



The PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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To PLS Members,

Happy New Year! This is the first issue of the Gazette for 2023.

As time is short because this issue needs to go to press, I will be to the point.

Work continues on the club house with help (as always) needed for painting, trim work installation, window installation (thank you Rick S.), hanging of cabinets in the meeting room and bathrooms. The kitchen and floor remain to be works in progress as funding is sought. The club house is now warm and well lit - ideal for indoor work. See or email Pete Brown or Paul Miller if you need a particular assignment.

Please be sure to read the contents of this issue of the Gazette, as many items directly pertain to the March 18th, 12:30 PM Membership Meeting. These items need to be reviewed and voted on at the March meeting in order for the business of the club to continue, according to the By-Laws. The items contained within include:

The 2023 Budget.

The 2023 Calendar.

The slate of nominees for election.

The new Building Leases (draft) – is available for review in PDF form on the club website;

https://www.palivesteamers.org/track_leases.html#

(Do note that the bottom right corner of the lease lists this as January 23, 2023 Draft. Once approved, the Treasurer will manage and execute the NEW Leases accordingly. There are a few housekeeping changes needed in the various bays in order to better manage moving forward).

At the March meeting we hope to be able to present the Club Train Qualifying Pilot Program.

Lastly the Board of Directors and I wish to notify all of the Passing of Robert (Bob) Thomas on January 18, at the age of 95. A fitting tribute has been produced by Bill Shields and is also included in this issue. All of us send our sincerest condolences to the Thomas family.

We hope to see everyone at the Saturday work sessions and the March 18th meeting.

Pat Murphy, President

Pennsylvania Live Steamers

Associate Renewals Now Past Due

PLS renewal notices have been sent and were due by the end of December 2022. Please complete the form in its entirety and return it with your payment in the envelope provided. Membership cards will be sent in early February. If you do not receive your renewal notice or have questions on completing this form, please email:

secretary@palivesteamers.org

Please keep your membership current. We value your support. Thank you.

Membership Gauge

As of January 31, 2023 PLS has:

104 Regular Members

149 Associate Members

4 Honorary Members

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received since November: Henry Blanco White, David Brush, Fred Daddi, Paul Miller, Richard Moore, Lawrence Moss, Paul Nichini, Richard Poletto, James Benko, Mayland Crosson, Gretchen Dellatorre, William Fluck, Jeff Guzy, Jerry Bohlander, Thomas Diedrich, R. Buzz Heidenreich, Ronald Heller, Edgar Hendler, Roger Kain, Ronald Klinger, James Larkin, James Milo, Stanley Richmond, Morton Schoenberg, John Souder, David Staplin, Kenneth Thomas, Dennis Tiley, John Wessels, Dale Woodland, Bruce Barrett, John Caldwell, John Kane, Carmen Visalli, K. Ross Magee, Patrick Murphy, Jim Salmons, Daniel Siegle, James Adams, David Bucher, Thomas Gmitter, Robert Gray, William Krayger,

Charles Leeds, Nelson Leid, Edward Overly, Michael McDevitt, Kathleen Parris, Terry Weinstein, Robert Kimmey, Chris Rood, Deborah Voynar, Domenic Zampogna, Chris Becker, Newell Godschall Jr, Brittany Grimm, Harry Quirk Jr, Joseph Rohanna, Doug Brooker, Elizabeth Emmert, Jay Gross, Joy Pedrick, Jeff Stahl, Dolores Stahl, Wayne Becker, Marc Carpino, Edward Kabak, David Laird, Carl Miller, Roy Nelson, Richard Stoughton, Mark Layton, Mary Mercer, Alan Redeker, Gita Talmage, Jay Forsythe, John Morris, John Sommer, Susan Borders, David Klotz, and Ronald Marburger.

Club Membership

PLS welcomes new Probationary Regulars Luigi Ricci Moretti and John Kelly, plus Associate Members Charlton Swingle and Robert Slegelmilch.

PLS Tentative Events 2023

Sat, January 21 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

Sat, February 11 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

Sat, March 18 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Annual Elections

Sat, April 15 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
SPRING CLEAN-UP in AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sun, April 23 Run Day - 9:00 AM
BOILER TESTING
Rain Date April 30

PLS Elections

PLS Elections will be held during the **Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday March 19, 2023 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 are as follows:

President: Pat Murphy
Secretary: Mark Cahill
Treasurer: Bob Morris

Board of Directors: Pete Brown
Steve Mallon
Paul Rice

(Vacant seat may be filled at March meeting)

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Pat Murphy	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	Mark Cahill	mark.cahill@verizon.net
Treasurer	Robert Morris	Treasurer@palivesteamers.org
Gazette Editor	Lawrence Moss	LarryMoss@outlook.com

Board of Directors

Steve Leatherman, steveleatherman@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/23	Paul Rice, ricepaul@verizon.net - Term Expires 3/23
Ross Magee, mrrmagww@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/24	Peter Brown, peteprivate@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/23
Paul Miller, pava77@comcast.net - Term Expires 3/24	Vacant Seat

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

PLS Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023

Income	Expenses		
100 • Donations	200 • Utilities	224 • Corporate	
100.0 - Run Day 350.00	200.10 - Electric 3,445.00	24.10 - Legal & Prof. Fees 2,000.00	
100.11 - Gauge 1 25.00	200.30 - Septic Tank 900.00	224.11 - Delaware Corp. Tax 75.00	
100.40 - Pot Luck 200.00	200.40 - Portable Toilets 1,875.00	224.20 - Office General 600.00	
100.50 - Picnic 100.00	200.60 - Dumpster 1,350.00	224.30 - Property Tax 5,025.00	
100.63 - Books and Magazines 250.00	Total 200 - Utilities 7,570.00	224.40 - Sales Tax 70.00	
100.90 - Other Donations 1,800.00		224.60 - Office Postage 600.00	
Total 100 • Donations \$10,845.00	210 • Miscellaneous Expense	224.70 - Insurance 4,675.00	
	210.20 - Picnic 300.00	224.80 - Corporate Printing 300.00	
120 • Dues	210.30 - Pot Luck 300.00	Total 224 • Corporate \$13,345.00	
120.10 - Regular Membership 12,720.00	210.40 - Security 200.00		
120.20 - Assoc. Membership 5,775.00	Total 210 • Misc. Expense \$800.00	225 • Sales	
Total 120 • Dues \$18,495.00		225.20 - Snacks 300.00	
	220 • Maintenance	225.30 - Soda 600.00	
130 • Items Sold	220.10 - Backhoe 1,800.00	225.40 - Table Sales 1,000.00	
130.20 - Coal 35.00	220.20 - Building #1 600.00	Total 225 • Sales \$1,900.00	
130.20 - Soda Sales 320.00	220.30 - Buildings 480.00		
130.60 - Snacks Non-Run Day 160.00	220.40 - Gauge 1 100.00	Total Expenses \$36,580.00	
130.70 - Snacks Run Day 160.00	220.50 - Track 3,000.00		
130.90 - Sales Table Taxable 600.00	220.60 - Mower 1,000.00		
130.91 - Sales Table Non-tax 975.00	220.70 - Signals 600.00		
130.94 - Sales 75th Taxable 125.00	220.80 - Gas Mowing 470.00		
130.95 - Sale 75th Non-taxable 515.00	220.90 - Gas Track 100.00		
Total 130 • Items Sold \$2,890.00	Total 220 • Maintenance \$8,550.00		
		Excess of Income	
		Over Expenses...\$3,046.00	
140 • Storage Trax Fees	223 • Communications		
140.30 - Building #3 Rental 12,797.00	223.10 - Gazette Postage 1,020.00		
140.60 - Building #6 Rental 4,338.00	223.20 - Gazette Printing 720.00		
140.80 - Building #8 Rental 1,106.00	223.30 - Other Printing 240.00		
Total 140 • Storage Trax Fees \$18,241.00	223.40 - Computer 100.00		
	223.50 - Internet 1,260.00		
Total Income \$39,626.00	223.60 - Community Support 250.00		
	223.70 - Waiver Sheets 75.00		
	223.80 - Web Page 750.00		
	Total 223 • Communications \$4,415.00		



Who was this Fellow, Bob Thomas?

A Tribute to Longtime PLS Member and Influencer, Robert G. Thomas

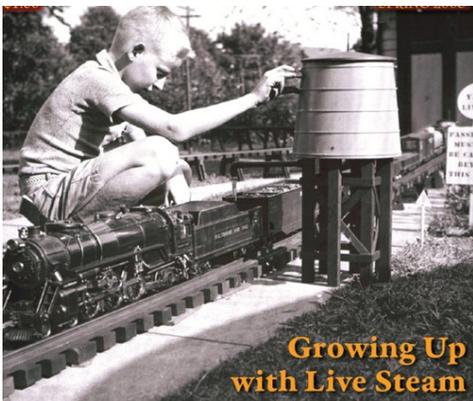
by Bill Shields

As many of you are aware, Bob Thomas, a long-time member of PLS, passed away in January at the age of 95.

I consider myself blessed to have known Bob for some 35 years and pleased to consider both him and his wife Phyllis as friends.

Since it has been more than a few years since Bob was at PLS and many club members never met him. I thought that I would take this time to provide a semi-chronological outline of his contributions to PLS and the Live Steam hobby in general.

Who was this fellow, Robert (Bob) G. Thomas ?

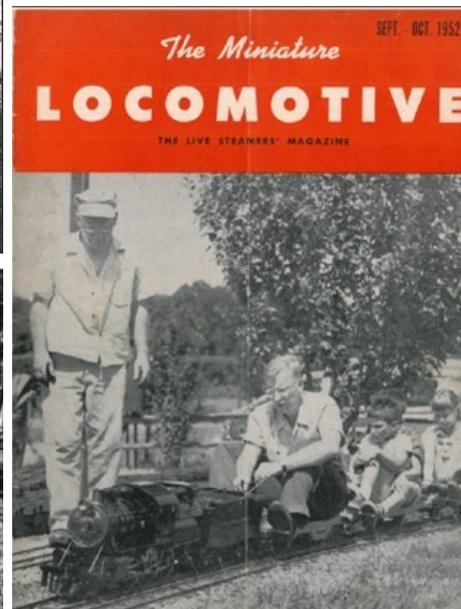


That's him, at a very young age, operating his father's (George Thomas) B&O Pacific, built from H. J. Coventry castings. The above pictures were taken in 1937-1938 when Bob was about 10 years old and obviously bitten by the live steam bug. Yes, that is a 2-1/2" gauge loco.



You will note that the track in the above pictures effectively blocks entrance to the garage, which he described as "not a problem since it was the 1930's and they didn't own a car!"

His dad built 3 other locos of which I am aware. Two are still in the PLS family (owned by Bob Blackson) and happily running on the 4-3/4" track.



In this picture above, taken at the PLS Paoli track, Bob is 24 years old. He has already begun building the tender for his 2.5" gauge B-18 B&O steamer. The man standing is his father, George.

The loco: a 1" 4-6-0 Reading camelback which, while still in the area, is inoperable due to reported throttle problems.

Why 2.5 gauge?

Back in the early days of live steam modeling, 2.5" gauge, which was very popular in the UK, was considered to be the smallest gauge behind which you could reliably ride. Therefore, when Bob's father started in live steam, it was a given: 2.5" gauge.

Most people refer to 2.5" gauge as 1/2" scale, however Bob correctly called it 17/32". This 'level of exactness' will follow through with Bob's life, work and interaction with others – and if you were going to interact with Bob, you needed to be aware of and prepared for this mind-set.

Yes – you can say that Bob 'grew up live steam' and to say that he 'had it in his blood' is an understatement.

After graduating from Drexel Engineering school (electrical engineering, but he admitted he did better in the mechanical engineering classes), Bob went immediately to work for RCA in Camden NJ as a design engineer in the department where they built TV broadcast equipment (mostly cameras).

He stayed with RCA for over 30 years, taking an early retirement at age 55. Yes, Bob was also a HAM radio operator, which was part and parcel of the business and work environment of the time period.

He then took a job at ABC in NYC. Rather than move from Chestnut Hill, he would get up at 5:30 AM, drive to 30th street station and take Amtrak to Penn Station. Using the subway from there, he would be in his office in ABC's building on 67th Street for normal starting time. Obviously, he enjoyed his work as Director of Broadcast Operations and Engineering, from which he retired at age 65.

Enough non-steam background, since this is the PLS Gazette.

Bob joined PLS as an associate member in 1946 when the club was still in Paoli. He became a regular member in 1966 and was

elected president in 1970, which was the year before the club moved to Rahns. He was President of the club when the current location was purchased.

Today's PLS Gazette, which began life as a regular monthly newsletter, was created by Bob to assist with keeping the club together during the challenging time of the move from Paoli to Rahns. Club membership was down because of the move / construction in Rahns. Bob created the PLS Gazette and used it as a way to keep people talking about live steam. Bob wrote the copy and distributed the Gazette with Phyllis' assistance.

During this time, he organized the track building for what is now called the multi-gauge ground track. Bob also proposed that the multi-gauge track (2.5" / 3.5") also include a 4.75" gauge rail so that the 'newer' 1" scale locos would have a place to run while the main line was being completed.

Over the period of just over a month, the multigauge track panels were built in the clubhouse.

George Thomas (Bob's father) built the stub turnout to the turntable which was aptly named 'Thomas Junction'.

All the while, Bob was planning, designing, acquiring materials for and building his B18 B&O 10-wheeler in 17/32" scale (number 2024). **Time records**, some of which go back to 1948, list all of the hours spent on designing and building individual pieces of the B18. Most of his detailed, freehand pencil on graph paper design drawings and invoices for purchase of materials are dated in the 1970s.

One of his notes clearly states '5000 hours design, 2400 hours construction' -> this for a loco weighing 35#. Anyone that thinks building a small loco is easier and quicker than building a large loco...has a lot to learn from this man's record keeping.

Also of note is that one of his earliest personal 'time cards' shows that he was building the tender in late 1947 and spent over 100 hours laying out with scribe and center punch, drilling and driving the 100's of rivets into the tank. Quick math tells me that from 1946 until 1978 running makes

2042 a project spanning 30+ years.

Club members were always welcome to visit his shop, but only with advance notice so that he could 'clean up'. Visible progress on 2024 notwithstanding, more than one PLS member is remembered commenting "**I don't know how Bob gets anything done, his shop looks like it has never been used**".

John Caldwell (who joined PLS in 1968) remembers the one and only day when he made an unannounced visit to Bob's shop which caused great dismay. Evidently Bob did not have time to properly 'prepare' for the visit and there were chips to be found lying about!

Like many in the live steam hobby in the middle of the 20th century (that is the 1950s - 1970s for you Gen-X, Gen-Y, Gen-Z or Millennial readers), live steam loco designs were strongly influenced by what was be-

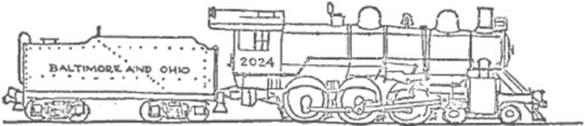
ing / had been produced in the UK. In pursuit of understanding, Bob and Phyllis spent several summers 'travelling around' England, visiting model engineering clubs (or at least Bob was) and gathering insight.

One of the most prolific designers of this era was an author known as LBSC, whom Bob met at his father's home when LBSC was on a tour of the USA sponsored by Charles Purinton of Mass, founder of the IBLs.

Those of you who do not know about the IBLs, please look them up on the internet.

http://ibls.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Ground_Flying

By late 1978, Bob had completed work (and testing) of his B&O B18 and provided written invitations with tear-off-and-mail-back RSVP for people to attend its inaugural operation on August 11th, 1979. (note Bob and Phyllis' address which is in the Chestnut Hill area of Philadelphia).



INAUGURAL RUNNING OF B&O CLASS B-18 4-6-0 No. 2024

and

RE-COMMISSIONING OF B&O CLASS P-7 PACIFIC "PRESIDENT ADAMS"

The above 17/32" scale 2 1/2" gauge live steam locomotives will be operated on a 32 foot circle of prefabricated track individually, and doubleheading a freight train. You are invited to join a dozen or so fellow enthusiasts for any or all of the planned activities. If you have any equipment capable of running on 2 1/2" gauge track, bring it along for operation or display. Do not feel any obligation at all to assist with setting-up track, as it only requires two or three people, and help has been assured; but do try to attend running in the afternoon!

PLACE: 216 Sunrise Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118

DATE: Saturday, August 11, 1979
In case of inclement weather, the event will be postponed to August 18.
In case of doubt about the effect of weather, check by phone: 247 - 2427.

SCHEDULE:

9 AM to 12 PM	- Set-up and align track
12 PM to 1 PM	- Lunch (A light lunch will be provided)
1 PM to 4 PM	- Train operation
4 PM to 5 PM	- Dismantle and store track

I hope to see you sometime during the day.

Bob Thomas

R.S.V.P.

I plan to attend between approximately _____ and _____.

I will be unable to attend.

_____ Name

Story will continue in the next PLS Gazette



For Sale
1" Scale
4-6-0 B&O



"Thatcher Perkins"



Includes:

- Built from custom patterns and castings
- Beautifully machined - rolls freely
- Stored in climate controlled basement
- Copper boiler - last operated in mid 1980's
- Features axle pump, injector & hand pump
- Two safety valves & multi chime whistle
- Plus 1" scale riding & carrying rack for loco

Email Curt Pierson at curt.pierson@gmail.com
or phone **215-588-8450**

Note: Locomotive can be hydro tested and steamed for interested parties. Located for initial inspection in Harleysville.



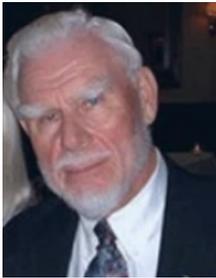
John Schlacter

John Schlacter died on December 2, 2022 at the age of 87. John was a very supportive, long time member of PA Live Steamers. He and his wife, Olympia, attended every Run Day and Meet. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Olympia and her family.



Gayle Keir

PLS associate member Gayle Keir passed away at home on Saturday, January 14, 2023 after a long illness. Gayle would travel with PLS regular member Rich Poletto to both PLS attended events and non-PLS events and the Gauge 1 group. Gayle was a tireless supporter of PLS. She spent many hours assisting in and staffing the kitchen at the annual Spring and Fall Meets. Gayle will be greatly missed by all at PLS who knew her.



Tom Tucker

We have just learned of the passing of long time PLS member, Tom Tucker. Tom died on January 14, at the age of 95. Prior to his later years, Tom rarely missed a Wed or Sat, during which he worked tirelessly on the grounds. Tom also greatly enjoyed giving rides to visitors during Run Days and Meets. Our condolences go out to Tom's wife, Patti, and her family.



New Qualifying Pilot Program for PLS Club Train Engineers & Conductors

The PLS Club train is a vital component of PLS's monthly Run Days and Meets. Although regular members may offer rides on their personal equipment, the club train provides the majority of rides to our associate members and guests.

Due to the limited number of regular members available to operate the club train, the train sits idle for substantial stretches of time during scheduled events. In an effort to keep the club train in continuous service throughout an event, PLS is initiating a pilot program to qualify engineers and conductors to operate the club train. Qualifying to operate the club train will be open to **ALL** PLS members (regular and associate) age 21 or older.

A study guide containing the PLS operating rules, railroad territory, signal system and club locomotive will be made available to prospective engineer/conductor "students". All students will be required to pass a written exam based on the study guide. Engineer students will also be required to pass a check ride on the club locomotive.

Qualified students will be added to a roster of qualified engineers/conductors. During the season, qualified engineers/conductors will be called to operate the club train during scheduled events.

Interested members may contact Secretary Mark Cahill for more information at secretary@palivesteamers.org

Tentative PLS Calendar of Events for 2023

January

Saturday Jan. 21 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

February

Saturday Feb. 11 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM

March

Saturday Mar. 18 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Annual Elections

April

Saturday Apr. 15 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
SPRING CLEAN-UP in AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sunday Apr. 23 Run Day - Members & Guests
BOILER TESTING
(Rain Date April 30)

May

Saturday May 20 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Friday May 26 **SPRING MEET** - Members & Guests

Saturday May 27 **SPRING MEET** - Members & Guests

Sunday May 28 **SPRING MEET** - Members & Guests

June

Saturday Jun. 3 **Perkiomen Community Day**
Run Day - Township Residents

Saturday Jun. 17 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sunday Jun. 25 Run Day - Members & Guests
(Rain Date July 2)

July

Saturday Jul. 15 **Annual PLS Picnic - 12:00 Noon**
(Train rides will be available from Noon until 3 PM)
(Picnic Rain Date Sunday July 16)

Sunday Jul. 23 Run Day – Members & Guests
(Rain Date July 30)

August

Saturday Aug. 19 Board of Directors Meeting—9:30
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sunday Aug. 27 Run Day - Members & Guests
(No Rain Date)

September

Friday Sept. 1 **FALL MEET** - Members & Guests

Saturday Sept. 2 **FALL MEET** - Members & Guests

Sunday Sept. 3 **FALL MEET** - Members & Guests

Sunday Sept. 16 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sunday Sept. 24 Run Day - Members & Guests
(Rain Date October 1)

October

Saturday Oct. 21 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
FALL CLEAN-UP in AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Sunday Oct. 22 Run Day - Members & Guests
(Rain Date October 29)

November

Saturday Nov. 18 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM

Friday Nov. 24 Turkey Trot Run – Gauge 1 only

December

Saturday Dec. 9 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM



Note: No meetings in July

SPECIAL NOTE: This is a proposed schedule subject to change due to the ongoing cleanup and reconstruction.

Also, rides may be limited or not available should the club engine be out of service.



The PLS GAZETTE

P.O. Box 26202

Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

FIRST CLASS



Great Start for 2023

First ride of the year was enjoyed by Steve Mallon, Bruce Barrett, Pat Murphy, and Joe and Jim Gotlewski.