

How to Make Rocket City Pin Clamps

by Gerald Sullivan, Editor, San Diego Scale Staffel Newsletter, September 2004

Stuyvestant Pell, one of our members from New Jersey, sent a letter along with his recent dues payment. In the letter, he wrote that he could not find a supply of the Rocket City pin clamps. He sent along samples of some that he made from sections of popsicle sticks. He might have missed the reprint of an idea of our own Scotty Hall that was published in the June 2004 issue of the newsletter. Looking at the article, I decided that if one wanted to make a few samples, it would be better to make the disks out of plastic instead of rubber, and to make the disks a little bigger than Scotty's hole punch size.

To that end, I made the punch and die as described here. Cut off a piece of 3/8 inch diameter stock and square up one end. It should be made of steel, but I used aluminum which has held up fine punching about 100 disks. Drill a small hole in the end, and roughing up a cut off pin, glue it in place using epoxy. I tried CyA but it would not hold. In a small piece of rectangular stock, drill an accurate 3/8 inch hole. The punch needs to be a sliding fit in the hole of the die. Place the punch in a (heavy duty) drill press and slide the die up the punch. Lower to the table and clamp the die to the table. This insures alignment. You can then place 1/32 inch styrene plastic on the die and pulling down on the feed lever, punch out a disk that already has a pin hole in the center. Retracting the feed handle will allow you to get the disk off the pin if it hasn't fallen out the bottom. Do not use more force than you would use to drill a large hole so obviously you are not over forcing the drill press. Insert your favorite type of pin (round head or "T") and you will have a nice replica of a Rocket City T pin clamp.

These are really great for locking down 1/16 square sticks on your plan. No need to put the pin through the stick. Put the pin beside the stick, and lower the disk to hold the stick in place...

