

The Liggie

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WESTMORELAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY HONORS LVRRA

Lisa Hays, Executive Director of the Westmoreland Historical Society (WHS), presented the coveted Arthur St. Clair Historic Preservation Award to the LVRRA and three other recipients on October 1, 2008, at the Greensburg Country Club.



Named after one of Westmoreland County's most prominent citizens of the 18th century, the Arthur St. Clair Historic Preservation Award is on display at the LVRRA mini-museum.

The WHS annually recognizes local historic preservation endeavors through a nomination and selection-by-committee process. The LVRRA award was given in recognition of the restoration of the Darlington Station and the preservation of the history of the LVRRA.

Other recipients included the Westmoreland Courthouse Centennial Commemoration Committee, chaired by Judge Daniel J. Ackerman; Dr. Robert Mendler, a survivor of Nazi concentration camps, for his lifetime commitment to educate the public about the Holocaust; and Margaret Albright, for her outstanding volunteer service to the WHS.

In attendance at the annual awards ceremony, United States Congressman Tim Murphy also presented a Certificate of Recognition to all of the recipients. The LVRRA certificate honors the members of the LVRRA "for their hard work and dedication to the restoration of the Darlington Station and preservation of the history of the LVRRA."



This commendation is now on display at the LVRRA mini-museum.

2008 GALA A GREAT SUCCESS

On September 27, 2008, more than 100 supporters of the LVRRA enjoyed an evening of fun and fellowship at the Darlington Station, celebrating the successful completion of the fund drive to restore the station.



Socializing under the big top

Attired in a conductor's uniform, Dave Byers (son of ex-LVRR employee Elroy Byers) greeted people and checked off their names. Ted Gerome and the Pittsburgh Banjo Club entertained arriving guests with period tunes popular during the heyday of the LVRR.

As participants socialized, they enjoyed a wide selection of drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Pat Wallace, chair of the fundraising committee, served as emcee of the evening's program. Number one on his agenda was the presentation of LVRRA's vision to operate a full-size doodlebug between Darlington Station and Idlewild. Even though Idlewild is supportive of the concept, there are many details to address before any track is laid.

Serving as guest speaker, Bill Flanagan, Executive Director of Pittsburgh 250 and noted Pittsburgh TV personality, elaborated on the various events comprising the Pittsburgh 250

celebration, including the largest fireworks display ever to be seen in Pittsburgh, and the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage between Pittsburgh and Washington D. C.

Additionally, Flanagan detailed numerous ways in which Ligonier has impacted Pittsburgh history, such as Fort Ligonier's role in the assault on Ft Duquesne.

Following the program, the musical group Home Front wrapped up the evening with music from the 19th century.

The LVRRA wishes to extend special thanks to all of those who helped to make the evening such a success. Vallozzi's Restaurant catered the Gala. Drinks were donated by JM Builders, Ligonier Distributing, and LVRRA directors.

Additional photographs of the gala are located on the back page.

FUNDING NEEDED FOR COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE

Although the funding for the station restoration has been raised, the funding for the computer systems has not. Having the appropriate hardware and software will allow LVRRA to catalogue and manage the growing collection of photographs, artifacts and memorabilia. Currently, staff has to trust to memory where each item is filed. More frequently than not, a requested item is known to exist, but cannot be located.

Once the computers and software are available, LVRRA will organize and cross-reference materials so that retrieving items will be a simple task. With your support, the LVRRA will develop such a system.

OPENING DATE TARGETED

Since work is still continuing on the interior of the building, spring 2009 is a realistic opening date for the railroad museum at Darlington Station. The walls and ceilings have been plastered and will be painted as soon as the plaster cures. Once the interior woodwork, trim and hardwood floors are installed, the furniture and display cases will be moved in, followed by the artifacts, memorabilia and photographs.

LINCOLN HIGHWAY HERITAGE CORRIDOR ROAD RALLY VISITS THE STATION

On September 20, 2008, the road rally sponsored by Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor included a stop at the Darlington Station.

Classic cars from the '50s and '60s as well as modern day sports cars filled the station's parking lot. After touring the building and the caboose, the visitors chatted and shared stories with the Friends who were on hand to point out details and to offer an overview of the restoration project. In turn, the Friends enjoyed checking out the cars.



LHHC Road Rally participants at the Darlington Station

LVRRA RECEIVES ANOTHER ACCOLADE

At its 2008 annual dinner, the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce gave membership recognition honors to the LVRRA and its Darlington Station restoration project. The LVRRA was one of eleven recipients of the LACCy award, presented at the Four Points Sheraton on November 5.

The honor is bestowed upon organizations that have made a positive impact in the area. Some of the other recipients were Latrobe Specialty Steel, Chestnut Ridge Beverage, Barnes House, and Schultheis Electric.



2008 LACCy Award presented by the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce

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NEW BOARD MEMBER INTRODUCED

Art McMullen, retired executive of the Tribune-Review, was named to replace Ralph Scalise on the LVRRA Board of Directors. Art and his wife, Cheryl, are long-time residents of the valley.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY AWARDS CHALLENGE GRANT

Every year the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County awards grants to local non-profit organizations. Recipients are identified through an application and selection process. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded over \$7 million in grants to local charitable organizations through its Westmoreland Now and Forever Fund.

On October 31, the 2008 presentations were made at the Foundation Headquarters in the Greensburg Garden Center. Included was the LVRRA for its Darlington Station restoration project. The \$2500 challenge grant must be met by July 2009. Please consider earmarking a contribution toward meeting this challenge.

The Community Foundation awarded 33 grants this year, totaling almost \$200,000. Three additional historical agencies were recognized. The remaining 29 grants were awarded to humanitarian organizations, such as the Union Mission, Habitat for Humanity and the Westmoreland County Food Bank.

SCALISE NAMED EMERITUS

Ralph Scalise has retired from the LVRRA Board of Directors. An active model train enthusiast and collector, Ralph helped to set up distribution outlets to market commemorative LVRRA model trains. He was also instrumental in facilitating the acquisition of the Darlington Station. Thank you, Ralph, for your dedicated service.

NEW MEMBERS

Since June 1

James Ashbaugh
G. Scott Baton
Debbie and Bob Beck
James Bowers III
Darlene Carns
Tom and Nancy Donchez
Edward Dupstadt
Jim Frey
John Galla
Kenneth Geary
C.R. and Linda Greene
Consuelo Hails
Donald and Anna Catherine Harbison
Charles Hauer
Douglas Jones
Albert W. Kovacs
Ron and Jane McKenzie
Art McMullen
Armour Mellon
R. Joanne Metz
Michael O'Malley
Janet Riordan
Ed Showalter
Raymond Speicher
Mike and Roxanne Warner
Peggy and Ted Weidlein

Welcome Aboard!

FORT DAYS INFORMATION AND SALES BOOTH BENEFITS FROM RECORD CROWD

This was LVRRA's fourth year at the North St. Clair Street location and its best sales year, no doubt due to the wonderful October weather and the Ligonier 250 celebration.

Each year more and more people visit the LVRRA booth to share their experiences and to make inquiries. Fortunately for the LVRRA, a man visiting from Windber arranged to donate an authentic PRR caboose coal stove to us. Although in storage now, the stove will be displayed eventually at the station.

In Memoriam

John Horrell
Charter Friend of the LVRR,
Life-long volunteer fireman
and long-time friend and neighbor

Nan Ferry
Friend of the LVRR and
the Ligonier community

PITTSBURGH BANJO CLUB AT ANNUAL DINNER



Pittsburgh Banjo Club at Pike Run

Contributing to the success of the LVRRA annual dinner, the Pittsburgh Banjo Club entertained Friends during the cocktail hour. The LVRRA is indebted to Covington Investments for underwriting that expense. Thank you, Covington Investments.

FIELD TRIPS PLANNED FOR DECEMBER AND EARLY SPRING

Join the LVRRA on December 13 for a field trip to Somerset, the home of the Laurel Highlands Model Railroad Club. One of its train displays accurately models the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad (PW&S). The layout, which depicts changes in elevation, includes rail-side features, such as the bluestone quarry and the Quemahoning Tunnel.

Also plan to tour the Mill Creek branch of the LVRR in late March or early April of 2009. This branch runs north of town where one can see the ruins of the Old Colony and Fort Palmer coke ovens. The tour will visit the site of one of the worst railroad accidents in American history. Viewing the lay of the land gives insight into how this tragic accident could have happened.

The spring tour may also include, if time allows, the tram right-of-way that serviced the mine north of Fort Palmer church and, if permission is granted, the bank of 99 Wilpen coke ovens. Although deteriorated, these ovens are remarkably intact having been inactive for the past 60 years. The date of this fieldtrip will be announced in the next newsletter.

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

Al Pilz - Director

Pat Wallace - Director

Paul Fry - Director

Armour Mellon - Director

Art McMullen - Director

Janet Hudson - Emeritus

Lisa Hays - Emeritus

Ralph Scalise - Emeritus

UNCOVERING THE BACKGROUND OF THE "THE LIGONIER DOODLEBUG"

Super sleuth and Friend, Gladys Light has uncovered the missing pieces of the puzzle involving "The Ligonier Doodlebug" ditty. The September 2008 *Liggie* reported that the writer was known only as W. G., Freight Agent.

Armed with her genealogical-honed investigative determination, Gladys invaded the Ligonier Library. After a brief consult with library archivist and fellow-Friend, Shirley Iscrupe, Gladys searched the obituary files of the Ligonier Echo. She had an "eureka" moment when she found an obituary with the initials W. G., identified as Wilbert G. Gindlesperger (1921-1981), who was a freight agent and driver for the railroad.

Upon contacting his relatives, Detective Light learned that Gindlesperger had been a member of a blue grass band. He, two brothers and a brother-in-law had their own band and played for barn dances. Gindlesperger's son, Ron, remembered that his dad had written the "The Ligonier Doodlebug," and that it was to be sung to the tune of the "Wabash Cannonball."

Thank you, Gladys, for your great work.

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

CALENDAR OF LVRRA EVENTS

December 13, 2008 - LHMRC/PW&S
April 25, 2009 - Model-train House Tour
Spring 2009 - Mill Creek Branch Tour
Spring 2009 - Museum Opening
Spring 2009 - Annual Dinner
September 2009 - Annual Gala

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

Gerald Ledney

PRR caboose coal stove

Anonymous

Original Ligonier Valley reunion program, dated 1936; original copy of Pittsburgh Press article entitled "Millionaire's Railroad" (a.k.a. LVRR); and PRR watchman's lantern

Ida Hart

Glass PRR inkwell with brass lid; book entitled On the Main Line - the PRR in the 19th Century; and wool Pullman blanket

Bruce Shirey

Projection screen

Dick Flock

Photograph of doodlebug #1152 at the Latrobe platform

John Vucina

Photocopy of an 1873 Ligonier Valley Rail Road stock certificate (three shares at \$50.00 each)

Bill Casey

Original photographs of LVRR conductors, Denny Piper and John Holman

GIFT IDEAS
Denim Shirts, Hats and
Model Trains

Visit us on-line at www.lvrta.org or in person Saturday mornings at the mini-museum on St. Clair Street in Ligonier to choose a gift unique to Friends of the LVRRA. That gift could be a denim shirt or a hat emblazoned with the updated LVRRA logo, or it could be a model train, such as an O gage doodlebug that announces the stations between Latrobe and Ligonier, or one of the commemorative freight cars in either O or HO gage.

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

From staffing the office on Saturday mornings, to manning the Fort Days booth, to cleaning up the station and office, to working on a committee, etc., volunteers make it happen. Outside of a few contract employees, the LVRRA is managed and operated by volunteers.

Many thanks to the following people who have volunteered in the past quarter:

Tom Bitner	Kerry Byers
Ruth Campbell	Ed Concus
Frank Dominick	Dick Flock
Paul Fry	Don Harbison
Lisa Hays	Tom Hunter
Gladys Light	Bill McCullough
Karen McCullough	Bill Potthoff
Bernetha Pritts	Staci Peipock
Ray Robb	Fran Robb
Dick Sheats	Bruce Shirey
Dave Somerville	Howie Stahl
Bob Stutzman	Carolyn Stutzman
John Vucina	Sally Walker

Please volunteer whenever you can. Without volunteers, the LVRRA would not even exist.

LVRRA SCHEDULES A
MODEL-TRAIN HOME TOUR

You are invited to enter the fantasy world of model railroading April 25, 2009. The home-tour committee, chaired by Dick Flock, promises that the five or six layouts on the tour will be enjoyed by all ages. Details will be included in the March 2009 *Liggie*.

Edited excerpts from a letter written by one of the hosts to all LVRRA members follow:

Dear Friends of the LVRRA:

The LVRRA is hosting a tour of a few very nice train layouts in the area. I encourage you to sign up for the tour, not because my train layout is one of those on the tour, but because of the half hour or more of enjoyment you will experience viewing each layout.

For some of you, it will bring back wonderful memories of buying your children their first train set many years ago. For others, it may stir feelings of how you felt when you received your first train set.

Each person who builds a permanent layout works hard to make it enjoyable for others to see. However, please realize no train layout is ever finished, because its creator is always looking for ways to improve it.

You won't be able to describe to others all the train layouts on the tour, but you might choose to use words such as "awesome," "amazing," or "unbelievable." I have never seen a train layout that I haven't enjoyed!

So please join us for the tour in April and bring along your spouse or a friend and **DON'T FORGET YOUR CAMERA.**

Yours in Jesus,
Ed Kuhn



Bob Stutzman greets the greeter, Dave Byers.



Karen McCullough, Darlene Nagrosky and Bill McCullough



Pat Wallace, Bill Flanagan and Bill Potthoff



The Pittsburgh Banjo Club



Russ Lowden adjusts the brakes.



Nancy and Tom Donchez



Rich Flickinger, Hugh Brallier and Mike Kuzemchak



Ulla and Fritz Teroerde