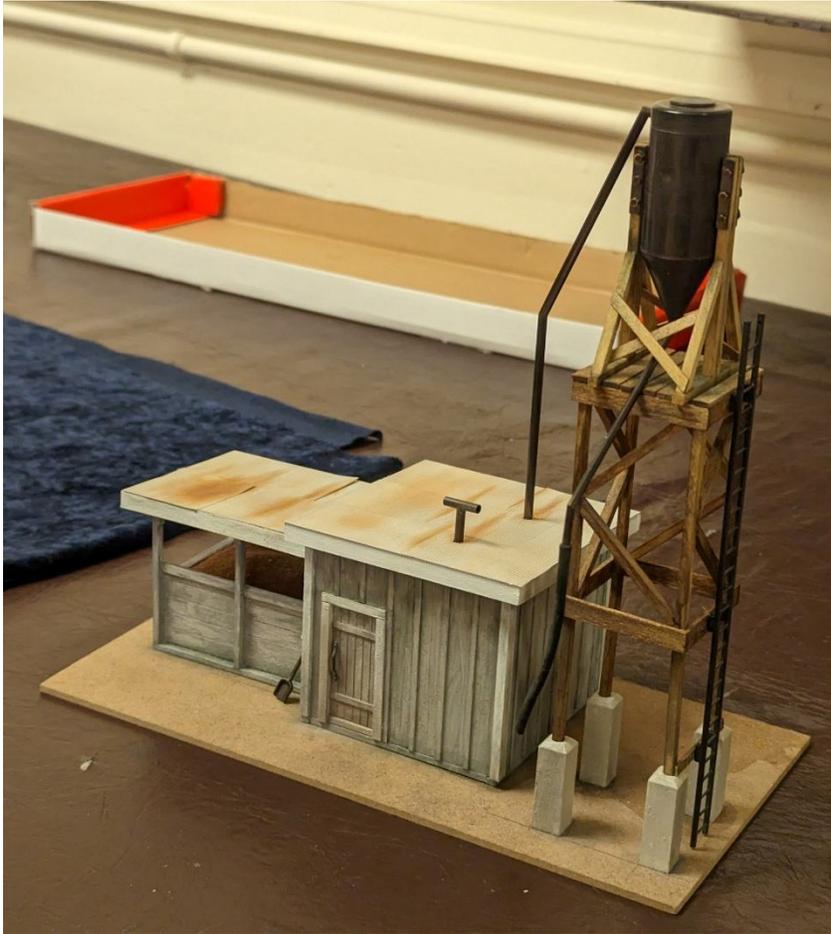
Modeler's Showcase, cont'd:

Bob Stafford is in the process of splicing two Walthers Milwaukee Road Freight House kits into one long structure. Bob has volunteered to give a clinic next year on working with Walthers kits (thanks, Bob!)

And sitting in front of the freight house is an Atlas model RS-3 diesel that Bob has stripped and repainted and is in the process of weathering it. Bob also mentioned that real railroads often put kitty litter on the walkways to make them less slick from oil and grease, and he replicated that by adding talcum powder to paint to get a gritty texture.



Modeler's Showcase, cont'd:



Ron Nelson continues to wow us with his scratchbuilt O scale structures. This time it is a sand tower with a drying shed. All scratchbuilt, including the ladder. Ron reports he used pan pastels to create the rust effect on the roof, which is some very thin corrugated aluminum material.

Mark Malmkar, MMR, displayed his finished HO scale Leadville, Colorado station. Mark has faithfully brought the station to the past several clinics, showing it as it progressed through construction stages.



Modeler's Showcase, cont'd:

Dave Falconer now has his motorized drawbridge operational, and he provided a demonstration. It is very quiet, using a 5vdc motor and gearing from



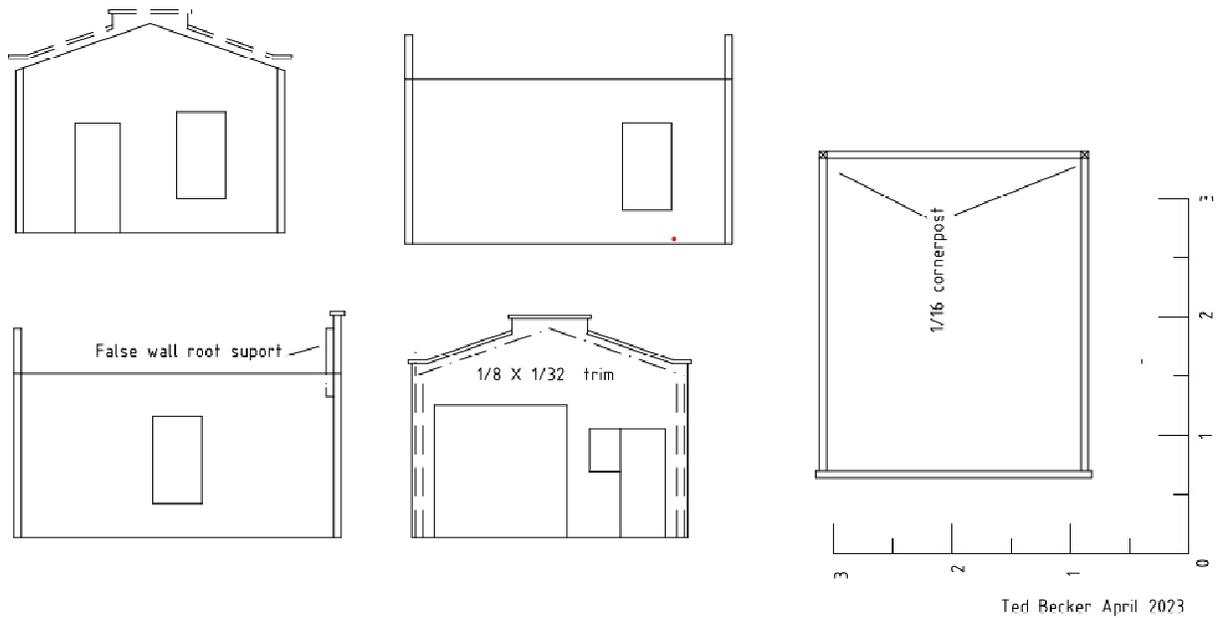
Al Carter showed a scratchbuilt garage. But it wasn't all his doing – he collaborated with still hospitalized **Ted Becker**, who put his CAD program on his laptop to good use and drew up some plans for Al to follow. The inspiration was a free kit offered by FOS scale models during one of their promotions, although Ted and Al made some differences in the window arrangement. Ted's program allows use of Tichy castings, and he drew the plans up for Tichy double hung windows, and Tichy double door garage doors. The front stucco wall was simulated by using AK Interactive "Terrains Concrete" spread on the surface and lightly sanded. The weathered, flaked paint finish was made by first staining the wood a weathered gray color, then dry-sponging Vallejo Acrylic white, and then green. The roof was made from black masking tape, thanks to a tip from **Nick Muff, MMR**, and then weathered with pan pastels.

The inspiration from FOS Scale Models:



Modeler's Showcase, cont'd:

The plans as drawn by Ted:



The finished model as assembled by AI:



Still undecided is what the business will be. The garage doors are just tack glued in place, so if the interior is going to be detailed, the doors can be opened to show what is inside. And the roof is removable, for access and possible future LED lighting.

Evening's Main Event: Tom Hawkins came over from Anacortes to describe his method of making "Ground Goop", which is a concoction of various ingredients that are blended to make a substance that you can trowel onto your layout as a basic terrain surface. Ground Goop has been around for several years, and the basic recipe calls for equal parts of Celluclay, Sculptamold, white glue, tan latex paint, and water as needed.

The original recipe calls for the addition of a capful of Lysol to retard any mold growth, since if you don't use your whole batch up, you can store the leftovers in an airtight container for weeks, even months. But the Lysol does emit an odor, so if you are sensitive to it, or if you are going to use all your mixture at one time, Tom says don't bother with the Lysol.



Ground Goop remains soft for several hours, even a couple of days, depending on how much water is added when mixing, so there is no rush to complete your ground cover, as there is when using plaster-based scenery textures. While the Ground Goop is still damp you can add sand or perhaps Woodland Scenics ground foam or similar. A light misting with "wet" water and some diluted white glue or matte medium will affix the sand/foam or even small rocks into place.

Evening's Main Event, cont'd:



At the clinic, Tom mixed up a batch of Ground Goop and applied it to a mini-diorama base he brought, then added some ground turf and so forth, plus a tree to cap it off. Tom commented that the brown paint he used for this demonstration is darker than he normally uses. He also painted the sides of the diorama with the paint, which hides the pink foam and dresses it up.

Al Carter then mentioned a couple of alternative ideas:

1. "Goopy Chew" (term coined by Randy Seiler of Cincinnati West fame, which is documented in MRH's on-line forum): Equal parts Celluclay and tan paint, and some water to get desired consistency. The difference between Goopy Chew and regular Ground Goop is this sets up usually overnight, whereas Ground Goop allows you a couple of days to work with it.
2. Equal parts dry (powdered) joint (drywall) compound and Perlite (or Vermiculite), and water to achieve the desired consistency. The Vermiculite or Perlite adds some texture, as this concoction by itself is rather smooth. And add some latex paint to tint the mixture. Dry joint compound is available at Home Depot in 20 lb. bags, and comes in different setting (working) times, such as 24-, 40-, or 90-minute working times. I use the longest working time that I can find.

Thanks, Tom, for a great clinic! Now we can all go and get messy playing with Ground Goop!

Coming Down the Track:

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
Sep 18	Mount Vernon	Clinic: (TBD)

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

Looking Ahead to Next Season: A quick poll of those present at the clinic came up with some suggestions for clinics next season:

1. Passenger Car Interiors (Mark Malmkar)
2. Detailing Track (Tom Buckingham)
3. Kitbashing Walthers Cornerstone Buildings (Bob Stafford)
4. Making Trees from Rabbit Bush (Bob Stafford)
5. Weathering (TBD)
6. Detailing Structures (TBD)
7. Rust (Al Carter)

This is by no means the final plan for next season, but it's a start! Thanks for the input, folks!

That's a wrap for this month...

And remember...

