



The Mount Vernon NMRA Clinic



Kit Rehashing Report: What's in your closet?



Tool Time:



Steve Londino told us of an HO/N scale tape measure he saw at the recent Monroe train show, as well as on eBay: [The Train Tape](#)

March 17, 2025 Highlights



Welcome Back: The first clinic of the season, following our winter break, was held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center on March 17. Not a lot of leprechauns in attendance, but we did have 22 eager model railroaders show up, including first timers **Chris Carnhan** of Clear Lake, who models in #1 gauge (1:32), and **Ron VanLuven** of Burlington, who is into HO scale. And a fellow we hadn't seen in several years, **Marvin Hall**, returned to the fold. Marvin's interest is in American Flyer, "S" gauge trains. **Bob Stafford**, Vice-President of the PNR, confirmed that the NMRA Convention will be coming to Tacoma in the near future.



Phil Hernandez showed off some cork sheets and some 3-volt LED light strings he found from his favorite store: Dollar Tree.

New and Improved Tool Time



Nick Muff displayed a pair of parallel jaw pliers, from Micro Mark

Roger Weiss showed his “Sonic Saber” cutter, which is basically a hobby knife that heats up and is quite effective.

Al Carter was searching for a way to strip insulation from very small wire and discovered a pair of wire strippers that are adjustable, from DCC Concepts.



Change In Leadership: Al Carter announced that this “season” will be his last as chairman of the Mount Vernon Clinic, after 10 years of hosting and co-hosting (with Ted Becker) this clinic. Al appealed to those present for someone to step up and take over.

Advance Notice: The Mount Vernon Clinic will once again have our annual “field trip” to visit Nick Muff’s fabulous Kansas City Southern layout for our June 2025 clinic.

Video Coverage: Be sure to check out the video of this clinic, as well as many more, by our own Bob Stafford, that appears on the 4D You Tube channel. Here’s a link: <https://www.youtube.com/@4DPNRMovies/videos>

April Clinic: Let’s get down and dirty! Al Carter and Nick Muff will be co-clinicians, showing how to easily apply weathering, using both the “powder” method and the acrylic wash method. This will be a hands-on clinic wherein students will make a railroad car look like it has been around the block a few times. All that is required is to bring a car (or several) to which a coat of clear flat paint has been applied, such as Testor’s Dullcoat, Rustoleum’s Dead Flat, or Behr’s Matte Clear. Or a clear flat artist’s fixative will work, as well.



Modeler's Showcase



Mark Malmkar displayed an HO scale “mail storage car” lettered for his Rocky Mountain Central railroad. These cars were used to transfer mail over long distances, and were loaded and locked at their point of origin and no personnel were needed in the car enroute. Mark says an interesting side note is that express box cars and even refrigerator cars were often pressed into service, especially at Christmas time. Think of a car of oranges going west and the same car returning east full of mail.

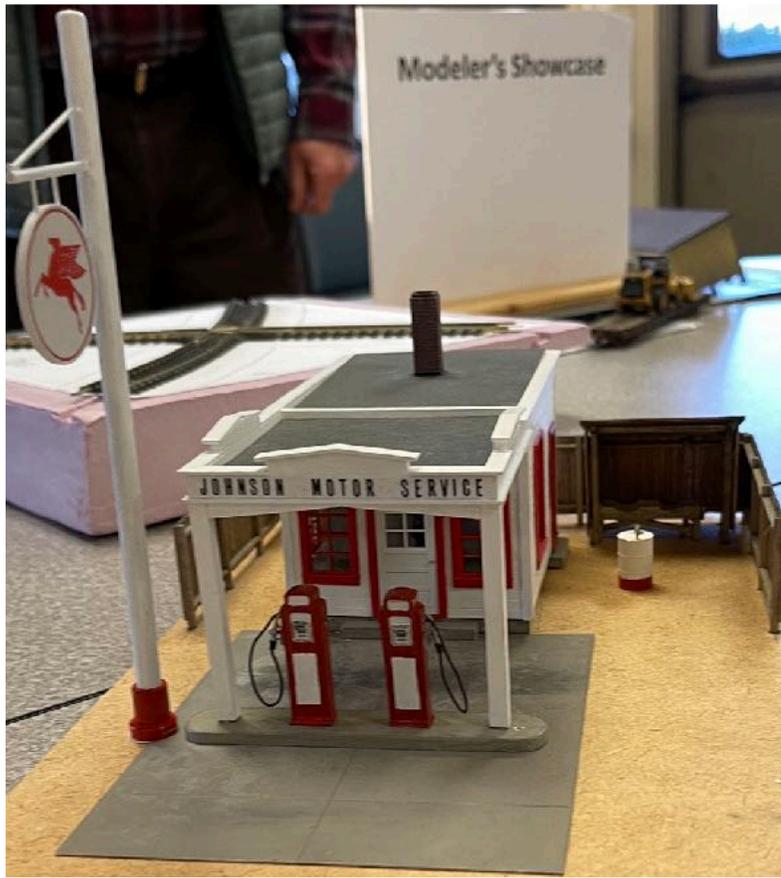


Al Carter continues his efforts to weather anything in sight: in this case, an HO scale Alaska RR 60' flat car with a diecast front end loader. The car has a very thin scribed wood deck from ITLA Scale Models. The loader was “tied down” with banding made from Chart Pak tape.



Chris Carnhan, a “first timer” to the clinic, brought a #1-gauge (1:32 scale) brass trolley that he bought in a disassembled state from that auction site, and he has been working his way through rebuilding it and now has it running. He eventually wants to have it run on a track with an automatic reversing scheme.

Modeler's Showcase Continued



Ron Nelson is working on an O scale gas station, modeled after a Johnson Motor Service design. Totally scratch built from wood, with machined parts (oil drum, etc.). A prototype of this gas station once stood in Bellingham and was offered in HO scale as a kit from Columbia Valley Models.

Geoff Stippes scratch built (out of styrene) an HO scale three track rail car float, based on a real such vessel that the Milwaukee Road used on Puget Sound and called on Bellingham on one of its routes. Geoff built this, and previously a tugboat, for a friend's layout.



Roy Andrukut was unable to attend the clinic, but he did make a lot of progress on his run-down N scale barn, as evidenced by the photos he provided. (See his final results in the Main Event section)

Modeler's Showcase Continued



And another (!) plastic kit, this time a Kibri brand residence and garage. Nick found that if he tried to light the interior, too much light leaked through the thin walls and corners, so he inserted a piece of black styrene diagonally inside the structure to prevent see-through, and then simply add a porch light.

Nick Muff is helping out the Sedro Woolley's HO scale museum layout, contributing a scale sign, and now a replica of the Puget Sound and Baker River Railway #2 steam loco that sits next to Highway 20 in Sedro Woolley. This loco was rebuilt to remove the DCC control system, and it now runs on straight DC. Nick created the tender lettering as a one-piece decal. Nick also brought several structures he is working on for his layout:

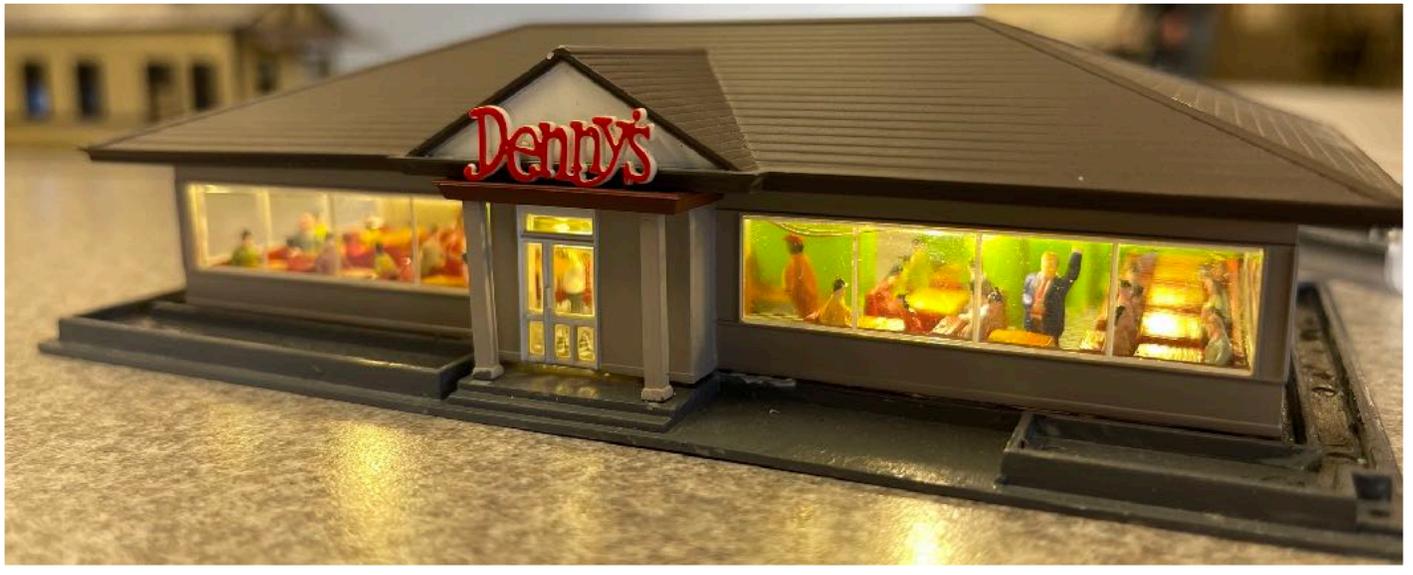
A scratch-built model of the KCS railroad station in Rodessa, LA, modeled from just one photo.

A kit built (yes, Nick actually builds an occasional plastic kit) sugar refinery building and complex to represent the Godchaux Sugar Refinery in Reserve, LA, starting with a Walthers Greatland Sugar Refinery kit. Nick also drew plans for and 3d printed a stationary Corliss Steam Engine that will go inside and be visible through the windows.



Main Event

What's In Your Closet?

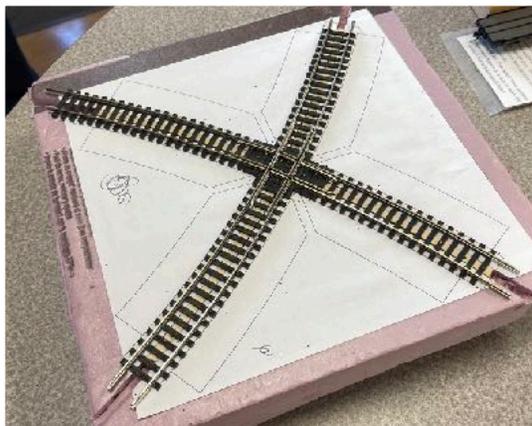


The theme of this evening's clinic was a continuation of last November's season finale, wherein folks showed some in-progress projects that they intended to try to complete over the winter break.

Steve McCartt showed off an N scale Denny's Restaurant, with a complete interior including some unique flooring material. Steve populated the establishment with lots of N scale "little people", and lit the structure with some of the aforementioned light kits from the Dollar Tree that Phil Hernandez espoused.

Mark Malmkar showed off another of his HO scale passenger cars. He painted, decaled and created the interior for a parlor/observation. It is lettered Utah Midland, car #404. It is a short, scale 60-foot car, built in "1914" for a predecessor to his railroad. Unfortunately, it was "scrapped" before the era he models. Mark had the kit since 1987 and decided to use it for a predecessor railroad.

Dave Falconer is just about finished with his HO scale custom scratch-built crossing. He has discovered that the guard rails are just a bit too high and will have to be re-do them.



Main Event

What's In Your Closet?

Roger Weiss is building an N scale locomotive maintenance facility.

Bob Stafford is modeling an Acme Market Distribution Center complex of structures for his HO scale layout, and is making progress on the main building, which started life as a Walthers "Front Street Warehouse" kit.

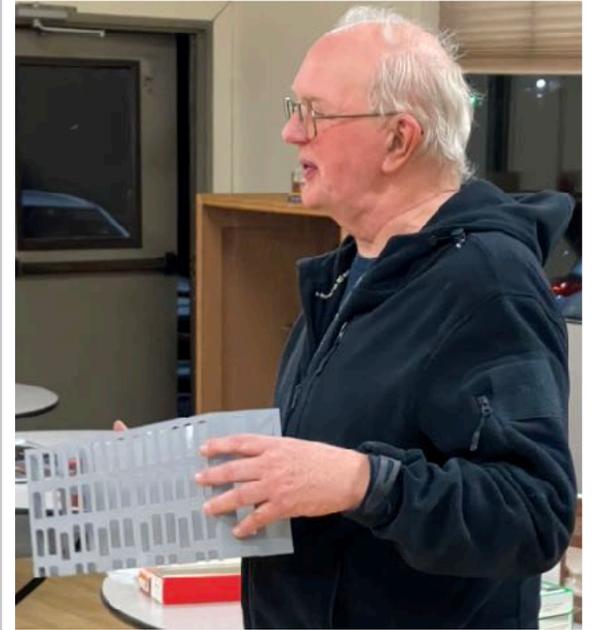
Dave Sherwood has constructed an HO scale train of flat cars, each with a (diecast) construction vehicle as a load, and has been working on chaining them down prototypically.

Roy Andrukat was unable to attend the clinic, but he did make a lot of progress on his run-down N scale barn, as evidenced by the photo he provided.

Al Carter finally completed his HO scale Shell gas station, for which Nick Muff drew plans and laser cut wall components, sort of a one-off kit. "No instruction included" said Nick, leaving Al to figure out how to complete the structure, which is illuminated with LEDs and has a complete interior.

Roy Andrukat's completed "weathered barn.

Dave Sherwood's flat car collection.



The Laugh Track

Next Clinic: Will be on May 19, 2025. The program is yet to be determined.

Appreciation Time: The Mount Vernon Clinic doesn't run by itself, and several folks help keep us on track:

Bob Stafford handles the videoing of our clinics and gets them posted on the 4D/PNR website (see: [4DPNR Movies - YouTube](#)). Bob also handles the name tags and is currently the Pacific Northwest Region Vice President.

Steve McCartt takes the rough draft of the newsletter and turns it into a masterpiece with his software wizardry. Steve also maintains the mailing list and emails each edition of the newsletter. If that isn't enough, Steve is the President of the Whatcom/Skagit Model RR Club.

Dave Falconer faithfully brings cookies and soft drinks to each clinic. Dave also sets up the computer, tripod, and projector.

Coming Down the Track

April 21, Mount Vernon Clinic: Weathering

May 10, Alger WSMRC Open House

May 19, Mount Vernon NMRA 4D Clinic

June 16, Mount Vernon Visit to Nick Muff's KCS Layout



When I first got married my new bride came into my train room and after watching me work for a while she folded her arms and said, "Now that we are married, you should probably sell all these trains so we can turn this room into a nice parlor." I turned to her with a shocked look on my face and started shaking. She saw my state of agitation and said, "Is anything wrong?" And I replied, "Well for a minute there you sounded just like my ex-wife!" She angrily replied, "You never told me that you were married before!" And I said, "I wasn't."

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 winter months (December, January, February). 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/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.