

John Bulger Training Day Commentaries

August 25, 2012

by the Participants and Pat Young

Although I did not take advantage of John's tutorial I did have the pleasure of witnessing John's sharing of his love of live steaming and then passing it on to each of his participants. It's one of life's little pleasures to be able to finally experience a long yearning or pent-up desire that has been building up through the year and I think that the grins says it all. Hear and enjoy what the participants thought about their sessions with John. - Pat Young

Time 9:00 – 10:00 am



Tom Hamilton: “John was very gracious and helpful. He very courteously determined the member's level of competence through conversation, and then “took you where you were at”.

John patiently guided me through a brief survey of the engine's controls and gauges, then was literally right behind me as he invited me to take control of the locomotive.

He was equally helpful in acquainting me with the club trackage and signal system.

Certainly John's patient and generous spirit - sharing the use and operation of his locomotive, extended to his easy going manner of instruction. He certainly represents the best attributes of our club and our hobby, attributes which attract and sustain new members."

Time 10:00 – 11:00 am



Dan Swanson: "For those that had none or very little experience running a steam locomotive but wanted more here was a unique opportunity to do so. Thanks to the generosity of John Bulger I signed up for one of his steam practice sessions and brought a friend along with his 10 year old grandson who is an avid train fan. John is a patient instructor allowing newcomers to operate his highly crafted engine. Although I operated the Hines Atlantic club engine back in the late 80's I had not touched steam since except for one time so I was really rusty and felt like a newb when I sat at the controls. Unfortunately for John and embarrassing for me before our first loop was complete we derailed going through a switch and a major effort was underway to re-rail his larger scale engine and tender. After half an hour plus of grunting with heavy pry bars and jacks we were moving once more. Although my session was short I found it beneficial and motivating to continue on with my RSC 2-6-0 Mogul. I truly appreciated his time and the use of his engine."

Time 11:00 – 12:00 am



Bill Holland: “I don't have my own equipment to run at the GGLS, so some times I get to run the work train hauling ballast and what not. I am always eager at any chance to run a steam locomotive but I will never ask the owners for a try, just something I always thought to be very taboo.

I had a great time running Johns 7.5" gauge engine and so did everyone else who signed up to do so. I can't speak for the mindset of other owners and their equipment, it is not for me to judge, and everyone has their own reasons why, but I would think it could only be beneficial to the hobby, and our club for that matter if others offered what John did.

I can speak from a pilot and flight instructors point of view, and one of the greatest enjoyments I have in the cockpit is when I take people up for their first flight or first flying lesson, to tell them that they have the controls and see their eyes light up as a dream came true.

I would think that people in this hobby may just find the same amount of joy doing the same with their equipment.

The only other time I ran a steamer was by a gracious person at the FLLS who let me run their Allen 10 wheeler one lap around the track.

Perhaps a trend could develop? Thanks John!”

Time 12:00 – 1:00 pm



Stephen , Alicia, Matthew & Jonathan Franaszek:

“Mr. Bulger's instruction was very good. His locomotive steamed well and was easy to run. I would love to run it again – hint, hint! Thank you, Mr. Bulger for this great opportunity and for the use of your impressive engine!” - Matthew Franaszek, 14

"The locomotive's performance was amazing!" – Jonathan Franaszek, 10

"As a spouse of a Live Steamer and as a mom of young Live Steamers, I very much appreciated the

opportunity to experience firsthand what all of the excitement is about up there at GGLS! John was very friendly and welcoming. His passion for live steam and for his exquisite-work-of-art Strawberry Canyon #24 was infectious. He was an excellent listener and he customized his instruction depending on who he was speaking with, whether the person was my more experienced and super enthusiastic 14-year-old or my "following-in-his-brother's-footsteps" 10-year-old or my novice self. John was very generous with his time, equipment and expertise. I think that offering these kinds of experiences are educational and help generate interest in this favorite occupation and help develop the next generation of GGLS members. Thank you, John, for sharing your knowledge, experience and, especially Strawberry Canyon 24!" – Alicia Mendoza, Wife and Mom of Live Steamers

"Mr. Bulger was very generous to offer his time and effort to educate and train the next generation of Live Steamers. I do not know if he has worked with young people, but he was amazingly patient and made this a fun and educational activity for both of my boys, who are at very different stages of understanding when it comes to steam engines. He did a great job of promoting the live steam hobby."
– Stephen Franaszek

Time 1:00 – 2:00 pm



John Bouey: "We should encourage other members to share their engines with the club membership. John was very gracious and I don't mean that everyone need to go that far, but if they would at least bring their engines out and do a demo and take us for some rides that would be enough.

I think an article in the *Callboy* (like this? - Pat) should thank John for his sharing and hopefully let other members know just how great the experience was (I know the members both before and after me

had similar experiences).”

Time 2:00 – 3:00 pm



Ken Reinhart: “John was an excellent teacher and surprisingly patient with both my father and I. I had a little bit of previous experience so I had the basic concept down but John took his time showing everything we needed to know. John started us off running on just residual steam pressure so as not to bombard us with too much information at once. After we were familiar with basic handling he showed us how to light the fire, use the injector and maintain the fire via atomizer/blower.

GGLS is a far drive for me (70 miles) and we just barely made our 2 pm appointment. But John was nice about it and we got started right away. I think 2 hours would have been perfect in terms of time but I was happy with the way things turned out and John was very free with answers to all our questions.”

Aftermath:



John Bulger: “The day went very well and I would like to do it again. We did have a derailment but that is part of the learning process for everyone including myself. It is intimidating for anyone to try something new. I applaud the courage of those that came out to give it a try. Each hour slot was over in a flash so the day went by very quickly and I agree that 2 hour slots might have been better. Club maintenance and structural improvements are necessary but building and riding engines should be our main focus. To me that is what the club is about, people helping each other with train activities. I would like to continue with this to see where it goes, so if anyone is interested in participating as teacher, student, organizer, equipment supplier, etc., I would like to hear from them. I welcome those who know more than I do to operate my engine and perhaps teach me something. This is a learning experience for me also. If Saturday training were available on the club engine then guess what, after your qualified, you can get lots of practice on Sunday from noon to 3. Now that the club engines are to be used for the revenue train only and not for use of the club members, perhaps the club should buy an engine just to be used by the club members. It gets back to *what is the purpose of the club?*”