

The Liggie

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

September 2007

Volume 3 - Issue 3

COMPLETION OF PHASE ONE Signified By Replica Cast-iron Sign



Phase One of the Darlington Station project is complete. The exterior of the building has been restored and a parking lot constructed. Even if nothing else is done, this vestige of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road has been saved. And it is paid for!

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of others. First, Idlewild and Soak Zone, a subsidiary of Kennywood, donated the property to the LVRRRA. The lead grant awarded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation provided a solid foundation on which to build. Subsequent grants from the Allegheny Foundation and the Ligonier Endowment and contributions from Friends of the LVRR added further support. The LVRRRA recognizes its indebtedness to all those who have shown support and believed in its mission.

DARLINGTON STATION FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2006 the LVRRRA set a goal of raising \$650,000 to finance the Darlington Station project. The money was to be allocated as indicated below:

\$340,000 Exterior
\$150,000 Interior
\$60,000 Furnishings
\$100,000 Endowment

With Phase One completed, the restoration of the interior will soon begin, thanks, in part, to a grant from the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation. As the graphic below indicates, the approximate amount of money available after Phase One is \$42,000, which will be used as a springboard to launch Phase Two.



SUMMER IN LIGONIER

Thanks to Rachel Roehrig, the executive director of the Ligonier Chamber of Commerce, the LVRRA had the opportunity to distribute its newsletters and brochures and to discuss its mission with a number of people visiting the Diamond during the recent craft festival over the last weekend of July.



Along with the Ligonier Valley Historical Society, the LVRRA added another dimension to the event by sharing photographs and stories from the past. The clang of the bell removed from LVRRA Engine #19 attracted considerable attention from both kids and adults, who enjoyed ringing the eighty-year-old bell. Shown here is Lydia Herrholtz, age 6, enjoying her turn.

FUNDRAISING GALA September 20, 2007

The board of directors will host a gala at the Darlington Station on September 20 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. to raise additional funding for Phase Two. Donations of \$150 per person or \$250 per couple entitle persons attending admission to the exhibit of photographs from the archives, an artifact display, live music, hors 'd oeuvres and beverages. Anyone who has not received an invitation and would like to attend, please contact one of the board members or send an e-mail to lvrra@verizon.net.

(Reservations are necessary to attend the gala.)

ANNUAL DINNER

Colonial Inn -- October 25, 2007

Mark your calendar. The Colonial Inn, under new management, will host the 2007 annual dinner. The inn faces the divided section of US Route 30 near Idlewild Park. The eastbound lanes of Route 30 are located on the old Ligonier right of way. In LVRRA lingo, the Colonial Inn faces the Ligonier ROW halfway between Bells and Millbank. The new owners, Bruce and Teria Auman, are happy to host the event and are anxious to make a good impression. Invitations will be mailed to members by mid-September.

LVRRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill McCullough - President
724-238-5859
Bill Stablein - Vice President
724-238-5570
Bill Potthoff - Secretary
724-532-5564
Bob Stutzman - Treasurer
724-537-2647
Ralph Scalise - Director
Lisa Hays - Director
Al Pilz - Director
Pat Wallace - Director
Paul Fry - Director

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

THE PARK STORE

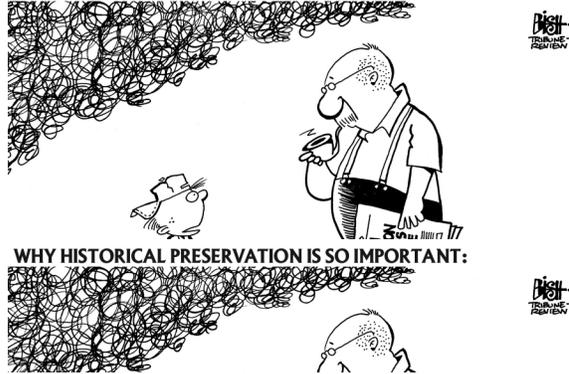


Thanks to Betty Miller, we have copies of several photographs of the Darlington Station. This particular picture postcard was mailed in 1914 and indicates that the station doubled as a park store. Passengers on the way to Idlewild could purchase a lunch that included pie, cake, coffee and sandwiches.

DINOSAURS IN DARLINGTON?

Randy Bish, Ligonier Echo and Greensburg Tribune-Review political cartoonist, recently featured the LVRRA project to preserve the Darlington Station. With his permission, it is reprinted below.

WHY HISTORICAL PRESERVATION IS SO IMPORTANT:



Without historic preservation, little, if anything, about the railroad years of Ligonier Valley will be remembered by future generations. When the LVRR was built, the valley was rich in natural resources, including lumber, coal and stone. The railroad made the transportation of these commodities to market economically feasible. Over the 75 year life span of the railroad, it hauled more than 30 million tons of freight.

(A big thank you goes to Randy Bish, who has autographed his original sketch and donated it to the LVRRA.)

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

The following items have been donated to the LVRRA. Thanks to all contributors.

Peggy Wilkins

Complete series of logging railroad books by Kline, Taber and Casler, plus period lumbering catalogues

Dennis Yamber

Copies of photographs of the Baker Siding Bridge, circa 1950

Leonard Finnell

Original 1949 New Florence topographic map that he used as a Boy Scout advisor (This quadrangle displays the Mill Creek Branch of the LVRRA.)

Betty Miller

Copies of family photographs of the Darlington Station, plus a postcard mailed in 1914, picturing the park store (See a copy of the postcard elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Betty Shirey

Original postcard featuring a picture of the early Kingston Station

Gretchen Thiele

Collection of original railroad passes and correspondence collected by her grandfather, J. P. Gochnour, Jr., who was the general manager of the LVRRA

June Noel

Original Post Gazette dated July 17, 1952, announcing the "folding" of the LVRRA

Kim Shaffer

Original photograph of the Last Run ceremony in Ligonier

Dorothy Clark

Original LVRRA memorabilia collected by her grandfather, John Holman, former LVRRA employee, including a 1919 employee roster, railroad passes, pad of blank train orders and post cards, plus copies of family photographs relating to the LVRRA

Jim Mickinak

Original LVRRA "Private Property, No Trespassing" cast-iron sign

Richard Camp

Unused issues (still in their original cellophane wrappers) of Pennsylvania Short Lines in Color, a book written by Gary R. Carlson, to be offered to anyone interested at a discounted price, and a copy of the NRHS Jersey Central Chapter publication, dated February 1982, which includes an article about the LVRRA

**A memorial gift to the
Darlington Station
Restoration Fund**

**In Memory Of
Marie
by
Staci Peipock and John Conett**

**NEW FRIENDS OF THE LVRRA
Welcome Aboard**

Duane & Helen Craig
Oz & Louise Dean
Diamond Café
Christopher Elkus
Ted & Roni Labuda
Dirk & Theresa Matson
Betty Miller
James L. Parker
Patrick E. Purcell
Robert J. Ramsey
John Shutter
Ernie & RuthAnn Sistik
Don & Dee Smith

**Come Along With Us And
Ride The
Ligonier Valley Rail Road**

One of the primary goals of the LVRRA is to educate the public about the railroading industry in Ligonier Valley. To date, almost 1400 fans have taken the virtual ride on the LVRRA. The PowerPoint presentation includes photographs of scenes along the Ligonier right of way. If your organization is interested in taking the virtual tour, call 724-537-2647 or 724-532-5564, to schedule your ride.

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association
106 N. St. Clair Street,
PO Box 21
Ligonier, PA 15658

lvrra@verizon.net

724-238-7819
724-238-7859

BOOKS FOR SALE

The LVRRA has two reference books for sale at its office on St. Clair Street.

First is *Stemwinders in the Laurel Highlands*, a book focusing on the logging railroads of Western Pennsylvania. Included are articles about the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad (PW&S) and the railroads of the Ligonier Lumber Company and the Blair Lumber Company. The issues for sale are authorized reprints of the original written in 1973 by Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr. It is informative and offers a good overview of the early logging industry in the valley. The price is \$12.50.

Second is *Pennsylvania Short Lines in Color* by Gary R. Carlson. This hardback book has a two page article on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road that includes a color photograph of the M-21 Doodlebug and Engine #18 in front of the roundhouse. The suggested retail price of this book is \$60; however, due to the generosity of Friend Richard Camp, the cost is \$50.

Dave Crawley and KDKA-TV

Did you catch the commentary about the Darlington Station and the LVRRA by KDKA-TV's Dave Crawley? The Darlington Station and the LVRRA were his topics on Thursday, August 16. Dave always does a nice job covering the stories of local interest. View the TV story by visiting www.lvrra.org and clicking on the KDKA link.

MILL CREEK BRANCH TOUR

Sunday, October 28, 2007, 1:30 p.m.

Please note the change of date and time for the tour. The date was changed to a Sunday to accommodate one of the host property owners, Old Colony Sportsmen. Seeing the remnants of the coaling operations on its property will be one of the highlights of the tour.

Near to the Old Colony mine is the next tour stop, which is the site of one of the worst train accidents in Pennsylvania history. On July 5, 1912, with the northbound engine pushing its load of passengers and the southbound pulling its load of coal, the two trains crashed into one another, smashing the carload of passengers between them. Twenty-three people died and forty more were injured.

Next on the tour is the right of way for the Ligonier Lumber Company logging railroad.

The tour will also explore other branch lines which connected their mines to the LVRR, including St. Clair, Tosh, Baton, Vogeles, Hazelburg, Wilpen, Shenango, Marrietta, and Fort Palmer. If you are familiar with these sites, come along and share your experiences with us. If you would like to learn more about this era of valley history, you are also welcome. The tour will begin at the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street. Please call 724-238-2653 or 724-238-2647 to reserve your spot in the LVRR caravan of cars. If you have a CB radio, please bring it along.

It's your museum, albeit small.
Come and visit Saturday mornings.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK

By Lynn Gamble Byers



Ligonier Valley native, Lynn Gamble Byers is painting scenes of the restored Darlington Station on slates taken from the station's original roof. At \$200 per slate, there is already a waiting list. The painting includes a certificate of authentication on the reverse side of each slate. We are indebted to Lynn for her selfless contributions to the LVRR. A sample of her work is on display at the office on St. Clair Street in Ligonier. Stop by on Saturday mornings to see this historic memento. Perhaps, you will end up ordering one yourself.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

This gizmo is made of brass and is more than 12 inches long. The handle (in the upper left corner) is fastened to a "belt buckle" that rotates on the spike. Nancy Wilkins has two of these and believes they are railroad related. If you can identify this tool or its function, please call 724-537-2647.



"From The Archives..."

By Bill Potthoff

National Archives

The National Archives Building is located in Washington, D.C., on Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Ninth streets, NW. However, all railroad and railroad related records were moved a few years ago to College Park Maryland, located in the Northeast Section of Washington. This location is denoted as the National Archives II (NA II).

For the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, the NA II has all of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) Annual Reports from 1888 through 1952, some valuation records, engineering records, track plans and maps. The annual reports for 1888 through 1914 are on microfilm and from 1915 to 1952 the actual documents are on file.

Darlington Station

Since the Darlington Station is currently of high interest to us, I thought I'd start this series with some information about the station. The earliest information we have on the station appears in an article in the Ligonier Echo, dated Wednesday, December 24, 1890: "The L.V.R.R. Company is laying another siding at Latrobe; also we noticed the foundation of a new building at Darlington station. The road is steadily improving under the efficient management of its Superintendent Geo. Senft."

The NAI has a valuation survey that the ICC did in May of 1918. The document listed an inventory and description of the station as well as other stations along the line. Darlington was recorded as a "Combination Passenger Station/Dwelling," Type PA-2W-6, and the age of the station was listed as 22 years with an expected useful remaining life of 24 years. That would place the structure as being

completed around 1896. We need to do a little more research of the Latrobe and Ligonier newspapers around 1896 to see if there are any other references to Darlington. There were two other stations along the line that had the same designation, namely, Kingston and Oakville (in Latrobe). Oakville had a note that said "Occupant sells tickets but also works in the Steel Plant. Building built for R.R. purposes".

In 1918 Darlington had a cinder platform that was 10 feet wide and 212 feet long with a depth of six inches. There was a brick sidewalk laid flat in a herringbone pattern on sand that was eight feet by 20 feet. A note mentions a brick retaining wall that was 212 feet long, two feet, six inches deep and nine inches wide. This wall was underground and was placed between the platform and the roadbed. We know the location because during the restoration of the station in 2007, part of the wall was uncovered and the mason took out several bricks for us. The bricks were produced at Soisson Brickworks, just east of Kingston. Darlington also had a few other structures, namely, a coal house measuring eight feet by 12 feet by seven feet and built in 1908, and a "Shelter Shed" 12 feet by 52 feet, also built in 1908. Where these were located on the property is unknown.

The Darlington inventory lists two station signs, 10 years old, and two benches in the waiting room designated as "Benches as at Oakville." These were apparently nine feet long with wood arms at the ends.

If you have any information about any of the stations on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, please let us know. If you have any information about who occupied Oakville, Kingston or Darlington, we would like to know that as well. You can send any information to info@lvrra.org or call 800-813-8949 or 724-537-2647.

MODEL RAILROADING

Believe it or not...the "O" gage doodlebug models have arrived! They are resplendent with their Ligonier Valley markings, including the safety striping on the front end. Combined with an MTH transformer, the doodlebug transmits announcements, such as, "Next stop, Idlewild Park, the amusement center of Ligonier Valley." The conductor even wishes passengers to have a good day shopping in Latrobe.



Only because numerous people were willing to preorder, were we even able to have the "doodlebug" built. Thanks to all who have so patiently waited for the delivery, especially since the initial production date was in October 2006.

MTH produced only 100 of these Ligonier Valley doodlebugs. With 65 of them pre-sold, if you are interested, order yours ASAP. The price is \$350 plus shipping and handling. You can order them on line at www.lvrro.org using PayPal or in person at the office Saturday mornings.

If you have ordered a doodlebug and have not heard from us, please call 724-537-2647 to arrange pick-up/delivery.

MODEL RAILROADING

"HO" Venture

The HO gage boxcars, sporting the Ligonier Valley logo, have arrived ahead of schedule. We are pleased with the results.



The boxcar is commemorative and sports the logo that includes the Diamond's bandstand and an outline of the fort. At this time it is available at the office Saturday mornings or on line at www.lvrro.org. Special arrangements can be made by calling the office at 724-238-7819.

The price is \$20.00 assembled or \$18.00 unassembled.

TEAMWORK!

To increase awareness and to share our mission with the community, the LVRRA set up informational booths during recent events (Summer in Ligonier, the Stroll and Antiques on the Diamond). The following volunteers made this possible:

Paul Fry	Gladys Light
Ed Concus	Ruth Campbell
Tom Bitner	Staci Peipock
Kerry Byers	Marjorie Byers
Bill McCullough	Karen McCullough
Bob Stutzman	Carolyn Stutzman
Bill Potthoff	