

The Mt Vernon NMRA Clinic

September 18, 2023

Seventeen folks showed up for the September 2023 Clinic, including former regular and wandering (to Idaho!) N Scaler (and hobby shop owner) **Mike O'Brien**. Good to see you again, Mike! Although I wonder if the main reason you visited was to go on a fishing trip with **Tom Buckingham**... Anyway, below is a group photo – just look at all those eager faces. Or maybe they were wondering what words of wisdom I'm spew forth with next...



Pun/Joke of the Month: From “Master Punster” and clinic Videographer **Steve McCartt**:

You know what you call the guy who steps off the train and onto the third rail? A Conductor.

Tool Time:

Pickings were slim, as only **Al Carter** brought a couple of items to share. First was a very inexpensive way to get some micro brushes.



These were found on Amazon for \$6.99 for 400 pieces. Here is the link: [Amazon.com: Disposable Lip Brush Lip Gloss and Disposable Microbrush Mascara, Mini Swab Cleaning Mascara, Makeup Beauty Stick Kit Pink \(400PCS\) : Beauty & Personal Care](#)

Al also showed a much easier component for layout wiring. Getting older means getting under the layout to wire it is becoming more (much more!) difficult, even with a low rolling stool. So, Al adopted a practice he picked up from Model Railroad Hobbyist's Forum, which is to place all the wiring connections at the front (aisle) of the layout. Al runs his DCC bus and his 12vdc lighting bus along a board recessed a couple of inches from the front of the layout.

Instead of using terminal blocks, which require, when done properly, a ring or fork connector on the end of the wire, Al has adopted the use of the connectors shown below. These are called "lever wire connectors", also commonly called Wago connectors (Wago was the originator, I think). These are UL rated for house wiring (250 volts) and are very easy to use... simply strip the wire, raise the lever, insert the wire, and snap the lever closed. These will work with up to 10-gauge wire, and down to as small as 26-gauge (and maybe smaller). They come in various configurations, 2-position up to 8-position. They are available on Amazon by searching for "Wago connectors". Here is a link to one listing: [WAGO 221 Lever Nuts 78pc Compact Splicing Wire Connector Assortment with Case. Includes \(34x\) 221-412, \(26x\) 221-413, \(18x\) 221-415: Amazon.com: Tools & Home Improvement](https://www.amazon.com/WAGO-221-Lever-Nuts-78pc-Compact-Splicing-Wire-Connector-Assortment-with-Case-Includes-34x-221-412-26x-221-413-18x-221-415/dp/B000APLW02)



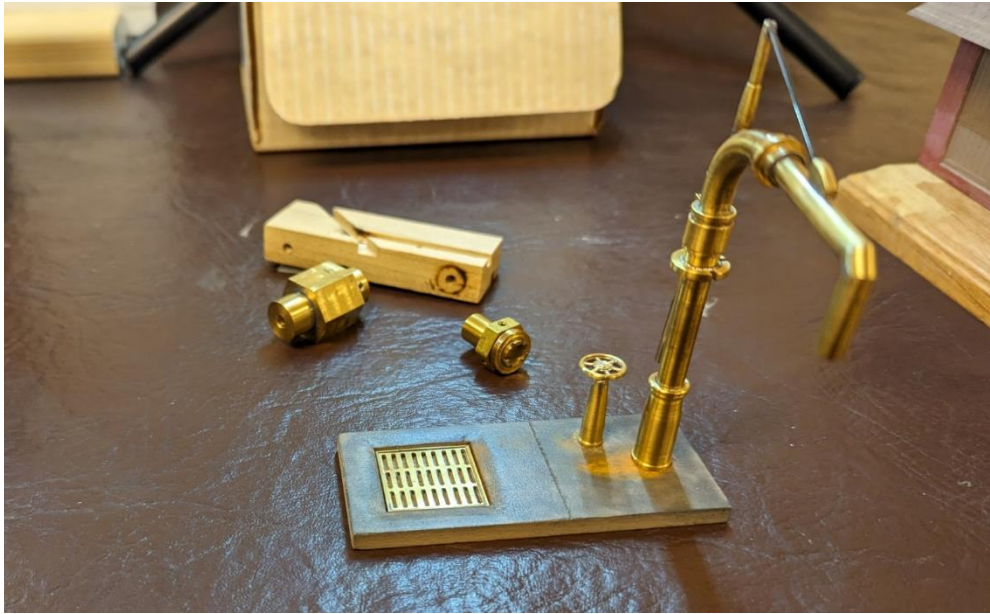
Modeler's Showcase:

Doug Seward showed off a nifty O scale building. This is a kit offered by O Gauge Railroading magazine, that Doug enhanced with acrylic paint and a new roofing treatment.



In Doug's own words: *"I really didn't do anything special on this kit. I do like to display on a base with some foliage etc., for added interest. It is the "Second Chance Dry Goods" in the Ameri-Towne line, offered by O-gauger magazine. Of course, it can be called anything one desires, and I haven't given it any signage yet. I do plan on adding windows, and might try the 1/16 clear polycarbonate, as addressed during Monday night's clinic. Easily assembled, it's ripe for added details such as gutters, downspouts, electric conduit and meter, etc. As mentioned, painted with Hobby Lobby acrylics, which I've also used to weather rolling stock."*

Ron Nelson continues to amaze us with his intricate scratchbuilt O scale projects. This one is a water column and Ron reports he has scratchbuilt the whole thing. Nice!



In Ron's own words: *"The water valve hand wheel is made of 11 brass parts that are soldered to make the wheel. It was fun to make. I ended up making two of them because I didn't like the 1st one. The spout can be set in three positions, and they can be locked into each position. If set between two tracks, it can be turned to service an engine on either track. A water column could have a water tank some distance from the track."*

Nick Muff, MMR brought a scratchbuilt model of the office/sales building for Peterson Industries, a business located in Decatur, Arkansas. All scratchbuilt, laser cut walls and windows/doors. The front display windows are slanted towards the rear, which was quite challenging to model. Still to come is a detailed interior and spotlights for the sign. Nick built this from only one photo of the building that he had taken many years ago.



Al Carter, known mainly for structure and vehicle modeling, proved that he can also model rolling stock. First up is a 60' VTTX Trailer Train flat car with a 20' and 40' container load. The car and containers are weathered with pan pastels; wheels and more weathering yet to come.



The use of 3D printing in our hobby continues to expand at a very rapid rate. Many modelers now have their own 3D printer, and there are plenty of commercial companies catering to model railroaders. One of those companies is Miniprints (miniprints.com), which has a very large assortment of items (unpainted), in various scales, including people, animals, birds, “oddities”, and so forth. Below are a few items from Miniprints that are “in progress” on Al’s workbench.

First is a 41-foot “Detroitter” mobile home, which has only had its two base colors (Krylon mini spray cans) applied. This trailer has an interior, or portion thereof, already “printed” and is awaiting painting, detailing, and lighting (and maybe a Miniprints 1960s vintage TV with flickering LED screen).



Next is an in-progress project. It started out as a basket case, an undecorated Walther's HO scale Russell snowplow. It was prepped, primed, and painted (rattle can), then decaled for the Alaska Railroad's plow #4. The unit was paint-faded, then rust was applied with pan pastels and then artist's pigments (dry) fixed in place with white spirit. The roof walks were treated with a couple of colors of artists watercolor pencils to simulate a wood surface with peeled paint.

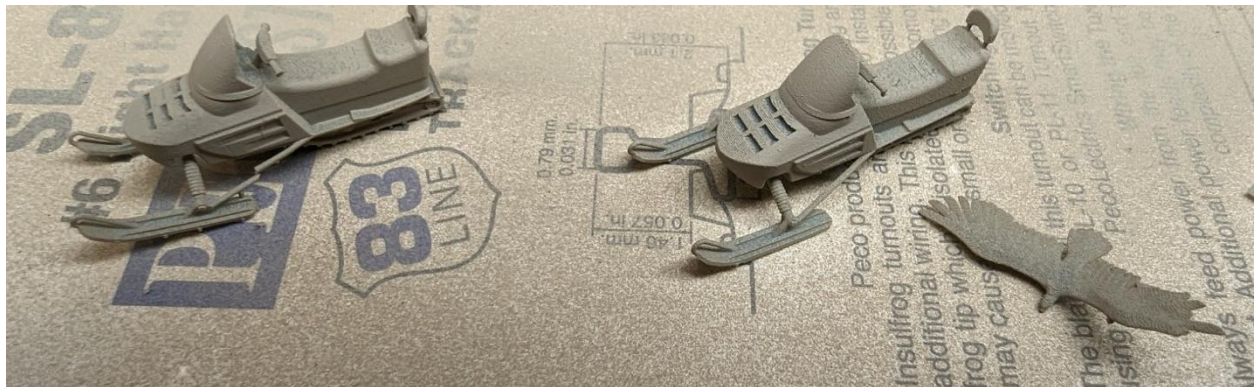


When weathering or even just modeling a specific prototype, it is most helpful to have a photo or two for reference. Here are a couple of photos, taken by Bob Yost, of ARR plow #4, courtesy of John Comb's excellent website of the Alaska Railroad.

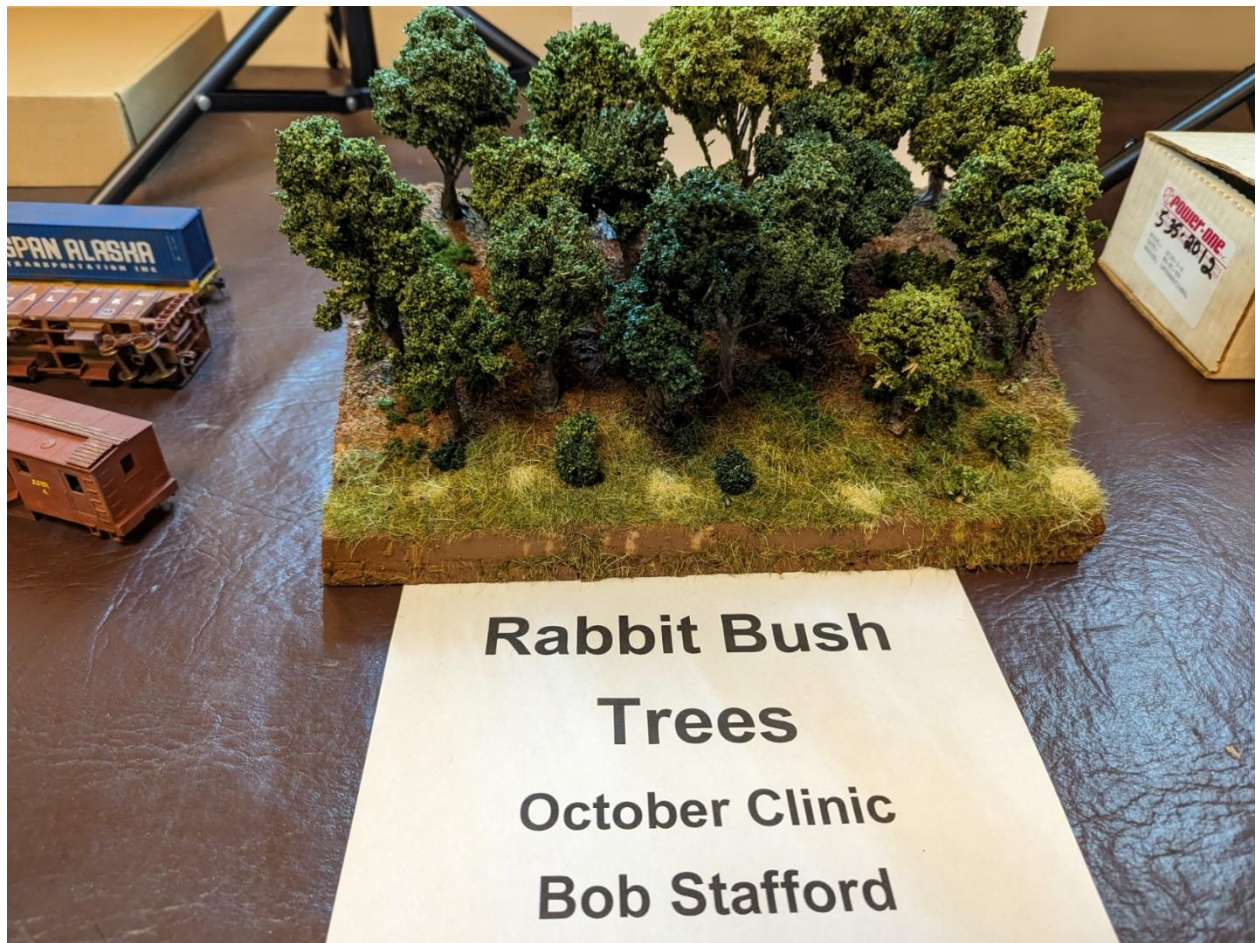
And no, I haven't mustered up the courage (yet) to try replicating the dented corner on the original.



Next are some 3D printed wildlife by Miniprints, including moose, caribou, a bald eagle, and a couple of snowplows. They have been primed (Rustoleum Khaki) and a first coat of acrylic paint applied to some of them. An essential part of an Alaska Railroad-themed layout!



Bob Stafford will be presenting the October clinic on making trees from Rabbit Bush. As a teaser, Bob displayed some sample trees:



Evening's Main Event:

Nick Muff is known for his fondness for detailing (super detailing, to be sure) the various scenes on his layout. Nick is quite a fan of George Sellios of Franklin & South Manchester fame and has employed a lot of George's techniques. One of George's well-known techniques is to use his India ink and alcohol mixture on everything: people, vehicles, structures, details. Nick follows that technique, keeping various mixtures of India ink/alcohol handy (1 tsp/pint; 2 tsp/pint; 3 tsp/pint, etc.). Many years ago, when helping settle an estate, Nick acquired a lifetime supply of India ink (that is a **quart** bottle!). Let's see... 192 teaspoons per quart... that would make a **lot** of india ink/alcohol mix!



Following are a few examples of Nick's techniques for detailing his layout, with his own captions:

Wall signs:



Paper signs can be applied over brick walls by thinning the back with fine sandpaper and scuffing up the front with fine steel wool. The sign is then attached with a thin layer of white glue. Running a fingernail along the horizontal mortar lines will enhance them.

Building details:



Printed cardstock awnings, fold up cardstock "Interior" and Manila folder "blinds" add a lot of realism. The lounge-in-cheek sign is from the late George Hook of Central Valley Model Works.

Scrap lumber piles:



Stained weathered wood scraps are cheap and easy to make. A great added detail.

Hobo camp:



Hobo Camp with broken glass, scrap wood, steel strapping and newspaper rubbish details.

Board fences:



Central Valey model Works plastic fence looks much more realistic with random boards removed, painted, weathered and with vintage signs added.

Classified Ads: Have something to sell? In search of something? Want to give away something? We are happy to list your for sale/trade/wanted items. Just send me the particulars (and photos always help) and I'll insert them into this section.

To start things off, I have an LGB Christmas Train set (loco and two cars, track and transformer), plus several other LGB Christmas themed cars, 7 switches and a whole bunch of LGB and Aristo Craft track. I mean a whole bunch! The set was last used prior to our move to Skagit County in 2010, and then it was only used for a couple of Christmas seasons. Oh, also included is an Aristo Craft Howe (?) truss bridge, made from wood with threaded rods. It is three feet long!

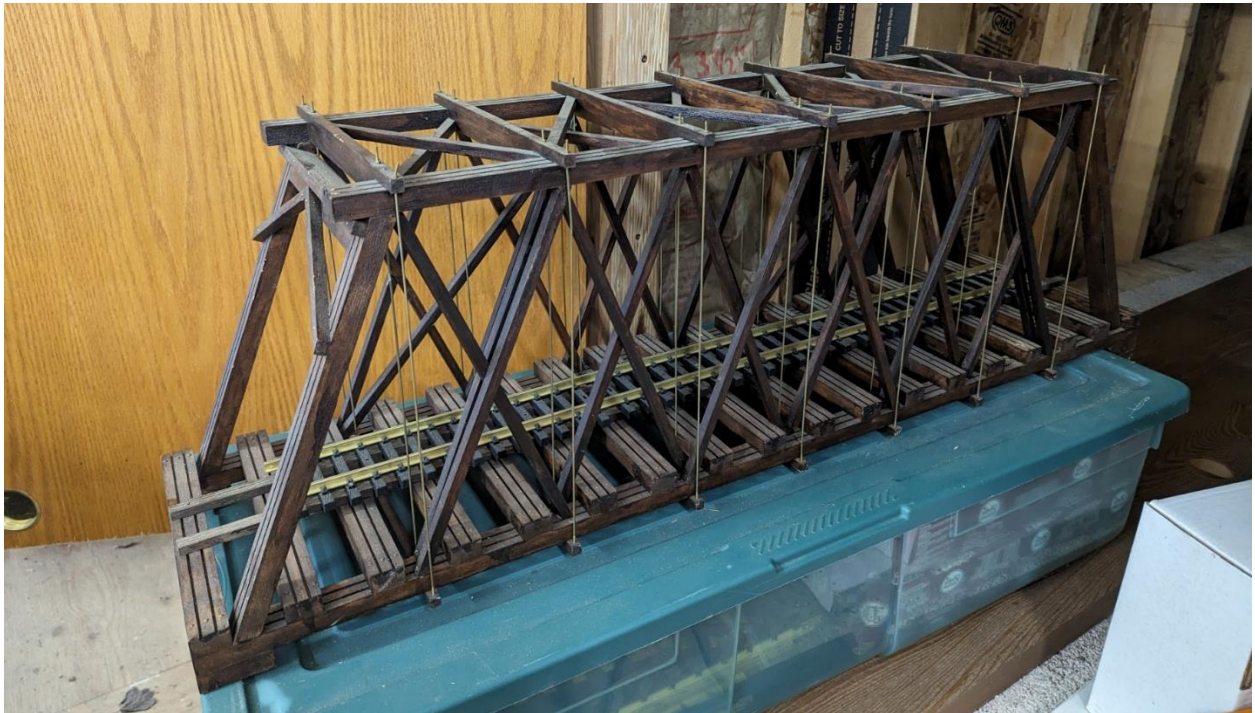


I'm asking for \$500 for everything. I'm offering it here first, then it will be listed in the Grab Iron, and then on to a commercial site. No shipping – must be picked up here in Skagit County, or nearby. Email me at: tabooma@msn.com or tabooma10@gmail.com.

Classified, cont'd:



Classified, cont'd:



Coming Down the Track:

Oct 7/8	Lynden	Lions Club Mode Train Swap Meet
Oct 11	Oak Harbor	Clinic – Decals (Cliff Aaker)
Oct 14	Alger	WSMRC Open House – HO & N Scale Layouts
Oct 16	Mount Vernon	Clinic – Trees from Rabbit Bush (Bob Stafford)
Nov 11	Alger	WSMRC Open House – HO & N Scale Layouts
Nov 20	Mount Vernon	Clinic – Detailing Passenger Car Interiors (Mark Malmkar)
Nov 23	Kent	Boeing Employees Model RR Club Swap Meet
Nov 25	Alger	WSMRC Open House – HO & N Scale Layouts

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.

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 Zoom meetings put on by the NMRA [4th division](#).

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

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.

That's a wrap for this month...