



The PLS GAZETTE

January - February 2016

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

It's only three months before trains will once again begin rolling on the PLS railroad as the first run day of the 2016 season on Sunday April 24th is fast approaching. However, before any trains leave the station I would like to remind all members to mark their calendars for the first membership meeting on Saturday March 19th 2016. Attending this meeting will give all Regular and Associate members a change to learn about a number of projects we would like to complete in 2016 and hopefully add their names to a list of volunteers that will be needed to make these projects happen.

Over the winter months the Board of Directors (BOD) discussed various ideas and ways that we might involve more members in the seemingly endless list of projects that take place every year at PLS. We understand that it is sometimes difficult for newcomers to PLS to become "involved" in a project. We understand that if you don't know the people at PLS, how do you become involved? If you don't know what skills might be required, how do you know if you can do the job? We also know that projects approved by the BOD are not always visible to the membership at the time the project is started. The starting date for a project is often a moving target do to available money, bad weather, and interference with the running of the railroad. You can't dig up the tracks if it conflicts with a meet or a scheduled run day! So how do we make it easier for all members to see what's going on and how do we communicate when a project will start and when help is needed? One way is to en-

courage all members to attend the monthly membership meetings where project status is reported. That sounds easy, but it is often not realistic as a Saturday Membership meeting day may conflict with other commitments, especially for those with younger families.

Here are some of the ideas discussed by the BOD. Start by publishing a simple list of the projects we have identified for 2016. Once a project leader is identified add it to the list with contact info. When a starting date is known, add it to the list. Send an e-mail blast to all members or those interested in a specific project. Since we all receive a ton of e-mails we would like to make whatever we send out as meaningful as possible and not an annoyance. Here are examples of projects planned for 2016:

1. Core Wall Restack – Status: Started, Completion: 50%, Skills: strong back, Lead: Frank Webb

2. Porch Extension – Status: Variance Approved, Completion: 0%, Skills: Woodwork, Lead: TBA

3. PLS Main Bldg. Roof Repair – Status: Not started, but urgent, Skills: Woodwork, Lead: TBA

4. Yard/Bldg. 3 Switch – Status: Started, Completion: 25% Skills: Many, Lead: Lee Nonnemacher

5. 1" Switch at Brown Box – Status: Started, Completion 40% Skills: Many, Lead: Ron Henderson

6. Backhoe Lean-to – Status: Not started, Skills: Woodwork, Lead: TBA

7. Caboose Paint Restoration – Status: Not Started: Skills: Paint rehab, Lead: Jim Salmons

This is a current list of approved projects, some started over the winter and some planned as the spring thaw comes. **1.** The Core wall project only requires skills with a shovel and a strong back as the cores weigh about 20 -25 pounds each and need to be un-stacked, cleaned and restacked with a little construction adhesive applied, you also should plan on getting a little dirty too. **2.** The Porch Extension is a significant project that will extend the existing main building's roof by 30 feet over a concrete slab. We could use a skilled concrete finisher and those interested in building roof trusses and putting up the new tin roof are welcomed. **3.** The main building roof has some rotten wood on the North side. The gutters need to be removed and the first purlin needs to be replaced as well as any other rotten rafter ends that maybe discovered. **4.** The new Yard to mainline and Yard to Building 3 Switch is the building of a new dual gauge switch to replace a switch that has been on the ground for more than 25 years. As of this writing the switch is being assembled in our shop and should be ready for installation in the spring. This is a time sensitive project as once we dig up the existing switch access to Building 3, our engine house, is cut off. Anyone truly interested in our hobby should stop by and see what goes into building a switch with three custom machined curved frogs and switches two different track, both 4 ¾ inch and 7 ¼ inch gauge simultaneously. The main part of the switch being assembled on the track bench is over 12 feet long, all that will fit through

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the buildings center door, the balance will be assembled on the ground at the time of installation. **5.** The 1 inch scale 4 ¾ gauge switch and signal project at what we call the Brown Box on the West end of the yard is a switch signal project that has been under construction for at least 20 years. Two year ago we made significant progress by updating the signal circuits in the "Brown Box". The work that remains involves the 4 ¾ inch mainline track that crosses over non-signaled tracks and passes through several non-insulated switches. These switches need to be replaced with new insulated switches or the existing switches need to be insulated. Once the repair or replace decision has been made the work on the existing 4 ¾ inch mainline signal system can be completed and the 4 ¾ inch signal system around the entire railroad will reach completion. It is difficult to work on this part of the railroad as the work involves very time sensitive work as removing any track or switches effects running on both 4 ¾ and 7 ¼ inch tracks. **6.** The Backhoe Lean-to is a simple project, but requires a building permit, holes dug for the concrete post supports and finally erection. No significant skills are required as most is digging, mixing, toting materials and attachment to the East side of the engine house. **7.** The Caboose paint on the South side has significant paint oxidation. Jim Salmons will try and determine if this can be restored, if not we will look for other solutions. In addition to the red paint oxidation some small areas of the black paint have failed and needs to be scraped, sanded and repainted. We will continue to update this list and as man and or women power becomes available we will work the project list as people are available. Keep

an eye open for an e-mail Blast looking for your support. Each project will have a Lead person with contact information. You can stop by PLS any Wednesday or Saturday before noon, call or e-mail the Lead and let them know if you are interested in helping with a project.

Oh by the way, don't worry if you can't help out with the existing open projects, more are added all the time and don't forget we always need someone to help cut the grass, paint and do all the other general maintenance work at the PLS railroad. It's not all work and no play. We do take time on the forth Sunday of each month from April to October to operate the railroad and run the trains. And don't forget the Spring Meet, Club Picnic, and the Fall Meet - all opportunities to ride the rails at PLS.

See you on the main line,
Frank Webb - President

Editors Note

Thanks to Harry Quirk for his submission of the article *A Little Matter of Gauge* on page 3. It is printed with the permission of Gary Madlinger, President of NJLS, and live steam historian Keith Taylor, a former NJLS Member.

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate Members: Dylan Sobel, Matt Sobel, and Brian J. Kronenbitter.

New applicants for Regular Membership are Fred G. Daddi, Joseph H. Graham, and Joseph H. Gotlewski.

2016 PLS Upcoming Events

March 19 - Board of Directors 9:30 AM
Saturday Business Meeting 12.30PM
Elections & Budget Vote
April 24 - Regular Run Day
Sunday Boiler Testing

Membership Renewals Past Due

As a reminder, membership renewals were due by December 31, 2015. In order to remain a member, we must have your paid renewal. If you do not renew, this will be your last issue of the *PLS Gazette*. Please take the time to complete the renewal notice that you were sent in early December and forward it with your dues. If you have misplaced your renewal notice, you can receive another one by e-mailing secretary@palivesteamers.org or writing to PLS Inc. at the address at the bottom of this page. **Please do not forward dues without the renewal form.** We must have the signed renewal form completed for our records. Your membership cards will be sent to you when your dues are received.

Membership Cards

Membership cards for paid members were mailed in early February. If you have sent your renewal and have not yet received your membership card, please e-mail: secretary@palivesteamers.org

Membership Gauge

As of January 31, 2016 PLS has:

105 Regular Members

226 Associate Members

10 Honorary Members

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Frank Webb	77 Roundwood Circle, Collegeville, PA 19426	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	Lee Nonnemacher	1474 North Wales Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422	lee_n@msn.com
Treasurer	Robert Morris	3034 Black Swift Road, Norristown, PA 19403	rmorris1171@verizon.net
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A Little Matter of Gauge

By Gary Madlinger & Keith Taylor

While US prototype gauge was established at 4 feet 8 ½ inches by Abraham Lincoln's signature in 1864, the story of gauge in the smaller hobby sizes has often been one of miscalculations and mistakes. While such discrepancies would prove disastrous with prototype, fortunately in the smaller scales it has proved more of an inconvenience.

To trace the great gauge debates, we have to look back to the turn of the century when scale model railroading, as a hobby, was in its infancy in America. The toy train market in the United States was dominated by German toymakers who made beautifully lithographed expensive toy trains in heavy gauge steel. These imports introduced the "continental system" for measuring train gauge into the model railroad hobby. This system had begun with tinplate trains and called for measuring gauge from the center of one railhead to the other. This made sense, since these toy trains used a tubular rail with no distinct edge to measure to.

However, from the beginning, this variation in measuring techniques from the hobby to the prototype was destined to cause confusion. In the early 1900's, for example, the Ives Co. who offered trains in No. 1 gauge, wished to expand their offerings to the No. 2 gauge being sold by companies such as Bassett-Lowke, Maerklin, Bing, Carette, Karl Bub and the others, so they asked a European supplier for the correct gauge for these No. 2 gauge trains. Using the accepted continental method of measuring from the top of one rail to the top of the other, the supplier reported that No. 2 gauge measured 2 1/8". Ives tooled up for 2 1/8" only to find that their new trains would not be compatible with the imported British and German toys built to the proper gauge set at 2" between the rail heads. A few years later, the Lionel Train Co. used the same continental system when referring to their "Standard Gauge" electric trains as being 2 ¼" gauge. Measured correctly from inside edge to inside edge, they were actually 2 1/8" gauge.

Such miscalculations did not stop there. Fast-forward to Chicago in 1939 when an active live steamer decided he wanted to build a locomotive in the larger 1 ½" scale that was just starting to gain some popularity in the United States. The problem was that he had conflicting information to go on in determining the proper gauge for his new creation. At the time there were few 1 ½" scale models that had been built in

this country and only a handful had been imported to the US from Britain. All of these locomotives were built to 7 ¼" gauge as measured from the inside edge of one rail to the inside edge of the other. But this is where things get interesting.

One of the American-built locomotives, the 1 ½" scale model of a PRR K-4 called the "Miss Bayshore," had been written up in the *Modelmaker Magazine*. The well-known builder, Calvert Holt, had constructed it with design help from the famous LBSC (L. Lawrence of the *Model Engineer*) who was living on the Holt estate at that time. As expected, they built it to the British standard of 7 ¼" gauge. However, in the *Modelmaker Magazine* article, it was incorrectly identified as being 7" gauge.

Adding to the confusion was another later article highlighting a relatively new 1 ½ scale track in Michigan. The line featured a scratch-built 0-6-0 switcher and a 4-6-2, both of which were built to fit the 7 ¼" gauge track. Yet, in the article published on this new live steam line, once again the size was noted incorrectly - as 7 ½" gauge!

This leads us back to Chicago where the new (but eager) 1 ½" locomotive builder was confronted with three possible gauges to choose from - 7", 7 ¼" or 7 ½". Having already chosen to build a 1 ½" scale Hudson (freelanced to look like a B&O locomotive), he decided to confer with a live steam acquaintance who owned his own track nearby. This way, the builder figured he would always have a place to run his locomotive once it was built. When the acquaintance heard the question, rather than trust his memory, he decided to measure the gauge of his track so he would be able to give an EXACT measurement. Out he went and placed the scale on the tracks. And this is where the story takes another turn.

You see, this live steamer was a lover of all trains, but perhaps his first love remained the strongest - for the tinplate toy trains sets he was familiar with since childhood. Being first and foremost a fan of the smaller tinplate model railroads, when he measured the gauge of his 1 ½" scale track, he used the continental method of measuring track gauge for tinplate trains. Instead of measuring from the inside of the railhead to the inside of the railhead, he measured from the center of the rail to the center of the rail! As far as he was concerned, that identified his 1 ½" scale layout as 7 ½" gauge. Based on this, the Chicago builder finished his locomotive to 7 ½" gauge, and being an

eager hobbyist, began to solicit his friends to build the same size as he had. In the Chicago area there were some excellent modelers and at least two of them were enthusiastic proponents of the larger scale steam locomotives. They even decided to build what proved to be a fabulous layout in Blue Island, Illinois. Being that they were friends with the Chicago builder and wanted him to be able to run at their track, they too built to the mistaken gauge of 7 ½"! It did not take long before the Midwest was bristling with 7 ½" gauge locomotives, and as suppliers such as Little Engines got into the 1 ½" scale, they made sure to design kits to sell to the largest number of potential customers, including those in the Midwest with the "Strange" gauge.

Not everyone out West was converted, though. Live steamers such as Walt Disney built to 1 ½" scale using the traditional 7 ¼" gauge. Billy Rose, the famous composer and bandleader, also had a private 7 ¼" gauge line at his estate in Hollywood. But since a number live steamers in the Los Angeles area liked to travel around, they wanted to use the gauge of the largest number of tracks they might visit. They converted to 7 ½" gauge and that is how the majority of the USA has come to use a gauge that is not compatible with the rest of the world. This is the story told by live steam author Steve Booth and by at least two letters that appeared in the 50's in *Miniature Locomotive Magazine* and *North American Live Steamer*.

With the introduction of 7 ½" gauge, it was not long before many scale sensitive models started to notice that the 1 ½" scale proportions seemed to be under scale to the proportions of the larger track bed. To compensate, some started designing and building in 1.6" scale for 7 ½" gauge - a trend that continues to this day. Such is the nature of scale hobbies; you just never know the effect of an eighth or quarter inch change.

Today, if your riding scale of choice is 1 ½" and you like to travel, you better plan well with the right size locomotive. In the Northeast, 7 ¼" gauge is the standard, though there are a handful of small groups and backyard tracks running 7 ½" or dual gauge. Head west to Ohio or south to Maryland and you are in 7 ½" country which extends throughout the rest of the US. That means if you want to run at Oregon's famous Train Mountain, you better be prepared for 7 ½" gauge - all because of some mistaken measurements taken a long time ago.

PLS Budget for Fiscal Year 2016

Income		Expenses			
Donations		Utilities		Communications	
Run Day.....	\$ 525.00	Electric.....	\$ 2,075.00	Gazette Postage.....	\$ 630.00
Gauge 1.....	65.00	Oil.....	900.00	Gazette Printing.....	630.00
Special Run Day.....	.00	Septic Tank.....	800.00	Other Printing.....	425.00
Pot Luck Dinner.....	350.00	Portable Toilets.....	1,150.00	Computer.....	200.00
Picnic.....	75.00	Telephone.....	350.00	Internet.....	1,200.00
General.....	2,500.00	Dumpster.....	1,200.00	Community Support.....	200.00
Books and Magazines.....	20.00	Miscellaneous.....	250.00	Web Page.....	600.00
Other.....	2,300.00	Miscellaneous		Miscellaneous.....	550.00
Dues		Picnic.....	250.00	Corporate	
Regular Member.....	8,000.00	Pot Luck Dinner.....	275.00	Legal & Accounting Fees..	750.00
Associate Member.....	6,750.00	Maintenance		Delaware Corporate Tax..	50.00
Sales		Backhoe.....	100.00	Office General.....	200.00
Boiler Treatment.....	25.00	Machine Shop Supplies	50.00	Property Tax.....	4,500.00
Coal.....	30.00	Building # 1.....	750.00	Sales Tax.....	75.00
Soda.....	450.00	Buildings # 2-8.....	750.00	Office Postage.....	540.00
Snacks Non-Run Day.....	275.00	Gauge 1.....	250.00	Insurance.....	3,700.00
Snacks Run Day.....	725.00	Track.....	1,500.00	Corporate Miscellaneous..	150.00
Kitchen on Meet Weekends	1,500.00	Mowers.....	350.00	Food & Merchandise Supplies	
Table Sales Taxable.....	200.00	Signals.....	300.00	Kitchen.....	650.00
Table Sales Non-Taxable...	825.00	Gas Mowing.....	175.00	Snacks.....	400.00
Miscellaneous.....	25.00	Gas Track.....	75.00	Soda.....	550.00
Storage Track Fees		Club Locomotive.....	300.00	Sale Table Items.....	1,300.00
Building # 3.....	3,636.00	Landscaping.....	750.00	Special Projects	
Building # 6.....	2,470.00	Trees.....	500.00	Building # 1 Canopy Ext..	6,500.00
Building #8.....	384.00	Fire Extinguishers.....	400.00	Loader Shed.....	<u>800.00</u>
Recycling		Miscellaneous Property	750.00		
Aluminum Cans.....	<u>40.00</u>				
Total Income.....	\$ 32,170.00			Total Expenses.....	\$ 38,850.00

Thanks from the Editor

Dear Members,

I wish to thank all the news contributors for their timely submissions this past year and for the praise I have received from many of our readers. Without you this

newsletter would not have been possible.

I would particularly would like to thank Bob Thomas who stayed on an extra year just to help me get my feet wet. Bob was born into a railroad family and was one of the founders of PLS back when he helped build the original RR in Berwyn. He also

had great influence on our present Rahns location and is the founder of the *Gazette*.

His well written articles have ranged from historical to nostalgic to practical. We hope Bob might honor us again with an occasional piece if he is so inclined.

Larry Moss

Scenes from Last Season

Larry Moss Photos



John Forsythe fires up the boiler at the June Run



Carl Miller shows off new paint job on switcher



Rich Poletto's Galloping Goose - now with sound



Bob Morris takes grandkids out on the mainline

Notice of Elections and Annual Meeting

PLS elections will be held during the annual membership meeting on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at 12:30 P.M. To be elected are president, secretary, treasurer and three board members.

Nominees for the offices are as follows:

President - Frank Webb
Secretary - Lee Nonnemacher
Treasurer - Bob Morris

Board of Directors:

Larry Moss Paul Rice
 Hank Riley Bob Hillenbrand



New 2016 PLS Wall Calendars

Ron Shupard ShuSmoke@aol.com

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during December and January: Lee Nonnemacher, Wayne Baldwin, Chris Becker, Jack Richards, Michael McDevitt, Robert Goepel, Ronald Drenth, Charles Kadyk, Chris Rood, Alan Redeker, Deborah Voynar, Darryl Smith, Thomas Caldwell, William Fluck, Raymond Matus, John Wessels,

Joseph Natale, Thomas Diedrich, Kenneth Thomas, Robert Gray III, Robert Heidenreich, Brian Ziegler, Jack Morris, Kathy Parris, Frank Webb, Larry Moss, Richard Poletto, Pat Murphy, Roy Nelson, Steve Leatherman, Henry Blanco White, Harry Quirk, Richard Moore, Roman Pawlowski, George Cooper, David Laird, Carol McMullan, Paul Nichini, Jim Salmons, Robert Small, David Bucher, Wayne Gillmor, Ronald Marburger, Albert Rieger Jr, Jerry Shank Sr, Dolores Stahl, Jeff Stahl,

David Staplin, James Zaleski, John Bortz, John Caldwell, Robert Morris, Duane Quenzel, Jared Schoenly, David Sclavi, Carl Bruhns, James Milo, Dean Rupp, Carmen Visalli, David Taylor, Marc Carpino, Edgar Hendler, Joseph Springer, Gita Talmage, Susan Borders, Richard Falzone, Brittany Grimm, Joseph Rohanna, Steven Quenzel, James Stapleton, Paul Miller, Ed Kabak, and Douglas Pyatt.



The PLS GAZETTE

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FIRST CLASS

Cool start to the New Year: Ron Shupard, Bob Hillenbrand, Bruce Saylor, Roy Nelson, Guy Godshall, Hank Riley, and Joe Gotlewski kicked off the New Year with a brisk ride on the PLS mainline on January 1, 2016.

