



# The PLS GAZETTE

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

September–October 2013

# The PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER TOPICS: Green Signals Ahead 1 Membership News 2 Pot Luck Dinner 2 Membership Gauge 2 Donations 2 Fall Meet Thanks 2 John Henry Bortz, Sr. 3 St. Croix Trip 2013 4 Fall Meet Photographs 6 PLS Acquires New Locomotive 7

## FIRST CLASS



## Green Signals Ahead

As we come to the end of October 2013 it is fair to say that we have already had a busy year at the PLS track site. The weather allowed a good season of regularly scheduled run days as well as two successful meets at Memorial and Labor Day. We also had a number of projects that were completed or are nearing completion. After more than a year's work, the East Rahns siding was opened for the Labor Day weekend with track, switches and signals all working to our expectations. No less significant was the replacement of worn rail for our largest trains in 1½ inch scale on the entire 180 foot length of the trestle. Another major project nearing completion is Building 8 — our new smaller 1 inch scale car storage building. Building 8 is in place along with the gutters, drains, yard stone and a new electrical service box that feeds the buildings lighting. The first two switches are on the ground and the first of three, three-way stub switches is nearing completion. We expect to open Building 8 for leased storage next April just in time for the beginning of the 2014 running season.

One ongoing project that goes unnoticed is the continuous week after week track work that takes place nearly every Wednesday and Saturday. Track work that includes replacement of rotted ties, worn track, stone, screws/nuts, track leveling and ballast tamping; a lot of work that keeps our railroad running safe and smooth. Next time

you cross the tunnel coming into the infield take a look at the new paint job that was applied to the inside of the tunnel and the retaining wall that approaches larger 1½ inch scale car storage Building 6. In addition numerous smaller projects takes place weekly and are very important for keeping our facility running well and looking good. One project mentioned in the April Gazette that did not get started this season is the repair work needed on the Multi-Gauge Truss Bridge; you might remember this is the small gray painted wooden bridge that crosses over the two downhill tracks from our yard and larger station. Most of the East-side wood has given way to rot and needs to be replaced. This would be a good over the winter project. We are always looking for members with the skills to perform this type of work. If you are interested please do not hesitate to contact me, any officer or board member.

In true PLS tradition the list of projects never seems to come to an

end. Two membership approved projects, one just barely started and one not started can always use your help and support. The larger 1½ inch scale Rahns station roof extension project is just getting underway with footings to be dug, concrete to be mixed and poured along with posts and roof that will need to be erected. A second membership approved project is a covered storage area that will be installed on the East side of Engine Storage Building 3 to keep the backhoe, cement mixer and other construction items out of the weather. Over the winter the engine transfer table at Building 3 will be taken offline for inspection and needed maintenance to replace worn bearings/bushings and other items as needed. This is an important project that must be completed before our first run day next April.

The April to October running season is coming to an end, but our work days continue through the fall, winter and into the spring. Maintaining and

*(Continued on page 2)*

The Club's New Dash-9 Locomotive on the St. Croix club's turntable. Story on p7.

Bruce Saylor



Bruce Saylor

The Club's New Dash-9 Locomotive on the private track of Carl Schmidt in Sparta, Wisconsin. Carl has two miles of track and three Dash-9 locomotives of his own.



## Green Signals Ahead

(Continued from page 1)

improving our five acre railroad takes a lot of hard work and dedication from our membership and to all those that come out to work I would like to say *thank you*. If you haven't been to one of our Wednesday or Saturday work days recently and would like to become involved in helping with one of our projects, or just cut the grass, I assure you your help would be greatly appreciated.

See you on the Mainline,

Frank Webb - President

## Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members June M. Doyle, Andrew Shea, Kristen B. Frasch, Lee B. Letwin, Barbara E. Letwin, Joseph F. Sedlacek, Ernest J. Anastasi, and Paul Smith. Also, John D. Dolhanczyk Jr. has applied for Regular membership.

Congratulations to George Lord who was granted Honorary membership by the Board of Directors.

## Pot Luck Dinner

The Labor Day Pot Luck Dinner was a success again this year thanks to the efforts of Jay Shupard. *Thank you Jay!* I would also like to thank all those that supported Jay and to all those that brought a variety of delicious covered dishes, salads and deserts.

## 2013 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, Oct. 19	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM <b>Fall Clean Up</b> Afternoon/Evening Run*
Sunday, Oct. 27	Run Day - Members & Guests
Sunday, Nov. 3	Run Day Rain Date
Saturday, Nov. 16	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Friday, Nov. 29	Turkey Trot Run – Gauge 1 only – (rides not available)
Saturday, Dec. 21	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

## Membership Gauge Fall Meet Thanks

As of September 30, PLS has:

- 105 Regular Members**
- 270 Associate Members**
- 8 Honorary Members**

Despite the heat and humidity, PLS had a very dedicated group staffing the kitchen during this year's event. Kathy Parris wishes to thank those who provided baked goods and/or volunteered in the kitchen. This includes, among others: Al Hein, Walt Mensch, Gayle Keir, Bruce Saylor, Mary Saylor, Barry Shapin, Rose Ann Wagner, Janet Fego, Sue Borders, Catherine Barker, Sharon Connelly, Savanna Wagner, Delaney Wagner, Barb Moore, Carol Quirk, Sue Webb, Paul Rice, Bruce Barrett, Joan Freer, Joe Sedlacek, Mary Sedlacek, Mary Ann Sedlacek, John Dolhanczyk Jr, Roy Nelson, Dave Laird, George Cooper, and John Bortz Jr. Special mention also of continued support by Redner's Warehouse Markets.

## Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during August and September: Barry Shapin, George Lord, and Bill Manley. Thanks also to Cub Scout Pack 146 of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

## Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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## PLS Acquires New Club Locomotive



During its test run at PLS, John Bortz, Jr. operates the club's new GE Dash 9 replica pulling 25 cars with ease.

all photos by Bruce Saylor

PLS is committed to having passenger carrying trains running on our regularly scheduled run days as well as for special events. Our existing club locomotive, a replica of a diesel-type switching locomotive, has found it hard to keep up with the loads presented to it. A search was undertaken to find something more suitable and an almost new replica of a GE Dash-9 Series locomotive, manufactured by Mountain Car Company was located in Illinois. Pledges and donations were received from members familiar with the effort totaling \$5,450.00. That, along with PLS money approved at the PLS September 21 business meeting, plus the impending sale of the existing club locomotive provided sufficient funds for the new loco purchase.

Since Bruce Saylor, and a few other PLS members were headed to the meet of the St. Croix Live Steamers in Wisconsin the last week in September, Bruce made arrangements to pick up the locomotive outside of Chicago on his way by. While at St. Croix, the PLS members gave the loco a good workout and have reported that it ran flawlessly. Upon his return from St. Croix, Bruce Saylor and several other PLS members re-gauged the locomotive for PLS' 7 1/4 inch gauge track, vice its as-built 7 1/2 inch gauge. If all goes well, the loco

will be in service for our final scheduled run day on October 27.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the following people who have pledged or contributed to this effort: Lee Nonnemacher, Bruce Saylor, Kathy Parris, Jim Salmons, Jim and Sharon Connelly, Frank Webb, John

Bortz, Jr., Pat Murphy, Jeff Stahl, Roy Nelson, Jeff Parris, Bob Hillenbrand, Guy Godschall, Jr., Paul Rice, Dave Sclavi, Bob Freer and Dave Munson. Donations toward this effort are still being accepted. 🍷

— Lee Nonnemacher



**Above:** Under the covers at St. Croix; **Below:** Club loco being tested on Carl Schmidt's private track in Sparta, Wisconsin.

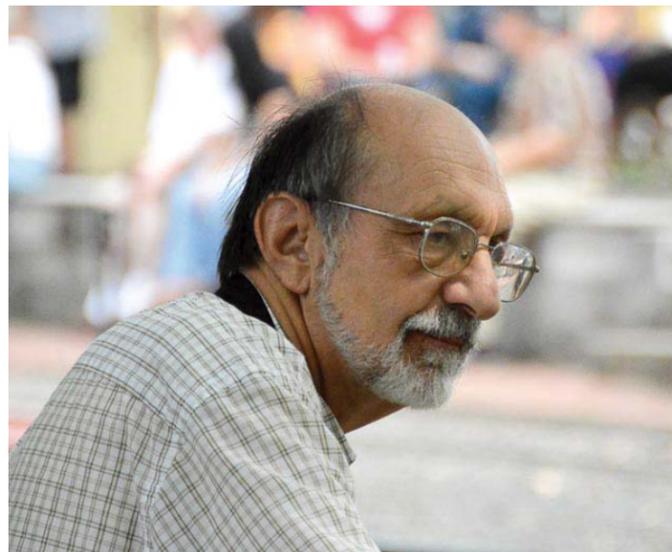
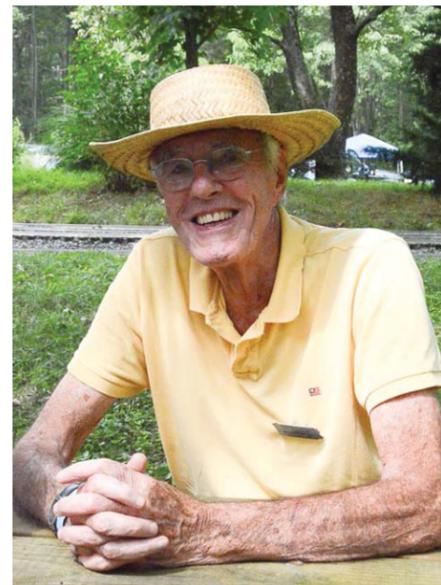
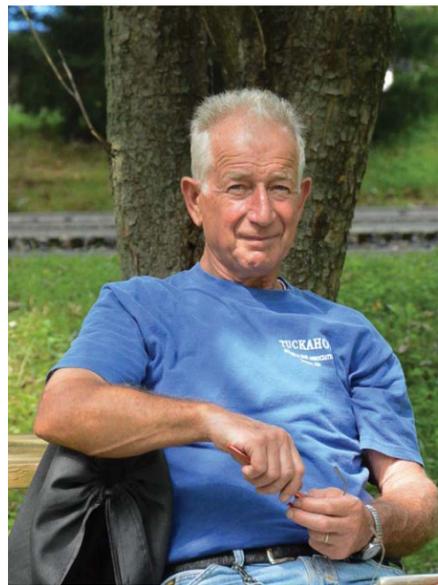
## Fall Meet Photos

Some random shots of the people and their equipment at the PLS Fall Meet.

— Allen Underkofler



**Clockwise from above:** Jay Shupard's Kozo based 0-4-0 engine that he and his father Ron built; John and Jay Forsythe discuss adjustments; Gauge 1 members Rich Poletto and Murray Wilson; Brittany Grimm gets some operational pointers from Bill Shields; artist Ted Xaras who created the club painting "Steam on a Summer Sunday."



## In Memoriam

# John Henry Bortz, Sr.

*John Henry Bortz, Sr., age 94, passed away on Saturday September 14th, 2013 in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania.*

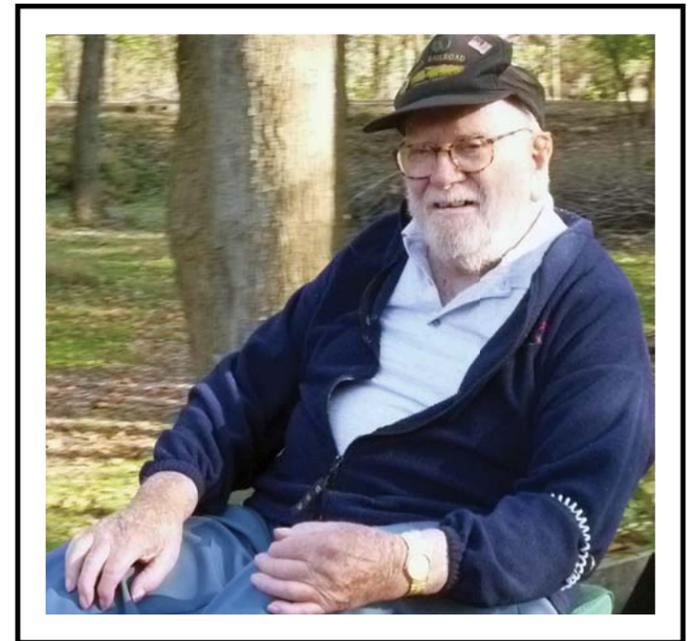
John was the devoted husband of the late Thelma E. Bortz, and was married for over 68 years. He worked for Nabisco for 26 years, and was happily retired from Nabisco for more years than he worked there.

John was the beloved father of Joanne (husband Bill) Kerr, John H. Jr., Barbara, Richard A. (wife Maria), and David S. (wife Corale) Bortz. He will be sadly missed by his grandchildren Robin Micklus, Brian Kerr, Ashley Bortz, David Bortz, Jr., Lauren Zezinski and Michael Peljae, great grandchildren Calum and Rowan Micklus, and by all who knew him.

John had a lifelong love of railroading, and grew up in Philadelphia, Pa., near many of the Reading RR's facilities that developed a love of steam trains. That love motivated him to build a large 'S' scale layout in his basement, which featured over 600 feet of hand laid track work, trestles, mountains, cities, an iron ore dock, roundhouse and freight yard. John was a very well known 'S' scaler, winning Best in Show, 1st place Steam locomotives, 1st place freight cars and 1st place in locomotive performance contest awards at National Model RR Association (NMRA) conventions across the country. In 'S' scale he built over 30 custom brass locomotives and literally hundreds of pieces of rolling stock.

Along with modeling, John was a very active volunteer on the New Hope & Ivyland Steam RR during the 1970's, working his way up from brakeman to Conductor to Fireman and finally Locomotive Engineer.

John became involved in Live Steam by becoming a member of the New Jersey Live Steamers in 1975. Closer to home, John assisted with the construction of the Deep Run Central RR of Paul B. Culp, driving a majority of the 50,000 rivets within their large deck girder bridge, and assembling



many of the switches that exist on that railroad today.

John became a member of PLS in 1987 and has been involved in the construction and development of the club since that time.

He is best known at PLS for building his favorite locomotive, the #757 Lima Berkshire and many of the cars on the long freight trains he pulled behind it.

John was very proud to be a member of the Pennsylvania Live steamers, and always enjoyed meets and run days at "the club." My favorite memories of him will be of him running at PLS, charging up the hill on *The Berk* (#757) with 25 cars in tow, popping the safety valves at the crest of the grade and sitting back letting momentum carry the train past the crossing and downgrade.

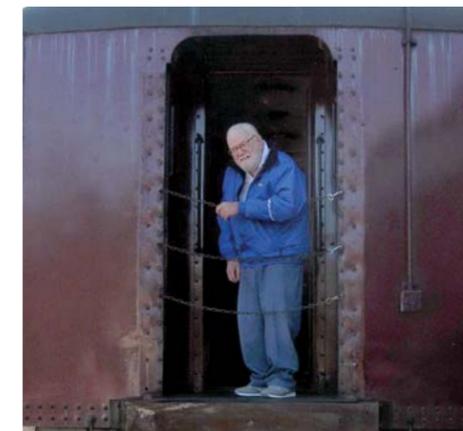
High Greens, good coal and clear track forever Pop. We will miss you.

— David Bortz

*Memorial contributions may be made in his name to the Wounded Warrior Project P.O. Box # 758517 Topeka, Kansas 66675 or [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).*

**Left:** John Bortz Sr. at the New Hope & Ivyland Railroad in a photo by Dennis McCoy.

**Right:** John's Lima Berkshire at PLS.



# St. Croix 2013

PLS Members Make Their 22<sup>nd</sup> Trek

By Bruce Saylor



**Kitchen Crew:** Dave Johnson, Steve Leatherman, head caterer Charlie and Bruce Saylor.

For 22 years in a row, Dave Johnson and I have travelled to the St. Croix Railroad in Wisconsin and it has been an interesting trip. Ron Shupard and Steve Leatherman were along with us. We waited on Saturday at the PLS regular meeting for the vote to spend the money to purchase the Dash-9 needed to haul our members on run days.

Carrying all our one-inch scale equipment in my trailer, I had made room for a 10 x 2 foot piece of ¾ inch plywood with steel straps in which to handle the 10 foot long locomotive. We arrived at the shop of L B Trains in Chicago, Ill around 5:00 Sunday afternoon. I inspected the locomotive and listened to it run and we loaded it in the trailer and away we went.

On Monday morning I called a friend Carl Schmidt in central Wisconsin. Carl has three of these Dash-9 locos plus he has two miles of track on his property. I asked him if we could stop by, unload the loco and run it on his track. He was more than willing. We ran it around for about 45 minutes. The loco proved to be a winner. Carl said we got a bargain. He also gave me pointers on care and maintenance and a couple things to change. The seller told me that the loco has had Mobil One synthetic oil in it since it was new. Carl said that is all he uses in his three. We loaded it up and off we went to the St. Croix railroad.

We arrived at the railroad around 5:00 P.M. and unloaded all our equipment. I also had my little electric and

a gondola riding car. I re-gauged the wheels before leaving on the trip to 7 ½ inch gauge.

From Tuesday on the weather couldn't have been better. The temperature was in the mid 70's. Saturday morning we did have some rain but were running just after noon. Steve ran my Berkshire for the most part. Ron had his PRR Mikado and Dave had his SP pacific. I ran my electric and the diesel. I did get to run my Berk one afternoon.

On Tuesday, Ron Henderson, another PLS member showed up with Joe Cavanaugh from New York. Ron brought his new Northern and Joe had a pair on RS-3's. Both had their trains to pull. I volunteered K-P duty with Dave and Steve. We all ate well!



**Clockwise from top:** Ron Henderson with his new Lehigh Valley Northern; Steve Leatherman gives our club's new engine a run; the club engine tucked into Bruce Saylor's trailer; Ron Henderson at the turntable pit; Ron Shupard with his Pennsy Mikado.