

PENNSYLVANIA LIVE STEAMERS, INC.

P.O. BOX 26202, COLLEGEVILLE, PA. 19426-0202

May, June – 2008

Along The Main Line

AFTERGLOW!! That's the way I still feel after perhaps the most enjoyable spring meet I can recall. While the weather certainly helped with this, I still recall the number of interesting trains on the track, the great food offered by our ever dependable kitchen staff headed by Kathy Parris and the tremendous number of adults and kids who enjoyed the campfire at night. There was also something about that long triple header freight train on Sunday. (You have to look up You Tube for this one!)



But most importantly was how we as a club were able to organize and cooperate with this first try at waiver enforcements. Almost everyone got with the program in the best good natured way that was hoped for. We policed ourselves and ensured that everyone had a wonderful time. Hopefully this will carry over to better public relations for our visitors in June.

Knowing that everyone on the property had agreed to our simple requests upon entering, I had a sense of relaxation as a result of the wrist band policy. On one particular ride involving a first time visitor, I glanced back to confirm that this visitor had the required red wrist band. Upon confirmation, any anxiety I may have had, diminished throughout the ride. I could then proceed with a safe and enjoyable trip on the layout.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who helped out at the gate, and helped out in having a good time.

Let's please keep this momentum at the all important first non member public run in June. Sign up sheets are now posted.

As I grow into the position of President of this club, it is becoming more evident to me where problems and conflicts can occur. At April's membership meeting deep feelings and opinions pertaining to the future of **non member public run days** were expressed. (Thanks to Robert Blackson for contributing a fresh copy of Roberts Rules of Order). These public events are becoming more and more inundated with good intentioned people who presume that we are a part of the local trail system. For the most part non members have been cooperative and obey the rules that are posted throughout the property. However I now realize from the membership's reaction at April's meeting, that much discussion and contemplation is needed by our members to resolve what our future should be regarding this ever growing exposure. As President I intend to work with the Board to outline clear options and ramifications to present to the membership later in the year sometime after the fall meet so that this matter might be discussed and decided upon. Please use this season to seriously consider what you wish the outcome to be.

WHATS NEW – additional signage at the front gate; camp fire pit for scheduled events; new charcoal grill for events (thanks to John Geib for this donation!); additional track signals are underway; Insurance Coverage provided by Perkiomen Township for Perkiomen Day. This will allow us to participate in Perkiomen Day ONLY without concern for public wrist bands and waivers.

NEW WEB SITE- One of the hallmarks of this board is the long overdue of a classy looking web site. This site is intended to promote good fellowship among live steamers and within our immediate geographical area. Potential new members can now find out more about us, download the membership application as well as back issues of the Gazette. A NEWS PAGE has been posted to offer important notices and items in between the Gazette postings. Please visit this site often at www.palivesteamers.org and let your BOD know what you think.

WHATS OLD – Projects around the club are now piling up. WE NEED ABLED BODIED HELP! Roofing on building 2 needs to be removed and new shingles, now languishing onsite, to be installed; 2 pallets of new cap stones for the rebuilt retaining walls (thanks to Barry Shapin for this donation) need to be installed; materials for the new 1.5" steaming bay is onsite and needs to be drilled and installed; paint throughout the property is in dire need of refreshing; new ballast and track maintenance is needed; kitchen clean up during the week leaves much to be desired.

Thank you to all the members who contribute with this work. Do you want to help out with something in a specific area? If not physical can you perform clerical duties? Or can you just help out in general? The Wednesday and Saturday work crews needs your help NOW.

Lastly – Be respectful to your fellow member. Always remember it's not what you say but how you say it. Most importantly remember that is just a hobby– **HAVE FUN!**

Pat Murphy

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2008

Saturday, June 21	Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run Members & Guests Only
Sunday, June 22	Run Day – Open to the Public – Rain Date June 29
Saturday, July 12	Board of Directors Meeting - 12:30 PM
Saturday, July 19	Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Annual Picnic & Run Day
Sunday, July 27	Run Day – Open to the Public – Rain Date August 3
Saturday, August 9	Board of Directors Meeting - 12:30 PM
August, August 16	NO MEETING – Afternoon/Evening Run Members & Guests Only
Sunday, August 24	Run Day – Open to Public – No Rain Date
Saturday, August 30	Autumn Meet
Sunday, August 31	Autumn Meet

The PLS *Gazette* is published 6 times a year starting in February.

Deadline is BOD Meeting

Membership cards will be mailed to all paid up Members with the April Gazette

Club Picnic

Attention PLS members. This year the annual club picnic is going to be held on SATURDAY July 19, 2008 in conjunction with our PM run day. We are asking all those who attend to please bring a covered dish to share. We anticipate eating at approximately 4:30 pm. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

Regards, Bill Meyer

2008 Spring Meet Thanks

Our kitchen and snack areas were extremely busy, with Saturday producing the greatest single day income ever. Kathy Parris wishes to acknowledge the generous donations of food and time by: Hatfield Quality Meats, Heinz Company, Redner's Warehouse Markets, Rich's Products, Bruce Barrett, Buddy Borders, George Cooper, Mary Lou Delp, Sue Eshback, Ed Faller, John Forsythe, Joan Freer, John Geib, Eileen Hammond, Sandy Hart, Al Hein, Pat Heller, Roberta Henderson, Ann Keen, Julia Kiefer, Paul Kulp, David Laird, Michelle Lizak, Irene Manley, Jane McDevitt, Walt Mensch, Barbara Miller, Les Murphy, Carol Quirk, Harry Quirk, Jack Reed, Pam Rice, Mary Ann Salmons, Jim Salmons, Bruce Saylor, Mary Saylor, Barry Shapin, Bonnie Shupard, Pat Speak, Dave Taylor, Rose Ann Wagner-Love, and Sue Webb.

Gazette Delivery Notice

Along with this year's membership renewal, we presented members with the option of having the PLS Gazette delivered electronically, via the internet. For those members who opted for electronic delivery, this will be your last paper copy of the Gazette. Please check the Gazette section of the PLS website (palivesteamers.org/gazette.html) periodically for new issues. Gazette releases are normally on the third Saturday of February, April, June, August, October and December. Back issues of the Gazette are also available at the same location. We thank those members who chose this option for helping us to reduce our printing and mailing costs.

DAVE CUSHWA

Dave Cushwa died suddenly on April 30. When reflecting upon that somber news at PLS, the singular observation expressed by everyone, over and over was, “Dave was a really nice guy.” He was universally liked by all who were fortunate to know him at Rahns from the day he joined in 1995. Moreover, Dave was one of a distinguished small group of members who, in all the years of the club’s existence, could rightly claim decades of experience in Real Railroading. Fortunately, Dave left us an insightful memoir of his PRR career¹, upon which much of this manuscript is based.

Railroading, specifically the Pennsylvania Railroad, was deeply rooted in Dave’s family: his mother and father both were employed by the PRR, as were some uncles. There must have been something in his genes that preordained Dave to follow a railroading career, although that did not take effect until after he enlisted in the U.S. Navy V-5 carrier pilot training program and began studying Mechanical Engineering at Villanova University. The attraction of railroading eventually captured him, so when the war ended and the V-5 program was terminated, Dave transferred his studies to Civil Engineering. That led to summer jobs as a Trackman on the Pennsy during his last two years in college, positioning him for permanent employment as a Junior Engineer when he graduated in 1948. The railroad was well known for moving employees around, especially new ones, thus Dave spent his first assignment supervising adjustment of track alignment on the four-track main line at Newport, PA (west of Harrisburg), then it was on to Altoona for precision track alignment dictated by sections with extremely tight clearance, and finally back again to Newport. On his second assignment at Newport he participated in modifying conventional track for tests to simulate welded rail, worked with a Brownhoist ballast cleaning train, and monitored track condition on a Sperry car – all in his first year on the railroad!

The next transfer was to Williamsport, where Dave found time to marry, and where his bride became acquainted with middle-of-the-night emergency calls that went with his job. But within a few months, it was change again, to Jersey City for a new challenges in track maintenance and problem solving, then to Carnegie and finally Buffalo. He was then persuaded by a former schoolmate to forsake railroading for a plumbing and heating business but two years later when that venture fell below his expectations, Dave’s overture for return to the PRR was met with a disappointing offer for reinstatement – perhaps in retribution for his earlier “desertion.” Undaunted, he joined the Railway Division of the Budd Company where he contributed his practical expertise to development of the “Pioneer” (Metroliner) MU cars, new “Silverliner II” cars for SEPTA, and conversion of a number of PRR and N&W sleepers into coaches.

That was not all Dave accomplished in the railroad field beyond the PRR. He also guided design of NJT commuter cars², helped develop specifications for the PATCO Lindenwold Line, supervised planning of sections of the Washington, D.C. transit system, and was a consultant in railroad matters for Louis T. Krauder and Associates. Truly a man for all seasons!

And so he was at PLS from the first day he joined. It wasn’t long after Harry Quirk learned of Dave’s background in trackwork that he cajoled him into building switches for the Gauge 1 track, then under construction. Dave readily agreed, “As long as I can make them at home.” And his expertise is evident today, with every switch on the line still performing flawlessly. More recently Dave and Bill Manly prefabricated a huge number of track panels for the 7.25” gauge yard upgrade and new car barn. He was also interested in modeling traction railways and, although he did not have a layout of his own, he assisted an old PRR friend with construction and operation of an O gauge traction line.

Well beyond the material accomplishments related above, David Cushwa was a devoted husband of fifty-seven years, a father of four children, and proud of his extended family of thirteen(!) grandchildren. Unassuming, always working in the background, this “really nice guy” made the world a better place. We are all diminished by his passing and we miss him.

B.T.

¹ Cushwa, David H. “Life in the Track Department.” *PRRT&HS Keystone Chronicles*. No.3, April 2003. Robert B. Watson, Editor. pp. 2-14.

² “No one-track career for this civil engineer.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 11, 2008.

PLS Spring Meet

The Annual Spring Meet, held on Friday, May 23rd through Sunday, May 25th had a good turnout of live steamers from PLS and others visiting from clubs throughout the northeast region. It was probably one of the best attended Spring Meets we've had in a long time despite the rising fuel prices. The weather was near perfect, with bright and sunny skies in the mid 70s with still a touch of chill in the wee morning hours. Many thanks goes out to everyone who helped during the Spring Meet – we couldn't have done it without you!

During the morning and early afternoon hours on Saturday and Sunday, the railroad was busy with a substantial amount of traffic on the 7.25" gauge mainline and both Gauge 1 tracks always seemed to have a flurry of activity. The club kitchen was also busy with activity serving up the always delicious selection of homemade snack goods, barbecued beef, pork, meatballs, sausage, and the ever popular Hatfield hot dogs. For the upcoming Fall Meet, Bruce Saylor has once again asked Glenn McCalley's Food by Fire to cater the Saturday evening meal at the club. He was the gentleman that catered the Saturday night meal during the 60th Anniversary.

On Saturday evening, John Geib put the club's new charcoal grill to use by cooking donated hamburgers, hot dogs, sausages, and chicken from other members. We also had an assortment of salads and baked good. These food items were compiled by a few people and we all had a wonderful time.

After the evening barbeque, the traffic shifted from the railroad to the newly constructed camp fire, situated where the curved Spruce tree once stood. Once the fire was lit, the children quickly scrambled for sticks in order to roast (or in some instances completely char) marshmallows for smores. Later on in the evening, the adults sat around telling amusing live steam and railroad stories into the wee hours of the following morning. Everyone had a great time and we will be having the campfire once again on Friday and Saturday evening of the Fall Meet – so bring your chairs and smore making supplies!

Marty Knox, owner of Ridge Locomotive Works, was a popular visitor for the Spring Meet. He made the trip all the way from Michigan to drop off two live steam boilers for John Forsythe's 1.5" Scale Pacific and Lee Nonnemacher's 1.5" Scale Northern. Both John and Lee are now busy working to get their locomotive assembled and running and we look forward to seeing two beautiful steamers back out on the rails soon!

PLS Website Renewed

If you haven't been on our club website recently, you should check it out. Words cannot express the amount of change has been done to the website, which was long overdue. It was recently redone by Allen Underkofler, an IBM IT specialist who also happens to be interested in model trains and railroading. Our previous website was started by Buddy Border in the late 1990s was hosted on Univ. of PA. Servers. Buddy originally designed the website to enable other live steamers to visit PLS without physically coming to the club. By today's standards, the website was very plain and becoming outdated, but when it was first released, it was similar to what other live steam clubs were doing at the time. In 2000, the club moved the website to our own server and Ed Abate continued to maintain the website until his passing in May 2007. Bill Meyer in the interim has stepped in and made small changes in order to keep our club calendar current.

In late 2007, a few members brought up the idea of modernizing our club website and Allen seemed to be the right person for the job. Instead of modifying the existing website, Allen suggested that we take the outline of what we currently had and bring it up to modern standards with a new template and graphics. In addition for being paid for his services, Allen has also donated a large amount of time to put the finishing touches on the website. Many of you know that any website is always changing and needs constant maintenance. Allen's goal for our club website is to get us started off on solid ground and then pass the baton onto someone else to update the pictures, calendar, etc. He will still be available to make any major changes to the website and answer any questions. If anyone is interested in helping to maintain the website, please express your interest to Pat Murphy.

Live Steam Club Calendar

If you've been looking to visit some other clubs, here is a list of events for the various clubs in the Northeast.

NJ Live Steamers

- July 4th Independence Day Run
- September 1st Labor Day Run
- October 3rd thru 5th Fall Meet
- October 26th Blowdown Run

Waushakum Live Steamers

- August 22nd thru 24th 38th Annual Meet
- October 19th Fall Meet

Long Island Live Steamers

- July 25th thru 27th Summer Meet
- September 26th thru 28th Fall Meet

Pioneer Valley Live Steamers

- July 25th & 26th Mid-Summer Meet
- September 12th thru 14th Fall Meet

Finger Lakes Live Steamers

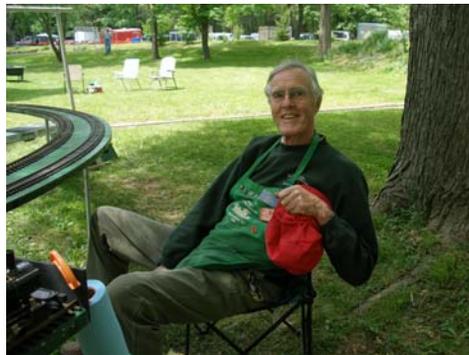
- July 19th Model Railroaders Run Day
- August 16th Family Picnic and Run Day August 30th & 31st Labor Day Weekend Run



Julia (Ron Henderson's Granddaughter) learning to operate Big John's 1.5" Scale New Haven Pacific. Photo courtesy of John Forsythe. Justin Koch, Ryan Bednarik, and Jeff Redecker watch Justin's Coal Fired Rio Grande K-27 pull a long string of cars on the Gauge 1 track. Photo courtesy of Allen Underkofler.



Karl Godschall and Rob Dennis are having way too much fun running Eric Peffel's New Haven Mountain. Photo courtesy of Jeff Parris. There was barely enough room for trains in the very busy 1.5" scale yard during Saturday of the Spring Meet. Photo courtesy of Allen Underkofler.



Murray Wilson enjoying the shade while running his Gauge 1 trains on the portable track. Photo courtesy of Allen Underkofler

Page 4 and Page 5 were provided by Steve Leatherman.

Editor's Notes

Thank You's are always difficult because you know you are going to miss some one. But there are those who stand out and must be counted. **PLS** has been blessed with some very talented people. Bob Thomas is a superb writer and his article on Dave Cushwa was very good and appreciated. I knew Dave from the times a few years ago when Dave and I used to be regulars at the Wednesday work sessions. Dave and I had a contest to see who was going to get there first. I beat him occasionally, but most of the time when I got there he was already walking the track. He always gave me a heads-up on the condition he found it in and got a nice early morning walk in that he enjoyed. If you think I miss Dave, you are correct. Steve Leatherman did a nice job of providing the pictures and article you see on Pages 4 and 5. Kathy Parris always does a great job of maintaining and running our kitchen. Allen Underkofler redid our website. He did far more than we paid for and if you haven't checked it out lately, you really must do so.

Phil.P.



Steve Leatherman

The PLS Gazette
P.O. Box 26202
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FIRST CLASS



Think Fall Meet !!