



The PLS GAZETTE

September-October 2010

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Along the Main Line

Fall represents a change of seasons and transition to winter. Leaves are falling now and the annual property clean up will soon follow after our last run day later this month. If we do not gather the leaves and prepare for winter, the clutter, snow and spring thaws will wreak havoc on drainage and facilities around the property. Remember that leaves and twigs can no longer be burned or deposited over the embankment. They must be deposited at the designated area.

For some, fall can also signal the time for other changes. As you read this issue of the **PLS GAZETTE**, you will see major changes in the appearance of this publication. For some it will be welcome, for others, well, it may take some time to adjust. If so, just take a deep breath and give it a try. For everyone else, read on and enjoy the content.

This issue marks the first effort from our new editor, Allen Underkofler, who has taken over from Phil Paskos. We are most appreciative of Phil for his years of service. Allen has revised the look and content of our publication, much as he did with our web site. He has agreed to perform the duties of editor for one year. Communication and sharing the enjoyment of the hobby among our members is part of the club atmosphere. The Gazette for many is the “public face” of the club.

Your support is needed in submitting noteworthy articles for publication. These articles do not need to be lengthy, but should be relevant to the club and live steaming and will require

some thoughtful effort. Articles on your personal live steam basement project; your travels to other live steam events or tracks; “how-to” shop and machining tips; and reports of PLS club activities are welcome. They can cover the present or reflect on years gone by. It is up to the editor to choose what to use and how best to shape it so that the look is clean, exciting and worthy of the club. There are many photos in the club archives of past run days for which no names nor dates

appear.

Allen can be reached by e-mail. His address is pls@apunderkofler.com. Or, you can contact him by phone via the club directory. Let Allen and the board know what you think of the new look. Don't miss the train — support this publication.

Other activities – A better front gate has been obtained and we are now appealing for leadership and help

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PLS Under Water

PLS visitors are restricted to members and guests but that didn't keep tropical storm Nicole from trespassing. Heavy rains from the storm on September 29 caused some major flooding at the club as the storm pounded

the area with over ten inches of rain recorded at Graterford.

The water crested sometime between three to four in the morning, placing a considerable amount of the main line under a foot or more of water. The photos shown here were taken

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Along the Main Line

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installing this over the winter months.

Five Year plan – A revised and ordered version of the plan will be posted in the clubhouse soon so that the Board can manage how best to address the projects listed. There are many projects offering people the opportunity to contribute to the upkeep of our property and facilities.

Calendar – Be sure to read the highlighted dates found in the Calendar of Events.

The new **one-inch passing siding** installation by the clubhouse is underway and should be completed soon.

Library Donation of New England Railroad Books

We wish to thank Carl Bruhns for his recent gift of three dozen books dealing with the trains of New England such as the Boston and Maine. They make a very fine addition to our library first because all but two are books which we did not have and second, they are all substantial scholarly books which you do not see very often.

Please let me take this occasion to remind you all that our library of over 750 books and videos is a lending library. All members (regular and associate) are welcome to take out our train books and videos. The lending

period is one month. You can sign out an item from Lynn Hammond, club librarian, or any officer or board member can assist you in doing so. If you care to donate train books or videos to the club, we will add the books we do not have to our library and sell those where we already have a copy. We are currently updating our catalog and it will be available at the club shortly.

PLS Is Looking for an Archivist

Recently, Bob Watson has contributed his extensive collection of photographs taken at PLS over a twenty year period of associate membership. We

financial resources to obtain equipment for the larger scales.

See you at the Track!

Pat Murphy, President, PLS

thank him for this valuable donation. We have many other photographs both of the club activities and pictures of interesting trains in general. This brings up an important need for the club. We are hoping that one of you associate or regular members will step forward and offer to be our club archivist. This person would organize our club photo collection into an accessible database. This could be done at that member's leisure in various ways from making scrapbooks even to creating a digital record on the computer if you are so inclined.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone who would like to become more acquainted with the club and its membership. They could participate when they so desired on either a Sat-

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2010 PLS Calendar of Events

Sunday, Oct. 3	Run Day Rain Date
Saturday, Oct. 16	Membership Meeting – 12:30 PM
Saturday, Oct. 23	Fall Clean Up
Sunday, Oct. 24	Run Day – Members & Guests
Sunday, Oct. 31	Run Day Rain Date
Friday, Nov. 26	Turkey Trot Day

Gauge One – Help is needed in maintaining this layout. If you haven't yet done so, take a peek at the gauge 1 layout. This particular scale lends itself well to the beginner live steam enthusiast who has neither the space nor

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

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PLS Is Looking for an Archivist

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urday or Wednesday and as part of the task, they would have good occasion to ask other members about the photos

and in this way gather the information needed in order to create the archive. There are no time-lines for this task. Right now the photos just sit in boxes and any progress made on the task would be a real contribution to

the club and quite a bit of fun. Please contact any officer or board member if you are interested.

— Lynn Hammond

PLS Under Water

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at 9:30 Friday morning after the water had gone down 16 inches. It dropped another five inches 40 minutes later.

The track most effected was adjacent to the Perkiomen Creek. The pooling effect of the heavy rain caught some low areas in addition to those not directly flooded by the creek.

A few members showed up on Saturday to assist in the cleanup and tie replacement. Things were back in order in a short time. We thank those who helped with the cleanup.

— Bruce Saylor

Bridge Over Troubled Water —

Much of the main line was submerged. Fortunately, the water receded quickly.



Right: The high water mark can be seen on two courses of block above the track level in the first tunnel.

Below: The receding water left the right-of-way covered with leaves and other floating debris.



Perfect Weather for the Fall Meet

Photographs by Allen Underkofler

The 2010 season has been great weather-wise for the major events at PLS. Labor Day weekend provided a perfect backdrop for the annual Fall Meet.

Saturday's turnout was light until the late afternoon when members and guests started arriving for the pot-luck supper.

Grilling was again handled by Jay Shupard, a man with the ability to cook for a hundred hungry people by using just one grill. Jay was assisted by his family and John Geib and his family.

After dinner, trains continued to run well into the night. (*See back cover.*)

Clockwise from Right: "Big" John Geib lends a hand to a stalled train; Carl Miller with his grandson Nick at the throttle; Steve Getz





Clockwise from Above: John Lukasavage Jr. runs his K4; members line up for Jay Shupard's burgers; Jim and Sharon Connelly; Buddy Borders flashes his familiar smile.



Fall Meet Thanks

PLS had an excellent group staffing the kitchen during this year's event from setup to cleanup. Kathy Parris wishes to thank those who provided baked goods and/or volunteered in the kitchen including, among others: Catherine Barker, Bruce Barrett, Nancy Blackson, Tom Caldwell, Sharon Connelly, George Cooper, Mary Lou Delp, Joan Freer, Al Hein, Pat Heller, Roberta Henderson, Julia Kiefer, Dave Laird, Chuck Leindecker, Jane McDewitt, Walt Mensch, Barb Miller, Ginny Morris, Carol Quirk, Harry Quirk, Deb Rose, Bruce Saylor, Mary Saylor, Barry Shapin, Richard Speak, Dave Taylor, Judy Taylor, Rose Ann Wagner, Sue Webb, and Frank Wilus.

Jay Shupard and his family with help from John Geib and family did a

magnificent job of grilling and serving.

Also, special thanks to Redner's Warehouse Markets for their continued support.



Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Michael Haenn Jr., Will Lindley, Samuel Weber, Jeff Stahl, Robert H. Stevenson, Charles Leindecker, Stephanie Legault, Amber Tucholski, Robert W. Gerhart, Donald S. Hawley, Frederick Leeds, Donald C. Patterson, Terry L. Trickel, William T. Vanderslice, Ed White, Patricia Coin, Brian Ley, Ian Grant, Lawrence R. Moss Jr., David J. Yoder, and Neil Tyson.

Richard G. Moore, Eric Peffel, Richard A. Poletto, and Jared Schoenly are new probationary Regular Members.

Gauge 1 — The Second Time Around

It's a Small World

By Murray Wilson

Photos by Allen Underkofler

A century ago gauge 1 was considered the smallest practical gauge for live steam models and it flourished, though mainly in Britain. There were firms such as Bassett Lowke, Jubb and Bonds who made commercial models, but engines were usually built by their owners, possibly using cylinders purchased as finished items as a lathe was a luxury. The catalogues of that time show a wonderful variety of parts and accessories. Many of the parts suppliers succumbed to hard times in the 1930s or the strictures of WW II and gauge 1 itself more or less died out.

After WW II a small group of enthusiasts in Britain decided to try and revive interest in the gauge and they formed the Gauge 1 Model Railway Association (G1MRA). Of necessity the members normally built their own engines, but the aim of the Association was to persuade manufacturers to start catering to the gauge, which had otherwise largely been overtaken by gauge O and then HO. The membership represented all forms of propulsion, but overwhelmingly the preference was for steam, in 10mm or $\frac{3}{8}$ " scale standard gauge.

In the USA too the once universally popular gauge O had lost out to HO and only the rare lone wolf worked in gauge 1. The introduction here of LGB electric trains in 1968 revived interest in gauge 1 and set the stage for acceptance of the Japanese made Aster locomotives in 1975. With noted British gauge 1 steam expert John van Riemsdijk as their consultant and sometime designer Aster's first engine was the "Schools" class 4-4-0 of the English Southern Railway. Even though it was of British outline 3,000 were sold worldwide at a price that in the USA was about \$350. The design was purely 1930s British technology,



Left to right: Murray Wilson, Roy Ganderton and Rob Kuhlman at Mike Moore's portable track. Could it be that geologist Rob Kuhlman is thinking about rocks?

even to the Smithies boiler, but it was and is a wonderful runner.

Aster continued with generally smaller batches of engines of types usually targeted at particular countries. Some such as the Pennsylvania K4 remain in great demand today. Inevitably Aster's success invited competition and about ten years ago Accucraft entered the market with the Ruby, a narrow gauge 0-4-0. This was priced at \$299, but Accucraft quickly realized they did not need to sell it so cheaply and raised the price to \$399. It is now about \$500 but still an attractive buy and a magnet for kit bashers, as the Mamod had been twenty years earlier.

Like Aster, Accucraft quickly moved to more advanced models, but unlike Aster they apparently did not have a designer or consultant of the caliber

of John van Riemsdijk for they made some very basic mistakes. Aster in their time had made some too and not all Aster engines had been satisfactory runners without considerable tweaking by the owner. In a way this turned out to be a plus for the hobby for many buyers who perhaps had not considered they possessed the skills to work on an engine found that, when forced to, it wasn't so hard after all. This in turn led to the realization they were perfectly capable of kit-bashing a purchased engine into what they would really have preferred to have. With the high cost of an Aster engine today probably not many current products will be kit bashed, but some Accucraft engines are still at a price where they may be regarded as a good starting point for a project. So there are now

many kit-bashed engines to be seen and it is not always obvious what the engine had started life as.

Even though very few people in the

USA build their own gauge 1 engine from scratch it still is a hands-on hobby, the typical owner is not content just to run a standard 'out-of-the-box'

engine. The big difference between gauge 1 activity here and in the UK is that in the UK an individual normally runs either "standard gauge" or narrow gauge. Not both. Many 'standard gaugers' there simply will not run on the same track as narrow gaugers. In the USA however it is quite common for an owner to have both standard and narrow gauge engines. At PLS we welcome anything that can get through the tunnel and circle the track without interfering with a train on the adjacent line. The upper limit seems to be $\frac{7}{8}$ " scale narrow gauge locos (1:13.7), "standard gauge" engines being 1:32.

So though at a casual glance it may appear not much but running goes on at the gauge 1 track in fact the activity is a partial throwback to the early days of clubs such as PLS. Time was that building, tuning and modifying engines was the main interest of members, the track was there so the engines could be test run. Well running is important to today's gauge 1 people, but very often a run is a tryout of a new idea or modification. Most importantly members are following the original "mission" of the club, preserving the days of steam. 🚂

Justin Koch's coal-fired narrow gauge K27 started life as an Accucraft electric model. Justin converted the engine to coal-fired steam.

Below: An Aster 'Berkshire' on the trestle.





Passengers wait at the station for evening train rides late Saturday night during the Fall Meet. — *Allen Underkoffler*



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FIRST CLASS