

The Liggie

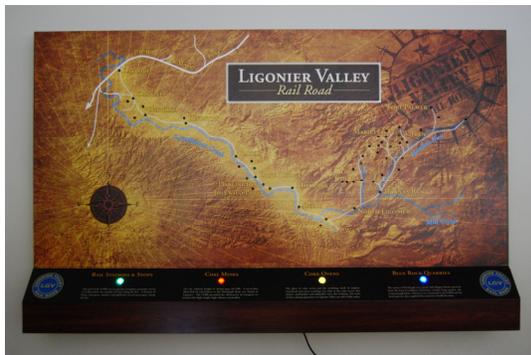
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LVRRA SETTLES INTO NEW HEADQUARTERS

The LVRRA Saturday morning discussion group has moved from the St. Clair Street office to the Darlington Station. Friends and visitors are welcome to stop in and chat, contribute their stories, check out the restoration and learn what's new with the LVRRA. Hours will continue to be 9 a.m. until noon.



Inter-active map is prominently displayed in the station.

The inter-active display map of the Ligonier Valley Railroad, made possible through a grant from the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, will intrigue even the most casual visitor. It provides an overview of the area served by the railroad and at the push of a button, the locations of the stations, coal mines, coke ovens and blue-stone quarries along the LVRR are highlighted.

The business operations of the LVRRA are now being conducted on the second floor of the Darlington Station. Once acclimated to the new building, the staff and BOD will determine a floor plan which will best accommodate the LVRRA's future objectives. The staff has already begun to use the newly installed PastPerfect software to catalogue LVRRA's growing collection of photographs, memorabilia and artifacts.

GOOD MEMORIES OF THE ST. CLAIR STREET OFFICE LINGER

The LVRRA is firmly entrenched in its new location at the Darlington Station, but not without nostalgic feelings for the former St. Clair Street office that had been its home for over five years. There LVRRA's dream of owning a permanent site developed into reality with the acquisition and restoration of the Darlington Station.



The former office on St. Clair Street

Although the new headquarters has distinct advantages over the old, the St. Clair Street office provided an anchor point for the LVRRA in its formative years. It was open to the public every Saturday morning since June 2004 and served as the Saturday morning "club house" for many regulars.

It also provided climate-controlled storage for the ever-growing collection of photographs and memorabilia. In addition, numerous Quickbooks accounting sessions convened there as well as *Liggie* stuffing parties.

The LVRRA will miss the many co-tenants of the building, especially Fran Redd, Tim Widich, Roxanne Warner, Betty Jo Dlugonski, and, of course, the landlord Linda Secorie Jakes. Thanks for the memories.

LVRRA GALA CELEBRATES THE COMPLETED RESTORATION

On September 26, 2009, the platform at the Darlington Station once again sheltered guests from the elements, but instead of railroad passengers as in the past, it protected guests arriving for the third annual LVRRA fundraising gala. In spite of the damp weather, Dave Byers, attired in his conductor's uniform, cheerfully ushered guests into the former lobby of the station. There the Harry Cardillo Trio created a welcoming atmosphere with Cardillo on keyboard and Pat Crossley on string bass accompanying vocalist Daphne LaPointe.



Dave Byers, son of ex-LVRR employ Elroy Byers, greets LVRRA director Pat Wallace and his wife, Kim Dickert-Wallace.

While enjoying tunes from the '30s and '40s, guests mingled as they admired the restored station and observed the LVRR photographs and memorabilia displayed in the cabinets moved from St. Clair Street as well as in the newly acquired oak-framed glass counters. Especially interesting to all was the new inter-active display map funded by the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau.

In the wing of the building that Idlewild added in the 1980s, guests were treated to collages of photographs of various facets of life taken during the active years of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, a full size replica of the front page of the

Pittsburg Dispatch reporting the story of the LVRR train wreck in 1912, and a display case housing awards and recognitions won by the LVRRA.



Iola Mitchell, granddaughter of Bud and Mary Snyder, one-time station masters of the Darlington Station, shares memories with LVRRA director Bill Stablein.

After guests moved from the station to the tent erected in the parking lot, they greeted and visited with friends. Terry Sabo played his guitar and sang selections from his enormous repertoire of oldies music as guests enjoyed the delicious hors d'oeuvres prepared by Ernie Vallozzi and drinks provided by Jim Mickinak, general contractor for the restoration project, and LVRRA directors Paul Fry, Pat Wallace and Al Pilz.

As the program began, emcee and co-chair Pat Wallace recognized Armour Mellon, gala chair, for his hands-on involvement in the association. Wallace also introduced fellow board members in attendance and the guest speaker, Dan Messmer, who talked about the business acumen that Judge Thomas Mellon related to his sons, the founders of the LVRR.

Wallace also recognized co-founders Bill McCullough and Bob Stutzman, who, in turn, introduced descendents of LVRR employees in attendance, Ray Robb, Dave Byers and Iola Mitchell.

**NEW MEMBERS
SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

Sam Calo
Harry Ferguson
James Miller
Robert D. Piper
Robert and Ina Mae Smithley
Owen Tewart

**LAYOUT TOUR IS ON TRACK FOR
MAY 1, 2010**

With a goal of selecting six layouts, the 2010 committee is currently screening possible layouts for the upcoming model train tour. Two layouts in the Greensburg area have been booked and others are under consideration. The committee evaluates accessibility and location, as well as various other factors in choosing sites for the tour.

The two layouts already on the 2010 tour should be crowd pleasers. One in HO scale replicates a real-life railroad operation, which switches cars and assembles trains to move down the line. The second, an O scale layout, is enhanced with realistic scenery and modeled after the Pennsylvania/Penn Central Railroad centered on the Shire Oaks Yard along the Monongahela River south and east of Pittsburgh.

Tickets will cost \$10 per adult and \$5 per child under age 16 and will be limited to the first 200 guests. They will be available through advance sale only. Plan to attend this tour scheduled for May 1, 2010.

Anyone aware of a layout owner in the Greensburg area who might consider being a host, please call Dick Flock at 724-850-8882. The committee will be appreciative of any new leads.

**COME ALONG WITH US AND RIDE
THE LIGONIER VALLEY RAILROAD
(VERSION 2010)**

More than 100 people attended the 2010 virtual tour of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road either on November 1 at the Antiochian Village or on November 3 at the Rogers Center. For some 25 attendees, this was their first exposure to the LVRRA, and hopefully some of them will elect to become members.

The LVRRA was most appreciative of the attendance of ex-LVRR employee Tom Shivetts and his wife, Ruth, who was the daughter of LVRR engineer Ed Blair. After the presentation at the Rogers Center, Shivetts introduced himself and, happily for the LVRRA, expressed interest in becoming involved with the organization.

The presentations began with Bill McCullough, who introduced the program, followed by Bob Stutzman, who narrated of the PowerPoint slide show.

The slides were divided into two parts, the first of which included historic pictures dating from the inception of the LVRR through the Last Run. This portion of the slide show included pictures of various stations, engines, doodlebugs, and industries serviced by the LVRR.

The second part of the program focused on the LVRRA and its accomplishments during its six years of existence. Many of these slides dealt with the restoration of the Darlington Station and chronicled the project from the LVRRA's acquisition of the property through the restoration's completion.

Both presentations were followed by question and answer sessions, which prompted excellent interaction among those in attendance. Because of one question, an addition will be added to future slide shows, dealing with a description of the Ligonier wye and an explanation of how it enabled an engine or a doodlebug to turn around for its return trip to Latrobe.

As a result of the positive response to the November slide shows, another program has been scheduled for February 28, 2010, at the Ligonier Town Hall at 2:30 p.m. The presentation is also available to social clubs, service organizations and church fellowship groups. Please call 724-238-7819 or send an e-mail to lvrra@verizon.net for additional information.

TEMPORARY STAIRS PROVIDE ACCESS TO CABOOSE

Volunteers have built temporary steps leading up to the Costello Caboose platform to alleviate the problem of climbing the original steps into the caboose. Visitors and workers can now easily access the caboose platform without having to awkwardly climb the ladder-like steps into the caboose. Kudos to Bill McCullough, Art McMullen and David Kindl for donating their time and talents.



David Kindl stands on the platform he helped to design and build.

REFERENCES DOCUMENT THE LOCAL LOGGING RAILROAD INDUSTRY

The LVRRA owns two of the most notable references concerning the logging railroads in Ligonier Valley. The most all-encompassing source is *Stemwinders in the Laurel Highlands*, written by Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr., in 1973. The book is Number 13 in his series of 13 books entitled *The Logging Railroad Era of Lumbering in Pennsylvania*. Fortunately, reprints of this book are still available through the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and are for sale at the Darlington Station for \$12.50.

A second reference, *The Story of a Mountain Railroad*, written by Franklin J. Langsdale, pertains only to the PW&S. The book is an easy-to-read, in-depth study. Although it has been reprinted, copies are scarce and hard to find. It is available for visitors to read in the Pennsylvania Room of the Ligonier Library.

LHMRC FIELD TRIP SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 19, 2009

An annual tradition of the Friends of the LVRR has been to visit the Laurel Highlands Model Railroad Club in Somerset during the month of December. This experience always stirs up nostalgia and inspires those attending to dig out their model trains, even if it is just to set them up to circle the Christmas tree.

A car pool will form at the Darlington Station at noon on December 19, 2009, regardless of the weather, and it will travel over the mountain to the new headquarters of the LHMRRRC located at Georgian Place in Somerset.

POPULAR PW&S FIELD TRIP RETURNS APRIL 10, 2010

For Friends of the LVRR, the LVRRA once again will sponsor a tour of the PW&S Railroad and retrace its roadbed from the Ligonier Station to the turnpike north of Somerset. The tour will begin at 10 a.m. and return at about 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 10, 2010.

John Vucina, retired ranger of Forbes State Forest, will lead the tour and point out features and vestiges of the railroad along the way. The location of the logging pond built by the Byers-Allen Sawmill is still visible, as well as numerous bridge abutments where the railroad crossed the Loyalhanna Creek on its climb toward the mountain. Some walking will be involved but since this part of the tour follows the railroad bed, it is a relatively easy trek.

Call the office at 724-238-7819, send an e-mail to lvrra@verizon.net or stop in at the Darlington Station some Saturday morning to indicate your intention to join the tour. There will be no charge for the tour unless the decision is made to rent a small tour bus so that everyone can travel in one vehicle. If that occurs, then there will be a nominal fee to share the cost of renting the bus. (If you like the idea of renting a bus, please let someone in the office know.)

PLANNING FOR A GRAND OPENING

The LVRRA BOD is organizing a celebration befitting the culmination of more than three years of work in restoring the Darlington Station. Details will be published in the March edition of the *Liggy*, and invitations will be mailed to all Friends of the LVRR. Mark the date, Thursday, May 13, 2010, on your calendar and plan to help celebrate the LVRRA's accomplishments to date and the beginning of a new phase in the life of the LVRRA.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill McCullough—President
724-238-5859
Bob Stutzman—Vice President
724-537-2647
Bill Potthoff—Secretary
724-532-5564
Art McMullen—Treasurer
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Al Pilz—Director
Bill Stablein—Director
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Open to the public
Friday, Saturday and Sundays
Thru mid-January
Friday hours 3 p.m.—7 p.m.
Saturday hours Noon—6 p.m.
Sunday hours Noon—5 p.m.

Adults—\$5.00
Admission free for children under age 12

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association
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PO Box 21
Ligonier, PA 15658

www.lvrroa.org
lvrra@verizon.net or info@lvrra.org

724-238-7819

Friend forever – in memorial

Ronald Fritz

FORT DAYS INFORMATION BOOTH MARKS NEW LOCATION

The 2009 LVRRA Fort Days information and sales booth moved to the sidewalk in front of the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street. Although the weather dampened attendance this year, the festive atmosphere prevailed. The LVRRA was pleased with its new location because it attracted more visitors with its improved visibility and easier access.

Volunteers distributed flyers and sold LVRRA merchandise as they garnered and shared information with visitors from throughout the area. Volunteers were:

Kerry Byers	Ruth Campbell
Ed Concus	Carol Gross
Ed Gross	Rita Horrell
Jack Horrell	Tom Hunter
Rev. Al Kovacs	Gladys Light
Art McMullen	Cheryl McMullen
Jim Murdock	Toni Polosky
Bill Potthoff	Bruce Shirey
Pat Slack	Jane Spencer
Bob Stutzman	Carolyn Stutzman
Sally Walker	

SECOND GENERATION LVRR EMPLOYEE PASSES AWAY

Former LVRR employee, Henry Albert (Al) Trautmann, Jr., died October 17, 2009. Carl Tantlinger, his life-long friend who was also a former LVRR employee, remembers Al as the eminent historian on the LVRR.

After graduating from Ligonier High in 1947, Trautmann started to work on the LVRR where his father was the freight agent and his uncle, Joseph P. Gochnour, Jr., was the general manager. He worked on the LVRR until the Last Run and then moved to Pittsburgh to work on the Pennsylvania Railroad.



*Al Trautmann during a 2005 interview
with directors of the LVRRA*

During an interview in 2005 with three directors of the LVRRA, Trautmann relayed numerous memories of the railroad that he loved. He recalled piloting the only diesel engine that ever came to Ligonier, an honor for such a young employee that he was proud to share.

A more dramatic event he recalled was the time he had to drive his car to Kingston to flag the crossing there for an overloaded coal train. If the train had had to stop at the crossing for automobile traffic, then it would have been difficult for it to regain momentum to climb the grade into Latrobe. The recording of Trautmann's personal experiences will remain an invaluable addition to the LVRRA archives.

Al Trautmann was one of only four former employees still living, and his knowledge added greatly to the facts that are known about the daily operation of the LVRR. He will be greatly missed. Carl Tantlinger, John Volpe and Tom Shivetts remain as the only first-hand sources of what it was like to work for the LVRR.

SIGNIFICANT ARTIFACT DONATED TO THE LVRRA

Those who remember Denny Piper, long-time LVRR doodlebug conductor, say Piper epitomized the railroad. He proudly wore his uniform and well-represented the LVRR over many years. Piper was a passenger favorite and very endearing to all who rode *his* train. For all of these reasons, the LVRRA is most grateful to receive one of his conductor's hats to add to its archives.

Piper's namesake and nephew, Robert Denny Piper, recently donated a conductor's hat that he purchased at his uncle's estate auction in the '70s. Robert Piper was outbid on the first of two hats offered for sale, but was able to buy the second for the same price.



*Conductor Denny Piper, on left, shown receiving Last Run orders
from dispatcher George Geeting while engineers
Ed Blair and Fred Iscrupe look on*

Ironcially, Bill McCullough, one of the co-founders and current president of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association, was the man who outbid Piper. The conductor's hat that he bought that day remains part of his personal collection of railroad memorabilia, at least for the time being. McCullough intends some day to reunite the two hats in the archives of the LVRRA.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to all contributors for the following items that have been donated to the LVRRA since the last Liggie publication:

Jim Murdock and Pat Ferry

Time, labor and supplies to re-finish two cabooses stoves

Bill McCullough, Art McMullen and Dave Kindl

Labor and time to build temporary caboose steps

Dave Kindl

Time and labor to refinish display cases for the LVRRA

Mark Ferry

Last run railroad spike

John Vucina

Photograph of a PW&S bridge in Linn Run State Park that has since been removed to improve the state road

Rev. Al Kovacs

Antique wooden grocery box, easel, vacuum sweeper, calculator, and bulletin board

Robert D. Piper

Original LVRR conductor's hat purchased at Denny Piper's estate auction

Latrobe Foundry Machine and Supply Co.

File cabinets, bookcase and chairs

The Robert W. Hoover, Sr., Family

Original LVRR desk and glass ink-well set used by LVRR controller Walter Dapper, Hoover's father-in-law

Pennsylvania Game Commission, Southwest Regional Office

Original oil painting by Milan Petrovitts of the Ligonier Station in 1923

Nancy McLeary

Original photograph of the LVRR bridge, which spanned Mill Creek near Weller Field

Ray, Jack and Larry Kinsey

Steam boiler maintenance tools

Ed Concus

Scan of 1951 photograph of Concus standing at the Wilpen coke ovens

CALENDAR OF LVRRA EVENTS

December 19, 2009—Field trip to LHMRRRC display in Somerset

February 28, 2010—Come Along with Us and Ride the LVRR at the Ligonier Town Hall

April 10, 2010—PW&S field trip

May 1, 2010—Layout tour

May 13, 2010—Annual dinner and grand opening of the Darlington Station

September 25, 2010—Annual gala

THE MISSION OF THE LVRRA Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association Organized in 2004:

To Preserve the legacy of the LVRR

To Conserve vestiges of the LVRR

To Collect memorabilia of the LVRR

To Educate the public about the history of railroading in Ligonier Valley

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION DONATES ORIGINAL ARTWORK TO THE LVRRA

The Southwest Regional Headquarters of the Pennsylvania Game Commission recently uncovered in its archives an original oil painting by noted artist Marlin Petrovits. The historic painting, dated 1923, portrays the headquarters and Ligonier Station of the LVRRA on West Main Street, which became the regional headquarters of the Game Commission in the 1950s and remained so until 2001. Since the Game Commission vacated the building several years ago, it recently decided to donate the picture to the LVRRA.



Representing the LVRRA, Bob Stutzman accepts the donation of an original Petrovits oil painting from Rich Weaver of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The painting was once owned and possibly commissioned by Ruth Scott (Mrs. J. Lewis Scott) of Pittsburgh, who was also associated with Powdermill Nature Reserve. It apparently was donated to the Pennsylvania Game Commission after it moved into the former Ligonier Station. Unfortunately, the Game Commission did not have further information about the painting.

According to retired Powdermill bird-bander, Bob Leberman, Ruth Scott was a life-long conservationist and friend of Rachael Carson. Scott volunteered for many years at Powdermill and during the 1960s was in charge of the summer education program. Additionally, she spearheaded the project to remodel and

restore one of the original buildings on the Powdermill property into a 16-bunk dormitory.



The original oil painting donated to the LVRRA by the Pennsylvania Game Commission

The following information about the artist was found through the website AskArt.com and was credited to Westmoreland Museum of Art:

Milan Petrovits came to this country from Vienna in 1905. He became a student of Arthur Sparks at the newly formed Department of Fine Arts at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. In 1934 he joined the faculty at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh where he remained until his death in 1944.

During the 1920s and 1930s, he had numerous one-man exhibitions at the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh and in 1932, he was awarded the Ida Smith Memorial prize for a group painting. He also exhibited at galleries in New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, Philadelphia and Cincinnati. The consensus of contemporary reviewers indicated that the artist was comfortable with a variety of styles, subjects and techniques. In addition, he was regarded as a rich colorist who employed a high keyed palette.

The LVRRA is indebted to the Game Commission for this donation and will proudly display this valuable historic painting in the Darlington Station.