



The PLS GAZETTE

A Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

This article, **How to Build a Railroad Station Suitable for 7 ¼ Inch Gauge 1 ½ Inch Scale**, is dedicated to our past member William (Bill) Normart (December 12, 1921 – March 10, 2018). If you look around PLS you will see two railroad stations, the most prominent is Rahns Station for our 7 ¼ inch gauge equipment. Most will agree that this is a beautiful building with inspiring details that can be seen in the framing of the windows and doors, the support columns for the roof over the track and passenger loading area, as well as the brackets used on every post making this a superb piece of architecture well suited to the railroad at PLS. Bill, a soft-spoken man, an accomplished architect, engineer and builder as well as the designer, architect, and builder of Rahns Station, one of several of his creations at PLS. Yes, I say creation because Bill built Rahns Station at his home in King of Prussia, Pa. Not just built, but prefabricated and painted the station in sections that could be easily transported to PLS and re-assembled on site. This is not the only structure that Bill prefabricated at home and later erected at PLS, the 4 ¾ inch gauge station and Beck tower were also prefabricated at home and later assembled at PLS. However, for this article we will focus on Rahns Station.

We are very fortunate to have more than a dozen photos from May 1988 the year Rahns station was delivered to PLS for final assembly. Bill's drawings were very detailed and before the station was delivered the brick floor of the station was put in place along with the in-ground wooden stringers that the station would be attached

to. Following Bill's drawings Walter Mensch put in place most of the bricks for Rahns Station floor, just a few of many bricks Walt would place on the ground for this and many PLS building projects. As you look at the photos below please note that the brick extends on both sides of the station track with close spacing of brick to the outside of the rail head on both sides of the track, in addition the spacing required special ties that allow the track's railheads to be flush with the top of the brick. If you look closely you will also see that the track section ends at the end of the station as no approach or departure track was ready at the time so station construction. If you look at the photos we have on the walls of our meeting room you can find a picture of the actual Rahns Railroad Station. And although our station is somewhat different than the full size Rahns Station, you can see some of the details that inspired Bill on the design of his station.

Photo 1 and Photo 2 show the brick floor of the station, two prefabricated and painted panels with window openings can also be seen resting against the north side uprights that will support the roof over the track. Looking closely you can see the decorative brackets are already installed on the upright posts. This ornamental design element can be found in Bill's other projects around the PLS railroad. In Photo 3 the west end panel has been attached with the upright post sitting on the inlaid pressure treated wooden footing. In Photo 4 the prefabricated east end panel has been raised along with a good view of how the brick has been fitted closely around the track.

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Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

PLS Election Results

Elections were held at the regular membership meeting on Saturday, March 17, 2018. Frank Webb, Lee Nonnemacher and Bob Morris, running unopposed, were confirmed as President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively.

There were four names on the ballot for three open positions on the board of directors. Bob Hillenbrand, Larry Moss and Ross Magee were elected. Rounding out the board with one year remaining on their two-year terms are Pete Brown, Jim Miller and Jim Salmons

Congratulations and best wishes to those elected.

2018 Spring Meet Information

The Spring Meet will be held on May 26th and 27th this year. As usual, running will start on Friday afternoon, May 25th. Volunteers are needed for gate duty, station duty, and kitchen duty. Just sign up for a time slot when you arrive at the meet.

Also, please remember that we depend on your donations of baked goods for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Please note: 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 pot luck dinner, please use your own cooler if at all possible. Thank you.

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate Members Robert McHale, Carl Hessig Sr, Mark Hartranft, and James Lipnitz.

PLS Upcoming Events 2018

Saturday, April 21	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Spring Clean Up in AM
Sunday, April 22	Run Day - Members & Guests Boiler Testing - Rain Date April 29
Saturday, May 19	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 AM
Friday, May 25	Spring Meet - Members & Guests
Saturday, May 26	Spring Meet - Members & Guests Pot Luck Dinner - 5:30 PM
Sunday, May 27	Spring Meet - Members & Guests
Sunday, June 16	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Sunday, June 24	Run Day - Members & Guests Rain Date July 1

Donation Acknowledgements

PLA wishes to thank the following members for donations received during February and March: Mary Mercer, Chris Rood, Rich Falzone, James Barker, and David Taylor. Thanks also to the Exxon Foundation for their donation on behalf of Terry and Cindy Smelser.



Storage Track Payments are Due

To regular members who have storage tracks at PLS: your annual fees were due as of April 1. If you have not already paid, please see Bob Morris with your payment or send to PLS c/o the Treasurer.

Membership Gauge

As of March 31, 2018 PLS has:

- 107 Regular Members**
- 160 Associate Members**
- 5 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
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Photo 5 shows the prefabricated upper panel and the left window panel in place. Note the pre-painted post brackets. Bill loved his brackets! Photo 6 has all the left side pre-painted rafters in place and getting ready for roofing, the corner boards are also in place and of course pre-painted.

When you look at Photo 7 you can only wonder what Bill was thinking... Maybe he was pondering will this station ever be finished, but like all of Bill's projects all were well planned and all that was needed was a little man power to put the pieces together. Photo 8 shows some of the station's details like grill work in the end panel and the details cut into each rafter like the fancy work on the tail of the rafter at the edge of the roof and some decorative detail cut into the upper part of the rafters. Each post end has a detailed end finish and once again you can see the fancy bracket work. Bill spent many, many hours with his bandsaw and jigsaw cutting out these detailed parts.

Photos 9 and 10 show the completed station as it appeared in 1988. Photo 10 shows the detail of the finished windows along with the Rahns station signs in place. Just a few years ago we asked Bill to draft construction drawings for a roof extension that we wanted to add to Rahns station and the always agreeable Bill provided us with those drawing and we added the extended roof you see today. The new roof looks like it could have been built in 1988 and is a perfect fit to Bill's original design.

Photo 11 is a picture of the original Rahns Station taken in 1933 that proudly hangs on the wall of the PLS meeting room. Photo 12 is an under construction photo taken in 1988 with Bill Normart standing in the doorway of his version of the PLS Rahns Station. I think you will agree that Bill's designs that can be seen all around the PLS railroad are some of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc. best assets.

Bill, we will all miss you.

Frank Webb, President



Photo 5



Photo 9



Photo 6



Photo 10



Photo 7



Photo 11



Photo 8



Photo 12

WHEN THE FEDERAL COULD NOT STOP PART 1

Well, it finally did, but . . .

by Bob Thomas

THE JOURNEY.

Patronage on Pennsylvania Railroad's *Federal* (Train No. 173) was exceptionally high on January 14, 1953 as crowds flooded into Washington for the inauguration of Dwight Eisenhower as president. When it departed from Boston for Washington on time at 11 p.m., 173 consisted of a New Haven Diesel locomotive hauling a PRR combine, PRR coach and New Haven coach No. 8665, followed by a mix of ten PRR and New Haven coaches and sleepers.¹

The *Federal* was keeping good time until the flagman noticed that brakes were dragging on the last six cars. An unscheduled stop was made at Kingston Swamp, Rhode Island. After forty minutes, and car maintainers were unable to diagnose the reason for dragging brakes, the engineman and fireman got on the ground and walked back to inspect their train. They discovered that the rear angle cock on NH 8665 was closed. The angle cock was reset, a brake test was conducted, and 173 continued its journey almost an hour late.

The first scheduled stop was New Haven, where the NH Diesel was replaced by a NH electric locomotive, three additional cars were added to the end of the train, and a new NH crew took over.

However, *there was no mention by any of*

the departing crew about the brake problem they had just experienced! After another brake test 173 departed New Haven 48 minutes late with the new crew that made up more time before arriving at Pennsylvania Station New York. At Penn Station, PRR engineman Harry Brower, with over forty years' experience on the railroad, and fireman John Moyer, twenty years on the job, backed GG1 4876 onto the 16-car train. The GG1 was resplendent in its DGLE* finish and PRR's classic full-length 5-stripe side accent.

After attaining required 110 psi brake line pressure, Brower made a 15-pound reduction that held constant for one minute, then a further 5-pound reduction that also remained constant, verifying that his train's brake system was working properly. In addition, two car inspectors on each side of the train and two brake inspectors went from car-to-car to ensure that brake cylinders on every car were working in accordance with ICC regulations. With their report in hand, Conductor T.J. Murphy ordered Brower to get the *Federal* rolling out of New York, now just 28 minutes behind schedule.

THE CRASH.

Brower made 21 brake applications between New York and Baltimore in response to various track and dispatch situations. The *Federal* responded normally at station stops in Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore, leaving the latter only nine minutes late. This was looking like a good day for 173 after all, but then, while moving along at 80 mph on the down the grade toward Washington Union Station, Brower observed an *Approach* (30 mph) aspect on the terminal distant signal. He acknowledged the signal on train control then made an 8-pound reduction. However, the expected speed reduction did not materialize, nor did he hear the usual lengthy air discharge from the trainline exhaust pipe on the brake stand. He immediately dropped sand and put the brakes in Emergency, but there still was no change in the train's speed. Now alarmed, he called across to fireman Moyer to put his brake handle on Emergency. No effect!

The engineman then attempted to reverse the GG1 motors but at that high speed, the reverse current was too high, causing breakers to open. He was now powerless to



4876 rests on Baggage Room floor after crashing down from track level above.

do anything other than alert conductor Murphy to what was happening and warn whoever he could at lineside of 173's precarious runaway status. Moyer immediately began blowing the GG1's mighty air horn in continuous short blasts, a signal to all that 173 was in trouble. Murphy recognized the emergency signal at once; the veteran conductor pulled the emergency cord but he was in the third car so it had no effect. He then went through the train herding

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*DGLE is the acronym for *Dark Green Locomotive Enamel*, often erroneously referred to as "Brunswick Green."

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passengers in coaches toward the rear of their car, with instructions to prepare themselves for the inevitable jolting stop.

Meanwhile, towerman Harry Ball, in “C-Tower” only one mile from Washington Union Station, alerted by 4876’s horn, looked out as the GG1 passed, “with wheels glowing orange and sparks showering from all the wheels of the locomotive and first three cars.” Ball didn’t have to be told what was happening! He immediately called the Director at “K-Tower,” located just outside the station, who in turn reported the runaway *Federal* to the Station Master’s Office. Everyone in the office rushed out to clear the circulating area at the ends of incoming tracks and from the crowded waiting room behind. Everyone was safely evacuated with less than a minute to spare before 173 entered Platform Track 16 at an estimated 35 to 40 m.p.h.

The speeding GG1, propelled by enormous momentum of the sixteen cars behind it, wiped out a steel buffer at the end of Track 16, smashed through a Union News stand, the station master’s office, an iron fence, and began scudding across the floor of the now-empty waiting room. Unable to bear the weight of the 240-ton GG1, the floor progressively collapsed, easing 4876, rear end first, and one following car into the Baggage Room below. The second car of the train hung half-in and half-out of the Baggage Room as dust and debris began to settle all around.

(To be Continued)

REFERENCE

1 Martin, Robert, “Runaway GG1 4876 Crashes into Washington Union Station” PRRT&HS *The Keystone** Vol. 37, No.4 (2004) 49-60

* Much of this manuscript is based on articles appearing in *The Keystone*, a quarterly publication of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society (PRRT&HS). Information concerning membership and benefits of the PRRT&HS is available on-line at: www.prrths.com/



Bill Normart 1921-2018

Long-time PLS member Bill Normart passed away on Saturday, March 10, 2018. He died peacefully at his home in King of Prussia, PA, at age 96. Bill was born on December 12, 1921 and grew up in Glenolden, PA, just south of Philadelphia and very near the main line tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad. As a child he loved to watch the trains and that began his lifelong love of anything railroad. He enjoyed traveling by train and would plan vacation trips to travel that way, including to one of his favorite places, the Grand Canyon.

Bill was in the Army during World War II, serving in the Pacific. He worked as an apprentice in the engineering department of the old Baldwin Locomotive Works, inking drawings with a ruling pen. He went on to become a very talented architectural draftsman, designer and illustrator. Bill became a PLS member in 1959 and brought with him those design talents wherein he became responsible for the design and construction of many of the structures at PLS (see detailed article elsewhere in this *Gazette*.)

Bill remained active and continued to drive his car until this past fall when he began to experience health issues. He will be sorely missed by those of us who have been lucky enough to know and work with him over the years.

Bill is survived by sons Martin and Robert, daughter Christine, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Headlight Lens Found

Brass bezel and visor with
glass lens for 1-1/2 inch scale

Contact:
secretary@palivesteamers.org





The PLS GAZETTE

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FIRST CLASS



Still Need Your Help

Many new volunteers have stepped forward to help us fill our kitchen staffing 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.

Kitchen Activities Where Help is Needed

1. Friday	9 AM	1 or 2 people, set up, etc.	7. Saturday	3 PM - 4 PM,	2 people clean up
2. Saturday	9 AM - 10 AM	1 person kitchen preparation	8. Sunday	9 AM - 10 AM	1 person kitchen preparation
3. Saturday	11AM - Noon	2 people serving & 1 cashier	9. Sunday	11 AM - Noon	2 people serving & 1 cashier
4. Saturday	Noon - 1 PM,	3 people serving & 1 cashier	10. Sunday	Noon - 1 PM	3 people serving & 1 cashier
5. Saturday	1 PM - 2 PM	3 people serving & 1 cashier	11. Sunday	1 PM - 2 PM	3 people serving & 1 cashier
6. Saturday	2 PM - 3 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.