



The PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

Many of us have varied interest in railroading. For some of us it started out with trains around the Christmas tree, for others it was living close to major rail activities or working for the railroad. Some have found enjoyment in visiting tourist railroads that still offer rides on steam locomotives from a bygone era, and for others it's just the sight and sound of trains in whatever form they appear. For me it is a combination of growing up very close to the New York Central, Croton-

Harmon to New York City line. This is (was) a four track electric system with 600 volt third rail that hugs the Hudson River for a good part of the way for the 40 mile journey from Harmon Yard to Grand Central Station. I also found the mechanics of engines and equipment exciting and fascinating.

When you are about nine years old and grow up less than half a mile from both the Hudson River and a busy rail line, what's not to love? For me the railroad and the river would be a place to visit regularly for the next ten years. However, my visits to the railroad started at an earlier age when my father and mother would take me to the steel bridge that crossed over

Harmon Yard. You could look down at the two roundhouses west of the station area. One was a 25-stall building erected in 1913 with an 85-foot turntable. A portion of this survived into the 1960's as a storage barn. A larger roundhouse built in 1928 had a 100-foot turntable serving 32 stalls for increasingly larger locomotives. A 900-ton trestle-type coaling facility south of the roundhouses served the area adequately. Croton-Harmon was a New York Central-created community that came into existence because it was a logical point for the outer limit of the electric zone. Being an interchange point, it required plenty of room. Not

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Photo 1. A partial view of the old Harmon Yard



2014 Fall Meet

As we prepare for our 2014 Fall Meet, it is again time to remind all members, Regular and Associate, that we *depend* on you to help the weekend run smoothly. Our need for volunteers to perform gate duty and/or staff the kitchen/snack areas seems to be more difficult to meet each season. So please sign up when you arrive on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday of Labor Day Weekend. Thank you.

And, as always, your donation of baked goods for our snack area, either home made or store bought, would be greatly appreciated.

REMINDER: During the meet, the clubhouse refrigerators are used for food and drinks sold by PLS throughout the weekend. Should you need refrigeration for either personal use or items brought for the potluck dinner, please use your own cooler.

2014 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, August 16	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*
Sunday, August 24	Run Day - Members & Guests
Friday, August 29	Fall Meet - Members & Guests
Saturday, August 30	Fall Meet - Members & Guests
Sunday, August 31	Fall Meet - Members & Guests
Saturday, Sept. 20	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*
Sunday, Sept. 28	John Bortz, Sr. Memorial Run Day - Members & Guests
Sunday, October 5	Run Day Rain Date

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate Members Jay Gross, Lamar Schlotterer, Christiene Cusworth, R. William Strawhacker, Jim Bullock, Frank J. Morris Jr., and Mary G. Mercer. William L. Hain has applied for Regular Membership.

Congratulations to Bill Manley who has been conferred Honorary membership by the Board of Directors.

We are sorry to learn of the passing of long-time Associate Member Ann Marie Bent. PLS wishes to extend its sympathy to her family and friends.

Fall Meet Potluck

Don't forget the potluck supper at the Fall Meet on Saturday, August 30 at 5:30 p.m. Bring items to share and the club will provide hamburgers and hot dogs.

Membership Gauge

As of July 31, PLS has:

- 104 Regular Members**
- 245 Associate Members**
- 9 Honorary Members**

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for donations received during June and July: William Fluck, Larry Moss, the Shapin Family, All My Children Center, the Train Collectors Association, and the Jerusalem Lutheran Nursery School and Day Care.

Thank you also to Kathy Parris for her contribution to PLS in memory of Bob and Ann Marie Bent.

And special thanks to Bob Morris who has completed painting the station roof extension and is now painting the rest of the station.

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Projects Update

Water Tower Roof Refurbished

The water tower located at the east end of the Rahns station is necessary to provide water to the steam locomotives that pass through the station. Built some 15 years ago by Regular Member Bill Normart, time had taken its toll on the tower, especially on the roof structure. The roof is an octagonal structure made of wood and sheathed in sheet aluminum with a baked-on brown paint finish. Due to the damp environment inside the water tower, the wood portion of the roof became severely rotted.

Seizing an opportunity to use his talents, PLS Regular member Larry Moss took the entire roof to the woodshop that he has access to in order to make the repairs. The tapered plywood shapes that form the octagonal underlayment for the aluminum were replaced with new plywood. All of the trim around the outside was replaced with a plastic material that will never rot. Screened vents were added under the eaves that will help reduce internal condensation. The new external pieces were painted with standard PLS brown, and the finial atop the roof was cleaned up and painted with a textured paint to resemble cast iron. Larry put the roof back in place in early July. PLS thanks Larry for a job well done.



1" Car Barn

The 1" car barn with its new tenants.



Green Signals Ahead

(Continued from page 1)

only was there room for sidings and yards, but also for repair facilities. The steam engines that pulled the Great Steel Fleet to Chicago rested here.

As the small, but powerful, electrics pulled in from Grand Central Terminal, the steamers quickly hooked on and took off up the Hudson. I can still remember seeing large steam engines being moved in and out of the round-houses and being turned on the large turntable. The only thing I didn't like about the trip was the drive across the top of the yard on the steel bridge with its open steel framing and wooden paths for the car tires to follow. Honestly it scared me half to death every time we made the drive. Once across the bridge you entered onto Croton Point, a four-mile long peninsula that juts out into the Hudson and separates the Croton River from the Hudson's main channel. The Point had picnic areas and was a good place for lunch

and to watch tugs and barges being pushed up and down the river. I didn't like the drive back across the bridge to home any better. Photo 1 shows a partial picture of the old Harmon Yard going stronger than ever, but doesn't look anything like it once did. Even the Harmon commuter station has been moved from its original location and a new Amtrak station has been built. The yard today covers much more area and the shops for repair have expanded significantly. Photos 2a and 2b are Google Earth pictures of the 1994 and current Harmon Yard.

At the left side of the photos you can see the Hudson River and at the bottom right is the Croton River. In the center of the yard you can see the new concrete bridge that crosses over the yard, the old steel bridge is history. Not visible in the photo is the rail freight rail yard to the north.

Croton-Harmon got its name because real estate entrepreneur Clifford Harmon acquired much of the Van Cortlandt property in 1903 to develop

a country retreat for artists, writers and musicians, among them Wagnerian soprano Lillian Nordica. The Playhouse Clifford Harmon built enjoyed more than a decade of success, with guests such as Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks.

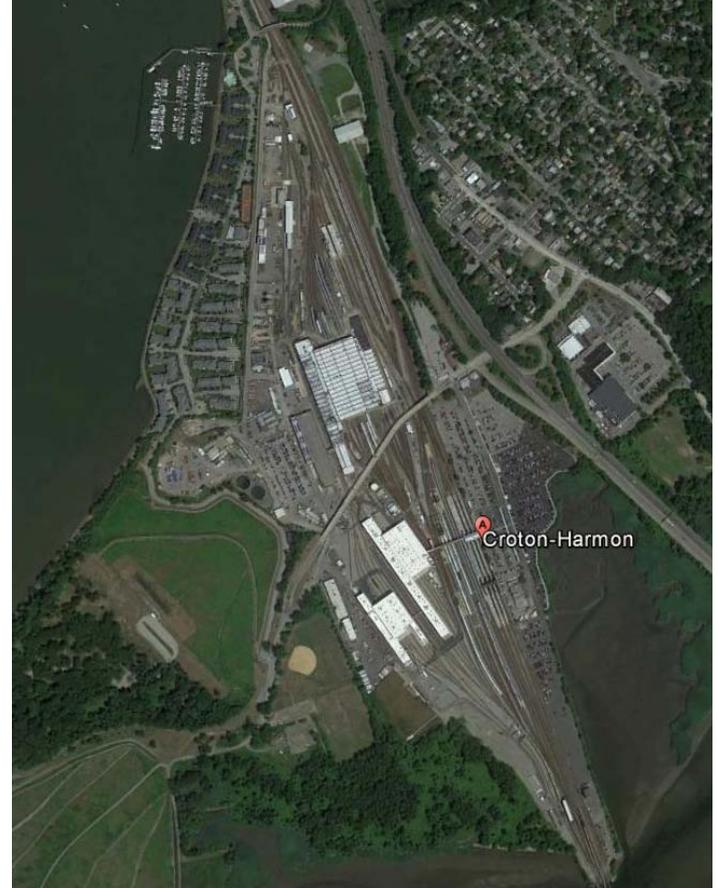
Around that time electric trains began operating on the Hudson Line out of Grand Central Terminal. Harmon sold the property on the neck of Croton Point to the New York Central Railroad for a train yard with the stipulation that the station would always bear his name — hence Croton-Harmon Station. Many railroad employees chose to make the Village their home because of its close proximity to the yards.

As for me as a young boy my, roaming area from my home in Ossining, New York was north to Harmon, about 3 miles and south to Tarrytown about 7 miles. Going north you had to cross the Croton River. This meant crossing the steel bridge with its high walls, close clearances and those pesky 600

Photos 2a & 2b. An April 1994 aerial view of the Croton-Harmon facility with June 2010 view to right.

U.S. Geological Survey via Google earth

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totalfailure / Panoramio

Photo 3. View of the outside span of the rail bridge spanning the Croton River.

volt third rails. If you didn't cross the bridge you couldn't get to Croton-Harmon. I crossed this bridge a good number of times and once on the outside. Photo 3 is a view of the outside of bridge span.

Walking south from the Ossining railroad station you had to pass by Sing-Sing Prison, built in 1826. Yes, this is where the term "up the

river" comes from, also known as the "Big House." The railroad runs right through the middle of the prison. To get by the first prison guard tower you had to watch and wait for the guard to move to the opposite side from the tunnel, watch out for the trains and then run towards the tunnel entrance. The two-portal tunnel had two tracks in each portal, all had third rails.

Sometime in the late 60s the New York Central removed the tunnel roof to allow for higher freights and less maintenance cost. The state got the railroad to provide several bridges over the tracks in exchange for allowing the tunnel roof to be removed. The prison was served by a small station platform, which also removed. Photo 4 from Google Earth gives a good view of the Sing-Sing today and the bridges that replaced the tunnel's roof.

Once past the prison tunnel all was clear for the next 6 miles with a number of places to fish or swim in the river.

In my hundreds of trips to the railroad and the river I always had the freedom to walk along the tracks, watch the trains, wave to the engineers, and watch many, many trains go by. Only once was I stopped by a New York Central Railroad detective that only wanted me to assure him that I was not one of the boys that had been throwing rocks at passing MU passenger cars. I assured him I knew better and would never throw rocks at a moving train, and that was the truth!

Keep watching those trains,

Frank Webb - President

Photo 4. View of Sing-Sing Prison — the "Big House."

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Picnic Photos

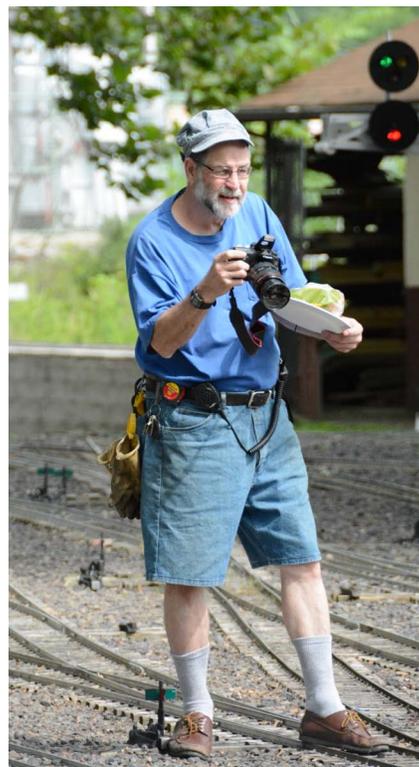
Photos by Allen Underkofler

The Pennsylvania Live Steamers celebrated their annual summer picnic on July 19, 2014. Steve Leatherman had the grilling honors and organized the picnic events.

The weather was perfect and those who attended enjoyed good food and lots of train rides. Once again, Jonathan Riehl and his helpers made their delicious ice cream right on site, using his steam engine.

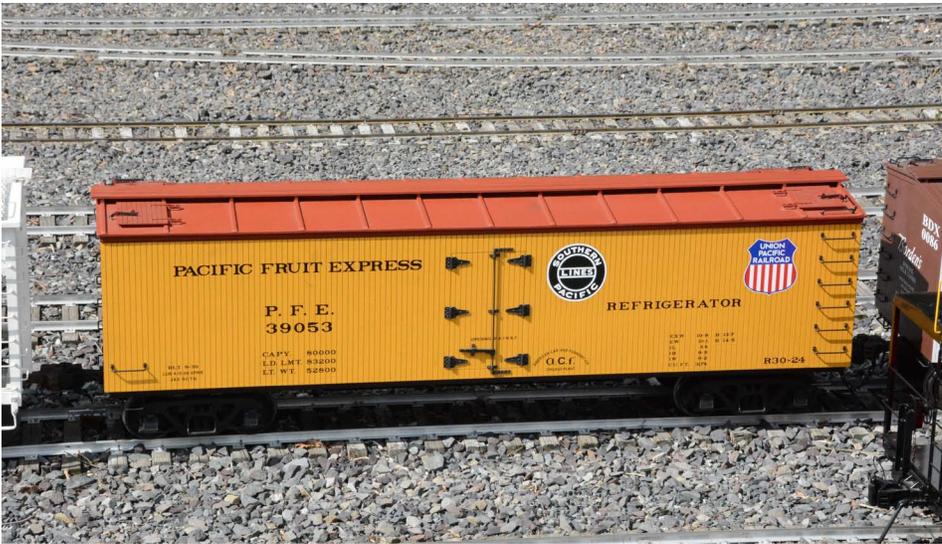
PLS thanks Steve, Jonathan, and all those who pitched in, for a successful event.

Clockwise from right: Steve Leatherman at the grill; Jonathan Riehl and his helpers at the steam tractor making 'steam cream'; Carl Miller "smokes" a hot dog; Ronald Shupard fixes a problem on the 1" line; Pete Brown gets a photo for the club's Facebook page; enjoying the picnic.





Clockwise from Left: The steam tractor which generated steam cream; Mike McDevitt; new passenger shed; future train buffs; new PFE reefer.





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FIRST CLASS



'Steam Cream' is a picnic favorite — Frank Webb enjoys a perennial handmade treat.

Allen Underkofler