



The PLS GAZETTE

P.O. Box 26202
Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

FIRST CLASS

Mickey Mouse peers out of the cab keeping an eye on conditions while his visiting New Jersey passengers enjoy their ride during the Fall Meet.

Allen Underkofler



The PLS GAZETTE

September–October 2012

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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From Along the PLS Main Line

Fall has arrived and Sunday, October 28 is our last scheduled run day for 2012. The season sure seems to go by in a hurry. Since the last *Gazette*, we've had two run days with the Fall Meet sandwiched in between. The meet was rather lightly attended, compared to other recent meets; however everyone who attended appeared to enjoy themselves. The pot luck dinner was a success, as usual, and I would like to extend our thanks to the

grill master, Jay Shupard, his helpers and all those who contributed food items.

In addition to our members, we also had two groups visit for the September 23 run day. There were about thirty members from the Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and about ten folks from Ann's Choice retirement community in Warminster. There was considerable interaction between those guests and PLS members and all appeared to have had a good time.

The project to add additional storage tracks to the equipment storage building, reported on in the last

Gazette, has been completed. All three tracks have been allocated and are now occupied with members' equipment. PLS thanks everyone who worked to complete that project.

With the coming of fall is also the coming of the leaves – and there will be no scarcity of them at PLS. So, anyone wishing to help with the leaf cleanup will be welcome to participate through the next few weeks.

Hope to see you at the final run day.

Safe Steaming,
Lee Nonnemacher – President

Car Storage Building Addition Completed

Work on the car storage building was completed in time for the fall meet. The final portion was the access ramp and track. Shown in the left photo the Wednesday work crew is awaiting the next batch of concrete for the support piers. It is being mixed on the left by (L-R) Henry

Blanco White, John Bortz, Jr. and Bruce Saylor (hidden behind Henry). Waiting to pour the concrete are (L-R) Jim Salmons, Walt Mensch, Jim Rich and Larry Moss. The finished ramp is shown in the right photo complete with new turnout and track.

— *Lee Nonnemacher*



Trains and Schools

As custodian of our library here at PLS, I get exposed to quite a variety of materials that in one way or another are train related. One example, new to me, was educational materials that the train industry sponsored for elementary and middle school education.

The two documents that have come to us are from the Association of American Railroads, which I assume was the major agency representing the railroads. Both are from the 1940's and take me back to my then encounters with the "Weekly Reader" in school.

Reading such a view over half a century later has a strong impact.

The Stories Behind the Pictures for Primary and Intermediate Grades. No authors listed. Association of American Railroads, Washington, D. C. 1942.

The Modern Wonder Book of trains and Railroadng. Norman Carlisle. John C. Winston Co., 1947.

— Lynn Hammond

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members William W. Colleran, Barry Moore, Dawson B. Turner, Joe Bergmaier, Jack J. Lanyon, Marc Palmerio, Elmer M. Knapp, John Dolhanczyk Jr, David Galpern, David Ortlip, and Matthew J. Haines, plus Minor Associate member, Sophie Aaron. Also, Brittany Grimm and Jeff Dolhanczyk have applied for Regular membership.

2012 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, Oct. 20	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Fall Clean Up Afternoon/Evening Run*
Sunday, Oct. 28	Run Day - Members & Guests
Sunday, Nov. 4	Run Day Rain Date
Saturday, Nov. 17	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Friday, Nov. 23	Turkey Trot Run – Gauge 1 only – (rides not available)
Saturday, Dec. 15	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

Fall Meet Thanks

We had very dedicated members staffing the kitchen during the meet. PLS is grateful to those who volunteered in the kitchen and/or provided baked goods. This includes, among others: Al Hein, Rose Ann Wagner, Sharon Connelly, Sue Borders, Cathy Barker, Walt Mensch, Barry Shapin, Mary Saylor, Bruce Saylor, Bob Freer, Carol Quirk, Barb Miller, Sue Webb, Donna Latino, Bruce Barrett, Pam Rice, Pat Speak, Dave Laird, George Cooper, and Jim Connelly. Special mention also of continued support by Redner's Warehouse Markets.

— Kathy Parris

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during August and September: Jim Stapleton, Mike Moore, Pat Murphy, and Ed Faller.

Membership Gauge

As of September 30, PLS has:

- 105 Regular Members
- 289 Associate Members
- 8 Honorary Members

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Lee Nonnemacher	1474 North Wales Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422-3687	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	Robert Blackson	303 North Tulpehocken Road, Reading, PA 19601	PennsylvaniaLiveSteamer@comcast.net
Treasurer	Walter Mensch	1348 Sheep Hill Rd., Pottstown, PA 19465	
Gazette Editor	Allen Underkofler	Box 609, Kimberton, PA 19442-0609	pls@apunderkofler.com

Board of Directors: John Bortz Jr., jonyx@netzero.net; Sharon Connelly, connellywood@verizon.net; Bob Freer, W3YLT@Juno.com; Paul Rice, ricepaul@verizon.net; Jim Salmons, jshay6@verizon.net; Ron Shupard, shusmoke@aol.com.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc. • P.O. Box 26202, Collegeville, PA. 19426-0202 • 610-454-0477 • www.palivesteamers.org



Dennis McCoy

Ron on the New Hope and Ivyland.

makes up No 3 & 4 of Volume 27 of the Bee-Line for our lending-library.)

Unfortunately, some property owners bordering the track were annoyed with the return of trains and found a legal way of putting an end to their use of the right of way after two years of operation. At this point, the Valley Forge Scenic Railroad merged with the New Hope & Ivyland which still runs today from New Hope, Pennsylvania. All the coaches and most of the volunteers including Ron Shupard went to New Hope. The engines still run today, the pacific is now at a tourist railroad in Temple, Pennsylvania, while the switcher runs at a road in Delaware. The coaches still run today in passenger trains at New Hope, thanks largely to volunteers like Ron and Bruce.

Ron earned his qualification as an Engineer based on the Reading Rule Book while working at the New Hope & Ivyland.

Around 1971, many of the core group from the old Valley Forge Scenic Railroad left New Hope after a series of disagreements among volunteers. The group stayed together building what is now an extensive On3 narrow gauge layout in Bruce Saylor's basement. The group still meets at Bruce's on Wednesday nights.

For a few years after this, Ron along with several others from the old group like Denny McCoy started volunteering at the Morristown & Erie, another

small railroad located in Morristown, New Jersey that did both freight and tourist operation. Since he was a certified engineer he ran engines in regular freight service including an experience with an oil-burning pacific (ex FEC #148).

During the 1975–76 period described above, Ron was already a member of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers having joined in 1971. At this date, the early Rahns members of PLS had just finished the multi-gauge track—the first, and at that time—the only running track here at our current site. Although he was only an associate member

then, Ron began a 40-year-plus contribution to the building and maintenance of the club railroad.

Meanwhile, Ron continued to learn more about building steam engines, honing his machining skills, and working on a series of incomplete engines. Very few of the steam engines that you see traveling around our track on a run day were built entirely by one person. It is even rarer that the owner of the engine is the builder.

After working on a number of partially build engines, Ron purchased a 1-inch scale 2-8-2 "Mikado" steam engine in 1986. That engine had reached the stage in its construction where it could be run but was doing so poorly and lacked much of the detail that is needed to complete the model. By 1988 Ron had finished the engine such that it ran well and was an accurate model of the real engine. And it still runs today very frequently here at PLS.

When member Jim Ziegler passed away in the early 1990's Ron purchased the boxcar electric that Jim had built from scratch and Ron still runs that frequently today. In 2011 Ron purchased a 1-inch model of a 4-6-4 "Hudson" that had been built by current PLS member LaMar Delp which needed finishing. LaMar offered the engine to Ron on very kind and generous terms for which he is very appreciative. Ron still runs that engine today. As a result, Ron has three run-

ning engines at the club. He greatly assisted his machinist son, Jay Shupard, who is also an active full member of PLS, in the building of a 1 ½ inch scale model of a Pennsylvania A4 0-4-0 live steam switcher. Ron has been working for many years on an East Broad Top 2-6-2 narrow gauge engine, number 11, which would run on 1-inch track.

Ron has been married for many years. His wife Bonnie, a frequent visitor and contributor to the club, was also active with Valley Forge Scenic Railroad. They have a grown daughter and a son Jay, a club member. They also have three grandchildren, Quinton, Victoria and Alexandra, two of which have learned how to run Jay's 0-4-0.

Ron has been contributing to our club for many years. He currently serves on the board, and served a two-year stint previously. He was editor of the *Gazette* for about ten years. He has probably contributed his efforts to almost all of the major projects at the club including welding and assembly work on Mercer Bridge.

If you visit the club on most of our Wednesday and Saturday workdays, you will see Ron engaged in a renovation or maintenance task. On run days, he can usually be seen on one of his engines.



Allen Underkofler

People at PLS

By Lynn Hammond



Allen Underkofler

Ron Shupard – *The development of a rail fan*

Fever Machinist Shows in York, Pa.

After the Alan Wood plant closed, Ron went on the road driving trucks for several different firms until retiring recently.

While working at Alan Wood, Ron went to Montco Tech night school, in Norristown, where he took several

semesters of coursework which dealt with the machinist trade. Of relevance to our hobby, several other students taking the course at the same time had a keen interest in large and small trains. One of them was well-known PLS member Bruce Saylor. The course instructor was very supportive of their interest in applying budding machinist skills to producing parts for miniature trains.

Ron had already met Bruce Saylor earlier in a rather curious way. At that time, Bruce worked as a milkman and he would drive by Ron's house on his route. Bruce's milk truck had a noisy muffler and when Bruce made his deliveries very early in the morning, he would wake Ron's father. Bruce's name became a frequent topic of family conversation. Ron went to one of the "Reading Rambles" rail fan trips and there was this Saylor fellow, another very strong rail fan. A friendship ensued that leads us to the tale of the Valley Forge Scenic Railroad.

Malcolm Ottinger owned a steam engine—a very large one. He and several dozen or so other people got to-

gether to restore the engine and run on some track just west of Phoenixville, Pa. In 1968, Malcolm, Ron, Bruce Saylor, Guy Obrecht, Denny McCoy, Keith Dorn, Henry Townsend and several others formed the core of a for-profit organization called the Valley Forge Scenic Railway. Ron, Bruce and Keith are members of PLS today; Henry and Guy were members of PLS when the club was at Paoli. The organization obtained the right of way of about 2 ½ miles of track that ran from a place called Ironsides on route 23 (a little west of where the Sears and K-mart are located today), through the village of Kimberton, past its brick station (still standing) and then ran a little further to the south. The track was part of what was once the Pickering Valley branch of the Reading Railroad.

The Valley Forge Scenic Railroad had two steam engines and a number of passenger cars all of which were restored by this group of enthusiasts. One engine (number 425) was a Pacific with a 4-6-2 wheel arrangement and the other was an 0-6-0 switching engine. There were two different sets of passenger cars. One set consisted of two older ones of the clerestory roof variety while the other set consisted of four round roof Reading cars (like the American Flyer version). All this equipment was restored to attractive working order and then was used in a revenue gathering tourist operation. The Reading Company Technical and Historical Society *Bee-Line* ran a lengthy article on the Valley Forge Scenic Railroad in 2005. (We are currently seeking a copy of this article which

Fall Meet Photos

Some trains and faces seen at the Fall Meet — people having fun.

— Allen Underkofler



Clockwise from top, center: Brittany Grimm on Bill Shield's 2-8-0 camelback; "Big" John Geib in his Stetson engineer's bowler; Adam Madlinger at Mercer Bridge; young visitor on a ride; Eric Peffel, Rose Ann Wagner's birthday cake; St. Croix visitor Danielle Bissonnette on Bruce Saylor's Hudson.



The Lindbergh Locomotive

When a PRR E6 raced an airplane By Bob Thomas

Before television, news of major importance was reported to the public by radio, newspapers and motion picture films. Feature films in theatres usually were preceded by a short “newsreel” of abbreviated news-worthy items produced and distributed to theatres by national news agencies. Large cities even had theatres dedicated exclusively to news films, like the compact Trans-Lux in Philadelphia. A one-hour sequence of current news was continually repeated, enabling patrons to come and go at their convenience – not unlike KYW without the commercials. Competition among news reel production companies was more intense than in television today; great pride and valuable bragging rights were claimed by the company that got the story on the screen first.

No event in the first half of the Twentieth Century captured public imagination more than the first non-stop transatlantic solo flight by Charles A. Lindbergh on May 20-21, 1927. Lindy had set out alone on his high risk flight of 33.5 hours from Roosevelt Field on Long Island to Le Bourget Aerodrome near Paris. Seconds after he landed, a crowd of 125,000 jubilant onlookers rushed past police and army guards to hail the bashful pilot in recognition of his success. The American hero was feted in Europe and England before returning to the U.S. aboard U.S.S. Memphis for the voyage to Washington, D.C. and unparalleled public adulation.

Official recognition of Lindbergh’s extraordinary achievement was planned for June 11th, when President Calvin Coolidge would award him the Distinguished Flying Cross at a public reception before a crowd of thousands in Washington, D.C. That was just the kind of news story that drew throngs of viewers to movie houses! Two news film agencies made preparations to go head-to-head to be first in showing the



The “Lindbergh” Atlantic at Lenola, Pennsylvania. Date and photographer unknown.

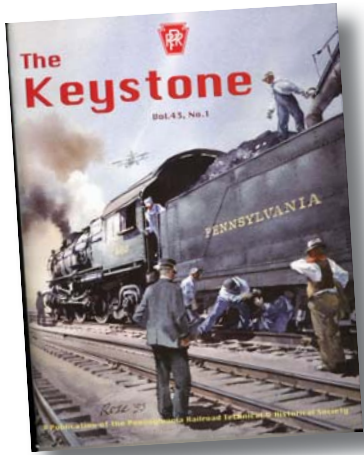
event to enthusiastic movie goers in New York City. Two years earlier The International News Reel Company had sent its films of Coolidge’s inauguration from Washington to New York as they were being processed aboard a PRR train and they were going to do the same thing for the Lindbergh event. Their competitor, perhaps riding the wave of interest in air travel, chartered an airplane to fly its film to Long Island, where it would be developed and printed for distribution in the Manhattan theatre district.

International News Reel had leased PRR B60 baggage car No. 7874, in which a complete film processing lab was set up for developing, editing and duplicating motion picture films of the Lindbergh award ceremony. Officials from the three PRR divisions the train would be traversing rode behind the baggage car in P70 coach No. 3301. The locomotive for this abbreviated train was E6s Atlantic No. 460, specially selected for its crucial assignment after proving itself with ten days of trouble-free service following overhaul in the Wilmington shops. 460’s crew had been chosen for their keen knowledge of the route to New York and the

engineman was given permission to go as fast as safely possible. Freight traffic was diverted well ahead of “The Lindbergh Special” as it stood in readiness to depart from Washington Union Station.

Canisters of exposed film arrived by courier from the reception and 460 Extra East was its way at 12:14 PM. Capacious capacity of E6 tenders meant there would be no need for coal stops, and it was planned to pick up water from track pans for a non-stop run. Those plans were disrupted when the water scoop failed to drop properly near Wilmington, requiring the train to stop while the damaged scoop was lifted clear of the track. But all was not lost; the engineman spotted the tender under a water plug so his fireman could take on water during maintenance. An iconic painting by Ted Rose captures the intensity of the moment as mechanics crawl under the tender while the conductor, engineman and a supervisor look on anxiously.

Scoop repairs completed, the train continued on its way, dashing to Manhattan Transfer 2 hours and 56 minutes after its Washington departure. DD-1 No. 16 then replaced 460 to haul



Ted Rose’s painting on the cover of the PRR&HS *Keystone* Vol. 43, No. 1.

the train through the Hudson Tunnel to New York Pennsylvania Station where taxi cabs were waiting to rush projection-ready films to Broadway theatres. Average speed for the trip, including the maintenance stop was 74 mph, with typical road speed of 85 mph rising to 115 mph on favorable stretches. By comparison, today’s AMTRAK Acela Express No. 2166 takes 2 hours and 45 minutes to make the trip with very brief station stops at BWI and Wilmington, and 2 minutes in Philadelphia. That is no better than 460 Extra, discounting its delay for scoop maintenance and motive power change at Manhattan Transfer. Even considering differences in the two trains’ consists, it is legitimate to ask how far have we have actually progressed in 85 years.

The competing air plane landed on Long Island before the Pennsy Lind-

bergh Special pulled into Pennsylvania Station. However, exposed films that the plane carried still had to be developed, printed, edited, and duplicated before delivery to theatres in far off Manhattan. The net result was that those theatres were scooped a full hour by movie houses that were already projecting pictures from reels delivered by 460 Extra – a lifetime in the news reel business!

E6 Class locomotives were designed by Alfred Gibbs, General Superintendent, Lines East, to cope with the higher weight of the all-steel passenger cars PRR introduced in the early 1900s. Recognizing the vital role of steaming capacity on the performance of his new locomotive, Gibbs adapted the boiler of the successful H8 2-8-0 freight locomotive. High speed operation was assured by 80” light weight drivers and hollow piston valves. Superb tracking characteristics of the E6 resulted from Gibbs’ suspension design with the lead truck equalized with the first set of drivers and separate equalizing the advanced KW cast steel trailing truck with the second driver wheelset. The new engine lived up to expectations and really came alive after fitting of a superheater on the E6s. Gibbs’ masterpiece was used on the *Broadway Limited* and all other premier trains of the Pennsylvania Railroad until it was finally displaced by the larger K4 Pacific. A total of 83 E6s locomotives were built at Juniata, of which No. 460 was the last. Following introduction of K4s, the E6 was relegated to secondary service, in this region notably to speedy locals in

South Jersey and legendary seashore excursion trains operated by the P-RSL. No. 460 was removed from service in 1956 to join PRR’s Historical Collection. Fortunately steam enthusiast William Volkmer was general foreman where the engine was stored and he saw that it was maintained as best as possible. In 1979 460 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, ensuring its preservation. The “original” 460 (with a tender from No. 1565 and various parts from other E6s) now resides in the restoration shop of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania where stripping, priming and major external renovations are in progress. The entire cab is being rebuilt and the tender will have rusted-out sheets restored or replaced. Heavy repairs are made across the street in the shops of the Strasburg Rail Road. Restoration of 460 to full running condition is economically out of the question but rapid strides, estimated to cost over \$300,000, are being made to bring the appearance of the famed locomotive to the same high standard as other PRR equipment in the museum’s inside display hall. Tentative plans call for the drivers to turn when activated by a visitor in the vicinity of a proximity detector.

Given the historic significance of the Lindbergh Locomotive, it would certainly be appropriate for any PLS members so inclined – or even PLS as an organization – to support the worthy effort of the Museum in making 460 and its storied history accessible to future generations. 🚂

