

# The Liggie

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

June 2010

Volume 6 - Issue 2

## ANNUAL DINNER COINCIDES WITH GRAND OPENING OF THE LVRR MUSEUM MAY 20, 2010

On May 20, 2010, over 120 Friends of the LVRR joined together to celebrate the Grand Opening of the LVRR Museum in the restored Darlington Station. The date of the event, planned to coincide with the LVRRA's fifth annual dinner, highlighted all that the LVRRA has accomplished during its brief existence.

Soon after Bill McCullough and Bob Stutzman organized the LVRRA in 2004, the idea of preserving the Darlington Station and eventually turning it into a public museum became an ultimate dream for both men. Little by little that dream became a goal for many others as people from throughout the area joined the group to help in restoring an important part of Ligonier's history. The Grand Opening gave all those who contributed in any way a chance to share their pride in helping to make what first appeared to be possibly just another pipe dream into a reality.

The Grand Opening party was all that one might expect of such a celebration. Guests, greeted at the station platform by LVRRA conductor Dave Byers, were impressed upon entering the museum. The beautifully restored but empty Darlington Station that most had not seen since last year's Gala stood before them transformed into a fully furnished, bona fide railroad museum. Many admired the illuminated display cases which highlight the photographs, memorabilia, and railroad relics, which for years were buried in LVRRA's archives. The attention of many was drawn to the original painting of the Ligonier Station by Milan Petrovits, which now hangs as a focal point in the former station lobby. On the walls throughout the museum, photographs picturing various railroad scenes taken during LVRR's existence allowed Friends to gain a greater

insight into what it must have been like to work on the railroad and live in the Valley in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The media room was equally popular with the crowd. Interesting to many purists was the refinished stove removed from LVRRA's bobber caboose. A cabinet filled with the many awards presented to the LVRRA drew the attention of many, as did a big screen monitor, centered over the cabinet, on which a video of the LVRR's Last Run played on a continuous loop.



Pat Wallace presents Charles A. Fagan, III, with a picture of the Darlington Station, painted by Lynn Byers on an original slate removed from the station during its restoration.

As guests moved to the large tent that covered the entire parking lot, the festivities continued with Terry Sabo providing background music with his guitar and familiar vocals. The tables were adorned with colorful floral arrangements created by Bob and Sally Ambrose of Ridgeview Acres Farm in Stahlstown. Equally attractive was the buffet table on which Ernie Vallozzi's Restaurant presented a delicious choice of hors d'oeuvres, entrées and desserts. Keeping with the theme of the evening, the menu offered Pullman pulled pork, whistle-stop potato salad and red-flag warning BBQ chicken. The real eye-catcher of the buffet, however, was the dessert table with its choo-choo train cup cakes riding on Thomas the Tank track.

Pat Wallace, a director of the LVRRA, chaired the annual dinner and served as emcee. After welcoming the guests and acknowledging the

volunteers, he congratulated the 306 Friends of the LVRR for a job well done. In introducing the directors of the LVRRA, Wallace praised them as "the best non-profit board that he has ever served on." Wallace also recognized the four foundations most supportive of the Darlington Station project: Allegheny, Katherine Mabis McKenna, Richard King Mellon, and R. K. Mellon Family. In his introduction of the guest speaker, Wallace enumerated the various accomplishments of Charles A. Fagan, III.

Local historian, Charles A. Fagan, III, began his speech by establishing the historic significance of Ligonier Valley dating back to the mid 1700s. Fagan recalled the story of George Washington's near-death encounter not far from Fort Ligonier when his troops became disoriented and engaged in a friendly-fire incident. Fagan also elaborated upon the importance that Forbes Road played in western migration in the 1800s and upon the emerging technology that brought growth and prosperity to western Pennsylvania as well as a need for new means of transporting both raw materials and finished products.

Fagan went on to trace the part Judge Thomas Mellon and his sons played in choosing to develop the LVRR and the positive effects the railroad had on the region. Expanding on the wisdom the senior Mellon exhibited in raising his sons to accept responsibility and jump wholeheartedly into a project that piqued their interest, Fagan philosophized on the importance of identifying "critical 'main chance' crossroads in life" and of grasping those moments. Fagan warned, though, that although intuition should not be ignored in today's world, "better and broader" educational experiences are needed in recognizing "main chance" opportunities.

Most attending the Grand Opening of the LVRR Museum would agree that the evening was a grand success. LVRRA would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the following sponsors who generously helped in making the evening such a special one:

Commercial Bank and Trust of Pennsylvania  
Covington Investments Advisers, Inc.  
Richard F. Flickinger  
Hadley Family Foundation  
Dave Herrholtz  
Idlewild and Soak Zone  
J. M. Builders, Inc.  
Ernie Vallozzi's Restaurant

(See related photographs on back page.)

## INAUGURAL WEEKEND OF THE LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD MUSEUM AT THE DARLINGTON STATION MAY 21 AND 22, 2010

A steady flow of visitors toured the newest museum in Ligonier Valley on its inaugural weekend, May 21 and 22. Approximately 60 guests were led by volunteers on tours throughout the museum and the caboose over the two days. Most stayed at least an hour looking at the rich array of LVRRA's railroad collection. Especially interesting to many visitors were the videos of the Last Run and of Wilpen that played throughout the day. Of course, climbing into the caboose is always the highlight for the children.



Matthew, Christopher, and Anita Cox of Crabtree were anxious to visit the museum on its inaugural weekend.

Several volunteers helped to assure that the opening weekend went smoothly. LVVRA officers Bill McCullough, Bob Stutzman and Bill Potthoff were on hand to share railroading tales with the visitors and to answer questions. Dave Kindl added to the atmosphere in his bib overalls and railroad cap as he greeted visitors at the caboose and showed them around. A Friend from Connecticut even offered his help. Bill Potthoff's brother Tom came to the valley for the weekend so that he could take part in the opening of the museum. Other personnel on hand to help were John Vucina, Mimi Owens and Lois Neiderhiser. In addition, numerous Friends dropped by to say hello and to congratulate the board and other volunteers on a successful beginning.

## **LVRR MUSEUM HOURS OF OPERATION**

The museum will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Other times will be made available upon request by interested persons calling 724-238-7819 or sending an e-mail to [info@lvrra.org](mailto:info@lvrra.org).

### **COMMUNITY DAY ARTS AND HISTORY THROUGH THE VALLEY JUNE 13, 2010**

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum at the Darlington Station will be participating in the 2010 Community Day, Arts and History through the Valley. The "open house" format provides area residents free admission to Fort Ligonier, Antiochian Village, Compass Inn, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA), Valley Players and the Darlington Station.



*Organizers of the 2010 Community Day, Arts and History through the Valley recently met at the Darlington Station to finalize plans for the event. Left to right are Tina Yandrick of Compass Inn, Julia Ritter of Antiochian Village, Cathi Rhodes of Valley Players, Bill Potthoff of LVRRRA, Jim Koontz of Compass Inn, Annie Urban of Fort Ligonier, and Larry Shew of Valley Players.*

Each site has special events planned for the day. In addition, to encourage participation five area restaurants will offer discounts. They are Abigals, Carol and Dave's Roadhouse, Colonial Inn, Ligonier Country Inn and Ligonier Tavern.

New this year will be a chance to win one of three gift baskets donated by the participating organizations. Participants will receive a passport at the first site they visit. It will be stamped or punched at each new location. People visiting at least three of the six open houses will qualify for the drawing. Among the prizes to be awarded

in the three gift baskets are a pair of season passes to the Valley Players' productions, a family membership to the Compass Inn, a weekend for two at Antiochian Village, a family membership at Fort Ligonier, and an honorary membership in the Friends of the LVRR.

The varying hours for those participating in the self-directed tour are as follows:

Darlington Station — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Fort Ligonier — 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Antiochian Village — 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
Compass Inn — 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
SAMA — 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Valley Players — 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### **CALENDAR OF LVRRA EVENTS**

June 13 — Ligonier Community Days  
July 23 & 24 — Summer in Ligonier  
September 25 — Annual Gala

### **COME ALONG WITH US AND RIDE THE LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD**

In Ligonier Valley on a very cold and blustery February 28, 2010, 50 people attended a 45-minute presentation of the 2010 version of a virtual ride on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road at the Ligonier Town Hall. The program included a completely new slide show comprised of pictures not part of previous versions. It was narrated by Bob Stutzman and followed by an interesting question-and-answer session.

Any group interested in viewing historic photographs of the LVRR or recent ones of the restoration of the Darlington Station may call 724-238-7819 or e-mail [lvrra@verizon.net](mailto:lvrra@verizon.net) to arrange a date for the slide show to be presented at the location of its choice. Recent programs have been presented to the Derry Area Historical Society, the Fort Ligonier Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Latrobe Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons and the Rotary Club of Ligonier.

*The Liggie* is published quarterly for Friends of the LVRR.  
Editor — Bob Stutzman  
Associate Editor — Carolyn Henderson Dillon

## SECOND LAYOUT TOUR EXCEEDS GOAL

The second annual model-train layout tour on May 1, 2010, turned out to be a huge success as a result of the time and energy expended by members of the layout tour committee, chaired by Dick Flock. The tour included seven layouts, three at private residences and the other four in commercial buildings. More than 200 people participated in the self-directed tour.



Grandchildren of Dennis and Barb Gallucci traveled a considerable distance to participate in the layout tour. Left to right are Angelo Gallucci, Shay Freund and Brayden Freund at the Tulenko home.

Four of the layouts were permanent ones. Dick Flock's prototypical HO scale layout engages multiple "engineers" who use written train orders to assemble trains and move them from one location to another. Rob Enrico's layout, a two-rail O gauge, realistically depicts a section of the West Brownsville yard of the Penn-Central Railroad near Pittsburgh. Flock and Enrico are known as "rivet counters" because of their meticulous attention to detail and realism.

Mark Tulenko's classic O gauge layout features multiple trains running on several levels. It also includes a cityscape enhanced with numerous operating accessories, including skiers and a ski lift, a draw bridge and a flying Santa Claus and reindeer.

Dan Wukich designed a separate room in his company's office building to permanently house his classic O gauge layout. Like Tulenko's, it also features multiple trains and levels. By recently incorporating scale-sized windmills modeled after those in Somerset County, Wukich added a touch of local realism to his layout.

Since the other three displays on the tour were modular, the LVRRA rented the Greensburg Masonic Lodge banquet room to exhibit all three in one location. The S-Gaugers of Pittsburgh exhibited a unique module featuring four tracks with turnouts which enables various trains to switch from one track to another.

The Pittsburgh Independent Hi-Railers displayed an O guage four-track main line with engines pulling trains up to 55 cars in length on its impressive 26-by-40 foot layout. The Hi-Railers' goal is to include as much scenery as possible. Its layout features trestles spanning both a canyon and a marina. Another module depicts a whimsical UFO landing site. Especially impressive is a drive-in movie module where a 1950s movie plays on a laptop monitor.

The Terrell Jacobs Ring is a division of the Circus Model Builders, Inc. Its circus layout depicts models of a Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus sideshow tent and big top, resplendent with a parade moving down Main Street, USA.

The second annual layout tour was even more successful than the first one. Plans have already begun for next year's tour. If anyone knows of a prospective layout, please call Ray Robb at 724-832-3041.

A special thanks to Gladys Light and her volunteers, who greeted visitors at each tour site, and to all the hosts for sharing their displays and taking time out of their busy schedules to help make LVRRA's layout tour such a success.



Dan Wukich's train collection and layout fills an entire room in his office building.



The modules of the S-Gaugers of Pittsburgh depict the activity of a typical rail yard.



Wesley Rhoades and grandparents Pat and Cookie Ferry check out the action on Rob Enrico's layout.



Guests admire the intricacies of Dick Flock's layout.



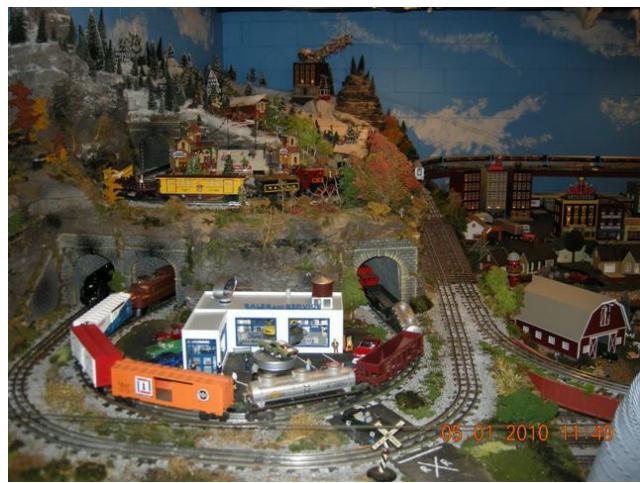
The circus display includes a big top with a cut-away, which reveals a view of the three-ring circus acts.



Tulenko's layout features an actual water scene.



A Conrail locomotive speeds through a gorge on one of the modules in the Pittsburgh Independent Hi-Railers' layout.



A close-up view of Tulenko's mountain scene reveals the various levels of his layout.

## E-VERSION OF THE LIGGIE IS AVAILABLE

In the future *The Liggie* will be available via e-mail for the convenience of its readers. Hard copy will continue to be mailed to Friends of the LVRR unless otherwise requested. If any Friends have not already viewed *The Liggie* on the website, they should do so if only to see the clarity and color of the pictures.

Anyone wishing to discontinue the delivery of the hard copy of *The Liggie* should e-mail the LVRRA at [lvrra@verizon.net](mailto:lvrra@verizon.net).

### Friends forever – in memorial

Alice (A.B.) Bell  
Donald E. Gaston

## NEAR-PERFECT CONDITIONS PREVAIL FOR THE PW&S FIELD TRIP

On April 10, 2010, 24 Friends boarded a bus at the former Ligonier Station on West Main Street to explore the roadbed of the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad (PW&S), that ceased operation in 1916. John Vucina, retired Ranger One for Linn Run State Forest, served as the tour director.

The sun was shining, the snow was melted and the leaves were still in bud. Because of these conditions, traces of the Byers Allen Saw Mill and the roadbed of the PW&S Railroad were plainly visible.

Throughout the tour Vucina pointed out and commented on existing vestiges of the PW&S. Two residences in Ligonier still face the former roadbed rather than the front street as they did when the railroad was in its prime. The bridge abutments where the PW&S crossed the Loyalhanna Creek are still visible in several locations as is the bank of the former logging pond of the Byers Allen Saw Mill. Portions of the paved road through Linn Run State Park follow the roadbed of the PW&S. Signs of escape ramps and sidings into the forest are also apparent as are the severe grades that the steel-wheeled trains climbed and descended.

During the brown-bag lunch break at the Linn Run State Park Office, Vucina shared with the group a pictorial PW&S display, which he created several years ago. As he explained the operation of the PW&S, Vucina's knowledge and enthusiasm engaged his audience. As a side trip at the top of the mountain, everyone walked a former siding from the Laurel Summit picnic area to an area known as Spruce Flats Bog, which exists today in part because of the clear-cutting of the forest during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On the other side of the mountain in Somerset County, those on the tour could see the "towns" of Zufall and Allenvale where the PW&S had scheduled stops. The group stopped at the Gasteiger cut, a 90-foot-deep trench cut into the bedrock during the 1880s to accommodate the South Penn Railroad (an upstart railroad, which never materialized, in spite of its designs to compete with the PRR and the B&O). After filling in the deep cut, the PW&S was able to lay track across the gorge and circle around about one quarter of a mile down the line, where it then followed the South Penn roadbed southward into Somerset.

The tour concluded where the Pennsylvania turnpike crosses the former PW&S roadbed. A future tour will trace the remainder of the PW&S roadbed south of the turnpike into the town of Somerset.



Friends pause at the former site of the Byers Allen Saw Mill where the PW&S first crossed the Loyalhanna Creek.



Friends reboard the chartered bus near Laurel Summit.

## GENEALOGY RESEARCH PROJECT IN ARIZONA UNCOVERS PHOTOGRAPH OF LVRRA'S BOBBER CABOOSE

Michael Nalbone of Glendale, Arizona, set out last year to research the career of his great-grandfather, Albert John Holcomb, who worked on the Pennsylvania Railroad for 39 years and retired as a conductor in 1939.

Nalbone's interest in researching his great-grandfather's railroad career began with a photograph he found among old family pictures. On the back of the photograph picturing an engine and six crewmen standing in front of a caboose, were listed the names of the men. Nalbone recognized the second name as being that of his great-grandfather. Upon closer examination of the picture, he was able to discern the serial number of the caboose.

This information was enough to start Nalbone's research on the internet. When he entered the PRR serial number on Google, it led him to the LVRRA website.

After an exchange of e-mails between Nalbone and the LVRRA, it was obvious that the caboose in his photograph was the same caboose sitting at the Darlington Station. Nalbone was able to date the photograph with further information he found on the LVRRA website as to being taken sometime between 1905, when the caboose was purchased by the PRR, and 1919, when it was sold.

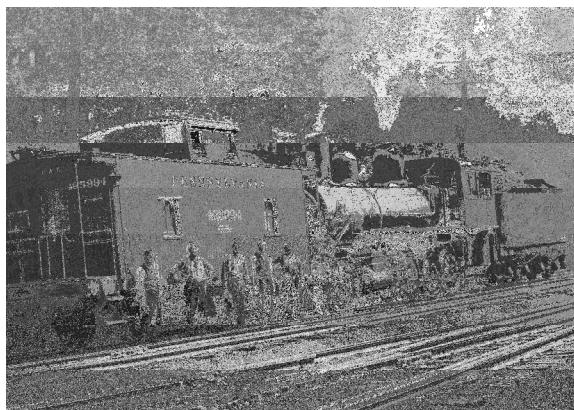
Additional e-mails led to Nalbone sharing his photograph with the LVRRA via a high resolution e-copy. LVRRA personnel then contracted Harry Frye, a local Photoshop master, to "rebuild" the missing corner and to restore and enhance the photograph.

Nalbone's excitement upon receiving the restored photograph was matched by LVRRA's delight upon being able to add this photograph to its archives. This exchange could never have taken place

without Bill Potthoff's diligence in creating the LVRRA website, [www.lvrra.org](http://www.lvrra.org).



*The photograph as received from Nalbone*



*The contrast between the before and after pictures is evidence of Harry Frye's expertise.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill McCullough - President  
724-238-5859  
Bob Stutzman - Vice President  
724-537-2647  
Bill Potthoff - Secretary  
724-532-5564  
Art McMullen - Treasurer  
724-593-7277  
Al Pilz - Director  
Bill Stablein - Director  
Pat Wallace - Director  
Paul Fry - Director  
Armour Mellon - Director  
Janet Hudson - Director Emerita  
Lisa Hays - Director Emerita  
Ralph Scalise - Director Emeritus

## **JOIN THE AUTUMN FOLIAGE FIELD TRIP TO STRASBURG AND RIDE ON A FULL-SIZE STEAM- DRIVEN TRAIN**

For some time Friends of the LVRR have considered renting a bus to take a field trip to Strasburg, where passengers can ride a steam-driven train through Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish farmland. Nineteenth-century passengers complained about the smoke and the hot cinders, but there remains a mystique and thrill of riding a steam-driven train. This field trip offers Friends a chance to experience first hand the wonder of riding a smoke-bellowing train.

A tentative date, dependent upon whether enough people are interested in the tour, has been set for October 2, 2010. The cost will be \$100 based on at least 21 Friends signing up. The plan is to depart Ligonier at 6 a.m. and to stop in Breezewood for breakfast and arrive in Strasburg by 11 a.m. in order to board the noon train. Lunch will be served on the 45-minute train ride.

Upon returning to the station, those on the tour will have two to three hours to browse the gift shops and to visit the train store and the museum. The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania houses a collection of more than 100 locomotives and cars, railroad artifacts and railroad-related artwork. It alone is worth the trip to Strasburg.

The bus will depart Strasburg at approximately 4 p.m. and stop in Breezewood in time for dinner, returning to Ligonier by 9 p.m.

The \$100 price of the tour includes bus transportation, train ride and lunch and admission to the museum. The cost of breakfast and dinner will be an additional expense.

In order for the LVRRA to guarantee tickets for the noon train, reservations with payment must be received at the Darlington Station by July 15. Please make all checks

payable to the LVRRA (earmarked for Strasburg) and mail them to PO Box 21, Ligonier, PA 15658. If at least 21 Friends do not register, payments will be returned.

This is a great opportunity to ride a steam engine much like the ones that chugged along the LVRR main line. Please call 724-537-2647 or send an e-mail to [lvrra@verizon.net](mailto:lvrra@verizon.net) with any questions.

### **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

### **COVINGTON INVESTMENTS SPONSORS RESTORATION OF ORIGINAL PETROVITTS PAINTING**

A painting of the Ligonier Station in the 1920s, by noted artist Milan Petrovitts, was donated to the LVRRA by the Pennsylvania Game Commission in 2009. Patrick Wallace, president of Covington Investments, has underwritten the expense of having the painting cleaned, repaired and reframed. It is now displayed at the Darlington Station.



*Patrick Wallace recently presented the restored original oil painting to Bill McCullough and Bill Potthoff, officers of the LVRRA.*

## CAROL AND DAVE'S ROADHOUSE FEATURES COLLAGES OF LVRR PHOTOGRAPHS

Carol and Dave Cassler, owners of Carol and Dave's Roadhouse in Oak Grove, recently invited the LVRRA to display some of its pictures in one of its dining rooms. Fort Ligonier is also currently displaying artifacts and memorabilia from the fort in another dining room.



Dave Cassler stands in front of a collage of photographs recording the tragic 1912 train wreck.

Happy to have this opportunity to further preserve the legacy of the LVRR, Friends of LVRR designed three collages with photographs taken from LVRRA's archives. One collage features passengers, railroad employees, and stops along LVRR's line during its existence from 1877 to 1952. The second collage includes pictures of two LVRR engines and one of its doodlebugs and the third chronicles the infamous 1912 calamity on the LVRR in which 23 people died in a train wreck on the Hannah's Run Branch, a site located less than one mile from the roadhouse.

By providing stimulating reminders of the past, the Casslers hope to help keep alive the rich history of Ligonier Valley. Diners who visit Carol and Dave's Roadhouse are invited to spend some time in both dining rooms enjoying the historic displays of Fort Ligonier and the LVRR. Hopefully, this experience will whet their appetites not only for the delightful food at the roadhouse but also for visiting some local historic sites.

## 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIGONIER STATION

The Ligonier Valley Library will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ligonier Station later this summer. *Ligonier Echo* files show that August 13, 1910, was the official opening date of the station. Watch for details in the local papers.

## CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENT SALE

Every year the Ligonier Chamber of Commerce sells as a fund-raiser a Christmas tree ornament featuring a Ligonier landmark. The LVRRA feels honored that the 2010 ornament, Number 27 in the series, depicts the restored Darlington Station. Profits from the sale of the boxed ornaments will benefit the Chamber of Commerce. The ornaments may be purchased for \$9 either at the Chamber's office in the Ligonier Town Hall or at the Darlington Station gift shop.



Ligonier Chamber of Commerce's 2010 ornament features the restored Darlington Station.

## LOIS NEIDERHISER JOINS THE STAFF OF THE LVRRA

The Title V program administered by Westmoreland Community College has enabled Lois Neiderhiser to join the staff of the LVRRA. She is helping Secretary/Director Bill Potthoff, Frank Dominick and Susan Shaffer to catalogue artifacts and working in the Darlington Station gift shop. Neiderhiser is a life-long resident of Ligonier Valley. Welcome aboard!



Ray and Fran Robb are greeted by Dave Byers.



Vallozzi's buffet was pleasing to both the eye as well as the palate.



Paul Fry, Armour Mellon, Art McMullen and Dawn Law exchange pleasantries in the museum.



Gladys and Phil Light are enticed by the dessert table.



The tent, as seen from the caboose platform, almost covered the entire parking lot.



The cup-cake train was a big hit.



The atmosphere under the big tent was spacious and airy.



Friends enjoy each other's company while admiring the museum.