



# The PLS GAZETTE

November–December 2010

**A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.**

**NOVEMBER–DECEMBER TOPICS:** New Passing Siding on the 4¾" Track **1** Library Report **2**  
Rare Engineering Magazines for Sale **2** Membership News **2** Donations **2** Road Trip **4**  
A 5-Year Plan for PLS **6** It's a Small World **7** Turkey Trot **8** PLS Workshops **8**

## Along the Main Line

**N**ow that the Thanksgiving turkey is almost gone and the cold winter wind is blowing, we can concentrate on the upcoming Christmas holiday and the advent of the New Year. I find it interesting that a fascination in trains and railroad-ing in general persists these days even with competing hobbies and interests. People of all ages continue to love trains. We are fortunate at PLS be able to "stoke" our passion for the hobby while continuing to share our enjoyment with visitors as well.

During the next few months the Board of Directors will be meeting monthly to oversee the business of the club while the membership meetings are in recess. As always, PLS members are welcome to attend and observe the Board of Directors meeting, especially if there is the possibility that you might want to get involved in the club's direction. Submissions for next year's Board of Directors are actively being sought. If you have an interest in taking a more active role in the governing of the club, please contact a member of the nominating committee: Bruce Saylor ([bgsberk@comcast.net](mailto:bgsberk@comcast.net)) or Robert Blackson ([rmblackson@comcast.net](mailto:rmblackson@comcast.net)) to express your interest. I thank Bruce and Robert for volunteering their valuable time and talents in compiling a slate for next year's election. Positions for President, Secretary, Treasurer and two board positions need to be filed. Remember that only regular members, not associate, can run for office.

**5-Year Plan** – Interest and participation in the 5-year plan, proposed

last July, seems to be growing. We encourage both our regular and associate members to seek an active role in achieving the goals of the plan. The current version of the plan appears on page 6. Look it over and see if there is an opportunity for you to contribute.

**Club Locomotive** – I am pleased to report the PLS now owns a gas-

powered diesel locomotive to assist in maintenance service and people hauling duties on the club property. Purchasing this locomotive could not have been possible without the extremely generous financial support of all of our members. The Board of Directors and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## PLS Gets a New Passing Siding on the One-Inch Scale Track

For some time now, some members have expressed a desire to run trains in both directions at the same time. Bidirectional traffic requires the use of passing tracks spaced around the railroad. There are now three such

tracks ready to go if you count the station track. The third passing track has just been finished. It stretches from the west end of the club house to the lawn

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Along the Main Line

(Continued from page 1)

I am most appreciative and extend a sincere thank you.

Now that the year is coming to an end, you might consider a gift of financial support that can be applied to upcoming projects, growing our membership and nurturing a passion for the hobby.

Renewal notices will be going out

## 2011 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, Jan. 8	Board of Directors Meeting 9:30 AM
Jan. 15-16	Cabin Fever Expo – <a href="http://www.cabinfeverexpo.com">www.cabinfeverexpo.com</a>
Saturday, Feb. 12	Board of Directors Meeting 9:30 AM
Saturday, Mar. 19	Board of Directors Meeting 9:30 AM
Saturday, Mar. 19	Regular Membership Meeting 12:30 PM - Elections

shortly. Please be as prompt as possible in responding.

I would like to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a

safe and healthy Happy New Year!!

*Pat Murphy, President, PLS*

## PLS Library Report

Our PLS Library is slowly growing and we now are approaching 850 cataloged items. These are books, pamphlets, videos, DVDs, and a few bound magazine volumes all of which deal with trains or tools and techniques for making miniature ones. Thanks are due to Roseanne Wagner-Love who has just donated another batch of booklets from the late Bill Love's Library. We have just finished reorganizing our catalog based on subject matter in a fashion similar to a typical library. The new catalog is available on the conference table in the clubroom.

As before, all members (regular and associate) can take out any of these items for a period of one month. We ask that you sign them out and the procedure for that is posted on the glass-front bookcase in the clubroom.

To give the members some idea of what we offer, we will feature an item or two frequently in the Gazette. For instance, a very relevant set of two thin paperbounds deals with Reading Sta-

tions on branchlines such as the one that ran up Rt. 29 in front of the club. These are listed in the catalog under Reading books.

One of the booklets in the batch donated by Roseanne is entitled "Vertical Milling in the Home Workshop" by Arnold Throp. It is specially relevant to those members who are trying to gain some rudimentary skills in machining to make repairs and such for small model trains.

Please visit our library on Wednesday or Saturday workdays (9-2) or on one of our Sunday activity days.

— Lynn Hammond

## For Sale

I have issues of MODEL ENGINEER for sale. 1970 to present plus some from 50s and 60s, full year 1943 – 109 issues! I have most issues of MODELTEC and LIVE STEAM. Also, ENGINEERING IN MINIATURE Vol. 1 #1 through 2000, plus year 2005 and some extras. In addition, the first 7 issues of WORLD OF MODEL ENGINEERING; MODEL ENGI-

NEER WORKSHOP: first 133 issues plus extras. Plus others! All magazines to be sold by the year unless missing mags in a year and all at fair price.

*This was written on November 20th so some may be sold when you receive this Gazette.*

Bruce Saylor, [bgsberk@comcast.net](mailto:bgsberk@comcast.net) or 610-666-6572

## Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate member Carl F. Holmes. Patricia Coin and Roy Nelson are new probationary Regular Members.

## Donations

PLS wishes to thank the following members for their recent donations: Bruce Saylor, Ed Kabak, and John Geib. Thanks also to the Red Hat Ladies.

## Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

<b>President</b>	Patrick J. Murphy	2439 Overbrook Drive, Gilbertsville, PA 19525	PMurphy129@aol.com
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**Board of Directors:** John Geib, [steamer38@comcast.net](mailto:steamer38@comcast.net); Ron Henderson, [ronjhenderson@verizon.net](mailto:ronjhenderson@verizon.net); Paul Rice, [ricepaul@verizon.net](mailto:ricepaul@verizon.net); John Bortz Jr., [jonyx@netzero.net](mailto:jonyx@netzero.net); Bob Freer, [W3YLT@Juno.com](mailto:W3YLT@Juno.com); Hank Riley.

**Safety Committee Members:** John Geib, chairman; Bruce Saylor; Pete Brown; Pat Murphy; Buddy Borders.

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## New Passing Siding

*(Continued from page 1)*

mower building with a length of 140 feet.

Fitting the siding into the available space required the engineering and construction of a curved switch. Parts for the switch were designed and made with the able assistance of Lee Non-nemacher and Jim Salmons. Lee then directed the assembly of the switch. Ron Shupard built the track panels for the siding and the other switch using available parts.

The curved switch and the last section of track were installed on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. The 14<sup>th</sup> was another beautiful day as Bob Freer claimed the honor of operating the first train to run over it on. He was followed by Dave Bortz Jr. who ran his PRR A3 steamer. We were pleased to get the track completed before winter thanks to the help provided by John Bortz Jr. and Bruce Saylor who tamped the ballast using the air compressor-equipped work train. Other helping members included Hank Riley, Jim Rich, Henry White, Sal Manzo, Bob Freer and Walt Mensch. Sorry if I missed anyone.

While the siding was being built,



**Ballast is applied** to the new siding as the work train stands by with the compressor.

the crosswalk also got a makeover, eliminating the steep drop from track level to the driveway. Walt Mensch directed the building of a ramp of cement blocks from the driveway up

to the track level resulting in a much safer walkway. Photos show the work in progress. So now it's back to the regular track maintenance.

— Ron Shupard

**The new brick and cement block crosswalk** provides safety and durability.



# Road Trip

By Bruce Saylor

## John Bortz Jr., Dave Johnson, Bruce Saylor and Ron Shupard Return to the St. Croix Railroad in Wisconsin

Saturday, September the 18<sup>th</sup>, Ronnie Shupard, John Bortz Jr. and I left to go pick up Dave Johnson for our annual fall trip to the St. Croix Railroad in Hudson, Wisconsin. Five miles from home the tread came off a trailer tire and tore up the fender. Four hours later we arrived at Dave's home and got him loaded for the trip. We went out for dinner at Ruby Tuesday's and then home to bed for a 4:00 am departure on Sunday.

We stopped at the Super 8 motel in Elgin, Illinois, had a great dinner at Alexander's Restaurant and off to bed. We left for the club track at 7:00 am and arrived about 2:00 pm and unloaded all four train sets.

The weather was cloudy when we arrived. Tuesday we covered our trains and waited until Wednesday for a run. Thursday was a washout with heavy rain most of the day.

Friday morning the NYC Mikado I rebuilt last winter was fired up by its new owner and he ran the wheels off it. Later in the day I fired up my



**Left to right:** Dave Johnson, Ronnie Shupard, Bruce Saylor, and John Bortz Jr. ready their engines in the pit at St. Croix.

Berkshire and did a bunch of running. Dave and Ronnie had been running their locomotives.

All went well until late Saturday when the line to the injector broke. I had it back together several hours

later. I fired it up after dinner and it still leaked steam. I tried to tighten the union, but the threads gave way and

**Doubleheader:** Ron and Dave pull riders at St. Croix.



the steam came out roaring. I shut it down and left it until I could get home to repair it right.

Jack Anderson, a club member and a full-time railroad worker loves to cook. We had meals morning, noon and evening. Although our motel supplied a full breakfast at 6:00, we got to the track and had breakfast again with eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, and pancakes with real pure maple syrup, all made locally. Lunch was burgers or whatever. Dinners were full including salad, baked and mashed potatoes, a vegetable and cobbler for desert for four nights. Prime rib was served on Saturday. *Awesome!* All the meals for the week cost each less than \$100. All food was prepared on the property. It was hard not to gain weight after that week. I gained 3 pounds.

John Bortz was very active helping put up a wall of 82 pound block. He also helped put in two sidings in the new yard. Many members were working hard in the yard getting ready for their 24 x 66 ft. car barn that will be 10 tracks wide and have room on top from the back for up to 10 more if needed. They have been getting photos from me of our car barn as a guide to the amount of cars to store.

On Sunday they had a public day



**John Bortz** helps set a retaining wall built of 82 pound block.

that brought in 775 people — a large day for them. They haul public May through September, plus several special events.

Sunday afternoon we loaded up and headed out about 6:00 am eastern

time for an uneventful trip back home. The van averaged 12.45 mpg for the trip. This was the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive fall trip there for Dave and me. We look forward to next year and their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 🚂

**St. Croix club members** work on new sidings and a car barn designed with help from PLS photos.



# A 5-Year Plan for PLS

## A To-Do List and Vision for the Club

PLS President Pat Murphy has assembled a project list which was approved conceptually by the membership in July. With input from the board and membership, the list has been extended and refined as shown here. A plan such as this is a work in progress — it is never finalized. Projects are re-

moved after completion and new ones are added as required. The plan itself does not reflect urgency nor funding — those things may have yet to be resolved. It does however serve as a checklist to keep members aware of maintenance issues and a guideline to set the direction for what the club might be.

### A. Current Projects

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Clubhouse passing siding on 4¾" track.               | <u>Completed</u>   |
| 2. Steaming bay lighting.                               | <u>Completed</u>   |
| 3. Preservative coating on benches, table, and trestle. | <u>Completed</u>   |
| 4. Improvement of track signals.                        | <u>Completed</u>   |
| 5. Track surfacing and alignment as required. 1½ and 1" | <u>Ongoing</u>     |
| 6. Front gate.  | <u>In progress</u> |
| 7. Repair or replace PLS sign at entrance.              | <u>Completed</u>   |

### B. Building and Grounds Maintenance/Improvements

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Install gutter on steaming bay roof.                                   | <u>                    </u> |
| 2. Repair or replace trim on Building 6.                                  | <u>Completed</u>            |
| 3. Install sconce light by club door.                                     | <u>                    </u> |
| 4. Renovate Beck Tower  | <u>                    </u> |
| a. Relocate sump pump discharge pipe.                                     | <u>                    </u> |
| b. replace four drain valves.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 5. Paint all steaming bays and existing wood structures.                  | <u>                    </u> |
| 6. Install paved walkway access to club house and station.                | <u>                    </u> |
| 7. Reshingle coal bin.  | <u>Completed</u>            |
| 8. Obtain extended arm chain saw to maintain hard-to-reach tree branches. | <u>                    </u> |
| 9. Replace ballast retention RR ties from mm 4.0.                         | <u>                    </u> |
| 10. A few additional trees, saplings.                                     | <u>Ongoing</u>              |
| 11. Install hand soap dispenser in ladies room.                           | <u>                    </u> |
| 12. Renovate/repaint both bathrooms.                                      | <u>                    </u> |
| 13. Clean and shore up drainage stream to Perkiomen.                      | <u>                    </u> |
| 14. Repair and paint multi-gauge bridge.                                  | <u>                    </u> |
| 15. Repaint T-111 siding on end of steaming bay roof.                     | <u>                    </u> |
| 16. Redo plantings/flowers at Beck Tower.                                 | <u>                    </u> |
| 17. Rebuild drain under Mercer Bridge.                                    | <u>                    </u> |

### C. Track

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Repair or upgrade 4¾" tracks at station.  | <u>                    </u> |
| 2. Additional ash pit location either in yard or passing track at station – would stop servicing congestion in yard. | <u>                    </u> |
| 3. Consider interchange crossover from one-inch to multi-gauge.  | <u>                    </u> |

### D. Signals

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Add flashing crossbucks near club house and public crossing. | <u>                    </u> |
|---|-----------------------------|

### E. Projects to be Developed

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. New 4¾" car storage building   | <u>                    </u> |
| 2. Kitchen improvements/ upgrades   | <u>                    </u> |
| 3. Flag stop indicators at 1½" station.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 4. Center storage shelf with ramp track in car barn.  | <u>                    </u> |
| 5. Develop a plan to construct a flat yard and branch line for storage during meets with passing track and future industrial switching sidings for new challenge and operation. To be located between tunnel and Mercer Bridge. | <u>                    </u> |
| 6. Extend club house awning into parking lot.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 7. Add shower.  | <u>                    </u> |
| 8. Club locomotive.   | <u>Completed</u>            |
| 9. Add a tail track to the eastern end of passing track at parking lot, back to stone bin.  | <u>                    </u> |

### F. Potential Projects

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Extend 1½ station roof over waiting benches.  | <u>                    </u> |
| 2. New wider transfer to replace existing scissors jack.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 3. Web cams to observe if anyone is present on a Sunday.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 4. Refurbish caboose interior for archive storage.   | <u>In progress</u>          |
| 5. Relocate archive files from club house meeting room to caboose to provide additional space in club house. | <u>In progress</u>          |

### G. Organization Projects

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. New Gazette format/facelift and staff.                                   | <u>In progress</u>          |
| 2. Renovate/update bylaws.  | <u>                    </u> |
| 3. Explore grant possibilities.   | <u>                    </u> |
| 4. Develop "Each one Teach One" policy into regular membership recruitment. | <u>                    </u> |
| 5. Continue to develop machine shop winter projects and seminars.           | <u>                    </u> |
| 6. Develop and implement firing and trackwork open house.                   | <u>                    </u> |

# It's a Small World

By Murray Wilson

Photo by Allen Underkoffler

## Butane Or Alcohol?


In gauge 1 live steam today one of the most debated subjects is the relative merits of butane and alcohol as fuel. Years ago, long before butane became an option, alcohol was the most commonly used fuel, but gasoline and kerosene had their devotees too. Though alcohol may seem similar to the other two in practice it is not. Gasoline and kerosene in locomotive boiler use require a blowtorch type of burner. Such a burner's rate of fuel flow depends only on the setting of its flow control valve and in this it is similar to the typical butane burner of today.

Alcohol burned with a wick burner behaves like solid fuel in a locomotive type boiler in that the intensity of the fire is controlled by the boiler's draft. A fundamental and very desirable characteristic of the locomotive boiler when fired with these fuels is that the rate of combustion will tend to follow changes in the steam flow and hold the steam pressure steady. The more exhaust blast there is the faster the fuel is burned. Because there is no ash to clog up a grate and upset the air flow an alcohol fired locomotive can be set up so steam pressure is automatically maintained over a considerable range of load and speed. The balance is unlikely to extend over the full range, but it can be optimized.

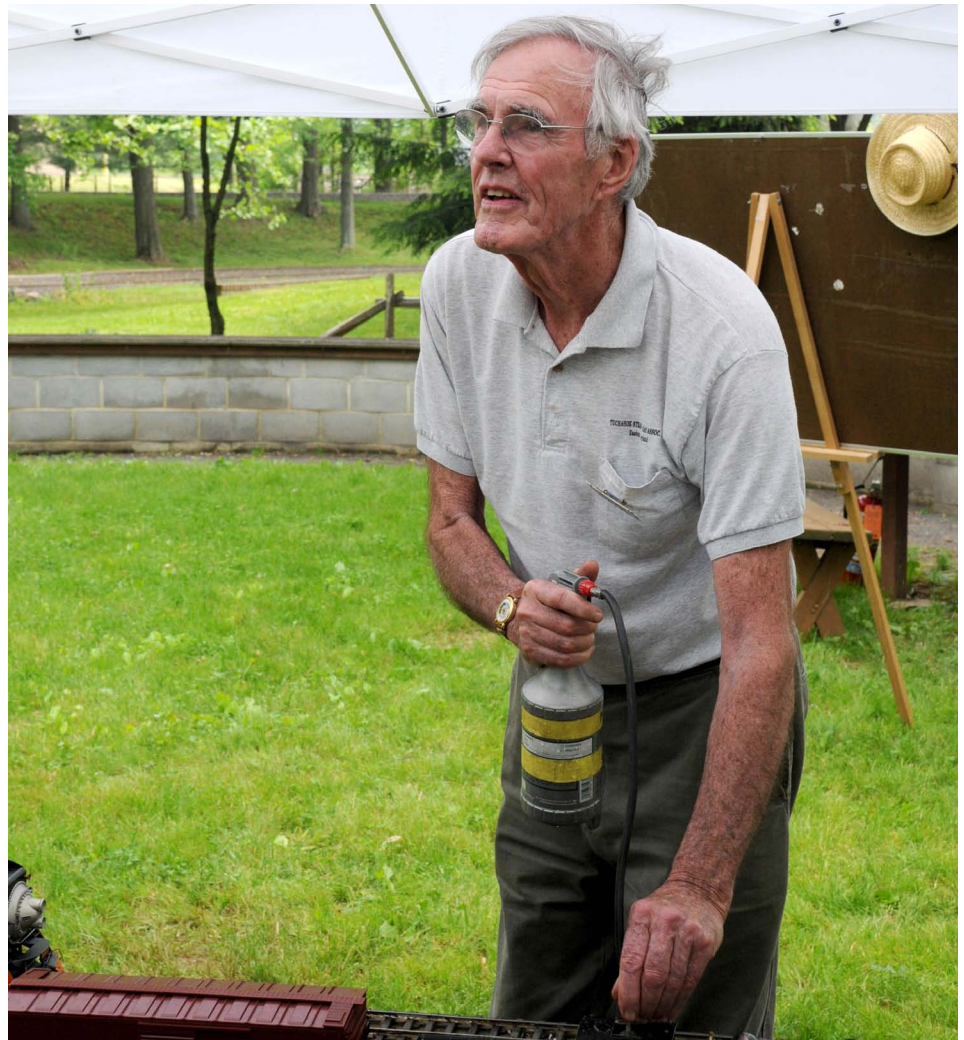
This setting up may involve quite a lot of experimentation and testing. It is not just a matter of adjusting the height and bore of the blast nozzle, the entry area for the combustion air must be matched and the wicks trimmed appropriately. Probably all alcohol fired engines made commercially allow far too much combustion air to enter, they may also have too much wick or even too many wicks. It can happen that wick holders must be removed from an engine and the space be blanked off in order to get good steaming. That

is the extreme, but all the engines I've worked on benefited from reducing the airflow. The combustion engineer's ideal of the theoretically perfect fuel to air ratio, the stoichiometric ratio (commonly referred to as 'stoke'), is not achieved even on the most advanced of full sized stationary boilers and we certainly cannot aspire to running anywhere near to "stoke" on a simple boiler, but usually we can get a lot closer than the original designer did. It is very satisfying to achieve set-

tings which give a good range of speed and load over which the boiler will maintain pressure but not blow off, all without manually adjusting the fuel flow. A secondary advantage is that the fuel consumption is minimized.

Gas firing loses all that. The boiler's self regulating characteristic is gone and manual adjustment of the gas flow is essentially all the steam pressure control that is available. Why would anyone choose butane as fuel when this is the penalty? 

**Murray Wilson** pumps water into a gauge 1 engine while answering a question.



## Turkey Trot Meet Is Spared the Rain

It looked a little iffy because it rained during the night, but by mid morning the weather cleared and "Tur-

key Trot" came off as scheduled on the day after Thanksgiving.

Seven members and three guests including one from Scotland had a great day running their steam trains on the gauge 1 track. Two members with 1" equipment showed up to run as well.

— *Harry E. Quirk*



Gauge 1 members enjoy "Turkey Trot" run day. — *Robert Wilson*

## PLS Workshops

Winter before last we held six separate workshops for members. We would like to continue this activity but are faced with two problems. We need people to hold them and we need people to attend. If you would be interested in holding a workshop please contact me. If you would like to attend one or more workshops please contact me (see below) and indicate what kinds of workshop would be of most interest to you. In the past we held workshops on simple lathe work, silver soldering, and welding. We would be very interested in having an introductory workshop on the use of the milling machine.

Workshops could also deal with an aspect of modeling trains, their operation or their history.

Please contact Lynn Hammond with e-mail at [brillcar@aol.com](mailto:brillcar@aol.com) or at my cell 484-238-7335.

— *Lynn Hammond*

## FIRST CLASS

**The PLS GAZETTE**

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