

# The LIGONIER

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## From the Museum's Collection:

The Ligonier Valley Railroad museum acquired a date nail collection from Mr. Fran Lynch. According to Lynch, he received the collection from Mr. Frank Gunther, who was a mentor early in Lynch's career and later became a friend. Lynch stated that Gunther, who has since passed on, would be happy knowing his collection was on display for many to enjoy. So, just what is a date nail?



*In this photo of a date nail, the number 27 is raised and would be from 1927.*

### Date nails:

A date nail is a nail with a date stamped in its head. A nail with a "38", for example, is from 1938. Nails are usually 2½" long with ¼" shanks. Date nails were used for record keeping purposes and were driven into poles, bridge timbers, railroad ties, and other wooden structures. The nails were made of a variety of metals, copper, aluminum, iron, brass, but most date nails are made of steel.

### Brief history:

By the late 1800s, railroads began experimenting with chemically treated ties in order to extend the life of a tie. Companies then needed to develop a method that would allow them to track a particular section of ties, their age, the wood used, as well as the method of preserving the timber. By the 1920s railroads using the date nail

system was the norm; this practice peaked around 1931, although not all railroads used them. From 1950 to 1970 the number of railroads using date nails steadily declined. This decline can be attributed mainly to two things: the perfection of treatment techniques and the reliance of stamps in the ends of the ties for records.

### Collecting date nails:

There are hundreds of date nail enthusiasts across the country. Date nails come in different shapes, sizes, and metals. Some nails have depressed numbers, while others are raised, they can have a round or square head, and the shanks differ in length and width. Nails are mainly traded, bought, and sold through the internet or by attending nail shows. A seasoned collector knows where to find date nails and carefully, so as not to destroy the nail, pull the nail from a timber. However, before an individual decides to look for nails along an old set of tracks, it is important to note that you need permission to look for nails as this is considered trespassing and stealing.

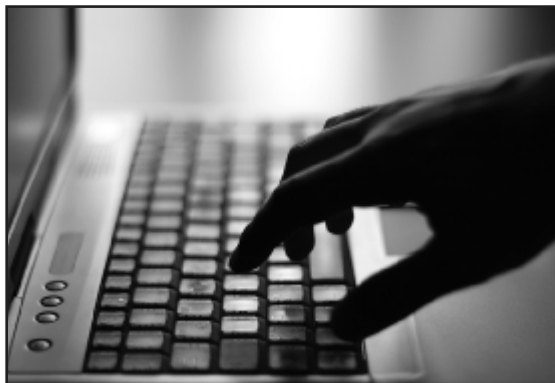
For more information on date nails, how to collect them, and to see the display, stop by the museum, and we'll be happy to show you.



*Bill Potthoff is shown here with the museum's nail display.*

# CALENDAR OF LVRRA EVENTS

- April 27 Model Train Home  
Tour
- May 5 Community Day
- June 1 Walkersville Southern  
Railroad



## E-VERSION OF THE LIGGIE

If you prefer to access the newsletter in electronic format rather than to receive a hard copy, please notify the office at 724-238-7819 or send an e-mail to [info@lvrra.org](mailto:info@lvrra.org).

### NEW MEMBERS

since December 1, 2012

Ed Banks  
Harold Hauger, M.D.  
Joseph Hunter

*The Liggie is published quarterly  
for Friends of the LVRRA.*

Mimi Owens, Editor

# MODEL RAILROAD TRAIN TOUR 2013



The 2013 model railroad tour consists of six locations; five private home layouts and Huber Hall in Latrobe.

There will be three train club layouts at Huber Hall. These are portable modular layouts. Each club member builds his own module and then they bring them to a meet where they are put together to make some very large model railroads. Each module has to be built to very exact specifications so that the modules will fit precisely together. At Huber there will be: Pittsburgh HiRailers (a large O scale club); Esther's Hobby Shop from Pittsburgh (a very nice N scale modular layout); and Three Rivers N-Trak (another N scale modular layout)

The five other layouts consist of:

A family-built layout that is a child's vision of the world. These young brothers are very proud of their mixed scale layout.

There are two outdoor G scale garden railroads. One is reminiscent of the Old West complete with western buildings set in a beautiful garden planted with some actual cactus. The other fills a yard with modern G scale trains.

The fourth layout fills the second floor of a garage with a large O scale layout that is patterned after Western Pennsylvania.

The fifth layout is museum quality O scale. It is extremely detailed and models the Johnstown area in the 1940s and 50s and includes an operating trolley line, a coal mine fire, a hot-air balloon and many large steam engines.

# RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

## LINDA HOUSTON

- 1 3" track wrench
- 1 4" track wrench
- 1 crow bar
- 1 spike remover

## DON McMAHON

- 3 railroad videotapes
- 2 metal static train models

## DAVE MARUCCO

- 3 VHS tape set of Reader's Digest Scenic Rail Journeys, *The Vanishing Age of Steam*
- 6 DVD set of trains – *Wide World of Steam*
- 6 DVD set of trains – *America By Rail*

## BILL POTTHOFF

- 21 Pages (copies) of Ligonier Valley Railroad Co. valuation summaries, May 27, 1918
- 31 Pages (copies) of Annual Report of Ligonier Valley Railroad Co. to the Interstate Commerce Commission for the year ending June 30, 1888
- 1 CD – *Come Along with us and Ride the LVRR* – June 5 Slides and Script
- 1 DVD Wilpen Films – Pete Picadio
- 2 DVDs – *The Last Run of the Ligonier Valley Railroad*

## RAY & FRAN ROBB

- Collection of postcards and photographs – Latrobe, Greensburg and Ligonier Valley Railroad

## ED STAUFFER

- 1 small oil can, 1 large oil can, 1 Thermos



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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## MISSION OF THE LVRRA

*Ligonier Valley Railroad Association*

*Organized in 2004:*

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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*

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*Find us on the web  
at [www.lvrria.org](http://www.lvrria.org)*



## Hours of Operation

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wednesday through Saturday

*Please check website for any changes*

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