



September - October 2025

THE PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

July – August TOPICS: Trying new things [1](#)
PLS Upcoming Events [2](#) Donations [2](#) Membership Gauge [2](#) Membership News [2](#)
Workdays at PLS [3-4](#) Preschool Visit [5](#) Upgrading Turnouts [5](#)
Super Storm Sandy [6-8](#)

Trying new things

The first ever Saturday run day was reasonably well attended on October 11th, it was an enjoyable day.

The first ever three day blow down meet is coming soon.

I welcome discussion over the course of the upcoming membership meetings for consideration of doing Saturday runs instead of Sunday runs and repeating the three day blow down event.

The pros and cons and counter points to Saturday runs as I see it.

Pros;

1. Saturday runs leave Sunday open for family time and family events.
2. Having Saturday runs in place of Sunday runs leaves Sunday open for church attendance for those who attend. Not having to decide on either missing a run day or missing baptisms, dedications, choir events or normal Sunday services etc. would be great.
3. Having Sunday to relax before going back to the work week is very nice. Running equipment, especially steam, is fun but it is a lot of effort which leaves little time to recover before Monday. This leads into the next point.
4. Saturday runs tend to be more relaxing because you have more of the day to relax and have fun before having to pack up to be ready for Monday.

Cons;

1. We lose a work day once a month during the running season. We are already short on volunteer work hours to keep up with the railroad maintenance.

Counter to this point, losing 7 work days by having Saturday runs will not change anyone's ability or opportunity to come out and help on the other 45 Saturday work days of the year, not to mention the 52 Wednesday work days of the year.

2. Tradition, Sunday runs are the way we have operated for ever.

In case you have not discerned it yet, my preference is to have all Saturday run days but this is a club which we will need to collectively decide on to make such a change. This is something to think about before we create next year's calendar of events.

Let's keep it fun!

See you at the tracks.

John Forsythe
President PLS, Inc.

PLS Schedule Changes

Please note the following Fall Run Days that were added to this year's schedule.

- Fri, Oct 24 Blow Down Meet
- Sat, Oct 25 Blow Down Meet
- Sun, Oct 26 Blow Down Meet
Members & Guest

2025 PLS Upcoming Events

- Fri, Oct 24 Blow Down Meet – Members & Guest
- Sat, Oct 25 Bring you Crock Pot to share lunch!
+ Hot dogs are served too.
- Sun, Oct 26 Members & Guests. No food service.
- Tue, Nov 11 Veterans Day Run
- Sat, Nov 15 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
FALL CLEAN UP in AM
Membership Meeting – 12:30 PM
- Fri, Nov 28 Turkey Trot Run - Gauge 1 Only
- Sat, Dec 13 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

Membership Gauge

As of Oct. 14, PLS has:

- 95** Regular Members
- 10** Probationary
- 146** Associate Members
- 2** Honorary Members.



Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members: Andrew Morine, Christopher Hawkins, Trent Wolfensberger, Rafael Torok, Brandon Dilibero, Brian Greenzang, and Jon Maison.

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for donations received by October 10: Rich Poletto, Bruce Saylor, Barry Shapin, Andrew Kosmach, Larry Moss, Mike Moore, Paul Miller, Fred Daddi, Joan Cahill, Guy Godschall, Jerusalem Lutheran School, Perkiomen Township, Jared Schoenly, Mark Cahill, Bruce Barrett, Rick Stoughton, and Kathy Parris.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	John Forsythe	of Blooming Glen, PA	john@tcsdcc.com
Secretary	Paul Miller	of West Chester, PA	secretary@palivesteamers.org
Treasurer	Mark Cahill	of Perkasio, PA	treasurer@palivesteamers.org
Gazette Editor	TBD - Paul Miller (Interim)		

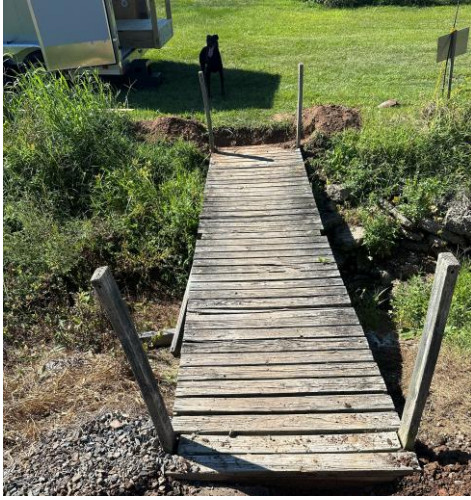
Board of Directors

Steve Mallon, mallonmusic@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/27,	Fred Daddi, F_Daddi@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26
Bonny Slater, , quiltnsewlad@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26	Peter Brown, peteprivate@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/27
Bruce Barrett, greenjeeps2@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/27	Steve Leatherman, steveleatherman@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/26

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

Workdays at PLS

The Bridge Replacement Project was started and completed in August.



Old Bridge just before removal.



New Bridge after installation.



SALMONS CREEK BRIDGE

After the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on August 30, 2025. Pictured on the Bridge Jim Salmons and Paul Rice in the front row. Also, Paul Miller, Mark Cahill, Frank Webb and Bob Morris.

SALMONS CREEK BRIDGE



BUILT 8-21-2025

by Paul Miller

Installed 8-23-2025

by the PLS Crew

Workdays at PLS



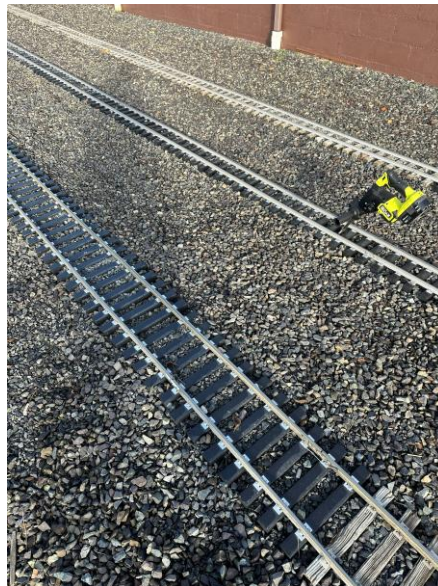
PLS's new Cordless Hammer Drill with tamping bit will make the Remove & Replace Tie Project faster and more efficient. The Club also acquired 2- 4AH batteries and a charger.



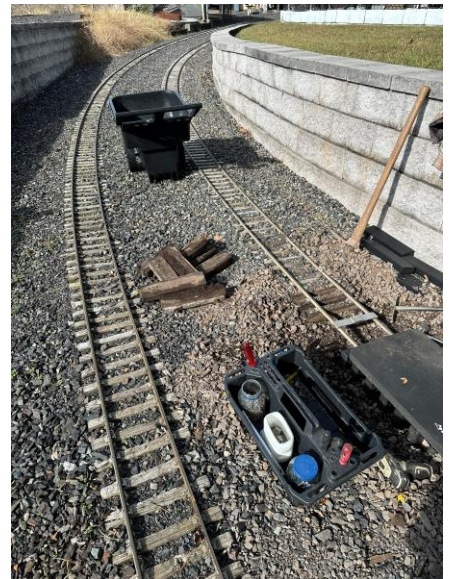
The Clubs new Garden Cart (Donated) will join our old one to help transport new and old Ties.



The Ties for the 4.75" Main going west from Salmons Creek Bridge have been replaced to the next Turnout. The old wooden Ties were installed in 1999 and after 26 years of baking in the Sun most were dry rotted and unable to keep the Rails in gauge.



Some of the worst Ties on the 7.25" Main were also replaced along the South property line. Many more are still in need of replacement.



The Yard exit Track on the 7.25" is almost completed from where the 11 new Panels were installed in 2019 to the Merge Turnout. On the Main the Merge Turnout and Main to the Tunnel the Ties are also replaced. The Main from the Station to the Merge Turnout Tie replacement is now in progress.

PLS Welcomes Preschool Visitors



"As a community service, PLS again hosted the children from the Jerusalem Lutheran Preschool in nearby Schwenksville for a special train ride. The children loved it! Paul Miller and Mark Cahill engineered the event. The school's teachers thanked PLS with a donation."

Upgrading Turnouts at PLS



This a before look at our third Turnout to be Rebuilt in place along the Main Line.

The process includes creating a cut list of all the different length Ties. Then predrilling one hole and placing a Tie Plate for the stock Rail side.

Then as the process begins on one end by removing and replacing 5 Ties at a time to help maintain the Turnouts geometry.

Tales From a Retired Engineer: “Super Storm Sandy”

Author: Mark Cahill

Hurricane Sandy (unofficially referred to as **Superstorm Sandy**)^{[1][2]} was an extremely large and devastating [tropical cyclone](#) which ravaged the Caribbean and the coastal [Mid-Atlantic region of the United States](#) in late October 2012. It was the largest Atlantic hurricane on record as measured by diameter, with tropical-storm-force winds spanning 1,150 miles. On October 29, 2012, Hurricane “Sandy” made landfall near Brigantine, NJ (just north of Atlantic City).

Although at the time of landfall, the storm had reduced to a Category 1 to 2 range, the size of the storm and its accompanying storm surge devastated a significant number of structures along the NJ coast. Also greatly impacted were many of the subway lines and tunnels in New York City, Amtrak’s Hudson River and East River tunnels, NJ Transit’s Hoboken Terminal and NJ Transit’s Meadows Maintenance Complex (MMC).

Of note was the complete flooding of Amtrak’s Hudson River North Tube from the storm surge. The sump pumps located at the lowest point of each tunnel were keeping up with the floodwaters. However, a subsequent power failure rendered the North Tube’s sump pumps inoperable. Thus, the North Tube filled completely with water several hundred feet east and west of its low point. These tunnels were completed by the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) in 1910 in conjunction with Pennsylvania Station (in Manhattan), 4 East River tunnels and a servicing yard in Sunnyside Queens NY.

After the storm passed, it took Amtrak 3 days to completely drain the tunnel and restore traction power. Restoring signals took longer. Amtrak operated their trains at restricted speed until signal restoration was complete.

At the time of the storm, I was working a Morrisville assignment. On the actual day of the storm’s landfall (Monday October 29, 2012), I was on my relief day.

NJ Transit’s management woefully underestimated the storm’s destructive potential. They failed to realize the flooding vulnerability of the extremely low elevations above sea level of both Hoboken Terminal and the MMC. Regrettably, no decision was made to move equipment to higher ground with one exception. About 6 push-pull trainsets were re-positioned on Main Track #1 on the North Jersey Coast Line just west of “Union” Interlocking on Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC). “Union” Interlocking is where NJ Transit’s North Jersey Coast Line joins the NEC. The main tracks in this area are unlikely to flood.

At Hoboken Terminal and the MMC, a substantial amount of NJ Transit’s equipment (both locomotives and passenger cars) was submerged and heavily damaged. If I recall, NJ Transit suspended all rail service for about 5 days.

NJ Transit resumed limited service on November 3. Although Amtrak’s Hudson River tunnels were in service (barely), NJ Transit elected to terminate some of its trains either at Newark Penn Station, Newark, NJ or Secaucus Jct.

Full service was restored about 3 weeks after the storm (November 20).

Tales From a Retired Engineer: “Super Storm Sandy”

During these approximate 3 weeks of either suspended or limited service, all crews working Morrisville assignments were ordered to report and standby. For those first few days, no equipment was moved. NJ Transit management was gracious enough to pay all crews the earnings of their assignments even though they performed no service.

On Thursday November 1, 3 days after the storm, 7 Morrisville crews were ordered to go get the 6 trainsets sitting on Main Track #1 on the North Jersey Coast Line and bring them back to Morrisville Yard. One of the 7 crews operated a train to “Union” Interlocking while 6 crews deadheaded on the train. After clearing the interlocking, the operating crew reversed direction down onto the North Jersey Coast Line and closed up on the 1st of the 6 stored trainsets. From there, the 6 crews proceeded to walk Main Track #2 paralleling the stored equipment, each crew manning a trainset. I was fortunate to be assigned the 2nd of the 6 trainsets so I only had to walk 2 trainset lengths. The last assigned crew had to walk the length of all 6 trainsets, a pretty good distance!

For the 3 weeks before full service was restored, the Morrisville crews rotated working the reduced train schedule. Several crews would work the assignments while the remaining crews would remain on standby. Usually after a few hours, these standby crews would be released and could go home.

After being crucified by the NJ State legislature and the Media for poor planning, NJ Transit management learned a very painful lesson, move equipment to higher ground! Going forward, one plan was to restore a small storage yard near the Jersey Ave station for use in relocating equipment should there ever be another storm event like Sandy. Back in the day, the PRR had built this yard to support passenger trains originating at Jersey Ave. As of today, almost 13 years later, this yard remains dormant.

However, recently, NJ Transit announced the construction of the long-awaited North Brunswick Station. This station will be located adjacent to the current Jersey Ave Station which will be retired once the new station is completed. Part of this new station project may include the restoration of the storage yard.



Hoboken Terminal Waiting Room. Water has already receded but was high enough to float the huge heavy seats off the floor! I believe the devices under the seats are seat warmers.

Tales From a Retired Engineer: “Super Storm Sandy”



North Jersey Coast Line MP 3. Raritan Bay is to the Left. Total devastation.



SEPTA Silverliner 4 and a push-pull trainset submerged at Trenton on Tracks 5 and 7. Assunpink Creek is to the left.



North Jersey Coast Line MP 3.1 (Morgan Drawbridge). Boats and container floated down from a Marina just North of the bridge, a bit of a unique mess!



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P.O. Box 26202

Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

FIRST CLASS



Fred Daddi enjoying his 0-4-0 Steam Locomotive. Fred had the first Steamer out on Oct.11 our first Saturday Run Day.

Looks like the team is talking about the finer points of a good fire.