



# The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Many, Many, Many Mini Clinics



## March 18, 2024 Highlights

**You May Notice** that there is a different seating arrangement for the March clinic – a semi-circle. Why, you ask? Well, at **Bob Stafford's** suggestion, we tried out this set-up so clinic attendees could better see our featured clinicians from the night's "Mini-Clinics" program. Seemed to work well (thanks for the idea, Bob!). And apologies to **John Bayer** for cutting all but a tiny part of him out of the photo, on the right. I'll try to do better!

**Dale Bearden, MMR**, recently underwent successful open-heart surgery back at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Dale's wife **Roxanne** reports Dale is on the road to recovery and should be home soon. We wish him a continued speedy recovery and return to the clinic and model railroading!

### In Case You Missed Last Month's Announcement:

The Mount Vernon clinic will be shifting to a schedule of March through November, effective now. The clinic will still be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

- April 13, 2024 Alger**  
WSMRC Open House
- April 15, 2024 Mt. Vernon**  
Lighting Passenger Cars by  
Don Jones
- May 11, 2024 Alger**  
WSMRC Open House
- May 20, 2024 Mt Vernon**  
Bob Stafford on Operations

### Tool Time:



**Tom Buckingham** brought a pry bar type tool that he picked up from Boeing Surplus years ago, which he says is great for, well, prying up track, cork, etc. Unfortunately, Boeing Surplus store is now closed...



**Dave Sherwood** displayed a "milk frother" a battery-operated tool that can be used as a paint stirrer, or possibly other uses depending on if you modified the "business end" of the tool. Similar frothers are available on Amazon: [Amazon.com : milk frother](https://www.amazon.com/milk-frother)

(continued)

# New and Improved Tool Time

**Phillip Hernandez** works at a convenience store, so he has access to used up displays, etc. Among his finds are a variety of display boards for things like torches (lighters), which he shows as perfect for holding your bottles of paint, glue, etc. Phillip also espoused the use of cigarette papers for creating shingles and tiles.

**Tom O'Hara** showed a piece of Masonite that he curved for a backdrop. Although there are lots of references to soaking the back of Masonite with "409 Cleaner", Tom reports he made his curve by just using plain water on the back and holding it into the desired arc until it dried.



**Al Carter** received an "unsolicited" tool in the mail the other day... "Doctors Without Borders" had sent out a solicitation-for-donations letter, including a multi-use tool that includes, besides a ball point pen tip, a removable end cap that has a Phillips and regular screw driver bit, a measuring gauge (inches and millimeters), and a bubble level. Oh, and it holds a cell phone upright, too. Maybe every model railroader needs one?

## The Laugh Track



**Tool Time: Continued**  
**Bob Stafford** brought a 1/16-inch-thick piece of plywood, which he said is perfect for structure bases (sorry, no photo).



**Tom O'Hara** showed a torpedo level that he modified by adding marks to either side of the bubble, denoting what percentage of grade would be achieved when the edge of the bubble reached the line. Tom



also brought in a digital level that shows degrees of change. He uses both tools to help determine the grade for his track when creating climbs and descents.

# Modeler's Showcase

1. **Ron Nelson** brought back his O scale small freight station, previously shown at a clinic, and now improved with a great stained deck (diluted leather dye followed by pan pastels) and a nifty sliding door. Ron also asked for advice on how to stain and apply his paper (cardstock) shingles. Well, we're nothing of not good on giving advice, and Ron received several suggestions.



2. **Al Carter** bought a used Walther's Cornerstone Merchant's Row III structure off a Facebook site, that said there weren't any decals in the kit. No problem, lots of decals and signs saved up. But when the structure arrived, it did not have the correct base/sidewalk arrangement. Al contacted the seller, who promptly refunded the price. A new base/sidewalk is in the works. Al also modified the storefront on the left side, after uttering lots of choice bad words about the kit design and substituted a Smalltown USA storefront. Also noteworthy is the "mortar" is white non-waterproof ink.



3. **Steve McCartt**, our resident "baker" (see the newsletter from October 2023), showed off another of his "cakes". Not edible, but a good description of how he stacks up pink and/or blue foam as the base, then gets busy with his carving tools to create a mountain. Stay tuned to see this geological wonder of the world (well, the 1/160 world, anyway) develop over the coming months.



Two other clinicians brought in items, **Mark Mamlkar**, MMR, gave a mini-clinic on freight car reweighing and what the dates mean, and displayed two open hoppers to illustrate his correct car lettering and **Doug Sewald** was also a mini-clinic presenter, his subject was creating models from paper and cardstock. Doug showed off an O scale structure made entirely from cardstock (Pictures of both will be in the Main Event)

# Main Event

## The Evening's Main Event

featured the return of “mini clinics” and we were treated to 6 clinicians and subjects

**Mark Malmkar, MMR**, likes to keep things era-correct on his layout, so he makes sure all his cars have correct re-weigh dates on them. What are “re-weigh” dates, you ask? The government requires all types of freight cars to be re-weighed periodically to ensure they meet compliance requirements. These dates have of course been modified over the years, as the capacity of freight cars has increased. Mark models 1950-ish, so he re-marks his cars as necessary to be correct. Although professing to be a rivet counter Mark admits that he has made concessions on of the some models. Below is a photo of Mark's two hoppers from the Modeler's Showcase.



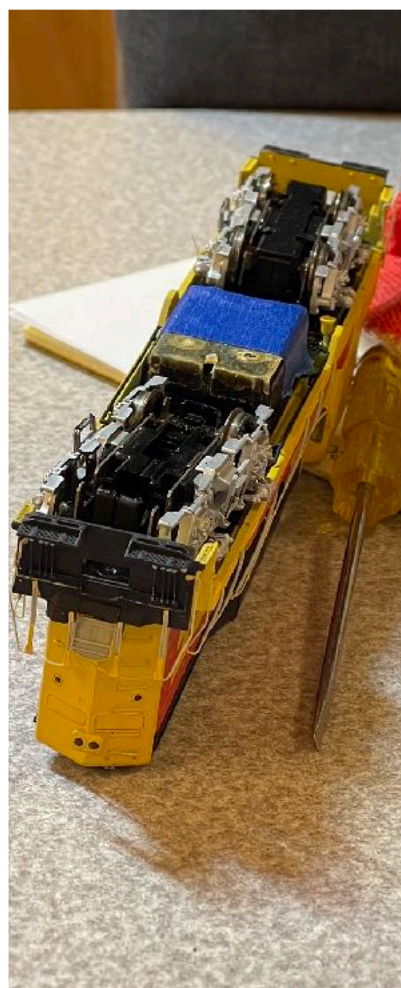
**Al Carter, our illustrious leader**, jumped at the chance to assist our brave clinicians during their presentations. Ever mindful of offering support and encouragement for those willing to get up in front of the crowd to impart words of wisdom and skills for training fellow modelers in...well trains, Al held the tube of glue upside down for Bob Stafford and lit the way for David Sherwood so he could see the trucks on his diesel engine.



# The Main Event Continued



**Doug Sewald** is an experienced card (paper) modeler, as he has shown in the past with some of his creations. Paper modeling is a different medium than many of us are used to, but Doug showed us how he goes about creating a 3D paper model. Doug says he typically uses 65-100lb cardstock, which runs through his printer without issue. Tools include a hobby knife, straight edge, glue, and a “creaser” (old ball point pen) to use along the “fold” lines). Doug also says a dark marker is essential, to hide the white lines when you do make a cut. A good source of paper models is **Clever Models, LLC** and that company has several “freebies” available to download, as well as some excellent tutorial pages on their website. A photo of Doug’s O scale model appears on the left.



**Dave Sherwood** is an expert locomotive repairman. And he has replaced hundreds of cracked gears found on earlier Proto-2000 locomotives. Dave showed us how he goes about making the necessary repairs, and he makes it look easy!

Along the “cracked gear replacement” theme, **James Harvey** emailed me to say that he replaced cracked gears on his Bachmann (HO) GP-40, and included a link for the part: eBay item number: **354947432964**

Thanks for the additional tip, James!

# The Main Event Continued



**Bob Stafford** is quite fond of an adhesive from Titebond called “Quick & Thick”. I for one had never heard of this glue, and I’ve got quite the arsenal of glues on my work bench. Bob demonstrated how he uses the glue by affixing some cork roadbed to plywood, then gluing some flex track to the cork. Bob flipped the sample upside down and the glue really is “quick” – nothing fell off. Bob also reports he uses it to glue wood to styrene, and it is (pink/blue) foam safe. To remove something glued with this product, Bob just wets (spray bottle) the area and it easily comes up with a putty knife. I’m sold – no longer using silicone caulk/adhesive for me!



**Renumbering cars** was the final mini-clinic of the evening. Have you ended up with two (or more) cars with the same road number? While some just ignore the duplication, if you are more into prototype correctness, **Al Carter** showed an easy way to change the number. First, you need to remove the offending number. To do that, before resorting to scraping the number, which can (probably will) ruin the paint job on the car, try this: put a drop of Micro Scale “Micro-Set” decal

solution on the number. Let it dry, then repeat, maybe a couple of times. Then try to rub off the incorrect number with a (new!) pencil eraser, or (Al’s choice) a fiberglass scratch pen. If this doesn’t work, then try Micro Scale “Micro-Sol”, that company’s slightly higher-powered solution. And if that doesn't work, then try Walther’s “Solvaset”, which is even stronger yet. Once the incorrect number has been

removed, then proceed with your favorite method for adding the correct number (decal or dry transfer).



# The Main Event Continued



## NORTHERN PACIFIC WRECK: RENTON, WA 04/22/1952

By Tom Buckingham

My family sold our house in Renton in 1949 and moved into a rental house while my dad built enough of our new home to move in during the summer of 1951. Our house was immediately north of what is now the Seattle Seahawk practice facility. When we originally moved, the Seahawk property was just a very large wooded lot. But just south of there was the Barbee Mill and the Creosote Plant.

Creosote was manufactured at the plant from 1916 through 1969. The Northern Pacific's Sumas route from Renton to Sumas passed to the east, right behind our property and they would frequently stop southbound to service both of the businesses. When they would do so we could not leave

as our only access was across the tracks. It did not take long for us to figure out the NP's routine. Whenever stopped they would send a brakeman out (to the north) to put out torpedo's and a flare. The idea being that if you were in a following train you would first hit the two torpedoes warning you that there might be a stopped train ahead so slow down and look for a lit fusee. If the following train saw a lit fusee they needed to prepare to stop as there was still a stopped train just ahead.

On Tuesday April 22, 1952 my brother and father and I were outside waiting for the stopped train to clear the crossing as we were going out to run some errands. My mother was inside probably doing dishes while we waited.

On this particular evening we could hear the approach of another train and then heard the torpedoes go off and my dad made some comment to the effect "he'd better be slowing down". What we did not know at the time but were told later is that the flagman who set out the torpedoes had taken three fusees with him but every one was damp and would not light. He then tried to stop the oncoming train by waving his red lantern but they did not. It also came out in the subsequent investigation that the oncoming train was going faster than it should have been. At some point my dad realized we were about to witness a wreck and he yelled to my mom "Hey Nome, if you want to see a train wreck you better get out here!" She came running.

Immediately north of where the stopped train was there was a timber bridge. I believe it was about thirty feet high. You could not really see a southbound train until it moved on to the trestle. As soon as we saw it we could see the occupants of the engine jumping off the locomotive into the huge piles of blackberry vines below. Everyone in the cab jumped except the fireman who was running the engine at the time.

When the engine got to the caboose it was going about 23 MPH according to the investigation and the caboose went up into the air and landed right on our back property line. It was destroyed. The engine that

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# The Main Event Continued

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hit the caboose was GP-7 558. It had significant damage. The cost of repairs was estimated at \$15,000. That is about \$175,000 in today's dollars. Also damaged on the parked train were an ATSF single sheath box car, a CGW all steel box car, an SP all steel box car and an SLSF single sheath box car.

Kurt Armbruster, editor of the NPRHA quarterly magazine found the investigation report in the Burien archives but we have still not been able to locate the findings. We both feel, however, that the fault was with the engineer of 558 for going too fast under the circumstances. (*Editor's Note: According to the NPRHA Site: Rear end collision at Quendall on 4/22/1952 due to improper flagging in non-block signal territory. This View shows cab of GP-7 558 demolished in accident.*) Photo appears on page 7.

Ironically, Jim Fredrickson, noted NP photographer was on train 558 and in the cab of 558 until the previous stop when he ended up in the caboose instead. His photographs of the wreck are on the NPRHA website. They are numbers JMF07-04347.0 through JMF07-04353.0. Here is a [Link](#) to the photos.

The best part of the entire incident was that my mother let me stay home from school for the rest of the week to watch the cleanup! Meanwhile, she made plates of cookies for the workers which I got to deliver. For years after the wreck whenever a train went by our house, if they saw us, they would blow the diesel horn and toot the caboose whistle.

On the last day of cleanup one of the workers who had been talking to me all week pulled a mostly destroyed kerosene lantern out of the caboose and said "here kid, do you want this?" I still have it.



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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/4dpnrMovies](http://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.

- **April Clinic:** For our April 15 clinic, lighting "wizard" **Don Jones** will show us how to light passenger cars and cabooses from track power, "flicker-free". This clinic subject was requested by **John O'Connell**, so thanks for the "ask", John, and folks, don't be afraid to request a clinic!