



July - August 2025

THE PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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A look to the future at PLS

Mentorship

Recently we have seen a few new young members becoming involved at workdays and run days. This is very good to see given the average age of our club members. It is essential for the ongoing health of the club.

This does bring to mind the importance of mentorship!

I myself had the blessing of being mentored in this hobby by Uncle Jim. Jim Salmons for those who don't know. Uncle Jim is my mom's brother. Uncle Jim joined PLS in 1973 and knowing my interest in all things trains introduced me to PLS where I became a member the following year in 1974.

Mentorship involves passing on knowledge and skills like machine shop practice, locomotive building and maintenance, track building and all things mechanical. It is one on one teaching. Uncle Jim did all those things for me very well.

Perhaps more importantly mentorship is really about passing on life skills like patience and forbearance with others. Having humility, offering encouragement and generosity of time. Showing respect to young and old even through our differences. Working as a team to accomplish greater things beyond what one can achieve oneself. All these life skills were taught to me by Uncle Jim over the years by way of steady example and continue even now!

As we welcome the next generation of train enthusiasts I encourage all to be patient with them.

Take the time to get to know them, work together with them and encourage them. Be generous with your time and friendship. When guidance and corrections are needed, be kind and gentle with your words. How you say things is more important than what you say. Let your life example speak louder than your words.

Let's work together young and old for the fun and enjoyment of our wonderful live steam hobby!

Remember to bring your smile.

See you at the tracks.

John Forsythe
President PLS, Inc.
215-872-9782

PLS Schedule Changes

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

- Sat, Sep 13 Perkiomen Community Day.
- Sat, Oct 11 Run Day – Members & Guest
- Fri, Oct 24 Blow Down Meet
- Sat, Oct 25 Blow Down Meet
- Sun, Oct 26 Blow Down Meet
Members & Guest

2025 PLS Upcoming Events

- Sat, Aug 16 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting – 12:30 PM
- Sun, Aug 24 Run Day – Members & Guest
(NO Rain Date)-
- Fri, Aug 29 Fall Meet – Members & Guest
- Sat, Aug 30 Breakfast & Lunch, Pot Luck Dinner
- Sun, Aug 31 Breakfast & Lunch
- Sat, Sep 13 Perkiomen Community Day
Run Day – Township Residents
- Sat, Sep 20 Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM
Membership Meeting – 12:30 PM
- Sun, Sep 28 Run Day – Members & Guest
(Rain Date Oct 5)

Membership Gauge

As of July 31, PLS has:

- 92** Regular Members
- 13** Probationary
- 138** Associate Members
- 2** Honorary Members.



Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Gage Vizzi and George Slater.

Kaeden Peffel has applied for Regular membership and Ralph Orr; Sr has applied to upgrade from Associate to Regular membership.

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for their donations: Rich Poletto, John Forsythe, Paul Miller and the Delaware Valley Triumph Classic Car Club.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Steve Leatherman, steveleatherman@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/26

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Workdays at PLS



Thank you, Larry Moss, for all the recent painting work giving this building a fresh look!

It was in need. Many have enjoyed the artwork on this building. It gives the railroad a unique look, a clever point of interest.



Good job Steve Leatherman operating the hydraulic stump grinder rented from Home Depot. We got rid of ten nuisance stops in one day.

This makes mowing much easier and our grounds safer.

Workdays at PLS



This brand-new Cub Cadet mower was generously donated to the club this spring by an anonymous donor. Thank you very much to the donor. For those who are not comfortable operating the club zero turn mower this is your chance to get the grass cutting done.



Dave Strouse getting down to work on tie replacement project. Tie replacement has been continuing at a steady pace. Thank you, team leaders Rick Stoughton and Paul Rice, and their helpers Theo Flood, Matan Moshe, Jim Salmons, John Forsythe, Dave Strouse, Paul Miller, Gage Vizzi, Kaeden Peffel, George Fitzgerald and others.



Notice anything different about the signal mass coming off the Mercer Bridge?

Yes, that's right, the telltale bracket has been removed. Wednesday's work crew recently removed it at the request of President Forsythe and approved by the board. When sitting straight up on the tender of 5000 the telltale steel bracket would hit you square between your eyes. Not just a minor safety hazard! Thank you Wednesday crew.

All Workday Photos and descriptions provided by John Forsythe President PLS, Inc.

PLS Welcomes the Delaware Valley Triumph Car Club



Despite bad weather several Delaware Valley Triumph Classic Car Club members made their annual July visit to PLS.

Update for the PLS Club Steam Loco



Club steam engine side rods have been polished and plated. We received them from the plating shop. They look much better now!

They were very corroded before.

John Forsythe

I survived the Open Air Car

Written by Joe Gotlewski

This year the Reading Blue Mountain Northern added a new and unique option to their popular Iron Horse Rambles. That is an opportunity to ride in an open air car #22 “Appalachian Trail” for the entire excursion. Normally this has always been offered with the 70-minute Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway that is located in Jim Thorpe. So far this year it was available on the Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe Iron Horse Ramble and then another one from Nesquehoning to Tunkhannock. Both my dad and I were able to ride the Iron Horse Ramble from the RBMN railroad’s newly built Nesquehoning Campus to Tunkhannock in June. The three-hour layover in Tunkhannock coincided with their annual Founders Day Festival.

On the northbound trip of the journey, the open air car was at the end of the train which gave us a complete observation view of the tracks and scenery. The lack of a wye track in Tunkhannock resulted in steam locomotive #2102 being repositioned at the opposite end, so that the open air coach was directly behind the front of the locomotive. Once the train reached the Pittston station only the locomotive was moved onto the wye which resulted in the tender facing towards us before continuing the rest of the journey back to Nesquehoning. Due to the excessive noise and cinders from #2102, each rider was provided with earplugs and goggles. While bench seating was available most riders stood throughout the trip, with some on the rear platform of the train.

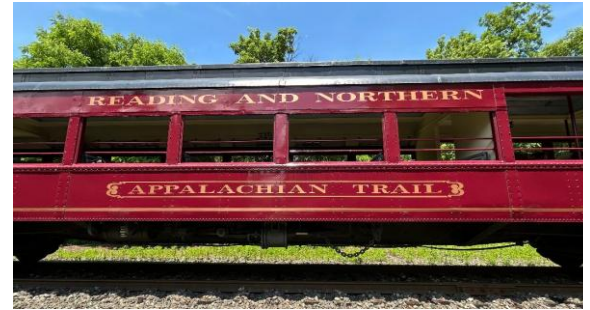
As usual the Iron Horse Ramble attracted many roadside observers and photographers.

It was an exhilarating and enjoyable day.

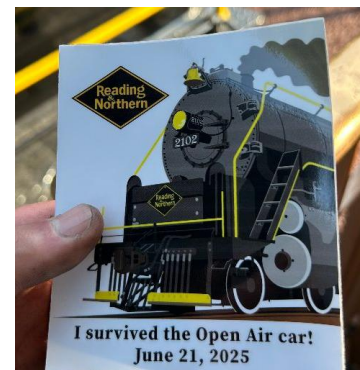
Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Joe



RBMN No.22 the Open Air Car



RBMN T-1 No.2102's Tender



Me and 2102

A Ro-Scale Sandbox Model of PLS

Written by Matan Moshe

My name is Matan Moshe, and I'm the creator of the online PLS! For those of you who don't know, there is a video game maker that is called Roblox (Pronounced: Ro-Blocks). And in Roblox you can create games and other fun activities that you and your friends can play together from anywhere in the world! I play this game in Roblox called RSS. RSS Stands for Ro-Scale Sandbox, Ro scale standing for Roblox scale. This scale is roughly 4 1/4 inch.

Getting all that out of the way, in RSS what you do is with virtually infinite possibilities of terrain and track, you create your own miniature railroad. This could be a simple tabletop layout, a full-fledged miniatures railroad with working operations, or in my case... a real-life live steam railroad! Now before my PLS project came around, I had created a completely fictional live steamers known as SMRR. (Smokey Mountain Railroad). This live steamers was less than ideal, but it was my first ever attempt at creating one. This also earned me a roll in the RSS community known as an OPS host, now in this online game there's a "server list" where you can look at a big list of people's railroads and choose which one you want to see, once you choose it you'll be teleported to that railroad. As an OPS host, my railroad whenever it's up, will have a bright orange outline and it will be at the very top of the list. I ran SMRR for a good year, and decided I wanted a new project to work on. Something I can truly be proud of.

I wanted to keep the theme of live steam, but I also wanted to try my hand at making a real-life live steamers. Currently in the OPS program, there was only a single live steamers that was a copy of a real life one, that being LALS. During school I went online and looked up live steamers near me, since I wanted to make one that was close to my home. That was my first time learning about Pennsylvania Live Steamers, I went on the website and just spent hours looking at gallery photos and the track layout wondering if it would be possible to remake this in RSS. I also watched the YouTube video "Trip Around Pennsylvania Live Steamers Behind Gizmo" about a million times. After looking at my other options, I decided that PLS would be the railroad I would remake in RSS. Me and a few friends spent hours researching the line, all facilities, and scouring the internet for any video we could find. We had trouble because PLS is not the most well-documented place, but we managed.



Overview of the 3D RSS Model of the PLS Layout

A Ro-Scale Sandbox Model of PLS

Images created by Matan Moshe

October 22, 2024, begun with the yard. which was the one of the more complicated things on the line. In photos I'll attach, you'll see there was absolutely nothing around except for just floating tracks in the air. When making any live steam map in RSS, you always want to make the track layout first before adding any detail surrounding it. This not only helps with moral keeping a sort of mental completion meter but also allowed me to figure out the online PLS will be about $\frac{2}{3}$ the size of the real location. After the yard however came trouble, As currently RSS was still in early development, and they hadn't added any good ways to make accurate curved grades. Those of you who have ever driven on the line will know once exiting the yard there's a 4.7% grade on a downhill leading towards the two bridges. I tried, and tried, and tried, yet I couldn't get a good accurate downhill turn with the materials I had. I completely considered giving up the project and just continuing with SMR. But then RSS had a surprise update! low and behold there were now the tools available to make virtually every single track on the line. And the project was back up!

I hired terrain workers, builders, and crossing builders to help with the project. The whole thing took around 9 months to complete; we had an early opening which you can still find the video by iliketrails2828 on YouTube titled "Ro-Scale Sandbox - Pennsylvania Live Steamers Grand Opening" after the release of that video the rest of construction went as smoothly as I ever could of hoped! I remember one day lying in my bed however, when I get a notification from a person I've never seen before. This turned out to be Theodore Flood, who saw the opening video and decided to message me about how he is an actual member at the real location. He invited me down for a tour of the real place, and the rest is history! The final completion of the online PLS was when I built the club caboos and set it atop it's tracks, signifying the total completion of the online PLS.

We now run frequently every Sunday at ~8:00 PM sharp.

If you want to join the Discord and get active updates on the online PLS, Join this link.

<https://discord.gg/kTzFNbXVj6>

If you want to join RSS the game and see for yourself a run day, visit this website

<https://www.roblox.com/games/4629209674/RO-Scale-Sandbox>



Example of two Trains on Mercer Bridge. This shows the 3D ability RSS software. Note the Engineers driving the Locos.



This view shows the Tunnels and Over Pass another example of the 3D created Model.



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FIRST CLASS

PLS Remove & Replace Tie Project



Some of the Remove & Replace Tie Project team. Right after another section of the 7.25-inch Main was completed.

Left to right Dave Strouse, Gage Vizzi, Matan Moshe and John Forsythe.