



January - February 2025

THE PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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The Wheel Report

Dear Friends of PLS

A few simple matters of housekeeping

The Annual Business meeting of the membership will be held at the club house on March 15th at 12:30. As typical we will vote on the presented slate for officers and open seats for the Board of Directors. I am very pleased to see that this year we actually have a fine slate of new and seasoned members wishing to give of their time for the benefit of our club.

Additionally, we will also be voting on the budget for next year. **Please plan to attend.**

Once again, I will remind everyone that only **REGULAR MEMBERS** in **Good standing** may vote. This means that if you have not renewed your Regular membership or have an outstanding bill to the club your membership standing may be taken into question. As of this message (2/12/25) we have 53 members who are delinquent in obligations to the club. This includes Regular memberships (6), unpaid storage leases and a not an insignificant number of Associates members (37) who have outstanding invoices. This translates to more than \$2100 in gap funding from the budget.

PLEASE pay your dues as soon as possible. Regular voting members, I would stress the need to put your account in order before the meeting on March 15 – 12:30. We would not wish to question anyone prior to the vote in March of your good standing. We take cash, Credit Card and Check. See Mark or Kathy

This message represents my last as President. I wish to thank you all for the privilege of serving as President for these past 3 years. I hope that my involvement has been helpful in some way. I wish to join everyone in extending best wishes and support for the incoming administration.

See you at the track.

Pat Murphy

President PLS, Inc.

PLS - Elections

PLS Elections will be held during the Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday March 15, 2025, at 12:30 PM. Voting will be by secret ballot to elect a President, Secretary, Treasurer and four Board of Directors.

- Nominees for the open office positions:
 - President:** John Forsythe
 - Secretary:** Paul Miller
 - Treasurer:** Mark Cahill
- Nominees for the 4 open Board of Directors:
 - Jim Adams
 - Bruce Barette
 - Pete Brown
 - Steve Letterman
 - Ross Magee
 - Steve Mallon

Membership Gauge

As of February 12, 2025

- 93** Regular Members
- 10** Probationary Members
- 155** Associate Members
- 2** Honorary Members



Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Arnold Bresser, James Mooney, and Dan Sclavi.

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for donations received by February 12: Bob Blackson, Pat Murphy, Paul Nichini, Richard Poletto, Jim Salmons, Daniel Siegle, Terry Weinstein, Paul Bastek, Thomas Diedrich, Jeffrey Guzy, Matthew Haines, Robert Heidenreich, Roger Kain, Jeffrey Knueppel PE, James Milo, Edward Overly, Douglas Pyatt, Robert Small, David Staplin, Kenneth Thomas, James Adams, John Caldwell, Roy Nelson, Kathleen Parris, Harry Quirk Jr, James Stapleton, John Evans Jr, Thomas Gmitter, Dave Johnson, Robert Kimmey, Mark Layton, Chris Rood, David Van Winkle, Carmen Visalli, John Wessels, Chris Becker, Erich Boldt Sr, Ken Chermak, Rich Falzone, David Laird, Steve Leatherman, Lawrence Moss Jr, Duane Quenzel, Bill Shields, Robert Gray, Penelope Landgraf, Deborah Voynar, Dale Woodland, Jill Zimmerman, Marc Carpino, Robert Dennis, Dave Klotz, Mary Mercer, Gita Talmage, Domenic Zampogna, Wayne Baldwin, Rick Stoughton, Douglas Brooker, David Bucher, Stanley Richmond, Bruce Barrett, Ronald Drenth, Jared Schoenly, Alan Redeker, K. Ross Magee, Eric Peffel, Franklin Webb, Thomas Narrigan, Brittany Grimm, Joseph Rohanna, Jav Forsythe, Rose Ann Wagner, Ed Kabak, and Don Maleta.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Pat Murphy	of Gilbertsville, PA	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	Paul Miller	of West Chester, PA	secretary@palivesteamers.org
Treasurer	Mark Cahill	of Perkasie, PA	treasurer@palivesteamers.org
Gazette Editor	TBD - Paul Miller (Interim)		

Board of Directors

Steve Mallon, mallonmusic@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/25, Events	Paul Rice, ricepaul@verizon.net - Term Expires 3/25
John Forsythe, john@tcsdcc.com - Term Expires 3/26	Peter Brown, peteprivate@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/25, Buildings
Bonny Slater, quiltnewslady@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26	Fred Daddi, F_Daddi@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc. • P.O. Box 26202 • Collegeville, PA 19426-0202 • www.palivesteamers.org

2025 PLS Upcoming Events

- Sat, Mar 15 **Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM**
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Annual Elections
- Sat, Apr 12 **Chipper Event**
- Sat, Apr 19 **Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM**
Spring Clean-Up
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
- Sun, Apr 27 **BOILER TESTING**
Run Day - Members & Guest
(Rain Date May 4)
- Sat, May 17 **Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM**
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
- Fri, May 23 **Spring Meet - Members & Quest**
- Sat, May 24
- Sun, May 25

PLS Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

Income

100 · Donations	
100.10 · Run Day	\$650.00
100.40 · Pot Luck	\$170.00
100.50 · Picnic	\$100.00
100.90 · Other Donations	\$10,000.00
Total 100 · Donations	\$10,920.00
120 · Dues	
120.10 · Regular Member	\$12,240.00
120.20 · Associate Member	\$5,425.00
Total 120 · Dues	\$17,665.00
130 · Items Sold	
130.20 · Coal	\$20.00
130.50 · Water/Ice Cream	\$450.00
130.65 · Snacks	\$600.00
130.80 · Kitchen Sales	\$0.00
130.90 · Sales Table Taxable	\$375.00
130.91 · Sales Table Non-Tax	\$975.00
Total 130 · Items Sold	\$2,420.00
140 · Storage Trax Fees	
140.30 · Building #3 Rental	\$4,986.00
140.60 · Building #6 Rental	\$2,592.00
140.80 · Building #8 Rental	\$632.00
Total 140 · Storage Trax Fees	\$8,210.00
Total Income	\$39,215.00

Expenses

200 · Utilities		224 · Corporate	
200.10 · Electric	\$2,300.00	224.10 · Legal & Prof. Fees	\$2,545.00
200.30 · Septic Tank	\$1,440.00	224.11 · Delaware Corp. Tax	\$75.00
200.40 · Portable Toilets	\$1,485.00	224.20 · Office General	\$270.00
200.60 · Dumpster	\$2,520.00	224.30 · Property Tax	\$5,500.00
200.70 · Misc Utilities	\$0.00	224.40 · Sales Tax	\$70.00
Total 200 · Utilities	\$7,745.00	224.60 · Office Postage	\$305.00
210 · Miscellaneous Expense		224.70 · Insurance	\$5,200.00
210.20 · Picnic	\$300.00	224.80 · Corporate Printing	\$300.00
210.30 · Pot Luck	\$300.00	224.99 · Corporate Misc	\$100.00
210.40 · Security	\$0.00	Total 224 · Corporate	\$14,365.00
Total 210 · Misc Expense	\$600.00	225 · Sales	
220 · Maintenance		225.10 · Kitchen	\$0.00
220.11 · Mach Shop Supplies	\$0.00	225.20 · Snacks	\$300.00
220.20 · Building #1	\$1,200.00	225.30 · Soda	\$600.00
220.30 · Building #2-8	\$1,000.00	225.40 · Table Sales	\$1,000.00
220.40 · Gauge 1	\$1,000.00	Total 225 · Sales	\$1,900.00
220.50 · Track	\$5,500.00	226 · Special Projects	
220.60 · Mower	\$900.00	227 · '21 Flood Expenses	
220.70 · Signals	\$420.00	227.10 · Building #1	\$0.00
220.80 · Gas Mowing	\$280.00	227.11 · Building #2 - #6	\$0.00
220.90 · Gas Track	\$200.00	227.12 · Rebuild Bathrooms	\$0.00
220.91 · Club Locomotive	\$500.00	227.13 · Rebuild Electrical	\$0.00
220.92 · Landscaping	\$0.00	Total 227 · '21 Flood Expense	\$0.00
220.93 · Tree Trimming	\$5,000.00	Total Expenses	\$47,043.00
220.94 · Fire Extinguishers	\$400.00		
220.99 · Misc. Maintenance	\$1,400.00		
Total 220 · Maintenance	\$17,800.00		
223 · Communications			
223.10 · Gazette-Postage	\$300.00	Income Over/Under Expense	\$7,828.00
223.20 · Gazette-Printing	\$720.00	Projected FY24 Over/Under	\$3,102.00
223.30 · Other Printing	\$240.00		
223.40 · Computer	\$650.00		
223.50 · Internet	\$1,773.00		
223.60 · Community Support	\$125.00		
223.70 · Waiver Sheets	\$75.00		
223.80 · Web Page	\$750.00		
223.99 · Misc Comms	\$0.00		
Total 223 · Communications	\$4,633.00		

Tales From a Retired Engineer: The Princeton “Dinky”

Author: Mark Cahill

Of the several “original” New Jersey railroads dating back to the early 1800’s, one of more prominent and dominant railroads was the Camden & Amboy (C&A).

The original C&A “main line” ran between South Amboy and Bordentown and was later extended to Camden.

Two other players, the Philadelphia & Trenton RR (P&T) and the New Jersey RR (NJRR) coordinated with the C&A to establish a through route from Philadelphia to New York City.

The P&T had built north (RR east) from Philadelphia to Trenton while the NJRR had built south (RR west) from Jersey City to New Brunswick.

To complete the through route, the C&A had agreed to build the “middle section,” an extension from their main line beginning in Bordentown and ending in New Brunswick. This extension would also pass through Trenton and Princeton. This extension was completed in 1839.

From Trenton, the C&A’s line loosely paralleled the Delaware & Raritan Canal for about 13 miles before veering away from the canal and more towards what is today’s Monmouth Junction.

In 1863, the C&A elected to realigned this line further to the south (along what is today’s Northeast Corridor (NEC)) to reduce mileage and curvature.

The people of Princeton were not happy. Princeton was the first Capital of New Jersey and undoubtedly was the home of many important and influential people.

To placate the Princetonians, the C&A agreed to build a branch line connecting Princeton to their realigned route at what is today’s Princeton Junction.

And so began 162 uninterrupted years of service on the Princeton Branch.

In 1871, the line came under the control of the Pennsylvania RR (PRR) via lease. The PRR operated the branch until it (Penn Central) declared bankruptcy on June 21, 1970.

Through federal legislation, Amtrak was born on May 1, 1971. At that time, the property and infrastructure that today is the NEC was conveyed to Amtrak (yes, Amtrak owns the NEC).

5 years later, again through federal legislation, Conrail was formed on April 1, 1976. Conrail was conveyed most of the property and infrastructure of the remaining bankrupt regional railroads (i.e. Erie-Lackawanna RR, Central RR of New Jersey, Reading RR, New York & Long Branch RR).

The New Jersey Department of Transportation contracted with Conrail to continue providing commuter rail service to Penn Station, NY and Hoboken, NJ.

Provisions in yet another piece of federal legislation, the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981, allowed Conrail to abandon its commuter rail operations and transfer these operations to the New Jersey Department of Transportation on January 1, 1983.

Tales From a Retired Engineer: The Princeton “Dinky”



Circa 1863 photo of the Princeton Branch at Princeton Junction Station (looking west towards Princeton). Note the primitive turntable for turning the locomotive. The station is to the train's right.



Today's NJT Arrow III equipment just departing Princeton Junction on roughly the same curve as the train in the 1863 photo above.

Tales From a Retired Engineer: The Princeton “Dinky”

On January 1, 1983, New Jersey Transit Rail Operations (NJTRO) was formed. From this date forward, all commuter rail operations in the state of New Jersey are provided by NJTRO, ***including the Princeton Branch.***

As a locomotive engineer for New Jersey Transit (NJT), I had the privilege to operate the Princeton Shuttle, affectionately known as the “Princeton Dinky” from 2001 to 2017.

The Princeton Branch was 2.7 miles long with only 2 stations, Princeton, and Princeton Junction. A one-way trip took about 5 minutes. The speed limit was 60 mph with a few 35 mph curves.

A tour-of-duty was about 10½ hours with about 15 round trips performed. Signup was at Princeton Junction. Equipment was typically two single Arrow III MUs (NJT had married pairs of Arrow III MUs but resisted using them on the Princeton Branch because the pair had only a single pantograph. If something went bad with the pan, the train would be unable to continue. Having a 2nd pantograph afforded some redundancy).

There is a cyclone fenced cage at Princeton Junction. The cage is 2 car lengths long and the equipment is secured in this cage when not in service. I was informed that at one time, the signup and equipment was in Princeton. Storing the equipment in Princeton ended when a student climbed up on to the roof of the equipment and was severely injured when he came into contact with the overhead catenary (12,500 Volts AC).

Today, the branch is single track and is not signaled (it was once double tracked and signaled back in the PRR days) The PRR had a sizable yard at Princeton and once provided extra passenger train service to Princeton University football games.

Since we were the only train on the branch, once we received a Form D Line 2 from the dispatcher to operate in both directions between Princeton and Princeton Junction, we had exclusive use of the branch, thus one track was sufficient and no signals were required.

I had several “memorable” trips while working the Princeton Branch.

The 1st incident was when I was still a fairly new engineer. I had only worked the branch a few times. Then, on one tour-of-duty, it started to rain lightly. I didn’t think anything of it until, while moving at 60 mph, I applied the brakes to slow for a 35 mph curve coming into Princeton Junction. I felt very little, if any, braking action. Similar to a car, the train is equipped with a form of ABS (anti-lock braking system) but the system response is much much slower. Normally, an engineer would drop sand to increase friction between the rails and the wheels, however, MUs are not equipped with sanders. Needless to say, I was terrified because there was not a thing I could do. The train was slowing but I hit the curve doing about 50 mph. I managed to stay on the rails. Braking improved going through the curve which helped although I blew through the parking lot grade crossing just as the gates got fully down. At that point I had control again. I learned a very valuable lesson that day. Light rain is worse than heavy rain because light rain does not shed off of the rail head. That water mixed with oils from crushed leaves and oils leaking from trains forms a potentially deadly mixture. So, apply the brakes lighter and sooner when these conditions exist.

Tales From a Retired Engineer: The Princeton “Dinky”

Once upon arriving at Princeton Junction, I was cutting out my control stand and preparing to cut back in at the other end of the train when the vestibule door opened and a young woman (probably a Princeton University student) entered the locomotive cab. I politely said, “Ma’am, you can’t be in here”. Ignoring me, she walked over to the far side of the cab and turned to face me. A moment later, I noticed a liquid running down her leg. Yup, you guessed it, she was relieving herself right there in my cab! (the single car MU’s had no bathroom) At least she stayed clothed! When she was finished, she calmly left my cab never uttering a word leaving a puddle of urine behind. That incident was a hard one to explain to the dispatcher. We wound up missing a round trip to wash out the floor with buckets of water.

Because there were only 2 stations on the branch, sometimes Princeton University students would board the train without a ticket then refuse to purchase one from the conductor. Normally, a conductor would discharge a non-paying passenger at the next stop. But because the next stop was always the last stop, the conductor had no recourse. After a conductor told me about this, I told him “Look, we own the track, if while we are enroute you have a non-paying passenger, just buzz me to stop, then buzz me 3 times and I will reverse the train back to the station. Then you can throw the passenger off where he got on”. Just one time did we actually do that. The smartass passenger thought he would get a free ride. Not that day!

On another occasion, after arriving at Princeton Junction, one of the passengers (another Princeton student) was frantically looking for his wallet. My conductor and myself joined the search but came up empty. The student was relentless though and continued looking. He stayed on the train for another few round trips. Then, upon arriving at Princeton, I noticed something in the gauge of the track just in front of the train. Because the station at Princeton is a high-level platform, I had to exit the train through an end door on the opposite side to reach the ground. Walking up to the head end of the train, voila! I find the wallet. It must have fallen out of his pocket while boarding the train. We could not find the student so I kept the wallet and probably would have eventually turned it in to lost & found. However, when we returned to Princeton Junction, the student was *still* on the train looking for the wallet! I decided to have a little fun with him. I approached him and asked him his name, then asked him his address (I knew the answers because his student ID was in the wallet). When he replied correctly, I said “Here’s your wallet”. The student was flabbergasted but extremely grateful too.

There were 2 interesting incidents while standing at Princeton station.

One scared the bejeebers out of everybody on the platform including me and my conductor when a squirrel jumped out of a trashcan when a passenger threw something into the can.

Another even more frightening incident involved squirrels too. Again, while standing at Princeton station, there was a bright flash of light and a tremendous explosion. Talk about levitating! There was no power to the train indicating that the overhead catenary had gone dead. We called the dispatcher who contacted the power director. He confirmed that a circuit breaker had tripped. He reset it and power to the train was restored. But then we noticed a squirrel walking along the top of the train towards the pantograph. The animal climbed up onto the pantograph assembly out of our sight on the other side of the train. Then, boom! another bright flash of light and explosion. At that point, my conductor said we’re not moving this train until someone from the electrical department comes out to inspect the equipment.

Upon arriving, the electrician 1st checked to make sure the catenary was de-energized. When it was safe, he climbed up on the equipment to inspect. A moment later he returned with a very badly burned squirrel! Ugh!

Tales From a Retired Engineer: The Princeton “Dinky”

One last incident that I can recall occurred while traversing the Route 1 overhead bridge. It was my 1st trip of the day from Princeton Junction to Princeton. As I approached the bridge doing 60 mph, a group of deer were on the near side of the bridge. They all scattered into the clear except for one small young deer. That deer decided to run across the bridge. He didn't make it. On my return trip, what was left of the deer on the bridge was a twisted mess. Its legs looked like a pretzel. And I had to look at this thing for about 14 more round trips. Oooh.

Here's a link to a cab ride video from Princeton Junction to Princeton around 2008.

<https://youtu.be/1xFqsOJQvds?si=XbidXaVJm8rPvKsN>

Typical workdays on the railroad are usually routine. But every now and then, some really interesting things happen. I hope you enjoyed this story.

PLS Election - 2025

To all **VOTING** Members of PLS - (regular members in good standing).

Bylaw Article IV Paragraph 2: "The slate of nominees will be posted in the clubhouse or via electronic mail (PLS, Inc., BLAST) or *The PLS Gazette* no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting."

- The above task has been completed. The PLS Gazette will also show the election slate. (See Page 2)

Bylaw Article IV Paragraph 8.1 allows voting by absentee ballot.

A regular member can request a mailed absentee ballot from the secretary not less than 15 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting .A regular member can request an absentee ballot from the secretary in person at any time prior to the election. All absentee ballots returned to the secretary prior to the election will be accepted and may not be withdrawn.

PLS Club Steam Locomotive Update



Bruce Saylor surveys the 2-6-0 after the Boiler was removed.

The Loco was donated to the Club by Bob Morris. With the hopes that it will run again and become a learning platform for both maintenance and operation.

Pat Murphy has taken the Boiler to Godshall's Custom Machining in Shermans Dale, PA. They will be evaluating the condition and determine if it can be repaired.

Much work is still required and the assessment of the condition of all the other parts. Including Wheels, Bearings, Running Gear, etc....

Fead Daddi will be the project coordinator going forward.

Members are encouraged to be a part of project and learn maintenance and operation of a Live Steam Locomotive.

PLS at Cabin Fever Expo 2025



Our first time with our own display at the Cabin Fever Expo. We were well staffed for this two-day event. Steve Mallon displayed one of his flat cars and Bonny Slater played our PLS Membership Video on continuous loop on her laptop. We handed out many brochures and just maybe we inspired some potential new Members. Special thanks for all that helped make this possible.





The PLS GAZETTE

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

FIRST CLASS



Very large turnout on January 1, 2025. The Meet included two Steam Engines this year as well as many other Locos and Train Cars including one self-propelled Trolley Car.