



# The PLS GAZETTE

**A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.**

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## Green Signals Ahead

**M**ay is an important month for all railroad enthusiast and rail fans that love live steam locomotives as May 30, 2015 is when a prominent J class 4-8-4 Northern full size steam locomotive returns to the rails in Roanoke, Virginia once again. The locomotive is Norfolk & Western's Number 611, one of 14 J class engines built by N&W between 1941 and 1950 (photo 1). Only a few railroads designed and built their own engines and some of the best were built in the Norfolk & Western East End Shops in Roanoke, Virginia, but by 1957 the era of steam locomotives was drawing to an end. Due to increasing operating costs, N&W started switching to diesel locomotives in 1957. As 611 was in good operating condition it was selected to pull the company's "farewell to steam" excursion in October 1959. Once 611's duties were officially over, her fate was uncertain. All J's with the exception of 611 went by the way of the scrappers' torch. Only 611 survived mostly due to the efforts of well-known photographer O. Winston Link whose offer to purchase 611 himself rather than see it scrapped embarrassed N&W into donating it for posterity. In addition to Link's offer to purchase 611, native Roanokers Graham and Robert Claytor reached out to N&W President Stuart Saunders to save 611 from going to the scrap yard. The engine was saved and donated to the city of Roanoke and housed in the new Roanoke Transportation Museum (later the Virginia Museum of Transportation) for static display.



**Photo 1 -** The 611 consist will look like the train pictured above but will also include a tool car and helper tender.

N&W 611 - facts and figures. Engine 611 was rolled out of the Roanoke shop on May 29, 1950 at a cost of \$251,344.00 (\$2.5 million in 2015 dollars) and joined other J's that were the company's premiere passenger trains for the people along the N&W's right-of-ways. The J class engines pulled passenger trains like the "Powhatan Arrow," the "Pocahontas," and the "Cavalier" between Cincinnati, Ohio and Norfolk, Virginia in addition to trains between Monroe, North Carolina and Bristol, Tennessee. 611 could pull 15 cars at speeds up to 110 miles per hour on 70 inch drivers with all wheels and rods running on roller bearings and developed a tractive effort of 80,000 lbs. The J class engines averaged 15,000 miles per month and some of the locomotives traveled nearly 3 million miles

before retirement. The 611 has a length (engine plus tender) of 109 feet, 2 inches, a height of 16 feet. The engine weighed 494,000 pounds and the tender 378,000 with a capacity of 22,000 gallons of water and 35 tons of coal. Operation boiler pressure is 300 psi (pounds per square inch) with a great area of 107.7 square feet, making it the most powerful 4-8-4 locomotive without a booster.

In 1981 under the direction of Norfolk Southern President Robert Claytor, 611 was sent to Norris Steam shop in Birmingham, Alabama. The 611 became the star of the Norfolk Southern steam program pulling excursions throughout the eastern United States. The program ended in 1994 and 611

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## Spring Meet Thanks

PLS had a great response to our desperate plea for help this year. It was very gratifying that so many members of not only PLS, but visiting clubs, volunteered to work in the kitchen. So thank you all, it was greatly appreciated—especially since our 2015 Spring Meet was the busiest for our kitchen in six years.

Probably a few names will be missed, but those who helped with set up, take down, kitchen staffing, and/or donated baked goods included: Rose Ann Wagner, Sue Borders, Walt Mensch, Bruce Saylor, John Bortz, Bob Morris, Jim Gotlewski, Ron Shupard, Hank Riley, Joe Gotlewski, Penny Landgraf, Paul Rice, Jim Salmons, Buddy Borders, Cathy Barker, Heidi Ver-trees, Cheryl Godschall, Dawn Kendter, George Cooper, Steve Leatherman, Gary Madlinger, Judy Braddick, Jen Schoenly, Fran Shirey, Guy Godschall, Larry Moss, Bruce Barrett, Barb Miller, Sue Webb, Mike Moore, Roy Nelson, Ross Magee, Mary Magee, Carol Quirk, Pat Heller, Bill Hain, Lyn Fox, Terry Weinstein, Deb Rose, Dick Moore, David Laird, Robert Hekemian, and Jay Shupard.

Special thank you to Mary and Bruce Saylor for making the macaroni salad and pickled eggs, to Barry Shapin for making the baked beans, and to John Geib for donating hot dogs.

PLS also wishes to acknowledge the support of Redner's Market, Philly Pretzel Factory, and Wegman's.

Again, thanks to everyone. Hope you will continue to volunteer at future PLS Meets.

*Kathy Parris - Kitchen Coordinator*

## 2015 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 20	Afternoon/Evening Run
Sunday, June 28	Run Day - Members & Guests
Sunday, July 5	(Run Day Rain Date)
Saturday, July 18	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM <b>Club Picnic</b> Afternoon/Evening Run
Sunday, July 19	(Club Picnic Rain Date)
Sunday, July 26	Run Day - Members & Guests
Sunday, August 2	(Run Day Rain Date)

## Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during April and May: Paul Tyson and Jim Barker.

Thank you also to Jim Salmons and Kathy Parris for their contributions in memory of Al Hein.



## Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate Members Eileen Daley, Roger Williams, and Stewart Kupfer. John M. Sommer has applied for Regular membership.

## Membership Gauge

As of May 31, 2015 PLS has:

**102 Regular Members**

**205 Associate Members**

**9 Honorary Members**

## Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

<b>President</b>	Frank Webb	77 Roundwood Circle, Collegeville, PA 19426	president@palivesteamers.org
<b>Secretary</b>	Lee Nonnemacher	1474 North Wales Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422	lee_n@msn.com
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**Board of Directors:** Peter Brown, peteprivate@yahoo.com; Robert Freer, W3YLT@juno.com; Steve Leatherman, steveleatherman@gmail.com; Jim Salmons, jshay6@verizon.net; Bruce Saylor, bgsberk@comcast.net; Ron Shupard, ShuSmoke@aol.com

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## Green Signals Ahead

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returned to her Virginia Museum of Transportation, <http://vmt.org/> to once again serve as a static display next to another Norfolk & Western built locomotive 1218, a very large articulated 2-6-6-4 manufactured in 1943 (photo 2). On April 2, 2012 The City of Roanoke officially donated

both 611 & 1218 to the Virginia Museum of Transportation.

On February 22, 2013, the Virginia Museum of Transportation announced that a feasibility study would be conducted with the goal of returning 611 to active service. The committee is known as "Fire Up 611". Through the efforts of the "Fire Up 611" \$2.3 Million dollars was raised and 611

was moved to Spencer, North Carolina to begin restoration. On March 31, 2015, 611 was fired up for the first time in over 20 years. On May 9<sup>th</sup> she ran under her own power as part of the first round of post-restoration testing. After successfully completing testing, 611 returned to Roanoke on May 30, 2015 to begin new steam excursions. You can find more information regarding June and July excursions at <http://fireup611.org/>

If you are a railroad enthusiast, a trip to Roanoke to ride behind 611 would likely be exciting and a great experience. If you plan a trip to the Roanoke be sure to take the time to visit the O. Winston Link exhibit just a few blocks up the street from the transportation museum. His night time photos taken along the N&W railroad are truly fantastic!

*Frank Webb - President*



**Photo 2** - The 611 is housed in the Virginia Museum of Transportation next to the 1218 simple articulated steam engine.

FRANK WEBB PHOTO

## Thanks to Our Pot Luck Helpers

Once again Jay Shupard and his family did a great job cooking at this year's Spring Meet Pot Luck Supper. We also owe many thanks to all that brought a covered dish to round out the standard fare of hamburgers and hot dogs.



PETER BROWN PHOTO



FRANK WEBB PHOTO

Thank You to all that helped with the set up and clean up once the evening was over.

# WHAT'S IN A NAME – PART 2

“A station by any other name ...”

Bob Thomas



Broad Street Station approach.

Broad Street Station was built by the PRR in 1881 to cope with increasing passenger volume and improve access to the center of Philadelphia. However, it was a stub-end terminus that imposed severe and costly operational complications in dispatching through trains on North/South runs and on numerous suburban commuter lines. In 1910 Broad Street Station was handling well over 500 trains per day with more than two arrivals or departures every minute during peak hours! To accommodate that traffic, sixteen tracks to the station were laid on a massive viaduct of earth fill between walls of huge granite blocks. It was forty feet high, a city block wide, with tunnels or bridges at north/south streets, and ran adjacent to the north side of Market Street from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to Broad Street Station. No wonder it was dubbed the “Chinese Wall.”

By 1925 operational problems at Broad Street Station combined with mounting pressure from the city to eliminate the Chinese Wall influenced the PRR to develop a series of sweeping changes known as The Philadelphia Improvements. The Improvements involved building a new underground commuter station below a 20-floor office building in central Philadelphia (now known as Suburban Station), construction of a new through-track mainline station combined with a second suburban station at 30<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets, decom-

missioning the West Philadelphia Station made redundant by the new 30<sup>th</sup> Street facilities, and constructing a new office building at 31<sup>st</sup> Street for railroad employees displaced from Broad Street. Removal of Broad Street Station and the Chinese Wall by the city was delayed until 1952 due to World War-II and Philadelphia’s perennial financial woes. Completion of those last initiatives, however, finally opened 18 acres of premium real estate (mostly owned by the PRR) that led to a flurry of new commercial development west of Broad Street.

Pennsylvania Station - 30<sup>th</sup> Street, as the new station was officially named, was planned to consist of a grand main station building with extensions on its north and south sides. The southern extension initially was intended to accommodate the Market-Frankford elevated line until railroad management realized how badly that unsightly structure would degrade the appearance of their station. The city finally agreed to bury the tracks underground all the way from 46<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street through a new tunnel under the Schuylkill River, so plans for the extension were cancelled. However, relocation of the El by the laggard city was not completed until 1955.



East side of 30th Street Station with SEPTA tracks entering suburban extension platforms at right and JFK Boulevard left.

Construction of the northern extension of the main building to serve as the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station stop for commuter trains to and from the new downtown Suburban Station began in 1928. Tracks from Suburban Station pass through a tunnel under city streets, up a 2.2 percent grade to a new bridge across the river, and into the northern station extension. High level platforms in the station are protected from the weather by a handsome glass canopy. Steps and escalators connect the platforms to a commuter waiting room and ticket office. A wide, gently sloping ramp links the suburban waiting room to the main station concourse. In a bit of irony, old Pennsy MP54 red MU cars could negotiate the 2.2 percent grade but trains hauled by the mighty GG1 could not!

Construction of the commuter station was completed on schedule September 28, 1930 – right at the height of the depression. Nevertheless, the railroad’s conservative financial planning allowed continuing construction of the main building. The main station building is 637 feet long, 327 feet wide and 116 feet high. Pedestrian entrances to the main concourse inside the building are through porticos accented on each side with impressive Corinthian columns 11 feet in diameter and 71 feet high. The

main concourse is an open area with a Solari “Split-flap” train announcement board and information counter in the center. Windows, rising from the floor almost to the ceiling, 95 feet above the floor, admit natural light to supplement illumination by opulent light fixtures 18 feet high. Platforms for ten tracks below the concourse floor are accessed from two locations by stairs and escalators at present. There were only two tracks when the station opened in 1935, increased to seven in 1937, then to ten in support of the war effort. A turnaround loop situated just south of the station was proposed in the Philadelphia Improvements to facilitate reversing train directions, but it was never built because curvature would have been too tight and it would conflict with Wilmington and West Chester local trains.<sup>1</sup>

There are direct connections from the concourse to ticket windows and rest rooms. The station originally had a barber shop, shoe shine stand and a full-service dining room with meeting facilities. In fact, during the early years of PLS we had Sunday afternoon dinner/meetings there with a presentation on railroad a topic by a knowledgeable member or guest speaker. Today that area is occupied by a variety of small shops. Alfresco dining has recently been introduced at “The Porch” on the south end of the station and plans are in progress to incorporate even more public amenities at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station, now the third busiest Amtrak terminal.

The Philadelphia Improvements cost the railroad at least \$75 million (about \$1 billion in today’s inflated money) which was financed by debt and private equity raised by the PRR. Furthermore, a large part of that expense was incurred while the railroad was simultaneously electrifying its New York to Washington route! That alone should endow 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station undisputed possession of the name given to it by its parent, but does it?

Now along comes the Political Class with the impudence to assert their assumed prerogative to rename 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station after one of their own even though it is not government property. Chaka Fattah succeeded in forcing renaming 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station into law but, sensing the outrage

and the unlikely possibility the “William H. Gray, III 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station” will ever be accepted by the public, Chaka now says he will be satisfied with a coveted photo-op and a plaque somewhere in the station. In that case, when the kerfuffle finally subsides, everyone will naturally continue to call the station by the name it was given ninety years ago by its legitimate parent, the Pennsylvania Railroad.

**Credit:** This article is largely based on information obtained from “The Philadelphia Improvements,” Parts 1 and 2, published in the Magazine of the Philadelphia Chapter of the PRRT&HS, Vol. 3, Nos. 1 and 2, September 1980, Fourth Printing. The author of those landmark articles is none other than PLS member and former editor of the *PLS Gazette*, Allen P. Underkofler! We are indebted to Allen for bringing together in narrative, maps and historic photographs a record of the singular achievements of the Pennsylvania Railroad that continue to benefit all who live in, near, or pass through Philadelphia.

Reference <sup>1</sup>: Information on fate of proposed turnaround loop is based on comments by Chris Baer, Assistant Curator and Librarian, Hagley Museum, on the PRRT&HS Discussion Forum at: <http://prrthsdiscussionweb30239.yuku.com/topic/2806/30th-Street-Station-Loop>

## Locomotives for Sale



1 Inch Scale 4-4-2 Atlantic



1-1/2 Inch Scale 0-6-0 Switcher

Contact

**Jimmy Diefenderfer**

for further information at:  
[jimmydrigging@gmail.com](mailto:jimmydrigging@gmail.com)

## For Sale

### Compact Air Compressor

- 4 cfm @ 90 psi
- 120 Volt, 13.5Amp, 3400 rpm
- 2 Tanks: 6” diameter x 16” long (Approximately 3 gal.)
  - Adjustable Regulator, HP & LP Gauges
  - 1/4” NPT 10 ft. Coiled Hose with Blowgun

**\$50**

Bob Thomas

215-616-0570

[SteamRR@Comcast.net](mailto:SteamRR@Comcast.net)

# Seen at the Spring Meet

Great weather and excellent turnout for this year's Spring Meet as evidenced by record food sales

- Larry Moss

**Page 6 - Clockwise from Top:** Henry Blanco White directs guests; Pat Murphy and Frank Webb keeping pace; Lee Nonnemacher drives the club engine; Kaeden Peffel does a solo; and Terry Weinstein demonstrates his Box Cab. **Page 7 - Top Left Clockwise:** Ron Henderson and Hank Riley ready to run; President Frank Webb enjoys lunch break; Yard fills with waiting trains; Gauge 1 CP 2860 Hudson Class steams by; Joe Gotlewski and son Jim break for supper; and Nolan Kovalik mans the Erie switcher.





PETER BROWN PHOTOS





**The  
PLS GAZETTE**

P.O. Box 26202

Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

**FIRST CLASS**

**Annual PLS Picnic**  
**July 18th, 2-4 PM**  
Rain Date, July 19th

*We supply the Hotdogs, Burgers & Ice Cream...*

*You bring a Favorite Dish & Beverage.*