

The Liggie

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

December 2007

Volume 3 - Issue 4

GALA LAUNCHES PHASE TWO

The photographs on the right capture the essence of the evening as the Board of Directors and Friends of the LVRR hosted the first fundraising gala on September 20, 2007.

The spirited music of the Pittsburgh Banjo Club greeted the 80 plus attendees at the station platform as they arrived. The Board of Directors, Staci Peipock, office manager, Gladys Light, Karen McCullough and Carolyn Stutzman welcomed those attending and directed them into the station, where they enjoyed viewing various collages of photographs depicting life during the days of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road.

As people drifted from the station to the hospitality tent where drinks and hors d'oeuvres awaited them, the music of Home Front created nostalgic feelings. It took little imagination to envision LVRR passengers bustling about the station.

Throughout the evening, conversations turned to the beautiful evening, the enthusiasm of everyone enjoying the gala, and the wholesomeness of the endeavor to hold on to and preserve a time in Ligonier Valley history that otherwise might be forgotten. (Just think what it meant to the people who, instead of spending four hours to travel by horse and buggy from Ligonier to Latrobe or vice-versa, were able to ride the train and be at their destination in only forty minutes.)

(Continued on next page)



Bob and Carolyn Stutzman and Maggie Kanaan enjoying the music of the Pittsburgh Banjo Club



Bill and Karen McCullough posing on the pump car they loaned to LVRR for the evening



Paul and Nancy Fry reflect the festive mood of the evening as those around them socialize.

PHASE TWO OUTLINED

During the evening Pat Wallace, the gala chair, briefly interrupted the party atmosphere to thank everyone for attending. At that time, he recognized the contributions of Idlewild Park, the Allegheny Foundation, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Ligonier Endowment, the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation and individuals who have supported the restoration. He also applauded the efforts of Bob Stutzman and Bill McCullough, the co-founders of the LVRRA, and the other directors for all of their hard work and accomplishments.

The committee and the LVRRA are indebted to the underwriters who sponsored everything from the music and valet parking, to the hors d'oeuvres and beverages. A special thank you to Pat Wallace for spearheading the gala. (Mark your calendar for next year's gala, Saturday, September 27, 2008. Hope to see you there!)

The LVRRA's gala was successful not just for the money raised for Phase Two of the restoration project, but equally for bringing together so many people from various walks of life to promote the common bond of preserving the legacy of the LVRRA.

ANNUAL DINNER

Seventy Friends and guests gathered at the Colonial Inn for the second LVRRA annual dinner on October 25, 2007. The evening began with hors d'oeuvres and drinks. After the social hour, attendees enjoyed a delicious sit-down dinner and dessert. The PowerPoint slide show which followed shared recently acquired historical LVRRA photographs and tracked Phase One of the Darlington project through a series of before, during and after photographs. Some people ended the evening with a tour of the station.

In less than one year after LVRRA's assuming ownership of the Darlington Station, Phase Two of the restoration is set to begin. The goals of Phase Two include restoring the waiting room/convenience store to its original state and utilizing it as a museum, converting the former living room into a museum, and creating a library/reference center in the third room on the first floor, which was added in the '50s. Two ADA restrooms will also be housed in this addition.

On the second floor, the two original bedrooms will be converted into much needed office space for the LVRRA. The original estimate for Phase Two also includes the following: complete re-wiring; installation of a heating, ventilation and air conditioning system; insulation of the outside walls and ceiling; and refinishing of the hardwood floors.

DARLINGTON STATION FINANCIAL REPORT

With the completion of Phase One, which cost approximately \$360,000, \$40,000 remains in the treasury to launch Phase Two of the restoration project, which was originally projected to cost \$150,000.

A recent reevaluation of the Darlington project has resulted in a revision of the total cost of completion. Overlooked in the original proposal were a security system, a fire-suppression system and a back-up generator. Also, in order to utilize the basement for a kitchen, storage area and a conference room, a sump system and dehumidifier are needed. The stone walls, dirt floors and exposed ceiling joists need to be improved.

The board is currently taking bids for the additional projects and will vote at a later time on which additional goals will be included in Phase Two. Obviously, any changes in Phase Two will increase the overall goal beyond the original estimate of \$650,000.

CABOOSE PROJECT

One man's passion for railroading led to his buying an ex-PRR 1905 wood-sided caboose to use as a "clubhouse" for his children. That was fifty-some years ago.

Over the years, John Costello of Summerhill, Pa., maintained his vintage caboose long after his children grew up and moved away. After recently moving to a retirement community near Harrisburg, the Costellos were undecided as to what to do with their long-treasured caboose.

Fortunately, Dick Flock, a railroad buff from Greensburg and a friend of the Costellos, suggested that Costello might want to contact the LVRRA about donating his caboose. Soon after, Flock arranged a meeting between the Costellos and the officers of the board.

After realizing the similarity between his caboose and the one that operated on the Ligonier line, Costello agreed to donate his children's "clubhouse" to the LVRRA.

Plans are currently underway to relocate the caboose to Darlington. Dave Herrholtz and the Board of Directors are teaming up to make this happen.



Since it is almost identical to the caboose that logged thousands of miles on the LVRR line, this gift will be an important addition to the museum.

CAST IRON STATION SIGNS

Warning! The following is for the eyes of serious collectors only:

A variety of circumstances has resulted in the LVRRA's having three replica cast-iron station signs available for sale. They are in the raw/as cast condition and need to be de-burred, cleaned, primed and painted. Even though they are replicas, they are realistic and would look very nice hanging on a porch.

The Longbridge, Kingston and Idlewild signs are available at \$400 per piece on a first come, first serve basis. If interested, please call 724-537-2647 for specifics.

If there is ongoing interest, LVRRA has the ability to cast replica station signs for Ligonier, Latrobe, Kingston, Longbridge and Idlewild. Prices will be dependent on the availability of a pattern and the number of orders for any given sign.

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

OFFICE STAFF

A strong volunteer base is a necessity for all non-profit organizations to function. Our core group makes sure the LVRRA mini-museum and gift shop is open to the public every Saturday morning.

The "regulars" are Staci Peipock, Bernetha Pritts, Gladys Light, Marjorie Byers, John Vucina, Bob Stutzman, Bill Potthoff and Tom Bitner. Two or three of these volunteers are usually at the mini-museum to greet visitors, answer questions and sell LVRRA merchandise.

The LVRRA continually collects LVRRA photographs, memorabilia and artifacts, which are displayed at the mini-museum for visitors to enjoy.

One never knows who will walk in next with a new treasure. (Will it be you?) Frequently, the staff becomes the student as visitors share their LVRRA-related experiences. These unpredictable experiences are what keeps the volunteers coming back Saturday mornings.

MILL CREEK BRANCH TOUR

On October 28, 17 Friends climbed aboard the LVRRA "consist" of SUVs to retrace the Mill Creek branch of the LVRRA. Starting at the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street, the caravan passed the Ligonier yard and engine house enroute to the first stop where the LVRRA crossed Mill Creek behind Weller Field.

Other stops included the bee-hive coke ovens and "wash tubs" of Old Colony and the site of one of the worst railroad accidents in United States history. The caravan continued north to the Marietta branch, the Wilpen rail yard and the push-through coke ovens at Fort Palmer.

The most enjoyable break on the tour was the hospitality stop at the 1835 home of Al and Connie Pilz. After the Friends toured Pilzes' 172-year old home, the hungry trekkers appreciated the pizza, Swedish meatballs, etc. that Al and Connie graciously served.

[The LVRRA is grateful to the people who permitted visitors on their property to view remaining vestiges of Ligonier's industrial heritage.]

SHARING THE HISTORY

One of the founding principles of our association is to teach the public about railroading in Ligonier Valley. The Mill Creek Branch was the fourth tour sponsored by the LVRRA. Others have been the PW&S, the Latrobe to Ligonier ROW, and the Booth and Flinn Quarry. Future tours may include the Ligonier Lumber ROW, the dinky line between Ft. Palmer Church and Champion Lakes, and the Baton coke ovens outside Wilpen. Also, if there is enough interest, previous tours can be rescheduled. Call Staci at 724-238-2653 if you are interested in taking a tour.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to all contributors for the following items that have been donated to the LVRRA:

Scott Graham

Original plan of the Old Colony mine

Richard M. Scaife

Original Ligonier cast-iron station sign

Ray Kinsey

Railroad spikes recovered from the PW&S roadbed

Neal Nicely

Scan of a 1908 postcard view of the Idlewild lakes from the Darlington Station

Bernetha Pritts

Scan of 1908 postcard with scene of the LVRR consist in the Loyalhanna Gorge

Suzann Park

Original LVRR postcards dated early 1900s

Laurel Valley Golf Club

Electric range for Darlington kitchen

Amy Clarke

Original 1942 PRR time table

John Volpe

Pole climbing spikes used on the LVRR (John was the designated pole climber for the LVRR. He donated his spikes that had been in storage for 55 years.)

Tom Hunter

Scans of LVRR photographs including Engine #594 crossing West Main Street

Dorothy Clark

Original LVRR passes, train orders, postcards, clippings and scans of family photographs related to the LVRR

Al Pilz

LVRR note cards for resale and maple bookcases

John Costello

1905 ex-PRR caboose (*sister caboose to the LVRR LGV57, aka LV57 caboose*)

Dennis Custer

Two LVRR switch locks with keys collected from abandoned equipment in 1952

Jim Harrold

Deamers' Tales and *Memories*, books written by Harrold recording his Ligonier memories

Rose Withrow

Original Post Gazette article announcing the last run of the LVRR

Anonymous

Cast iron pulley assembly found along the PW&S roadbed

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

NEW FRIENDS OF THE LVRR

Welcome Aboard!

Joshua Byers
Lynn Byers
Dennis Custer
Gray Garland
Beverly Grimm
John Horrell
Rita Horrell
Thomas Hunter, Jr.
Bea Kissell
Loretta Kurtz
Mr. and Mrs. S. Prosser Mellon
Sandra Neiderhiser
Mark Riethmuller
Lewis Shafer
Andy Stofan
Sandy MacDonald Venning
Charlotte Welshons
Bill and Margot Woodwell
Carolyn Zambotti

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

PW&S IN MINATURE

The Laurel Highlands Model Railroad Club, Inc., a model railroading club in Somerset, Pa., has constructed a scale model of the PW&S Railroad that includes elevation. It is quite realistic in detail and portrays distinctive features along the line. If interested, join the LVRRRA on a field trip to the PW&S model Saturday, December 29. A carpool will form at the St. Clair Street office at noon.

UNIQUE GIFTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is that time of year when many people need to find a gift for that special someone who is always so hard to buy for. Please consider supporting the LVRRRA by buying one of the following unique gifts sold in our gift shop:

Commemorative issues of LVRR toy trains in "O" gage include a doodlebug, cabooses, tank car, a box car and three hoppers and an HO gage box car

100-year old Darlington Station roof slates hand-painted with a scene of the restored exterior

Friend of the LVRR membership

Stemwinders - a book about the logging railroads of western Pennsylvania.

Photographs of LVRR equipment and scenes

LVRRRA mugs and note cards

DVD about mining and coking during the '40s in Wilpen, Pa., narrated by the original cameraman, Pete Picadio

All gifts are available Saturday mornings at the office on St. Clair Street in Ligonier. If you prefer, visit our website at www.lvrra.org or call 724-537-2647.

"From The Archives..."

By Bill Potthoff

Interstate Commerce Commission

The Records of the Interstate Commerce Commission (Record Group 134) contain extensive information concerning the corporate and financial history of railroads.

As mentioned in the previous article, the National Archives II has all of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) Annual Reports for the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Company from 1888 through 1952. The annual reports for 1888 through 1914 are on microfilm and from 1915 to 1952 actual documents are on file. Unfortunately, the microfilm records were apparently photographed in a hurry or taken by someone who needed a new eyeglass prescription, as the records are very blurred and don't print well. However, I was able to read some of the information from the 1888 Annual Report which follows:

1888 ICC Annual Report

The history section of the report states that the LVRR was "incorporated under the General Railroad Law of Pennsylvania, approved February 19, 1849. Charter granted April 15, 1853, supplement approved 1871, holding stock although \$5 per share had not been paid thereon. Supplement approved 1871 changing name to Ligonier Valley RR. Original charter name was Latrobe & Ligonier RR."

The Directors listed in 1888 were Thos. Mellon, T.A. Mellon, J.R. Mellon, A.W. Mellon, R.B. Mellon, W.S. Mitchell and Geo. Senft. The Officers were Thos. Mellon, President; A.W. Mellon, Secretary/Treasurer; Thos. Mellon, General Solicitor, Att'y, or Counsel; J.R. Mellon, Comptroller, Auditor; T.A. Mellon, General Manager; and Geo. Senft, who held the following positions: Traffic Manager, General Passenger Agent, General Ticket Agent, General Superintendent, Division Superintendent, Superintendent of Telegraph, Superintendent of Express, and General Baggage Agent (George was apparently quite busy.)

The ICC Report includes sections for Financials, Employees, Freight & Traffic Movement, Description of Equipment, Mileage of Road Operated, Consumption of Fuel by Locomotive, Characteristics of Road, and other sections. A brief summary of these follow for 1888:

The LVRR had Gross Earnings for Operations in 1888 of \$31,190.36 and Operating Expenses of \$17,838.79, leaving \$13,351.57 in Income from Operations. Freight Revenue was \$16,191.36 and Passenger Revenue was \$14,999.00.

Twenty-six employees and their salaries were listed: 1 General Officer at \$1,800/year, 2 Station Agents at \$450/year, 1 Engineman at \$960/year, 1 Fireman at \$660/year, 2 Conductors at \$660/year, 2 "Other Trainmen" at \$1.45/ day, 1 Section Foreman at \$540/year, and 16 Trackmen, who were paid \$1.30/day.

Additional photographs of the gala...



Station aglow at twilight



Pat Wallace presenting slate to Brandon Leonatti



Home Front providing period atmosphere and music



Pittsburgh Banjo Club strumming period tunes



Guests enjoying chatting with one another



Collage of Last Run photos



Walt Johnson flanked by Staci Peipock and Carolyn Stutzman



Scrumptious hors d'oeuvres