



# The PLS GAZETTE

January–February 2012

**A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.**

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## Along the Main Line

**T**his is my last editorial as President of PLS. Kathy Parris warned me four years ago when I accepted this position how much things will change for me. Believe it or not, I *really* enjoyed serving and learning over these past four years, though I must admit, composing this regular message for the *Gazette* is a duty I will not miss.

I strongly encourage everyone read-

ing this to attend the first and important **membership meeting on March 17th**— St. Patrick's Day no less! At that meeting, we will have the annual election of officers and Board of Directors members. We will also be reviewing the new proposed storage track leases. The meeting will be followed by an organized effort to remove the debris pile from the infield left by Hurricane Irene back in September. We will have a rented chipper on site to help with this effort. Everyone's participation on the 17th is strongly requested.

Once again I want to point out those important words so often lacking in a volunteer organization — **THANK YOU**. Thanks to everyone whose participation over the years have made PLS the wonderful organization that it is. In particular, I would like to send my heartfelt thanks to Lee Nonnemacher, Walt Mensch, Bruce Saylor, Ron Shupard, Ron Henderson, Kathy Parris, Pete Brown, Big John Geib, Jay Shupard, Paul Rice, Bob Freer, Jim and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## One-inch Scale Canyon to be Opened Soon

**T**he second phase of the 4¾" main track realignment project nears completion with the setting of the retaining wall in the canyon and the placement of the new track. With the help of a few hardy souls and a mild winter, the project should be ready by the April run day.

Ronnie Shupard, the project manager, and I set most of the 38-pound blocks of the retaining wall with help from Walt Mensch who also delivered the block from the store. Plus, we did a whole lot of digging!

— Bruce Saylor

**Ronnie Shupard** looks out from the one-inch scale canyon while waiting for another 50 wall blocks to be delivered by Walt Mensch.



## Along the Main Line

(Continued from page 1)

Sharon Connelly, Hank Riley, John Bortz, Jr., Buddy and Sue Borders, Allen Underkofler, Phil Paskos, Bruce Barrett, Robert Blackson, Lynn Hammond, George Cooper and anyone else I may have unintentionally overlooked for staying involved with this club and its activities over the past four years.

For me the greatest challenge that I had to learn was how to effectively manage different personalities and opinions, recognize each person's talents and encourage that person to contribute positively towards the common good of the club. Sometimes I was not successful despite my best of intentions.

However this acquired experience has greatly enhanced my understanding of human nature in such a profound way, that I sense new social tools to apply in my day to day profession. My experience here at PLS has given me greater confidence in considering leadership opportunities within my own trade and among my professional peers. This has certainly been a maturing process indeed.

My only hope is that as I withdraw from this position as President, the club is even just a little better than before I became President and that forward positive growth will continue. To you the membership of PLS I say *thank you* for the opportunity to serve. I would encourage everyone to con-

sider serving PLS as an officer or board member and enjoy the opportunity to interact with many terrific people. I hope someday to serve again once others have offered their constructive contributions.

It seems that an organization such as PLS has many educational opportunities to consider and at times too many rules to navigate. However I would suggest always the golden rules:

**Rule 1 — Have fun. Rule 2 — Become involved and treat others as you would want yourself to be treated.** If rule 2 is unattainable, see rule 1.

See you at the Track

Pat Murphy, President, PLS

## Notice of Elections and Annual Meeting

PLS elections will be held during the annual membership meeting on Saturday, March 17, 2012 at 12:30 P.M. To be elected are a president, secretary, treasurer and three board members.

Nominees for the offices are as follows:

**President** — Lee Nonnemacher  
**Secretary** — Bob Blackson  
**Treasurer** — Walter Mensch

### Board of directors:

John Bortz Jr.\* Jim Connelly  
Bob Freer\* Hank Riley  
Jim Salmons Bruce Saylor

\* Denotes incumbent running for second two-year term.

## Membership Renewals Now Due

As a reminder, membership renewals are now due for 2012. In order to remain a member, we must have your renewal by March 1, 2012. Please take the time to complete the renewal notice that you were sent in January and forward it with your dues. If you have misplaced your renewal notice, you can receive another one by e-mailing [secretary@palivesteamers.org](mailto:secretary@palivesteamers.org) or by writing to PLS Inc. at the address below on this page.

Please *do not forward* dues without the renewal form. We must have the renewal form completed for our records.

Your membership cards will be sent to you when your dues are received.

## Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Terry Weinsteiniger, Dennis Nunan, Neil Sardinas, Eric Hostetler, Jeffrey Loux, and Cong Chen..

## Membership Gauge

As of January 31, PLS has:

**102 Regular Members**  
**299 Associate Members**  
**9 Honorary Members**

## Inspectors Needed

We need inspectors for the annual Boiler Inspection on April 22. Please consider signing up for that morning.

## Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

<b>President</b>	Patrick J. Murphy	2439 Overlook Drive, Gilbertsville, PA 19525	PMurphy129@aol.com
<b>Secretary</b>	Robert Blackson	303 North Tulpehocken Road, Reading, PA 19601	PennsylvaniaLiveSteamer@comcast.net
<b>Treasurer</b>	Walter Mensch	1348 Sheep Hill Rd., Pottstown, PA 19465	
<b>Gazette Editor</b>	Allen Underkofler	Box 609, Kimberton, PA 19442-0609	pls@apunderkofler.com

**Board of Directors:** John Bortz Jr., [jonyx@netzero.net](mailto:jonyx@netzero.net); Sharon Connelly, [connellywood@verizon.net](mailto:connellywood@verizon.net); Bob Freer, [W3YLT@Juno.com](mailto:W3YLT@Juno.com); John Geib, [steamer38@comcast.net](mailto:steamer38@comcast.net); Paul Rice, [ricepaul@verizon.net](mailto:ricepaul@verizon.net); Ron Shupard, [shusmoke@aol.com](mailto:shusmoke@aol.com).

**Safety Committee Members:** John Geib, chairman; Buddy Borders; Pete Brown; Pat Murphy; Bruce Saylor.

**Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.** • P.O. Box 26202, Collegeville, PA. 19426-0202 • 610-454-0477 • [www.palivesteamers.org](http://www.palivesteamers.org)

# 2012 Complete Calendar of Events

Saturday, Jan. 21	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM	Saturday, August 18	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*
Saturday, Feb. 18	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM	Sunday, August 26	Run Day - Members & Guests
Saturday, Mar. 17	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM - <b>Elections</b>	Friday, August 31	<b>Fall Meet</b> - Members & Guests
Saturday, April 21	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM <b>Spring Clean Up</b> Afternoon/Evening Run*	Saturday, Sept. 1	<b>Fall Meet</b> - Members & Guests
Sunday, April 22	Run Day - Members & Guests <b>Boiler Testing</b>	Sunday, Sept. 2	<b>Fall Meet</b> - Members & Guests
Sunday, April 29	Run Day Rain Date	Saturday, Sept. 15	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*
Saturday, May 19	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM	Sunday, Sept. 23	Run Day - Members & Guests
Friday, May 25	<b>Spring Meet</b> - Members & Guests	Sunday, Sept. 30	Run Day Rain Date
Saturday, May 26	<b>Spring Meet</b> - Members & Guests	Saturday, Oct. 20	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM <b>Fall Clean Up</b> Afternoon/Evening Run*
Sunday, May 27	<b>Spring Meet</b> - Members & Guests	Sunday, Oct. 28	Run Day - Members & Guests
Saturday, June 16	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*	Sunday, Nov. 4	Run Day Rain Date
Sunday, June 24	Run Day - Members & Guests	Saturday, Nov. 17	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Sunday, July 1	Run Day Rain Date	Friday, Nov. 23	Turkey Trot Run – Gauge 1 only – ( <i>rides not available</i> )
Saturday, July 21	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Afternoon/Evening Run*	Saturday, Dec. 15	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Sunday, July 22	Run Day - Members & Guests - No Rain Date	<i>* 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..</i>	
Saturday, July 28	<b>Club Picnic</b>		
Sunday, July 29	Club Picnic Rain Date		

## Donation Acknowledgements

**P**LS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during December and January: Guy Godshall, George Lord, Lee Nonnemacher, Frederick Bowman Sr, William Corrado, Thomas Died-

rich, Angela Learn, Raymond Matus, William Mentzer, Brittany Grimm, Wayne Baldwin, Robert Blackson, Brian Del Monte, Robert Goepel, Patrick Murphy, Duane Quenzel, Jack Richards, Joseph Rohanna, Thomas Caldwell, Robert Gray III, Barrie Heilveil, Edward Leiser, Francis Mahoney, Tom McInerney, Joseph Natale, Richard Poletto, Douglas Pyatt, George Spohrer, John Wessels, Kenneth Wil-

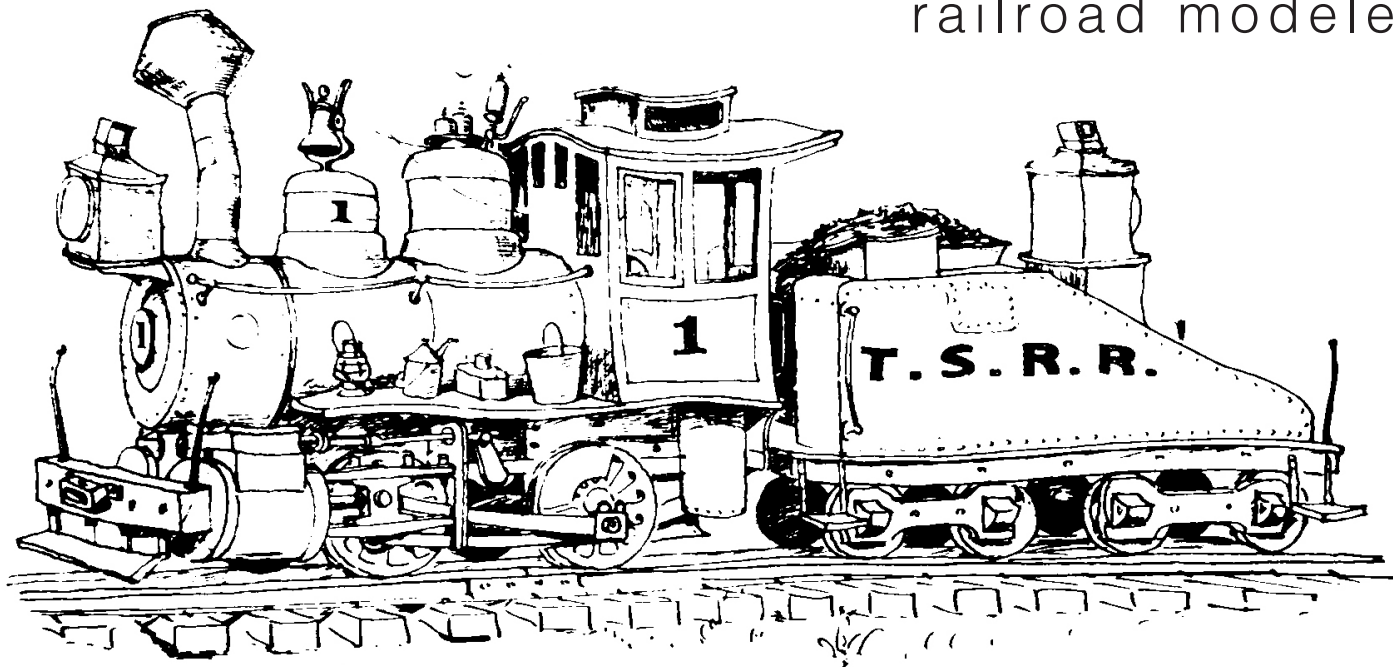
liams, Wayne DeVilbiss, Jim Salmons, Frank Webb, Ed Kabak, Chris Becker, Marc Carpino, Buzz Heidenreich, Elaine Linkewich, Alan Redeker, Joseph Springer, David Staplin, Carmen Visalli, Deborah Voynar, Jerry Shank Sr, Mary Spear, Kathy Parris, Wanda Gammon, Kyle Sanders, Sharon Connelly, Jim Connelly, and Henry Blanco White



# J. Harold Geissel

By Bob Thomas

## Part 2 – Illustrious railroad modeler



*Greetings from the Paoli Locomotive Works.*

*Harold Geissel*

**H**arold's two black cocker spaniels scampered around at his heels wherever he went, in the Camp Car or around the orchard where "The Big Apple Line" was located. He was a calming influence, not very keen on big earth-moving projects, but vitally interested in detail. Of course he was always a mine of information if you needed to know something about one of his favorite railroads like the Ma and Pa, RDG, PRR or almost any other line for that matter. When he wasn't lavishing his attention on the Camp Car he often busied himself with selected maintenance chores and sometimes would bring out a new car he had just completed. One day he excitedly pulled some 1" scale lost wax bronze castings from his pocket and passed them around. They included an operating coupler and coupler pocket, a marker lamp and bracket, flat car stake pocket

and a few other items, all made in very fine detail by a new supplier known as "Doc Fixit." Harold became a staunch advocate of Doc Fixit's products which he incorporated on his new car construction, and I vaguely remember them regularly exchanging correspondence. Knockoff products on the market today made of diecast "Crapalloy" sadly lack the durability of the Doctor's original bronze parts.

A visit to Harold's second floor studio at his home in Paoli was an unforgettable experience. A large drafting table dominated the room, usually with a drawing-in-progress on top awaiting completion. On an adjacent table were his bow pens and compasses, triangles and the most elaborate collection of French Curves imaginable. There were a couple of tracing and print filing cabinets. On the tops of the cabinets and various tables around the room lay partly com-

**In his Christmas card** from the mid 'sixties every element of the locomotive in Gike's charming sketch conveys the nostalgia of down-at-the-heels short lines that he so revered. "T.S.R.R." probably refers to the Tuckerton Railroad, one of his favorite quaint short lines. (*Illustrations from author's file.*)

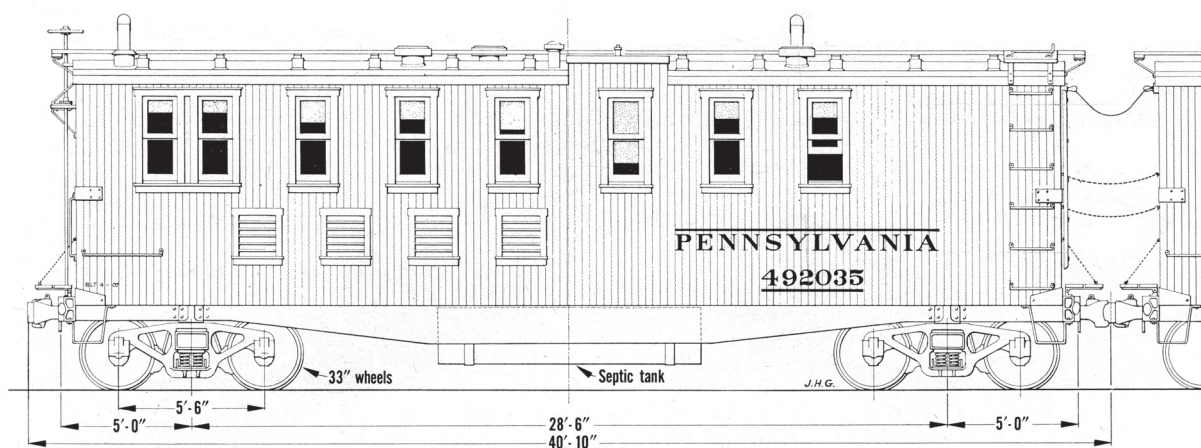
pleted drawings with related reference books, railroad drawings, and photographs all temporarily set aside for a more urgent project or maybe something he just would rather work on at the moment. Speaking of photographs, Harold often took his trusty Kodak 3A folding camera on strolls around the PLS track and always had it with him on his frequent field trips. He used its postcard-size negatives for contact prints that he passed around for us to see and possibly later for his own use for guidance depicting a detail in a drawing or to illustrate and article in *MR*. One of the rare times Harold ever

appeared dispirited was when Kodak stopped making the 122-size film his camera used, but he became resigned to that reality and carried on with a smaller camera.

A distinguishing feature of all Harold's drawings was his use of lines with various thicknesses related to the importance of the object they depicted. He called it "Line Shading," and although some other *Model Railroader* draftsmen acquired the technique, Harold was the innovator and certainly most skillful user in the field. All his drawings for publication were done

in India ink on linen — actual linen cloth that was treated with a starch-like filler to create a smooth surface. The result was a durable, reasonably stable drawing but if a mistake was made there was no erasing it; the draftsman had to try bleaching it out and if that didn't work he had to scrape-off incorrectly inked lines, burnish the cloth so ink for new lines would not run, and then re-draw as needed. Harold was so proficient, however, that any time I visited him there was never an indication that an error had been made; he was patient, knew what he was doing,

and got it right the first time. There was no *Leroy* or "guided-lettering" on any of Harold's drawings. His ability to letter freehand, whether on a formal drawing, car body, or PLS poster was astonishingly perfect, equal to or better than modern "graphic artists" produce today with elaborate computer support. Accompanying samples illustrate that rare skill as well as his gift for conveying the whimsical charms of locomotives. Harold identified many of his locomotive drawings with his initials *JHG* under the front truck or pilot — look for them.



## PRR class XL camp car

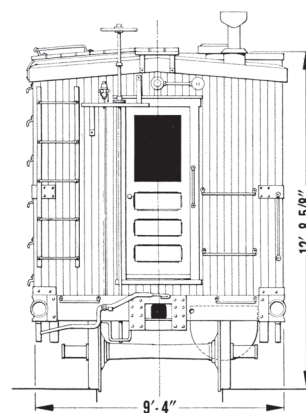
PENNSYLVANIA RR.'s class XL camp cars were originally wood-body, steel-under-frame boxcars built around 1910. [Drawings were printed in the August 1957 MR.] When converted to sleeping cars with bunks for 10 men, the window spacing was dictated by the vertical and diagonal members in the walls. Louvers below the windows are fixed wooden slats, screened inside.

The raised part of the roof at center houses a rectangular water tank that is filled through the roof. Hot water is carried in two cylindrical tanks strapped to the ceiling. A chemical toilet discharges into a septic tank below the floor. The inside of the car is lined with wallboard. The floor is composition cement of the type used in passenger cars.

Electric lights on the ceiling are fed by jumper wires connecting a number of camp cars to a generator in another car. The water supply system is also connected from car to car via hoses for convenience in hooking to the city water supply where possible. Gangplanks at the end doors are folded and hooked up when the cars are in transit. All windows have dark green roller shades.

When first converted the cars were painted PRR boxcar red. Later the scheme was changed to battleship gray with black lettering. The current scheme is a light butter yellow with black roof, under-frame, trucks, and lettering.

The interior is painted an ocher color with an olive green wainscot. The floor is red.



Drawn for MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE by  
**J. HAROLD GEISSEL**

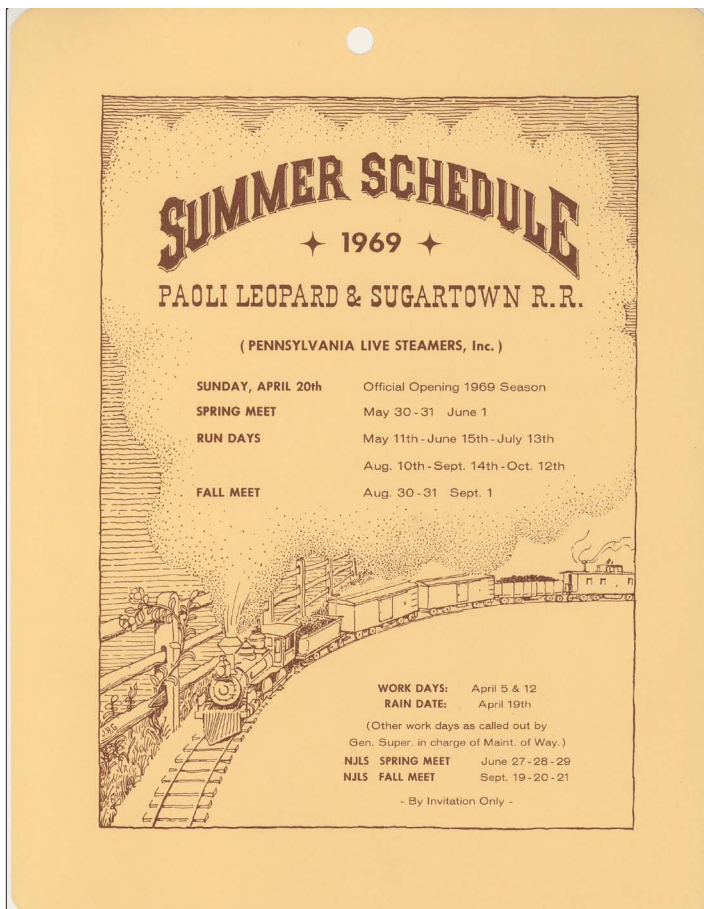
Magazine purchaser may have photocopies of these drawings made as an aid to his personal modelmaking or tool designing. MODEL RAILROADER retains all rights to distribute copies of the drawings to others.

Harold's drawings of the PRR camp car that was moved to the PLS property appeared in the September 1966 *Model Railroader*. This set of drawings is typical of the work he prepared for *Model Railroader*. It is fitting that he used his favorite car to document the

camp car. The drawings above were reproduced from that issue of *MR* at their original size — HO scale. The text has been reduced slightly to fit the page. Drawings of the top and car inside from the same feature appear on page 8.

*Model Railroader Magazine*, reproduced with permission





**1969 Summer Schedule** – An early JHG hand-drawn and lettered layout for our 1969 running season with dates printed by regular typography.

**1970 Operating Schedule** – Harold was not only a master of freehand lettering, he had a rare talent for sketching endearing caricatures of locomotives and their engineers. This operating schedule was duplicated for several years with current dates inserted by Dan Crabtree using conventional typography. Note only two scheduled work days — we knew how to have fun!

Known primarily for his superb drawings and super-detailed rolling stock, Harold Geissel also was an accomplished writer. A description of his pioneering  $\frac{17}{64}$ " scale Chester Valley Railroad layout, mentioned in Part-1 of this article, appeared with his cover color photo in the August 1939 *Model Railroader*.<sup>1</sup> In 1964 he wrote and illustrated another *MR* article about the original PLS track at Berwyn.<sup>2</sup> It followed a detailed description of the track and facilities with an illustrated account the "Parade of the Iron Horse" invitational meet we held that year to showcase the variety live steam locomotives from the Civil War period to the latest motive power, all built by

members and visitors. Harold was the subject of an article himself in 1976 when Gordon Odegard, Associate Editor of *MR*, wrote a feature on Gike in honor of the man who produced over three hundred drawings for the magazine and NMRA.<sup>3</sup> Harold submitted a lengthy unsolicited two-part article in the early days of the monthly *PLS Gazette* about the West Chester and Intersection Railroad.<sup>4</sup> The first part related the history of the 9-mile link from West Chester to Intersection (now Malvern) at a junction with what would become the PRR main line. His second part included a comprehensive

roster of prototype motive power and a classic JHG picturesque word portrayal of Joe Wilson's  $\frac{3}{4}$ " scale backyard live steam track representing features of the WC&I.

We hear a lot these days about politicians and other self-important demigods who are concerned about their "legacy" and how it will affect what people will think of them in the future. By contrast, we can be certain that modest, unpretentious Harold Geissel never gave a thought to anything as trite as a legacy; he was too occupied achieving day-to-day accomplishments with his matchless talents. Nevertheless, he did receive highest acclimation from his peers through a number of awards and other honors. He received the 1973 NMRA President's Award for: *Outstanding service*

<sup>1</sup> Geissel, J. Harold. "Chester Valley Railroad," *Model Railroader*, 8/39, 383-386

<sup>2</sup> Geissel, J. Harold. "Steaming Up," *Model Railroader*, 8/64, 28-29

<sup>3</sup> Odegard, Gordon. "The Venerable J. Harold Geissel," *Model Railroader*, 7/76, 54-57

<sup>4</sup> Geissel, J. Harold, "West Chester & Intersection Railroad," *PLS Gazette*, 9/71, 4-5; 10/71, 2

to the NMRA.<sup>5</sup> Even more prestigious recognition of Harold's gift to railroad modeling came in 1998 when he was inducted into the NMRA Pioneers of Model Railroading.<sup>6</sup> His citation for that occasion reads: *For many years a draftsman of model railroad equipment, primarily in Model Railroader, of unsurpassed excellence whose work contributed to advancement of the hobby. A fastidious modeler, Harold worked in half inch scale, and was known as a clinician. He had previously received the NMRA President's Award.* To fully appreciate its significance, the Pioneers Award has to be seen in the context of other giants of the hobby who share

<sup>5</sup> NMRA, *President's Award*: [www.nmra.org/membership/honors/honors\\_pa.html](http://www.nmra.org/membership/honors/honors_pa.html)

<sup>6</sup> NMRA, *Pioneers of Model Railroading*: [www.nmra.org/membership/honors/alltime\\_n.html](http://www.nmra.org/membership/honors/alltime_n.html)

the honor. They include John Allen, Irvin Athearn, Alfred C. Gilbert, the Märklin Brothers, Charles Pittman, Gordon Varney, William K. Walthers, and Linn Westcott. Okay, so that's a lot of name dropping, but those men exemplify the pinnacle of achievement in railroad modeling and our boy Harold is justifiably right up there among them! Privately, Harold received a moving tribute from the 1978 winner of the United Transportation Union's *Brass Lantern Award* for an incredibly detailed 1" scale PRR Lines West cabin car.<sup>7</sup> In accepting his award, the builder commented, "Someday this model will be given to a museum in memory of my dear friend J. Harold Geissel — better known as 'Gike' to all his friends."

<sup>7</sup> *NER Coupler*, Fall/78, 3:- [www.nernmra.org/nercoupler/NERCoupler\\_117.pdf](http://www.nernmra.org/nercoupler/NERCoupler_117.pdf)

Accolades for Harold continue even today. One cannot surf the internet without encountering references to J. Harold Geissel. How many among us can claim to be the subject of a commercial poster<sup>8</sup> (in three sizes \$19.99-\$59.99!)? His name pops up frequently on current discussion forums and in tributes from master model builders who acknowledge his contribution to their success. So with regard to a legacy, even though JHG never strived for it, he certainly acquired one and it lives on! Today, all PLS members can bask in the success of a club that once had the honor to claim J. Harold Geissel as a member. 📄

<sup>8</sup> J. Harold Geissel Cabin Car Poster:- [www.allposters.com/-st/J-h-Geissel-Posters\\_c104578\\_.htm](http://www.allposters.com/-st/J-h-Geissel-Posters_c104578_.htm)

## Proposed PLS Budget For Fiscal Year 2012

### INCOME

#### Donations

Run Day .....	\$ 700.00
Special Run Day .....	300.00
Pot Luck Dinner .....	500.00
Picnic .....	200.00
General .....	4,000.00
Other .....	350.00

#### Dues

Regular Member .....	7,700.00
Associate Member .....	8,700.00

#### Sales

Boiler Treatment .....	156.00
Coal .....	48.00
Steam Oil .....	50.00
Machine Shop Equip. ....	75.00
Soda Sales .....	2,000.00
Snacks non-run Day .....	350.00
Snacks Run Day .....	600.00
Kitchen Sales .....	1,500.00
Table Sales Taxable .....	500.00
Table Sales non-Taxable .....	1,200.00
Miscellaneous .....	200.00

#### Storage Track Fees

Building # 3 .....	3,636.00
Building # 6 .....	1,910.00

#### Recycling

Aluminum Cans .....	40.00
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**Total Income .....** **\$ 34,715.00**

### EXPENSE

#### Utilities

Electric .....	\$ 2,300.00
Oil .....	750.00
Septic Tank .....	1,200.00
Portable Toilets .....	800.00
Telephone .....	300.00
Dumpster .....	700.00
Miscellaneous .....	240.00

#### Miscellaneous

Contingency Fund .....	1,000.00
Picnic .....	500.00
Security .....	200.00
Pot Luck Dinner .....	250.00

#### Maintenance

Backhoe .....	50.00
Machine Shop Supplies .....	250.00
Building # 1 .....	500.00
Building # 2-7 .....	500.00
Gauge 1 .....	200.00
Track .....	1,600.00
Mowers .....	200.00
Signals .....	100.00
Gas Mowing .....	200.00
Gas Track .....	100.00
Club Locomotive .....	100.00
Landscaping .....	200.00
Trees .....	2,000.00
Fire Extinguishers .....	300.00
Misc .....	1,000.00

#### Communications

Gazette-Postage .....	550.00
Gazette-Printing .....	700.00
Other Printing .....	200.00
Computer .....	300.00
Internet .....	900.00
Community Support .....	100.00
Waiver Sheets .....	75.00
Web Page .....	700.00
Misc .....	100.00

#### Corporate

Legal & Professional Fees .....	1,000.00
Office General .....	200.00
Property Tax .....	5,000.00
Sales Tax .....	150.00
Office Postage .....	200.00
Insurance .....	3,000.00
Corporate Misc .....	100.00

#### Sales

Kitchen .....	750.00
Snacks .....	450.00
Soda .....	900.00
Table Sales .....	1,000.00
Boiler Treatment .....	120.00
Steam Oil .....	100.00

#### Special Projects

Signals .....	1,300.00
Caboose Library .....	100.00

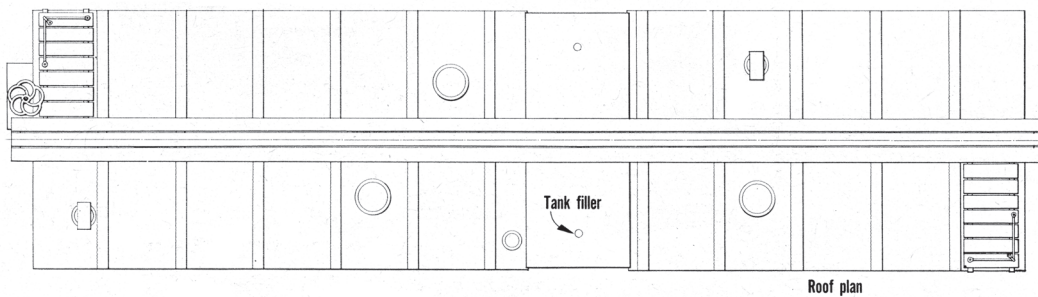
**Total Expenses .....** **\$ 33,535.00**



# The PLS GAZETTE

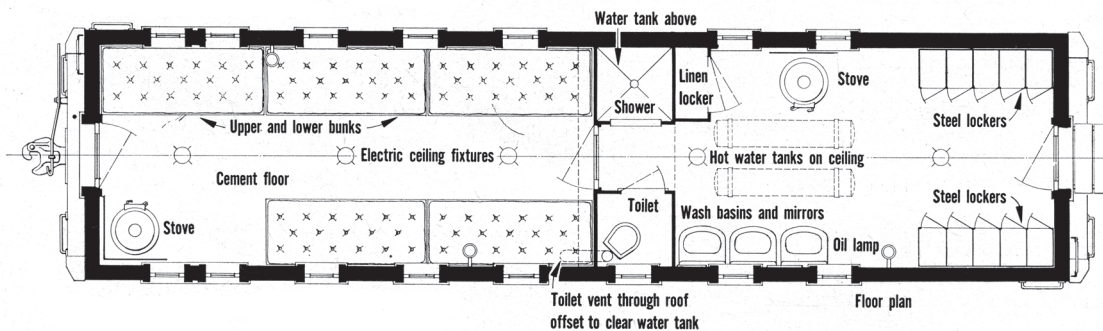
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## FIRST CLASS



Roof plan

Proportion 87:1  
HO scale, 3.5 mm. per foot



Floor plan

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**J. Harold Geissel's drawings of the PRR camp car** from the September 1966 issue of *Model Railroader*. Part 2 of an article on J. Harold Geissel is on page 4.