

The PLS GAZETTE



PENNSYLVANIA LIVE STEAMERS, INC.

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

July, August – 2008

Along The Main Line



As is often said, where did the summer go? It seems just yesterday when I was reporting on the marvelous spring meet that I am now looking toward the **Fall Meet this August 30th – 31** with early arrival of the 29th. As we play *what I did over the summer*, I know of 1 person named Harry at Gauge One who has quite a summer story to share. Just ask him.

Let's look back over our summer. The public run days have been mostly successful and well attended. Our club participation with regards to enforcing and administrating the club waiver has been incident free and well managed. *Kudos to everyone* who have signed up at the gate to help out. Many thanks to Bruce Barratt - and many others for helping to oversee these events at the gate.

Last month's club picnic was a wonderful event enjoyed by many of the club regulars. (Did YOU attend?) We had good weather, fine food and an enthusiastic response. Those who did attend enjoyed many tasty and plentiful dishes providing food enough for all. While many good folks helped out, my sincerest thanks go to "Big John" Geib and his family, Fran and Christina for helping out with organizing and executing this event with such flare. Also thanks to Kathy Parris and Jack Reed for their support in this event.

New Items - We have installed an Ultra Violet water conditioning unit to improve the quality of our drinking water. The tenth and final steaming bay is in and ready to provide service; the re- shingling on building 2 is complete; deferred track maintenance is kicking into higher gear. Many thanks for all of you who are working on this. Special thanks to John Bortz Jr. and Bruce Saylor for providing ongoing tie replacement during the non regular days of the working week. They would appreciate *additional help* in this arduous task.

Frogs for the switch and crossover project into building 6 are now in process of machining. Thanks to Lee Nonemacher and Jim Salmons for keeping this final component of the building 6 project moving forward. I know that the club members hope to see this project continuing to move forward to completion in the very near future.

Machine shop committee persons are working towards operating procedures for the new machines shop. Your input is always appreciated. See Lynn Hammond about this.

New projects – Steaming Bay covering. We will soon be considering acceptance and start of this new construction project that will allow cover during night time and rainy operating sessions, (like the rain and hail we experienced at the June run day!!). Track maintenance is continuing. See any one of the track committee, Paul Rice, Bob Freer, Lee Nonemacher, and John Bortz Jr, to pitch in with any muscle you can provide.

The Signal committee is moving along with solid progress that will enhance our operating safety and appearance. Thanks as always to "Raritan" Ron Henderson and his committee for keeping this project well motivated.

REMINDERS - Perkiomen Day is **September 7th**. We will need members to help in providing good cheer and neighborly fellowship with regards to the stations and sales table. We will not need gate waivers as we are covered for liability for this one day event by the Perkiomen Township.

As we enter the fall we need to begin to consider our future as a club and the challenges we have facing ahead of us. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting an associate and his family who was not able to participate on a regular Saturday (or Wednesday) work day, but expressed a desire to pitch in if only for just a day. There may be more of you out there who may not feel you "belong" but wish to contribute some of your talents to the club, whether it be physical, clerical or just want to make a contribution in your time and offerings.

To those silent, humble people, I sincerely say **thank you!**

Pat Murphy

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2008

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| 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 |
| | |
| Sunday, September 7 | PERKIOMEN DAY |
| Saturday, September 13 | Board of Directors Meeting - 12:30 PM |
| Saturday, September 20 | Membership Meeting – Afternoon/Evening Run Members & Guests Only |
| Sunday, September 28 | Run Day - Members and Guests Only – Rain Date October 5 |
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| Saturday, October 11 | Board of Directors Meeting - 12:30 PM |
| Sunday, October 18 | Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM |
| Saturday, October 25 | Fall Cleanup Day, All Hands |
| Sunday, October 26 | Blowdown Run Day – Members and Guests Only –No Rain Date |

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

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Little Engines 1 inch scale 4-6-2 . Runs fine. Boiler inspected through May 2009. Has full set of blueprints from Little Engines. The engine has never had any boiler problems. I have owned it for at least 15 years. This is an older engine and the seller reserves the right to refuse sale to any party that, in my opinion, lacks knowledge and understanding of steam locomotives for safety reasons that keeps in consistency with the club's standards. Asking \$5300.00. Email me at dornfam3@comcast.net with questions.

Steam OIL

See Big John Geib for steam oil either by the 20oz. bottle for \$4.50 or by the gallon for \$27.00.

Fall Meet

The Fall Meet will be held on August 30 and August 31 this year. As usual running may start on Friday afternoon August 30th. We will need baked goods and Cathy Parris will be needing Kitchen help on Saturday and Sunday especially.

New Members And Donations

New members are Virginia Kulak and Mayland Crossen. Welcome to both of you. Donations were made by Paul Nichini and Mayland Crossen. Thanks to both of you.

William the Illustrator

There are over 400 members of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers Club of which three quarters of you are associate members. Many of you who enjoy the trains and hobby are not well acquainted with the members and yet in many ways the club is the members. We thought that you might like to learn a bit more about the members whose efforts have made and are making this club a reality. This time we want to tell you a little about one of our long-standing members who has done so much for the club. His name is William Normart, Bill to us, and his membership goes back deep into the years when the club was at Paoli before 1969. I refer to him as "William the Illustrator" because that was his chosen profession and seems to be how he thinks of himself. In photo 1 you see him standing next to an illustration of his showing the appearance of the about-to-be built engine house.



Photo 1: Bill Normart next to one of the early drawings he did for the engine house. Bill always loved trains, so it should be no surprise that his first job was with the Baldwin Locomotive works where he was hired as an illustrator just out of high school. He got the, for him, delightful job of drawing trains. But he found the drawings he was given inadequate to fully illustrate the trains and complained so much that they transferred him to the drafting department. By default he became a draftsman. If you have a chance to see some of the many beautiful mechanical drawings and illustrations of PLS projects by Bill that reside in our archives (like the one in photo 1) you will agree that he is very good at what he does. In the second picture, Bill is shown next to Rahns Station that immediately captures the attention of anyone who visits the club. Photo 2: Bill Normart in the doorway of the Rahns Station. Bill designed this station (no doubt illustrated it) and built it in sections at his home around 1988. Later these sections were then erected at the Club. I find the station so creative because it reflects a smaller scale from the front than the back, which in a way symbolizes miniature, riding trains (one scale for the trains and one for the people on them). Of course, I also love the gingerbread. As you might imagine Bill worked on trains as well buildings. Back in the 60's he worked on an Atlantic steam engine (4-4-2 wheel arrangement) in 1 inch scale from a kit (castings and drawings) by Little Engines Company. These kits consist mostly of raw castings which must be machined on a lathe and milling machine. Constructing one of these kits is an enormous undertaking. Some members have been working half of a long lifetime on completing an engine. Many of the engines that those of you less acquainted with club see on run days are the work of a number of individuals and many years of work.

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Bill completed the Atlantic engine and it was running at Paoli in about 1964. Later Bill began to convert this engine to a Pacific (4-4-2 wheel arrangement). Bill also started work on a 1 ½ inch scale Hudson (4-4-4 wheel arrangement).

Around 2002 when the Hudson was about 80% completed, Bill became very ill and thought that he was going to die. To settle his affairs he sold the yet to run Hudson to member Bruce Saylor and the 1 inch Pacific to member Paul Quirk. But as you can see in the pictures he is still very much with us. . In photo 3 you see Bill running the Hudson that Bruce finished.



Photo 3: Bill on the Hudson that Bruce Saylor finished back 2002.

On run days at PLS today you can often see Paul Quirk running the 1 inch Pacific or Bruce Saylor sitting behind the very large Hudson engine pulling many happy members or public. And if look closely you can also see our William the illustrator or just plain Bill happily watching the engines including those with which he is so very familiar.

Article By Lynn Hammond

MY WOLSZTYN EXPERIENCE

Harry E. Quirk

When I read Carl Franz' article in the January issue of "Railfan" about driving steam engines in commuter service in Poland, I knew I had to go. I met Carl at Cabin Fever and signed on, along with Ryan Bednarik. Shortly after that my legs started to swell. By our departure date of June 19, my legs had gotten so bad that I was walking with a cane. The adventure really starts downhill at this point. Shortly before departure, we learned that "Belle Helene," a Pacific whose top speed was 80 mph, blew a dry pipe and would not be running. Next the trips to Poznan, a 100 mile round trip, were cancelled due to dry conditions and the fear of starting a fire in the dry countryside. My Wolsztyn Experience looked rather gloomy.

On day 1, we took a train pulled by a 2-8-2 tank engine for a trip to the Polish Railway Museum. Two of our crew of eight got throttle time. The museum had quite a selection of locomotives, including four U.S. Army 2-8-0's and a large collection of Harley-Davidson and Indian motorcycles.

On day 2, Ryan and I were assigned to operate the 05:56 from Wolsztyn (pronounced Volstine) to Lesno, 31 miles away, with 12 station stops. When I was chosen to be the engineer for the first six stops, all of the negatives suddenly disappeared. Sitting in the cab, watching all of the commuters board the coaches on their way to work, school, or on their daily routines, I was ready! When the Polish engineer shouted "Odioc" (meaning go). I opened the throttle, experiencing a slight delay while the steam reached the cylinders. We started to move. Almost immediately, I was ordered to back off on the reverser, then close the cylinder cocks. We were on our way. I started to think, "How am I going to stop this thing?" It turned out to be easy, the Polish engineer gave the command "Off" (the throttle). Then he put his hand on mine on the train brake and guided me through the first two stops. After that it was no problem.

On day 3, Ryan and I took an OL49, #23, a 2-6-2 to Gniesno for repairs, a 5 hour trip. I think Ryan exceeded 50mph at one point.

On day 4, I was the engineer on the British 2-6-2T from Wroclaw to Jelcz, an uneventful trip, until I fell off the locomotive, breaking my wrist, cutting a finger, and experiencing a badly bruised hip. An ambulance was called, and I was taken to a local hospital. An English speaking, young Polish lady, who was riding on the train, came along with me. Thank God she did. No one in the hospital spoke English. My wrist was x-rayed and set in a plaster cast. My finger was sutured. I gave Marta my insurance cards, which were denied by the billing office. When she returned and informed me of their refusal, I would have to pay cash. I wondered where I was going to get \$800 to \$900 in cash. They would not accept credit cards either. It turned out the entire bill was ZL190 or \$87.40 (WHEW!!!!). I called Marta my "guardian angel," who shared her lunch with me, and stayed with me all day until a taxi came to take me back to Wolsztyn, which cost me ZL384 or \$175.

Since I could not operate a locomotive, much less get into the cab, I was a spectator for the last 4 days. Even though there were many problems, it was a great experience and I would go again.

The worst fifteen minutes of my life

In 1956 I was an engineer on a small cargo ship. One April evening we left Valletta, Malta in fairly rough, but not exceptionally rough, weather. Once clear of the harbour the bridge rang ³Full Away² and the watch was mine. We had a triple expansion steam engine and due to the pitching of the ship it started to race each time the propeller came partly out of the water. These engines do not respond quickly to the overspeed governor and so to limit the overspeeding I progressively throttled in the engine. After some minutes the bridge called down on the speaking tube and said maximum revolutions were necessary as we were being carried backwards towards rocks. I told them I was concerned about damage to the engine and that I would get the Chief Engineer down. The Chief came down, discussed the situation with the Captain on the bridge, then ordered the throttle to be opened fully. He and I joined the fireman and the greaser in the stokehold where we would at least be protected from flying pieces if the engine flew apart. What chance we'd have if the ship did go on the rocks in such weather, in the dark, I didn't know, but I supposed it would not be good. So I held on to something solid and listened to the poor old engine racing and shuddering. It seemed a shame that at age 25 these might be my last few minutes, but I felt no more than that. After about fifteen minutes the bridge called down that we were safely clear of the rocks and could throttle down to safe revolutions. The engine room was a mess, lubricating oil thrown everywhere by the open cranks and rods of the engine, but everything was still in one piece.

Those though were not the worst fifteen minutes of my life. They came years later when I was stuck on a Pocono ski lift right alongside a pylon mounted loudspeaker. For fifteen minutes I was the captive audience for a series of Johnny Mathis recordings. Sorry Johnny, those were the worst.

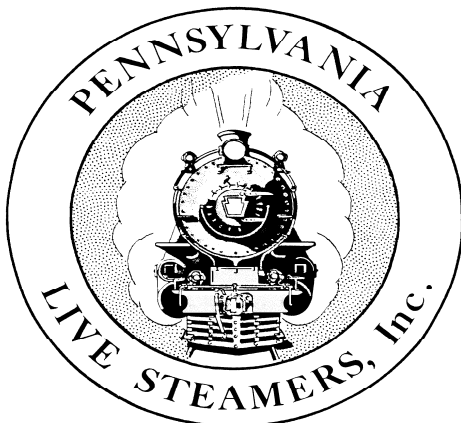
Murray Wilson



Big John Geib at the June Public run day

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FIRST CLASS



Think Fall Meet !!