

# The Liggie

Published by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association for the Friends of the LVRR

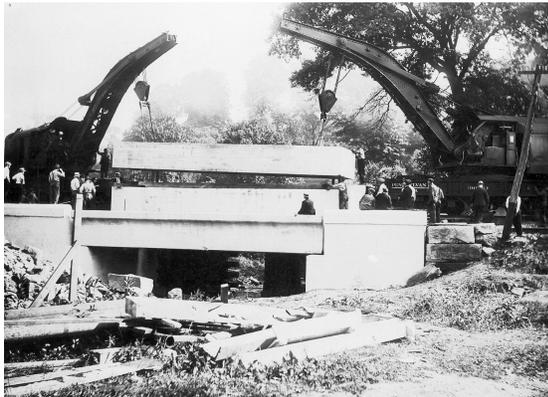
March 2011

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## SPRING FIELD TRIP WILL TRACE THE ABANDONED LVRR ROADBED BETWEEN LIGONIER AND LATROBE

Friends of the LVRR are invited on April 16 to participate in the 2011 field trip to explore the roadbed of the LVRR between Latrobe and Ligonier. The tour is designed to share information about this 10.6 mile segment of the LVRR and the part it played in the railroad's 75-year history as well as its impact on the economy.

Most residents are aware that the sweeping curves of the west-bound lanes of Route 30 between Longbridge and Kingston follow the grade of the abandoned LVRR through the Loyalhanna Gorge.



*This bridge, built for the LVRR to cross Cold Pit Run circa 1900, remains in use today, not for trains, but for automobiles.*

Those same residents, however, may not be aware that the bridge on the entry road leading into Idlewild Park from Route 30 west was built by the LVRR, or that the open area where the Idlewild ticket kiosks now stand was a railroad yard. There numerous sidings were used to park picnic trains while engines continued east to

Ligonier to re-fuel and turn around for the return trip west toward Pittsburgh.

The Millbank Station stood near the railroad tracks between the bridge and the space where the kiosks now stand. Nearby was a railroad spur which led to a clay quarry, which supplied area refractories. Still visible is a section of the foundation of the long-defunct Crescent Pipeline pumping station. This relay station was one of several that pumped oil from the west to cities in the east.



*The Crescent Pipeline facility near Millbank was in operation at the same time as the LVRR.*

Other vestiges remain along this section of LVRR's mainline, including: the bridge abutments that supported the bridge on the spur line to the Booth and Flinn quarry; the south wall staging area for the quarry where gravel and paving stones were piled and then loaded into railroad hopper cars; the abandoned tipple for another quarry on the north wall of the gorge; and the ruins of the Soisson brick yard ovens.

The tour will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday April 16 in the parking lot of the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street. Throughout the tour, guides will use CB

radios to communicate with participants in car pools.

Handouts, including maps and photographs, will be provided. Those planning to attend the tour should call the office at 724-238-7819 or e-mail [lvrra@verizon.net](mailto:lvrra@verizon.net) by April 9 to make reservations. At that time, anyone who can supply a CB for the tour should indicate so. Appropriate shoes will be required for walking on very moderate grades. This field trip is for dues-paying Friends only.

**ANNUAL DINNER  
RETURNS TO PIKE RUN  
MAY 27, 2011**

The sixth annual dinner meeting for Friends of the LVRR returns to Pike Run Country Club in Jones Mills on May 27. Pat Wallace, president of Covington Advisors and a director of the LVRRRA, will chair and emcee the event. Invitations will be mailed in early April.

Along with the usual good food, pleasant atmosphere and music, will be a silent auction of railroad related items, such as lanterns, diner car china, a switch lock and blank LVRR passes signed by J. P. Gochnour, long-time general manager of the LVRR.

In addition, the LVRRRA will raffle off a set of Jim Beam railroad decanters with unbroken seals. The set consists of an entire train, including engine, cars and caboose. Friend Roy Culbert donated this collection of decanters in 2009 to be raffled off as a fund-raiser for the LVRRRA.

**E-VERSION OF *THE LIGGIE***

Friends who prefer to access the newsletter in electronic format rather than to receive a hard copy, please notify the office at 724-238-7819 or e-mail [lvrra@verizon.net](mailto:lvrra@verizon.net).

**REPRINT OF 1886 ARTICLE  
FROM THE  
LATROBE ADVANCE  
DETAILS IDLEWILD EXCURSION**

*The following unedited article, dated June 23, 1886, is interesting not only for its subject matter and folksy journalistic style, but also for its relevancy to the field trip LVRRRA has planned for April 16.*

A Picnic of Seven

Among the first outings of the season was a picnic which took place on Wednesday last. The party was very small and select, consisting of ladies and gentlemen to the number of seven, all from Latrobe.

Although the clouds were dark and lowering, after getting the baskets packed, the party took the morning train on the Ligonier Valley Railroad, for Idlewild Parks. They found aboard the cars A. B. Kline, Dr. W. J. K. Kline, District Attorney A. M. Sloan, John Rumbaugh, and Mr. Kirkwood, of Greensburg, members of the Ligonier Fire Clay Company whose shipping point is Coalpit, a short distance above Idlewild. There gentlemen were accompanied by Ed Keenan, also of Greensburg and were on their way to inspect their works.

In the course of time the train arrived at Idlewild and the seven merry picnickers left the cars. The baskets had to be attended to of course. These were put in a place of safety, when the party crossed the wire suspension bridge which spans the Loyalhanna and entering the west Park, made a grand rush for the swings. They soon tired of this sport however, and after taking a short stroll among the laurel and rhododendron thickets, plucking some white flowers here and delicately tinted pink ones, there, they concluded that it was time to eat. Accordingly the feast was spread on a table which had been placed under cover on the floor of the immense dancing pavilion. At the word "go" every person pitched in and the wreck made among the eatables was

complete. By a motion unanimously passed it was resolved to let the table stand until time to pack up. This was a pious idea and no matter when you would look in that direction during the afternoon, some one could always be seen near the table, and, strange to relate, they never felt the least bit hungry.

The afternoon was passed in fishing and boating on the Loyalhanna, gathering laurel and rhododendron flowers, ferns, etc. Although it rained at times, this did not mar the pleasure of the picnics in the least. The laurels and rhododendrons in this particular locality are just in the height of their beauty at present, and lend a magnificent effect to the beautiful parks.

Several of the party accepted an invitation of the fire clay company to visit their works. Going along the railroad from Idlewild toward Ligonier, for a short distance, they came to a switch taking off to the left of the road. Here, a short distance back from the railroad is located the crusher belonging to the company. The mines of the fire clay company are located among the everlasting hills about one and one half miles from the L.V.R.R. To reach them a narrow gauge track has been constructed, and upon it runs a train of clay cars or dumps, drawn by a neat little engine bearing the appropriate name of the "Duke of Idlewild." The visitors carefully crawled into one of the clay cars, the whistle sounded and the noble "Duke" began the upward journey. In a short time the train traversed the levels and several steep grades when the mines were reached. Disembarking the party explored the mines for a short distance, and then getting on the cars once more, commenced the downward journey. This road although only one and one half miles in length, passes through a very romantic and picturesque region, and if you every have the opportunity, we advise you to take a trip over it.

The visitors to the fire clay pits having rejoined the picnics at Idlewild, took another boat ride on the Loyalhanna and as

train time was drawing near, "ate their supper" and packed the baskets.

The train arrived on schedule time and the still merry but somewhat fatigued party got aboard and in a short time was back in Latrobe again, each being delighted with the day's pleasure. The thanks of the picnics are due to Superintendent Senft, of the L.V.R.R., for courtesies extended. Dear reader, do not fail to go to Idlewild, and go as often as you can.

### **THIRD ANNUAL MODEL TRAIN TOUR SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 30 Open to the Public**

The third annual model-train layout tour will feature ten layouts, all new to the tour. Six of the layouts will be in Latrobe, four of them displayed in Huber Hall and the other two in private homes. Of the remaining four layouts, one is in Derry and the other three in Ligonier Valley.

The 300 available tickets will be sold in advance of the tour. The price is \$10 for adults and \$5 for students under 16. In order to make a reservation, indicate the number of adult and/or student tickets desired and send a check, earmarked "layout tour," to LVRRA, PO Box 21, Ligonier, PA 15658. Requests must be received by April 23, 2011, in order for the LVRRA to guarantee that tickets and information packets will be returned in time for the tour. Please include also a return address and, if applicable, an e-mail address, in case of last-minute changes.

In addition to the four mobile layouts, LVRRA's information booth and gift shop will be set up in Latrobe's Huber Hall. The layouts of the Fort Pitt Hi-Railers and of the Three Rivers N-Trackers consist of numerous modules that depict various landscapes along a railroad line. The 5 X 9 scenic layout of the S-Gaugers of Pittsburgh includes multi-levels and a two track main line along with a tunnel.



*This portable N-gauge layout includes numerous railroad scenes in a compact space.*

The fourth is a privately owned N-gauge layout with an industrial siding and a coal mine spur. It is a two-line operation with switching capabilities.

Near Huber Hall in a private home is a 6 X 28 layout depicting small villages as well as sections of London which feature several landmark buildings. This extensive ceramic collection from North Pole, New England and Department 56's Dickens Village creates a beautiful landscape through which two O-gauge trains travel. The hosts, a husband and wife team who began their collection in 1989, delight in creating a different display every Christmas.



*An MTH steam engine meanders through this winter scene.*

A special treat on this tour will be two hand-crafted 7.5-inch-gauge steam locomotives, one of which is 16 feet long and weighs 2000 pounds. Visitors, who will have the opportunity to talk to the father and son who built the engines, will recognize the time, material and craftsmanship that went into building them.

Close by in Derry is an O-gauge layout that is an ongoing project. This multiple level operation, which can operate up to 20 trains

at a time, includes both MTH and Lionel equipment.



*This layout includes a four-track overhead loop.*

All three layouts in Ligonier Valley are O gauge. One features a traditional post-war Lionel layout along with a wall display of the owner's vintage Lionel collection. The host designed his layout to run one train at a time. Numerous sidings accommodate additional trains in his extensive collection.



*Vintage Lionel toy trains are both displayed and operated by this collector.*

Close by in Ligonier is a layout that incorporates the latest high-end computerized engines and controls. This "available space" layout proves to model railroad "wannabees" that one does not need a separate room or building to accommodate a layout.



*Trains galore!*

The third layout in Ligonier Valley is a model railroader's dream with the space

and capacity to operate 28 trains at one time. It includes an 11-track main line on the first level. The focus of this host, a retired engineering professor, is to run as many trains as possible at one time. His philosophy is that "if you want to see scenery, look out the window."

Participants are encouraged to visit all ten layouts between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday April 30, 2011.

**Friend forever – in memorial**

**Bret "Budge" Pohland**

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**RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

**Anonymous**

An original 1912 Springfield, Massachusetts, newspaper, featuring on its front page a news story about the 1912 train wreck near Wilpen, Pennsylvania

**Bob Boyer**

Copies of LVRR passenger schedules for the years 1929, 1938 and 1944, including the names and the positions of management personnel

**Shirley Campbell**

Assorted PRR engine photographs

**William Chapin**

Framed photograph of LVRR's M-21 doodlebug

**Dick Flock**

Two books, Pennsylvania Railroad Facilities by Robert J. Yanosey and Pennsylvania Short Lines by Gary R. Carlson

**Paul Fry**

Original 1909 Pittsburg, Westmoreland & Somerset railroad pass

**Peter Pay**

A copy of his book The Bishop's Stortford, Dunmow and Braintree Branch by Peter Pay

**Dale Richards**

Photograph of an oil painting of the Kingston Station by an unknown artist

**Paul Richards**

Original postcards with photographs of Engine #14 after the 1912 wreck and a copy of a 1924 map of the Kingston area

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 16 – Field Trip  
April 30 – Layout Tour  
May 27 – Annual Dinner

## NEW MEMBERS SINCE December 1, 2010

Glema Burke  
James and Jennifer Isbister  
Doug Kurtz  
Ken Perney  
Berton and Sylvia Toy  
Merwin and Gini Weed

## 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

## LAMPS AND LANTERNS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN EARLY RAILROADING

LVRRA's collection of railroad artifacts includes 250 kerosene lamps and lanterns. These surviving relics of yesterday at one time played an essential part in the operation of railroads. In addition to lighting a particular area, they were used by trainmen to communicate with one another using signals. Even though radios and cell phones have today replaced most of the communication functions of lamps and lanterns, modern railroads still rely on stand-alone electric signals to convey the message of a clear

track ahead, an occupied siding or the end of a train.

Hopefully, an introduction to some of the uses of kerosene lamps and lanterns during the time of the LVRR may create a greater interest in and appreciation of LVRRA's extensive collection.

Lamps can be distinguished from lanterns by their fixed-base nature. Although portable, lamps were generally affixed to a free standing post, a switch stand or rolling stock.

Two such lamps important for signaling purposes were the marker and the switch lights. The lamp pictured below is an example of a marker light. Two of these lights were mounted to the back of a caboose, one on each corner, to mark

the end of the train. They served as tail lights to alert the engineers of other trains traveling on the same track that they should prepare to slow down or stop. When a train



was on a siding, a crewman would rotate the light so that the green lens faced traffic on the main line to signal passing trains that the tracks were clear. (The lamp pictured above was donated to the LVRRA by Carolyn Nair Shafer, a relative of Reed "Spoony" Knox, a long-time employee of the LVRR.)

A switch lamp, another example of a fixed-base light, was used to signal engineers that a switch was either open or closed. It had four lenses lit by a single flame. Two opposite faces had red lenses, and the other two green. In

the picture of the postcard of the Ligonier station below, a switch lamp is visible in the foreground.



*The Ligonier Station*

When a switch was thrown to change tracks, the light automatically turned to the appropriate color to signal approaching traffic whether or not the switch was open. Because of the switch lamp, the engineer was able to see from a distance either a green light indicating to proceed or a red light signaling him to stop. The marker and switch lamps, both of which are represented in LVRRA's collection, are only two of the many railroad kerosene lamps that enabled railroads to operate safely before the advent of electric signals.

Lanterns, however, were intended for personal use and generally hand held in operation. Incorporated in the design was a broad base that minimized the possibility of its tipping over when set down and catching something on fire. Used as a source of illumination, lanterns were also essential in relaying commands or safety concerns to crewmen. Current knowledge of railroad signals was an ongoing condition of employment for all railroaders.



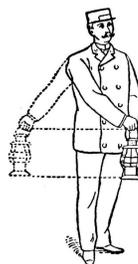
In signaling, both lens color and presentation or the manner in which a lantern was swung combined to indicate specific conditions or instructions. The most common color was clear or white. Lanterns could also have red, amber, green or blue lenses.



Color standards were established by signal engineers and glass manufacturers around 1900 to minimize the chance of accidents. The color standards established then are still in place today.

Green signals permission to advance, red stop, yellow proceed with caution and blue do not move this piece of equipment.

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Employee Time Table was the company's employee rule book. In it, pictures of trainmen illustrated the appropriate manner in which to convey seven specific signals.



**STOP.**  
Swung across the track.  
See Rule 50 (a).

The uniformed trainman in the picture on the left illustrates the sideways motion which signaled to an engineer to stop the train.

Similarly, this picture illustrates the up and down motion used to signal an engineer to proceed.

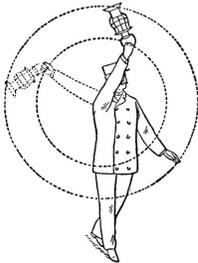


**PROCEED.**  
Raised and lowered vertically.  
See Rule 50 (b).



**BACK.**  
Swung vertically in a circle at half arm's length across the track.  
See Rules 50 (c) and 52 (h).

Swinging the lantern in a circle at the elbow length advised an engineer that it was clear to back up the train.



**TRAIN HAS PARTED.**  
Swung vertically in a circle at arm's length across the track.  
See Rules 50 (d) and 52 (f).

Swinging the lantern in a circle at arms length signaled to an engineer that the train was parted. Crewman had to be closely observant to distinguish between these two signals.

This overhead sideways motion pictured on the right signaled to an engineer to check the air brakes before moving the train.



**APPLY AIR BRAKES.**  
Swung horizontally above the head.  
See Rule 50 (e).

The stationary overhead signal pictured here advised the engineer to release the air brake and to move the train forward.



**RELEASE AIR BRAKES.**  
Held at arm's length above the head.  
See Rule 50 (f).

The stationary lantern held at arms length as pictured on the right signaled an approaching engineer to reduce the speed of the train.



**REDUCE SPEED.**  
Held horizontally at arm's length.  
See Rule 50 (g).

Kerosene lights and lanterns played an important part of the early days of railroading. It is hard to imagine how railroads could have operated without them. Many of these lights and lanterns used in the early days of railroading still exist today and the LVRRA museum is fortunate to have such an extensive collection of them. The museum values them as important pieces of history, each with a story of its own.

#### LVRRA LIBRARY REFERENCES

Classic Lanterns, Dennis Pearson, 1998.

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Time Table No. 5, 1925.

"The Railroad Lantern," The Liggie, Jim Aldridge, March 2007.

The Railroad Lantern, Volume 1 of The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Railroad Lighting, Richard C. Barrett, 1994.

The Railroad Signal Lamp, Volume 2 of The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Railroad Lighting, Richard C. Barrett, 1999.

#### ON LINE REFERENCE

[www.railrodiana.org](http://www.railrodiana.org) — the website of Railrodiana, a railroad artifact collecting magazine.

*The Liggie* is published quarterly for Friends of the LVRR.

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