



The PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

August is upon us and in just a few weeks we have our Fall Meet. The Fall Meet this year will start on Friday September 2nd and run through Sunday August 4th. We are all hoping for cooler weather for the meet, but who knows? This has been a somewhat odd year for weather with the spring being much below normal in temperature and the summer much hotter than normal with many days in the 90's and very high humidity. We have been fortunate in as much as many of our run days had the threat of rain, but to our good fortune, no rain! The unpredictable weather did have a negative impact on run day attendance with both our local PLS members and visitor attendance count lower than expected.

However, the purpose of my message is not to just discuss the weather although with good weather we are likely to see more trains on the PLS railroad at the Fall Meet. This message is about the equipment that has been running at PLS and a possible link between that equipment and an increase in rail damage that we have observed this year. The Spring Meet saw new equipment at PLS and an increase in derailments and more track damage than we have seen in past years. In most instances we do not know if the damage we have observed was caused by PLS members or by visitors but it is our desire to stop this type of damage from reoccurring. Here is a recap of the damage that we observed and the most likely cause of that damage:

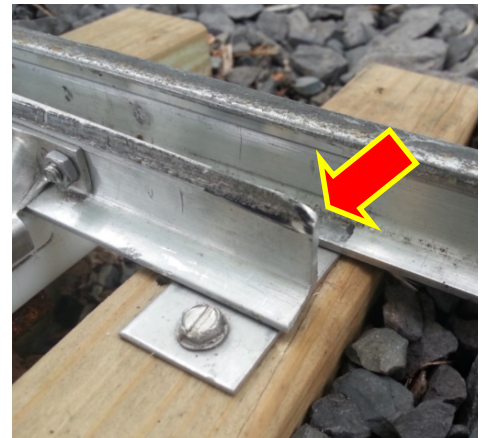
1. Inside of rail head shaved off with ribbons of long curly metal cut from the inside edge of the rail.

This was most likely caused by square wheel flanges that had little or no angle and little or no radius from the flange to wheel tread. The standard flange angle is 10 -15 degrees from horizontal and the radius is 3/32". When the angle is reduced towards 0 degrees the flange becomes a cutting tool that will cut the inside of the rail head.



Shaving from Rail Head

2. Flange strikes on the point of the Frog. We had a number of frogs with the frog point damaged. This can occur when the wheel set is out of gauge toward the wide dimension. As the wheel enters the frog guided by the guard rail, the wheel set is aligned away from the frog point by keeping the frog side wheel to the inside of the frog point. When the gauge is too wide the wheel flange can hit the point of the frog damaging the point but more likely derailing the wheel set.



Damage to Switch Point

3. Derailment; we have seen more derailments this year than in the past with many caused by out of gauge wheel sets. It appears that many of the newer engines have the option to change the wheel gauge by simply loosening a set screw or nut set and moving the wheels on a common gauge axle. The owner operator must take extra care to be sure all wheels are set to the correct gauge and that all securing devices are firmly tightened.



Rail Damaged by Derailment

4. Wheel wear also has the potential to cause track damage due to derailments or wear to the outside

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Another Successful Picnic for 2016

Although the Picnic attendance this year was lighter than expected, everyone that did attend seemed to have a very good time. Much of our success was due to the help of our Cooks that prepared the hamburgers and hotdogs. We all owe a very large THANK YOU to both John Forsythe and his Son Jay for taking on the cooking duties on a very warm and humid day. I would also like to thank all those who provided covered dishes for our event. The amount of food supplied by our members and visitors was just the right amount for those that attended the picnic. I would also like to say Thank You to all that helped with the setup and take down of the tables and chairs on a very warm day.

Thanks to all that participated,
Frank Webb - President

2016 Fall Meet

As we prepare for our 2016 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.

Also, PLS donations of baked goods for our snack area, either homemade or store bought, **are greatly needed.**

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.

Upcoming Events

- Saturday, August 20 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Afternoon/Evening Run*
- Sunday, August 28 Run Day - Members & Guests (No Rain Date)
- Friday, Sept. 2 **Fall Meet** - Members & Guests
- Saturday, Sept. 3 **Fall Meet** - Members & Guests
Pot Luck Dinner at 5:30 PM
- Sunday, Sept. 4 **Fall Meet** - Members & Guests
- Saturday, Sept. 17 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Afternoon/Evening Run*
- Sunday, Sept. 25 Run Day - Members & Guests (Rain Date 10/2)
- Saturday, Oct. 15 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
FALL CLEAN-UP in AM
Afternoon/Evening Run*
- Sunday, Oct. 23 Run Day - Members & Guests (Rain Date 10/30)

***Note:** Rides may not be available at afternoon/evening run days following membership meetings due to possible limited participation by equipment owners. All members and their guests are welcome to attend with the understanding that rides are not guaranteed at these events.

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate Members: Mannie McNeil, David Collison, Andrew Osborne, and Kirk Story. Ethan Robinson and Roger Kain have rejoined as Associates after several years absence. Ken Chermak has applied to upgrade to Regular Membership.

Membership Gauge

As of July 31, 2016 PLS has:

104 Regular Members

196 Associate Members

8 Honorary Members

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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edge of the rail head. Equipment that has been run for many years without wheel re-profiling can develop what is known as a false flange. Wheels run on track made from steel bar or angle iron are especially susceptible to developing false flanges. Wheels with false flanges do not track properly and can derail.

5. Deep flanges are another potential source for derailment, especially for light weight rolling stock. The PLS standard for flange depth is 0.156 inches and the IBLS standard is 0.187" maximum. However, if you walk around PLS you will find most if not all of our frogs have wear marks showing that it has been struck by a wheel's flange. When the wheel enters the frog and the flange hits the frog upon entering, it can hop up and derail a light piece of equipment. I have read and heard it said that deeper flanges are better flanges and that some believe that 0.250" deep flanges help prevent derailments but this is not the case. A wheel with proper profile dimensions is all that is needed for a wheel to track well with no worry of derailment.



6. Other issues that can cause derailments and subsequently track damage can often be traced to the trucks that the wheel sets ride in. If the spacing between the truck frames is larger than the dimension over the wheel set, the wheels can drift laterally causing the truck to skew and derail. If the truck lacks flexibility where one wheel cannot lift without picking

up another wheel, this too can lead to derailment.

Although the PLS Back to Back (inside of wheel to inside of other wheel on the same axle) dimension is 6.750" + 0.031" - 0.00" and varies from IBLS standard we have made adjustments in our switch dimensions that allows for the accommodation of wheel sets with a 6.875" Back to Back. It is also important for the truck to be able to turn freely on the bolster centering pin and to have a reasonable bearing surface where the bolster contacts the car, too much roll side to side in the attached car and cause derailment.

Recently one of our members (PLS) purchased new trucks from a well-known vendor. Upon inspection it was found that the wheel gauge was way out of specification, to the wide, on both trucks. We all know that mistakes can happen but in this case not only was the gauge incorrect, it was different for each axle. This error was caught and corrected before the equipment was run. Today it is more common than ever for the hobby's enthusiasts to be purchasing more and more finished parts, assemblies, and RTR (ready to roll) equipment than in the past when many of us in the hobby started with raw castings, raw metal and hardware to build up our railroad equipment. The lesson to be learned is you must carefully inspect the item you purchase to make sure they fit the track you intend to run them on. A quick inspection before you get to the track can save a lot of frustration before your new equipment hits the track for the first time. It can also prevent damaging track and switches.

In order to better manage the track and switch damage we have been experiencing, we will be monitoring Engines and Rolling Stock wheel profiles and gauges more closely in the future, especially on equipment that has a derailment. This will serve two purposes; the first to determine if the track or switch is at fault and the second to determine if the equipment being operated has an issue. We ask for your cooperation in helping to keep the track at PLS as good to run on as everyone has come to expect.

Thank you for helping to support our efforts to keep the track at PLS in good

working condition and helping to prevent unnecessary damage.

Frank Webb - President



Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for donations received during June and July: Ken Chermak, Jim Barker, Jerusalem Lutheran Day Care, and SEPA5 Camaro Club.



In Memoriam Mary E. Spear

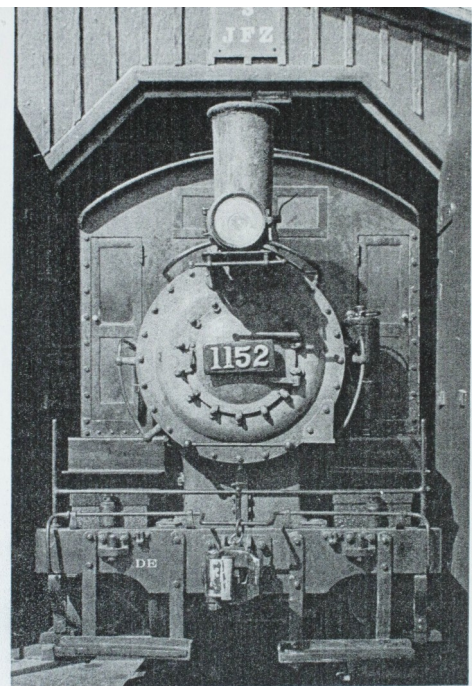
PLS Honorary Member Mary Spear passed away on May 26, 2016 at the age of 102. Mary was the widow of PLS Regular Member Doug Spear who predeceased her in 1995.

Mary loved coming with Doug on the weekends and especially loved the yearly picnics and dinners. She enjoyed sitting under one the trees visiting with her friends while Doug puttered with his Live Steam Engine.

PLS wishes to thank Mary's son Bob Spear and his wife Sue, and Mary's stepson PLS Associate Member Garry Spear and his wife Ellen for their very generous donation in memory of Mary and Doug Spear.

New PLS Lineside Feature

Jim Ziegler was a prolific, expert model builder and ardent Reading Railroad enthusiast when he joined PLS in the 1950s. He built No. 1152, a 1" scale Reading A5 0-4-0 that ran like a watch. To complement his locomotive, he then made the scale Reading-based engine house shown in the accompanying photo and caption from September 1971 *Model Railroader* magazine. In addition to his live steam activity, Jim constructed and operated an extensive ground level 1" scale interurban third-rail "trolley" line at his home in Devon. His cars were models of prototypes operated by the Philadelphia and Western on their high speed main line, built to steam railroad standards, from the PRT 69th Street Terminal to Bryn Mawr, Strafford, and Norristown. One of those cars is presently owned by Hank Riley, who runs it regularly (in either direction) on our track at Rahns. And finally, in addition to all that activity, Jim had acquired 300 acres of land near Reading, most of which he eventually donated to the Reading Railroad Historical Society; a smaller portion was given to the Reading Society of Model Engineers for an outdoor miniature railroad. Jim Ziegler was, indeed, a man for all seasons!



Sorry, but this is not a Reading enginehouse in rural Pennsylvania. That 0-4-0 poking its smokebox through the doors is in 1" scale. This is Jim Ziegler's engine at the Paoli, Leopard & Sugartown terminal.



One of Jim's last efforts on behalf of PLS was construction of a 1" fine scale water tank based, of course, on a Reading prototype. He designed and built it in the mid-1960s and it was initially used occasionally next to the passing siding on our original main line in Berwyn. It made an appearance with my father's 1" scale *Phantom* (now owned by Bob Blackson) on the cover of the *British Model Engineer* magazine, November 1976, in a Kodachrome photo made ten years previously. After we moved to Rahns the tank resided on a table at the front of the meeting room gathering dust until it was resurrected recently in a project headed by Bob Freer to return it to active duty.

main line a short distance from the passenger station. Today's operations unfortunately preclude locating the tank at a scale distance from the track where its spout could be functional. However, it will be on view for our pleasure and the edification of visitors who may be unfamiliar with the majestic structures that once graced steam railroads. The *Gazette* will publish the status of plans for the water tank as they are finalized.

Bob Thomas



Current plans for the water tank are to place it on a concrete plinth near the 1"

Remember the PLS Picnic in Rahns this Summer?



Photos by Larry Moss



From top to bottom: Head cooks John and Jay Forsythe man the grill with some great burgers and dogs. Two youngsters move carefully through the train yard. Henry Blanco White drives the company train. Members and guests enjoy some delicious picnic food. Pete Brown debuts his brand new Alco C420 Delaware & Hudson diesel with all the bells and whistles.



The PLS GAZETTE

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FIRST CLASS

Still Need Your Help for Fall Meet

Many new Volunteers have stepped forward to help us fill our kitchen needs during our Spring and Fall Meets. However, PLS needs you to continue volunteering and hopes others will join us. Just one hour of your time will allow the PLS kitchen to function smoothly.

The kitchen will be open until 3 pm on Saturday and 2 pm on Sunday. Below is a sample of activities where help is needed:

- | | | | |
|-----|----------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Friday | 9 am | 1 or 2 people, set up, etc. |
| 2. | Saturday | 9 am – 10 am | 1 person kitchen prep |
| 3. | Saturday | 11 am – Noon | 2 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 4. | Saturday | Noon – 1 pm | 3 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 5. | Saturday | 1 pm – 2 pm | 3 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 6. | Saturday | 2 pm – 3 pm | 3 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 7. | Saturday | 3 pm – 4 pm | 2 people clean up |
| 8. | Sunday | 9 am – 10 am | 1 person kitchen prep |
| 9. | Sunday | 11 am – Noon | 2 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 10. | Sunday | Noon – 1 pm | 3 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 11. | Sunday | 1 pm – 2 pm | 3 people serving & 1 cashier |
| 12. | Sunday | 2 pm – 3 pm | 2 people clean up/tear down |



Please contact Kathy Parris via email at parrisk415@gmail.com with any questions and to indicate your availability for volunteering.