May – June 2024

THE PLS GAZETTE

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

The Wheel Report

Dear Friends:

As I contemplate a message to send in this issue of the Gazette, I recall the outstanding turnout and fun times that were had by all who participated at the Spring meet. The weather was great, and the trains were plentiful. Thank you to everyone who helped make this meet possible.

At this same time, I must also reflect on the (recent) loss of friends both old (Walter Mensch) and new (Henry Blanco-White). What this all has in common is that we still come together to share good fellowship, and "play" outdoors sharing a common activity.

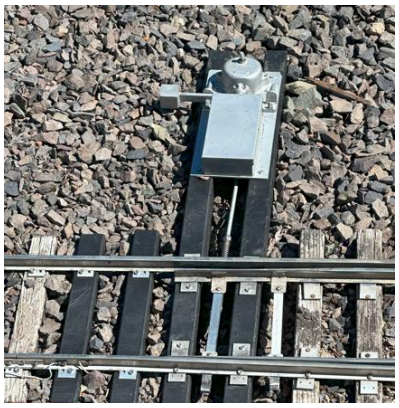
This place where we gather was created and built by many who came before us. PLS continues to be a *legacy* for those present and for those in the future. According to Merriam-Webster legacy can be defined as something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.

Let us continue to enjoy our small park but let us restate that what is here we hold in trust to maintain so that others, present and future, can enjoy. Let us remember that this place still requires a personal investment of time, money, sweat equity and participation. Please continue to contribute whatever you can to maintain this present happy place as a legacy.

Patrick J Murphy

President PLS, Inc.

PLS - Repairs



After a few derails at the Rahns Station Turnout it was repaired. The old Wood Ties failed pinching the throw bar. This caused the Turnout to not fully return to the normal position.

2024 PLS Upcoming Events

--Fri, May 24	**SPRING MEET - Members and Guests**
--Sat, May 25	**Breakfast & Lunch, Pot Luck Dinner**
--Sun, May 26	**Breakfast & Lunch**
--Sat, June 1	**Perkiomen Community Day**
	Run Day – Township Residents
--Sat, June 15	**Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM** **Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM**
--Sun, June 23	**Run Day - Members and Guests - 9:00** **Rain Date June 30**
--Sat, July 20	**Annual PLS Picnic - 12:00 Noon** **(Train Rides will be available from Noon Until 3:00 PM)** **Rain Date July 21**
--Sun, July 28	**Run Day - Members and Guests - 9:00** **Rain Date August 4**

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members: Jasper Langevin, Thomas Narrigan, and Russell Swinnerton. We also welcome Steve Gilbert and Brian Tusin, new Probationary members.

Membership Gauge

As of May 31, 2024

93 Regular Members
8 Probationary Members
134 Associate Members
2 Honorary Members

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following for donations received during April and May: Matthew Haines, Pat Murphy, Russell Swinnerton, and the Becker Family Foundation.

Thank you also to those members who donated baked goods sold at the Spring Meet.

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Pat Murphy	of Gilbertsville, PA	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	Paul Miller	of West Chester, PA	secretary@palivesteamers.org
Treasurer	Mark Cahill	of Perkasie, PA	treasurer@palivesteamers.org

Gazette Editor **TBD** - Paul Miller (Interim)

Board of Directors

Steve Mallon, mallonmusic@gmail.com - Term Expires 3/25, Events

Paul Rice, ricepaul@verizon.net - Term Expires 3/25

John Forsythe, john@tcsdcc.com - Term Expires 3/26

Peter Brown, peteprivate@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/25, Buildings

Bonny Mallon, quiltnsewlady@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26

Fred Daddi, F_Daddi@yahoo.com - Term Expires 3/26

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Remembrance

Of Walter H. Mensch, written by Lee Hart.

Bear with me, as I have never written anything like this. Walter and I met in 1968 at his home. My brother and I were invited to see his large Lionel train layout. Walt's layout operated like clockwork. It had a turntable operated by a manual overhead wire system to serve the roundhouse. In 1968, to see a Lionel layout run with such precision was really something. Walt visited our Lionel layout in Birdsboro. He taught us how to make a better layout. It was always about trains when we were together. That began our friendship of 58 years. Walter was a designer for Sanders & Thomas in Pottstown, Pa. Through his position at S&T, some projects involved working with Scott Paper Co. or going to Aberdeen proving grounds for military testing. S&T personnel were involved with tracking launches and landings, called shorties, on our aircraft carriers during the Vietnam war. With information collected, S&T designs helped make improvements to the aircraft catapult systems for the department of the Navy. Walt was in the Navy as an airplane mechanic & was assigned a special location on some planes as he was just the right height for most planes and did not have to duck, as most others were too tall. At times he was stationed on board the carrier when it left for sea maneuvers. When the air wing landed on board the carrier, his job as a mechanic began. A most exciting experience. When maneuvers were ending & the air wing was returning to base, Walter got the ride of his life. As a passenger he was launched off the carrier and returned to base. Walter never spoke much about his military service, only when asked. Walt really liked the small alcohol fueled miniature stationary steam engines & had several in his shop. Sometime later he showed me land along RT 724 in Gibraltar, Berks Ct. He discussed how it could work as a steam railroad. The land is still there. Sometime later, he connected with PLS & for the next 40 yrs. + it was all PLS. It was the perfect fit for Walter & PLS. When we were together, our discussions were trains or "the Club". He sponsored me when I joined TCA in1968. We almost never missed the big TCA YORK meet. During the years, Walt created many train model train projects in his shop. One was ¼ inch scale N.Y.C. brass tender for Lionels semi scale 773 Hudson. He produced 25 units, painted and lettered RTR. I did the painting & my brother did the lettering and Walter gave me his old air compressor from his shop for painting. Walt also produced 30" diameter motorized turntables RTR for many gauges. Free delivery within 25 miles of the shop. I painted, my brother did catwalks, railing and the control house. I helped deliver many turntables. I had one on my 2 rail O-scale layout operating for over 30 years, without any problems. When we bought our first new old home in Birdsboro, it needed a new front porch. Walt took on the job. He removed the old wooden porch & framing. He added new support framing, decking & repaired existing railing. Walter refused payment when we tried to pay him. He would always lend a hand to help our family. Typical Walter! My brother Larry and I started a large 2 rail O-Scale layout in my home in Union Township. Walt was there with the rest of us from the start. Thirty years later, nearing completion, Walt was still helping. The layout's operation was wonderful, due in part to Walter's efforts. After visiting PLS for a few years, I became an Associate member, then a Regular member. Walt showed me a PENNSY RS3 diesel that was for sale. I bought the engine. Walt stored it in his storage bay. At the end of the run season, he took it home to his heated basement. Showed me how to maintain it. I was having health problems. Walter found a member buyer, and the engine stayed at PLS. Walter was a graduate of Williamson Trade School, and a financial contributor. He attended many fund raising and social events. There was some decision about donating a bus for student activities. Administration scheduled a meeting with Walt. He asked me to go, so that after his meeting we could tour the campus. We got a look at the abandoned Williamson Railroad Station. He was hoping that the

Remembrance

students would be allowed to restore the station. He got some exterior paint samples for a picture that was being painted of the station. Walt got me a copy of the painting. His shop at home was expanding. An addition was being built to house more equipment, tools and material storage. A large new ZABLE lathe and a BRIDGEPORT Milling Machine would allow for more machining capabilities. For years he was building a 1 inch, NYC Pacific steam engine and tender. The running gear operated on compressed air. The boiler was certified for operation. When the club had a project that needed him, his steam engine build took a back seat. It never got completed. He donated it to a member at PLS. He was club president for several terms. I know he enjoyed the club banquets. Especially with guest speakers, like Ted Maurer, auctioneer. I visited Walt in the hospital when he was recovering from open heart surgery. Having never been in the hospital as a patient, it was quite an experience and recovery for him. In later years he started to downsize his train collection. Through Ted Maurer Auctions, most items found new homes. The model railroad was disassembled and removed. Sometime later, Walter said he no longer felt safe at home living alone. Meeting with his primary care physician, he was able to enter an assisted living center. We visited Walter in his studio apartment. We had a lazy boy rocker recliner to give him for more comfort, but he refused it saying it wasn't necessary. When covid hit, visits were limited. When we were allowed visits, I was not able. My cancer reappeared. The chemo treatments kept me home. I wrote letters about my condition and things in general. We spoke on the phone, but then Walter had his phone disconnected. So, I sent him cards, but he did not call me back.

I found out on April 28th that Walter passed away February 10, 2024. This was discovered as his PLS Gazette had been returned to PLS. There were services held for him, but unfortunately no one had been aware of this. I hope to visit his grave site in Highland Memorial Park, Pottstown, Pa. to say goodbye to my good friend Walter.

Editor's Note: Walt's 1 inch Pacific was completed and made operational by Bruce Saylor and still runs occasionally at PLS.

PLS Welcomes the 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers

"For this year's Spring Meet the PA Live Steamers were joined by the Annual Gathering of North American members of the Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers. While concentrating primarily on UK 2 foot narrow gauge railways modeled in a scale of 16mm to the foot the Association also welcomes members modeling narrow gauge railways in other gauges and scales. Each year North American members of the Association gather to run trains, show off their latest projects, and share experiences.

"Members arrived from the Mid-Atlantic states, Texas, North Carolina, Washington, New England, and Ontario, Canada. Portable tracks with both Gauge 1 and Gauge 0 tracks were set up. Both steam and battery powered locomotives and rolling stock were running. Equipment varied from entirely scratchbuilt, new off-the-shelf commercial items, and heritage items from the earliest days of the 16mm garden railway hobby."

Written by: Mike Moore and Rob Kuhlman

PLS Welcomes the 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers

2 Bertiessm

Shawe Katiesm

East Broad Top number 12

Archangel Rheidolsm

Workdays at PLS

Below illustrates an example workday on the sign in sheet. Workdays are every Wednesday and Saturday typically 9 AM to Noon. Work includes Track, Grounds and Buildings.

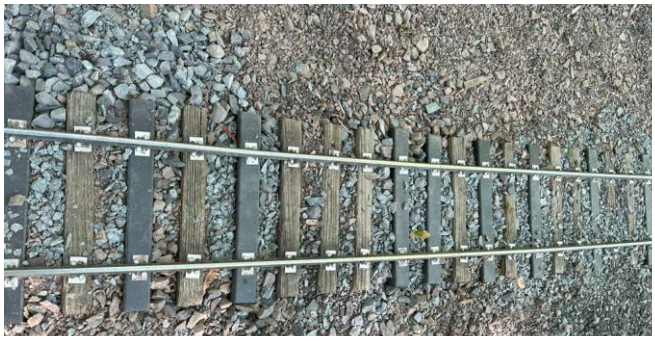
PLS Sign-up Sheet

Date	Name	Comments
29-May	Paul Miller	Weed Control
29-May	Roy Nelson	Unstated
29-May	Rick Stoughton	Unstated
29-May	Jim Adams	Painting
29-May	Bob Morris	Unstated
29-May	Jim Gotlewski	Power Washing
29-May	Terry Weinsteiger	Track
29-May	Jim Salmons	Unstated
29-May	Larry Moss	Painting

Come and ride the pine and enjoy the view. On a rainy Saturday Bruce Barrett removed and replaced the pine boards on 3 of our large benches. He came prepared with the new boards already treated and a popup tent. Once the old boards were removed, he then wire brushed and painted the metal supports, Then installed the new boards.

Thanks Bruce

Can you see the difference between the two tracks. The one on the left was power washed and made ready for repainting. The one on the right you can see the difference as Jim Adams applies a fresh coat of paint. After the tracks at Building 3 are completed all our Steaming Bays at the Turntable & Building 3 will have been upgraded.



Remove and replace old Wooden Ties with Plactic Ties has begun. The Image shows the 7.25” Main just South of Mercer Bridge. This process will help keep our 5/8” Steel Rail in place where we have steep grades.

Workdays at PLS

The dead tree in the North parking area near the front gate was taken down by team Forsythe with some help. Note Jay is removing the limbs so the tree can be removed. John is standing by ready to grab the debris. John recently acquired a new trailer so he could bring his tractor to the club to help do the heavy lifting. John also started cleaning up the infield removing some of the dirt pile and all the Railroad Ties.

Trackside Images

Note the Golden Spike (Actually a Screw) at the end of the red arrow. It was placed Saturday during the Spring Meet by Jim Miller officially opening the new 1" Passing Track between the Tunnel and Mercer Bridge. Shown are just some of the crew that helped get the project get completed. It took many years to add the dirt required to make the fill wider to accommodate the new Track. During the brief ceremony it was mentioned now we have Murphy Siding & Miller Siding maybe we should now call is area M & M Junction?

Tip: when viewing the PLS Gazette electronically you can Zoom In and Out to see the Images in better detail.

From Live Steam to Heart Surgery

Hi all – for those I haven't met yet, I'm John Kelly. I'm originally from Massachusetts, where I've been a member of the Waushakum Live Steamers since 2003. I was lucky to grow up just a few miles from WLS and used to ride my bike there before I could drive. During my time there, I was fortunate to develop great friendships with several members who took me under their wing and taught me how to run and work on live steam engines as I progressed from Gauge 1, to 3.5", 4.75", and ultimately, 7.25" gauge. I will always be grateful for their mentorship and encouragement. My experience at WLS and fascination with steam engines played a large part in my career choice.

Currently, I live in Philadelphia where I am completing my residency and fellowship in cardiac surgery at the University of Pennsylvania (Figure 1). For those not familiar with the medical pathway, I completed 4 years of college (William & Mary, BA degree in history, 2011), 4 years of medical school (Emory University, MD degree, 2018) and am now in year 6 of 8 of cardiac surgery residency/fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. Residency/fellowship is an apprenticeship during which you perform surgeries with experienced surgeons who teach and give you graduated responsibility. My experience with steam engines was one of the main reasons I chose to become a heart surgeon. Why? Open heart surgery is very similar to working on a steam engine.

The heart is a four-chamber pump that moves blood around the body. The pathway of blood through the heart is illustrated here in Figure 2. As our organs function, they extract oxygen from the blood. This deoxygenated blood drains from the upper body through the superior vena cava (SVC) and lower body through the inferior vena cava (IVC) into the right atrium (RA). From there, it moves through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle (RV), which squeezes and forces blood through the pulmonary valve through the pulmonary artery (PA) to the lungs. Inside the lungs, carbon dioxide is removed from the blood (what we breathe out) and oxygen diffuses into the blood (what we breathe in). This oxygen-rich blood then flows from the lungs through the pulmonary veins into the left atrium (LA). From there, it moves through the mitral valve to the left ventricle (LV). The LV is a thick, muscular chamber that squeezes and pumps blood through the aortic valve into the aorta and to the rest of the body. The heart itself needs a blood supply to provide the oxygen it requires to beat. This function is performed by the coronary arteries, which lie on the surface of the heart. Just like a steam engine, any one of these components can break down and need repair or replacement.

Most open-heart surgery requires use of a machine called cardiopulmonary bypass, or the "heart-lung machine." (Figure 3). Developed in the 1950s in Philadelphia, this machine is what made heart surgery possible. The "heart-lung machine" allows us to safely stop and open the heart so we can work inside it. Since the heart is not pumping, the machine also diverts the blood that would be returning to the heart and pumps it to the rest of the body, so the brain and other organs continue to receive the blood they need. To connect the patient's heart to the cardiopulmonary bypass machine, we sew plastic tubes called cannulas into the heart and large blood vessels. To stop the heart, we administer a special solution called cardioplegia. We also cool the patient's temperature to reduce the oxygen and metabolic demands of the heart muscle while it is stopped and not receiving its usual blood supply. Just like working on a live steam engine, we use small instruments and tools. Everything is hand-sewn and hand-tied. We wear headlights and magnifying glasses called loupes, so we can see the fine sutures and into the small spaces.

One common surgery we perform is valve replacement. Just like the valves on a locomotive, heart valves can become calcified over time and not open well (called stenosis) or wear-out and leak (called regurgitation or insufficiency). With the heart stopped, we cut out the dysfunctional valve and implant a new prosthetic valve with a series of sutures. When first developed in the 1960s, a replacement valve was a ball and cage, not unlike a check valve on a locomotive (Figure 4). These days, modern replacements include mechanical valves, made of plastic and metal, and bioprosthetic valves, composed of either bovine or porcine animal tissue and metal, plastic, and felt. Mechanical valves last for many years but require the patient to be on a lifelong blood thinner, while bioprosthetic valves do not require a blood thinner but last about 10-15 years. Over the past decade, a new technology called transcatheter valve implantation has exploded in volume. These valves are designed to be compressed, delivered through a device inserted through a needlestick in the blood vessels in the groin, and expanded once in position inside the heart. This allows patients to get a replacement valve without needing open heart surgery.

From Live Steam to Heart Surgery

The most common operation we perform is coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). The coronary arteries, which are the small vessels that supply the heart muscle with blood, can develop blockages over time than can cause a heart attack. In CABG surgery, we use small arteries from the underside of the sternum or the arm and veins from the leg to bypass blockages (Figure 5). Coronary arteries are small, measuring 1-3 mm in diameter. The sutures used are very fine, like the thickness of a human hair, and with a needle about the size of an eyelash. We also perform surgery on the aorta, which is the largest blood vessel in the body. The aorta normally measures 3 cm in diameter. However, it can become enlarged, which is called an aneurysm, or tear, which is called an aortic dissection. The largest ascending aortic aneurysm I have seen was over 8 cm in diameter! In aortic surgery, the diseased portion of the aorta is replaced with a tube made of material called Dacron (Figure 6).

Lastly, we also perform heart transplant, in which a patient's entire heart is removed and a new one from a donor patient is implanted. Heart transplant requires two teams. One team takes a small jet to another hospital to surgically remove and pick up the donor heart. Meanwhile, the second team prepares the recipient patient so when the donor heart arrives, it can be implanted into the recipient patient as fast as possible. My 6 years of residency have been exciting and extremely rewarding, and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with amazing people every day. I am very lucky to have found this career and look forward to my remaining 2 years of training and then starting out as an attending surgeon.

Two years ago, I had the opportunity to acquire Fitchburg Northern No. 5, a 7.25" gauge coal-fired mogul built by my good friend and live steam mentor Russ Steeves (Figure 7). I first met Russ and ran the No. 5 back in 2004 at Waushakum and Pioneer Valley (Figure 8). Since then, I had always had a particular admiration for the No. 5 and feel extremely honored to be its next caretaker. I moved the engine to my apartment in downtown Philadelphia and brought it to PLS soon after. I am excited to become a part of the club and look forward to getting to know everyone. See you at the track!

Figure 1: John Kelly performing coronary artery bypass (CABG) surgery. *Photo by Catie Russell.*

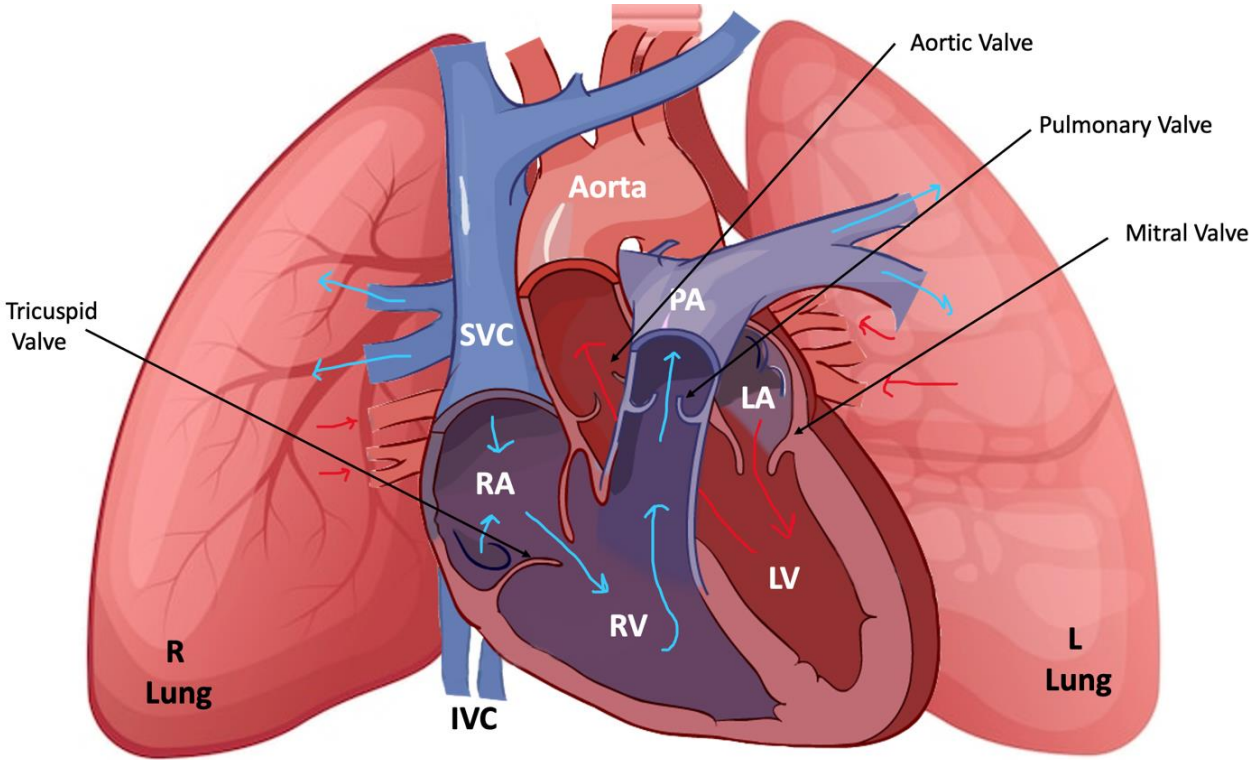


Figure 2: The path of blood through the heart.

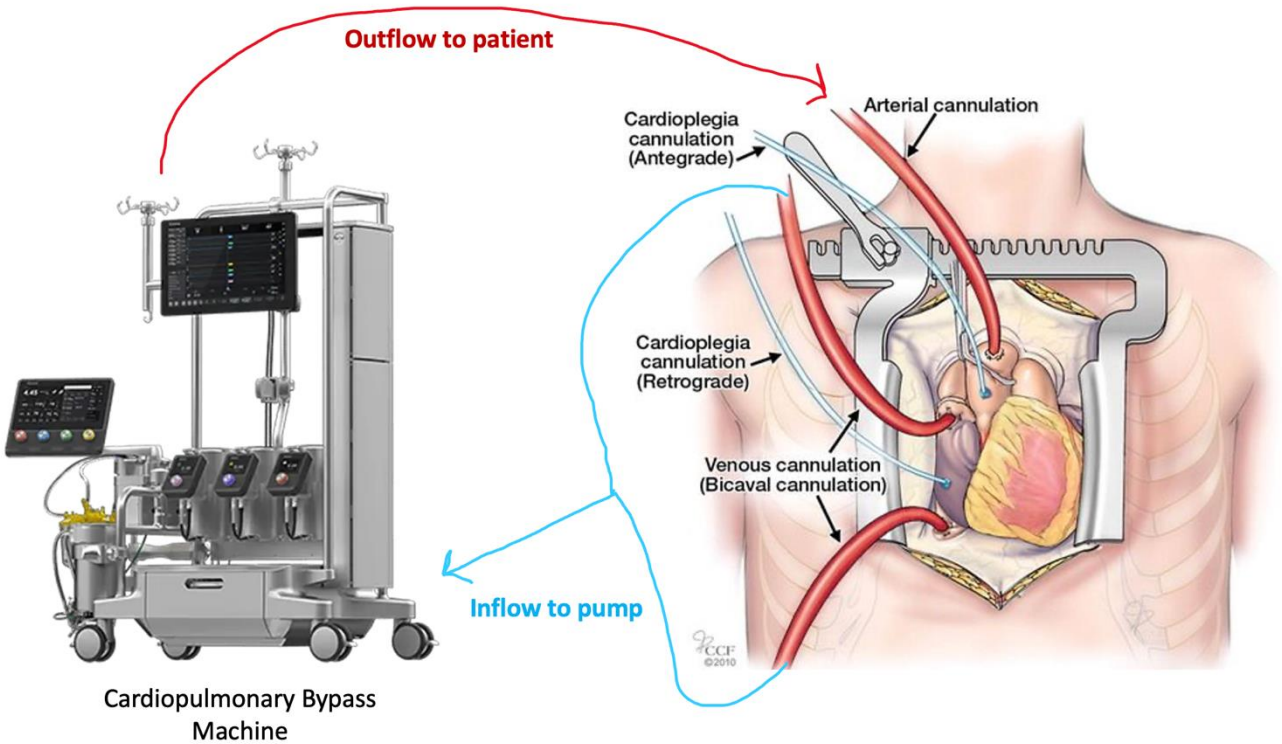


Figure 3: Cardiopulmonary bypass or the "heart-lung machine." Oxygen-poor blood is diverted away from the heart through plastic tubing into the machine (inflow). The machine oxygenates the blood and pumps it back to the aorta (outflow). This allows the brain and body to have adequate blood perfusion while the heart is stopped and opened for surgery.

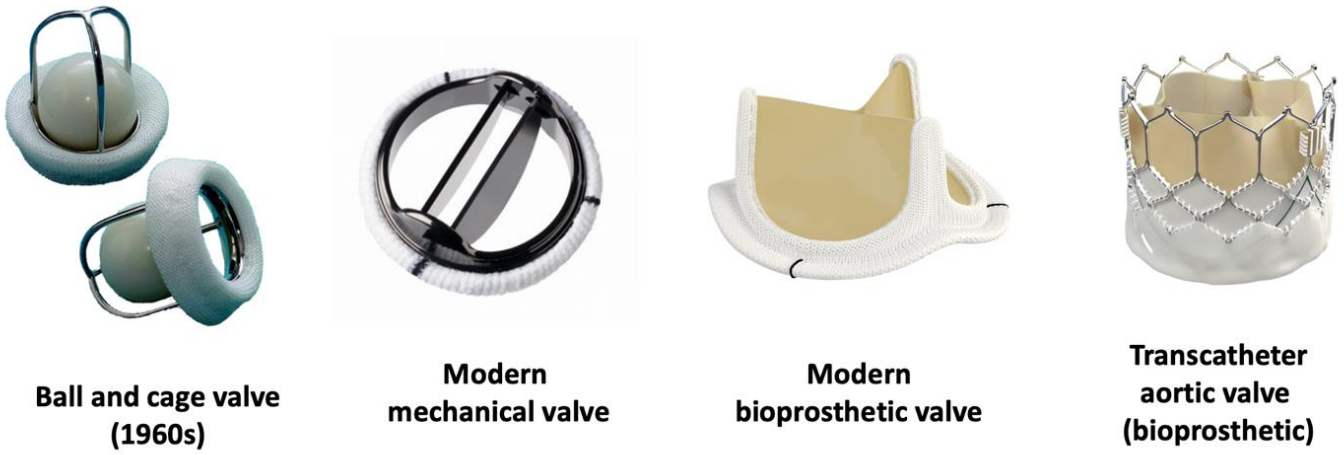


Figure 4: Types of artificial replacement heart valves.

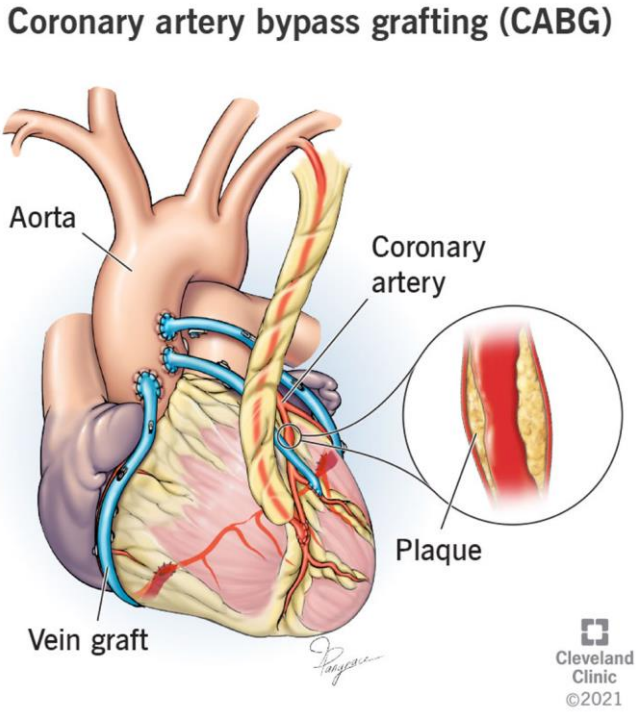


Figure 5: Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). Small arteries and veins are used to bypass blockages in the coronary arteries.

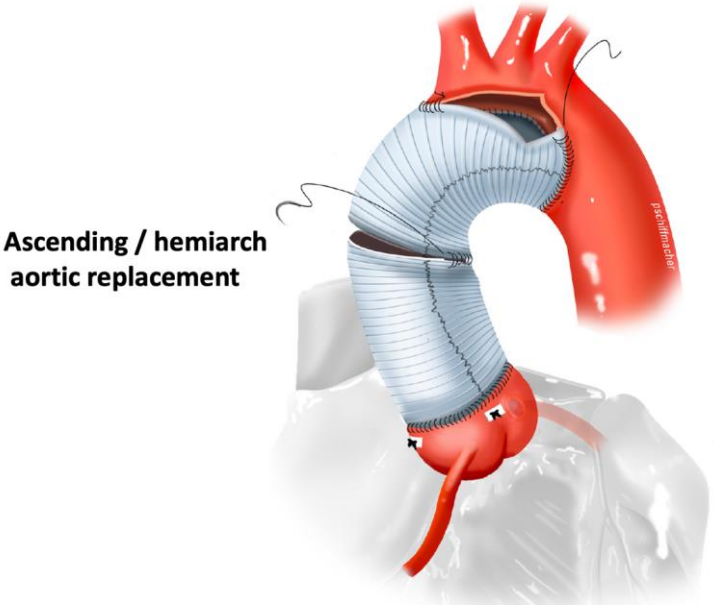


Figure 6: An ascending and hemiarch aortic replacement. The white prosthetic graft is made of a material called Dacron.

Figure 7: Russ Steeves and John Kelly at Waushakum Live Steamers in August 2023.

Figure 8: John Kelly 20 years ago at Pioneer Valley with engine No. 5 and more recently at PLS.

The
PLS GAZETTE

P.O. Box 26202
Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

FIRST CLASS

The Golden Spike is being installed. It was placed Saturday during the Spring Meet by Jim Miller officially opening the new 1" Passing Track between the Tunnel and Mercer Bridge. In the photo are Jim Miller, Dan Siegle, Terry Weinsteiger and Paul Miller. Photo by Rick Stoughton