

The Liggie

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

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Our Focus

Two years ago the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association incorporated with a four-fold purpose:

1. Preserve the legacy of the LVRR
2. Conserve the vestiges of the LVRR
3. Collect memorabilia of the LVRR
4. Educate the public about the history of railroading in Ligonier Valley.

By some measures, we have made gigantic progress. In others, we have only just begun. Thank all of you for your financial and moral support.

Friends of the LVRR

150 Friends have contributed an immeasurable amount of time and more than \$6000 to help preserve the legacy of the LVRR. Spread the word. As we move forward, we will need additional time and talent to staff our museum and railroad resource center at the Darlington Station.

Darlington Station Update

The Ligonier Township Planning Commission has approved our request to sub-divide the Darlington Station from Idlewild property. Our site plan also received preliminary approval subject to the resolution of three relatively minor issues. We also have sales agreement details to resolve.

Regardless, by the middle of July, we anticipate assuming "official ownership" of the building and accompanying property. It has been almost four years since Idlewild first considered donating the station to us. However slow it seems, we are moving forward towards saving the Darlington Station.

Welcome Aboard! New Friends since March

John Rolin
Bill Metzger
William & Shirley Iscrupe
Bud Carnahan

Membership Renewal

As the first anniversary of our Friends drive approaches, we will be starting to mail membership renewal letters in June. The letters will be sent on the anniversary of the month you joined the Friends of the LVRR. We hope you will renew your membership and continue to support our efforts to preserve the legacy of the Ligonier Valley Rail road.

Touring the LVRR Mainline

April 1st was a chilly but clear day when eighteen "Friends" experienced a first-hand look at the vestiges of the Ligonier main line between Ligonier and Latrobe.

One of the more common phrases overheard was, "I never saw this before." From Bells to Osborne, the guides led the caravan of six cars on a path to see the remaining vestiges of the LVRR. Did you know that there exists a "Great Wall of Ligonier" that apparently formed a "staging area" to service the railroad siding for the original Booth and Flinn Quarry? We also saw the ruins of the Keener brickyard where ovens fired molded clay into bricks for local construction. We experienced another great day of sharing information. Thanks to all who attended.

Future Tours

The best times to tour abandoned railroad beds are late Autumn and early Spring. These windows of opportunity are available when the leaves are down and there is minimal chance of deep snow. As such, the next logical facet of valley railroading to tour is the Mill Creek Branch of the LVRR. Also known as the Hannah's Run branch or the Wilpen branch, it served more than twenty coal mines and numerous coking operations. Names like Baton Coal, Marrietta Mine, Old Colony Works and Fort Palmer pepper the northern extension of the LVRR. We will announce the date of that tour in the September issue of *The Liggie*.

Mini-Museum/Library (A lesson in volunteerism)

Our office is located in the professional building at 106 N. St. Clair Street. Regular office hours are from nine until noon Saturday mornings. You and the general public are invited to drop in and exchange memories of the Liggie. Special arrangements are always available by contacting one of the officers, as listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Please feel free to stop by and peruse our collection of railroad artifacts, photographs and memorabilia focused on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road.

Thanks to the efforts of Staci Peipock, our list of volunteer greeters is growing. In addition to Staci, who has become a Saturday morning fixture, Bernetha Pritts, Gladys Light, Bill Down, Marjorie Byers and David Haines have also volunteered their time and talent to make visits to the museum an enjoyable experience.

Meet Ralph Scalise

Our newest director is Ralph Scalise; He brings considerable enthusiasm and board experience to the table. He is a family man and has a passion for model railroading. He loves spoiling his grandchildren especially when trains are involved. Although his home is near Mt. View, he routinely supports Ligonier events and is known throughout the valley. His board experience includes: Excelsior Health Inc, Adelphi USA, Seton Hill University and the Eastern Westmoreland Development Council.
Welcome aboard Ralph!

Model Railroading

As promised, we now have a series of commemorative hopper cars available. LVRR 1918, 1919 and 1920 are PRR Boxcar Red #2 and they honor three local industries that helped to shape our valley history. LVRR 1918 cites the Booth and Flinn Quarry. LVRR 1919 references the Marrietta Mine and LVRR 1920 carries the name of the Baton Coal Company.



Models are \$40.00 each and are available in Ligonier at the Chamber of Commerce and Zimmerman's and at PostNet in the Latrobe 30 Shopping Plaza. Of course they are also available at our office on St. Clair Street Saturday mornings.

If you haven't heard, we are also offering a model of one of the LVRR Doodlebugs. These models will be manufactured by MTH Electric Trains and will feature Ligonier-specific announcements. All of the stations along the mainline will be called out for passengers to disembark or to board. The model will approximate one of the gas-electrics purchased from the Boston and Maine. The price is \$350, and we are only ordering 100 models. A down payment of \$200 will guarantee your order. Delivery is scheduled for October 2006



Wilpen, Pennsylvania

By Pete Picadio

How would you like to see what Wilpen looked like back in 1940? Thanks to the efforts of Pete Picadio, you can see operating coke ovens, miners entering and emerging from a coal mine and Wilpen street scenes from 1940. All of this is in living color due to the efforts of a young Pete Picadio and his trusty 8 mm camera. Pete had bought his camera and a roll of, at that time, experimental color film to record the activities in his home town. Recently, he donated the rights to his film to the LVRRA.

With the abilities of a mutual friend, Walter Burko of Railroad Video Productions, the LVRRA is offering a ten-minute-long DVD, *Wilpen, Pennsylvania, Coke Oven Operations Circa 1940*.

The DVD is available at our office at 106 N. St. Clair St. in Ligonier, Saturday mornings or by phone order. Please call 724-537-2647 to order. The price is \$15.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

As a bonus, Mr. Burko arranged to have Pete narrate the DVD. This is truly a worthy memento of Wilpen history. Whether one is from Wilpen or West Virginia, if you are interested in mining and coking, circa 1940, you will like this DVD.

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Research Project

Back in the days of yore, when railroads played a more prominent role in the daily lives of most people, the newspapers reported on railroad activities to a much greater extent than they do these days. Newspaper accounts, although not always accurate, still provide valuable information about railroad operations, the development of online industry, employees, equipment purchases and so forth. Of course, just as today, the disasters also received front page coverage. In the case of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, where the location or even the existence of original records is unknown, newspapers and other secondary sources may provide the only means of acquiring additional knowledge.

Two local newspapers regularly reported on the LVRR, the Latrobe Bulletin and The Ligonier Echo. Regrettably, neither of these papers goes back to the origins of the railroad; however, coverage exists dating from about 1890. Microfilm copies of both newspapers are available at local libraries.

On a time available basis, we have been searching for articles about the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, The Pittsburg, Westmoreland & Somerset Railroad, the Ligonier Lumber Company and the Blair Lumber Company; making copies of the articles and transcribing them. This is not necessarily being done in a chronological order, but rather on the basis of what happens to be of interest to the researcher at the time. Eventually, eyesight and longevity cooperating, we shall get them all. For example, the LVRR had some material pertaining to the wreck of July 5, 1912, consisting of photographs and a few clippings. We then received a generous donation of additional documents. That provided the impetus to do further research and we now have most of the local newspaper coverage pertaining to the wreck and subsequent events. The research has

unearthed several interesting facts about the wreck that are not commonly known. These articles are being printed and are on file at our office/mini-museum for the benefit of all. To date, approximately 375 different stories have been transcribed although not all have yet made to the office file. To make this information more easily and widely accessible, it is also being placed on our Website.

If you go to our web site at <http://lvrra.org/> and click on the "Rail Road History" button, you will go to a page where you can click on a button named "Read Old Newspaper Articles". That will take you to a page where you can select articles by date to read. We plan to add another feature to the page where you can pick a date, then read further articles in date order. The page lists the number of articles, by year, on the left side of the page.

You can also search the articles for specific words. If you click on "Search Newspapers" you can enter a word you are looking for and it will list all articles containing that word. We plan to enhance the search features so you will be able to find articles with multiple words and search for exact matches. In other words, you will be able to do some serious research when the pages are completed, or just read some very interesting information about the history of the Rail Road and the area.

A Note from the Editor

The referenced researcher is Jim Aldridge and the person developing our website is Bill Potthoff. Together, these two men have become a force for LVRR historians. They do not seek accolades, but they sure do deserve our appreciation.

Thank you Jim and Bill.

Recent contributions

The following items have been donated to the LVRRA. Thank you, each of you, for believing in our mission.

Doris Matthews - Framed LVRR schedule

Dave Haines - Adlake marker light

Dan Stevens - Poster-size enlargement of Millbank photo.

Bill Burns - The loan of two photo albums compiled by his grandfather, _____ Burns, a one-time employee of the LVRR. The album includes a great photo of Engine #9 and its crew and several PW&S photos.

Pete Picadio - Wilpen DVD

Janice Barone - Holy Trinity dedication book

Paul Richards - commemorative issues of old newspapers

John "Pete" Goodwin - LVRR Lantern

Thank you Fran Gamble!

A very patient person, Fran has provided her professional guidance to organize our finances and financial reports. She has supplied what amounts to a personal tutorial to the LVRRA bookkeeper. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

www.lvrro.org

Check it out! Selected photographs, news clippings and past copies of *The Liggie* are available.

Annual Dinner plans

By now, you should have received your invitation to our first annual dinner celebrating the Friends of the Ligonier Valley Railroad.

Thursday, June 22, 2006
Ligonier Country Inn
1376 Route 30 East
Laughlintown, PA 15655

Social Hour 6:00PM
Buffet Dinner 7:00 PM
Program 8:00 PM

Dinner will be buffet style with your choice of freight house chicken or engine house beef along with salad, vegetables and dessert.

In appreciation for their support, Friends who enrolled at the patron and contributing level are eligible for one complimentary dinner. Any additional dinner (s) for a family member or a friend will be \$25.00 each.

Our newest artifacts and memorabilia will be on display for your enjoyment.

A short program will follow dinner. Come and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship focused on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road. If you have not received your invitation, please call one of the directors.

New To the Museum

Harry Bortz has recently completed the restoration of two additional lanterns from the Lowden collection that are now on display at our mini-museum.

The first is a Keystone "The Casey," from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. It was manufactured by the Keystone Lantern Company of Philadelphia during the early 1900s. No, this is not a reference to the famous Casey Jones, but rather to John F. Casey, an official of the company, who held the patent for this particular lantern design. "The Casey" had a unique design for the raising and lowering of the wick, which was done by a turning knob on the bottom of the lantern. Keystone lanterns were well made, have an attractive appearance and are highly regarded by collectors. Our lantern also has an extremely nice globe. It is an early Macbeth, extended base, clear, cast globe marked for the B&O.

The second lantern that was recently restored and placed on display was manufactured by the T. L. Moore Company of San Antonio, Texas. The Moore Company was a relatively small concern and not much is known about it or its lanterns. This lantern is a bell bottom and is in near mint condition. It is unmarked; it does not display any railroad marking on either the cage or the globe. This is typical of Moore lanterns. Another unusual feature about the Moore lantern is that it has a wood bail that is permanently fixed in the upright position. The use of a wood bail suggests that the lantern may have been used on electrified lines, perhaps an interurban or trolley system. T. L. Moore lanterns were not manufactured in great quantity and are therefore uncommon.

Fort Ligonier Days October 13 - 15, 2006

We are again planning on having a booth at the corner of Main and St Clair Streets to promote our mission and sell train related items. Volunteers will be needed to staff the booth for all three days of the festival. Mark you calendar; we will have more info in the next Liggie

In addition to our annual window display at Zimmerman's, we would also like to have our own float in the parade. All ideas are welcome. One consideration is to have Bill McCullough's full-size "Ligonier" pump car on a float and to have a few of you pump your way through the parade. If you would like to help with the window and or the float please let us know.

In Memory...

We are sad to report the death of a long-time acquaintance and a charter Friend of the LVRR. Bob Lowden died last month and will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

LVRRRA Board of Directors

Bill McCullough - President
724-238-5859
Jim Aldridge - Vice President
724-668-7405
Bill Potthoff - Secretary
724-532-5564
Bob Stutzman - Treasurer
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