



# The Liggie

Published by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association for Friends of the LVRR  
December 2018

## **CARL TANTLINGER** **Ligonier Valley Rail Road**

The death of Carl Tantlinger on October 21, 2018, marks the end of an era. Tantlinger was the last living employee of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road (LVRR). In his obituary, which he composed several years ago, he proudly listed his employment with the LVRR after he graduated from Ligonier High School until he was drafted to serve in the Korean War. Upon discharge he attended the University of Pittsburgh and earned a degree in civil engineering. He worked for PennDOT until he retired in 1989.

Over the past several years Tantlinger consented to interviews by members of the LVRR Board of Directors. Always congenial, he answered many questions and related memories of his time with the railroad.



*Carl Tantlinger, as a teenager, is shown above inspecting the drivers of a LVR engine.*

Tantlinger worked in the freight office and worked with both Al Trautman Sr. and Al

Trautman Jr. However, when necessary and due to his slender build, he was called upon to crawl into a cooled-down boiler of a locomotive to repair leaking boiler tubes.

In addition to Tantlinger, board members also interviewed other former employees. They were Elroy Byers, Jake Burns, Homer McMaster, Al Trautman, Jr., and John Volpe. Each shared their photos and memories with the interviewers.

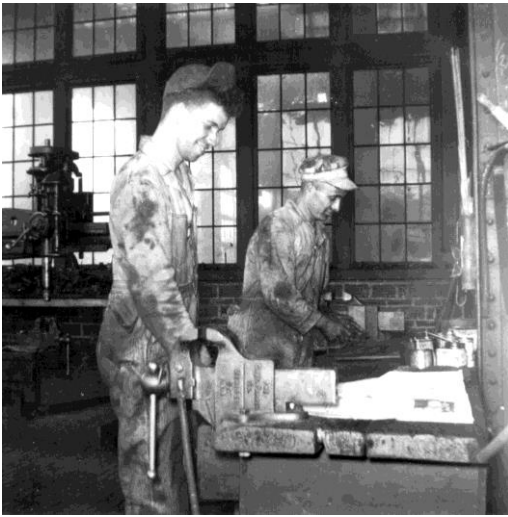
Elroy Byers was a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge. Upon his discharge, he turned to the LVRR for a job where his father, Harry, was employed. Byers was listed officially as a hostler and general laborer. Unofficially, he was a prankster. One example was to lay a smoking log under an engine while someone was in the cooled-down boiler patching leaks in the boiler tubes.



Elroy Byers is shown above wearing his conductor's uniform.

Jake Burns remembered Engine 4025 as the roughest riding engine he ever rode. The engine was designed for switching cars within a railroad yard. However, at times, the LVRR would assign the locomotive to haul freight to Latrobe. When the railroad shut down, Burns liberated a kerosene torch which he used on the LVRR. Around his home, he used the torch "to get rid of hornets' nests." The torch is now in the archives of the LVRR.

Homer McMaster graduated from Ligonier High in 1952 and worked on the railroad as a laborer until the Last Run in August 1952.



Teenager Homer McMaster (on the left) is working alongside veteran employee John Volpe in the LVRR machine shop.

John Volpe had been employed by the LVRR when he was drafted to serve in WWII. After the war, he returned to the LVRR to work until it shut down. His experience as a pole-climber for the LVRR “earned” him the honor of being a pole climber for the Army. He donated his pole-climbing spikes to the LVRR in 2006.

In addition to Byers, Al Trautman Jr. was also a second generation employee of the railroad. He worked in the freight office until the Last Run when he relocated to Philadelphia to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Trautman donated several physical items from the railroad including a photograph of the general manager, J. P. Gochmour. Trautman pointed out the label on the photo reads “Uncle Joe,” which conveyed the nature of the LVRR’s management and leadership style.



Al Trautman worked as a dispatcher, clerk, and freight agent. When Pennsylvania Railroad F3 Diesel-Electric locomotive, # 9554, ran to Idlewild Park, left the coaches it was hauling, and proceeded on to Ligonier, where the engine was “turned” on the “wye,” Al was the pilot. A pilot is one who knows a stretch of railroad like the proverbial back of his hand. Riding in the cab, the pilot advises the “foreign road engineman” about grade crossings, speed restrictions, and

other special instructions about with which the engineer may not be familiar.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The interviews were tape recorded, have been transferred into digital format and are available for review and/or research. These interviews offer a glimpse into the operation and history of the LVRR.

One of the goals of the LVRR BOD is to transcribe all of those interviews into working documents in order to be read and studied. If you have any time to help launch this project, please call Bob McKie or send him an email. Contact information is listed below.

### The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association Board of Directors

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### The Mission of the 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  
railroading in Ligonier Valley

## CREEPY CABOOSE

Saturday, October 20, 2018 marked the First Annual Creepy Caboose event. Hats off to Donna Richards who procured the hobo stew and corn bread. Also a tip of the hat to Bob and Virginia Burcin for decorating the caboose with scary goblins, ghosts, skeletons, and creepy, crawly critters!

Ghost stories around the camp fire, with our guests seated on hay bales, were told by Ed Keleman, author of [Pennsylvania's Haunted Railroads](#).



Thanks to the Darlington Volunteer Fire Department for providing crossing protection on Idlewild Hill, especially after it got dark. In spite of the rain and “special effects” of thunder, all had a good time and it looks like we may have another event in 2019!

## UPCOMING MODEL RAILROAD HOME TOUR

Mark your calendars now for the Tenth Annual Model Railroad Home Tour, May 18, 2019. There will be further details in the March edition of *The Liggie*.

**LVRRA Museum**  
at the restored Darlington Station  
3032 Idlewild Hill Rd  
PO Box 21  
Ligonier, PA 15658

**Museum Hours of Operation**  
Saturdays, year round, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Contact Information**  
724-238-7819 info@lvrra.org  
cnemckie@gmail.com for editor, Bob McKie

## TWELFTH ANNUAL DINNER

The Twelfth Annual Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association dinner was held on Saturday – September 15, 2018, at Giannilli's II east of Greensburg, with 50 people attending.

The speaker was Mr. Ron Nicely, a Ligonier native, who gave a most informative talk about his hobby of genealogy

Special thanks are extended to Board member, Donna Richards, for organizing the banquet and for procuring items for the raffle baskets.

## DONORS OF BRICKS

(Since last publication of “The Liggie”)

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Don and Chris Hohman  
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Dan & Linda Norris  
John S. Parker, MD  
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## MEMORIAL BRICK WALKWAY

To date, 93 persons have purchased 125 bricks for the brick walkway from the parking lot to the caboose. Listed on the back page is a roster of the donors who have purchased bricks. If your name is not included, orders are still being accepted. Order forms are available through the website [www.lvrra.org](http://www.lvrra.org) or by calling 724-238-7819.



A sample distribution of bricks in the memorial walkway

**IN RECOGNITION OF  
ALL CONTRIBUTORS OF BRICKS FOR THE CABOOSE WALKWAY  
AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2018**

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