



The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Mark Malmkar, MMR, Clinic on Passenger Car Interiors



December 18, 2023 Highlights

Amazingly, given that it was one week before Christmas AND there was a Seahawks game on Monday Night Football, these fine folks pictured below still showed up to hear/see **Mark Malmkar, MMR's**, clinic on passenger car interiors. Great clinic, by the way! See "Clinic Report" for details.

And a warm welcome to first timers **Mickey Bevens** of Bellingham and **Geoff Stippes** of Anacortes – glad to have you guys on board!

Christmas cookies appeared on the refreshment table, too – special thanks to **Sarah Falconer, Joyce Hawkins, and Irene Nelson** for the goodies – yum!

No Room for a Layout? Clinic regular attendee **Bob Stafford** has a remedy for that – buy a duplex, live in one side, and build your railroad in the other unit! Complete with holes cut in the walls for the train to pass from room to room. All it takes is some courage and an understanding spouse. Bob has the mainline in both N and HO scales operating now.

Here is a link to the latest video update from Bob: <https://youtu.be/fkLsPRXSD6g?si=xAnHGEgy5IQBLtEN>

Have a look at the video – it is quite the undertaking and Bob is making rapid progress.

Coming Down the Track

January 13, 2024 Alger

WSMRC Open House

January 15, Mt Vernon

Clinic: Tom Buckingham

Weathering Train Tracks

Ending January 1, 2024

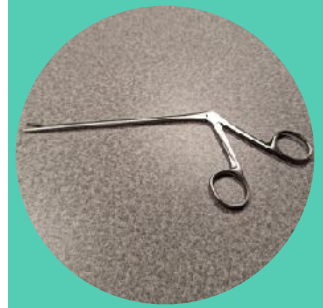
Great Train Show in Tacoma

February 13, 2024 Alger

WSMRC Open House

February 19, Mt Vernon

Mini-Clinics



Tool Time: Don Jones lights a lot of structures, and for inserting light bulbs or LEDs into hard-to-reach places (like the ceiling of an already built structure), Don really likes using "alligator forceps" like the sample he brought below. These are available on Amazon in a variety of sizes. This one is from Hartmann.



Ron Nelson was browsing in Hobby Lobby and found the locking tweezers shown below, along with a more traditional pair of locking tweezers, in the jewelry section, at prices well below online sources.. Ron also showed off a pair of

(continued)

Sedro-Woolley Museum Layout



Steve McCartt organized a small task force (**Nick Muff, Dave Falconer, Al Carter, and himself**) to visit the model railroad that has been in place at the Sedro Woolley Museum for many years but was inoperable. "The museum curator who is a former student of mine reached out to the Whatcom Skagit Model Railroad Club," Steve said. Some troubleshooting and track cleaning got the basic two track "mainline" oval operational, as well as a smaller logging loop, so the museum staff can make the trains run for visitors. However, much work needs to be done to really get this layout looking and operating great. If you are interested in lending a hand, contact Steve at: smccartt@comcast.net.

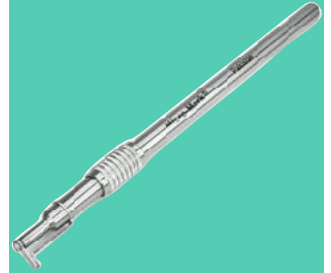
Sick Bay Report: Ted Becker has had a rough last few weeks. Besides the Myasthenia Gravis that has kept him hospitalized since August 19, 2022, he contracted a MRSA infection, then Covid, then pneumonia. As a result, he had to go into the ICU at Providence Hospital in Everett for a couple of weeks. He has fought that off and now is back at the Everett Center, where he is recuperating and trying to make progress towards getting home. Please send him well wishes via email at: rail.bird@att.net and/or send a card to him c/o The Everett Center, room 209, 1919 – 112th Street S.W., Everett 98204. He could use some cheering up!

Dale Bearden, MMR, emailed me to tell me he is at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, undergoing unspecified cardiac testing.



Top photo taken by Nick of the layout and the crew (left to right Steve, Dave, and Al). Bottom photo is of the downtown section of the layout which is closest to patrons.

Tool Time: Continued precision flush cutting pliers (nippers) made by Sandvik that he has had for 25 years! It pays to have quality tools!



Dave Sherwood found a great small parts holder at Micro Mark (#90699). It is spring loaded and can be operated with one hand. Jaws open to 1/4" and are slightly serrated. Below is a photo of the 7" long tool from the Micro Mark catalog, and below that are close up photos Dave provided of the jaws.



Mark Malmkar, MMR, brought a couple of "specialty" tools that he uses when working on passenger cars. You can see and read about them below in the Main Events section of the newsletter.

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Lynden Pioneer Museum Circus Layout

Speaking of museum layouts, **Dave Sherwood**, WSMRC member and clinic regular, has been busy at the Pioneer Museum in Lynden, volunteering his time working on the HO scale circus layout. In Dave's own words:

"I've been volunteering at the museum for around a year now. It is a circus layout with hundreds of people and animals. It is a double track DC system with an extended oval of around 6' x 10' with an open center. It breaks down into 6 module sections. The layout was not operating well, and regular track, engines and cars needed serious cleaning and repair. Also, many cars had serious coupler issues that I changed out with Kadee couplers.

Many hours and visits got the layout operational. I upgraded the electrical and installed a 5-minute bypass timer that fed power to a dual MRC throttle. Visitors can turn the timer on and enjoy watching the trains. Extremely popular exhibit now that it works correctly.

The Museum also has a railroad section that has many vintage dioramas and visual displays including another small O gauge operating layout operated via a motion detector.

The museum received a model railroad donation that is being inventoried. They are considering a possible high wall mounted operational layout that will run around the hallways and displays on the second floor. WSMC members may be involved in the design and installation of the track and operation for that display. The actual woodworking and installation will be completed by others not yet defined."

The museum was quite impressed with Dave's efforts and let him know by making a \$500 donation to the Whatcom Skagit Model Railroad Club.

Burlington Chamber of Commerce Layout

Similarly the Burlington Chamber of Commerce is looking to create a layout in the Depot Restoration Building on Fairhaven Street in Burlington.

If you are interested in this project contact Steve McCartt smccartt@comcast.net

Tool Time: Continued



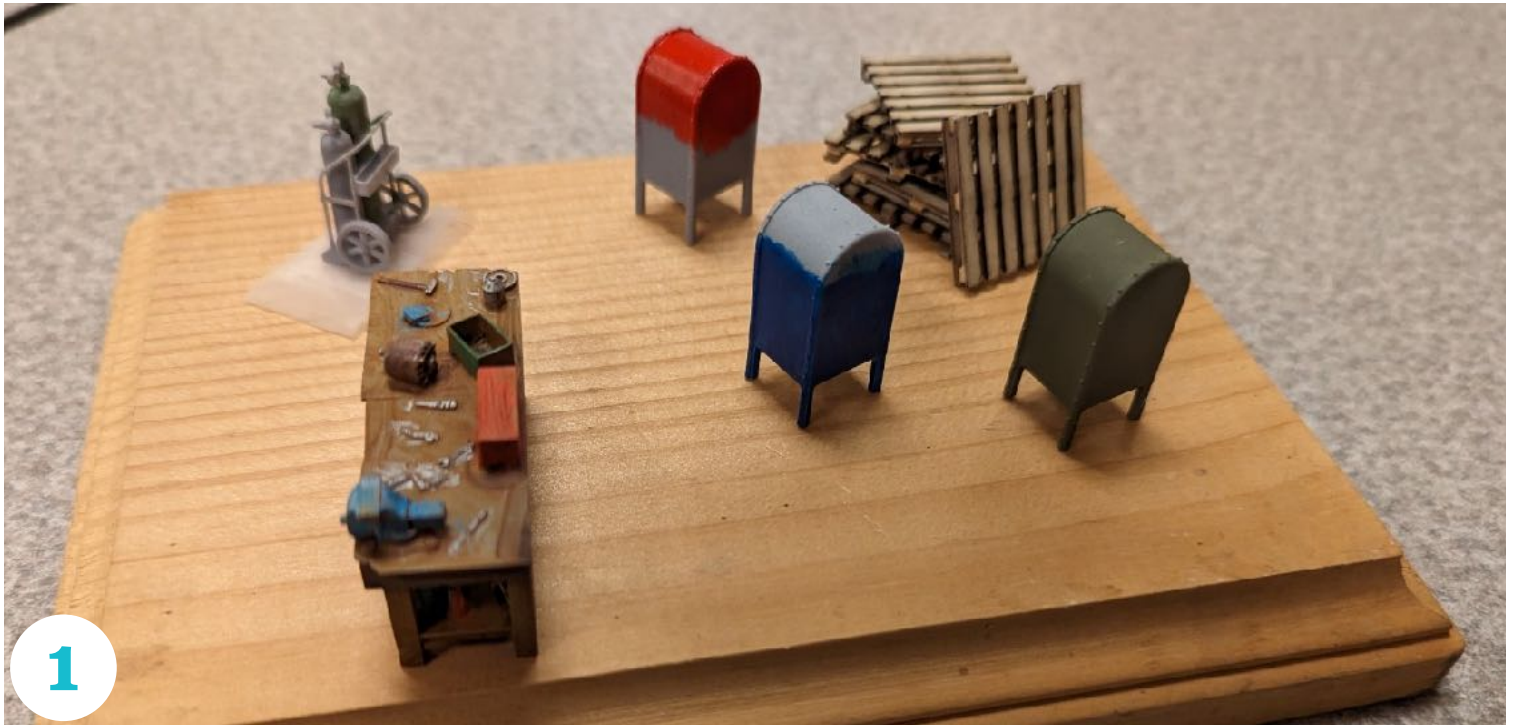
Seed dial with 5 different settings

Al Carter reports a great tool for applying ballast in those small, hard to reach areas (think: turnouts) is this "Seed Dispenser/Sower" from Amazon ([Amazon.com: Ogrmar 5 PCS Seed Dispenser Sower Seed Spreaders Planter Seeder Tool](https://www.amazon.com/Ogrmar-5-PCS-Seed-Dispenser-Sower-Seed-Spreaders-Planter-Seeder-Tool/dp/B07K111111)). It has 5 different sized openings, so precision application of ballast (or other small scenery materials) is easy, and a 5-pack is only about \$8.

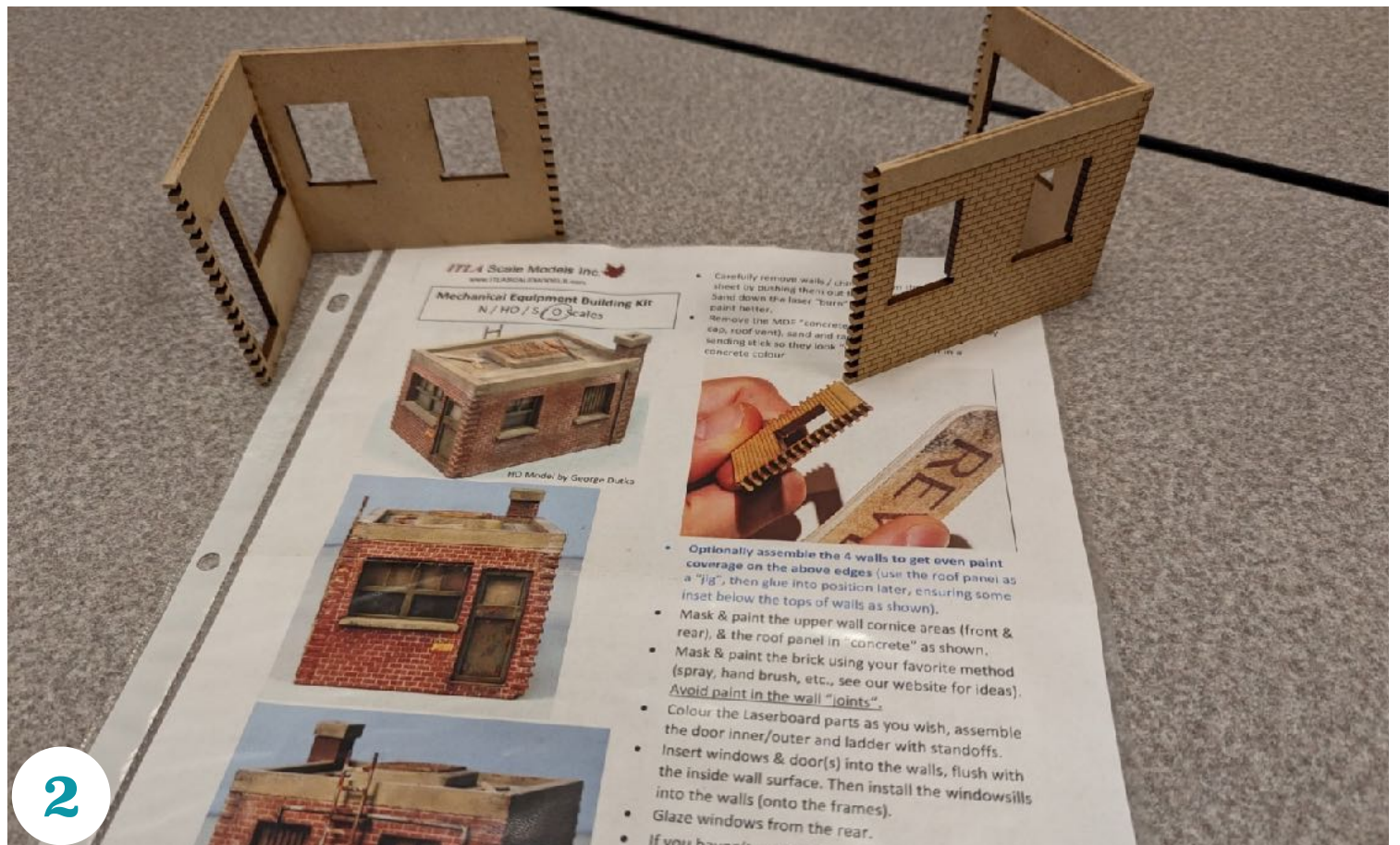
A huge thank you to those who shared their tools this clinic. It was refreshing and enlightening to see the myriad of tools offered up. Keep up the sharing. Even so, more Tool Time Tools are needed. Give some thought to a painters palette you use or a clamping idea, or a unique way to light your work bench. We all have our quirky ideas. Share yours.

Modeler's Showcase

1 Doug Seward showed off some O scale 3D printed details that he bought from Custom Model Depot custommodeldepot.com Note the finely painted tools on the workbench.



2. Doug also showed a couple of laser-cut wall components (O scale) that he purchased from a company called ITLA Scale Models. This company makes structures and modular wall components and detail parts in a variety of scales (ITLA Scale Models Inc.).



Modeler's Showcase Continued



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3. First time attendee **Geoff Stippes** displayed a variety of Nn3 locomotives and rolling stock. That's right, N scale, 3-foot gauge, and Geoff reports the locos all perform flawlessly. Wow! Rather than me trying to get all the details correct, here in his own words is Geoff's description:

The 0-6-0 switcher at bottom left is an Aspen kit now no longer available. It runs on a Merklin mechanism (and quite smoothly I might add). The 2-6-0, to the right, it is another kit. It's from Germany and it, too, runs on a Merklin mechanism. Its prototype is of a rather obscure Arizona mining railroad which was unusual in that most of its locomotives had two sand domes. The Shay is a Showcase Miniatures kit which I modified a bit (moved the sand dome, used a capped stack and added an oil head lamp) to more resemble a Gilpin Tram 2' engine.

The Bigler tank car is a shortened micro trains flat car with a scratched built cradle and tank (dome cannibalized from a standard gauge tank car).

The C&S caboose at the top right is another out of production Aspen Models kit with some extra added detail. Next to it is a Eureka Nevada passenger critter scratch built running on a Japanese mechanism. Next is a Bachman two axle caboose narrowed with some windows filled in, a side door (from a combination car) and extra details (railing of .010" wire). Then a Microtrains D&RGW caboose shortened to 24' and a Microtrains box car also shortened to 24'. And finally, an MDC (I think) combination car. Again, narrowed and some end windows filled in. I prefer duckbill roofs, so I cut one off a Bachman car, narrowed it and put it on. Also added grab irons etc. with Microtrains Nn3 passenger trucks.

Obviously not everything has been lettered yet and nothing weathered. Glazing needs to be added after lettering but I need to get some custom decals made for that. I might add that an Optivisor is an absolute necessity for me to do this kind of work, so I hope that no one gets the idea that I have Superman's vision in making these models.



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4. **Mark Malmkar, MMR**, showed off an SW-7 cow-and-calf switcher combination (HO scale) that he painted, detailed, and lettered (custom made decals) for his own railroad, the "Rocky Mountain Central". Here they are pulling a freight train past a farm (nice scene!) on his home layout.



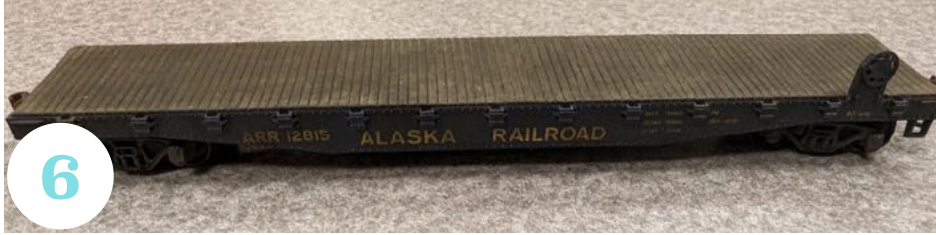
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5. **Al Carter** displayed his (almost) completed Alaska Railroad snowplow #4. Weathered with a combination of "real rust" solution, dry and liquid pigments, watercolor pencils, and Pan Pastels. All that is missing is a headlight for the cab roof.

6, 7, 8 **Al** says he has never seen a freight car he didn't want to weather. Below are some ARR cars that he attacked on his workbench. Weathering is primarily Pan Pastels and dry pigments,

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Modeler's Showcase Continued



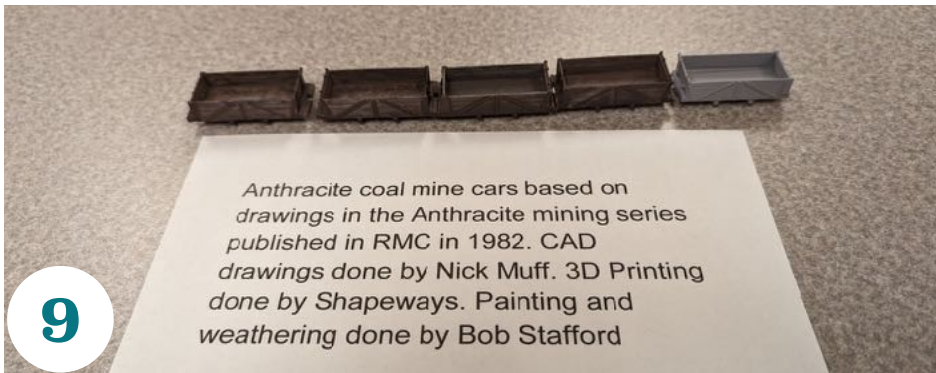
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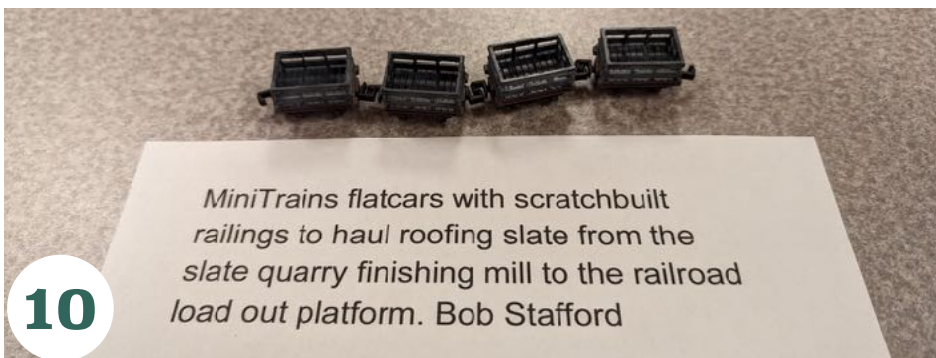


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Anthracite coal mine cars based on drawings in the Anthracite mining series published in RMC in 1982. CAD drawings done by Nick Muff. 3D Printing done by Shapeways. Painting and weathering done by Bob Stafford

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MiniTrains flatcars with scratchbuilt railings to haul roofing slate from the slate quarry finishing mill to the railroad load out platform. Bob Stafford

10

and AK Interactive rust washes and mediums. A “real rust” solution was applied to the inside and underside of the Athearn “blue box” hopper, which probably will not be placed into revenue service on Al’s Alaska Railroad. The mechanical reefer spent too long in the weathering shop and will most likely be relegated to storage shed duty

9-10. **Bob Stafford** displayed a couple of sets of narrow gauge ore cars, 3D printed. Bob was kind enough to make up descriptions, thus ensuring the reporter (me) gets the details right! Thanks, Bob!

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Clinic Coordinator’s Comment:

Just a note to let you know I really appreciate the participation this month in Tool Time and Modeler’s Showcase. Things were looking a bit lean for a couple of months. Remember, you are encouraged to bring models/projects “in progress” for **Modeler’s Showcase** – we can learn a lot from your techniques. Also, **Tool Time** isn’t limited to just tools – if you have a painting/weathering/gluing or so on product or tip to share, please do. We learn a lot from each other

MINI CLINICS:

In February, we are going to bring back one of **Ted Becker’s** favorite clinic subjects: “Mini Clinics”, which are, well, “mini” clinics of no more than 10 minutes in length. Subject matter is anything related to model railroading or prototype railroading.

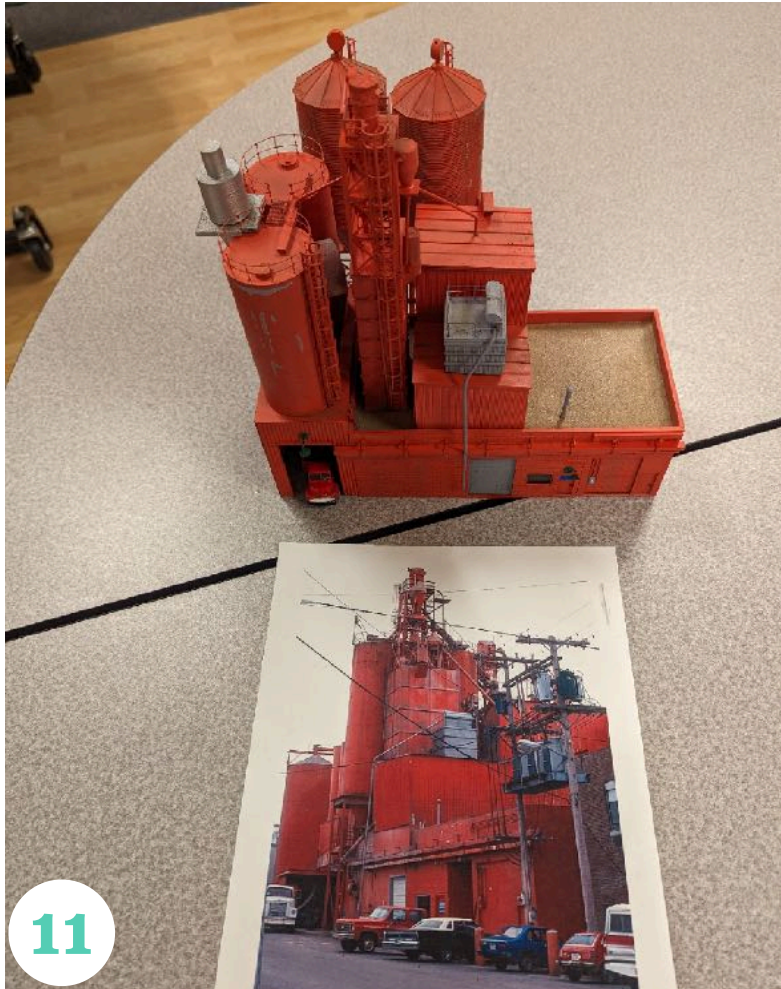
Clinicians lined up so far include **Dave Sherwood, Tom Hawkins, Bob Stafford, Mark Malmkar, MMR, Tom Buckingham, Doug Seward, Nick Muff, and Al Carter**. Subject matters will be revealed next month – don’t miss out!

THE LAUGH TRACK

Driving trains is a lot more difficult than it steams.

Q: What do you call a decoder equipped locomotive that no longer runs? A: DCCeased!

Modeler's Showcase Continued



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11. Nick Muff, MMR, brought along his completed model of the Peterson Industries Feed Mill in Decatur, Arkansas. Nick had previously shown his model of the office

complex for this business (see the September 2023 newsletter), and he had been working on this part of the model for quite some time. Almost all parts are 3D printed, in the "reddish" color you see, just like in the prototype photo. Of course, the structure is lighted, too. Amazing

12. A feed mill needs a grain truck, right? Nick built this 1953-ish Ford truck from a Sylvan kit. It features windshields/windows made out of .020 Lexan, windshield wipers, grab handles by the cab, and is painted via a Krylon spray can.



12



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13. Speaking of vehicles, it seems like **Al Carter** is always churning out more 1/87 vehicle models. This one is a 3D printed 1953 IHC pickup from Custom Model Depot (see above, Doug Seward's 3D models). When weathering, Al always tries to find a photo to use as an example. The "rust" is a combination of AK Interactive liquid pigments, Pan Pastels, and dry artists' pigments. The windshield is made from scotch tape. Hard to see in this photo of his model, but the front left tire is flat. And no spare tire...

Main Event

Mark Malmkar, MMR, just loves passenger cars. So much so, that he owns his own company (Palace Car Company)...that produces passenger car detail parts, both interior (seats, counters, steps, etc.) and exterior (fluting, vents, battery boxes, underbody detail, etc.). Here is a link to his company: [Palace Car Company - Oak Harbor, WA](#)

Mark also sells a large variety of steel weights that are specifically machined to fit inside passenger cars, under the floor “carpeting”. This greatly simplifies bringing the cars up to proper weight – no more trying to cram lead into crevices under the car!

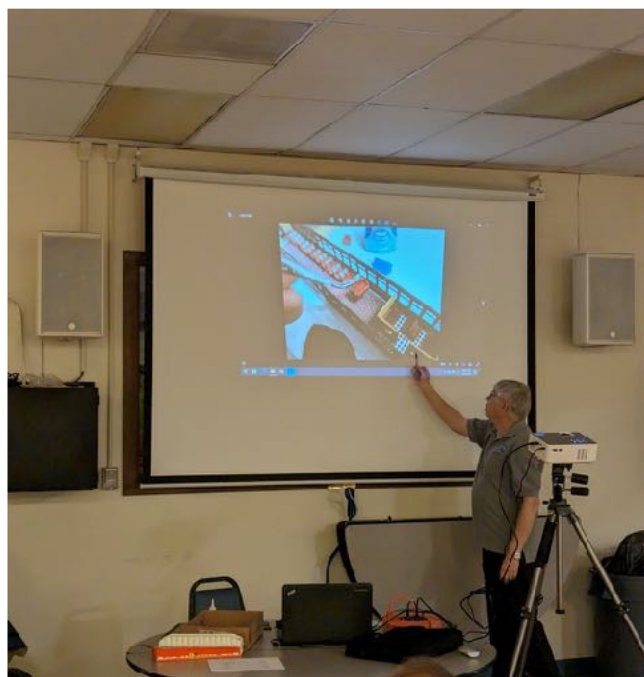
Mark provided a handout for clinic attendees and took us through a step by step (12 steps) journey on creating and installing an interior. The handout included floorplans for three different versions. He used a Rivarossi heavyweight coach for his example, but the techniques apply to just about all passenger car models.



Some of Mark’s “custom made” tools: a block of wood with duct tape thumbtacked in place, to temporarily hold seats and detail parts for painting; a curved file for smoothing out the car shell’s floor; a bent screwdriver which Mark uses to help pry up hard to reach components; and on the bottom, a machined steel floor weight (Mark offers a variety of these steel weights – check his website).



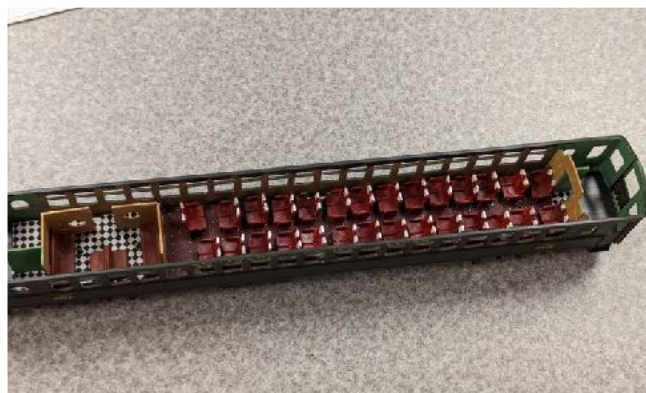
Mark inserting a painted seat into a heavyweight coach. Note the printed floor “carpet”. The seats are painted to represent mohair with white headrest covers, common in the early part of the 20th century.



Mark pointing out the smoker’s compartment detail in a heavyweight coach.



Lighting Passenger Cars: As an “add-on” to Mark’s clinic, Don Jones mentioned that he has found the constant lighting kits from Voltscooter ([HO Scale Passenger Car Lighting Board – Voltscooter Engineering](#)) to be very good and easy to use and install. Both Don and clinic attendee John O’Connell have installed Voltscooter lighting kits in their HO scale passenger cars. Also available for N scale



A view of the complete interior installed. Note the “tile” floor to the left in the smoker’s compartment.

Upcoming and Ongoing

January Clinic



Track is a model too! One of **Tom Buckingham's** favorite parts of modeling is making the track look as realistic as possible. Tom will show us how to take ordinary plastic flex track and turnouts and make them look like the real thing. Check out the photos of some examples of track installed on Tom's layout. BTW, the retaining wall is made from foam core by **John O'Connell**.



Rabbit Trees, revisited: **Steve McCartt** and 12 year old grandson **Liam** decided to make some trees for Steve's N scale home layout, so they followed **Bob Stafford's** method of making trees from Rabbit Bush, outlined in Bob's clinic this past October. Liam designed and created the stream and camping site as well.



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.

CONTACT US

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Clinic and Newsletter Photographer/Videographer: **Steve McCartt**
Roster Keeper: **Tom Buckingham**

4TH DIVISION ZOOM LAYOUT TOURS

Courtesy of Cliff Aaker

You can expect a regular layout tour the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM. The Zoom link will be posted on the [Grab Iron](#).

One of the best clinic options is the meetings put on by the [NMRA 4th Division](#). Some of these are also Zoom Meetings.

The 4th division also provide a youtube archive of past Layout tours and clinic videos you can access at www.youtube.com/c/4dpnrMovies

You can also visit the NMRA youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHw-7-1FWB5zQgTM0ZVY-Yw>

Note: Membership in the NMRA is not required to view Zoom meetings or on line clinics.