



The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Tom Buckingham on Detailing and Weathering Track



February 19, 2024 Highlights

Just look at all those smiling faces... No doubt eagerly awaiting the evenings program. And a few more came in a bit later, for a total of 25 attendees. That is gratifying and I hope we didn't disappoint.

A Warm Welcome to first timers **Philip Hernandez** of Bellingham (N scale) and 11-year-old **Levi Reyes**.

As always, a thank you to **Dave Falconer** who dutifully brings cookies and beverages to our meetings, as well as setting up the computer and projector. And thanks to **Bob Stafford** who filled in as videographer in Steve McCartt's absence. Bob has posted a video of the clinic and a tribute to Ted Becker.

Breaking News: The Mount Vernon clinic will be shifting to a schedule of March through November, effective now. The clinic will still be held on the 3rd Monday of those months, at 7:00 pm at the Mount Vernon Senior Center. Driving to and from the clinic is easier during spring/summer/fall months and we won't have to venture out in the darkest days of winter to go to the clinic.

Coming Down the Track

March 9, 2024 Alger
WSMRC Open House
March 18, 2024 Mt. Vernon
Clinic: Mini Clinics
April 13, 2024 Alger
WSMRC Open House
April 15, 2024 Mt Vernon
Clinic TBD.
May 20, 2024 Mt Vernon
Clinic TBD

Tool Time:



Roger Weiss brought a "tool" he uses sort of as a paint and/or glue pallet: it is called a "Pop Fidget" – really! I for one never heard of such a...um, thing. Apparently they are quite popular with the youngsters. But the deal is, it is made of a flexible silicone material, so when the cells get filled up with paint or glue, you just pop the residue out and start fresh. It measures about 5"x5" – just right for your workbench. Probably also good for miniature ice cubes, no?

New attendee **Phillip Hernandez** showed off some really nifty, inexpensive storage containers that he picked up at a Dollar Store. And at that store he also found
(continued)

Ted Becker Tribute



Ted in deep discussion with Doug Greenfield at the Anacortes Model Railroad Club.

Ted Becker As most of you probably know, the “face” of the Mount Vernon Clinic, Ted Becker, passed away on January 20, 2024. This was 17 months and 1 day after being admitted to the ER at Overlake Hospital, and ultimately diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. Ted remained hospitalized or in a specialized care facility for the entire time, never making it back home to “get back on track” on his layout. Ted was ever hopeful, though, working on his laptop in the hospital, redesigning his home layout and working on several other projects and, as us model railroaders do, dreaming of resuming time at his workbench and in his layout room.



One of Ted's favorite clinics to present was “Ted's Tub of Tricks & Tips”, wherein he brought a large container and would take things out one by one and discuss its use and where to get it. Often, the items were found at stores like Dollar Store.

In 2016, Ted was awarded the Fourth Division's **Golden Grab Iron Award**, which is given annually to someone who has contributed greatly to the hobby and division.



On the left Ted with the three previous year's winners: (left to right Jim Sabol, Russ Segner, Ted, and Jim Younkens. On the right, Ted proudly displaying his plaque.

Tool Time: Continued some trays that just happened to fit side by side in the larger storage container. Lots of good bargains at those Dollar Stores... Also, Phillip found some corrugated aluminum sheets, about 5"x5" that he will line with some sort of foam or soft covering, for transporting his N scale equipment. Unfortunately, your brainless newsletter forgot to snap a photo... sorry!



Did you know Walther's doesn't produce Goo any longer? News to me. Anyway, **Nick Muff** did some web searching and found “the recommended” replacement: 3M Yellow Super Weatherstrip and Gasket Adhesive. About \$11 on Amazon

Steve Londino asked the question: “Where do you buy small hobby tools when Micro Mark is out of stock?” I posed that question on the Model Railroad Hobbyist forum, and received quite a few suggestions. See for yourself – go to: [Small Tool Sources on the MRH Forum](#)

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Ted Becker Tribute (cont.)



Ted hosting a Mount Vernon Clinic from his train room/work studio.

Once Covid put a stop to in person clinics, the Fourth Division (4D) moved to using the Zoom platform, and Ted jumped right in hosting both the Mount Vernon Clinic and also a series of clinics hosted on the PNWModelers@groups.io site, which were well received and are still available for viewing (click on the link and search "Arduino")



Ted conducting a group clinic on DCC programming.



Ted hand building a turnout at a clinic.

A slide show featuring several photos of Ted was presented, and then several of Ted's modeling friends took a moment to speak of their memories of him, including **Bob Stafford, Susan Gonzales, Jim Betz, Tom Buckingham, and Al Carter.**

Here is a link to the tribute/memorial to Ted, that also includes the rest of the month's schedule clinic:

[How to weather track, "Tool Time" & eulogy to Ted Becker at Mount Vernon meeting of 4dPNR of NMRA - YouTube](#)

The tribute/memorial is at the beginning of the video.



Tool Time: Continued
You do not need to be a forum member to just read the various topics, but if you want to post a remark or question, you must establish a username and have a password. That's all; painless. I check into the forum daily and have learned a lot of things by reading what others post, including some resources that I didn't even know existed. And it's free!

Ever the resourceful modeler, **Mark Malmkar** found some better uses for hair clips. The metal ones



at the bottom of the photo have been around for years and are easily bent to specific applications. The claw-like clamps in the back are useful for applications like bonding styrene with Tenax or similar. Pretty slick idea, Mark!

Have you ever dropped a tiny part on the floor? Sure, you have. And most of us know that the

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Modeler's Showcase

1 **Nick Muff** continues his quest to accurately replicate buildings in Decatur, Arkansas, a city along the Kansas City Southern's main line. This building was (is) definitely unique and Nick had to think outside the box to duplicate the random stone siding.

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2. Nick said, "I used N-Scale Architect HO Scale Random stone siding for the base siding. 2. I found the building on Google Maps with a straight on view of the siding, still there and in full sunlight. I brought that image into Digital Image Pro and edited out the windows and power pole so that I had a solid sheet of the stone siding. I then printed a decal of the siding on my Alps Printer and laser cut it to size and removed the window openings."

3. "Lastly I applied the decal to the building and settled it down with Solvaset and lastly sealed it with Dullcoat."



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Modeler's Showcase Continued

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4. **Geoff Stippes** brought another of his Nn3 creations. Geoff elaborated, "The engine is a West Models Nn3 kit that I ordered from Germany late last year. While this kit (based on D&RGW 0-6-0 switchers) was available for decade, a week after I placed my order it was no longer listed on their web site so I think that it is no longer available. It sits on a Marklin chassis. The saddle tank is weighted with lead thus giving the engine excellent running characteristics. In building it I followed Tom Knapp's construction article in an old copy of RMC."

"The shorty combine was my attempt at the type of car a mining operation would freelance in order to haul supplies and workers. Actually it was the third one that I built since I wasn't pleased with my results in the first two models that I made. They just didn't have the look that I was trying to achieve. It uses an MDC standard gauge baggage car which was shortened and narrowed. I added a Tichy window and a scratched roof. It rides on a pair of DSP&P trucks available from Shapeways. I painted it a pale yellow (like early DSP&P waycars). Lettering, light weathering and glazing to follow."



5. First time attendee **Phillip Hernandez**, an N scale modeler, found plans for a transload facility in an old Kalmbach book and is presently scratchbuilding the structure



Tool Time: Continued

wayward part shows up better if you get down on the floor (groan) and try to look sideways along the floor, perhaps with a flashlight. **Al Carter** displayed a USB charged flashlight with a flexible arm. The light has "two speeds" that can shoot a wide arc along the floor; it also has a light on the end for a more pointed beam. Plus, it has a hook on the base end so you can hang it up under the layout while you are twisted into knots hooking up wiring. Available on Amazon (about \$32). And yes, Al reports it has already assisted in finding some previously given up for lost screws and so forth. Of course, it doesn't make getting down on the floor any



Modeler's Showcase Continued

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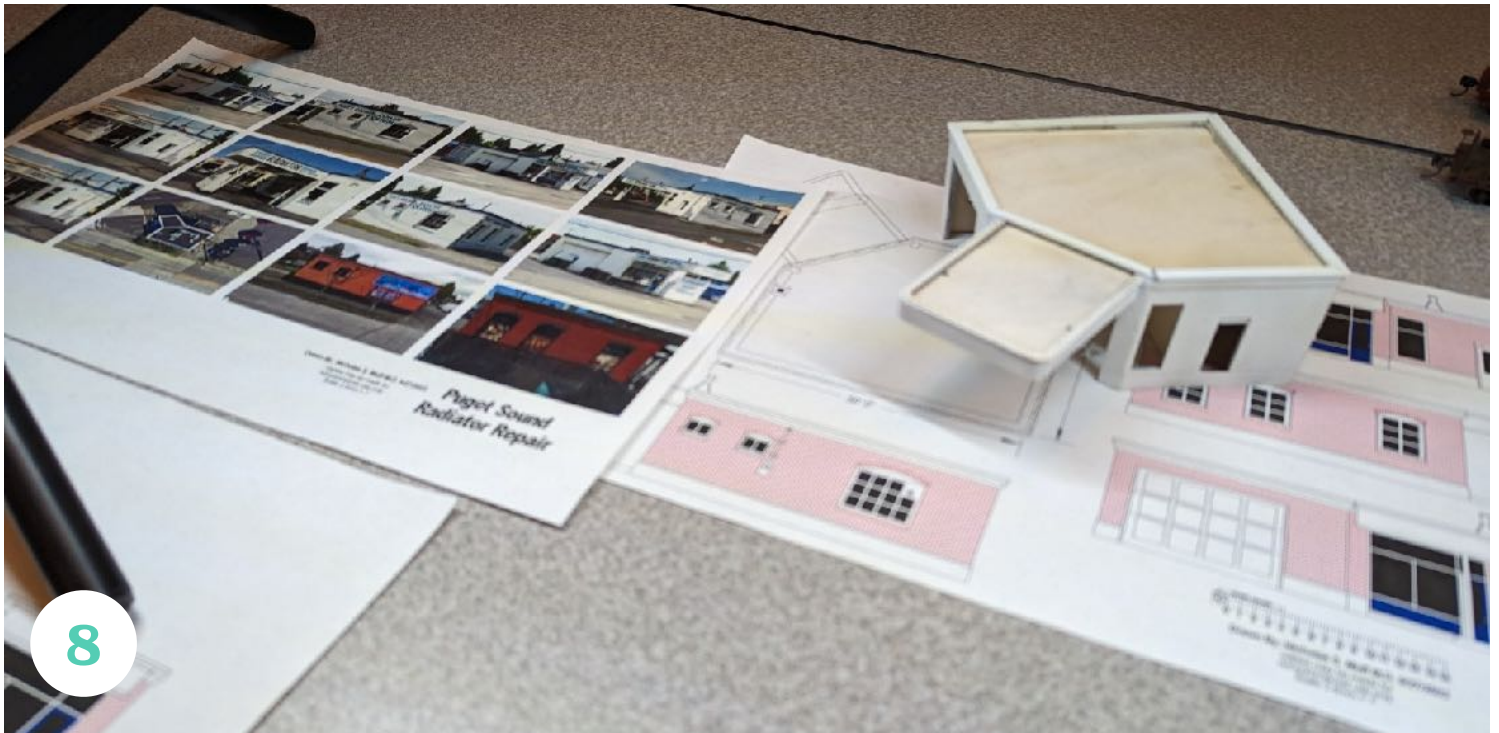
6. **Dave Sherwood** showed off a depressed train... depressed, as in depressed-center flat cars. Three are by Roco, one is a Bachmann, and the two larger ones are by Walthers. Each one has a different die-cast piece of equipment, and each one is chained down. Nicely weathered, too!

7. **Mark Malmkar** can't pass up a passenger car kit, even ones made in the distant past like these two, which are probably older than many of us at the clinic:

The Laugh Track



Modeler's Showcase Continued



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8. **Al Carter** brought an in-progress HO scale gas station. As mentioned last month, **Nick Muff** created CAD plans from photos that Al had taken many years ago, then drove to Seattle to verify some measurements, then laser cut the sub walls from micro plywood and the styrene brick overlay (from N Scale Architect, HO siding). Al has affixed the siding to the sub structure, added most trim and puttied the corners. Next up will be the windows, doors, and roof treatment. Still undecided as to what brand of gasoline station this will be, so stay tuned!

9. Al also continues his theme of weathering everything in sight. Case in point: An HO scale Walther's 53' GSC flat car, weathered with AK Interactive washes, followed by a couple of shades of Pan Pastels. The 40' Safeway semi-trailer received a dusting of Pan Pastels. A "before" (another unweathered car) is shown for comparison.

Upcoming March Clinic: The Mini Clinics

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**, repairing/replacing cracked diesel gears, **Bob Stafford**, Many uses of Weldwood thick & quick glue **Mark Malmkar**, car reweighing **Tom Buckingham**, NP collision in his backyard (!) **Doug Seward**, paper/card models **Al Carter**, renumbering cars

Main Event

Tom Buckingham wants his track work to be really well detailed and look good. He showed us how to improve the look of flex track and commercial turnouts. Note: Tom models in HO scale, but his techniques are applicable to all scales. Tom proceeded to take us through his multi-step process:

1. Glue Down the Track – Tom prefers a siliconized acrylic caulk, such as made by DAP, very thinly applied, and care must be taken to not put adhesive near the turnout's throwbar.
2. Paint the Rails – Tom uses Ceramcoat Walnut, or Burnt Umber or Black, or combinations thereof. And he uses a soft #2 round brush, which will get paint up under the rail flange better than with a flat brush.
3. Paint the Ties. Again, use acrylic paint, such as Ceramcoat Drizzle Grey or Platinum. Note: apply the paint in the direction of the ties (not the rail). Tom uses a ¼" brush, which enables you to paint two ties at once.
4. Apply the Ballast. Tom uses a tool from Prores (check eBay) – it is called a Ballast Spreader Car that has a hopper on wheels with a "gate" that you can adjust the flow of the ballast.
5. Smooth the Ballast. Tom uses a large round soft brush. The goal is to keep stray pieces of ballast from ending up on the ties or worse yet, on the rail web.
6. Glue the Ballast. Tom uses either white glue or matte medium, thinned 2:1 or higher with water. Whatever ratio he ends up with, he adds about 10% rubbing alcohol, to improve flow. After trying various "tools" to apply the glue, Tom settled on using cheap disposable pipettes. If the ballast "beads up" when the glue is applied, add a bit more alcohol. You want the ballast to be good and hard, so don't hesitate to make another application of your glue if necessary.
7. Clean up Ballast. This is where you remove errant pieces of ballast – mainly with forefinger and thumb, but a dental instrument can be used too.

Sources: Prores Ballast Spreader Car: Prores BS—HO-02 HO Scale Automated Ballast Spreader Car, \$49 on eBay, shipping included.

Alternative tool: Bachmann #160-39016 Ballast Spreader Car, \$71 from Walther's

Tom set up a test track and invited people to come up and try out the ballast spreader tool.



Tom brought a board that shows the 4 main steps he follows and a sample of completed track.



Ted Becker July 1943 - January 2024



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/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.