

The Liggie

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DARLINGTON STATION UPDATE

We are closing in on the home stretch of Phase One to preserve this vestige of the LVRR. The general contractor, J. M. Builders, and sub-contractors have been very busy since April. Including painters, concrete workers, stone masons, carpenters and roofers, there were days when twenty men were on the job-site. Recent jobs include: replacing the concrete platform and the hand railing, restoring the metal roofs, rebuilding the retaining wall and porch columns, and applying the finish coat of paint to the building. There is light at the end of the Phase One tunnel.



Gable facing Idlewild

Jim Mickinak, the general contractor, expects to have Phase One completed by the middle of June.

DARLINGTON STATION

A Financial Report

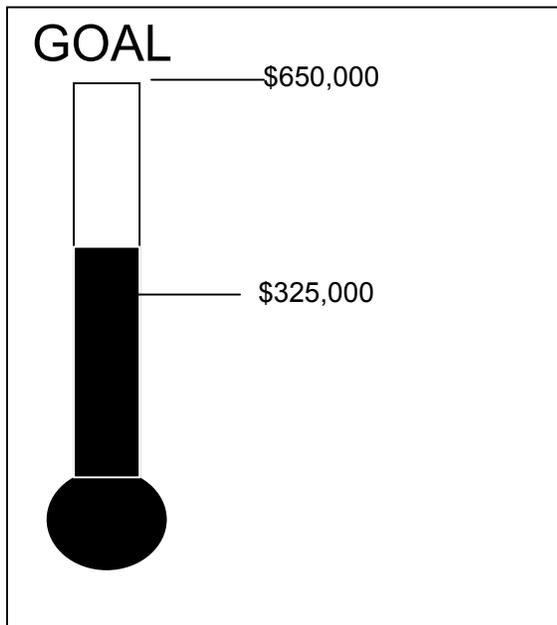
As we near the completion of Phase One of our restoration project, we are better able to define our overall goal to be \$650,000. In Phase One, we will have restored the shell of the building and improved the property. We anticipate total expenditures of approximately \$350,000 to complete this phase. This amount has been made possible through the generosity of Idlewild Park, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Allegheny Foundation, individuals and Friends of the LVRR. Although we have been able to accomplish our primary mission of preserving this vestige of the LVRR, it is much too early to pat ourselves on the back.

Part of the dream is to restore the interior in a way that it can also serve as a museum. A portion of the "modern-day" addition will serve as a library and the balance as restrooms. The former upstairs bedrooms will be transformed into office space for the LVRRA. The projected cost to restore the interior and upgrade the plumbing, electrical service, heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is \$150,000.

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The building will also need furniture, shelving and a communication system to function as a museum, library and office. The estimated cost of this phase is \$60,000. The vision also includes the creation of an endowment to insure the perpetual care of the building. Our initial goal is to have an endowment fund of \$100,000, but we will most likely need to increase that amount in the future.



The graph above reflects that we are more than half way to the overall goal of \$650,000.

In breaking news, the Ligonier Endowment has just announced an award of \$8,000 to support the restoration project. This award is most important in that it represents the LVRRA's first recognition by this Ligonier-based foundation.

OUR MISSION

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association
Organized in 2004 to:

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.

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

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Al Pilz - Director

Pat Wallace - Director

Paul Fry - Director

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Fry and Pat Wallace have been elected to vacancies on the LVRRA Board of Directors. Both are Ligonier natives and promise to bring their expertise to the table. Pat is president of Covington Investment Advisors and resides in Ligonier with his wife, Kim, and daughters, Natalie, Ruby and Clara. Paul is the Public Works Director of Ligonier Borough and resides in Ligonier Borough with his wife, Nancy. Welcome aboard gentlemen!

FIRST-HAND FACTS



Ella Betz Wuchina and son, Danny
Circa 1950 at the Darlington Station

It is always a pleasure to staff our museum. One never knows who is going to visit or what they will bring with them. Recently, a woman from California introduced herself as Ella Betz Wuchina and told us she had lived at the Darlington Station during the Forties. She was raised by her grandparents, Vivian and Mary Snyder, the station masters at the Darlington Station.

As we restore the station, we have yet to unearth any photographs of the interior. However, Ella agreed to share her first-hand knowledge with us. Staci Peipock video-taped Ella's visit to the station. Ella shared tidbits of her memories, such as where her grandfather Vivian was sitting, listening to the radio when he learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and later, of the death of President Roosevelt. She pointed out the location of a china cupboard, the pay telephone, and the room she shared with her Aunt Ida, etc. Ella also loaned us four family photos that were taken outside the station. One of them is shown above.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

By Staci Peipock

On April 11, Ella Wuchina met me at the Darlington Station to video-tape a walk-through tour. Ella had lived in the Station as a teenager with her grandparents and aunt, who were the station masters at the time. The Snyder family moved into the station in the early 1940s and remained there until the close of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road in 1952.

Ella described the layout of the waiting room when she lived there. She remembered the exact location of the ticket holder and the ice cream cooler. The kitchen was located in the basement and the living room was on the first floor behind the waiting room. She recalled many happy times in the house and many stories of the everyday activities revolving around the constant train traffic.

It was such a treat for us to meet and talk to Ella and her sister Iola. They both enjoyed reminiscing about their many memories of living at the station. They were disappointed to see the poor condition of the station, but were very happy about our plans to restore the building.

My wish is to meet more people who can give us additional insight regarding the Ligonier Valley Rail Road and the employees that worked the line. One of our main goals is to preserve the legacy of our little railroad. The best way that we will be able to do so is by gaining more information and compiling individual stories into a comprehensive history.

MODEL RAILROADING

Our "O" gage doodlebugs have been repromised (again). Most recently MTH has promised to deliver them by early July. Let's keep our fingers crossed that it will deliver. It has been more than a year since we placed the order, and you have been most patient. We look forward to engineer Bill calling out the station stops and conductor Bob positioning the riders. The doodlebugs will require a corresponding MTH transformer to activate the Ligonier-specific dialogue, which we believe you will enjoy.

If you have not ordered yours yet, the price is \$350. There are only thirty-five available, and they are guaranteed to become a Ligonier collectible. If you are interested, please send a \$100 deposit payable to the LVRRA, PO Box 21, Ligonier, PA 15658.

If "O" gage is your preference, we still have a supply of LVRRA hoppers, tank cars and box cars. The hoppers are available at the Chamber of Commerce and Zimmermans in Ligonier and at PostNet in the Latrobe 30 Plaza. All of the models are available at the office on St. Clair Street Saturday mornings.

"HO" VENTURE

You asked for it, and we plan to deliver. There have been numerous requests for us to offer HO train models for sale. Visualize a blue boxcar with white lettering sporting the Ligonier Chamber of Commerce logo, an outline of the fort and the gazebo. The HO models should be available by September.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

Dean and Barb Shirey

Two five-gallon milk cans with brass return plates: F.E.Shirey, Millbank, LVRRA. (*The Shireys shipped raw milk in these cans to their customers via the LVRRA. When the cans were emptied, the customers returned them via the railroad.*)

Ella Betz Wuchina

Family photographs taken at the Darlington Station (See related story elsewhere.)

In memory of the George L. Ribblet Family by daughters Lois and Connie

Two brass blowtorches

Latrobe Historical Society

Carl Mattioli, President

1879 Car-Builders Dictionary, 1949 Reprint

Dana Smith Pratt

Copies of ten "Last Run" slides

Anonymous

Dressel railroad lantern - B&O RR

COME ALONG WITH US AND RIDE THE LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD

To date, almost 1400 fans have taken our virtual ride on the LVRRA. We try to tailor the PowerPoint presentation for each audience. If you think your organization would be interested, call Bob, 724-537-2647, or Bill, 724-532-5564, to schedule your ride. We also include updated information on our progress in the restoration of the Darlington Station.

FUNDRAISING GALA
September 20, 2007

We are planning a gala to be held at the station to raise the funds to finish the restoration project. To date, the Darlington Station and grounds have been secured. Now we need to address the interior. Additional details will be mailed with the invitations at a later date.

NEW COLUMN

In the next issue of the *Liggie*, we will start a new column that will cover information we have recently located in the National Archives. The column will be entitled "From The Archives" and will be written by Bill Potthoff. It will summarize information related to the Ligonier Valley Rail Road found in Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) reports, valuation and engineering reports and other items from the National Archives.

NEW FRIENDS OF THE LVRR
Welcome Aboard!

Louise "Corky" Barnhart
Ted Fitzgerald
Demod Gelopulos
James Simon
Don Snyder
Jim Williams

ANNUAL DINNER

No, we have not forgotten. Yes, we are still considering an annual dinner for Friends of the LVRR. If it does happen, it looks like it will occur sometime in October or November.

PITCH-OUT PARTY
EDITION 2 & 3

As alluded to in the March issue of the *Liggie*, the Darlington Station was abandoned a few years ago and has sat empty and unheated since then. The building was literally full of household items and clothing, which, due to dampness and mildew, were unusable. Regardless, we decided to go through everything to see if there was anything worth salvaging. Our first work party filled a dumpster and dump truck. But, there was more.

So, on March 30 another group of Friends continued the job. Even though we again filled the dump truck provided by JM Builders, there was still more. Hopefully, the last pitch-out party convened on April 7 when three more Friends cleaned out the attic.

We are indebted to:
Staci Peipock Bob Boynton
Gladys Light Bob Stutzman
Betty Shirey Bruce Shirey
Bill Holmberg and an Anonymous Friend

EXPLORING A BYGONE INDUSTRIAL SITE

Dave Shirey recently led a band of Friends on a tour of the original Booth and Flinn Quarry located near Longbridge. The quarry, the source of the Belgian blocks that paved the streets of Pittsburgh, was a customer of the LVRR. Around the turn of the century, the LVRR built Baker's Siding to service the quarry and enabled the operation to send its product to market more efficiently. Bridge piers that once supported the girder bridge on the Baker's Siding are still visible in the Loyalhanna.



Booth and Flinn Quarry (South Wall)

It seems that previous tours have been conducted on cold and rainy days. The first day of fishing season, April 14, was no different. In spite of the weather, Dave led his band of Friends through the remains of this former industrial site. The quarry site offers a unique glimpse of *flora* and *fauna* as Nature continues the process of healing the scar. In addition to the rock floor and rock face, a visitor can see remnants of buildings, loading ramps and other evidence of man's presence.

One feature was created long after the quarrying operation was shut down. During WWII, Kennametal used the rock face to test its tungsten-carbide mining bits. Assorted bits were timed as to how

long each would take to drill a two-inch hole eight feet deep. The resulting section of rock face looks like a large piece of Swiss cheese. Hats off to Dave for leading the tour. Kudos to Staci Peipock for organizing it.

MILL CREEK BRANCH TOUR

Mark your calendars! On October 27, we will be conducting a tour of the Mill Creek Branch. (The leaves will have dropped by then, and the snow, hopefully, will still be in the future.) This branch was added at the turn of the 20th century to transport the coal from the eight-foot Pittsburgh seam north of Ligonier.

As with other tours, we will meet at the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street at 9 A. M. Please call 724-238-2653 or 724-238-2647 to reserve your spot in our LVRR caravan of cars.

We will visit the site of the train accident where 23 people died in 1912. Once you see the lay of the land, you may appreciate the incredible number of coincidences that had to occur to mark this fateful date in Ligonier Valley history. We will also point out locations of some of the mines and coke ovens that utilized the LVRR to market their products. Some of the more familiar names are Old Colony, Ft. Palmer, St. Clair, Tosh, Marrietta, and Baton. Other less familiar names include Shenango, Seger Brothers, Vogeles, and Hazelburg.