

The Lizzie

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Darlington Station Update

There is exciting news! You are probably aware that Idlewild has offered to donate the Darlington Station to the LVRRA. What a great opportunity it would be to save this grand vestige of the LVRRA. However, without proper funding, owning the station would have been a real albatross. Thanks to a lead grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, we are now able to accept Idlewild's offer. The grant will enable us to save the building.

Additionally, the Allegheny Foundation has awarded a grant for project support. This grant will cover the cost of sub-dividing the property and will enable the LVRRA to assume ownership of the building.

Our primary goal is to save the structure itself. Once we accomplish that, we plan to re-create the lobby as it appeared in the thirties and forties. The balance of the first floor will be utilized as a museum and resource center focused on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road. In so doing, it will become another attraction for tourists, and locals, to enjoy while visiting Ligonier Valley. In the early days of the railroad, Ligonier was billed as, *Pennsylvania's Mountain Playground*. Today, Ligonier remains a destination for both tourists and shoppers. Perhaps our endeavor will add additional flavor to that billing.

We are truly honored that these two foundations have enabled us to rescue and protect this vestige of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road.

Friends of the LVRRA

There are 143 *Charter Friends of the LVRRA*. Another four members have joined so far this year for a total of 147 members. Most of us are from Westmoreland County, but we have Friends located in eight states including Florida, Texas and Hawaii. The common thread with all of us is the desire to preserve the legacy of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road. Thank all of you for your support. Membership is open to anyone and everyone who shares our common goal. Call one of the directors with any questions.

LVRRA 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

724-537-2647

Al Pilz - Director

Bill Stablein - Director

Lisa Hays - Director

Thank you Janet Hudson

Janet has been an inspiration to us as she guided the LVRRA during its initial pangs of formal organization. Although no longer active as a director, she has agreed to be our first Director Emeritus and will be available for consultation as needed. She has also volunteered to help with the museum committee.

Tour the LVRR

Most of you have attended one of our slide shows, "Come Along With Us and Ride the Ligonier Valley Rail Road." Instead of a virtual tour of the LVRR, as the slide show offers, how would you like to take an actual tour of the LVRR and follow its roadbed?

You will have the opportunity to visit some of the industrial sites serviced by the LVRR. Some of the names are: Keener Brick, Soisson Brick, Vulcan Mold, Peter's Paper, Stupakoff Foundry, Latrobe Electric Steel, Latrobe Forge and Spring, Booth and Flynn Quarry.

In addition to the service provided to local industry, can you believe that during its 75-year history, 9 million passengers rode on the rails of LVRR?

Our tour will begin at the former railroad station on West Main Street in Ligonier, 9 AM, Saturday, April 1st. The tour will head west to the Latrobe railroad station following the roadbed as close as we can. Along the way, you will see some of the manufacturing plants that the LVRR had supported. On the return trip to Ligonier, we will take a short hike to explore the siding for the original Booth and Flynn Quarry. Call 724-537-2647 or 724-532-5564 to make your reservation. *If you have a CB radio, bring it along.* We will have a caravan of cars and the guides will use CB's to communicate with everyone.

Committees Chairs

Museum - Jim Aldridge
Public Relations - Bill Potthoff
Development - Bob Stutzman
Special Events - Bill McCullough
Property and Grounds - Paul Fry

Where do you belong? Why wait to be drafted? If you have a preference, contact the committee chair. The general responsibilities of each committee are included elsewhere in *The Liggie*.

Meet Jim Aldridge

Jim, the newest director of the LVRRA, hails from New Alexandria and has been a long time member of the PRR Technical & Historical Society. He has a strong interest in local PRR history and has written several articles for the Pittsburgh Chapter's newsletter, including a history of the PRR's Main Line between Derry and Radebaugh. Currently he is engaged in writing a history of the Pennsy's Alexandria Branch. He has graciously agreed to chair the museum committee. (Also, have you noticed? We already elected him to the office of vice-president?) Welcome aboard Jim.

Mini-Museum/Library

Regular office hours are from **nine until noon Saturday mornings**. You and the general public are invited to drop in and peruse our collection of railroad artifacts, photographs and memorabilia featuring the Ligonier Valley Rail Road. Staffing the museum has been enjoyable, as we learn how the railroad has touched the lives of our guests. The museum is located at **106 N. St. Clair St. in Ligonier**; Staci Peipock has been enlisting volunteers to assist in manning the museum. We would like to have knowledgeable "guides" available to make the visit worthwhile to our guests. If you would like to visit the museum, but cannot make it Saturday morning, call one of the officers and make an appointment. Someone is usually available. In the meanwhile, we continue to utilize the office to sort and catalogue memorabilia and photographs and to market our model trains and apparel.

Model Railroading

Are you up to date? Just when we thought we were sold out of our **Engine #19**, MTH, the manufacturer, "found" two more engines. These two were an overrun on our original order, and MTH was not sure we could use them. So, if you hesitated and did not buy an engine on the original go around, here's another chance for you to buy an engine with Ligonier-specific sounds. If you are interested, please call Bob at 724-537-2647. The cost is \$350.

*"Kingston, Idlewild and all points east,
heeeere we come!"*

LVRR 1917 is a box car with a photo of the Ligonier Station. Our newest model has proven to be very popular.



The price is \$50 and is available at the Chamber of Commerce and Zimmerman's in Ligonier and at PostNet in the Latrobe 30 Shopping Center. It is also available Saturday mornings at our St. Clair St. mini-museum. Mail orders are available by sending a check to: LVRRA, 605 Walnut St., Latrobe, PA 15650. Please add \$5.00 for shipping and handling.

Our next issues, **LVRR 1918, 1919 and 1920** are on the drawing boards. They will be a set of Pennsylvania Tuscan red hoppers commemorating two valley coal mines and the Booth and Flynn Quarry. They will sport the Ligonier Valley roadname and approximate what hoppers would have looked like if the LVRR had ever owned their own hoppers. These models are scheduled to arrive by June of this year. The price will be \$40.00 per car.

Note to the museum committee

Those of you who have volunteered for the Museum Committee - and we know who you are - can expect a call for assistance in the not too distant future. The most pressing task that faces the Committee at the present time is the matter of creating a workable system of accession (record keeping) for the artifacts and archival material owned by the LVRRA. We hope in the near future to obtain a computer for use at the mini-museum for this and other LVRRA purposes. Our in-house computer guru, Bill Potthoff, is at work on these projects. Once the accession program has been designed and tested, and the computer is in place, we will begin a series of work parties (actually fun parties). Those interested in learning more about the material that we have in our collection will find involvement in this project rewarding.

Most of the artifacts in the LVRRA collection are in a "raw" state, which is to say that they need work before being placed on display at our mini-museum and ultimately at Darlington. The Association is fortunate in having a "Friend" in Harry "Tom" Bortz who is knowledgeable on railroad artifacts; including china, locks, keys and lanterns. Harry has volunteered to undertake the task of preparing some of these items for display beginning with the lanterns. Each lantern requires many hours of work; and, so far, two have been completed. Those who have had the good fortune to see Harry's collection know him to be a meticulous craftsman. Thank you, Harry!

Our program, *"Come Along With Us and Ride the LVRR,"* is available to any group interested in the history of this region.

Call one of the directors with any questions.

The Smith/Lowden Collection



We are indebted to Tim Schultheis of Schultheis Electric and Dave Herrholtz of Ligonier Construction for teaming up to "pull" the large railroad signals that we had purchased. Their crews arrived early the morning of February 1st and by 11 AM, the signals were on their way to a storage facility in Ligonier. Thank you Tim and Dave very, very much. As it now stands, approximately 95% of the Smith-Lowden collection is physically in our possession. As time and weather permit, we will be able to complete the transaction.

www.lvrta.org

Check it out. Even though our site is still under construction, you will find useful information and past copies of the *Liggie*.

What is a ball signal?

Pictured below is our ball signal as it stood in Wells River, Vermont. It stood more than 30 feet tall and was used to control train traffic on the Boston and Maine. Ball signals were a very early style of fixed signal used for train control. They were generally replaced by more modern semaphore type signals at an early date and therefore were uncommon, particularly in the modern era. Our signal served its intended purpose for more than 100 years before being removed from service. We are fortunate that Bill Smith rescued this rare and historic relic of a bygone era.



Our signal is a five-ball signal that conveyed an assortment of aspects and indications to approaching trains. When raised to its highest position, the signal indicated proceed - High Ball - a phrase that has endured in the lexicon of railroaders, fans and civilians.

Recent contributions

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

Staci Peipock - Walter Dapper's LVRR Passes and a Foster Rail Gage. Dapper was Peipock's great-grandfather.

Ray Kinsey - Photos of the interiors of our Doodlebugs, railroad reference books and *Modern Railroad* magazines from 1952

Jean Harrold - Photograph of her father, Joseph G. Keffer, at the Atlantic Refining storage tanks on West Vincent St.

Neal Nicely - Photographs of LVRR Engines.

Don Stevens - Numerous items of PRR memorabilia from his father's collection. Collection includes PRR embossed salt and pepper shakers and a PRR policeman's badge

Julie Donovan - Panoramic photograph of Millbank area

Bruce Shirey - *The Pennsylvania Turnpike*, by Mitchell E. Dakelman and Neal A. Schorr.

Marjorie Byers - Photo of husband, Elroy Byers wearing a LVRR conductor's hat.

Paul Fry - Photo, dated 1916, showing the Ligonier water tower with two spouts located at the junction of the east and west legs of the wye.

Annual Dinner plans

As promised, the Special Events Committee is planning our first annual dinner to recognize you, the Friends of the LVRR. The dinner will also provide an opportunity for all of us to meet one another. The final date and location is still up in the air, but we are aiming for late June or early July. We expect to finalize plans by the end of March and will extend invitations at that time. All Friends will be invited. Patrons and Contributing Members, due to the level of their support, will be our guests and are entitled to a free dinner.

We are planning the menu based on the recipes that we found in the Ligonier Valley Rail Road archives. We recall the following: water tank lemonade, coal tipple coffee, freight house chicken, and engine house beef tips. Don't they conjure up a mouth-watering appetite?

The formal part of the program will be kept to a minimum, but we will have our newest artifacts and memorabilia to share with you. As always, there will be lots of great railroad stories to share. Hope to see you at the dinner.

Fort Days 2006

We need to start planning for Fort Ligonier Days 2006. In addition to our annual window display at Zimmerman's and our informational and sales booth, we would also like to build a float for the parade. Please share your ideas. Stop in Saturday morning at the office, attend the annual dinner or call one of the directors. Any and all suggestions are welcome.