



The PLS GAZETTE

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

FIRST CLASS



Bruce Saylor

The John Bortz Family has donated his John Deere tractor with mower, snow blower attachment, a four-foot trailer and Troy-built chipper replacing the club's unpopular Cub Cadet. John senior approved this donation and we are grateful for his gift.



The PLS GAZETTE

November–December 2013

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

We have a number of important goals at the Pennsylvania Live Steamers. One is to share (educate) our guests and associate members about large scale model railroading. Although large might not be the best or only description as the smallest Gauge One trains you see on the ground at PLS look like they might be suitable for use under a Christmas tree, but if you take a second look you will find that all our Gauge One engines have a fire burning in the fire box and belch smoke and steam from their smoke stack. These little engines are much better suited to outdoor running. Besides Gauge One you will find there are 4 larger track gauges (distance between the rails) and scale sizes on the ground and with each larger gauge you find engines of increased size and power. The largest and most powerful trains will easily pull 70 feet of passenger cars carrying 25 or more full size adults. This is a hobby with many facets that many find enjoyable, fascinating, exciting, gratifying and I am sure somewhat puzzling too.

The reason I say puzzling is because over the years I have been approached by many newcomers to the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, both invited guests and Associate Members, and asked many simple questions. “I didn’t know you guys were here.” “How much does one of those engines cost?” “Where do these trains come from?” “Did you build that caboose?” “Is that a real steam engine?” “How long have

you been here?” “Where did the track come from?” “Who built all of this?” Often these questions are asked after one has taken a ride on one of our trains or is standing in front of the steaming bay watching an engine come to life as it is being steamed up and readied for a day on the track. Some of these questions are easy to answer and some not so easy.

Here are a few answers to some of those most common questions. PLS was founded in Paoli, Pennsylvania in 1946 and relocated to Rahns in 1970. All of the original track from Paoli was brought to Rahns and is still on the ground today. Over the past 46 years the railroad layout has continued to grow using purchased rail that was made from PLS tooling that was sent to large commercial aluminum extrusion shop that squeezed out thousands of feet of new rail for many of our expansion projects. Only two buildings were on the property in 1970, the clubhouse and the small shop building next to the large sta-

tion. Everything else you see on the property was planned, laid-out and built by the PLS membership. Our membership consists of people from all walks of life. These include educators, machinists, carpenters, surveyors, masons, architects, truck drivers, train engineers, business people, electricians, engineers, lawyers and the list goes on. All have an interest in some part of PLS model railroading. Some of our members like to build trains from scratch including making patterns to cast metal parts used in the construction of locomotives and train cars. This includes making those parts to exact scale using original railroad shop drawings some more than 100 years old. This is followed by machining of those parts to the finished component like one of the driver wheels used on a highly detailed steam engine or the dome on a tank car. Other members like to run and maintain finished engines and cars they have purchased. What is the cost of the trains you see

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Bill Normart, who recently turned 92, stands in front of the station roof extension he designed. Bill was also the designer of the original station over 20 year ago. *Story on p7.*



Green Signals Ahead

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running at PLS? A Gauge One engine can be purchased as a bolt together kit for as little as a few hundred dollars for a small simple engine to more than ten thousand dollars for a larger detailed model. For the larger engines a diesel can be purchased for a few thousand dollars to more than fifteen thousand dollars from companies like the Mountain Car Company, (www.mountaincar.com/Locomotives-in-Production.html) and most large steam engines start at more than eight thousand dollars and for some the sky is the limit. Good deals can be found in all size and types of equipment by watching and shopping websites like Discover Live Steam (www.discoverlivesteam.com/discoverforsale/locomotive.html). If you look a little closer at the Discover Live Steam website you will see suppliers that sell parts and provide services to the large scale railroading hobbyist and have many used engines and cars in many different sizes (track gauge and scale) across a wide range of price. For those interested in building an engine you can find projects that have been started by a builder that needs to be completed.

We also have members that like to build, and there is always something to build, repair or expand at PLS, just take a look at the new extension that is being added to our larger station. As you know there is a lot of track on the ground and like the full-size railroads, our track needs to be maintained, repaired and replaced. Our hobby is not all about just running trains; it's the entire railroad experience.

2014 PLS Calendar of Events

- Saturday, Jan. 18 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
- Saturday, Feb. 15 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

As mentioned above we have a number of important goals at the Pennsylvania Live Steamers and one is to attract new members that have an interest in our hobby. We understand that many of our associate members come to our facility with their families to experience what we do and to ride our trains and for that we appreciate your support. We hope that every visit you make leaves you with a positive and enjoyable experience. For those who have a greater interest in our organization we encourage you to talk with us about your interest and consider joining us in our railroading hobby.

Although the running season has come to an end for this season, work on the railroad continues throughout the winter, but when the fourth Sunday in April comes around next year, our trains will once again take to the rails.

Happy Holidays,
Frank Webb – President

Membership Gauge

As of November 30, PLS has:

- 104 Regular Members
- 275 Associate Members
- 8 Honorary Members

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during October and November: Matt Haines, Chris Becker, and Mayland Crosson. Thanks also to the Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Historical Railway Association.

Recent donations toward the purchase of the PLS club locomotive were received from members Bob Morris and Steve Leatherman.

Thank you to the following persons who donated to PLS in memory of Win Becker: Chris Becker, Maureen A. Fee, Harry Quirk, Paul Quirk, Richard and Francine Bankert, Robert and Bonnie Taylor, Don Lowe, Kathryn Cox, Mary Ellen and Norman Gordon, Edith Becker, and Winifred A. Gaupp. Thanks also to Potters Industries, LLC.

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Tom Zimmer, Kerry Binder, Andrew Rush, and James H. Milo, plus Minor member Chase Robertson.

Extension Being Added to Station Roof

An extension is being added to the roof of Rahns Station to cover the platform benches. This extension was designed by Bill Normart, who also designed and pre-fabricated the original station at his home before erecting it on site over twenty years ago. Bill again fabricated the vertical supports at home for this addition. Walt Mensch and Paul Quirk, with help from Bob Hillenbrand, Bob Morris, Jim Rich, Bruce Saylor, Henry Blanco-White and several others have built the roof trusses and erected them on the base. Soon, furring strips and shingles will be applied to complete the project. We will show the final result in a future Gazette.

— Lee Nonnemacher



Lee Nonnemacher

November 4th – Bruce Saylor holds the final roof truss in place while Paul Quirk prepares to secure it from the opposite side.

Storage Track Renewals

For PLS regular members who have storage tracks at PLS, your track renewal notice has been included with your dues notice. Storage track payment is due by March 31, 2014, but may be included with your dues payment.

Building 3 Transfer Table to be Removed from Service

The Building 3 transfer table will be removed from service for maintenance after Sunday, January 5, 2014. Anyone needing to get equipment out should do so by that date. It will be restored to service by mid-April.

Pertinent Dates for the 2014 Election

The 2014 election of all officers and three non-officer directors will take place at the Annual Business Meeting on March 15, 2014. Bruce Saylor and Jim Connelly volunteered for and were appointed to the Nominating Committee. Regular Members who attended at least half of the membership meetings in 2013 are eligible to be nominated for election to a seat on the Board and to any office except President, which requires prior service of at least one term as an officer or non-officer director. Pertinent dates for the 2014 election are —

- December 9, 2013 Last day for Secretary to provide to the Nominating Committee the names of members who are eligible to stand for election to offices and/or the Board.
- December 14, 2013 First day to accept nominations.
- January 15, 2014 Last day to accept nominations.
- January 18, 2014 Last day for Nominating Committee to supply names of nominees for offices and directorships to President and Secretary.
- January 22, 2014 Last day for President to supply names of nominees for offices and directorships to the Editor for publication in The PLS Gazette.
- February 13, 2014 Last day for Secretary to post the names of nominees for offices and directorships in clubhouse.
- February 27, 2014 Last day to request an absentee ballot in writing.
- March 15, 2014 Election at Annual Business Meeting.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Frank Webb	77 Roundwood Circle, Collegeville, PA 19426	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; Ron Henderson, ronjhenderson@verizon.net; Jim Salmons, jshay6@verizon.net; Bruce Saylor, bgsberk@comcast.net.

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

Multi-Gauge Bridge Replacement

Years of service have taken their toll on the multi-gauge wooden bridge that spans the main. Growing areas of decay were discovered in the deck after one side was removed in a recent inspection. The board decided to replace it with a steel version that was more in keeping with traditional railroad design.

Jim Salmons, with a few helpers and I removed the original early in November. I picked up the steel on Wednesday, November 27th. Bob Hillenbrand helped cut the steel on Friday at Jim's garage. Jim cleaned it up the following Sunday. On Monday we set up the parts and Jim started welding. We added more parts and more welding. Then we set the sides up and put in the five center cross pieces and welded it all together. We started at 10:30 and finished at 4:45. We hauled the completed assembly in my trailer to PLS. The new bridge weighs just under 600 pounds and ready for paint.

— Bruce Saylor



Allen Underkofler

Clockwise from above: Wood on the old bridge started showing signs of decay; The new steel bridge in Jim Salmons garage; Jim welding a cross member on the deck.



Bruce Saylor



Bruce Saylor

In Memoriam

Win Becker

— A Train Lover

Winfield A. Becker, Sr., age 97, passed away on Saturday October 22nd, 2013 in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.

PLS Regular Member Winfield A. (Win) Becker passed away on October 22, 2013 at the age of 97. Win loved model trains, be they Lionel, American Flyer or Live Steam. Much of his life was centered around his trains, so much so that he was known to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren as choo-choo pop-pa.

Win served in the Army in Europe during World War II as a telephone and telegraph lineman in the Acorn Division which was part of Patton's command. He was responsible for stringing communications lines for the front line troops, and was outside of Berlin when that city fell in 1945.

Win's father, William H. Becker in 1909 began a hardware business by that name at 46 N. 11th St., behind the Reading Terminal Market, in Philadelphia. Sometime later, before the start of World War I, Win's father became the first dealer of Lionel Trains in the city of Philadelphia. Win, as a young child started working with his father in the store during the 20's and 30's learning how to service the various makes and models of trains. It was mainly through his efforts that the business was transformed from solely a hardware store into a hardware and model train business, specializing in both Lionel and American Flyer. WWII interrupted his working in the store in the early 40's; however, upon being honorably discharged from the Army in late 1945, Win went back to work with his father. Win continued in the business until the mid-80's when the Redevelopment Authority forced him out, at which time he retired from actively running the business. However, the business has lived on through the efforts of his eldest son, Winfield A. Becker, Jr. who sells and repairs trains through attendance at various train shows in our area. Win had continued repairing trains for the business right up to the end, having completed a Lionel switch repair a couple of days prior to his passing.

Win began attending PLS run days with his children when the club was located in the Orchard in Paoli. He joined as an associate member in the early 70's, shortly after PLS moved to its present location. Win became very active at PLS when the weekly Wednesday work crews began in the early 90's, participating in them regularly. Sadly, it was about that time that he lost his wife, Dorothea, after fifty years of marriage.

Win's live steam dream was realized in 1999 when he and youngest son Chris went to Tennessee to pick up the Conner Beam Engine that they had had built and returned with it to PLS. It was at that time that Win became a Regular Member of PLS. He made modifications to his locomotive,



Win Becker operating his Connor Beam Engine at the 2010 Spring Meet.

tive, one notably being the addition of a dead-man throttle after a harrowing incident in which the locomotive took off unattended through the yard. He also built his riding cars from kits. Son Chris and his family, along with his brothers and their families, have religiously attended PLS Spring and Fall Meets for more than a decade to assist Win in operating his locomotive and train.

Win was also devoted to his church. He was one of the founding members of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Penn Wynne, Pennsylvania in 1950. After his wife's passing, he became a member of the Altar Guild and was considered a valuable handyman for various maintenance projects around the church.

Unfortunately, about five years ago, Win's health forced him to give up driving which meant he could no longer attend work days at PLS. However, through the efforts of his sons, he was able to continue to enjoy operating his train at the two PLS meets, the last time being the Spring Meet this year. He did, however, ride as a passenger at this year's Fall Meet.

Win is survived by sons Winfield, Jr., Kenneth and Christopher, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, and a sister Edith Bankert.

Win will be missed by the many who knew him at PLS. Our condolences go to his family. 🙏

The Turkey Trot

A PLS Holiday Tradition

By Harry Quirk, photographs by Charles Bednarik



As the year draws to a close and Thanksgiving is upon us, we relax and reflect on the blessings of all that we have. The thoughts of family, good fortune and great friends are foremost in our thoughts. Part of our memory pauses to 1997 when the idea came about that maybe we could enjoy the spirit of Thanksgiving with one more steamup. The rationale was that the day after had become a day off for many as an extension of the holiday so, Paul Quirk put forth the concept to the Pennsylvania Live Steamers to have an official Gauge One steamup put on the calendar. With that inquiry was the establishment of the annual steam up on “Black Friday.”

Having enjoyed the family feast the day before, with the spouses out on their shopping sprees, with a need to get out for some fresh air and burnt fingers we head out to the club. This tradition of a November steamup has been well supported by the Gauge One steamers. On occasion we get visitors from families or even the running

of some 7-1/4" gauge with other PLS members. Throughout the years the weather has challenged our resolve to have the steamup but come cold, wind, rain, ice, snow and even a wonderful late “Indian summer” the core of the PLS gauge one members have gotten their locomotives under steam.

The success and continuation of this event is due to the number of live

steamers in attendance. Early on there was only a hand full, a reflection of how low the membership numbers were for the gauge one track. Attendance has ranged from six to nineteen, fluctuating with the weather and cold/flu season. This year there were fourteen steamers who enjoyed the event; some local, but others traveling from as far as Virginia and North Carolina. This steamup also features a lunch of Thanksgiving Day leftovers and, of course, a train related movie. It is probable the motive behind the movies came from the opportunity to extend the time in the building and keep warm, and on those times where it has rained us out proved an indispensable amount of entertainment.

There have been numerous wonderful memories of time spent with friends. At times the support from each other during the colder meets was necessary to encourage a return to the track after lunch. The challenge was more than just keeping our bodies warm (at one meet the burn barrel was a saving grace) as locomotives could freeze to the rail. One



member left their locomotive at the track during lunch and an attempt to fire the locomotive after lunch was unsuccessful as the water had frozen solid in the tender. The event also had unexpected occurrences that would change the layout such as the time the Aster Big Boy entered the tunnel only to exit with a grand steam cloud that told all the tunnel needed to be raised. Often, our elder members, with the most experience and knowledge would argue (giving great amusement to all) over certain images or details during the lunch film showing, resulting in the rewinding the video over and over to prove which one was correct. Most importantly, the videos are a visual of the past and the tradition of what the impact trains had in our daily lives. Stories of the Reading Rambles and the Christmas shopping trains into Philadelphia were special moments when steam trains were an integral part of one's daily routine. The sharing of steam experiences by members are always impressive. This year Brittany Grimm gave us some insight of her operational session on the Valley Railway in Essex, Connecticut.

What could be better than spending Black Friday with friends, enjoying each others' company and, of course, running trains? Certainly not traffic jams or crowded stores or the bills coming from the supposed “door buster bargains!” At the end of the day our time was well spent with just once more around the track, having braved the elements and giving us the memories necessary to get through those long winter days without steam.

