



The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Cliff Aaker describes the details on decals



Are you one of the happy folks in the photo below? No? Then you missed a great clinic by **Cliff Aaker** on applying both dry transfer and water slide decals. As you can tell, those in attendance were enjoying themselves. Or maybe they were laughing at me...

November 20, 2023 Highlights

We had a first timer last night, **Leigh Wilson** of Camano Island. Leigh models the Great Northern in HO scale up through Skykomish on a nifty 8x16 layout in his garage that he can move around on heavy duty casters.

Also putting in his “once a year” appearance (his words) was **Stephen Winter** of Mill Creek, who models in On30 scale and is part of the PNW On30 Modelers (dot com) modular group.

MINI CLINICS:

In years past, we’ve devoted a clinic night to “mini clinics”, not featuring just one clinician, but having a variety of folks volunteer to do a mini clinic (10 minutes maximum) on whatever they can share with the group. Have an idea for a mini clinic? Talk to me, let me know what you can do, and I’ll put together an agenda. Thinking this will probably be in February or later. This can be a live demonstration, or if you prefer, we can use the projector to show your clinic – just put it on a USB stick.

Coming Down the Track

December 9 Alger

WSMRC Open House

December 18 Mt Vernon

Clinic: Mark Malmkar
Passenger Car Interiors

December 23 Alger

WSMRC Open House

January 15 Mount Vernon

Clinic: Detailing Track by
Tom Buckingham

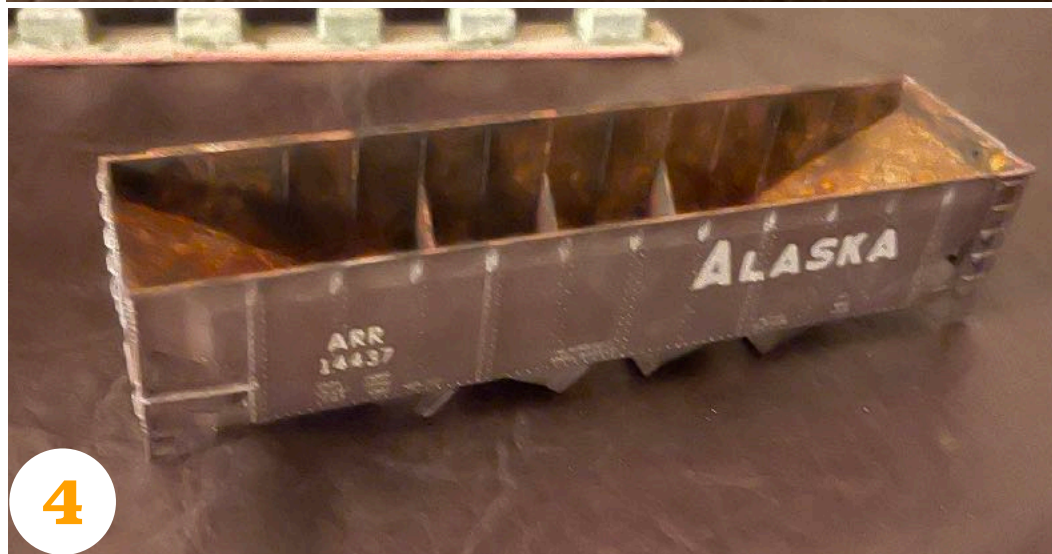


Tool Time: Al Carter

A double-duty “tool” was shared by **Al Carter** – a bean bag (actually, a “corn hole” game piece) that doubles as both a hand rest which helps to steady your hand while painting, and a flexible weight for securing odd-shaped objects when gluing, such as roofs on structures, etc. Available on Amazon, a four pack is about \$10.00.

Here is [the link](#)

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 cool O scale 3d printed items he purchased from a vendor at the Lynden Train Show last month, Custommodeldepot.com. This one-man company is located just south of us in Lake Stevens. Doug painted the objects with acrylic paints. Here is [the Link](#).

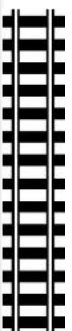
2. Also displayed from Custom Model Depot were two 1953 International trucks (HO scale) that **Al Carter** has been working on. One is a "Travelall", painted to match factory colors. Of note on this one is the front windshield is made from Scotch brand clear cellophane tape. The other vehicle is a pickup, being built to show a well-worn, rust adorned work horse.

3. **Al** also displayed a couple of in progress weathering projects: one is an Alaska RR 50' boxcar, in which the first step to weathering is achieving a paint fade, in this case achieved with a light-yellow Pan Pastel.

4. The second car is an Athearn "blue box" 40' hopper that has had a significant amount of rust applied to it's interior, using a 3-step product called "Model Memories".



The Laugh Track



Modeler's Showcase (Continued)

5. Finally, Al showed off his now completed snow shed (scratchbuilt) and retaining wall (Chooch urethane castings). The snow shed was built from CAD drawings supplied by Ted Becker (Ted crafted the drawings on his laptop in his hospital bed in Everett). It was stained with various shades of Hunterline stains. Here is a photo of it in place on Al's Alaska RR themed layout. Note the concrete footers that were 3d printed by **Nick Muff**.



6. A photo of Al's snow shed in place on his Alaska Railroad layout, with some "rubber rocks" from Cripplebush temporarily in place. Gotta do something about that pink snow, though...



Main Event

Coming all the way from Oak Harbor, noted On30 modeler **Cliff Aaker** demonstrated his techniques for applying waterslide and dry transfer decals.

Cliff says he uses commercial dry transfer lettering from Clover House and a mix of commercial and home-made waterslide decals.

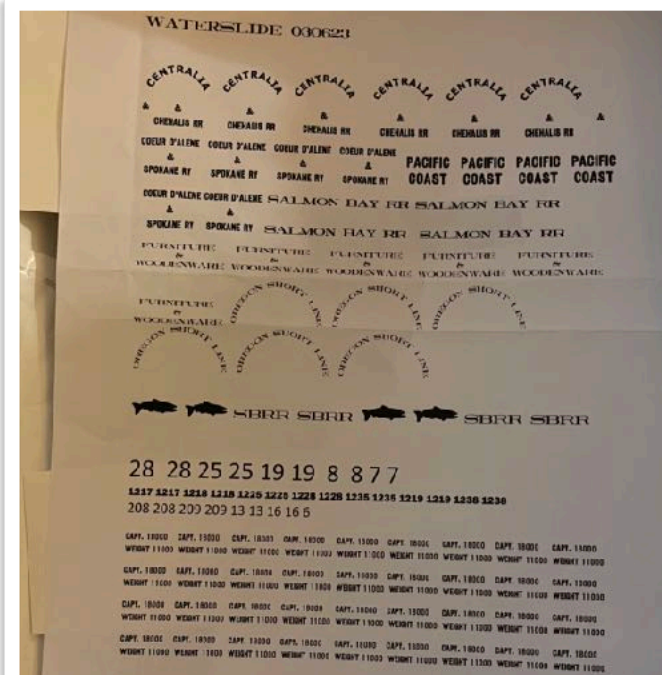
When applying dry transfer lettering, a nifty technique that Cliff employs is to use a piece of Scotch tape to overlay the transfer on the subject (boxcar, for example). When applying dry transfers, Cliff uses a lead pencil as his stylus to rub on the transfers. Then, he can lift the tape from one end and peel back the transfer backing sheet to ensure that the entire set of lettering or numbers have successfully transferred. If not, he can lay the tape back down exactly in place and continue rubbing the backing sheet.

When working with waterslide decals, Cliff uses setting solutions from Microscale Industries: Micro Set and Micro Sol. Micro Set is used to float the decal into place and position it correctly. Cliff then uses a unique "tool" to press the decal into place: a gun cleaning swab, which is sort of like a longer Q-tip. Cliff "rolls" the swab along the decal to press it into place. If there are issues getting the decal to conform to the surface, Cliff then employs Micro Sol, which is a much stronger setting solution.

Cliff says the best decal paper he has found is the decal paper offered by Micro Mark. To the right is an example of a full page of water slide decals that Cliff printed on his laser printer, which Cliff prefers over an inkjet printer for decal work. Micro Mark offers both types of paper, and if you use an inkjet printer, you must spray a fixative over the printed decal sheet and wait for it to dry before applying it.



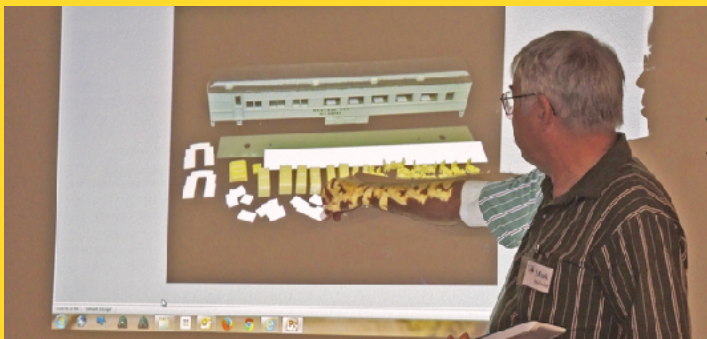
Cliff finds that putting a small piece of masking tape on the surface helps to get the lettering lined up nice and straight.



A sample of Cliff's handiwork. Cliff says that he prints off several pages of black ink while he works on getting the right size lettering before he prints the final decals.



Here is an example of one of Cliff's On30 boxcars lettered and numbered with dry transfers from Clover House.



December Clinic: Mark Malmkar, MMR, will show us how to make your passenger cars really look spiffy. Come and hear/see Mark's tips and techniques on adding authentic interiors to passenger cars, so one doesn't just see an empty car when peering through the windows.

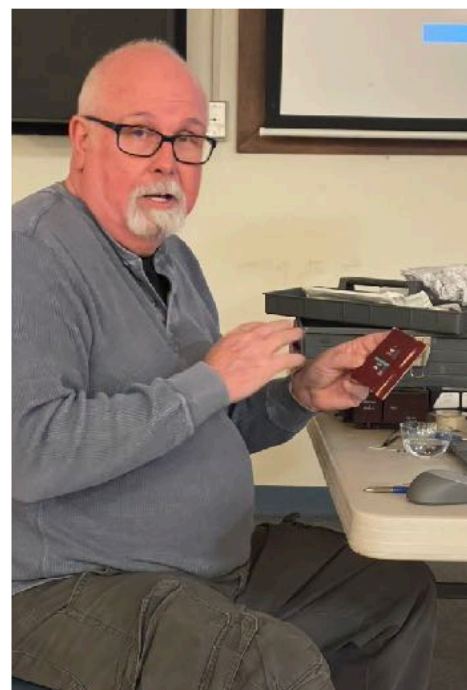
Main Event (Continued)



Cliff says, Don't have a camera to stream your work to the projector/screen? No problem – just use the camera on your laptop!



Stephen Winter giving close scrutiny to a sheet of water slide decals created by Cliff Aaker.



Cliff explains why he prefers not to use products like Dullcote because he feels it dims the lettering's color.

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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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/4dprMovies

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.